

Corrigendum for *The Bronze Age necropolis of Koh Ta Meas: insights into the health of the earliest inhabitants of the Angkor region*

Corrigendum sur La nécropole de l'âge du Bronze de Koh Ta Meas : un aperçu de l'état de santé des plus anciens habitants de la région d'Angkor

M.A. Frelat · C. Souday · N. Buchet · F. Demeter · C. Pottier

Reçu le 13 août 2015 ; accepté le 1 décembre 2015
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The publication of “The Bronze Age necropolis of Koh Ta Meas: insights into the health of the earliest inhabitants of the Angkor region” [1], signed by Frelat and Souday in the previous issue of this journal, is largely – but partially – based on a study conducted by the first author in 2007. In order to clarify the position, the following corrigendum was required, authored by the entire anthropological team who studied the material and by the director of the research project¹.

The “Introduction”, should have mentioned that the site of Koh Ta Meas is located in the Western *baray* in Angkor (not “of the Angkor Thom temple”), a monumental reservoir built between 1020 and 1050 AD [2]. The excavation campaigns, in 2004 and 2005, were not “salvage excavations” as indicated, since the site was not under any particular threat.

M.A. Frelat (✉)
Dipartimento di Beni Culturali, Università di Bologna,
Via degli Ariani 1, 48100 Ravenna (RA), Italie ;
UMR CNRS 7268 ADèS, Aix-Marseille Université,
Faculté de Médecine Secteur Nord, 51, Bd Pierre Dramard,
13344 Marseille cedex 15, France
e-mail : melanieagnes.frelat@unibo.it

C. Souday · N. Buchet
Équipe de Paléontologie Humaine, UMR 7194 du CNRS,
Département de Préhistoire du Muséum national d'Histoire
naturelle, Paris, France

F. Demeter
UMR7206, Département HNS, Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France

C. Pottier
École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Bangkok, Thaïlande ;
Directeur de la Mission Archéologique Franco-Khmère sur
l'Aménagement du Territoire Angkorien (MAFKATA),
Angkor, Cambodge

¹Author contributions: CP and FD designed the research; FD, MAF, CS, NB and CP performed the research; MAF, FD, NB and CS analysed the data; and MAF, FD and CP wrote the paper.

They were conducted when the opportunity arose to do so, during two consecutive exceptional droughts and for a short period of time before the monsoons, by the *Mission Archéologique Franco-Khmère sur l'Aménagement du Territoire Angkorien* (MAFKATA), under the direction of the last named author. The material discussed in the paper is currently stored at the EFEO centre in Siem Reap or on public display at the Norodom Sihanouk - Angkor Museum in Siem Reap.

The dating of the necropolis of Koh Ta Meas to the Bronze Age is supported by five AMS radiocarbon dates and not only one date as stated in the abstract and the text. These dates were obtained from charcoals collected during the excavation, with unknown in-built age, and not from collagen. They indicate that the necropolis was active for at least four centuries, circa 1200-1600 BC, but probably for much longer since the most recent layers had been removed during the digging of the *baray* [3].

The “archaeological context” remains unchanged overall despite some minor changes and reappraisals that occurred during the multidisciplinary studies and extensive conservation work conducted before 2010 [3]. Of relevance here for any potential hierarchy, grave number 4003 is not the “richest” one. Based on burial goods and ornaments, two other graves (10177 and 10389) can be distinguished as well, supporting the existence of a hierarchy.

The description of the population given in the paragraph on “skeletal data from Koh Ta Meas” mentioned “a minimum of 24 individuals (...) recovered from the 21 graves”. The latter figure should be corrected as 23 graves. These were primary or secondary graves lying in two directions, North-East/South-West (phases 2 and 4) and South-East/North-West (phase 3). From these burials were recovered 34 individuals, of which 26 were adult (at least 4 are more than 50 years old), 7 immature and 1 prenatal. The figure of “24 individuals” refers to the full sub-set of individuals discussed in the paper. Beyond the graves, 49 additional individuals were also

identified from isolated bones, but this is a minimum number pending detailed studies.

The section on “Indicators of health” failed to mention that characteristic signs of anaemia or thalassaemia were recognized in three individuals (4006, 10104 and 10009) [4]. The assertion that “the caries rate of the Koh Ta Meas population is quite low” is based on a percentage calculated for comparison with a largely unprovenanced collection “that consisted of isolated bones with no association by individual”. This caries rate does not reflect the number of individuals affected by caries: concerted additional analysis shows that the Koh Ta Meas population was indeed widely affected by caries, which are present in 29.4% of the individuals.

Regarding tooth avulsion, the discussion failed to properly mention that it was also present in the Prei Khmeng population (100-500 AD), excavated from 2000 to 2003 just 4 km southwest of Koh Ta Meas and previously studied by some of the authors of this paper [5-9].

Finally, some of the figures were not duly credited, in particular Fig. 3, 4 and 5 produced by various collaborators under the MAFKATA mission. Additionally, appropriate acknowledgements should mention the members of the excavation teams, including our Cambodian colleagues. The excavations were directed by C Pottier, F Demeter, Heng T, Khieu C, Pin Vichear S and Chhay R took part in the 2004 campaign. In 2005, archaeologists Kong V, J-B Chevance, E Llopis, Chea S and Sum S collaborated closely with the anthropological team comprising the four first authors of this paper. Both campaigns also benefited from the work of EFEO logisticians Vân S and Sin S, EFEO surveyor Uong S, about 30 workers from the neighbouring village of Prei Khmeng and the local policemen from the Heritage Police Unit.

The bioarchaeology study was mainly supported by an EFEO Research Grant awarded in 2007. However, it should

be stated that it is part of an excavations program co-funded by the Archaeological Commission of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the EFEO and the APSARA National Authority.

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