

Documenting the Instrument and Instrument-making of Angkuoch, Cambodian Mouth Harp

EMKP-SG02

Guide to the data

Project summary

In collaboration with non-governmental non-profit “Cambodian Living Arts” (CLA), this project documented and made available for future generations the instrument and instrument-making practices of the Cambodian mouth harp (commonly “Jew’s harp”) *Angkuoch*. The *Angkuoch* is highly endangered both as an instrument and performance practice, with fewer than ten instrument-makers believed to remain across Cambodia. Running from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020, for the first time this project documented in depth the process of making the instrument. Working predominantly with five participants in two rural village communities, it documented *Angkuoch* and its production cycle as found in Siem Riep province, focussing on two types of *Angkuoch*: those made of bamboo (*Angkuoch russey*) and of iron (*Angkuoch daek*). This project repository contains the edited project data, including more than 10 hours of video and audio, over 200 photographs, nearly 400 pages of text, and an 18-minute video documentary. The project also generated print media articles, radio interviews, blog posts, a 24-page bilingual print and online brochure, seminars and presentations, and scholarly publications (detailed in the final project report). The project also generated sociocultural outcomes outlined below.

Fieldwork approach and equipment

Fieldwork ran 31 December 2019 to 20 January 2020 in four villages in Siem Reap Province, focusing on the villages of Preak Dak and Srah Srong. It involved non-participant observation of instrument-making, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with *Angkuoch* makers and players. Over twenty days the project team documented the specific practices of procuring, preparing and manipulating source material for *Angkuoch*; making, assembling and tuning the instruments; and the materials, tools and techniques used to produce them. The project assets and metadata were prepared in the six months following fieldwork. Edited digital assets and metadata were finalised and provided to EMKP along with the final project report in October 2020.

Photographs were taken using a Panasonic Lumix digital camera; audio recordings were made on a Zoom H2 audio recorder with back-up audio made on an iPhone; video recordings were made using Canon 700D camera with Boya microphone. Further accessories included SD cards, headphones, camera batteries, and windsocks. Software used to prepare the assets for the digital repository included the Microsoft Word suite and Adobe Acrobat (for field notes), Movavi Video File Converter (for file type conversions in the field), Inqscribe (for preliminary transcription and translation with timecodes), ELAN (for final interactive transcription and

translation), Adobe Lightroom (for photo editing and storage), Adobe Premiere Pro (for audio and video editing), and Griffith University's digital Research Drive (for asset storage and backup).

The project team consulted closely with the participants (the Angkuoch makers and players) at every stage of the project, from conceptualisation to implementation and dissemination. Project outputs were shared with the participants for their feedback and approval before being finalised. In December 2020, a virtual launch of the project documentary (financially supported by UNESCO Cambodia) was live streamed to the participants and their village communities in Siem Reap province (as COVID19 travel restrictions prohibited a live event).

Team roles

Team members and project participants are detailed in the "People" tab of the project metadata spreadsheet. Here follows a brief description of roles of the team members.

- **Project Leader Grant** managed the project, led the fieldwork, took and edited the photographs, prepared fieldnotes, analysed the data, oversaw the preparation of metadata, assets, and outputs, and prepared the final report and this guide to the data.
- **Collaborator Song** managed the project locally, overseeing fieldwork preparations, supervising the RA and videographer, liaising with project participants, and providing feedback on outputs (to June 2020).
- **Collaborator En** replaced Song as CLA representative from July 2020 to its end in December 2020 (Song having left CLA in June 2020), organised the launch event in December 2020, and assisted with dissemination and finalisation of outcomes.
- **Collaborator Kersalé** provided organological advice, assisted with literature translation (from the French), and participated in a day of fieldwork.
- **Videographer Thon** shot and edited all video and audio footage, assisted with other fieldwork tasks, and compiled the video documentary with the input of the research team. (RA Say and Grant prepared the English subtitles for the video documentary.)
- **RA Say** assisted with fieldwork preparations, conducted interviews, provided interpretation, assisted with other fieldwork tasks, contributed to the fieldnotes, liaised with participants during and after fieldwork, transcribed and translated into English the video and audio files, and provided input on project outputs.
- A second **RA Teresa Kunaeva** (based in Brisbane, Australia) imported video / audio and transcript files into ELAN with timecodes, as interactive transcriptions and translations, under the guidance of the Project Leader.
- **Other CLA staff** provided supervisory support to videographer Thon and helped share project news via social media.
- **CLA and GU staff** provided budget-related and administrative assistance.

Project outcomes

Achievements of the project include:

- 1) **The first in-depth documentation of making and playing Angkuoch**, made freely publicly available via this digital repository.
- 2) **The acquisition by the British Museum of two Angkuoch for its collection.** These instruments were made for the project by participants Chi Monivong (bamboo Angkuoch) and Bin Song (iron Angkuoch). This digital repository contains a dossier relating to these instruments (Assets 6-22). The objects were added to the Museum's catalogue in December 2020.
- 3) **Revived local Angkuoch -related activity.** Bin Song may be the only remaining living maker of iron Angkuoch; until invited to do so by the project team, he had not made an Angkuoch since before the Khmer Rouge genocide of the 1970s. He went on to make at least four over the course of the project. His childhood friend, Angkuoch-player Son Soeun, had not played an Angkuoch for many years. The project team initiated a gathering of Bin, Son, and several further Angkuoch makers, players, and members of Angkuoch-making families, sparking lively discussion about the instrument, and capturing the interest of some further community members who joined in (Assets 231-251). A project team member (Collaborator Song Seng) learnt the basics of playing Angkuoch Daek during the course of the project, purchasing an instrument from Bin Song for private enjoyment and practice. Various further project activities support the claim that project implementation stimulated revived interest in Angkuoch-making and -playing in Siem Reap province (see Fieldwork notes, Asset 5).
- 4) **Identification of the probable maker of the only Angkuoch in the British Museum**, which was donated in 1966 without attribution of the maker. Project findings strongly suggest that the maker is MONG Koeuy, whose son, wife and daughter provided video-recorded statements about the object (Assets 206-217, 252a-d). At the time of writing (August 2021), the British Museum is underway with the process of appending to its catalogue entry for this instrument due acknowledgement of Mong Koeuy, as well as a detailed statement by Project Leader Grant about this finding.
- 5) **Training, capacity-building, and career progression** of the Project Team members. The project advanced the international research experience of the team; expanded their cultural, technical, research and documentation knowledge and skills; and further established them national and international cultural heritage researchers and experts.

Table 1: Overview of assets

This table provides an overview of the type, quantity and content of the assets in the digital repository.

Type	Duration in h/min	Amount	Size in MB/GB	Composition
Audio-visual (mp4)	10 h / 25 min	45	149GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 video files of ethical consent • 6 video files of playing Angkuoch • 15 video files of making Angkuoch • 13 video files of interviews • 5 video files of informal interviews or contexts • 1 video documentary
Audio (wav)	10 h / 8 min	44	7GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 audio files of ethical consent • 6 audio files of playing Angkuoch • 15 audio files of making Angkuoch • 13 audio files of interviews • 5 audio files of informal interviews or contexts
Text (pdf)	382 pages	45	7MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ethics consent materials files • 1 interview materials (questions) • 1 fieldwork notes document • 1 dossier • 1 asset acquisition proposal • 13 interview transcripts • 15 transcripts of making Angkuoch • 6 transcripts of playing Angkuoch • 5 transcripts of informal interviews or contexts
Map (pdf)	3 pages	1	3MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 map of fieldwork sites
Photo (tiff)	n/a	204	22GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 photos of acquisition instruments • 6 photos of project team • 4 photos of Angkuoch instruments • 4 photos of interview contexts • 11 portraits of interviewees or makers • 125 photos of making Angkuoch • 27 photos of playing Angkuoch • 12 contextual / informal photos
Annotation (eaf)	n/a	39	3MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 annotations of playing Angkuoch • 15 annotations of making Angkuoch • 13 annotations of interviews • 5 informal interviews or contexts
TOTAL	20 h / 33 min	378 files	178 GB	

Table 2: Assets by number

This table summarises the assets in the digital repository. Full details are provided in the Metadata spreadsheet.

Asset number	Description
1	Maps of fieldwork sites
2-3	Informed consent materials and data collection tools
4	Project fieldwork notes
6	Summary of dossier about angkuoch in the British Museum
7-22	Acquisition proposal and associated documentation
23-28	Photographs of the project team
29-33b	Records of ethical consent of participants
34-36, 169	Photographs of instruments made by participants
37-45, 51	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interview with bamboo angkuoch-maker Krak Chi
46-50	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Krak Chi making a bamboo angkuoch
52	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Krak Chi playing a bamboo angkuoch
53-98	Documentation (photographs) of Krak Chi making a bamboo angkuoch
99-105	Documentation (photographs) of Krak Chi playing a bamboo angkuoch
107-108, 110	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Chi Monivong making a bamboo angkuoch
109, 111-112	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interview with bamboo angkuoch-maker Chi Monivong
113	Portrait photograph of bamboo angkuoch-maker Chi Monivong
114-117, 251	Documentation (photographs) of Chi Monivong playing a bamboo angkuoch
118-151	Documentation (photographs) of Krak Chi making a bamboo angkuoch
152-153	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interview with bamboo angkuoch-player Chi Chen
154-162	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation, photographs) of Chi Chen playing a bamboo angkuoch
163	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Bin Song playing iron angkuoch
164-168	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Bin Song making an iron angkuoch
170-205, 218-219, 221-230	Documentation (photographs) of Bin Song making an iron angkuoch
206-208	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interviews with Lav Mech and Koeuy Leakhena (family of angkuoch-maker Mong Koeuy)
209-217	Documentation (photographs) of Lav Mech and Koeuy Leakhena
220	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interview with iron angkuoch-maker Bin Song
222	Portrait photograph of iron angkuoch-maker Bin Song
231-234	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interviews and interactions with iron angkuoch-maker Son Soeun
235-250	Documentation (photographs) of interviews and interactions with iron angkuoch-maker Son Soeun
252	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of interview with Koeuy Reatha, son of Mong Koeuy, about British Museum asset
253	Documentation (audio, video, text, annotation) of Koeuy Reatha playing bamboo angkuoch
254-255	Portrait photographs of family of bamboo angkuoch-maker Mong Koeuy
256	Video documentary "Angkuoch": Rediscovering the Cambodian Jew's Harp
257-258	Project metadata spreadsheet and guide to the data