



Interpreting iconography at East Mebon

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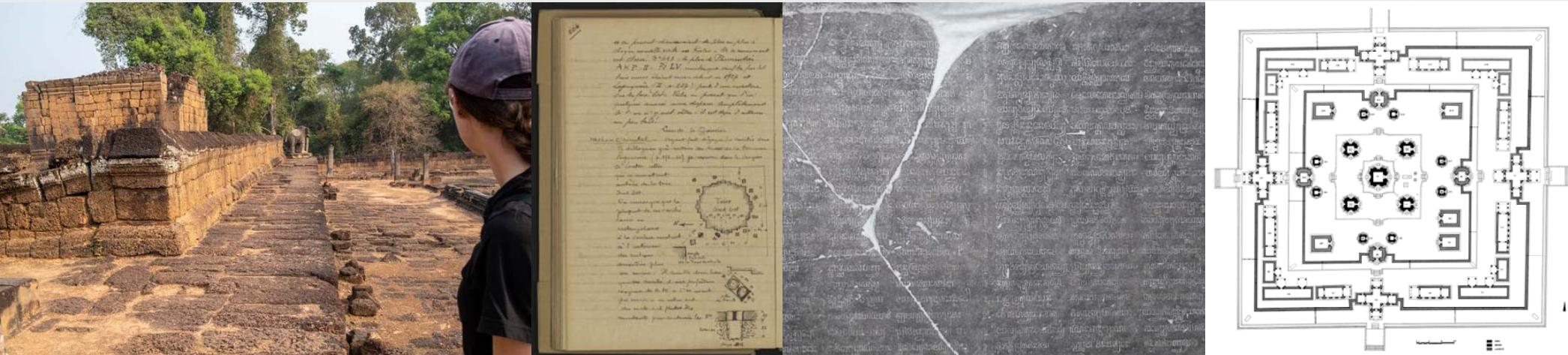
Introduction

- 1.Entering the temple**
- 2.Second enclosure**
- 3.First enclosure**
- 4.The central quincux of shrines**

Methodology

To contextualize the assets and the iconography in architecture and epigraphy for their interpretation – elaboration of a reading grid for the understanding of an angkorian temple, its signification and uses.

- On the field observations
- Archaeological archives (EFEO : journaux de fouilles, photographs, activity reports)
- Studies : epigraphy (G. Coedès, K. Bhattacharya, D. Goodal, D. Soutif, J. Estève), architecture (A. Haendel, B. Dagens)
- Comparison with Indian sources, art and texts (Tantra, Agāma... Śaivasiddhānta canon)



Historical context

Rājendravarman II (944-968 A.D.)

Consecration of East Mebon: january 953 A.D. (K.528)
= before Pre Rup

Architect: Kavīndrārimathana

K.528: foundation stela which is one of the longest poem in Sanskrit of Cambodia, describing the reign of the King and, to some extent, the iconography of the temple.

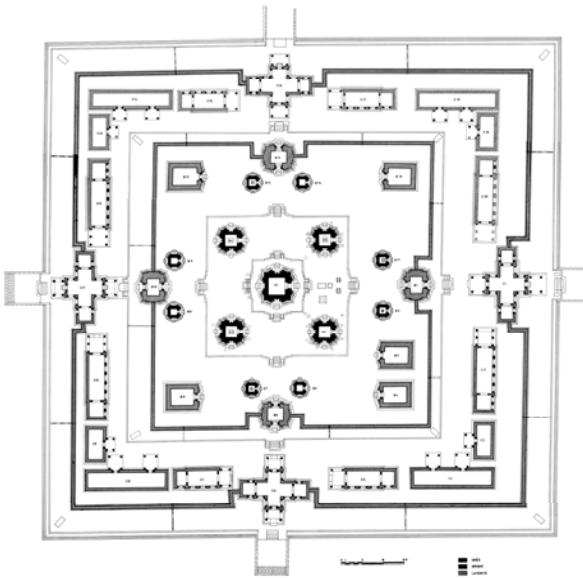
St. 206-218: the temple is erected for the King's parents. It is dedicated to the linga Śrī-Rājendreśvara and houses 8 other linga along with Viṣṇu, Gaurī, Giriśa (Śiva) and Brahmā.

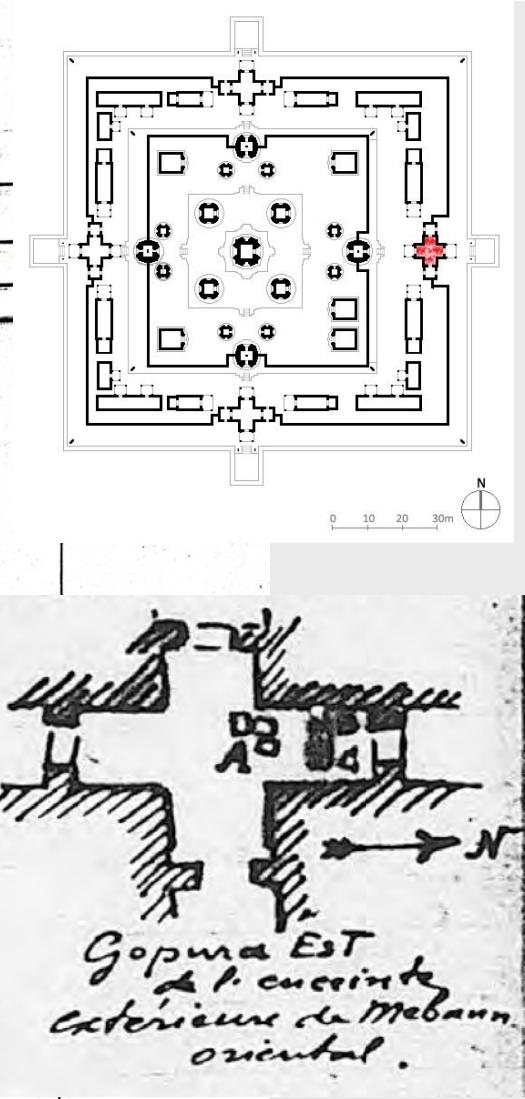
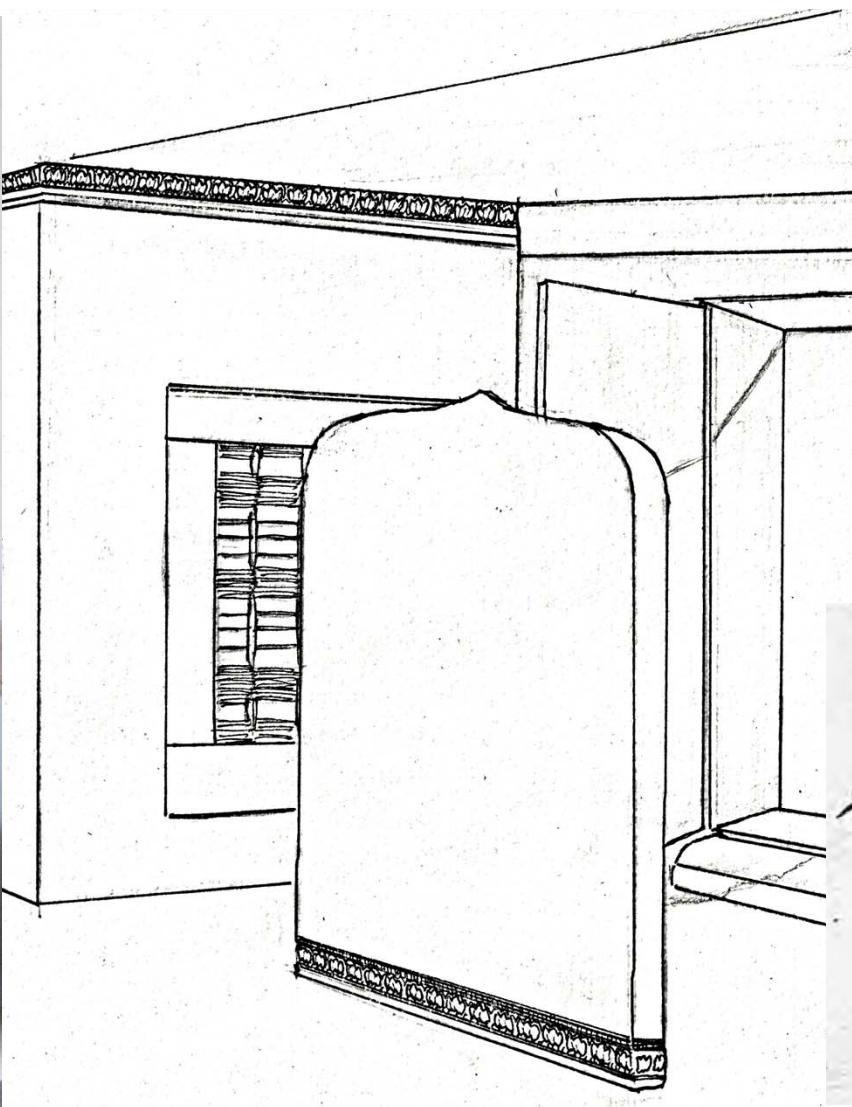


1. Entering the temple

- In the middle of East Baray
- 5 floors
- Progressive path to the most sacred part with show/hide apparatus

“On moving into the inner enclosure the devotee traverses the final boundary to this world, and enters the realm of the divine.” (Haendel 2004 : 250)





JF03 p.189, H. Marchal

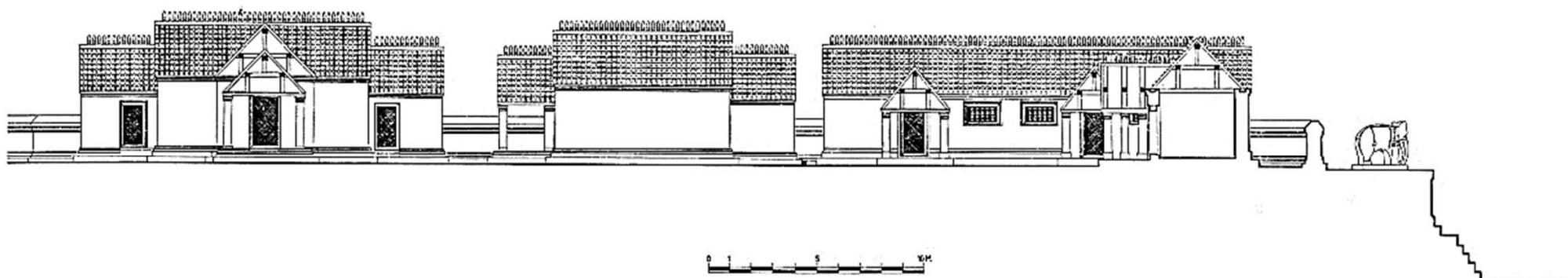
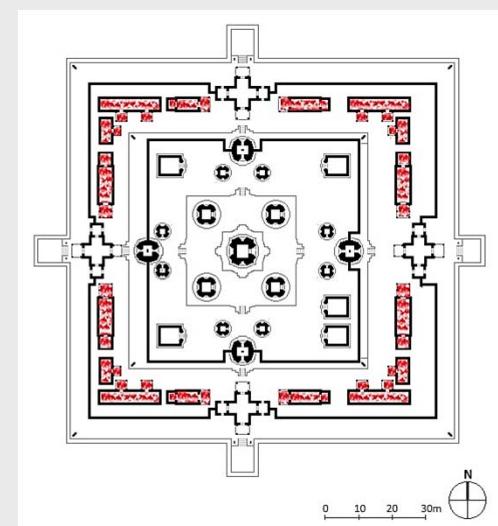
2. Second enclosure



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CAM16259 avril 1938, north of 2nd enclosure



CAM16565-1 avril 68 2nd enclosure, restitution of the roofs

ESSAI DE RESTAURATION DES TOITURES
CONSTRUCTION D'ANGKOR
MÉBON
1^{er} ETAGE
ESSAI de RESTAURATION des TOITURES

The halls

« Proto galleries » or utility buildings?

Dīptāgama chap. 11

Havyakosṭhaka: cooked offerings (kitchen)

Ayudhālaya: armoury

Śayanasthāna: dormitory for the images

Yāgamaṇḍapa: sacrificial pavillion

Vyañjanālaya: storage for condiments

Puṣpamaṇḍapa: pavillion for the flowers

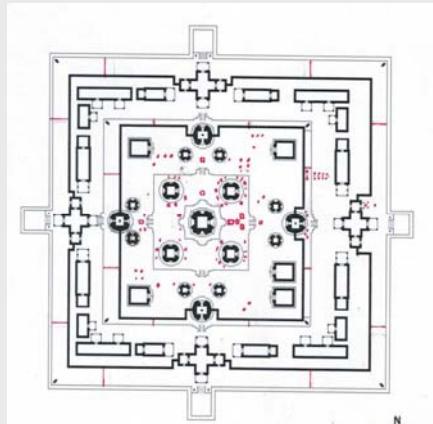
Añjanālaya: storage for blush (?)

Dharmaśravaṇamaṇḍapa: pious readings pavillion

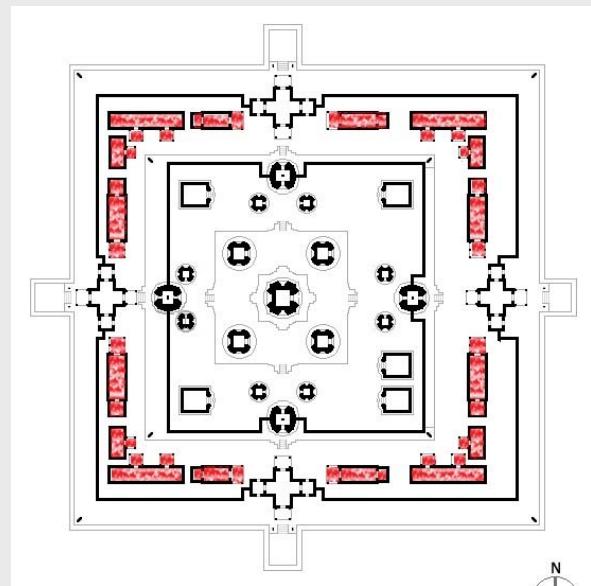
Putakārādhanālaya: library

Kūpa: « well »

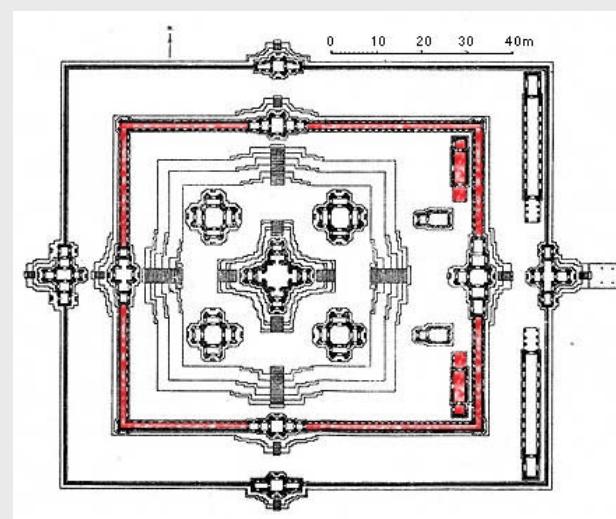
Hastisthāna: elephant stable



East Mebon



Takeo



The gods' properties

- Commodities for offerings (flowers, food, clarified butter, perfumed waters, etc.)
- utensils (ewers, vases, crucibles, etc.)
- Cult and procession paraphernalia (palanquins, lamps, fly swatters, parasols, fan, mirrors, etc.)
- Ornaments for the gods (belts, armours, brassards, bracelets, rings, kośa, etc.)

(D. Soutif 2009)

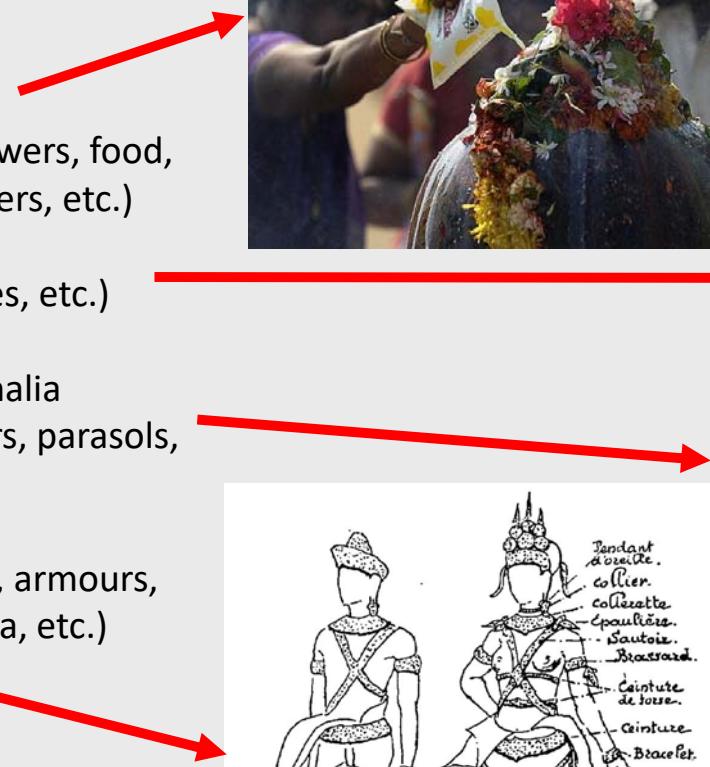


Fig. 37. — Les principales pièces d'orfèvrerie complétant le costume khmer.



India, offerings to Śivaliṅgam
Flowers, water, milk
Google image



Character holding an ewer,
Prei Monti,
SB 2019

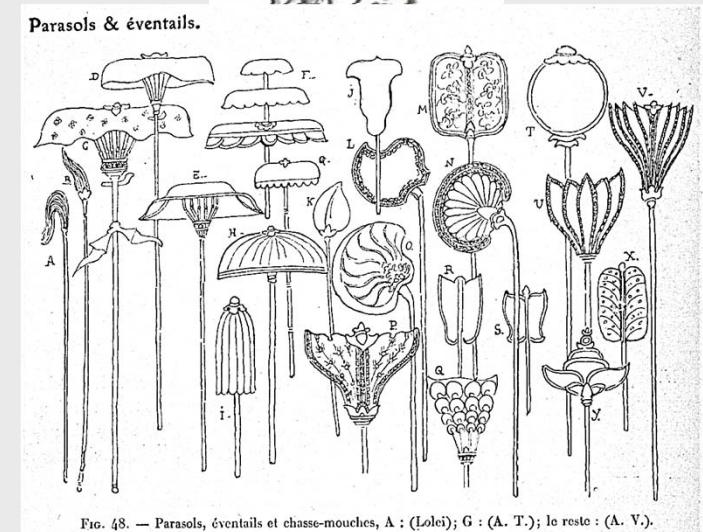


Fig. 48. — Parasols, éventails et chasse-mouches, A : (Lolei); G : (A. T.); le reste : (A. V.).

Parasols and fans on Lolei, Bayon, Angkor Wat
low reliefs

G.Groslier 1921 : 72 & 80

Activity reports of Angkor Conservation

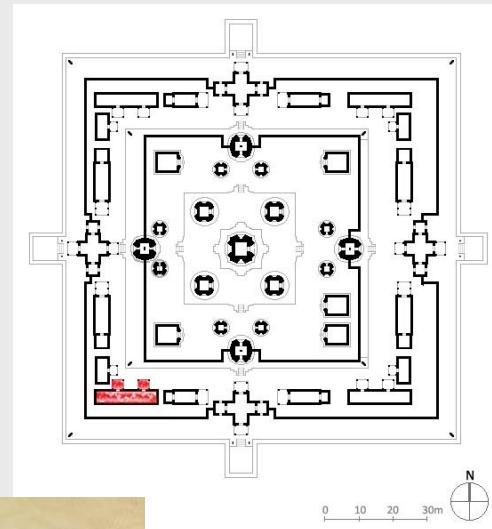
NOVEMBRE 1936 – MEBON ORIENTAL

« On a trouvé également à l'intérieur de cette salle [longue Sud-Ouest] un **petit nāga tricéphale** en bronze de 0.056m de hauteur, une **tablette de pessani** et des **morceaux de coquillage (conque)** enduits de chaux »

JUIN 1938 : trouvaille d'un rouleau de pessani



Ceramic conch, DCA4924
Srah Srang



Provenance inconnue
DCA1054



East Mebon
DCA3759

**Found in an undetermined area,
Second enclosure**



CAM25080
Bedding ring
CAM25080
Decorative fragment

Procession of the sacred fire,
Angkor Wat >
Palanquins on Banteay Chhmar,
Bayon and Angkor Wat low reliefs
G.Groslier 1921 : 104 >>



Pavois.

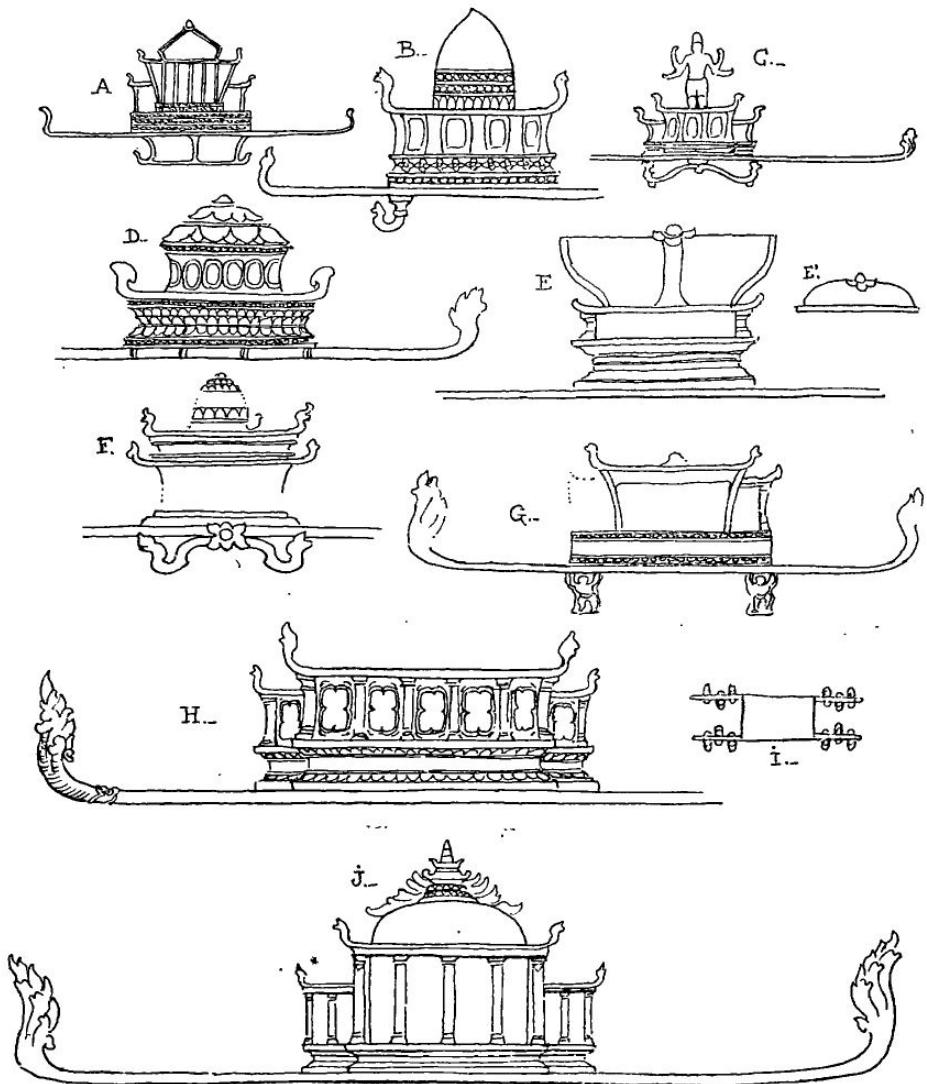


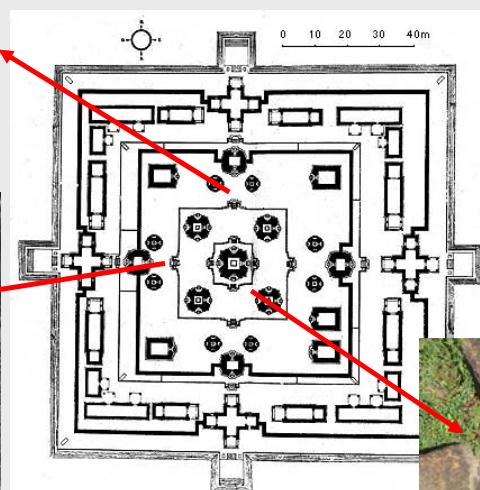
FIG. 66. — Pavois, A, B, G : (B. C.); D à G : (A. T.); H, J : (A. V.); I, place des porteurs : (A. V.).

Balipītha

For food offerings.
Can be recognized with the lotus
flower on the top.
(Dīptāgama vol1 p. 404)



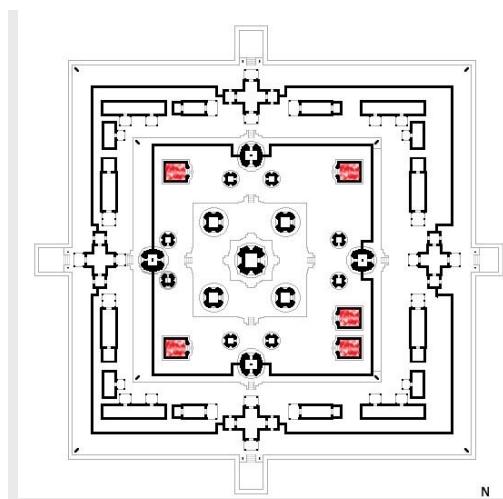
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Similar marks at north, east and west stairs

3. First enclosure

Laterite rooms



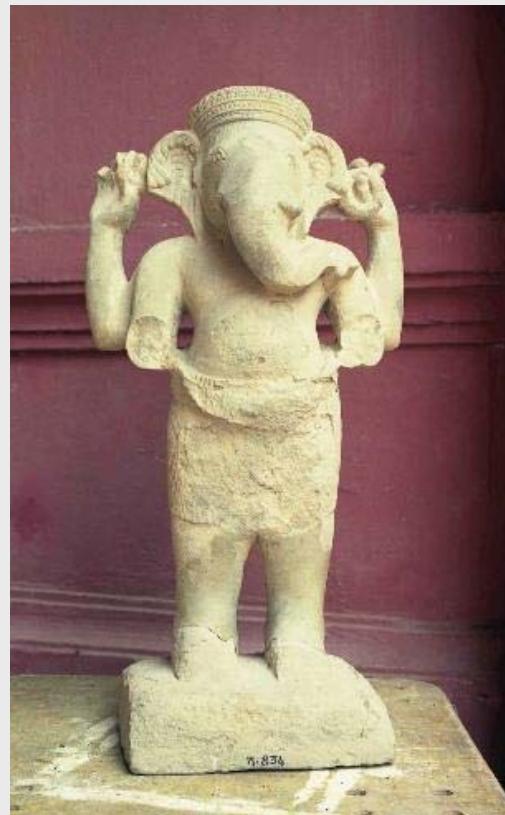
Gaṇeśa and the navagraha



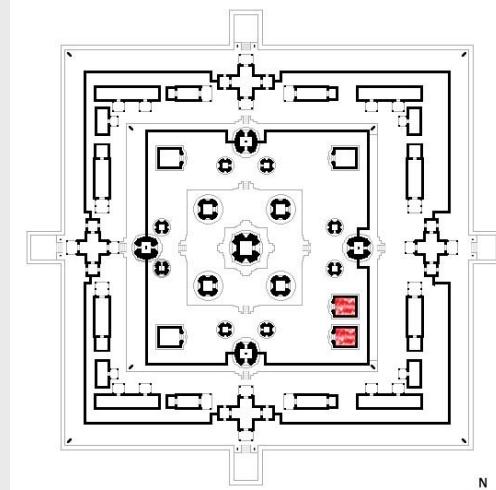
East Mebon, ACO, DCA3506 a-b



East Mebon, ACO, DCA3506 a-b



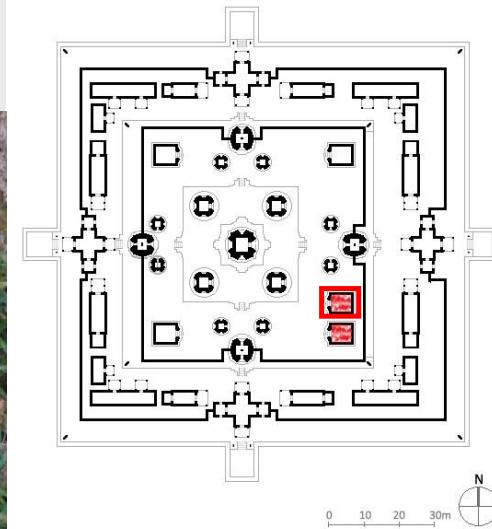
East Mebon, MNC, Ka. 834
(MNC/EFEO)

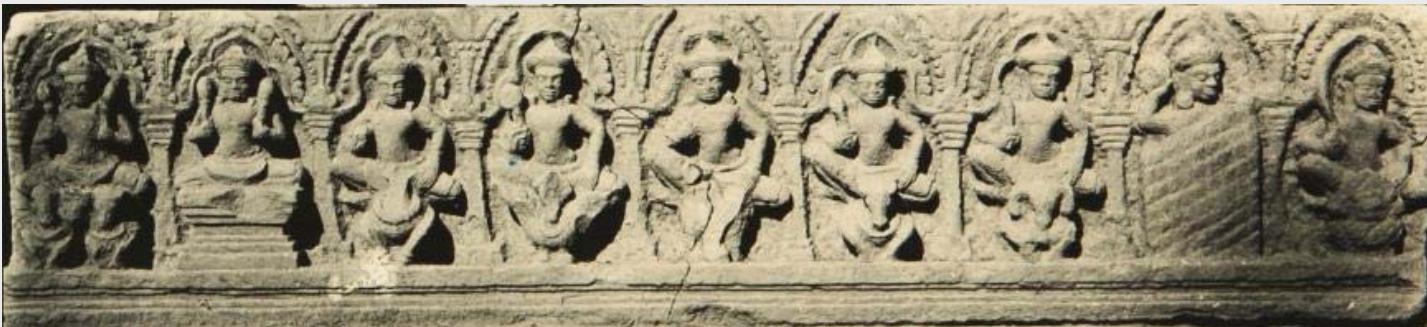


Mai 1936, JF13 p.5-6 : trouvaille d'une frise des neuf planètes, d'une seconde frise sculptée de deux côtés (9 planètes et 7 rishis), et d'un Gaṇeśa à quatre bras

« Les *graha* président à la destiné des hommes et lui envoient des maux lorsqu'ils sont irrités. C'est pour conjurer ces maux que l'on accomplit des rites propitiatoires en leur honneur ; et, puisque Gaṇeśa est le « Seigneur des Obstacles » (en fait, il provoque et écarte les obstacles), il est naturel de l'invoquer. » (Bhattacharya 1961 : 133)

South-East: Agni's direction

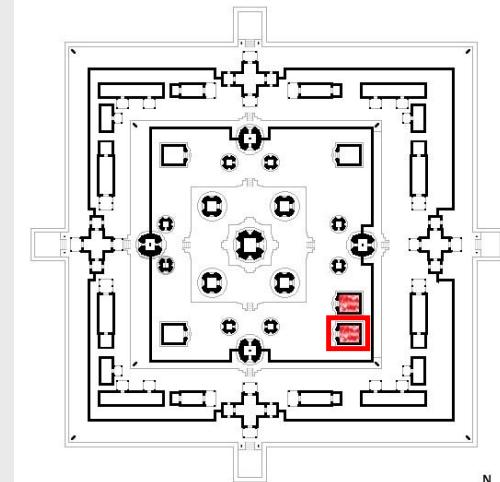




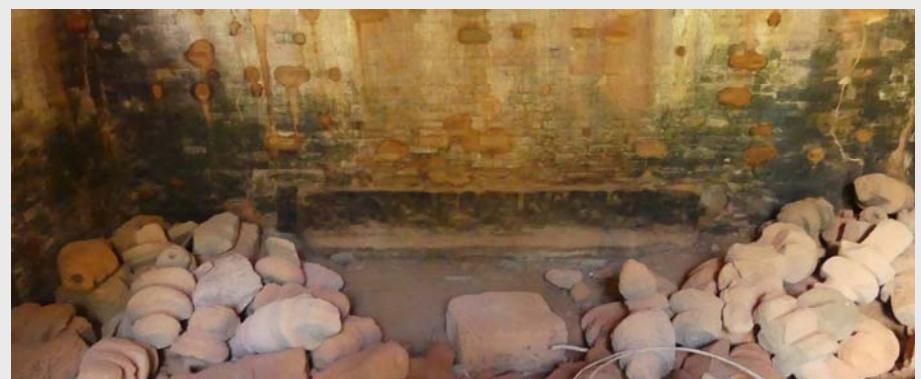
NMC CA_04433



NMC CA_04434



RCA Avril 1936 : dégagement du bâtiment annexe à l'angle Sud Est de la 2^e terrasse, construit en latérite jusqu'à une assez grande hauteur puis en brique. Trouvaille d'un linteau bien conservé et d'un petit Ganéśa de 20cm assez informe.



Preah Ko, SB 2020

Aṣṭa-mūrti



SB 2020

K.528, st.208 (translation D. Goodall):

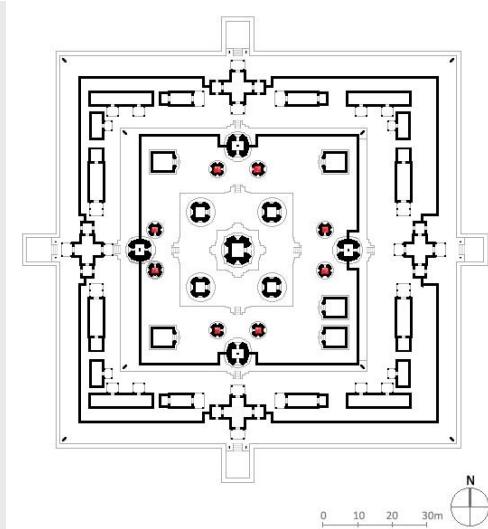
"That same mighty-armed one, who performed all the duties of a king, installed this (*imām*) statue (*nimām*) of the Four-Armed [Viṣṇu], and [another one] (*ca*) of the Lotus-Born [Brahmā], and then also eight *liṅgas* of [Śiva,] the one who has eight forms."

K.826: height forms of Śiva are earth, air, fire, moon, sun, water, ether and the sacrificer.

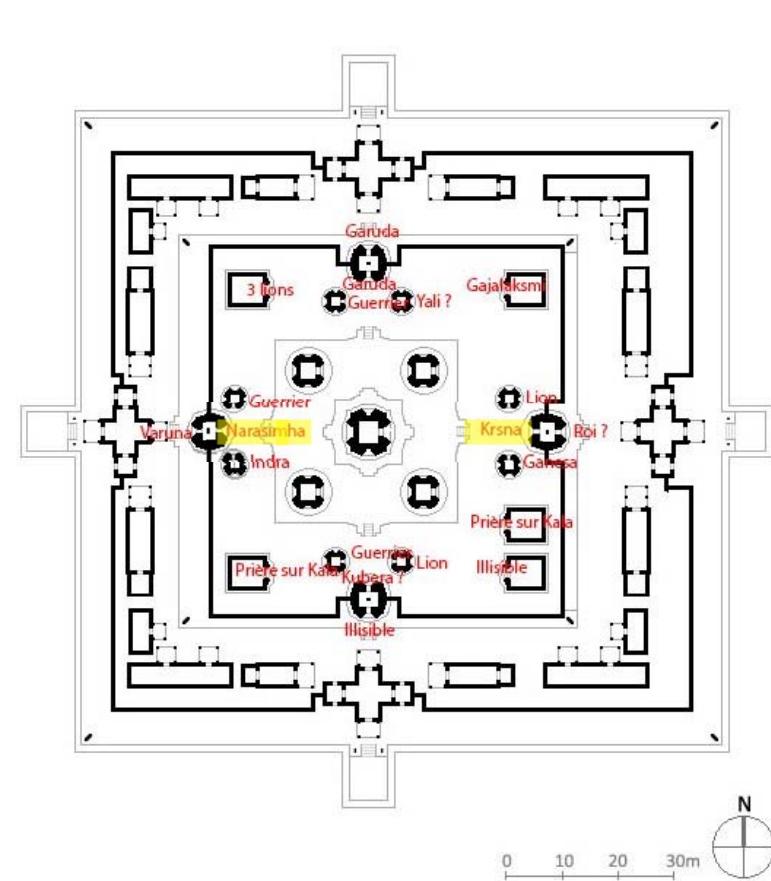


SB 2020

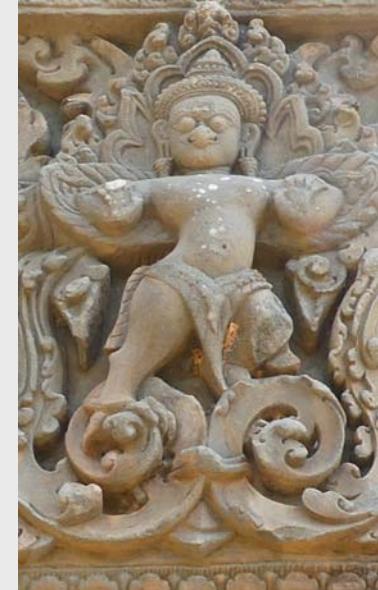
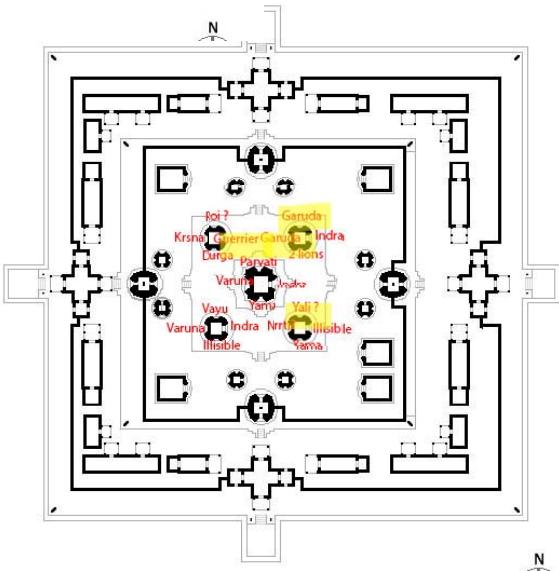
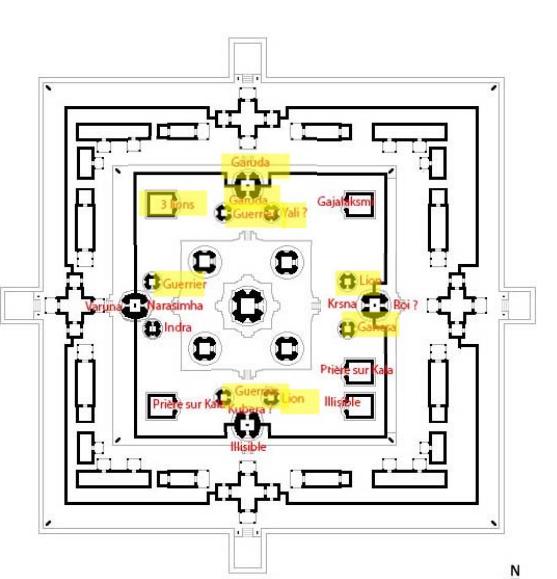
Pre Rup
DCA, 08.12.1990



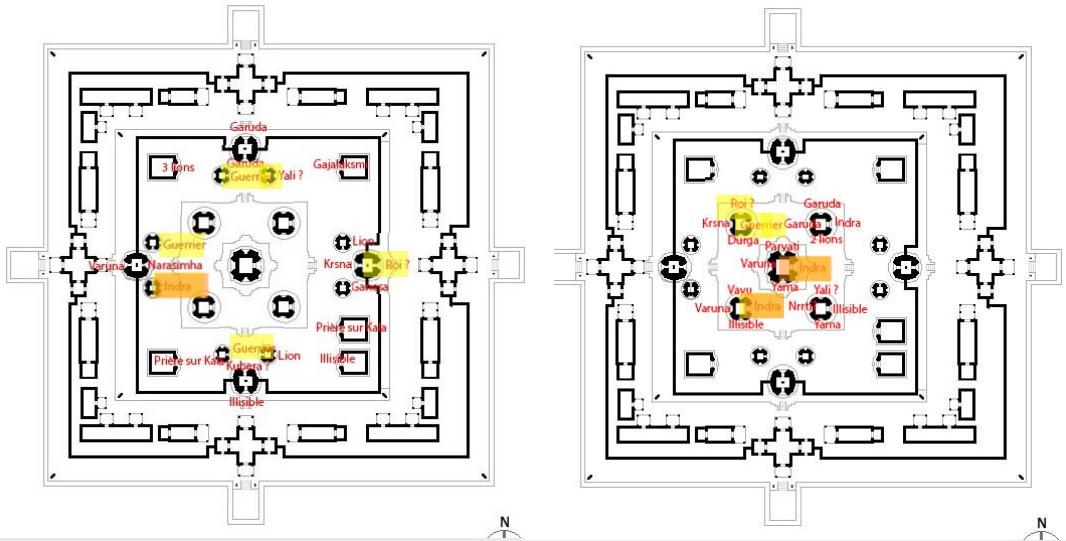
Examples of narrative lintels



Guardians and warriors



Indra and... the King ?



4. The central quincux





Preah Ko



Phnom Bakheng

< East Mebon, central shrine



East Mebon, SE tower



Pre Rup, SW tower

The main divinities

K.528

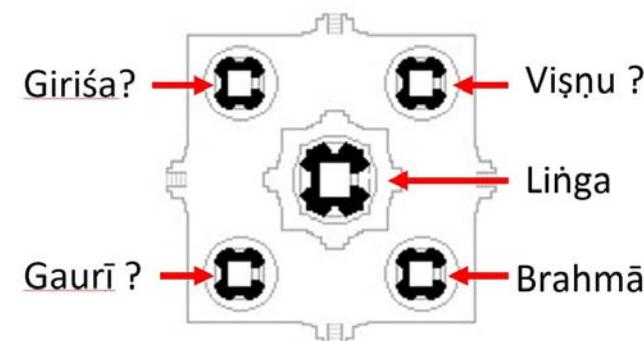
207. For/Of his own parents, from whom he inherited his glory, and who had reached a state of being in the same world (*sasthānatām*) as Bhavodbhava, this same (*so 'pi*) king, mindful of the [need for the] continuity [of the religion] (*sthitijñah*), installed these two images of Śiva and Śivā for the sake of blessing (*śivāya*).

Footnote: these two statues might be Śiva and Śiva consort as statues of his parents

208. That same mighty-armed one, who performed all the duties of a king, installed this (*imām*) statue (*nimām*) of the Four-Armed [Viṣṇu], and [another one] (*ca*) of the Lotus-Born [Brahmā], and then also eight *liṅgas* of [Śiva,] the one who has eight forms.

218. In the *śaka* year reckoned by dice (4), mountains (7) and Vasus (8), on the meritorious eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha, and (*api*) with the ascendant (*bhave*) entering (*yāti*) Pisces (*animişam*), [and] with the moon [entering] the middle of Taurus (?), this *liṅga*, called Śrī-Rājendresvara, of Him-who-bears-the-crescent-moon, achieved (*akṛta*) a correct installation (*parām...sthitim*) here, along with these cult-statues (*arcābhīḥ*) of Viṣṇu, Gaurī, Giriśa (Śiva) and Brahmā.

K.528 st. 207-208 :



Traduction D. Goodall, to be published

Brahmā

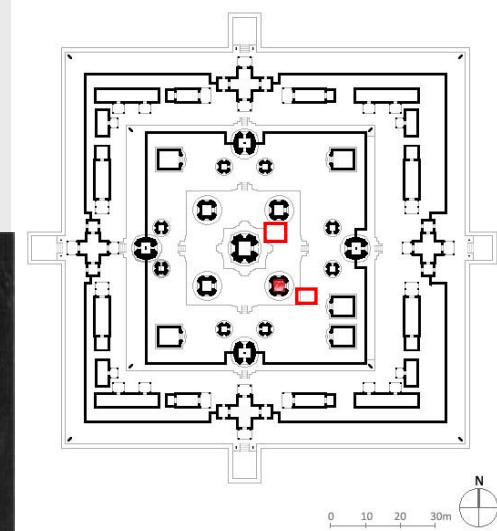


MG18887, RMN



Chignon de Brahmā
DCA4175
Photographie EFEO
CAM19204-6

Corps de Brahmā
DCA3507
Photographie EFEO
CAM19659-1



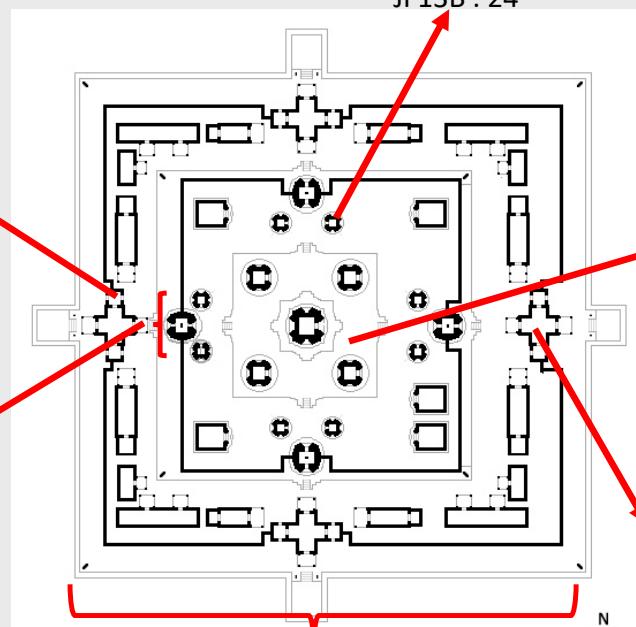
But where are the statues?



Woman carrying a child,
ACO,
DCA3747



« Gauri »
(?),
Baphuon
style
MNC
Ka.1672.
NMC-
EFEQ



Main tenant un chapelet
(de Ganésha Ka.834 ?)
JF13B : 24



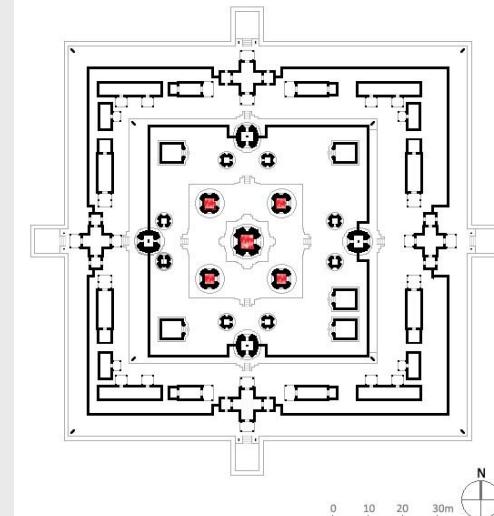
ACO, DCA3412
JF12B : 208



ACO, DCA3450A
JF13B : 13



ACO - DCA3470



Non determined area

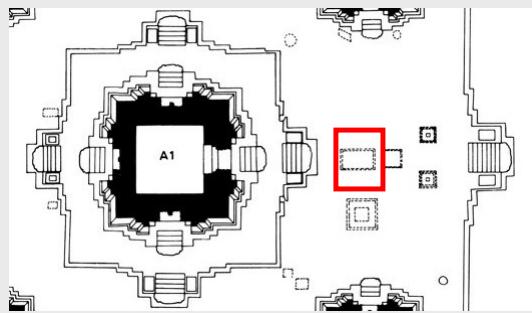


Tête masculine
ACO – DCA3507



Feminine divinity,
Bayobn style
ANM – DCA5422

Śiva's bull

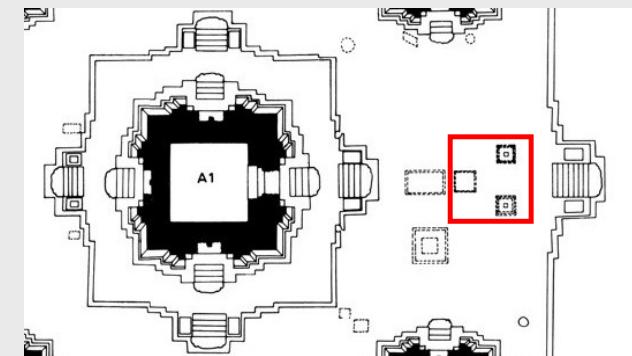


Tower S1, Prasat Yeay Poan,
Sambor Prei Kuk



Angkor Vat, 12th c., NMC Ga.5739

Other pedestal marks

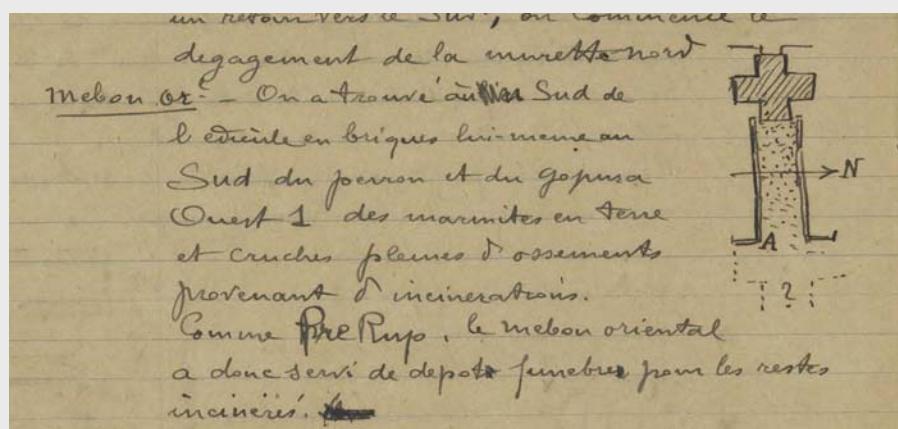


Replacement of sculptures and/or iconoclasm?

K.528 final imprecation (translation D. Goodall) :

211. And this same man with the mind of Brahmā (/ Br̥haspati) (*vācaspatidhīḥ*), foremost among those who uphold Dharma, addressed this profound speech that is in conformity with Dharma to the (*tān*) future kings of the Kamvujas who will have cultivated (/meditated upon) their royal duties (*bhāvitarājadharmān*).

212. Since you know that the Dharma of *kṣatriyas* is ... the protection of what must be protected, therefore (*tat*) the exhortation (*vijñāpanā*) "Protect this meritorious foundation (*puṇyam*)!" [is,] as it were, [something that] establishes what is [already] established.



JF13B p.64, 29th august 1936



SB 2020

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Special thanks:

Dominic Godall, EFEO, Pondicherry

Olivier Cunin, researcher, Siem Reap

Dominique Soutif, EFEO, Siem Reap

Brice Vincent, EFEO, Siem Reap