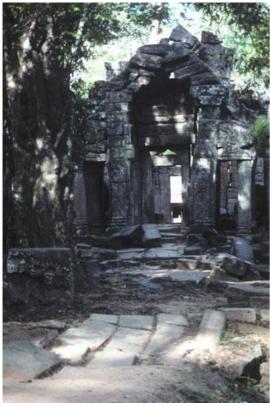# Crumbling stone arch over doorway at Ta Prohm site at Angkor

Crumbling stone arch over doorway at Ta Prohm site at Angkor

A stone "false arch" crumbles over a doorway at the Ta Prohm site at Angkor. Rather than building a vaulted arch, which requires a scaffold but spreads weight evenly down the wall for good support, Khmer builders erected weaker "corbel" or "false" arches, which were simply stones piled above two walls towards a center meeting point.Ta Prohm was built as a double-moated, royal monastery during the reign of Jayavarman VII at the end of the twelfth century. As a Mahayana Buddhist, the king dedicated the monument to his mother envisioned as a "bodhisattva" or saint of compassion. The images of Buddha himself were removed from the temple by Jayavarman VII's successor, Jayavarman VIII, who was a Hindu.

When French explorers first discovered the overgrown buildings at the ancient capital of Angkor in the late 1800s, much of the area was completely covered by forest. In particular, the roots of strangler figs, kapok, and banyan trees aggressively encompassed the Angkor structures.

This small site was deliberately left unconserved by French archaeologists to create a sharp contrast with their painstaking reconstruction of the temples in the Angkor Wat complex. At present, the temple is only conserved to prevent further building collapses and to clear passage for visitors. Even these two goals require considerable labor and forest management.

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