

## Report of the CSTM

### Brussels Musical Instrument Museum

26-30 October 2015

The objective of this Short Term Scientific Mission was to examine African and Asian lutes of the Brussels' museum (MIM) as a preliminary and necessary step of a wider scale project regarding the future publication (2018) of a descriptive catalogue of the non-Western lutes kept in the Paris *musée de la Musique*. As mentioned in the application form, the close links between the two institutions - their historical development and their collections – ensured a valuable organological examination that was completed with related information extracted from the MIM database.

#### **Method**

##### 1.1 Selection

The online database of the museum (<http://www.carmenis.be/eMuseumPlus>) was first consulted to figure out the number and the identity of the non-Western lutes housed in the MIM. Since the nature of the Paris' collection is mainly composed of African and Asian items and because of the limited time of a five days mission, the South American and Oceanian instruments of the MIM were left apart. Among the 220 lutes selected (51 from Africa and 169 from Asia), priority was given to instruments collected before early 20<sup>th</sup> century and/or which belonged to well-known collectors prior their entry in the museum (F. J. Fétiş, V. C. Mahillon, S. M. Tagore, King Leopold II). The other main criteria were the similarity of the MIM instruments with their Paris counterparts. When several specimens of the same instrument were represented in the collection, only two or three of them were chosen, the main criteria being their historical value and their specific features.


##### 1.2 Data procedure

To gather information collected during the examination, a specific database (FileMaker Pro) was created. The following fields were included:

- Inventory number
- Name/Vernacular
- Country/area
- Previous collection/origin acquisition
- Mode of acquisition
- Entry date
- Description
- Dimensions
- Materials
- Observations
- Bibliographical sources/references

The record of each selected musical instrument was accompanied with front, back and profile photos as well as detailed pics of organological features. The museum database “MuseumPlus” provided access to the information collected for each instrument by the curatorial staff as well as to the related archived sources. The description and sources fields were copied from the database and added or compared to the information given by Victor Charles Mahillon in his descriptive and analytic catalogue (1884-1922).

Luths MIM	
N° inventaire :	0791
Nom :	Kambre
Origine :	Guinée, Labé (région), Fouta-Djallon (territoire) population soninke
Collection, source acquis :	Louis C. Bicaise
Mode acquisition :	Donation - Schenking
Date d'entrée :	1882
Description :	
Dimensions cm l x L x P :	8,5 x 56,5 x 9,5 L caisse 32 L manche 50
Matériaux :	Bois, peau, cuir
Remarques :	La peau est maintenue sur la caisse par des faisceaux de lanières de cuir qui s'entrecroisent sur le dos de la caisse (voir photo)
Sources, bibliographie :	



Example of a record

### 1.3 Acoustic measurements

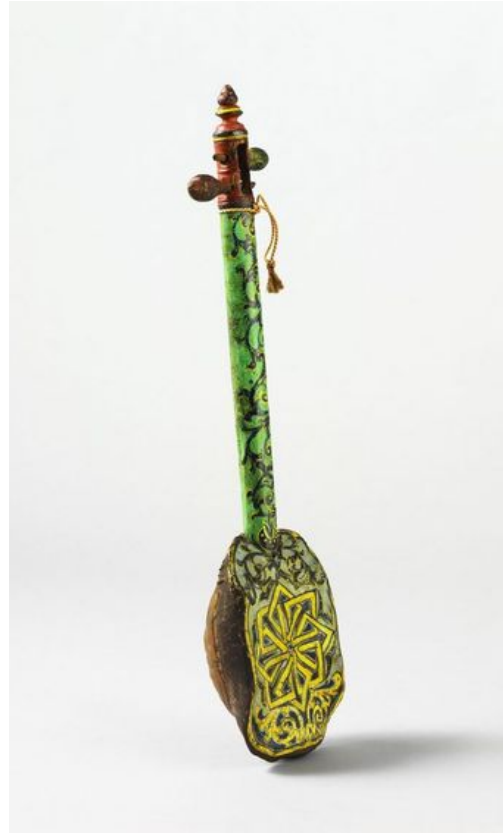
Impedance measurements were realised at the bridge location. An accelerometer (dytran 3225 f1, 2 gr), was placed near the bridge's feet and the bridge was excited with an impact hammer (dytran 5800B3). Two measurements have been made on the bass and the treble sides of the bridge. This acoustic analysis was conducted on several historical instruments collected in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was deliberately decided to apply this method to musical instruments that still possess their own (if not original) bridge and to select items with wooden as well as skinned sound tables. These measurements were undertaken to be compared with the results of the same protocol applied on the Paris' collection and that will be mentioned in the catalogue of the non-Western lutes.

### Results

During these five days CSTM, fifty-five instruments were examined and carefully documented. All of them were selected - as mentioned above - for their close organological features and/or historical links with the related Paris collection. The data collected in Brussels have not yet been thoroughly studied in a comparative perspective but the few observations already made in situ confirm the validity of the initial objective. The following pictures show few examples of the MIM musical instruments examined and correlated with their Paris counterparts.



Guinbri from the MIM collection (date of entry: 1877)



Guinbri from Paris' museum (date of entry: 1934)



Lotar LS 0034, MIM, 1969



Lotar E.2005.6.9, Paris 2005



Kwitra 0394, MIM, 1878



Kwitra E.489, Paris, 1873



Sanxian 1911, MIM, 1891



Sanxian E.559, Paris, 1873