

Des ermites aux pieds du dieu : nouvelles données archéologiques et épigraphiques au Phnom Preah Netr Preah

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Abstract

Located in the northwest of Cambodia, the hill (phnom) of Preah Netr Preah ranks among the provincial sites mentioned in early twentieth-century archaeological inventories, yet it has garnered little scholarly attention. Its occupation during the Angkorian period has hitherto been primarily represented by the temple constructed at its summit. This paper aims to examine new archaeological and epigraphic data gathered during fieldwork, from both the temple area and the slopes of the hill. The documented remains, showcasing diverse characteristics and often displaying original features at the scale of the ancient Khmer territory, reflect an eremitical presence contemporary with the temple's activity. These data prompt a reevaluation of the richness and diversity of the religious occupation of Phnom Preah Netr Preah, whose protagonists were gathered around the cult of śivapāda ("feet of Śiva"). Furthermore, they invite broader reflection on the interactions woven between the different types of religious establishments observed on this hill situated on the "margins" of the bustling centre of the Khmer kingdom.

Keywords: Cambodia; Angkorian; eremitism; rock site; sacred place; Śaiva temple; śivapāda.