

the idea of ethnology as an achievement of German Enlightenment, whereas Petermann only explains the origin and differences of the three terms *Anthropologie*, *Völkerkunde*, and *Ethnologie* (2004: Kap. 2).

As Vermeulen traces the origin of the different ethnoconcepts and related terms back to their first appearance in European dictionaries or publications, some of them of German origin or use like *Anthropologie*, *Statistik*, and *Volkskunde*, he gives the impression of highlighting even more the German Enlightenment and its ethnological approach too much. Albeit not intentionally, he arouses suspicion as he argues for a centripetal diffusion of ethnology from Germany or German-speaking countries as his main point of his history of ethnology.

The different terms involved in explaining the history of ethnology make it sometimes complicated to follow the author's argument. Although he italicized foreign words in his English script like *Völkerkunde* or *Ethnographie* or *ethnographia*, without knowledge of the German language it is sometimes confusing, as he often translates them within brackets. This complicates not only the reading flow but also the understanding, as there are two German words referring to the idea of ethnology (*Völkerkunde*, *Ethnologie*) but two similar words *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde* referring to different ideas which he describes as "the knowledge of people" and "the knowledge of the people," respectively. For the reader it would have been more helpful if a glossary had been provided to explain these terms and give English translations, so no additional reference or bracket would have been necessary in the text. There are within each chapter's main argumentation many subsections giving additional arguments which sometimes overload the text and disturb the flow of reading. There are also some inconsistencies especially concerning the introduction of the names of scholars for the first time, as he refers to them either by giving their full name and their biographic data or only by citing their name while the full name and the biographic data appear later or not at all (e.g., Messerschmidt, pages 88, 115; Linnaeus, pages 220, 230). Another inconsistency is the use of different designations for the same person (Tabbert and Strahlenberg for Philipp Johann Tabbert von Strahlenberg; 110f.). Finally, there are some repetitive arguments within the main sections of the book (introduction, conclusions, and chaps. 6, 7, and 8).

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**Volper, Julien** (ed.): *Giant Masks from the Congo. A Belgian Jesuit Ethnographic Heritage*. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2015. 152 pp. ISBN 978-9-4922-4415-4. Price: € 19.50

The famous Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, near Brussels, undergoing a major renovation, is closed to the public for the next couple of years. In the meantime, parts of its innumerable treasures can be enjoyed in temporary exhibitions large and small, some of which travel worldwide while others are shown in Belgian museums. One such exhibition, on view at the BELvue Museum in Brussels through part of 2015, was dedicated

to, "Giant Masks from the Congo. A Belgian Jesuit Ethnographic Heritage." Its pocket-sized catalogue features the masks and other artworks on display in the exhibition that reflected the ethnographic collecting and research conducted by Jesuit missionaries among neighbouring peoples of the Kwango-Kwilu region in the southwestern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The catalogue, written by three authors, is divided into four chapters of unequal length. The first one (12–57) is authored by Wauthier de Mahieu, an anthropologist and Jesuit priest known for his publications about the Komo peoples of northeastern DRC. Titled "Missionaries, Researchers, Collectors," it is an important addition to an underexplored topic. From the early 1920s, curators of what was then called the Museum of the Belgian Congo in Tervuren, encouraged Jesuit missionaries to collect art and artefacts, and information on ethnic origin and local use. De Mahieu includes excerpt after excerpt of letters to successive directors in which curators ask for subsidies to compensate the priests for their acquisitions. One of the missionaries, incidentally, took pains to point out that, in acquiring the pieces, "I never conduct raids. ... We bring them gifts in exchange" (27).

Covering around four decades until the country's independence in 1960, this first chapter considers five Jesuits in particular, most of whom contributed major ethnographic and linguistic monographs about the peoples they lived with. De Mahieu shows the differences in the style of collecting and documenting among these missionaries. The first ones were autodidacts: "Bit by bit we are learning the ethnographic approach, of which I knew little upon my arrival here, alas, as I was originally meant to teach at the seminary", wrote one of them to the head of Tervuren's ethnography section (13). Léon de Sousberghe, the last one under consideration, studied ethnological research methods at the University College London before starting as a researcher at the Institut de Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale, focusing on Pende art and social structures. While the Tervuren Museum wanted him to collect "objects made by the natives and used by them for their usual needs," he was sophisticated enough to recognize that changes had taken place. There were no more traditional sculpture workshops and Pende artists produced increasingly for the tourist market. In his wry reply to the curator, de Sousberghe wrote, "I see from your letter that you are, I believe, harbouring illusions on the level of primitiveness of the [Pende peoples]" (49f.).

Fascinating is the fact that some changes in art production in the Kwango-Kwilu region were triggered by the missionaries themselves. This consequence of the Jesuits' interest in local material culture is touched upon in the fourth and final chapter (88–145), "The Scarlet Giant *Kakuungu*. Functions and Ancestry of a Celebrated Mask from Bandundu (DRC)". Written by Julien Volper, assistant curator of the section of ethnography at the Museum of Tervuren and the editor of the catalogue, the chapter opens with a quote from a letter of 1938 by Father De Beir to the Museum. In it, the missionary explains how difficult it is to acquire the giant masks from their Yaka and Suku owners, "as getting rid of one is tantamount to

exposing oneself to a certain death. I am looking for an artist who can sculpt them on commission” (89). And indeed, the Jesuits sent to Tervuren a *kakuungu* mask in Suku style made for sale: without eyeholes, it shows no signs of wear and tear and is painted in fanciful colours (Fig. 57, p. 105). To be sure, such masks were routinely made in the 1930s and 1940s for visiting Europeans, but it is likely that the missionaries indirectly encouraged this practice when they began searching for sculptors to satisfy the wishes of the Tervuren Museum. I regret that the practical and theoretical ramifications of this aspect of the Jesuit “ethnographic heritage” were not explored in the catalogue.

Volper’s chapter 4 concentrates on the imposing artworks that gave the catalogue and exhibition their title, the giant Yaka and Suku masks called *kakuungu*. Among the tallest face masks of Africa and measuring on average between 85 cm and 125 cm in height, *kakuungu* is characterized by puffy cheeks, eye lashes in animal fur, and bushy hair of raffia, and a long chin. The colours are usually red and white, an expression of the mask’s ambivalent nature. Red stands for blood and vengeance, white for health – as the mask fulfilled both menacing and protective roles. The *kakuungu*, considered male, played a primary role during the initiation rituals of boys, called *mukanda* or *n-khanda* in the region. The mask protected participants against threats of evildoers, healed hemorrhage after circumcision, and controlled the rainfall to insure successful dancing and hunting. At the same time, *kakuungu* masks were believed to harm pregnant women who did not respect certain rules and punish initiates whose parents did not pay enough.

Volper does an excellent job in combing through the writings of Jesuit missionaries and professional anthropologists and art historians such as Hans Himmelheber, Renaat Devisch, and Arthur Bourgeois, to draw as complete a picture as possible of the functions of the *kakuungu* mask within and without the *mukanda* initiation, the use of the term *kakuungu* for things other than masks, and the occurrence of similar terms in neighbouring languages. The author suggests that when the *mukanda* initiation was introduced to the Yaka and Suku peoples, they had to come up with plastic and cultural expressions that fit a structured rite around circumcision. Part of these came from the neighbours, part from a local ritual foundation that, itself, was the result of much older cultural exchanges. In the end, the *kakuungu* complex belies the notion of isolated ethnic groups and illustrates the “extraordinary dynamism of African cultures” (143).

The catalogue’s two central chapters are authored by Viviane Baeke, senior curator at Tervuren’s section of ethnography. Chapter 2 (58–79) is called “Let the Masks Dance! Circumcision Masks among the Yaka, Suku, and Nkanu of Southwestern DRC,” while chap. 3 (80–87) deals with “When Sculptures Become Fishes. Therapeutic Rites among the Yaka of Southwestern DRC.” Baeke reviews the masks of neighbouring peoples that appeared during their *mukanda* male puberty rituals. The function of this rite of passage was to transmit fecundity and virility through the male line. It shared the same name and

general structure over a very wide area that went well beyond the Kwango-Kwilu region, but interestingly, the accompanying masks display a striking stylistic variability. The Jesuits collected many examples from the various populations, thus providing a survey of the types of fiber masks and wooden masks that were worn by the initiates themselves. The author also deals with the *mbwoolu* healing association of the Yaka, of which one became a member to treat sexual impotence or similar ailments. Some of the figurines used in this “cult of affliction” have names that are identical to masks used in the *mukanda* rituals, suggesting connections between initiation, healing, and protection.

The book has a few minor drawbacks: unnecessary typos (64, 109, 112, 123), the usage of “fetish” as a technical term, without quotation marks (106, 130, 137, 144), and some disconnect between the Jesuits discussed in the first chapter and those playing a role in the fourth one.

This is a most valuable contribution to the study of a rich corpus of beautiful artworks. It also sheds light on the professionalisation of 20th-century missionary collectors and the ways this affected the types of objects and information that got harvested.

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**Welch, James R., Ricardo Ventura Santos, Nancy M. Flowers e Carlos E. A. Coimbra Jr.:** Na primeira margem do rio. Território e ecologia do povo Xavante de Wedezé. Rio de Janeiro: Museu do Índio; FUNAI, 2013. 248 pp. ISBN 978-85-85986-46-9. Preço: R\$ 44.00

Na Antropologia brasileira, a elaboração de laudos para órgãos públicos tornou-se uma atividade profissional relativamente comum nas últimas décadas, de modo que as experiências acumuladas já foram transformadas em reflexões sistemáticas, em parte organizadas em coletâneas publicadas pela Associação Brasileira de Antropologia (ABA). Neste contexto, uma modalidade específica de “laudos” que exigem a *expertise* antropológica são os relatórios circunstanciados de identificação e delimitação de terras indígenas, que são elaborados para o órgão indigenista, a FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Índio). Representam o início de um processo demorado de regularização de uma terra indígena e são resultados do trabalho de um grupo técnico coordenado por um antropólogo.

Geralmente a circulação desses relatórios técnicos fica restrita às esferas administrativas e jurídicas, mas uma parte também foi disponibilizada pela ABA em suas páginas restritas aos sócios da associação. Desse modo, o livro resenhado representa uma exceção comemorável: a disponibilização exemplar de um relatório técnico de identificação e delimitação cuidadosamente editado a um público maior de leitores, como destacam em seus textos de apresentação a então presidente da FUNAI, Marta Maria do Amaral Azevedo, e o atual presidente da ABA, Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima.

Embora o título da publicação possa ser interpretado como uma alusão ao famoso conto “A Terceira Margem do Rio”, do livro “Primeiras Estórias” (1962), de João Guimarães Rosa, esta não parece ter sido a intenção dos