

CHAPTER FOUR: GUIDING THE WAY

In 1907 France and Siam signed a treaty that resulted in the retrocession by Siam of the provinces of Battambang, Sisophon, and Angkor¹ to the French protectorate of Cambodia. The treaty was the culmination of years of negotiations between Siam and France, and granted to France some of the best farmland in Cambodia,² as well as the monuments at Angkor. One of the first actions taken by the French colonial administration was to assign a man named Jean Commaille, who had been a secretary for the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)*, to fill the newly instituted position of *Conservateur d'Angkor*.

The *École Française d'Extrême-Orient* was founded initially as a permanent archaeological mission in Indochina (first named the *Mission archéologique permanente de l'Indochine*) in 1898. This *Mission* was transformed into the *EFEO* two years later, and was at that time placed under the scientific oversight of the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*.³ Prior to 1907 the work of the *EFEO* primarily focused on archaeological research in Vietnam, although there were several pre-1907 *EFEO* projects in Cambodia and Siam. In addition, members of the *EFEO*, including some of France's most accomplished Indologists,⁴ worked at translating Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions copied as rubbings, taken at Angkor. Once the monuments were retroceded to Cambodia the maintenance, study, and cataloguing of Angkor became one of the *EFEO*'s largest

¹ These are the Khmer names for these territories; these provinces had Thai names while they were part of Siam.

² Cambodia's most important export throughout the colonial period was cattle, which was shipped to other points in Asia, such as the Philippines. The addition of Battambang and Sisophon was important to the Cambodian cattle business.

³ The *EFEO* was based on the academic model offered by the *École Française d'Athènes*, which was founded in 1846, and the *École Française de Rome*, founded in 1875. *École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient et le Cambodge 1898-2003* (Paris: *École Française d'Extrême-Orient*: 2003) p. 5.

⁴ This groups included Abel Bergaigne, Auguste Barth, Émile Senart, Étienne Aymonier, and George Coedès. *Ibid*, p. 11.

and most important projects.⁵

The *EFEO*'s interactions with Angkor before 1907 were not restricted to the transcription and translation of inscriptions, but also included cataloguing, and even limited clearing, at some of the monuments. In July of 1900 a French officer named Commandant Lunet de Lajonquière was commissioned along with two topography officers, Lieutenants Buat and Ducret, by the *EFEO* to study and record the location of all monuments, inscriptions, or structures of archaeological interest within the "current territory of Cambodia."⁶ He was directed by the *EFEO* to "follow, in a systematic manner, the information gathered by the first explorers, Doudart de Lagrée, Louis Delaporte, and, later, Étienne Aymonier."⁷

De Lajonquière's mission included not only sighting and mapping these structures, but also noting and notifying the *EFEO* of the location of objects that were of the most artistic and archaeological interest for the *École*, so that they might mount subsequent missions to retrieve them. The 1900 expedition was the first of several commissions, and the results of the missions that Lajonquière conducted were published by the *EFEO* in three volumes, entitled *l'Inventaire descriptif des*

⁵ The *EFEO* has continued to play an active role at Angkor in the decades since the close of the colonial era. *EFEO* members continued to act as conservators over the monuments into the 1970s when they were forced to abandon Angkor to war, and eventually to the Khmer Rouge, in 1975. The *EFEO* was among the earliest conservation groups to return to Angkor, in 1990, after the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in 1979. They continue to oversee numerous projects at Angkor, the largest of which is the reconstruction of the Baphuon temple. The *EFEO* is now one of a large number of missions to Angkor, along with Japan's Sofia University; conservationists from Germany and the People's Republic of China; as well as the New York-based World Monument Fund. The *Conservation d'Angkor* compound is today run by the Cambodian government. *Ibid*, p.10.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁷ *Ibid*. Aymonier's works were among the most important research to be conducted on Angkorian period vestiges prior to 1907. Aymonier conducted a number of far-ranging voyages, and it is information gathered on these excursions that form the basis of much of his work. He spent all of 1882 and the first six months of 1883 traveling through Cambodia and the provinces of Angkor, Battambang and Sisophon. In July of 1883 he immediately began preparing for his next excursion, which he would begin in September of that year. He spent the following six months traveling through southern Laos and Isan. Thus, his writings were the result of his first-hand experiences, notes, drawings, and cartography. While subsequent writers often noted various inaccuracies in his work- particularly in cartography, and in the citing of temples- he is among the first to have approached these structures at all thoroughly.

monuments du Cambodge.⁸ The first volume was published in 1901, followed by the second in 1907, and the last in 1911. Each volume contained research in a geographically distinct area, and the expansion of French control over the territory can be seen within the geographical focus of each volume.

The first volume concentrates on the vestiges of the Khmer empire that could be found within the boundaries of French Cambodia at the time of Lajonquière's mission in 1900.⁹ By the time Lajonquière's second mission, the protectorate had gained territory, and this territorial expansion is reflected in the geographic concentration of the second volume in this series. The topic of the study has been expanded in this second volume to include a significant portion of Siamese territory, including three chapters entitled "*Laos Siamois Oriental*," "*Laos Siamois Occidental*," and "*Vallée du Menam*." The scope of these chapters covers the vestiges of Isan, as well as cities, such as Bangkok, in the Menam river valley, and includes studies of both Khmer and Siamese structures. The remaining chapters discuss Khmer vestiges in "*Laos Français*," and, in a chapter entitled "*Provinces nouvellement rattachées au Cambodge*," those structures within the provinces of Melu Prei, Thala Borirat, and Stung Treng, which the protectorate gained in 1904.

The final volume in this series is comprised of a study of the Khmer vestiges found in the last provinces to be retroceded to Cambodia by Siam: Angkor, Battambang, and Sisophon. In the introduction to this volume, de Lajonquière parallels the timing of France's gaining the territory with the maturity and gradual improvement of his own work as a researcher of Khmer vestiges. After nearly a decade of traveling through the territory of the former Khmer empire, he is finally

⁸ Etienne Lunet de Lajonquière, *Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1902-1911).

⁹ The geography is subdivided first by the French designation: *résidence*; and then by the Khmer district level *srok*. *Résidence* is the French title for the subdivision of the territory, while the Khmer *srok* can designate a district; a city; or a neighborhood. The list of territories included in this first volume includes the *résidences* of Ta Keo; Prey Veng; Svay Rieng; Kompong Speu; Kompong Cham; Kratie; Kompong Chhnang; and Kompong Thom.

able to write about the most important collection of vestiges, and his excitement is palpable.

De Lajonquière's missions were primarily fact-finding in nature. He followed in the footsteps of Étienne Aymonier, who spent more than a year traveling through not only the area surrounding Angkor, but also through Isan in northeastern Siam, collecting information. Like the travelogues of explorers such as Henri Mouhot and Louis de Carné, de Lajonquière's *Inventaire* attempts to construct a rationale for the expansion of French control into eastern Siam. As an inventory, de Lajonquière's writing is spare and practical; his purpose is to collect data and to catalogue and organize what he finds. The argument for expansion lies in the series of acts that are de Lajonquière's project: first, in the identification of "Khmer" objects and the collection of information about these objects; next, in the organization of that information; and lastly, in the publication of that information.

As a government-sponsored mission, the *EFEO*'s commission to de Lajonquière contained within it the implication of the colonial administration's commitment towards "retrieving" Angkor's lost history, and "retrieving" Angkor itself. This underlying rationale shows through at a number of points, such as in his second volume of writing. Prior to conducting this study he received the cooperation and support of the Siamese Minister of the Interior, Prince Damrong Rajanubhap, particularly for his further mapping and investigation of Siamese provinces and structures at the Prince's behest. Nevertheless, it is clear that Lajonquière believes the retrocession of these territories to France to be the best possible outcome, declaring that the "former Siamese province of Melu Prei has been transformed since its reunion with French Indochina..."¹⁰ This belief exposes

¹⁰ Ibid, Vol. II, 1907, p. 1.

one of the important purposes of missions like de Lajonquière's: to show, through the collection of an archaeological record, that these territories were "Cambodian."

In addition, as this kind of information-gathering had not been taken up systematically before de Lajonquière's mission was a way for the *EFEO* to show that they were best positioned to care for and study the monuments. De Lajonquière's mission was designed to show that France's *savants* were the men (and occasionally the women) best prepared not only to collect, but to process the data. The vast catalogue of information—descriptions, locations, even some coordinates—collected by de Lajonquière was subsequently arranged in a seemingly systematic manner, and then provided to the Francophone public. The *EFEO*'s publication of these materials was an evidential act: for members of the *EFEO*, it showed what had been accomplished. It also exposed the foci of the *EFEO*'s, and by extension the colonial administration's, attention. The collection and cataloguing of the information was a step towards the absorption of Angkor into the French Empire.

It is important to note that the publication of de Lajonquière's guide was not accomplished in order to acquaint Cambodians with the location of their historical vestiges, as evidenced by its use of French rather than Khmer. Instead, it was compiled and published to display the *EFEO*'s accomplishments to France, its citizen, and, importantly, its government. These accomplishments were collected and displayed not only for the use of scholars, but also as a way of stamping French identity on to the objects contained between the *Inventaire*'s covers. Furthermore, the publication was a step towards asserting that it should be the French *savants* whose work would open the history of Cambodia, echoing the earlier assertions by men like Mouhot that it would take European scholars to open the "seal" on the

monuments.¹¹ Finally, this and other publications were objects of evidence presented to a French public who was funding the colonial expansion and upkeep of the empire. Publications such as de Lajonquière's provided to their reading audiences examples of tangible "results" from the colonial project, and the *Inventaire* is an early example of a theme that recurs in numerous publications—particularly French productions—over the colonial period. This theme as it appears in works, such as the *Inventaire*, is one of several acts of "exposure" that will be discussed in this chapter.

Marking the Borders

Between 1907, when Angkor officially became part of the French Empire, and 1953, when Cambodia achieved its independence from France, the Angkor Historical Park consumed a varying, but always significant, percentage of the *EFEO*'s annual budget. The maintenance of the monuments alone required the hiring by the *Conservation d'Angkor* of dozens of workers, or "coolies," to clear vegetation from between the stones and to cut back the trees and grasses. The drainage ditches and moats needed to be cleared of vegetation in order to prevent flooding, and the stones and rubble from structural collapses that had happened over time needed to be collected and cleared. Where the buildings were unstable the conservators needed to organize and implement reconstruction and stabilization projects. In addition, each of the conservators also set in motion much larger scale reconstruction projects, such as the reconstruction of Banteay Srei temple in the 1930s.

¹¹ Mouhot, 2000, p. 237. "... there latter (inscriptions) are as a sealed book for want of an interpreter; and they may, perchance, throw light on the subject when some European savant shall succeed in deciphering them."

The first of these projects actually began before Angkor was retroceded to Cambodia. In 1901 the *EFEO* sent Henri Dufour and the sculptor Charles Carpeaux on a mission to Angkor. While there the two men began the first clearing project to free the path to the Bayon and the surrounding area from vegetation. Dufont and Carpeaux returned to Angkor at the behest of the *EFEO* in 1904 in order to create a complete set of photographs documenting the monument's bas-relief sculptures.¹²

Why would the *EFEO* send these two men on a mission to Angkor when, at the time, the monuments were not part of French territory in Southeast Asia? Investigations at Angkor were not the only *EFEO*-sponsored missions that sent scholars searching for information about cultures and histories outside of French Indochina. Sinologists and Indologists were not only among the members of the *EFEO*, but were also among the scholars who were based at the *EFEO*'s main office in Hanoi. *EFEO* projects included studies into topics which touched upon Japan, China, Tibet, Burma, and central Asia, among others. However, with the repeated calls, in travelogues as well as in public debates, to gather additional territory in Southeast Asia, missions such as Carpeaux and Dufour's likely had behind them more than a simple pursuit of knowledge.

In the earlier of these missions the two men set about conducting the initial clearing of the Bayon. Unlike Angkor Wat, the Bayon appears not to have had a monastery nearby whose members might have maintained a path to the structure, and the clearing performed by Dufour and Carpeaux might have been necessary in order to reach the temple. But in performing the initial clearing of the site Dufour, Carpeaux, and the *EFEO* took on the role, however briefly, of patron and overseer. In subsequent years this first act of cleaning would be compared, most notably by

¹² *EFEO*, 2003, p. 15. Carpeaux would die from an illness contracted during this second mission.

the first conservator of Angkor, Jean Commaille,¹³ to the absence of such acts by the Siamese government when the monuments had been under their authority. Dufour and Carpeaux's act was as symbolic as it was a physical reality: by clearing the path to the Bayon the *EFEO* could present the need for such work as an example of the Siamese court's lack of commitment to the monuments' upkeep, and as undermining Siamese legitimacy over the area, while simultaneously displaying the act as proof of France's own commitment to their maintenance.

Dufour and Carpeaux's second mission, in 1904, was conducted both for the purpose of collection and of documentation. The photographs allowed for the *EFEO* office in Hanoi to "collect" the bas-reliefs from Angkor, perhaps in anticipation of having them in their possession in the future. However, the photographs also document the moment that would subsequently be thought of as "before": before the official arrival of French authority over the area. The "before" and "after" aspects of collection and documentation became important after 1907, and manifested most clearly in the guidebooks written by the conservators of Angkor, and in particular those written by Jean Commaille, Henri Marchal, and Maurice Glaize. This chapter will focus on the view, descriptions, and exposures found within these official guidebooks to Angkor published during the colonial period, including an investigation of how the view that was framed for visitors was created and maintained.

When the provinces of Angkor, Battambang, and Sisophon were retroceded to Cambodia in March of 1907, Claude-Eugène Maitre, the director of the *EFEO* (1907-1920), laid out a plan for the direction the *École* planned to take with the

¹³ Jean Commaille, *Guide aux ruines d'Angkor* (Paris: Hachette, 1917), p. 109. "One notes with sadness the state in which all the monuments at Angkor Thom have been found. . . . and one ought to regret that the court at Bangkok, to whom the territory of Angkor has been a tributary almost since the 14th century, did not think to clear or protect a group of monuments among the most beautiful in the world. The Siamese could have implemented meritorious work in diverting, from among their flourishing takings, a few *ticaux* each year in favor of Angkor."

temples. In describing this plan in the pages of the *Bulletin* of the *EFEO*, he stated that the temples are deserving of special treatment not only because of the large number of structures within a limited space, but also because of their “incomparable beauty” and their importance as objects of “historical memory.”¹⁴ He furthermore explains that the *EFEO* carries a duty to protect the temples under the legal mechanisms put in place with regards to antiquities in 1900, and to safeguard the structures from the dangers of the natural elements and jungle through the process of clearing the structures of vegetation. Finally, he explains that in light of the ever-growing number of tourists, the *EFEO* was compelled, as its most important task, to make the temples more accessible to travelers: “We have thus a double task to fulfill: 1) to facilitate the means of access and the conditions of travel; 2) to assure the conservation and maintenance of these edifices.”

The establishment of the Angkor Historical Park, its status, rules, and regulations, was a long and ongoing process throughout the colonial period, beginning in 1907 with the retrocession of the territory. It was a process that included the complicated bureaucratic procedures attached to the writing and ratifying of *arrêté*, as well as the organization of practical matters such as the construction of access roads. The restoration of the monuments at Angkor quickly became one of the largest and most expensive undertakings that the *EFEO* would engage in over the course of its history. However, it seems significant that the first obligation Maitre lists for the *EFEO* at the outset of the park’s creation is not the conservation of the structures, but is the implementation of projects designed to facilitate the access and comfort of visitors to the temples. An investigation of the archival materials connected to the programs and concerns of the *Conservation*

¹⁴ “Chroniques: Cambodge,” *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* Tome VII, no. No. 3-4 (1907): p. 419.

d'Angkor and the *EFEO* with regards to the park delineates the identity of these visitors whose ease of entrance and egress are the *École's* paramount concerns.¹⁵

There were a significant number of projects designed by the administration to “improve” or “add value” to the historical park. These projects, which were discussed as programs designed to *mise en valeur* (to “develop” or “enhance”) the Historical Park were wide-ranging and had a significant impact on the physical state of the Park. Most projects designated as *mise en valeur* projects provided at least as much, if not more, benefit to the visitors to the temples or the *EFEO* members conducting projects within the park than to the Cambodians living in the area. A number of these projects, such as the construction of hotels, had no direct bearing on the local population, but for providing a small number of people with what may have been welcome or unwelcome employment. The bulk of the projects that were classified as *mise en valeur* projects were designed specifically to benefit mostly Western visitors and the colonial administration directly, and the local population only tangentially. In the process of directing significant resources toward the Angkor Historical Park, and then specifically choosing to “enhance” that park through the addition of projects designed to specifically benefit visitors and tourists, both the *EFEO*, and the colonial government that funded the *École*, committed an act of “exposure.” This exposure is explained within the boundaries of the projects themselves, as well as through the narratives, in the form of *arrêté*, official letters,

¹⁵ In a 1914 letter to the GGI, the RSC, Baudoin, states “And thus, the plan of this campaign is to respond the needs as they come, while envisioning four points of interest (view): proper restoration and conservation of the monuments, construction of roads, access roads and bridges, developing the bungalows (hotel) and, finally, managing the forest in the park.” Dated November 24, 1914, Number 171 (NAC: RSC, file 409) Furthermore, there are numerous examples in which the focus of works is upon tourists’ comfort. For example, a 1917 letter notes the need for further work upon the southern side of the Baphuon temple, “in order to permit pedestrian access to this side and to thus facilitate the circulation of visitors.” Letter from Henri Marchal to RSC, dated December 19, 1917, Number 133 (NAC: RSC, file 2003) In addition, the administration attempted to have services such as the boat service between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap adjusted so as to better fit the “desire of the tourists.” Letter from George Groslier to the President of the *Sous-Comité Cambodgien d'Angkor*, dated November 1911 (NAC: RSC, file 2007)

and guidebooks, which accompany these projects. Thus, in this section, I will primarily discuss “enhancement” projects that were most often directed specifically with an eye on visitors and tourists.¹⁶

Among the most important additions to the park was a system of paved roads and walking paths that made it possible to move throughout the area with

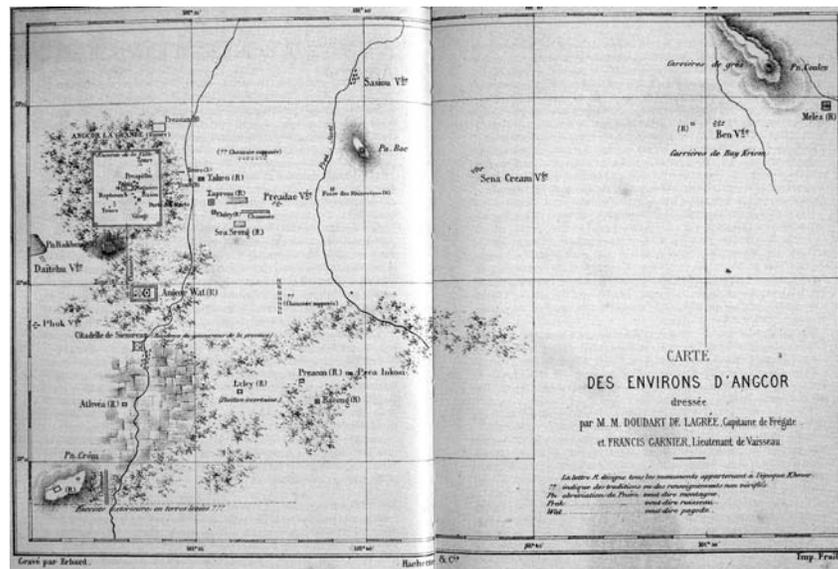


Figure 7 Colonial era map of the Angkor Historical Park

ease and comfort. A portion of these roads overlapped with the colonial provincial road system: colonial routes 56, 61, and 66. The remaining roads were set in place specifically for the purpose of facilitating access to the temples both for members of the *Conservation d'Angkor*, as well as for visitors.¹⁷ The system of routes was designed not only to provide access for supplies and personnel for the temples

¹⁶ The restoration projects were classified separately from the *mise en valeur* projects, which were designed specifically to “develop” the area economically, or to literally “put in value.” With that in mind I will not be discussing the restoration projects here in detail. Rather, I will be discussing later in this chapter the way in which these restoration projects were *presented* to the public, as it is here that I believe is the more potent exposure.

¹⁷ The walking paths were specifically designed for tourists visiting Angkor, such as the footpath that was proposed by the director of the EFEO that would refurbish an old footpath between Phnom Bakheng and Banteay Kdei that “would furnish tourists with possibility of a pleasant promenade by foot through the forest.” Letter from Louis Finot to the RSC, dated April 9, 1929, Number 825 (NAC: RSC, file 8370).

undergoing clearing and restoration, but to make it possible for tourists to reach not only the temples highest on their list of priorities, but also those still within the boundaries of the Historical Park that were previously without easy access, such as Pré Rup or Neak Pean. This system of “motoring roads” was a boon for tourists and the number of temples visited by tourists expanded with the new means of access.

With the creation of the road system within the park, the *Conservation d'Angkor* created itineraries that followed these road systems, directing tourists to the most impressive sites.¹⁸ In addition to the main itinerary, which involved a visit to the “Angkor Monuments,” there were two additional itineraries delineated by Marchal, which were known and followed by on-site guides, and were published in tour guides. These itineraries were named after the roadways that were built making them possible: the *grand circuit* (large or great circuit), and the *petit circuit* (small circuit).¹⁹ (Figure 7)²⁰

The structures found within the Angkor Monuments group included not only Angkor Wat, which was situated across the road from the *Hôtel des Ruines*,²¹ but also the Bakheng, the Bayon, and all of the additional structures found within the boundaries of Angkor Thom.²² The *Grand* and *Petit Circuits* were so named due to the varying lengths of their road circuits, and nearly all of the remaining

¹⁸ The creation of these itineraries for tourists was suggested as part of a large-scale plan for the park that was discussed amongst the *GGI*, *EFEO* and the *Conservation d'Angkor* in late 1927. Marchal's is the first official guidebook (published the following year) that included such a clearly delineated itinerary. “Propositions du Directeur de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient au Sujet de l'Organisation du Parc d'Angkor,” Dated October 15, 1927, Number 2880 (NAC: RSC, file 8385).

¹⁹ Henri Marchal, *Guide to Angkor; Angkor Vat-Angkor Thom and monuments of "great circuit" and "little circuit"* (Saigon: Société des éditions d'extrême-Asie 1930) p. 55.

²⁰ Dawn Rooney, *Angkor, An Introduction* (Chicago: Passport Books, 1997) pp. 36-7.

²¹ This was the main hotel in the area until the opening in the early 1930s of the *Grand Hôtel d'Angkor* in Siem Reap.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 55. The full list includes: Phnom Bakheng; Baksei Changkrang; the South Gate, North Gate and Victory Gate of Angkor Thom; the Bayon; Baphuon; Phimeanakas; the Terrace of the Leper King; Tep Pranam; Prah Palilay; Prah Pithu; the North and South Kleangs; and Mangalartha.

monuments within the park could be found along these routes.²³ The total number of sites integrated within these three itineraries includes more than twenty structures, and a full tour of each site was not generally recommended by the published guides. Henri Marchal, the man who held, over three periods in the position, the longest tenure as the *Conservateur d'Angkor*, warned against visiting too many sites at a time: "I should recommend not to visit too many monuments at a time, so as to be able to look at leisure, without fatigue or haste..."²⁴ Rather, Mr. Marchal suggests that in order to fully enjoy the monuments, one must "let one's self be penetrated by the charm emanating little by little from those ruins."²⁵ By spending more time with the individual ruins, Marchal suggests that one will be able to move beyond the confusing sight that these structures might at first present to the untrained eye. Rather, Marchal asserts that it is possible for the visitor see the Khmer civilization through the monuments by viewing, at length and up close, a representative sample of the temples. He is categorical in his choice of temples that will give the visitor the most complete view of the Angkor Historical Park, and of the Khmer Empire, suggesting that for the visitor with limited time to spare: "with the three temples of Angkor-Vat, Bayon and Ta Prohm he will have had three very characteristic views of the Angkor Group."²⁶ In the next section I will be discussing the motivations behind Marchal's choice of sites.

The restoration works at Angkor were the largest and most comprehensive projects implemented by the French in the Historical Park during the colonial era. But they were not the only projects, and a significant number of additional ventures were designed specifically to aid the visitors to the park. Some of these projects

²³ Ibid., pp. 56-57. The sites listed within the Petit Circuit were: Chay Say; Thommanon; Takeo; Ta Prohm; Banteai Kdei; and Prasat Kravanh. The Grand Circuit itinerary included: Prah Khan; Banteai Prei; Neak Pean; Krol Ko; Ta Som; the Western Mebon; Leak Neang; Pre Rup and Srah Srang.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 57.

were designed to add convenience, while others were designed to add to the experiential aspects of Angkor for visitors. For example, automobiles were introduced into the park even before the paved road system had been completed, however, with the system of routes from Sài Gòn and Phnom Penh not yet complete, the travelers who attempted the crossings were limited in number. Once the road system both in and outside of the park had improved, automobiles became the preferred mode of transportation, allowing for visitors to see more monuments in a shorter period of time. By the time of Marchal's 1928 guide book the road from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap via Angkor Thom was the most reliable mode of transportation from the capital, as the roads were passable during all seasons, while the steam launches that crossed the lake could only run from the end of July until the beginning of January, when the waters were high.

While automobiles added a greater level of convenience to visitors' journeys to Angkor, making it possible to visit a much larger number of temples in a shorter period of time, they did not provide the "authentic" experience of visiting the past that some visitors sought. By authentic here I am referring to the desire on the part of many visitors to feel as though they were experiencing Angkor as Mouhot or Garnier might have experienced them, or even how they might have been visited at the time they were constructed centuries before. Tourists seeking that experience were offered forms of transportation that had been instituted prior to the arrival and practicality of automobiles: Horses and elephants. The *Conservation d'Angkor* continued to offer the service of these animals, despite their sluggish pace by comparison to their mechanical counterparts, for many years beyond the point when they were no longer necessary. These services were most likely continued initially because the limited number of automobiles (for a time there appears to have only been one) could not possibly fulfill the demand. However, in the 1948 second edition of Maurice Glaize's guidebook to the temples, he notes that "these elephants

have been kept on location (in the Park) by the local Administration, making it possible to, in good conditions, ascend the Bakheng Hill, or tour the exterior galleries of Angkor Wat.”²⁷ (Figure 8)²⁸ It is clear that many tourists were choosing to visit the temples by this method as a way of completing their image of exotic Cambodia.²⁹ Visitors did not use this service as a primary mode of transportation, but as an experiential mode, while retaining the more convenient automobile in order to cover greater distances. Because this was no longer a necessary mode of transportation, the choice by the *Conservation d’Angkor* to continue to offer this option to visitors constitutes and act of exposure in which some of the beliefs about Cambodia, and about Angkor, were revealed. In this case it is the idea of the temple as a lost location that is highlighted. Visitors were seeking to experience the temples as though they were the ones to have discovered them. The *EFEO* sought to provide this experience because it is how Angkor was perceived by visitors and the general public in the *métropole*.

²⁷ Maurice Glaize, *Les monuments du groupe d’Angkor* (Saigon: Portail, 1948) 2nd ed., p. vi.

²⁸ Cover of *Angkor* (Hanoi: Office Indochinoise du Tourisme).

²⁹ While horses are no longer available as a means of transportation, elephants continue to be available today for limited distances, and at selected temples, such as the Bakheng. It is, in fact, still possible to visit the Bakheng hill on the back of an elephant.

The importance of the emphasis placed on the construction of roads and paths in order to facilitate visitors' access to the sites exposes two issues. It

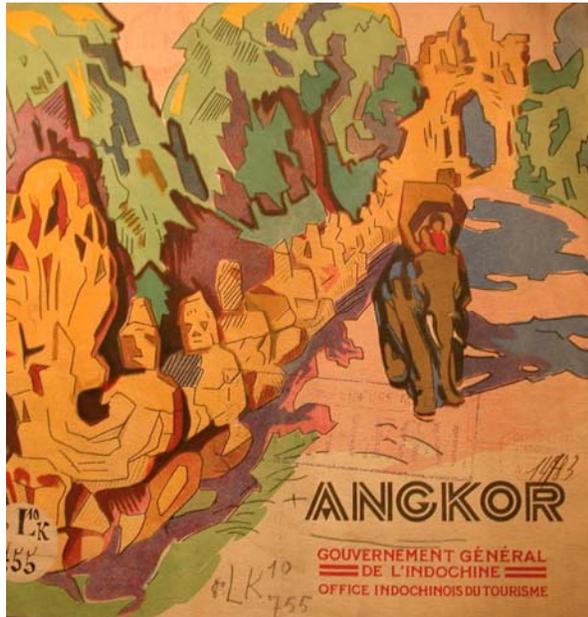


Figure 8 Illustration from tourism brochure

exposes the administration's desire to set the frames through which the monuments would be seen. The laying down of the roads and pathways between temples created a necessary physical boundary delineating what would and should be seen, and bounding as well the order in which the monuments would be encountered. However, this is not the most important boundary that was set in place. Instead, it was the official itinerary that tied many visitors to the viewing frame that had been set in place. While visitors were not obligated to follow this itinerary, most tourists did view the temples that were included in this itinerary, in the order described, and with the accompanying text which instructed visitors on what to look for and how to contextualize and understand the monuments. These official itineraries, which

appeared in the documents of the administration,³⁰ were most widely disseminated through the guidebooks which were written by Angkor's conservators. These guidebooks are the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Guiding the View

French scholars during the colonial period, as well as in the decades since Cambodia gained its independence, have dominated the field of research in investigating the Angkorian period. Numerous articles and volumes were published by the *EFEO* during the first half of the twentieth century which focused on the art, architecture, history, and epigraphy of Angkor. This vast collection of research has had a tremendous, and even a determining, effect on the study of Angkor, and has also had an impact on the way in which the monuments are presented in non-academic writing. While the content of these works, often in a summarized or diluted form, does penetrate the more general literature, scholarly publications were rarely read by non-specialists. In concentrating on the overarching narrative which, as Pratt notes, “produces” distant locations such as Cambodia for the metropolitan public,³¹ the scholarly treatises that often provided some of the background and foundational information to the more widely read works will not be the focus of this investigation. Instead, I will be concentrating on books designed to have a broader appeal. In the previous chapter I discussed the early travelogues, which were among the first objects to bring the far-away parts of the empire home. In this chapter I will be exploring the books that helped the travelers who in turn decided to bring themselves closer to the far-flung parts of the world and of the empire: guidebooks.

³⁰ . “Propositions du Directeur de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient au Sujet de l’Organisation du Parc d’Angkor,” Dated October 15, 1927, Number 2880 (NAC: RSC, file 8385).

³¹ Pratt, 1992, p. 5.

I became interested in the cultural importance and implications of guidebooks when I was sitting at a café in Siem Reap, Cambodia and realized as I glanced around that the café was filled entirely with international tourists, that every person was engaged in consulting a guidebook, and that with one exception everyone was reading the same guidebook. In looking around at the men and women from Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan who were all busily trying to decide what temple to visit next I realized that everyone's experience of the temples—and of Cambodia—was being negotiated through the same medium: the 3rd edition of the Lonely Planet Cambodia.³² This experience prompted me to think about where travelers and visitors to Cambodia during the colonial period might have gotten their information, and whether there was as much reliance on so limited a pool of resources as there was in that café in Siem Reap in 2001.

Considering the effort and expense of international travel during the colonial era the number of guidebooks that were published for visitors to Angkor is surprising. These books were published with the Western traveler (and his or her tastes and needs) in mind, and were particularly designed for Francophone and, to a lesser extent, Anglophone travelers. A few of these books were written by other travelers who turned their experience into guidebooks. This category includes a number of volumes which were can be thought of as guidebook/travelogue hybrids, such as Deane Dickason's 1939 *Wondrous Angkor*.³³

³² Nick Ray, *Cambodia, 3rd Edition* (Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000).

³³ Deane Dickason, *Wondrous Angkor* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh Ltd, 1939).

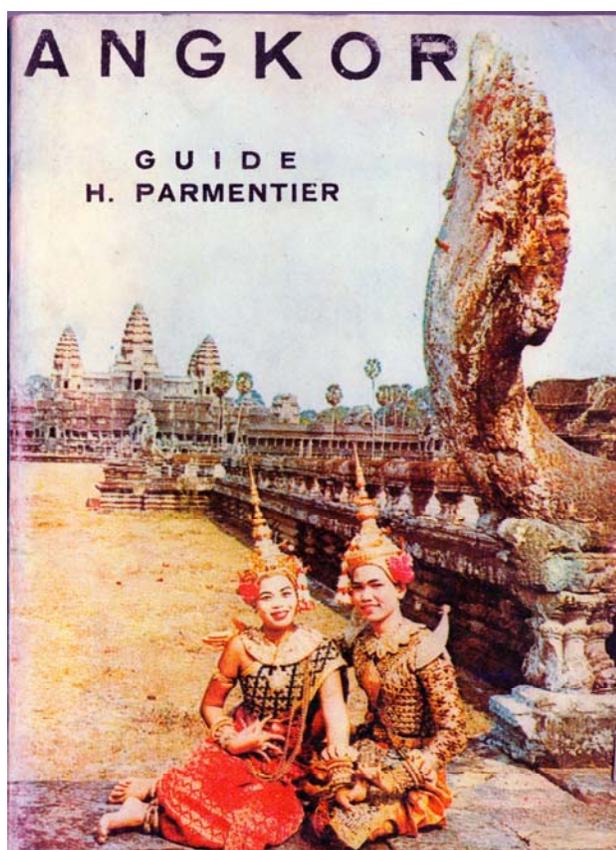


Figure 9 Guide H. Parmentier

One of the most important categories of guidebooks are those that presented a view of the temples explicitly or implicitly endorsed by the colonial administration. Beginning five years after Angkor was absorbed into the French Empire, and followed by an entirely new volume at least once during each subsequent decade, members of the *EFEO* closely connected to the *École*'s work at Angkor produced a guidebook to the monuments. While much of the text that appears in these publications appears (at times verbatim) in all of the Francophone and Anglophone guides to Angkor during the colonial era, the books produced by Angkor's conservators and archaeologists held a unique position. The authors were considered the foremost authorities on the topics about which they were writing, lending their suggestions and descriptions an air of infallibility. In addition, even where the guidebooks were not published by the *EFEO*, the position of the

authors—both within their fields of study, and within the colonial administration—gave these books the appearance of being “official” publications. (Figure 9)³⁴

The scholarship of the *Conservateurs d'Angkor* was important not only within the community of the *EFEO*, but had a significant impact on the visitors and tourists who journeyed to the Historical Park. With the exception of George Trouvé, whose tenure as conservator was limited to a brief three years in the early 1930s, the remaining Conservators of Angkor during the colonial period each wrote and published guidebooks about the monuments. The first of these “official” guidebooks was written by Jean Commaille, who was appointed as the first conservator of the Angkor Historical Park in 1907. His guide is entitled *Guide aux ruines d'Angkor*, and was published in 1912.³⁵ Commaille’s guide was not only the first such book written by one of Angkor’s conservators, but appears to have been the first book dedicated to the monuments that was structured as a guide rather than a narrative. The book is designed to convey not only the historical background of Angkor, but is also filled with practical information for the traveler: for example, Commaille’s preface is dedicated to describing the possible methods of travel to Angkor and suggestions on what to bring (khakis) for the tropical weather.

Commaille’s guide was followed by a volume written by the next Conservator, Henri Marchal, who published a guide to the ruins during his first tenure in the position, in 1928.³⁶ Marchal’s guide went through several printings and was translated into English. Maurice Glaize, Conservator from 1937 until 1946, published a guide to Angkor in 1944.³⁷ The final guide by an *EFEO* official to be published during the colonial period was written by Henri Parmentier, the *EFEO*’s chief of the archaeological service, in 1950. With the exception of Commaille’s

³⁴ Cover, *Angkor* (Phnom Penh: EKLP, 1060).

³⁵ Commaille, 1912.

³⁶ Marchal, 1930 (English edition) Original printing 1928.

³⁷ Glaize, 1948, Original printing 1944.

effort, which opened the field, each of these volumes went through multiple print runs and editions, and most were translated into English, as Marchal's was, in order to accommodate the growing number of English and American tourists visiting the temples.

The guidebooks written by the conservators and archaeologists were designed to be read and used by a learned, but non-specialist, audience. Although the books were meant to appeal to a more general public, each of the authors did include the scholarship of the day within their chapters. In some cases this meant the insertion of the author's theories on issues such as the chronology of the temples or the origin of the Khmer people, however, the guidebooks generally reflected that narrative that was becoming known as Khmer history. It was a narrative that had evolved considerably from Mouhot and Garnier's assertions that the only thing known about the past was the existence of a leperous king, and included the names and dates of many of Angkor's rulers, as well as their connection to many of the monuments.

In addition to reflecting the scholarship of the day—in the creation of which all of the authors were deeply involved—the guides also build upon the publications that have gone before them. While the chronology and other information included in Commaille's early text had come into question, and been corrected, by the time of Marchal's guide, there are far more similarities than dissimilarities between the two guides. This is also true in a comparison of the Marchal and Glaize texts, or of the Glaize and Parmentier texts. I was struck by these similarities, particularly when it came to the descriptions of the most often visited monuments. As I read through these guides I began to wonder why within these texts the restoration work completed on one structure is highlighted while the work done at the other is downplayed, and even denied.

One particularly telling thematic repetition across all of these guides appears in the selection of primary monuments, and the descriptive texts that accompany the sections dedicated to those temples. It is at this intersection that a key component of the product-narrative can be found, and at which this series of guidebooks, as a group, performs the act of exposure that is both related to the work of Dufour and Capeaux discussed above, and is the focus of this chapter.

Each of these guides provides a list of suggested itineraries of varying lengths, from one day to a week or more. These itineraries, beginning with Commaille's 1912 guide, are nearly identical over the course of the colonial era. For example, Marchal's suggested itinerary of "characteristic views" in 1928 was reproduced in Maurice Glaize's guidebook in the 1940s. The presence of what became a standardized itinerary was found not only in the official guidebooks written by *Conservateurs d'Angkor*, but soon became ubiquitous and institutionalized, as exemplified by its appearance in unofficial guidebooks, such as *The Madrolle Guides* 1939 publication, which urges the hurried tourist follow the standard one day itinerary in order to "gain a general idea of the archaeological group as a whole."³⁸

The one day itinerary, which includes the monuments that the writers considered to be the most significant or important for a visitor's experience and understanding of the temples, is identical for each book: Angkor Wat, the Bayon, and Ta Prohm. As the largest and most spectacular of the monuments it is not surprising that Angkor Wat is included. The nearby Bayon, with its unique floor plan and iconic four-faced towers, is also an easily anticipated selection. But Ta Prohm appears as a far less obvious choice.

³⁸ The first of these guides resembles the earlier travelogues and was published in 1900. Madrolle included subsequent books which were straightforward guidebooks rather than narratives, including one volume dedicated to Angkor. Claudius Madrolle, *To Angkor* (Paris: Société d'éditions géographiques, maritimes et coloniales, 1939). p. 28.

Unlike the Bayon, Ta Prohm temple does not possess a particularly unusual floor plan. In fact, a number of other temples in the area possess very similar architectural designs, including Preah Khan and nearby Banteay Kdei. The floor plan of Ta Prohm is also not dissimilar to Banteay Samre, among others. The bas-relief sculpture on all of these temples appears to be incomplete, and while many of the sculpted *devatas* and *apsaras* that decorate Ta Prohm show both delicacy and skill, it would be difficult to declare them of significantly higher quality than those found at other monuments of the same time period.

Ta Prohm was built in the same time period as the Bayon, a particularly prolific period of construction, and the last period of large-scale building. It was erected at roughly the same time as Preah Khan and Banteay Kdei. If one were seeking to guide visitors through a tour of the evolution of architectural design or of sculpture during the Angkor period, it might make more sense to have them begin with a stop at an early temple such as Ta Keo. If Ta Prohm was chosen neither for its artistic uniqueness, nor for its pedagogical value, then it must possess other qualities which make it worthy of its position of primacy amongst the monuments: another kind of singularity and another kind of pedagogical value.

The inclusion of Ta Prohm on the main itinerary and amongst the most often visited of Angkor's monuments is the result of a decision undertaken by the conservators and the scholars who studied the monuments soon after the temples were added to French territory in Southeast Asia. In the years that followed the retrocession of the territory, Angkor's conservators embarked on large-scale clearing and restoration projects at many of the monuments within the historical park, as well as a number of monuments outside the boundaries of the park. Restoration projects were implemented at Angkor Wat and the Bayon, in addition to similar ventures at Ta Keo, the Phimeanakes, Banteay Srei, Banteay Kdei, and others. While these projects were pushing forward it was decided that that one

exception to these restoration plans would be maintained: Ta Prohm would be left in its so-called “natural state.”³⁹ As Maurice Glaize states in his 1948 guidebook, “We have not ignored those, thirsting for the picturesque,... regretting (the loss of) its ancient state... we leave as an example some collections (of ruins) such as Ta Prohm “in their natural state”...”⁴⁰

Ta Prohm may have seemed a natural choice to be left in its “natural state” owing to the circumstance of the structure prior to the arrival of the French in 1907. In his guide to the temples at Angkor, the famed architect and senior member of the *EFEO*, Henri Parmentier, compared Banteay Kdei and Ta Prohm, noting that the “history and arrangement” of the structures are similar, if differing somewhat in complexity.⁴¹ However, he notes a second, significant difference between the two structures: “In fact, the temple of Banteay Kdei... was never completely overgrown by the vegetation because the monks stayed there a long time. Ta Prohm, on the other hand,... became the prey of the forest.... (and) is lost under its sylvan mantle.”⁴²

Maurice Glaize’s choice of words in describing the condition in which Ta Prohm was to be maintained—its “natural state”—is curious. Ta Prohm is, after all, a man-made construction; the opposite of a natural occurrence. Glaize uses the phrase to refer to the “natural state” of Ta Prohm as the one to which the monument will revert if all impediments are removed: without some regiment of vegetation control Ta Prohm reverts back to a state in which banyan trees sprout inside its walls. However, Glaize has chosen to call the condition of the temple its “natural state,” opening the implication that the invasion of Ta Prohm by banyan trees is the “normal” state of the monument, and that it might in some way be the *intended*

³⁹ Glaize, 1948, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Henri Parmentier, *Angkor Guide Henri Parmentier* (Phnom Penh: E.K.L.I.P./Portail, 1951) p. 101.

⁴² Ibid.

condition of the monument. Audiences—the travelers and visitors who came to Angkor, who read Glaize’s guide—are entreated through his turn of the phrase to register in their minds not what Ta Prohm might have looked like in the 13th century, or what it might have been used for, but what it had become, having slipped into its “natural state.”

For many of the men and women who visited the temples, used the guidebooks, or even just read about Angkor, the image of the monuments invaded by the forest was the “natural” image. It was the picture of the monuments described in the early Western travelogues, such as Mouhot’s or Garnier’s. But it was also a vision that was repeated over the decades of the colonial era in subsequent travelogues and in the guidebooks written by the conservators.

This vision was kept alive not only in the contemporary descriptions, but also in the retelling of the early Western encounters with Ta Prohm within the text of the guidebooks and in the travelogues of the twentieth century. For example, Herni Parmentier’s 1950 guidebook includes a passage in the section on Ta Prohm in which Parmentier reminds readers of the wonder felt by Louis Delaporte’s crew at the sight of the temple. Delaporte was a naval commander who made the first drawings of Ta Prohm in 1868, and was earlier a member of the Mekong Exploration Commission. Parmentier revisits the sailors’ wonder at the sea-green shadow of the forest, in which they took the gigantic tree roots for enormous serpents.⁴³

The decision not to restore Ta Prohm was not without controversy or detractors. The decree spurred some debate amongst scholars and admirers of Angkorian architecture and sculpture who felt that failing to restore Ta Prohm denied access to its design and sculpture. Conservators had a number of reasons for

⁴³ Ibid, p. 107.

deciding that Ta Prohm should not be restored, and it was a decision that was taken in no small part in response to the complaints being lodged by what Marchal called “the lovers of the picturesque and romanticism.”⁴⁴ This constituency consisted of those who wished to experience the temples as explorers, so that they might stumble upon Ta Prohm still encased in the jungle’s vegetation. There was also no small contingency of visitors who wished to experience Angkor with a melancholic and Romantic fervor, and with an idealized vision of ruins and what they represent. This experience was highlighted, and promoted, in the guidebooks, which often include descriptions of Ta Prohm as a temple whose appeal can be found in the interplay of the vegetation and stone. Here is how Henri Marchal describes the temple in his guide to Angkor:

The characteristic greatness of this Khmer temple, unique in this respect in the Angkorian group, *lies in the mixing of architecture and tropical nature* combined in well balanced proportions; vegetation struggles with carved stones to realize a whole where the contribution of each of those elements is judiciously shared, where everything is blended in a very mysterious and captivating harmony... In a word, the forest spreading everywhere... is now an inseparable part of the temple. (emphasis added)⁴⁵

The question of Ta Prohm’s restoration was also a point of discussion among the conservators themselves. The above quotation is taken from the same guidebook in which Marchal earlier complains of the romantics who would like to see the temples left as they were found. He then declares that the monuments have been “disengaged through the diligence of the *École Française d’Extrême-Orient*, and have been set free from the... vegetation obstructing them, which... made it very difficult, if not impossible to visit several edifices.”⁴⁶ Ta Prohm’s “natural

⁴⁴ Marchal, 1930, p. 41.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 169

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

state” is clearly not one that Marchal would prefer to leave the monuments. Yet, not only is he able to see the beauty that the “romantics” are clamoring for in the interplay of tropical vegetation and monumental stone, but his poetic descriptions of such comprise a significant portion of his section on Ta Prohm.

It was not only at the behest of the romantics among Angkor’s visitors that prompted the decision not to restore Ta Prohm, even as restoration work was being undertaken at other sites within the Angkor Historical Park. There was a second reason behind the choice to keep Ta Prohm in its picturesquely “natural state.” It was taken also in order to guide visitors towards making the comparison between the “old” and the “new.”

Massive restoration work was undertaken by the *Conservation d’Angkor* at numerous sites throughout the park. The work at Angkor Wat included not only clearing the vegetation from the area along the causeway, but also the repaving of the stones on the causeway itself; the repair of much of the statuary, including the *naga* and lion statues that line the balustrade;⁴⁷ and the collection and sorting of stone debris. The effort expended upon the Bayon, while a smaller monument, was more extensive in scale, while some monuments (such as the Baphuon) had to be almost entirely rebuilt.⁴⁸

Amongst all of the monuments contained within the Angkor Historical Park, Angkor Wat was, by far, in the best state of preservation when Henri Mouhot visited the area in the 1860, and half a century later when the French took control of the area. By creating a primary itinerary for visitors that included viewing Angkor Wat—the best preserved—and Ta Prohm—the monument left in its unrebuilt state—the conservators were inviting audiences to compare the two temples. Within

⁴⁷ Giant metal staples dating from the colonial era can still be seen in some of these statues holding pieces together.

⁴⁸ The EFEO continues to work on the reconstruction of the Baphuon, a project that began in the 1910s, and has continued with various hiatus’ due to security issues.

the framework of that comparison visitors were left with an implied (but inaccurate) impression of the scope and scale of the restoration work that had been performed by the French on other temples.

While the itinerary invited these comparisons, the guidebooks insisted upon it. Readers are directed explicitly to compare the state of the Ta Prohm with the monuments that had been restored as examples of “before” and “after” the arrival of the *EFEO*. Included in all but the Parmentier text are also numerous photographs showing the restoration process; the equipment used; and, importantly, comparative images showing many of the temples “before” clearing or restoration and “after” restoration. One of the few monuments that does not have a “before” picture is Ta Prohm. In fact, there are few photographs of Ta Prohm within the guidebooks: the monument was meant to be *experienced* as “before,” in comparison with the “afters” they would visit in the same day.

It was no coincidence that all itineraries included Angkor Wat, which was and is the temple in the best preserved state of all the monuments. However, Ta Prohm is not and was not the least preserved. Rather, it has been maintained in a state of suspended decay since the 1910s.⁴⁹ There are a number of Angkor period temples in present-day Cambodia that have not been significantly restored, and have not even been extensively cleared or maintained. While many of these structures are small shrines, there are significant architectural examples—such as the 13th century temple Beng Mealea 70 kilometers to the east of Angkor—which are and were in a much greater state of disarray than Ta Prohm.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ With the exception of the period during which the Khmer Rouge were in power, and the following years of political turmoil and insecurity.

⁵⁰ Conservationists during the colonial period did conduct various projects at Beng Mealea, and a number of research missions were made to the temple. The complex is large in scale and located at a distance from Siem Reap and the Angkor Historical Park making the prospect of large-scale restoration work difficult. Beng Mealea eventually slipped from the priority list. It can today be reached by means of a hardpack dirt road, however, the area was heavily mined during the post-1979 war, and will require extensive demining before it can be regularly or safely visited. In addition, with so many monuments clustered together within the confines of the Angkor Historical Park it seems

In fact, Ta Prohm was not and is not today found in its “natural” state—even if one were to understand the meaning of “natural” to coincide with the way in which it was found by the French. The Conservators of Angkor conducted significant clearing projects at Ta Prohm, and also carried out projects designed to stabilize some of the most unsound parts of the structure. The cleaning of the temple was strategic in nature: the smaller vegetation, as well as that which might block visitors’ ability to enter and exit the temple, was removed. The large banyan trees, whose roots are famously intertwined with the stones of the monument’s walls, were left in place. Discussions on the topic in the conservator’s notes from the 1910s and 1920s include some concern that the removal of certain trees’ root systems might cause the collapse of the walls they were helping to hold together. However, this does not explain the decision against the removal of trees which are not intrinsic to the stability of the monument.

Not only is the idea that Ta Prohm has been left “untouched” by restorers a myth, but the implication that Angkor Wat was in a similar “natural” state when the French arrived is also inaccurate. Even the earliest photographs of Angkor Wat show a temple surrounded by- but not inundated by- the jungle. In fact, the many monks who have continuously lived within the grounds of Angkor Wat for several centuries had taken on the duty of clearing the vegetation from the temple wherever possible. Thus, Angkor Wat was never truly in the “before” state exemplified by Ta Prohm.

Rather, as Maurice Glaize makes clear in his remarks on Ta Prohm in his guidebook, one of the most important reasons that the temple had been only partially cleared was in order to bear witness to the success of the French conservators. In his 1944 guide to Angkor he states:

doubtful that Beng Mealea would ever draw away significant numbers of visitors to justify the expense of demining any time in the foreseeable future.

Even though the relentless force of the vegetation is the cause of so much damage, the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient* felt obliged to leave at least one temple in Angkor as an example of the "natural state" that so marveled the early explorers, while also showing by comparison the importance of the effort already achieved in its work to safeguard these ancient stones.⁵¹

Glaize's sentiment is not a singular occurrence, but is one echoed by his fellow conservators and archaeologists. For example, Henri Parmentier notes this purpose very specifically for maintaining Ta Prohm in a partially cleared state: "We have... completely cleared the former (Banteay Kdei), whereas the latter (Ta Prohm) is kept *as a witness to the state in which we found the monuments of Angkor.*"⁵²

The act of bearing witness was, in fact, of paramount importance, and compelled the conservators to leave Ta Prohm not in its "natural" state, but in a partially cleared and restored state that allowed numerous tourists and visitors to walk through the temple while still maintaining the appearance of being "lost" in the wilderness. The choice both to include Ta Prohm on the primary itinerary, and to maintain the monument as unrestored, does indicate the desire to highlight an evolution—but not that of the Khmer Empire. Rather, it is indicative of the desire by French conservators to highlight the progression of the *EFEO*, and of the conservators, in their work at Angkor.

⁵¹ Glaize, 1948, p. 182.

⁵² Ibid. Emphasis added.

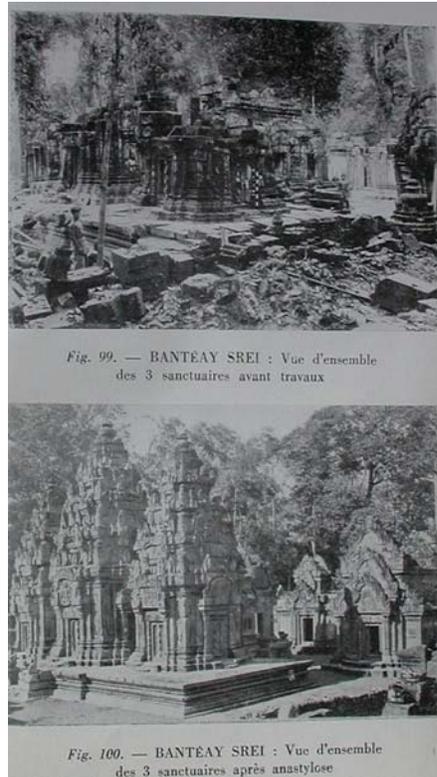


Figure 10 Guidebook showing Banteay Srei before and after restoration

The directive from the conservators to their reading audience to compare the “before” provided by Ta Prohm with the “after” provided by Angkor Wat was made explicit not only in the text of the guidebooks, but also in the photographs that were included within those texts. (Figure 10)⁵³ The guidebooks are replete with photographs showing giant stone blocks hovering under winches and other images showing the repair work that had been conducted on crumbling statues. Glossy pages with two images, one atop the other, break up the text, catching one’s eye with their similarity of form. For a moment viewers must have wondered why the same image was being reprinted twice on the same page, forcing them to pause long enough to see that the two images as often as not offer before and after comparisons: before restoration, after restoration. The repeated examples nested

⁵³ Marchal, 1930, Figures 99 and 100.

within the pages of the guidebooks that colonial visitors surely viewed prior to arriving in Siem Reap—even if only on the boat ride up from Phnom Penh—must have exerted some small conditioning upon them. These pages, with their doubled outline and clearly marked chronology, before and after, constructed a frame through which visitors were to view the monuments. Each guidebook tells its readers, if you only have one afternoon, you must see the Bayon, Angkor Wat, and Ta Prohm. By viewing these monuments visitors would be able to complete the task of comparison that is implied in those images; by insisting on these monuments as the most essential itinerary, the writers have proclaimed that understanding to be amongst the most important element of one’s visit.

The link between the work at Angkor and the colonial mission in Southeast Asia is occasionally explicit, but is more often implicit in the tone and emphasis found in descriptions of Angkor in the hands of the French. The case for the benefits of their colonial presence in Cambodia is made often in the comparative discussions of Angkor Wat and Ta Prohm. It is, as Glaize notes, there to remind visitors, as “examples,” of all that the French scholars and conservators have achieved.⁵⁴ However, that contrast also contains within it a second comparison between the creators and re-creators: the Khmer Empire that once built the monuments and the French Empire that was reconstructing them. By not only reconstructing Angkor, but by leaving a point of comparison, the French colonial administration, through the *EFEO* office that was part of that administration, was attempting to co-opt some of the power of Angkor. The reconstruction was seen by the French not only as a sign of all the work they had done to “civilize” Cambodia by pulling the temples, (and by implied extension the people of Cambodia) out of the jungle, but by shedding light on their “lost” past. The explicit, before and after

⁵⁴ Glaize, 1948, p. 72.

comparison, whose importance was laid out in the guidebooks' directions to prioritize Angkor Wat and Ta Prohm on every itinerary, was an in part attempt to argue for the legitimacy of French rule. This argument was being made to the visitors who came to Cambodia from the West, and specifically from France, where there had been resistance to the dedication of resources to the colonial project.

“Cleansing” the View

Much of the work overseen by the *Conservateur d'Angkor* was comprised of labor-intensive programs to remove vegetation from temples, clear pathways allowing visitors to walk between structures, and the removal and replacement of building materials, often in the interest of visitor safety. These programs served numerous purposes, among the most important of which was the formation of the foundation of research, restoration, and conservation programs. Each of these projects depended on the clearing of the jungle from the structures. With this function as a foundational project at Angkor, it is not surprising that the word *nettoyage*, meaning both to clean and to clear, appears so frequently in colonial documents referring to Angkor.

As the most basic project of the *Conservation d'Angkor*, the “cleaning” of Angkor served not only the practical purpose of granting access to both researchers and restorers, but also the starting point for the construction of a French colonial fantasia of ruins. By clearing the monuments, particularly at temples that had been overgrown, it allowed visitors to experience the forest at a safe distance. The removal of vegetation was the first step in the process of conforming Angkor to the conflicting visions and desires of scholars and amateurs alike: a place both wild and convenient; overgrown and cultivated; savage and tame.

To that end, the vegetation was not the only target for clearance projects at the site. Visitors arrived at Angkor expecting to see “lost” and “abandoned” temples: they expected to experience something akin to what they might have read about Angkor in Mouhot’s journals. In order to maintain the mythology of the temples, signs of modernity, civilization, and habitation were, wherever possible, kept external to the boundaries of the Park, and more importantly, to the boundaries of visitors’ view. In this section I will focus on some of the ways in which the administration worked to control the view both of and from the temples, regulating what could and could not be contained within the framework of that view.

The local administration and the *Conservation d’Angkor* set in place a number of rules and regulations that would preserve and control the view of and from Angkor. A significant number of these regulations were aimed at controlling the behavior of local residents and their interactions with tourists while in the park.

In 1925 a series of letters and telegrams began to circulate between the *Résident du Battambang*; the *Résident Supérieur du Cambodge (RSC)*, the *Conservateur d’Angkor*, the *Gouverneur Général de l’Indochine (GGI)*, and the director of the *EFEO* discussing the wording and content of points that were proposed for an *arrêté* pertaining to the creation of the Angkor Historical Park. While the Historical Park had already existed for many years, and had been referred to under this title, the *arrêté* would serve to codify into law many of the park’s regulations, as well as naming it as an official “*station de tourisme*.”⁵⁵

In May of 1925, Louis Finot, the Director of the *EFEO* submitted his proposed *arrêté* for the delineation of regulations for the Angkor Historical Park to the *GGI*. The document contained fourteen articles, including initial items delineating the boundaries of the Park; explaining the hierarchy of command for the

⁵⁵ Letter No. 602, July 16, 1925, “Au sujet de la Création dup arc d’Angkor.” (NAC: RSC, File 7781).

Park staff; and explaining the break down of entry fees for visitors to the Park. However, there were a number of articles that were specifically directed at controlling the behavior of Angkor's local residents, secular and non-secular alike. With respect to the local population, Article 5 contains the most pertinent restrictions.⁵⁶

This article supplies a list of activities which were to be strictly forbidden within the boundaries of the Park without the express, written approval of the Director of the *EFEO*, as delivered by the *RSC*. The list includes: "1) the construction of new buildings, and the reparation of ancient ones; 2) the opening of new farming plots, and the replanting of fields that have been abandoned for three years or less;⁵⁷ 3) all clearing work, digging, excavation, and the extraction of materials; 4) the pasturing or grazing of domestic animals; 5) fishing; 6) commerce or the hawking of goods."⁵⁸

While some of the items on the list are clearly designed to protect the sites from theft or destruction- such as the prohibitions on repairing ancient structures or on unauthorized excavations, many of these items prohibit daily activities in which much of the local population would have been engaged. Item number six, prohibiting unauthorized hawking within the confines of the Park served a number of purposes. It was designed to prevent theft and destruction within the temples: people wishing to sell souvenirs to visitors might steal small sculptures and decorative elements and try to sell them to tourists traveling through the monuments. It also institutes control over the market: It was meant to prevent independent and local sellers from attempting to undercut the *EFEO* efforts to

⁵⁶ Arrête (proposed), attached to letter number 621, to GGI from Louis Finot, Director of *EFEO*, dated May 25, 1925 (NAC: RSC, file 3353).

⁵⁷ The document indicates three years or less, though this is likely a typographical error, and should probably read "three years or more."

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

generate income for their projects. By the late 1920s, in an effort to combat thefts⁵⁹ and to increase funds for maintaining the park, doubles and objects of “lesser archaeological or artistic interest”⁶⁰ were being sold at the *Musée Albert Sarraut* in Phnom Penh, and soon after at the *Hôtel des Ruines*. Visitors were urged to take advantage of these means if they “wish to own a little carved fragment or keepsake of Cambodia and Angkor.”⁶¹ At these two locations, tourists were able to purchase not only authentic “stones from the ruins and local objects native made,” but also books and postcards of the monuments, all within “an elegant little pavilion in the style of the country.”⁶² Finally, this item was also enacted in order to control the view of the temples that tourists would encounter: it was designed to thwart what the tourists might have seen as a jarring vision of modern Cambodia encroaching upon the “abandoned” monuments.

This is not the only item that attempted to remove the present-day Cambodian population from the view of visitors. The regulations prohibiting the grazing of domestic animals, fishing, and the cultivation of either new or previously abandoned plots of land, all strive to control what images will come before the eyes of visitors. The enforcement of these items was considered not only necessary, but in some cases urgent, as is evidenced in the letter sent to the RSC by the *Résident* of Battambang in response to the proposed control of domestic animals within the park:

⁵⁹ There are numerous reports of the theft of archaeological objects in official documents and in newspapers, from the opening of the park through to today. André Malraux was convicted in 1923 of stealing eight bas-reliefs and a number of architectural ornaments from Banteay Srei. However, his was by no means the only case of theft at the monuments. By 1925 it was suggested that one way to combat the growing number of thefts at the monuments by tourists who had become “obsessed” by the “*idée fixe*” that they must possess a sculpted stone from Angkor was to “offer a legal means for procuring” such objects. The suggested method, which was implemented soon afterwards, was to sell selected objects in a shop at the Musée Albert Sarraut and at the Hôtel des Ruines so that “visitors will be able to possess a souvenir.” Letter from *L’Administrateur des Services civils* to RSC, dated May 19, 1925, Number 5C (NAC: RSC, file 8353).

⁶⁰ Marchal, 1930, p. 231.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

We've now come to the point in the discussion on the issue of policing the grazing of domestic animals within the limits of the "Parc d'Angkor." ... It (grazing) must be absolutely avoided. I shall note that each time I have been charged with accompanying some important personality on their visit to Angkor Wat, the broad walkways and the terraces have all been soiled with the feces of domestic animals. It has had a disastrous effect.⁶³

Embarrassment was only part of the motivation for this item. The instigation of this prohibition is clearly delineated by the *Résident's* attached proposal for a change in the wording of the *arrêté*. Over the course of the intervening months between Finot's original proposal in May and the *Résident's* suggestions in July, the wording and structure of the document changed, with those participating in the process of constructing the document realizing the detrimental, and perhaps dangerous, effect that barring the population from utilizing the land and waters surrounding the temples as they had historically. The prohibitions on these behaviors were softened, however, the modifications to the proposal restricting the grazing of domestic animals and fishing are informative. In response to the prohibitions, which have become Article 8 in the intervening months, the *Résident* proposes a clarification in the wording, as well as a method of enforcement:

I propose to the original first two lines with the following text: "The villages that are already established within the *Parc d'Angkor* will continue to enjoy the rights to fish and graze their domestic animals. These animals are, nevertheless, under pain of being fined (by the police) to be *kept from view*. Those found in the immediate area of the monuments, or inside the monuments, in violation of this regulation will be impounded, and their owners will be forced to pay (the fine)... It is absolutely forbidden to allow these animals

⁶³ Laubert, Résident du Battambang, in a letter addressed to the RSC, dated July 16, 1925. (NAC: RSC, file 7781).

to ramble along the walkways and terraces of Angkor Wat.”
(Emphasis added) ⁶⁴

It is clear from the *Résident's* proposed re-wording of this item—which ultimately was kept in the final wording of the *arrêté*⁶⁵-- that the priority of this article is the clearing—the *nettoyage*—of the view around the monuments, and around Angkor Wat in particular. In reviewing each of the proposed items in Finot's original list of prohibited activities, most of them also appear to be attempting to clear the view around the monuments. However, rather than the programmatic clearing of the monuments—removing them from the jungle, bringing them to light—the clearing that is proposed by these articles is the clearing of habitation, and of the local inhabitants from the view of visitors. The view presented to the visitors is of great importance, as “it is said that alongside the ancient art and architecture, it would be possible to admire the natural beauty (of the forest)... they (visitors) can only be more seduced.”⁶⁶ It appears that conservators were concerned that if the “natural beauty (of the forest)” were broken up with habitations and fields that some of the monuments' seductive qualities might be tarnished.

The *arrêté* of 1925 is by no means the only attempt to control the movement and appearance of local inhabitants within the park. A 1933 letter from the RSC delineates a series of measures, agreed upon between the RSC and *Conservateur* Trouvé, which were to be disseminated to the public. The list of measures includes the following: “a) It is absolutely forbidden to create new houses within the limits of the park, or... utilize existing structures without authorization; b) It is absolutely

⁶⁴ Projet d'Arrête du Résident Supérieur au Cambodge Créant a Siem-Reap une Station de Tourisme (Parc d'Angkor), from the Résident du Battambang. January 16, 1925 (NAC: RSC, file 7781).
Emphasis added.

⁶⁵ Arrêté, 1926 (NAC: RSC, file 8370).

⁶⁶ Letter from Baudoin, RSC, to GGI, dated November 24, 1914, Number, 171 (NAC: RSC, file 409)

forbidden to practice slash and burn agriculture; c) It is absolutely forbidden to use the *chhoeutéal* (a species of tree) for wood oil; d) It is absolutely forbidden to hunt.”⁶⁷

Maurice Glaize notes, while discussing the merits of the *EFEO* clearing and restoration efforts in the Park, it is the “reconstructed *but deserted* sanctuaries (which) inspire- according to the imagination of each - as much lyricism as melancholy (as the jungle-invaded ruins), and the accomplished work, of a scientific precision that perfectly conforms to current thinking, (which) assures the improvement of the building without harm to its character.”⁶⁸

However, the behaviors that this *arrêté* seeks to control were guaranteed at an earlier time to the park’s residents by a Royal Ordinance. In this ordinance the inhabitants “installed within the limits of the reserved zone (of the park)” would “furthermore continue to utilize (the park) for their personal needs, including the feeding of their animals and to use the streams, pools, ponds and basins that they have used previously for watering their crops.”⁶⁹ There is a clear divergence of ideas about the rights of access and usage of the park by Cambodians in the understandings of colonial administration and the royal court. The issue of diverging opinions, Cambodian and French, over what rights local residents had to the park and its lands continued to be a point of protest and disagreement. Local residents complained regularly, and by 1933, *Conservateur* Trouvé felt it necessary to offer as a concession to the *indigènes*: “authorization to create and continue (to utilize) the rice paddies that exist inside the moats of Angkor Thom and the Western and Eastern *barays*, with the exception of the Mebon, where a protective

⁶⁷ Letter from RSC to the Director of the *EFEO*, Dated May 12, 1933, Number 379 (NAC: RSC, file 15822).

⁶⁸ Glaize, 1948, p. 72. Emphasis added. In short, it is their abandonment, symbolized by their being maintained in a deserted state, that creates what Glaize sees as the proper frame for viewing both the structures themselves, as well as the accomplishments of the *EFEO*.

⁶⁹ Royal Ordinance, dated March 31, 1911 (NAC: RSC, file 15197).

zone has been established.”⁷⁰ The basins and moats of the *barays* and of Angkor Thom are in general located well beyond the line of sight from any of the main monuments.

Embedded within these prohibitions is the implied mistrust authorities have for the local population when it comes to caring for, or even respecting, these monuments. Although Marchal, in his guide books, entreats modern-day visitors to the structures to have “some respect and a little regard for those ancient temples,” as visitors tend to forget too “easily that those ruins were religious edifices where rites were celebrated, and that every religion deserves to be respected,” it should be noted that he has located, in this declaration, their usage as a place of worship in the past.⁷¹ The implication is that present-day Cambodians have neglected or forgotten the religions connected to the monuments—the Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism of the Angkorian period—in much the same way they have neglected or forgotten the structures that were once built for religious rites. He does not indicate that the structures were used at the time he wrote his guide book as a religious, Theravada Buddhist site, leaving the reader with the impression that the monuments are no longer used as temples. If, as Marchal here implies, the meaning of the monuments has been forgotten, Marchal appears to ask how the local inhabitants can be expected to have any respect for the structure. It is implied that respect for these structures has been so compromised within the Cambodian population, that they allow their animals to defile the sanctity of these sites. The underlying assertion in this passage is that it must be left to the French scholars to remind visitors of their sacred meaning.

⁷⁰ Letter from *conservateur d'Angkor* Trouvé to the Director of the *EFEO*, Dated January 26, 1933, Number 43 (NAC: RSC, file 14228).

⁷¹ Marchal, 1930, pp. 230-1.

This description seems to eclipse the presence of the monastery within the precincts of Angkor Wat. That monastery was, in fact, a target of one of the suggested articles: the prohibition on constructing new buildings within the limits of the park. The monastery and the *EFEO* found themselves at logger-heads over issues related to the buildings constructed by the monastic community. A campaign was mounted in the years immediately following retrocession to collect enough funds to compensate the monastery for the removal of their buildings within the precincts of the temples. The stated purpose behind removing these structures was to allow for an unobstructed view of the temples; the buildings connected to the monastic community were considered by the conservators and the *EFEO* as an eyesore.

Although this campaign was eventually successful, it was by no means the end of the disputes between the *École* and the monks who lived within the Park. The monks who lived in the monastery by Angkor Wat have left a record in French archival files of their disagreement with and resistance to the colonial authority's control over Angkor. Nearly every *Conservateur d'Angkor* seems to have had difficulties controlling the construction projects of the monastery, and *arrêtés* such as the one proposed by Finot were instituted in an attempt to curb new projects, and to give rise to mechanisms for their removal. Finot's *arrêté* was by no means the last of this issue: Henri Parmentier, the chief of the archaeological service, can be found complaining about the presence of the "hideous structures" raised by the monks in close proximity to the temples, and seeking legal recourse for their removal in 1932.⁷² The fact that each of these documents is one in a string of declarations, each attempting to do the same thing, exposes the *EFEO*'s purpose in their projects: their argument, in favor of the *mission civilisatrice*, was constructed

⁷² Henri Parmentier, in a letter to the Director of the *EFEO*, dated April 19, 1932 (*EFEO*: Monuments Historiques, Dossier 4).

only tangentially for the Khmer people; their main target audience was their own, metropolitan spectators.

The administration of both the colonial government, as well as the *EFEO*, attempted to mediate all encounters that visitors might have with the local population, not only in terms of interaction, but also visual encounters. There were Cambodians, and other “Indochinese” (mostly Vietnamese) who were working for the *Conservation d’Angkor* and for other branches of the colonial administration, from civil servants to “coolies.” However, the most intimate contact that most visitors had with members of the local population came in the form of the tour guides employed by the administration; the elephant mahouts; and the Sino-Khmer entrepreneur who purchased one of the first automobiles in Siem Reap and set up a business delivering visitors from the dock on the lake to the *Hôtel des Ruines*. The guides were hired by the colonial administration,⁷³ who searched for educated Cambodians and Vietnamese with appropriate language abilities. Each had to learn from the published knowledge of the French, and was tested on this knowledge, in order to gain and retain employment in this capacity,⁷⁴ so that the interaction of the

⁷³ The *EFEO* had the ultimate authority over who was hired to guide tourists and give information on the structures: “Article 9: the guides for the visitors are to be agreed upon by the local administration, who will at all times have the power to rescind their right to act as guides, and to forbid their entrance into the park...” Arrêté from the GGI, attached to a letter from the *EFEO* director to the RSC dated May 25, 1925 (NAC: RSC, File 8353) Guides were hired on a contract basis, with a pay scale that reflected both their language abilities and their job performance. “These guides will not be allowed to perform their duties until they have proven an exact knowledge of this summary (written about the monuments by the *Conservateur d’Angkor*) before a commission composed of the *Conservateur* and the *Résident* or his delegate. The *Conservateur* will always retain the right to test (assure) that this knowledge had not been lost, and, in the case of insufficient responses, and after a discussion with the *Résident*, the guide will be suspended.” From “Propositions du Directeur de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient au sujet de l’Organisation du Parc d’Angkor,” Dated October 15, 1927, Number 2880 (NAC: RSC, file 8385).

⁷⁴ A document from 1929 with the heading “Guides” explains the plan to hire one European and three “*guides indigènes*” (with the cumulative salaries of the native guides totaling just above the salary of the European), as well as explaining that each of the guides would receive an “education” in an effort to combat a propensity for “outrageous nonsense.” The notice furthermore proposes the father of a *sûreté* officer as the European appointment because he speaks English, Siamese, and German in addition to French, though he is without training on the temples or their legends. However, while that sort of knowledge would have been advantageous, “the utility of having a guide

greatest depth and breath that many visitors had with a local inhabitant was with a guide who spoke their language and knew the published, French-written history of the temples.

Aesthetics and History

As noted in earlier chapters, during the nineteenth century Western visitors to Angkor repeatedly described it as a place whose history was “lost” or “forgotten.” Over the course of the colonial period scholars from the *EFEO*, Angkor’s conservators, and others, all set about the self-assigned task of “rediscovering” Angkor’s history. With this approach Angkor became, for the French reading public, dehistoricized, meaning that, particularly during the earlier encounters with the monuments, Angkor was seen as having been separated from its history. It was described by travelers like Mouhot and Garnier as having been divided from its past, and this image continued to appear even after the process of re-historicization—in which French scholars attempted to rediscover Angkor’s past—was in full force.⁷⁵

In addition to writing of a cleavage between Angkor and its past, authors also divided the monuments from their religious present, as is noted above in an example from Henri Marchal’s guidebook. Neither of these visions accurately depicted the relationship between Angkor, the Khmer people who visited the temples, the monuments’ known past, or their role as a religious site. If Western popular writing did not reflect these relationships, how were the monuments being presented? In what way were readers, and visitors who used the guidebooks, meant

who is also knowledgeable in the Hindu legends is, in reality, hardly justified.” Documents dated December 3, 1929 (NAC: RSC, file 8370).

⁷⁵ Pierre Loti’s writings on Angkor provide an excellent example, particularly: Pierre Loti, *A Pilgrimage to Angkor* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1996).

to interact with Angkor? In this section I will be discussing the aestheticizing of Angkor in Western descriptions of the monuments.

Over the course of the colonial period, and through the practices and processes described in this chapter, Cambodia became eclipsed by the image of Angkor. Cambodia began to shrink, in descriptions of the country, to the size of Angkor. The guidebooks were all entitled as guides to the monuments: The few references made to other locations in the country were generally found within the instructions for how to make one's way from Sài Gòn to Phnom Penh, and from there to Siem Reap. While the travelogues—particularly the early travelogues—described locations beyond the monuments, each also dedicated more space and detail to Angkor than to any other single location in the country. Once Angkor became part of the protectorate and the number of travelers making the journey grew (particularly during the Interwar years), descriptions of Cambodia were often contained within an extended description of the monuments and few, if any, details about the rest of the country, except to note (like the guidebooks) where the author had stopped on his way from Việt Nam to Angkor.

Few visitors saw much of Cambodia beyond the temples at Angkor and the museum in Phnom Penh, and the image of Angkor is an oft-employed and widely recognized shorthand for Cambodia. (Figure 11)⁷⁶ Angkor was a part of Cambodia which soon filled in for the whole, but it was also a part that Cambodia's colonizers interacted with almost entirely on an aesthetic basis. For French audiences Cambodia was not simply turned into an Angkor-shaped object, but into an object whose meaning is read aesthetically. This reading of Angkor resembles Anne Janowitz's discussion of the politics of ruins, national identity, and their intersection

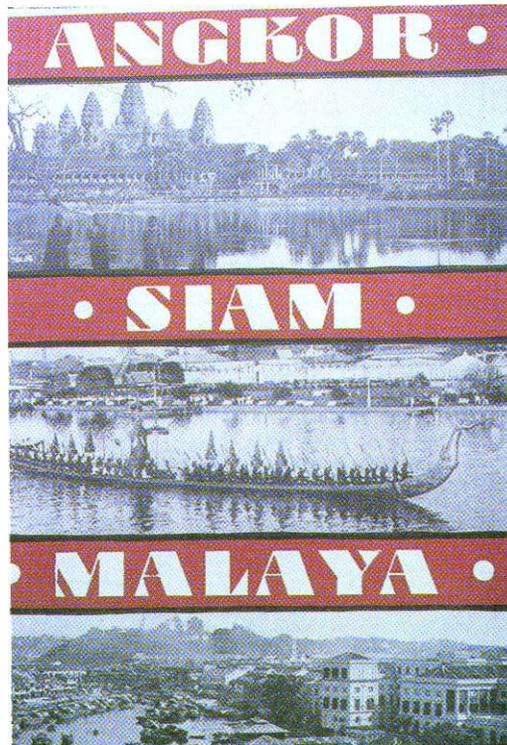


Figure 11 Tourism brochure

in English poetry, which was discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation. In her investigation of the ruin she notes the temporal shift that occurs in Byron's

⁷⁶ Dawn Rooney, *Angkor observed: a travel anthology of 'those there before'* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2001) p. 52.

description of Italy as “a land/ which *was* the mightiest in its old command,/ And *is* the loveliest,” in which visitors “substitute the value of beauty for that of power.”⁷⁷ In the poem, what it left in the ruins when the power of a fallen empire has been sapped, is beauty. In the colonial era writing about Angkor the ruins, like the Venice of Byron’s poem, come to symbolize the past loss of power and the present state of loveliness. Cambodia, like Venice in the poem by Byron which Janowitz quotes, has its “value... translated from its history...to its present as an aesthetic object...”⁷⁸

In aestheticizing Angkor, the ruins, like Italy in the example above, become objects that are not only met as part of an aesthetic experience, but are also always a reminder of the lost power of the past. For the French, aestheticizing the ruins of Angkor, the historical power of the monuments—the power as a locus where Cambodians might have identified with past power—was denied by permanently placing that power in the past rather than in the present. The process associated the structures specifically with the loss of that power by focusing on the aesthetic understanding of the temple—Ta Prohm—which most clearly manifests symbolically that loss of power. In the narratives from the period the monuments were first dehistoricized through the assertion of their “lost” history. By the monuments’ being sealed to the authors’ eyes (they could not read the inscriptions and felt there were no satisfactory answers about the monuments’ history to be found amongst the people they spoke with) early explorers were left primarily with the visual aspects of the temples: Their aesthetic experience. The early explorers’ interactions with Angkor on a largely aesthetic basis was carried on by subsequent authors, and was encouraged in the guidebooks, even as those guidebooks were being written by the men who were engaged in the process of uncovering, or

⁷⁷ Janowitz, 1990, p. 43.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 43.

perhaps rehistoricizing, the temples. The process whereby a history, and a chronology, was assigned to the temples by the French *savants* was one that linked this rehistoricizing, and its meaning, directly to the colonial administration. Over the course of the Protectorate's history, the rehistoricizing of the monuments in tandem with the evolving chronology of France's role in Cambodia is mapped onto both the monuments and the Angkor Historical Park, from the delineation of the Park's boundaries to the work of restoring and reconstructing the facades of the ruins.

In the guidebooks and travel accounts which were presented to largely foreign, and predominately Western, audiences, readers were asked to interact with Angkor on a largely aesthetic level. As in the example given earlier, when the temples' status as religious monument was noted it was described as though this were a past practice, not one that was going on each day throughout the colonial era. This stands in stark contrast to the experience that Cambodian visitors would have had at Angkor, where aesthetic experience would have played a role, but would have taken a secondary place to that of the site's meaning as a religious structure.

Furthermore, the chronology that is delineated in the pages of the guidebooks for the European and American tourists—the stream of unfamiliar names marking the beginning and end of reigns and kingships— would hardly have been loaded with meaning for most of these visitors. Again, this stands in contrast to the potential meaning that chronology might have held for Cambodian visitors. Rather, it was, according to Marchal, the “(l)earned men, poets, artists (who) may wander at any time in the monuments to study and gather diverse and increasingly renewed impressions” who were best equipped to understand and sense the

aesthetic experience provided by the structures.⁷⁹ For the remaining visitors, whose aesthetic capacities may not be as attuned as poets and painters, it was suggested that the trip to the temples be made in the morning “when the mildness of the temperature and the softened tones of the stones in the middle of the forest still asleep, give to the Angkor temples their maximum beauty.”⁸⁰ By casting a visit to the temples as though it were a portal in time through which tourists could experience a trip to a vague or unspecified past—such as the imagined past of the elephant-riding entourages depicted by Delaporte resurrected through the elephant tours provided to tourists, as well as the moment of Mouhot’s discovery, or Garnier’s mission, experienced through a visit to Ta Prohm—and as an aesthetic experience, the temples are removed from a specific historical moment. Rather, the structures are aestheticized instead of historicized.

By doing so the historical power represented in the glory of the Khmer empire that might be connected to Cambodian society is elided in these writings in favor of the modern power of the colonial administration. The cleansing of the monuments, the dehistoricizing of them, is the process by which the historical power that the temples might have presented, as a Cambodian rallying point, or as a symbol of something akin to ‘nation,’ is superseded by the reminder of loss.

But did the aestheticizing that took place at Angkor for the benefit of tourists and other visitors who were, by and large, not Khmer, truly dehistoricize the temples for the Cambodian population? It should be made clear that the audience towards which the *EFEO* and the colonial administration directed its efforts—particularly its *mise en valeur* efforts—were “visitors” and “tourists.” The letters, reports and *arrêtes* that were sent between the *Conservation d’Angkor*, the *EFEO*, the *RSC*, the *GGI*, and various other colonial offices refer continuously to

⁷⁹ Marchal, 1930, p. 59.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

the needs and desires, real, imagined, or perceived, of tourists and visitors. While many of these projects would not benefit tourists exclusively, they were noted as being the main audience to whom many of these programs were directed.

While the *mission civilisatrice* was aimed at “civilizing” France’s colonial subjects, in Cambodia and elsewhere, the *EFEO* rarely focused on the Cambodian population as the recipient of its work. Rather, in addition to the scholarly mission—the gathering of and interpretation of information that would become the body of knowledge the *EFEO* sought to codify—it was the comfort and safety of tourists and other visitors who came to appreciate the monuments as an aesthetic experience that was presented as the motivation behind much of their work and many of their programs. In addition, the restoration and enhancement of the Historical Park was cast as a moral imperative: these structures had to be saved from the clutches of the forest and forgetfulness. However, the restoration and enhancement programs of the colonial administration and of the *EFEO* also had the effect for the colonial administration of reconfirming the need for their intervention by means of the achievements of colonial scholarship, archaeology, restoration, and reconstruction projects, and technologies.