

CONGOCONNECT

Connections/Collections: power objects and institutions in north-east Congo (1800-1960)

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Axis 3: Cultural, historical and scientific heritage



NETWORK PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Context

The Northeast of DRCongo has been an important region in the history of Africa, geographically, culturally and politically. Despite recurrent political turmoil in postcolonial and contemporary history, scholarship of this region retained many blind spots and biases. The collections at the Royal Museum for Central Africa from this region, consisting of ethnographic objects, photographs, films and archives are rich and unique sources of a region undergoing major changes through an intense history of contacts (slave trade, colonial conquest, postcolonial conflicts). A large collection was assembled during a scientific expedition for the RMCA by the military commander Armand Hutereau (1911-13). The Hutereau collection and many smaller object sets, which constitute a significant yet underexplored part the **colonial scientific and cultural heritage of Northeast Congo, were studied in conjunction with other sources and in a comparative, international and interdisciplinary framework**. Methodologically, the project is based in its totality on the study of oral histories, archives, museum collections and the exploration of artistic methods to convey historical truth(s).

Objectives

The core of our interdisciplinary approach consisted in studying in an integrative way, **firstly**, the history of research and collecting practices in the RMCA museum in light of colonial politics and, **secondly**, the cultural history of Northeast Congo in relation to the formation of political institutions and resistance, more particularly against colonialism. **Thirdly**, the art of theatre and documentary making was explored to capture Congolese social memories of this contact history. Through this medium, local people's different and complex modalities of memory (oral tradition, dance, song, ritual,...) were captured, voiced and reflected upon, in a dialogue with Western research perspectives.

Conclusions

The project contributed to the revision of the political history of Northeast Congo which enhances understandings of contemporary conflicts to the extent that its outcome has a policy-prescriptive value and appeals to aid and peacebuilding actors in the region. Secondly, the project is innovative in its incorporation of a documentary and theatre production on Leopard-Men history as a means to voice a reality as lived by Congolese people yet in a medium that is meant to address a larger public. An educational app was designed on the same topic. Thirdly, the project brings to light a historical anthropology of a major expedition in Belgian scientific history, unstudied to this day. Finally, the project makes a major contribution to address a need that is felt in society at large today: a need for decolonisation and (digital) restitution of heritage and related knowledge. All partners helped alleviate such a need by using methods that reconnected heritage preserved in European collections back to its communities of origin.

Keywords

representation, museum collections, institutional dynamics, contested co-production, customary authority, collective therapies, insurgency, social memory, magic realism, leopard men/anioto, hybridity, interdisciplinarity, colonization, ritual, cultural appropriation, magic, fiction, stereotypes, creative documentary.

1. INTRODUCTION

The research project CONGOCONNECT entailed an interdisciplinary approach that innovatively contextualised and valorised the federal ethnographic collections from the Northeast of the DRCongo from the Royal Museum for Central Africa. This region, on the border between Equatorial and Interlacustrine Africa, has been very important in the history of Africa, geographically, culturally and politically. Despite recurrent political turmoil in postcolonial and contemporary history, invoking intermittent attention from foreign development agencies and conflict researchers, scholarship of this region retained many blind spots and biases. A large part of the RMCA collections from this region was assembled during an important scientific expedition in the history of the Belgian Congo by the military commander A. Hutereau (1911-13). This expedition competed with other major expeditions from the American Museum of Natural History (1909-15) and from the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin (1907-8). The Hutereau collection and many smaller sets of objects collected throughout the colonial period (by other historical personalities) represent a unique part of the **colonial scientific heritage** and the **cultural heritage of Northeast Congo**, but they were never truly investigated as such. We explored them as sources in light of different disciplinary angles and in an international perspective, comparing them with other important international collections.

The different facets of the project provided complementary, integrative perspectives, exploring the potential of the collection both as a unique source of colonial scientific heritage, of the cultural and political history of Northeast Congo, and for community engagement projects.

Background

The Northeast of the Congo, as a cultural bridge between Equatorial and Interlacustrine Africa, had a complex history as a **contact zone**, connecting very different social groups in each historical phase (precolonial, colonial, postcolonial). Throughout these phases diverse institutions developed to which the federal collections of the RMCA as well as the Africa archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bear witness. Although colonial collections have been criticised as colonial tools for creating knowledge of local societies in order to control them, they are also material evidence for recovering institutional histories and emic practices during the colonial era, and to hypothesize on their precedents in precolonial history.

In **precolonial** times, the region attracted populations from different origins, who adapted to a multitude of ecological niches, resulting in a wide variety of socio-political institutions, which were intricately interconnected in supra-regional networks. Since the 1870s, the region came under the control of **slave and ivory traders** (Sudanese and Zanzibari). People, goods and ideas travelled along the caravan trails, further enhancing dispersal of institutions, titles and cultural elements over large distances (e.g. *nebeli*, *mani*, etc.). The high number of **exploratory, military and scientific expeditions** between 1880 and 1910 reflected diplomatic and economic interests of Western nations in the region (e.g. G. Schweinfurth, H.M. Stanley). Belgium, Germany and Great Britain started prospecting here in competition for a slice of precious African land, leading to the military subjugation of the slave traders and the actual **colonisation**. Under colonial administration new borders were installed, and connections with the east coast and Sudan were disturbed, shifting local people's attention towards new centres

of economic and administrative activity. Colonial studies of the **cultural and political history** favoured larger-scale, centralised political realms (Nande, Mangbetu, Zande). But, the cultural and contact histories had also given rise to smaller-scale forms of socio-political organisation and more volatile movements responding to fundamental changes in society, which were hardly considered as part of political culture in colonial scholarship. After independence the region was subject to repeated periods of political turmoil until today, leaving it isolated and understudied.

The ethnographic objects, photographs and films collected at the RMCA in addition to other collections are rich and unique material sources of a region undergoing major changes through an intense history of contacts. The core of our interdisciplinary approach consisted in studying in an integrative way, **firstly**, the history of research and collecting practices in the museum in light of colonial politics and, **secondly**, the cultural history of Northeast Congo in relation to diverse contact histories. The dialectic nature of encounters is what binds together these two facets of research. To understand the role of objects in the creation of colonial knowledge enables to assess them critically as sources and make better use of them for the reconstruction of indigenous histories. **Thirdly**, in our project we take it as a crucial scholarly and moral principle that communities from which the heritage derives, or “source communities”, are to be recognised and involved in processes of reconstruction and representation of their own history. People should have the possibility to reconnect with their own cultural heritage in Belgian federal collections. Congolese social memories of the history have been explored most particularly through the arts of theatre and documentary making. Through these mediums, local people’s different and complex modalities of memory (oral tradition, dance, song, ritual,...) were captured, voiced and reflected upon, in a collaborative dialogue. The project in its totality also invested highly in community-engagement projects including the development of an educational app (see Annexe 7), in addition to a documentary and theatre performances.

2. STATE OF THE ART AND OBJECTIVES

At the onset, CONGOCONNECT was a unique research venture centred on valorising a complete regional collection by looking at it in an international and interdisciplinary perspective, using it as a resource for research in new ways, and reestablishing the bonds between the collection and its region of origin. During the execution of the project, at least one similar project was initiated, namely the Sudan Museum Network Project, coordinated by Cherri Leonardi (PI, Durham University) and Zoe Cormack (co-PI, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) with whom ideas and information were exchanged. The Sudan Museum Project's purpose was different in the sense that its fundamental goal was to reconnect colonial collections from (South) Sudan worldwide and establish a research agenda for these collections for years to come. The uniqueness of CONGOCONNECT sits in its interdisciplinary nature wherein different research strands are pursued centring on a singular regional collection cutting across disciplinary boundaries by connecting cultural history and museum anthropology research with research in contemporary arts (documentary), political science, educational science and community engagement.

A shared theoretical basis in this project is the consideration of the diverse sources and notably collections as “structured”, in the sense that they are continuously caught in between structure and agency. The concept of “structuration” goes against older, theoretical perspectives – e.g. in structuralist anthropology- wherein structure was perceived as the mental or theoretical framework that shaped people’s thoughts and actions, yet wherein factors of change and individual agency were neglected (Giddens, 1984). Characteristic of “structuration” is that structure does not exist and is perpetually in the making. Historical sources such as colonial texts are considered to be “structured” by individual agents in their practices of interpretation, negotiation and expression which they develop in line with cultural principles which seem logical to them. The fact that colonial agents, despite potentially contradicting perspectives, try to meet a certain socially agreeable understanding. This process enables that ideologies (structure) are regenerated in practice. The dialectic process is particularly embedded in discourse, in the form of official documents and language; but is also in the way people deal with objects and the material world, for example in the way objects are made, used, collected and framed in a museological display and in how people relate to them during a museum visit, or in ritual contexts.

In this project, overall, we have treated collections and other sources, and human interactions in general, as situated and created within structuration processes. In this project in particular we have developed a new, meaningful concept called “contested co-production” to study intercultural contacts and multicultural situations breaking with essentialist takes on culture and ethnicity, and pointing out multivocality and messiness in structuration processes. The concept also embraces the idea that the creation of myths and interpretation of facts are intrinsically interconnected (Verweijen and Van Bockhoven, 2020). At the same time, an ethnographically based vantage point permits coherence in analysis of the interconnections.

1) To study the CULTURAL HISTORY of the Northeast of the Congo and adjacent regions as a contact zone (1800-1960): development of socio-political institutions and resistance

[Supervisors Prof. Koen Stroeken and Prof. Inge Brinkman, UGent; Postdoctoral researcher: Dr. Vicky Van Bockhoven]

In pre-colonial times, the region attracted populations from different origins, who adapted to a multitude of ecological niches, resulting in a wide variety of inter-related socio-political institutions (Vansina, 1990). Colonial studies of the cultural history favoured large-scale, centralised political realms such as the Mangbetu, Nande and Interlacustrine kingdoms (Schildkout and Keim, 1990). But the region was also home to many smaller-scale forms of socio-political organisations e.g. boys initiation complexes and healing associations (Vansina, 1990). Since the 1870s, the region came subsequently under the control of **slave and ivory traders** from Sudan and Zanzibar, **and the Belgian colonizers** (Ivanov, 2000). These contact histories gave further rise to cultural borrowing and innovation in socio-political institutions and to more volatile movements responding to fundamental changes in society. The region notably was a breeding ground for “closed associations for collective magic” channelling resistance, inspired by poor living circumstances such as slavery, forced labour and starvation (Evans-Pritchard, 1937). While some of these new phenomena were merely evaporating movements, in many cases they became institutionalised grafting themselves upon pre-existing socio-political institutions, adapting to new circumstances and assuming diverse roles in society. In this project this process was coined by the term “institutional dynamism”, which is the result of “contested co-production” (Van Bockhoven, 2018, 2020). The colonial government who tried to retain control lumped diverse smaller-scale, new and initiation-based institutions together under the common denominator “secret societies” criminalizing them and pushing them underground, which obscured their role in history. This part of the project aspired to a more integrative focus on socio-political institutions in terms of a network, which proved particularly meaningful for understanding political developments in the postcolonial era until today.

The research has particularly focused on “collective therapies” or “closed associations for collective magic” in Northeast Congo and South Sudan between 1890 until today. These are known by the names *nebeli* (*beli*), *mani*, *saura* (*sahula*), *kpira* and *wanga*. This kind of initiation societies were/are based on the belief in and access to charms and medicines (Janzen, 1992; Evans-Pritchard, 1937). The ritual authority emanating from these collective therapies played a role in the development of political systems because such associations and their leaders could consolidate, or contest and usurp the authority of chiefs or colonial authorities, taking over functions of state when chaos was rampant. They typically impacted the growth and decline of political realms since pre-colonial times (e.g. of Mangbetu and Azande but also acephalous orders), and notably inspired anti-colonial rebellions (Hunt’s therapeutic insurgencies) (Hunt, 2015). Both the British and the Belgian colonial governments considered these phenomena as subversive, but their anti-colonial character was exaggerated as a means to legitimize their suppression (Johnson, 1991). Their suppression caused them to go underground which is why they were scarcely documented and are still discussed with discretion until today. The reconstructions of cases wherein esoteric or hidden collective therapies played a role -based on archival, collection and field research- helped to unveil an important part of political culture, correct historical biases and blind spots, and retrieve African agency in political history. The reconstruction of micro-historical case-studies of these institutions are helpful to understand macro-historical “institutional dynamism” that determined the formation of political history. Furthermore, later political movements such as the Simba’s, Lord’s Resistance Army and

MaiMai share significant features with early collective therapies such as the use of ritual-medicinal substances immunizing fighters (e.g. by turning bullets into water). The understanding of historical institutions thus helps to improve understandings of contemporary political cultures, and local institutions, in political science and conflict studies today, wherein metaphysical and ritual aspects are often neglected, including the role of power objects, charms and medicinal substances. This renewed research focus resulted in a special issue (edited by Verweijen and Van Bockhoven) on Customary Authority in the Past and the Present and a blog for London School of Economics webpage on Public Authority titled *How colonial understandings of customary authority skew policy interventions* (see Annex 4). Finally also a book project (work in progress) is being drafted titled *Revisiting Rebellion: collective therapies in the political history of Northeast-Congo and South Sudan (ca. 1850-today)* (other output listed under 4 and 5).

2) To obtain insight into COLLECTING AND RESEARCH practices in the museum in relation to Belgian colonial politics and within a wider geo-political framework

[Supervisors: Prof. Koen Stroeken, UGent; Dr. Maarten Couttenier, Africa Museum, dept. colonial history; doctoral research: Hannelore Vandenbergen]

The high number of **exploratory, military and scientific expeditions** between 1880 and 1910 reflect diplomatic and economic interests of Western nations (e.g. H.M. Stanley). Belgium, Germany, France and Great Britain started prospecting here in competition for a slice of African land, leading to the military subjugation of the slave traders and the actual **colonization**. The purpose is to contextualise the creation of scientific knowledge about the colony as connected to a colonial ideology and a political agenda. Politicised abstractions were made of complex realities in the colony. Ethnographic objects constituted the “matter of fact” details entangled in this dialectical process, materialising understandings of the colonised. The role of objects in colonial discourse –as opposed to texts- has hardly been studied. Hence, attention is paid to the instrumentality of ethnographic objects in the creation of colonial knowledge. The central case-study for this research objective concerns the Hutereau expedition. Ethnographic fieldwork permitted to identify the history of Chief Maroka as a vantage point for interpreting the historical data on the Haut-Uele province in the colonial archives.

Hannelore Vandenbergen's doctoral research is a historical ethnography trying to trace narratives surrounding the so-called “Hutereau collection” from the RMCA while looking at oral narratives on the history of chief Maroka in the city of Faradje, DRCongo, where the Hutereau expedition (1911-1913) passed. The thesis thus revises the dialectical relationship between collections (*ethnographica*, archives, photos) and social memory at both ends of the contact zone. While seeing and listening to Maroka's present-day descendants and opening registers for a diverse range of methodologies, this study really tries to find its way in the field of Museum Anthropology/Museum Ethnography within a postcolonial setting. After taking into account the advice of a belspo scientific committee member and anthropologist – “why would you again historicize both Congolese ancestors, descendants and the ethnographic objects” – the work tries to show how an ethnographic museum researcher *may* work based on collection, object and narrative-specificity. It also shows that we cannot *know* the eight thousand ethnographic objects (of the Hutereau collection), but that we can learn a lot from and interact with objects'

details, objects' absence or presence in DRCongo and related discussions, sentiments and hopes/beliefs. And that this is a matter of focus, methodology and representation. The text itself searches for self-reflexivity and creative writing boundaries within Anthropology.

3) To develop an understanding of CONGOLESE SOCIAL MEMORY in relation to the history of institutions and contact histories

[Supervisors: Chokri Ben Chikha, Dept. of Film, Photography and Drama, KASK (coordinator); Prof. Inge Brinkman (UGent); Dr. Vicky Van Bockhoven, Postdoctoral researcher (UGent); doctoral research: Jean-Michel Kibushi]

As part of a doctorate in arts and art sciences the aim has been to direct and produce a creative documentary on magic realism in writing and directing a creative documentary and a documentary theatre show, while exploring and reflecting on magic realism as a means to convey a ritual reality. The subject is the theme of leopard men, also known as *anioto*, represented by an infamous sculpture bending over a sleeping victim in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, now the Africamuseum, in Tervuren, Belgium. The sculpture specifically refers to leopard men of the Bali ethnic group in Northeast DRCongo during the colonial era. This image relates to a strong myth in colonial and postcolonial discourse, which associates black Africa with irrational and dark violence, a jungle without justice and moral order. The question is: how can we make sense of the history of leopard men without conforming to such stereotypical thinking? This PhD-project addresses this question from an artistic point of view, at once relating the question to theories of magical realism, and to the production of a documentary film and a theatre show.

The production of a **documentary** (see Annexe 1 for Synopsis) and a **theatre production** (see Annexe 2 for the flyer and 3 for newspaper articles on the event) are the preferred tools for understanding and voicing historical facts allowing to take into account the otherworldly aspects that constitute the basis of leopard men's practices. The factual basis of the story are documented court hearings of an important local leader held responsible for a series of *anioto* killings in 1933. At the centre of the action is a customary or traditional chief who is accused of murder and is obliged to answer the colonial officer's questions in court. The public is faced with a confrontation between colonial justice and the traditional authority that owns the land on which the colony has imposed its authority and laws. Through this lens, the documentary unveils Western misunderstandings and stereotypes focusing on the barbarism and primitivism of leopard men, which has nourished Western artistic imaginations to this day. The methodology is centered on the hybridity or syncretism of the documentary consists in combining real shots, film archives, photographs, animated sequences, documents and historical reconstructions. This hybridity and syncretism make it possible to take into account, without subscribing to the colonial myth, the otherworldly aspects that constitute the basis and locally-experienced reality of leopard men's practices. The discursive academic **dissertation** entails a theoretical reflection upon magical realism exploring it as an artistic modality and tool for understanding leopard-men practices, including rituals that were crucial to practices of self –defence, wherein otherworldly powers were co-opted.

3. METHODOLOGY

All the partners used a combination of archival, collection and ethnographic field research for their different goals:

1. Studying Archival Documents

In view of different research objectives, colonial, missionary and museum archives were studied for several purposes. Colonial archives reflect processes of interpretation by the author, trying to come to terms with a reality with which he is not familiar, filling in the gaps in knowledge with culturally reasonable conjectures, rumours and fantasies (Stoler, 1992). They reveal the structuring principles of colonial (or missionary) logic which is of importance to the study of the history of science and colonial ideology. Despite such biases, colonial administrative and ethnographic reports do contain specific data of cultural phenomena and events in the colony, and empirically verifiable data, such as names of individuals and places, dates, descriptions and culturally-specific terminology and related objects. Often, the interpretations of the authors also contain fragments of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the atmosphere, tensions and rumours providing important insights into the complex dialectics within colonial society. Such data were interpreted critically by contextualising them culturally and historically in conjunction with other sources (oral histories, object lists and entry books, visual sources such as photographs).

For the reconstruction of micro-histories of collective therapies and resistance the the judicial, administrative and state security archives of the Africa Archives of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were crucial. These contain ethnographic studies and documents pertaining to the monitoring of secret societies in Belgian Congo (see Van Bockhoven, 2020). Hundreds of documents were retrieved providing basic colonial ethnographic information on "secret societies", more appropriately collective therapies, which were suppressed by the colonial government in Belgian Congo. The anthropologist Evans-Pritchard's papers, kept in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, provided more detailed information obtained from insiders to the collective therapies, notably of the *mani* society.

Archives studied by the partners are: RMCA History and Ethnographic Archives; Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs Africa Archives; Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and of Military History (Brussels); Musical Instruments Museum (Brussels); Musée du Quai Branly; Archives of the Great Lodge of Freemasonry (Brussels); KADOC KUL; Archives of the Abbey of Tongerlo; Archives of the Domenican Abbey (Leuven); Sudan Archives at Durham University (UK); University Archives Ghent University; Administrative Archives kept at the Province of Haut-Uele, Isiro, DR Congo.

2. Studying museum collections

In this project ethnographic objects have been considered as sources in the widest sense possible, entangled in processes of structuration. Capturing the complexities of structuration in human experience and output necessarily entails moving away from the textual, considering social interactions and generation of knowledge in terms of people's bodily and sensory relationships with the material world. We have opted for an active model of the object's cultural biography (Kopytoff, 1986) incorporating the object's "agency" moving people to think, feel, and act (Gell, 1998; Hoskins, 2006: 75-77). Objects reflect emic ontologies (Henare et al, 2007) and objects are the medium through which generation of knowledge and ideologies occurs in a

process of “objectification” (Miller, 2005: 7-10). The concept of “objectification” is a theoretical means for overcoming the duality between materiality and meaning which can be applied to many different contexts wherein people are making sense of objects. It for instance occurs in the museum visitor’s interaction with objects, who recognises and sees values, ideas and social distinctions reconfirmed in the material form of the objects. Concepts such as “agency” and “objectification” enable to analyse people’s complex emotional, cognitive and sensory relationships with objects, e.g. both as scientific evidence in trials and museum contexts, and as power objects in ritual contexts and institutional histories. Through the reconstitution of object-biographies, the study of their material form and traces, and of complex person-object relations, we can verify how and why some objects have been singled out, put to the fore and redefined to objectify particular knowledge (incl. ontologies). Besides studying objects in museum contexts, we also used photographs of objects as mnemonic devices in fieldwork to study local recollections of objects, and verify their continued relevance and use in contemporary society. This resulted in concrete efforts to reconnect source communities with heritage in the RMCA and elsewhere, and its use for educational and community-building activities.

With regards to the study of the political history of collective therapies and resistance in Northeast Congo powerful ritual objects were identified in collections, particularly in the RMCA and in the American Museum of Natural history. These consisted of amulets such as bracelets or containers with magico-medicinal substances that were -for instance- used by the members of the *nebeli* society for protection, and of regalia of chiefs which were anointed which such means to enhance chiefly power. Object research helps to collect another kind of information on the subject of “collective therapies” which is otherwise scarcely documented, or mostly from a biased colonial perspective. How charms and medicines were used adds to the understanding of practices and underlying power dynamics. Connecting the “material” information with data from sources where the awe-inspiring effect of these medicines are explained give insight in the sensory and affective histories of the institutions concerned, that help us researchers assess their impact. These objects or substances protected, harmed and healed, inspired fear and comforted, and procured power to the owners. Looking at the objects highlights the ritual, sensory and affective dimensions of political power play throughout history. This dimension is overlooked by political scientists while similar amulets and magico-medicinal substances continue to play a role in contemporary power struggles in Northeast Congo, e.g. among MaiMai and LRA militias in Northeast Congo, though which are poorly understood.

Museum collections which were studied: the A. Huetereau expedition collections as well as other collections from Northeast Congo at the RMCA, Van Mecklenburg Expedition collection at the Ethnology Museum in Berlin (Humboldt Forum), Congo Expedition Collection at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, E. Evans-Pritchard collections and papers at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford.

3. The exploration of oral history

Historically-informed field research in Haut-Uele, Bas-Uele and Tshopo Provinces provided us with a better insight into culturally specific understandings and local recollections of the investigated contact histories, in conjunction with other sources mentioned (archives, collections mostly). From the interviews conducted, it appeared that the social memory regarding contact history is lively and strongly connected to forms of customary leadership and identities. All partners explored the possibilities for reconstructing history based on anthropological methodologies pursuing in-depth interviews with individuals and focus groups based on

informed consent, and by using objects, photography and films from Belgian as well as other scientific collections as mnemonic devices. In some localities, such tactile traces of history have gone missing due to climatic conditions, colonial collecting, and political turmoil and are coveted as a result. Historical recollections existing in stories, ritual, dance performances and songs were also investigated.

For the research on the role of collective therapies, Vicky Van Bockhoven carried out multi-sited ethnographic research during four field visits of approximately 1 to 1,5 months along the axis of Kisangani-NiaNia and then northwards to Niangara and from there eastward to Dungu. Research was also done along the axis Kisangani-Banalia-Buta in the Bas-Uele Province. About 35 interviews were carried out focusing on memories of leopard men and collective therapies such as nebeli, mani, saura, kpira. The fieldwork not only revealed that several of the historical collective therapies mentioned in Belgian colonial records as secret societies instigating rebellion, and described by Evans-Pritchard in South Sudan in the 1920s, continue to play a role in the political sphere and as daily protective means today. Kpira was for instance used in Niangara in the last decade to block the Lord's Resistance Army from crossing the Uele River after attacks had occurred in 2011. In the research method, which consisted of individual and focus group interviews based on informed consent, photographs of objects were used as mnemonic devices to check whether objects looked familiar to people and to record any recollections. Using photographs and sharing them by means of paper and digital copies certainly helped to form a bond with informants in the field.

A case-in-point, investing largely in community outreach, are the contexts in which the documentary and theatre performances were made, focusing essentially on local and active recollections of the history of leopard men interwoven with the experience of colonialism. Open air film projections and theatre performances were staged in both rural and urban areas in the region itself (Tshopo Province), as well as in the urban milieus of Kisangani and Kinshasa. This approach most particularly illustrates the overall research method of the project using photographs, objects, films as mnemonic devices, evoking memories of for instance initiation, ritual and self-defence practices, which at times instigated strong emotions among the public present. This encouraged discussions in the audience which served as new source materials, especially in terms of the representation of history, the local recollections and experiences of this history, and its relevance today. Film projections and theatre performance were also organised for academic audiences in Kisangani and Kinshasa, in order to discuss the relationships between history and imagination, art and reality in a more scholarly environment. This method is intrinsically interwoven with investment in community outreach efforts involving different Congolese audiences.

4. Artistic reflection and practice in the making of a documentary and theatre

The method for this part of the project is resumed by the term "**action-research**" based on a permanent and cyclical relationship between theory and practice. Cyclic evaluation of the artistic outcomes through interactions with target publics and academia –e.g. through the film projections mentioned above- was crucial to this process for both discursive and creative aspects underway to producing concrete results --i.e. following the cycle of design- experiment-validation- develop alternatives. These activities underlie the concept of the knowledge factory wherein the fabric of historical truth on the one hand and the fabric of artistic likelihood on the other hand are interwoven.

The documentary film and documentary theatre are both based on syncretic or hybrid methods allowing to present history as a concoction of historical facts, imaginations and otherworldly experiences at once. The interdisciplinary method draws on inspirational examples and methods from cinema, theatre, photography, animation, archive processing (De Legendre, 2005) as part of the intention to create new kinds of knowledge. Concretely this entails diverse artistic activities –some of them serving both the documentary and the play such as acting-: script writing, creation of graphics, directing the play and the documentary, recruiting and rehearsing with local actors, filming scenes, the preparation of animation film characters, decors, accessories, the editing process for the documentary.

Recent scholarly work of Vicky Van Bockhoven (2018) and Arsène Mwaka Bwenge (2010) changed the way we look at leopard men by highlighting the political dimension of their practices. Instead of only addressing the colonial myth of the leopard men, their interpretations lead to an understanding of leopard men as an aspect of political culture. In the documentary and theatre the otherworldly practices and experiences are put to the fore as part of a reality in the Congolese contexts using magical realism as an artistic modality to explore them. The artistic movement of magical realism produced remarkable art works in Europe and Latin America. This led to theoretical analyses of this artistic stream in scholarly literature. However, most of these analyses concern written and canonical art forms wherein Western art productions remain the norm. In Africa, both academic theorisation and artistic production on magic realism remains low, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Different kinds of sources on magical realism are explored for an artistic and discursive reflection, most particularly the oeuvre of two artists identified as magic realists: Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier (1904), and Congolese Paul Lomami Tchibamba (1914).

5. Methodological synthesis: Linking data to theoretical framework

The three researchers on the project worked with mixed methodologies related to different existing sources as well as creating new sources, combining oral history, archival and material culture research and artistic practice and hence contributing to new theories and knowledge production with a “fresh” perspective. A first pillar of this sort of postcolonial outlook can be seen as the *materiality discourse*. All researchers experienced that working with objects, their legacy, and their *agency* stirs up affect, emotional and sensory experiences, on both sides of the contact. It contains what is muted in colonial archives, and what is and what is voiced and re-(en)acted by interviewees. The materiality discourse comprises thinking, speaking and writing about the objects and the people who initially engaged in their assembly. All the researchers on the CongoConnect project experienced that through their type of action-research, another layer in their research is *praxeology*. It is the ability of switching from practical research (in the museum, with collections) to theory and vice versa, in order to move forward in the context-specificity of the fieldwork setting. All the researchers were fully submerged in a *focus on the archives* too, willing to submerge and then step away from their data-saturation. The CongoConnect researchers engaged next in looking at objects in a broader sense, leaving an openness for new possibilities as cited above. Last, the *visceral performance of orality* is addressed in the researchers’ work, embracing the power of the present and history both provided in raw and symbolic shapes via oral history.

Advice of the Follow-Up Committee

Advice from the Follow-Up Committee led to closer collaborations of partner 1 UGent (Vicky Van Bockhaven), studying institutional dynamics and formation of political institutions and resistance in the precolonial and colonial history, with political scientists and development scholars working in Northeast Congo and adjacent regions. In this way the bridge between historical and contemporary studies was made which gave the historical research in this project a stronger policy-prescriptive value.

4. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This project contributed, in several ways, to innovative research and valorization of museum collections. In the past decades ethnographic collections have suffered neglect in hindsight of postcolonial paradigms considering them as biased sources. This project contributed to a renewed and trending revival of material culture studies studying person-object relations as a fundamental aspect of our human nature and being in the world, engaging for instance with people's sensory, cognitive and emotional relationships with objects as part of negotiations of meanings and discourses ("objectification") compared to the better studied role of language, texts and speech (Henare et al, 2007). The innovation in this project consists in the fact that the RMCA's historical collections are used as sources for multiple purposes. They are for instance deployed as sources to gain insight into the working of collective therapies – more particularly in ritual practices- which have played an empowering role in political history and provided people with political leverage. Moreover these historical phenomena share features with contemporary politico-religious actors –e.g. ritually-empowered militias such as MaiMai- studied by political scientists who seldom focus on exactly their ritual power base (the magico-medicinal substances and amulets).
2. Building on point 1, this project touched upon contemporary public debates regarding decolonization of museums and restitution. Worldwide formerly colonized communities – and particularly also diaspora groups- reclaim authorship of their history and control over their heritage via cultural projects, academic work, exhibitions and activism. With our project we have made initial steps to alleviate this need by facilitating source communities' reconnections with heritage preserved in European and American museums. Recent decades' digitization projects in museums and archives facilitate better access to collection data, yet remain underexplored for this end. During fieldwork, the researchers in this project shared photographs and data of collections and used these as a resource in educational and focus group activities as part of new object-centered methodologies. This was done by taking object photographs and older field photographs back in the field to use them as mnemonic devices in interviews (see Peers and Brown 2003); by sharing these images with the wider communities during community-gatherings wherein photographs were exhibited or shown in a presentation; by handing paper and digital copies to the representatives of the communities and to educators. For example, former historical chiefs and kin were identified on photographs, colonial and indigenous locations were identified and sometimes seen for the first time. With this method a foundation was laid to pursue a larger-scale and more sustained

“digital restitution” project which will be carried out in the context of a new BRAIN-project AFRISURGE which builds on CONGOCONNECT wherein digital restitution will be explored as a resource for hands-on community and peacebuilding initiatives.

3. This project contributed to an **innovative approach** in the study of institutional histories in Africa. Going against biased, fragmentary and static understandings of cultural and political institutions -a legacy from the colonial era- institutions are revisited as interconnected and co-produced within a network and as part of historical processes. The concept of “institutional dynamism” was introduced as an intrinsic characteristic of local institutional networks (Vicky Van Bockhaven, 2018). The concept of “contested co-production” mentioned above was especially introduced to characterise the ongoing process of development, adoption and adaptation of institutions in intercultural contexts such as the colonial society, underlying institutional dynamics. Special attention was given to the micro-historical study of collective therapies regarded as subversive and pushed underground by colonial governments, which caused them to be poorly studied until today, although they are a significant indicator of African agency. The study of criminalized institutions channeling critiques and opposition to hegemonic and colonial forms of rule is important to shed colonial biases from the past that continue to **shape media representations and foreign interventions** in contemporary development and peacebuilding projects (Verweijen and Van Bockhaven, 2020; Van Bockhaven, 2020). In an article in the Washington Post in 2019, Belgian political scientists Kristof Titeca explained that he testified at The Hague in a court case against a commander of the LRA and that the jury could not understand the supernatural motivations of a man -once kidnapped and trained as a child soldier- who felt he was watched and controlled by spirits. Western scientific principles and juridical institutions, rooted in a secular worldview, are ill-equipped to judge actions that are inspired by beliefs in a supernatural world, and easily cast such actions and beliefs as irrational. This project has contributed to understanding Congolese political cultures by focusing on the particular cultural logic entailed in them.
4. A better insight in institutional histories in terms of networks – going beyond colonial biases and blind spots- are in the final analysis helpful to understand their legacies in contemporary politics and conflicts in the region. In view of this, collaborations with conflict and development researchers have been established. The special issue realized in the context of this project (Verweijen and Van Bockhaven, 2020) and the resulting LSE blog *How colonial understandings of customary authority skew policy interventions* (see Annex 4) are a result of such collaborations. Both publications, and especially the blog, are meant to sensitize aid agencies and their personnel for the persistence of past biases and repeated mistakes which compromise the successful implementation of projects. These collaborations with scholars in political and development science actually led to the new BRAIN-project AFRISURGE also aimed at improved aid and peacebuilding interventions in East and Central African countries.
5. Our project has a pioneering role in the uncovering of a substantial part of the Belgian colonial scientific history by studying the Hutereau expedition alongside other significant ethnographic endeavors. However, Vandenberghe’s thesis explains that little to very little social memory of the Hutereau expedition or the person of Armand Hutereau himself is present in the uppermost north of Northeastern DR Congo. Instead, these facts or type of expeditions were often remembered via “side paths”: the construction of the old bricks road (1896) as the embodiment of the growing colonial brutality and related fears and destructions, the old prison (“hell on earth”), a massacre near the village of Nganzi,

Maroka's tomb in Kisangani Ronvo, thunder stones. Secondly, there is an urge to rather speak about the heroism of local characters such as a chief Maroka, about the importance of family relations and cosmopraxis related to our western museum collections. These narratives are vital to the recovery of the region (heavily attacked by the LRA rebellion in 2008 and 2009). Colonial collecting practices attained meaning(s) in this project through ethnographic synthesis. By connecting seemingly insignificant details in collections, one can get a better understanding of the daily lives of historical characters on both sides of the contact. Nonetheless, these (historical) narratives underline the double role in the present: for intercultural dialogue and to make the museum ethnographically relevant again.

6. In addition to peer-reviewed publications and Ph.D. theses (see below under 5), one of the domains our project invested in thoroughly is community outreach in the form of an educational product, a theatre performance and a documentary. An educational app (see Annexe 7) has been developed, targeting a 12- to 18-year old (museum) public to improve their knowledge of leopard men history. This occurred in collaboration with Jo Tondeur (Prof. Educational Design, VUB/UGent) and occurred as part of the course work of students Educational Design and African Studies (under supervision of Inge Brinkman, Vicky Van Bockhaven). The app will be available in the Google app store for free (this goal is still being pursued), and will be designed to suit different digital fora (computers and smartphones). It takes the shape of a quiz, wherein the user will go through a series of questions, leading to multiple choice answers by means of which the user will learn about leopard men history and most significantly about its faulty colonial representation as irrational. The educational design of the app as well as the results of the usage will contribute to the know-how and experience of educational specialists and designers to develop educational applications as an aspect of applied science.
7. In addition to the previous point, the documentary and theatre performances are based on collaborative engagements with (diverse) Congolese communities -source, scholarly and other communities- to take part in the discussion and creation of Congolese history. The results are still to be distributed widely among Congolese publics and beyond. It would be recommendable to incorporate the collaborative method used in future projects and to aim for a large distribution of research results leading to a better historical and cultural awareness among a wide public as a source for wellbeing and social cohesion (see below under dissemination).

5. DISSEMINATION AND VALORISATION

Besides afore-mentioned activities in the course of research, including reconnecting source communities with heritage in European museum collections, and screenings of films in the context of fieldwork, the following specific dissemination activities were realised:

Workshops

- Series of Workshops on Congo Research in Material Culture and Art History
 - Session 1 (May 2017) at Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia (invited: Vicky Van Bockhaven, Hannelore Vandenbergen, Maarten Couttenier)
 - Session 2 (May 2018) at UGent, Dept. of Languages and Cultures (organisers: Vicky Van Bockhaven and Hannelore Vandenbergen) (Participants from Ghent University, UEA, the University of North Carolina (Art History), Yale University, RMCA)
- International author workshop for Special Issue on Customary Authority in the Past and the Present for the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2 October 2017 (co-organisers Vicky Van Bockhaven and Judith Verweijen, UGent, Conflict Research Group)

Conferences and Seminars

- Seminar (invited), History Dept, University of Durham: *Revisiting Rebellion*, 28 October 2019 (Vicky Van Bockhaven)
- WARS seminar (invited) Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts: *Revisiting Rebellion*, 16 October 2019 (Vicky Van Bockhaven)
- RMCA PhD Day, November 2018: What the Hutereau collection in the 21st century is good for (Thomas 2016) (Paper by Hannelore Vandenbergen)
- ASAUK, September 2018: Spiritual healing and politics: the case of mani in a longue durée and cross-border perspective (South Sudan, DRCongo, 1880-today) (Paper by Vicky Van Bockhaven and Naomi Pendle, London School of Economics)
- RMCA Summer school, July 2018: Objecten als lens voor (orale) geschiedenis (Paper by Hannelore Vandenbergen)
- Congo Research Network Meeting, April 2018 (chair): Material and Living Memory: Congolese Histories through Museum Collections. (Hannelore Vandenbergen –panel convenor-, Maarten Couttenier –participant- and Vicky Van Bockhaven –chair)
- Le Mans Université, Mémoires de l'esclavage et de la colonisation: Historiographie, Arts, Musées, November 2017: Carrying the Hutereau expedition for the Museum of Belgian Congo (1911-1913): The Porters, stories from Faradje, DRC (Paper by Hannelore Vandenbergen)
- ASAUK, September 2016: Panel on Customary Authority in the Congo: power and conflict in past and present (Panel conveners Vicky Van Bockhaven and Judith Verweijen)
- ASAUK, September 2016: Connections/Collections: power objects and institutions in Northeast Congo (1800-1960) (Paper by Vicky Van Bockhaven)
- Universita della Calabria, Images, représentations et imaginaires du Soi et de l'Autre : confronter cultures savantes et populaires pour contribuer à la stabilisation du Congo, Mai 2016: The representation of the Other and the self in the Hutereau collection (1911-

1913) in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren (Paper by Hannelore Vandenbergen)

- Congo Research Network Conference 'Contemporary Congolese Studies', June 2015, Cambridge : Anioto, leopard men from the east of the Congo (ca. 1890-1934): the embeddedness of anti-colonial resistance in local political culture (Paper by Vicky Van Bockhoven)
- CESAH, UGent, May 2015: Anioto, leopard men from the east of the Congo (ca. 1890-1934): the embeddedness of anti-colonial resistance in local political culture (Paper by Vicky Van Bockhoven)

Educational Activities

- Development of an educational app (see Annexe 7) on Leopard Men History in collaboration with students Educational Design (UGent, Prof. Jo Tondeur) to be available for free via Google App store (initiated by Vicky Van Bockhoven in collaboration with Jo Tondeur, Inge Brinkman, Jean-Michel Kibushi and students African Studies and Educational Science, UGent)
- Walk & Talk Luipaardman, Museum aan de Stroom, 27/11/2016 (guided tour by Vicky Van Bockhoven and panel regarding the museum representation and history of the Leopard Men Statue from the RMCA)
- Teaching activities at UGent: the project research on leopard men, collective therapies, collection research and critical museology have led to teaching sessions in our African Studies program (Vicky Van Bockhoven, Inge Brinkman).

Theatre Performance and Documentary

- The **documentary theatre** shows of "Nkoymagie, Anioto/leopard men" organised in Kinshasa both at popular, academic and museum venues. These shows were promoted through television and radio broadcasting. In total, 1,780 persons have watched the spectacle between 20 November and 15 December 2019.
- As soon as the **documentary** film "Anioto, Leopard Men: Myths and Realities" is finished, it will begin its international career at the special edition of the AfrikaFilmFestival 2020 in Leuven, Belgium, which will devote a special programme to Congolese cinema on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Congo's independence. Steps are also underway with the Institut Français de Kinshasa to include the show in the programming of Africa 2020, which is dedicated to African culture in France. With time the documentary will also be adapted for broadcasting on public television channels in DRCongo, Belgium and elsewhere.

As explained above collaborative practices and debate have been a crucial part of the action research and the fabrication of alternative takes on leopard men history. With the support of COFED in the Democratic Republic of Congo, after the first performances in 2018 in Kinshasa, we organised a series of public performances of our documentary theatre show NKOYMAGIE, in academic and popular circles, throughout the city of Kinshasa. Especially the theatrical performances in popular locations in the capital Kinshasa were a major cultural and social event. Our show brought together people of different faiths, political and philosophical opinions, to reflect on the themes of politics, violence and leopard symbolism in wider society. Participants in the debate expressed their opinion, without limitations. By

using film and documentary theatre as mediums, which are very popular in Congo, we offer the public the opportunity to affirm socio-political cohesion through a better knowledge of the country's history.

Ph.D. Theses

- The doctorate of Jean-Michel Kibushi, entitled: "ANIOTO, LEOPARD MEN: MYTHS AND REALITIES" is a joint project of KASK and UGent, under supervision of Chokri Ben Chikha, Inge Brinkman and Vicky van Bockhoven. The project consists of 2 parts, whereby the artistic part is currently being realised. The theatre spectacle is presently being performed in Kinshasa (see Annexe 2 and 3) and will be touring in the country in the course of 2020. The documentary film now knows a mock-up version and will be finished in 2020. In addition to the artistic component, an academic thesis is being written, that stands in close interaction with the artistic aspect. For this academic part all sources have been gathered and much theoretical reading has been realised, notwithstanding bureaucratic and administrative hurdles that had to be taken in the beginning of the project. After finishing the documentary film, the academic reflection will be written.
- A second doctorate, by Hannelore Vandenberghe, has reached its final stage. It is planned to be finished after a prolonged (twin) maternity leave in 2019-2020 (and corona measures) and an upcoming prolongation of employment in the RMCA from 1 August 2020 until 30 November 2020. Vandenberghe's thesis is titled *Chief Maroka (1884-1927) and the Hutereau expedition (1911-1913): An anthropology of (post)colonial layers of agency and exchange in Northeast Democratic Republic of Congo / the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren*. The starting point of every chapter is either a historical figure, the life history of present-day fieldwork participants, or memory or event while military and scientific expeditions in the Congolese Haut-Uele province during the years 1896-1913. The thesis itself is divided into four chapters, of which the first three chapters are finished and revised. One last chapter, as well as the introduction, conclusion and references are being adapted:
 1. Maroka as a heuristic for the Hutereau expedition (Mission Ethnographique de l'Uélé-Ubangi, 1911-1913)
 2. Nalingi kobanda na koloba ya lisolo na Aru, Ituri, DRC: Dwelling on spaces and memory
 3. Playing double games: Chief Maroka from Faradje (1900-1927)
 4. Re-contextualizing the Hutereau Expedition (1911-1913)

Research Stays abroad

- Collection Research Grant of the American Museum of Natural History, New York (Vicky Van Bockhoven)
- Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia (Vicky Van Bockhoven)
- Ethnographic fieldwork: in Faradje, RDC (Hannelore Vandenberghe); in Buta, in Tshopo provinces (Avakubi, Bafwasende, NiaNia) (Vicky Van Bockhoven and Jean-Michel

Kibushi), in Bas-Uele (Buta) (Vicky Van Bockhaven), in Haut-Uele (Isiro, Niangara, Rungu, Dungu) (Vicky Van Bockhaven); in Maniema (Jean-Michel Kibushi).

Community Outreach

- Jean-Michel Kibushi organized theatre shows and film screenings in DRC, working with local actors and informants of source communities, and actively involving diverse Congolese publics in discussing and adapting the histories presented (see flyer Nkoymagie in Annex 2, and article newspapers related to this event in Annexe 3).
- Several meetings in Faradje with Vandenbergen's Congolese partners resulted in a letter written to RMCA director Guido Gryseels, asking to co-create a joined photo project in the RMCA and Faradje, including application for presentation at the TAPAS/CARAM conference (Dec 2-3 2019, UGent, *Restitution of Colonial Collections in Europe: Possibilities, Challenges, Dilemmas*).
- In Vandenbergen's research, a particular result was also sharing photographs and knowledge with the youngsters of Faradje. A youth's atelier was organized together with the local ngo "Action pour la Promotion Rurale" (APRU) (<http://aprurdc.com>), to see and touch upon how they thought of their ancestral and colonial history. Years later now, this creative initiative has grown into an idea by APRU and Pax Pay-Bas in regards to a mobile peace-and-education exhibition in Haut-Uele. For this, Pax has requested the collaboration of the educational department in the RMCA. Part of the exhibition would consider ancestral and thus more traditional ways of reconciliation.
- During multi-sited research Van Bockhaven worked with and shared reproductions displaying historical persons and power objects with the source communities concerned. A method was adopted from the American Museum of Natural History to distribute flash cards which people can easily consult on their smartphones. Similar data sets were also digitally restored to institutions for higher education (Université de l'Uele, and several Instituts Pédagogiques where teachers are trained). A more sustainable and structural project for digital restitution -based on these preliminary efforts- will be part of the new BRAIN-project AFRISURGE.

Media interventions

Radio Interviews for the channel of the University of Kisangani, Le Flambeau de l'Orient:

- May 2019: Vicky Van Bockhaven on the importance of collection research
- September 2019: Jean-Michel Kibushi on research of leopard men history and representation and the making of a documentary

Blog post on Public Authority for London School of Economics (LSE) by Vicky Van Bockhaven and Judith Verweijen: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/02/19/colonial-understandings-customary-authority-policy-aid-interventions/>

Articles on theatre production of Jean-Michel Kibushi (see Annex 2 and 3)

Website: <https://www.congoconnect.ugent.be/>

6. PUBLICATIONS

- Verweijen, J. & V. Van Bockhaven (eds). 2020. Special Issue: "Customary Authority in Central and East Africa: Power, Conflict and Social Mobilization in Past and Present", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (1st issue, February 2020) (peer-reviewed A1, Open Access: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjea20/14/1?nav=tocList>)
- Van Bockhaven, V. 2020. "Anioto and Nebeli: Local Power Bases and the Negotiation of Customary Chieftaincy in the Belgian Congo (ca. 1930-1950)", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (1st issue, February 2020) (peer-reviewed A1, Open Access: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2019.1710363>)
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- Van Bockhaven, V. 2017, "Kongo Across the Waters [Book Review]", *African Arts*, 503:4. (book review, peer-reviewed A1 journal)
- Vandenberghe, H. 2019. Mythes, Faits, Récits? La Représentation de l'Autre et du Soi dans la Collection Hutereau (1911-1913) au Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale de Tervuren. In: Giordano Rosario, Quareta Edoardo and Dibwe Dia Mwembu Donatien (Eds), *Dynamiques Sociales et Représentations Congolaises (RD Congo): L'Expérience Fait la Différence. Volume hommage à Bogumil Jewsiewicki*. Paris: L'Harmattan: 113-126.

Works in progress :

- Van Bockhaven, V. The Leopard Men from Northeast Congo: history and colonial representation (monograph)
- Van Bockhaven, V. Revisiting Rebellion: the role of collective therapies in political histories Northeast Congo and South Sudan (monograph)
- Vandenberghe, H. *Minya avo fetro ya? Can we be chief of the trees?* How a coincidental archival encounter with chief Maroka (1884-1927) from Faradje (Democratic Republic of Congo) pushes writing and museum praxis forward (article for *Museum Anthropology*)

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- Administrative staff at Belspo
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- <https://southsudanmuseumnetwork.com/>

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Synopsis of the hybrid documentary: "Anioto/leopard men: myths and realities"" and **Documentary theatre:** "Nkoymagie, Anioto/leopard men " documentary theatre

Synopsis

Avakubi, Wamba - Uélé, Belgian Congo 1933. The accused *aniotos*, leopard men of the Bali ethnic group, are accused of ritual murders. During a series of public hearings, an important political leader and his assistants face colonial justice, eventually resulting in the hanging of the accused. Colonial logic is confronted here with the immutable realities of the tradition of political culture. The show is a fusion of reality and imagination. This concerns total theatre, syncretic and hybrid, mixing acting, colonial archives (photographs-films), animated sequences, and oral testimony.

ANNEX 2: Flyer of theatre workshops in DR Congo

Studio Malembe Maa présente

Anioto, les hommes léopards “Nkoymagie”

Théâtre documentaire

Mise en scène
Jean-Michel KIBUSHI Ndjate Wooto
Cinéaste - Doctorant en art & sciences de l'art

Assistant à la mise en scène
Wedou WETUNGANI

Centre Culturel Congolais le Zoo
Av. Kasa-Vubu n°10 C. Gombe
- 20, 21, 24 et 25 nov. 2019 à 15h

Musée National de la République Démocratique du Congo
Boulevard Triomphal Ref.: Palais du peuple
- 29, 30 nov. 2019 à 18h
- 1^{er}, 14 et 15 déc. 2019 à 15h

Théâtre des Intrigants
Av. Africaine 2, n°43 C. N'djili Q.12 (Bikala)
- 26 nov. 2019 à 19h
- 27 nov. 2019 à 15h

Académie des Beaux-Arts
Avenue Pierre Mulele (Ex. 24 novembre)
- 05 déc. 2019 à 19h

Institut National des Arts
Av. du Commerce n°1 C. Gombe
- 06 déc. 2019 à 10h

(Entrée libre)

MNRDC **AFRICA** **Wallonie-Bruxelles Internationale R.D Congo** **UNIVERSITE GENT** **KASK** **belspo**

Action Financée par l'Union européenne

ANNEXE 3: Press Articles on Theatre Production

N° 7764 du vendredi 13 décembre 2019

Culture | 15

Le Potentiel
www.lepotentielonline.net

Le spectacle «Anioto, les hommes léopards» marque les esprits à l'Académie des Beaux Arts

Projeté à l'Académie des Beaux Arts, le spectacle-documentaire «Anioto, les hommes léopards» a amélioré la connaissance historique active des étudiants et du personnel enseignant.

BIENVENU IPAN

Des étudiants et enseignants de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts ont assisté, le jeudi 5 décembre 2019, à la restitution mémorielle d'*«Anioto, les hommes léopards»*, un spectacle-documentaire réalisé par le studio Malembe Maa. Projeté dans cet établissement artistique, ce spectacle a été plus qu'un médium qui a contribué à de nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement. Dans la mesure où étudiants et enseignants ont amélioré leur connaissance historique active.

En plus, selon que l'a indiqué le metteur en scène d'*«Anioto, les hommes léopards»*, Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wooto et président du studio Malembe Maa, les archives utilisées dans ce spectacle permettent aux nombreux Congolais de découvrir le patrimoine du Congo, ses archives, objets existant à l'étranger dans des collections belges et privées. Le public assiste à la «restitution visuelle et imaginaire» de son passé filmé, photographié par les colons belges. La vue de ces images permet d'établir un dialogue entre les communautés sources dont les œuvres ont été spoliées et les institutions de gestion du patrimoine au Congo et à l'étranger.

Se confiant à la rédaction du journal *Le Potentiel*, le comédien Kuedy Mayimputu, alias Diallo, vieux dans ce métier, a livré ses impressions : «ce spectacle m'a inspiré la colonisation, comment les gens se comportaient avant l'arrivée de Blancs... c'est un spectacle bien monté, les acteurs se sont bien défendus, on a senti un peu du vrai dans le jeu des acteurs». «*Anioto, les hommes léopards*» permet de comprendre que nos chefs traditionnels recourraient à des fétiches pour défendre leurs territoires. Le directeur artistique du groupe Salongo de la RTNC, auteur, metteur en scène et dramaturge, Kuedy Mayimputu, a aussi émis un point de vue là-dessus : «C'était une vie. Dans certains coins du monde comme en Grèce, Roumanie, Cela a existé. Les chefs de clans avaient un certain ordre qui lesaidaient à bien diriger et défendre ces clans sur le plan mystique».

DES STÉRÉOTYPES À DÉNONCER

À l'issue de la présentation d'*«Anioto, les hommes léopards»*, le cinéaste et metteur en scène Jean-Michel Kibushi a répondu à certaines préoccupations des admirateurs (public). Les admirateurs étaient préoccupés de savoir pourquoi dans la représentation d'*«Anioto, les hommes léopards»*, les meurtriers n'ont pas été pendus publiquement après avoir été jugés coupables. Contrairement à ce qu'on voit dans les affiches du spectacle, ces meurtriers ont plutôt fumé le calumet de la paix avec les familles de victimes. Le metteur en scène a justifié ce paradoxe par le fait que la nouvelle législation congolaise abolit la peine capitale. Les photos de la pendaïson publique sur les affiches permettent la restitution visuelle et imaginaire du passé.

L'autre préoccupation du public a porté sur la chanson *«Nako mitunaka»* de Verckys Kiamwanga placée comme générique. Le metteur en scène a éclairé : «C'est une chanson vraiment fétiche qui a marqué et qui marquera notre patrimoine culturel congolais. Verckys, à son époque, s'est interrogé sur ce qui était vraiment l'identité des Noirs parce que le monde culturellement est colonisé par l'Occident et particulièrement les Etats unis : nous consommons presque les ¾ de produits culturels qui viennent de l'étranger parce qu'on nous a fait croire que c'était le meilleur. La chanson Na komitunaka, placée comme générique, était une introduction à cet événement parce que toutes les questions que Verckys pose là, c'était des stéréotypes que nous dénonçons ce soir (dans ce spectacle projeté : ndlr). Des stéréotypes pour dire : voilà, des fétiches. Pourtant, ces œuvres d'art, autrefois qualifiées de fétiches, enrichissent aujourd'hui des musées en Occident. C'est le cas de l'exposition des arts plastiques

Beauté Congo que la Fondation Cartier avait organisé de 2015 à 2016 à Paris pour valoriser l'art congolais (de 1926-2015), exposition qui a drainé des milliers de personnes. Mais ces fétiches, ces œuvres qu'on nous a dépossédées, qu'on nous a dit que ce n'était pas bien, ...Nako mitunaka s'interroge et on a placé cette chanson dans le générique du spectacle».

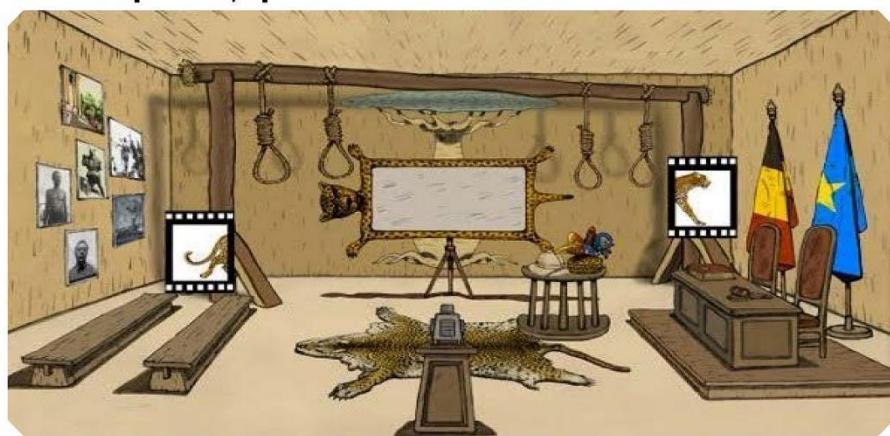
RENDEZ-VOUS LES 14 ET 15 DÉCEMBRE AU MUSÉE NATIONAL

Après l'étape des établissements artistiques (INA, Académie des Beaux-Arts), le spectacle est attendu ces 14 et 15 décembre à 15 heures au Musée national de la RDC (MNRDC) où il fera l'objet d'un grand débat scientifique.

Le spectacle-documentaire *«Anioto, les hommes léopards»* est l'adaptation du procès d'un meurtre commis à Avakubi, Wamba - Uélé, au Congo Belge, vers 1933. Les prévenus Aniotos, les hommes léopards de la tribu babali, sont accusés de meurtres rituels. Au cours d'une série d'audiences publiques, un chef médaillé et ses complices sont face à la justice coloniale. Une pendaïson imminente s'annonce ! Fusion de la réalité et de l'imaginaire. La logique coloniale s'affronte aux réalités immuables de la tradition des sectes ésotériques. Un spectacle total, syncrétique et hybride, mêlant jeu d'acteurs, archives coloniales (photographies-films), séquences animées, témoignages.

«Anioto, les hommes léopards», spectacle documentaire en tournée à Kinshasa

Dix dates en République démocratique du Congo, principalement à Kinshasa, pour présenter ce documentaire spectacle qui excave la vie de peuple Babali dans l'actuelle province de la Tshopo, de 1910 à 1935. Mise en scène par Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wootoo, «Anioto, les hommes léopards» ou «Nkoyi magie» est une pièce de théâtre qui sera jouée durant la période du 26 novembre au 15 décembre 2019, à la Compagnie Théâtre des Intrigants à N'Djili, au Musée national de la RDC, à l'Institut national des Arts (INA) et à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts (ABA). Selon la recherche scientifique à la base de cette pièce de théâtre, l'administration coloniale était butée aux problèmes récurrents des meurtres rituels clandestins, causés par une secte ésotérique surnommée «Anioto» ou «les hommes léopards». C'était simplement parce que les cadavres inertes présentaient des signes de griffes parfois en fer et/ou en marques de certaines parties du corps humain. Il fallait croire aux meurtres rituels pour des raisons économiques ou de lutte contre la domination des codes coloniaux sur



une idéologie ancestrale. Parmi les victimes, affirme Jean-Michel Kibushi (metteur en scène et doctorant en art et sciences de l'art), il y avait un nombre important d'auxiliaires de l'administration coloniale qui décédaient sans bruit ni trompette, mais marqués par des griffes de cette secte «terroriste». Après des enquêtes approfondies, apprend-on, les services

de l'administration mettront la main sur ce groupe avec à la tête, le chef coutumier Médallé qui va commencer par nier les faits, avant de les accepter tout en refusant d'être jugé devant une cour coloniale en lieu et place de l'arbre à palabre traditionnel. Malgré son refus, le chef coutumier médaillé sera puni et pendu publiquement, par ladite cour. Ce spectacle documentaire, illustré par des images et vi-

déos, est justement, la présentation du procès de ce chef devant les juges coloniaux.

arts : 06 déc 2019 à 19h
- Institut National des Arts : 6 déc 2019 à 10h

Lieux et dates du spectacle :

- Théâtre des Intrigants : 26 et 27 nov 2019 à 19h et à 15h
- Musée national de la RDC : 29, 30 nov 2019 à 18h 1, 14 et 15 déc 2019 à 15h
- Académie des beaux-

Onassis Mutombo

Fac'Arts pour la promotion de la Culture en milieu universitaire !

Ant pour but d'amener l'art en milieu universitaire tant sur le plan de la programmation, de la formation que dans les discussions entre étudiants, universitaires et monde professionnel, le projet Fac'Arts a été présenté ce 20 novembre 2019 à l'Académie des beaux-arts. Ce projet qui concerne 6 universités suivantes : IFAD, UPN, UPC, UCC, ULK ET UWB, vise à promouvoir la culture dans le milieu universitaire et organiser la formation des étudiants à la gestion des projets culturels afin de permettre le développement de l'industrie en RDC. Redynamisé des associations culturelles et programmes artistiques en milieu universitaire, approfondir le travail de réflexion sur le rôle sociétal des arts comme outil de débat permettant de générer et d'alimenter une dynamique de changement social, Fac'Arts a réussi dans ce sens à mettre en place un cadre d'échange culturel entre les étudiants de différentes institutions universitaires de la ville de Kinshasa. Henry Kalama Akulez, Directeur général de l'Académie des beaux-arts, a été heureux que son institution soit le lieu de présentation du projet. Son souhait est que Fac'Arts crée plus des espaces



d'échange pour stimuler la diversité des expressions culturelles en milieu universitaire. Serge Maret, représentant de l'Ambassadeur de l'Union Européenne en RDC, a mis l'accent soutenu sur la gestion des projets culturels. Pour lui, la culture n'est pas seulement une affaire des scènes mais également économique qui peut créer des emplois pour des jeunes congolais dans plusieurs filières. Soutenus par le Goethe Institut, Unesco et porté par la Plate-

forme Contemporaine, Fac'Arts permet de sortir la culture dans son carcan professionnel pour la ramener dans la société visant les futurs gestionnaires de l'Etat. Selon monsieur Augustin Bikale, représentant du Représentant-pays de l'Unesco, l'Université est un lieu par excellence où l'on forme les acteurs du changement pour le développement durable. « Parmi les objectifs du développement durable, la culture est reprise sur toutes les lignes. L'art rentre dans les

universités pour entrer dans les coeurs et l'imaginaire de ceux qui sont sensés gérer l'Etat demain. Même pour la lutte pour le changement de mentalité, on ne peut que s'appeler sur la culture pour mieux conscientiser l'homme congolais », souligne Augustin Bikale. « Fac'Arts, qui a fait ses preuves en formant des étudiants de cinq universités, a pour objectifs de sensibiliser les futurs cadres et intellectuels du pays à la culture. Le souci est de faire prendre

conscience à la jeunesse du potentiel économique du secteur culturel afin de favoriser l'émergence de ce secteur. A la fin, nous voulons former les jeunes à la gestion des projets culturels afin de professionnaliser le secteur », déclare Dada Kayindo. Avec des jeunes étudiants qui ont suivi cette formation, un club proposant une offre culturelle dans les universités a été mis en place pour garder ce lien et la plateforme d'échange. Onassis Mutombo

ANNEXE 4: Blog Post for the London School of Economics Webpage on Public Authority

The way we think about traditional forms of authority in Africa is often rooted in colonial biases on how political power works. A range of new scholarship is exploring these misunderstandings, which feed into how international donors approach the delivery of aid. So what can we learn from this scholarship to improve policy interventions?

In both scholarship and international aid interventions, there is growing attention on customary or traditional authority in Africa. A recent [special issue](#) in the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* examines engagements with this form of authority in Central and East Africa from the colonial era up to the present. The different contributions highlight the centrality of studying customary authority for a better insight into local socio-political orders and how public authority is constituted and operates. Yet the contributions also reveal that much of our knowledge of this form of authority is shaped by a number of biases that ultimately date back to the colonial era. These biases are also visible within development and peacebuilding interventions.

18 Shares

ANNEXE 5: Publication: Van Bockhaven, V. 2018, "Anioto: Leopard Men Killings and Institutional Dynamics in North-East Congo (ca. 1890-1940)", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 59, Issue 1 (March 2018). (first 3 pages; complete document added separately as pdf)

ANIOTO: LEOPARD-MEN KILLINGS AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMISM IN NORTHEAST CONGO, c. 1890-1940*

Vicky Van Bockhaven
Ghent University, Belgium

Abstract

In northeast Congo, from c. 1890–1940, ritually-empowered militias of Bali Leopard-men, or *anioto*, killed people on behalf of local leaders to secure access to land, resources, and people and to keep rivals and subjects in check. Belgian colonial authorities portrayed the actions of *anioto* as an irrational disturbance, ignoring their political relevance. The contextualized study of colonial-era conflicts based on court hearings, in association with anthropological, historical, and material sources, gives insight into emic perspectives. As militias controlled by different leaders, they reflected human adaptability in dealing with social ills, performed judicial functions, and provided therapeutic relief through violence. Originating in the precolonial era, *anioto* adapted to various strategic needs throughout history. A study of different manifestations of *anioto* reveals the creative and amalgamating nature of institutional dynamism in northeast Congo. Better knowledge of this institutional history, based on studying conflicts from the past, may enrich our deeper understanding of the dynamics of conflicts in the present.

Key Words

Congo, The Democratic Republic of the, South Sudan, Central Africa, decentralized societies, violence, health, rebellion, chieftancy.

In 1911, the governor of Orientale Province of Belgian Congo, Charles Delhaise, sent a complete '*anioto*' costume to the Congo Museum, now the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), in Tervuren, Belgium (Fig. 1). Delhaise reported that *anioto* dressed up as leopards and killed their victims at night, cutting the carotid artery with their iron claws and leaving leopard paw prints next to the bodies.¹ Delhaise's *mise-en-scène* photographs inspired the making of a sculpture, dressed with the objects. It has occupied a central place in the museum since 1915 (Fig. 2).² At that

* This article is based on earlier doctoral research undertaken at and supported by the Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, and on current postdoctoral research at the University of Ghent funded by the BRAIN-program of the Belgian Federal Ministry of Science. The University of Uele, and more particularly Roger Gaise, helped to facilitate field research in the provinces of Haut-Uele and Tshopo in the DRCongo. I want to thank Judith Verweijen for her feedback on comparisons of leopard-men with present-day militias in the east of DRC. Author's email: vicky.vanbockhaven@ugent.be

¹ Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), Ethnography Department, Dossier C. Delhaise, no. 153.

² RMCA, Museum Archives, Diverses, Communications between the Head of Ethnography Joseph Maes and Paul Wissaert, 1912-15.



Fig. 1. Anioto ready to attack, *mise-en-scène*, Bali population, Congo. Photo by Charles Delhaise, 1909
© Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), AP.O.1.6554.

time, administrators in the colony dismissed the reported killings as leopard attacks and local superstitions.³

In the late 1920s, a more coordinated and sustained administrative and legal attention culminated in several high-profile trials. The discourse developing in the 1920s and 1930s in colonial journals and fiction upheld a stereotype of leopard-men as evil, animal-like creatures threatening the colonial order, in line with the sculpture's iconography.⁴ In reality, leopard-men never wore such costumes for killing, and often committed murders with knives instead of claws.⁵ Yet, the image helped to legitimize the way the colonial administration dealt with leopard-men as a criminal 'secret society' or 'sect'. Although the trials revealed the complex nature and purposes of the killings, these data did not affect published reports. In the 1990s, critiques of demeaning leopard-men representations targeted colonial literature and the museum display, but did not question their historical foundations.⁶ The leopard-men's reputation as being elusive continued, possibly facilitated by a postcolonial taboo on researching violence committed by the colonized, or by the widespread assumption that first-hand reports of the killings could not be retraced.

3 L. Libois, 'La lutte contre les Aniotos', *L'Illustration Congolaise*, 181 (1936), 6066–7, 6082.

4 P. Halen, 'Une figure coloniale de l'autre: l'homme-léopard', *Les Cahiers des Para-Littératures*, 2 (1988), 129–47; V. Van Bockhaven, 'Leopard-men of the Congo in literature and popular imagination', *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, 46:1 (2009), 79–94.

5 This was confirmed by convicts' statements in judicial records and the analyses of traces on the objects at the RMCA in collaboration with the Belgian Federal Institute for Criminalistics and Criminology, funded by the King Baudouin Foundation, Oct. 2008–Jan. 2009.

6 Halen, 'Une figure', 129–47.



Fig. 2. The leopard-man of Stanley Falls by Paul Wissaert, 1915. Plaster figure, decorated with ethnographic objects. RMCA A.371, photographer unknown; all rights reserved.

The main focus of this article is the Bali leopard-men, known as *anioto*, from whom the sculpture's costume originated, and who also appeared among neighbouring Ndaka and Budu. The Bali and their neighbours belonged to a population of Bantu speakers who had migrated from the north, pushed southward by the expanding Azande and Mangbetu populations. For comparative purposes, I look at a related leopard-man variety, named *vibokohoko*, occurring among the Bapakombe and Nande to the southeast. The Bapakombe were a small population located to the northwest of Beni on the verge of the rainforest. While the colonial administration considered them as the vanguards of the Nande in the latter's migration from the eastern Great Lakes region, the Bapakombe

ANNEXE 6: Publication: Verweijen, J. & V. Van Bockhaven (eds). 2020. Special Issue: "Customary Authority in Central and East Africa: Power, Conflict and Social Mobilization in Past and Present", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (1st issue, February 2020)

Link to Open Access issue: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjea20/14/1?nav=tocList>

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1. Introduction: The contested co-production of knowledge on customary authority in Central and East Africa in past and present – Judith Verweijen & Vicky Van Bockhaven
2. Authority that is customary: Kitawala, customary chiefs, and the plurality of power in Congolese history - Nicole Eggers
3. *Anioto* and *nebeli*: Local power bases and the negotiation of customary chieftaincy in the Belgian Congo (ca. 1930-1950) - Vicky Van Bockhaven
4. Politics, prophets and armed mobilisations: divine and government authority over South Sudanese customary law - Naomi Pendle
5. Legacies of Kanjogera: Female political elites and the transgression of gender norms in Rwanda - Sarah Watkins & Erin Jessee
6. 'Courses au pouvoir': The struggle over customary capital in eastern Congo - Kasper Hoffmann, Koen Vlassenroot, Emery Mudinga.
7. In search of chiefly authority in 'post-aid' Acholiland: Customary chiefs navigating the departure of international aid agencies in northern Uganda - Sophie Komujuni & Karen Büscher
8. Locating the 'customary' in post-colonial Tanzania's politics: the shifting modus operandi of the rural state - Felicitas Becker

ANNEXE 7: Fragment of Educational App ‘Wie of wat is de luipaardman’ (draft; to be distributed via Google App Store for free; to be used by a secondary school public)

Hoe waarheidsgrouw is het beeld van de Luipaardman dan?



1) Is het grotendeels realistisch doordat het is geïnspireerd op -en gekleed met- bewijsmateriaal uit Congo?

2) Kan het zijn dat, ondanks de echtheid van de objecten, luipaardmannen toch niet aanvielen zoals het beeld voorstelt?

Antwoord 1: Het is deels realistisch

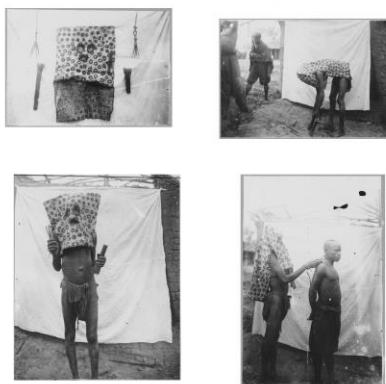


Doordat het beeld in een museum staat, lijkt het “waar”, met de objecten als bewijs, maar dat is het niet.

De kostuums waren onpraktisch en werden niet gebruikt voor aanvallen, maar wel in voorbereidende rituelen. Klauwen kwamen nooit in paren voor zoals het beeld voorstelt en waren meestal niet scherp genoeg om te doden. Heel vaak gebruikte men gewone messen als wapen.

De objecten leidden tot een foute museumvoorstelling waarin men Afrikanen als wild en dier-achtig voorstelt.

Antwoord 2: Luipaardmannen gingen in het echt niet zo te werk.



Klopt! De kostuums waren onpraktisch en werden niet gebruikt voor aanvallen, maar wel in voorbereidende rituelen. Klauwen kwamen nooit in paren voor zoals het beeld voorstelt en waren meestal niet scherp genoeg om te doden. Heel vaak gebruikte men gewone messen als wapen.

Doordat het beeld in een museum staat, lijkt het “waar”, met de objecten als bewijs. Maar men gebruikte ze op een foute manier om Afrikanen als wild en dier-achtig te tonen.

ANNEXE 8: Publication: Vandenberghe, H. 2019. "Mythes, faits, récits? La représentation de l'Autre et du soi dans la collection Hutereau (1911-1913) au Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale de Tervuren", Dynamiques Sociales et Représentation Congolaises (RD Congo), Giordano, Quareta and Dibwe Dia Mwembu, 2019.

DYNAMIQUES SOCIALES ET REPRÉSENTATIONS CONGOLAISES (RD CONGO)
«L'expérience fait la différence»

Le présent ouvrage naît d'un parcours transdisciplinaire qui a pour point de référence le projet « Mémoires de Lubumbashi » (2000-2010) et des présupposés théoriques et méthodologiques définis par le courant détourné de «l'histoire immédiate». Le travail collectif a pris corps avec l'élaboration d'un programme de recherche triennal (2017-2020) qui a été financé et reconnu comme «projet relevant de l'intérêt national» (PRIN) par le ministère italien de l'Éducation, de l'Université et de la Recherche (MIUR).

Une longue introduction porte sur les axes d'analyse qui ont retenu plus que d'autres l'attention : la production et la circulation d'images, les représentations croisées et imaginaires du Soi et de l'Autre et les effets de connaissance/méconnaissance entre Occident et Congo ; les savoirs populaires congolais et les modalités et les langages des arts pratiqués dans leur historicité et actualité. Les essais abordent les dimensions de la perception du temps et de l'historicité par les acteurs sociaux ; les réflexions sur les questions du présent visent à saisir les idées sur le passé projetées dans le présent et à enquêter sur la dimension de l'imagination de l'avenir.

Ce livre « est extraordinairement ambitieux et synergique ; il comprend des articles éclairés aussi divers qu'inventifs. Il émerge d'une confluence entre des inspirations intellectuelles et méthodologiques et les pratiques de recherche ainsi que la vigueur théorique de Bogumil Jěsiewicki. L'œuvre pionnière de ce grand historien social, culturel et visuel continue de nous inspirer en tant que chercheurs en études congolaises – et au-delà. » (Nancy Rose Hunt, Postface)

Rosario GIORDANO est professeur d'histoire de l'Afrique à l'Università della Calabria (Italie).

Edoardo QUARETTA est chercheur postdoctoral à l'Università della Calabria (Italie).

Donatien DIBWE DIA MWEMBU est professeur d'histoire à l'Université de Lubumbashi (RD Congo).

Nancy Rose HUNT est Professor of History & African Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville, et Professor Emerita of History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (USA).

En couverture : © Christian Tundula, *Everyone Matters*, série Street Journey, 2016.

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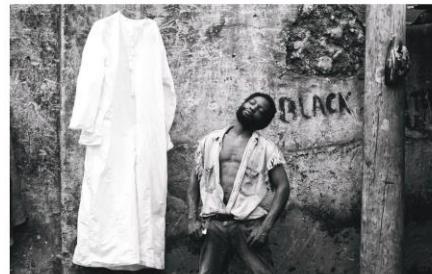


Sous la direction de
Rosario GIORDANO, Edoardo QUARETTA
et Donatien DIBWE DIA MWEMBU

DYNAMIQUES SOCIALES
ET REPRÉSENTATIONS CONGOLAISES
(RD CONGO)

« L'expérience fait la différence »

Volume hommage à Bogumil Jěsiewicki



Postface de Nancy Rose Hunt



L'Harmattan

Mythes, faits, récits ?

La représentation de l'autre et du soi dans la collection Hutereau (1911-1913) au Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale de Tervuren

Hannelore Vandenberghe
Université de Gand

Introduction

Entre souvenir et oubli, la collection Hutereau se trouve éparsillée dans les espaces de stockage de l'actuel Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC) à Tervuren. Ce singulier assemblage d'objets ethnographiques a été collecté par le militaire Armand Hutereau (1875-1914) entre 1911 et 1913. Lors d'une expédition ethnographique, quelque huit mille objets ont été récoltés le long de la rivière Uélé dans la Province orientale (Carte 1). La collection, maintes fois louée d'un point de vue formaliste, stylistique, esthétique ou comparatif, a livré des chefs-d'œuvre de renommée mondiale. Malgré de précédentes tentatives d'étudier ces objets du MRAC selon une approche plus multiforme¹, des questions demeurent quant à la méthode et, plus particulièrement, au contenu de la collection Hutereau.

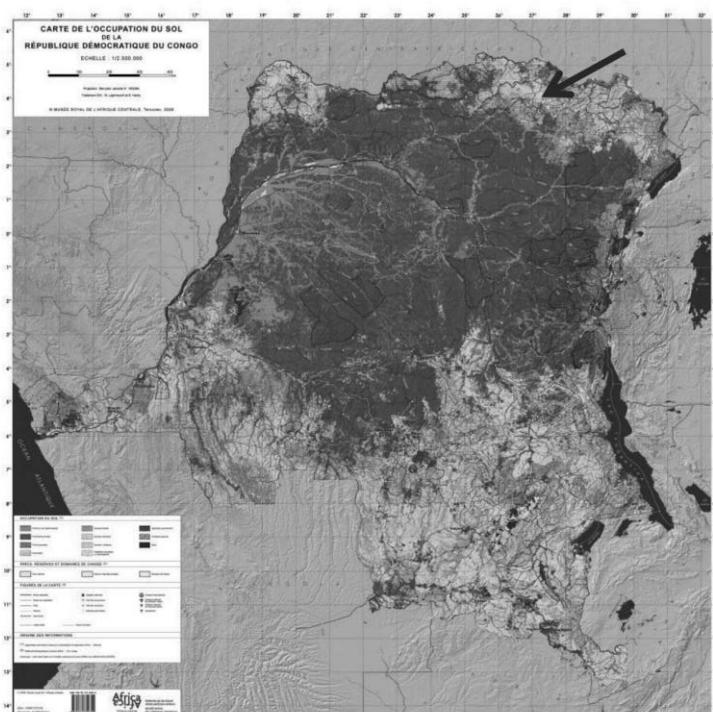
Dans le cadre du projet CongoConnect, « Connections/Collections : Objets et institutions de pouvoir au nord-est du Congo (1800-1960) »², le Dr Vicky Van Bockhaven, le doctorant et documentariste Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wootoo et moi-même étudions l'histoire locale du début de l'ère coloniale et sa mémoire culturelle, à travers une recherché médiée par les objets.

Cet article soutient que les objets ethnographiques constituent des ressources uniques pour la recherche historiographique et anthropologique. La vie de ces objets peut nous dire comment l'« autre » et le soi étaient représentés au début de la période coloniale et comment – sur la base de ces représentations – des faits ou mythes ethnologiques se sont installés. Je présente quelques résultats préliminaires d'une première année de recherche, basés sur l'étude de la collection, des archives et de la littérature connexe. Je tenterai

¹ B. Wastiau, K. De Boodt, J. Capenberghs, *ExitCongoMuseum : Een essay over het sociale leven van de meesterwerken uit het museum van Tervuren*, Tervuren, Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 2000, p. 81.

² Voir : <https://www.belspo.be/belspo/fedra/proj.asp?l=fr&COD=BR%2F143%2FA3%2FCONGOCONNECT> (BELSPO Banque de données projets FEDRA, site web multilingue, fournit une description détaillée du projet)

d'articuler ces connaissances acquises autour de différents récits liés à l'expédition Hutereau.



Carte 1 : La rivière Uélé dans les provinces Haut- et Bas-Uélé d'aujourd'hui, au nord-est de la RDC.

« DRC landcover 2008 » par Mohamed Laghmouch, MRAC Tervuren ©

1. La nécessité d'une interprétation historico-anthropologique de l'expédition Hutereau

1.1. Collecte de masques de guerre

Beaucoup ont pu admirer le remarquable masque *pongudu* (Illustration 1), exposé au MRAC. Ce masque est considéré comme un emblème du MRAC ; il n'en existerait que vingt exemplaires dans le monde.



Illustration 1 : Le masque *pongudu* des Boa.
EO.0.0.11696, collection MRAC Tervuren ; photo R. Asselberghs, MRAC Tervuren ©

Ce masque *pongudu* a été collecté en 1912 auprès du peuple Boa de Bokapu dans le nord-est du Congo, par Armand Hutereau et son équipe d'expédition. Au début de la période coloniale, la militarisation et l'empressement d'étendre la colonie au nord du Congo rivalisaient avec la soif de collecter et d'exposer la culture matérielle de l'autre.³ Il fallait focaliser le regard du public sur cette distinction entre le « nous », soit le Belge évolué, et – en l'occurrence – le peuple barbare des Boa. Ce peuple est représenté par le masque *pongudu*, qui irradiait une sorte d'altérité, avec ses formes vives et son jeu de couleur noir et blanc, contrastant avec le décor victorien du musée de Tervuren. Le conservateur d'Ethnographie assurait que les objets qu'il exposait n'étaient pas « contaminés » par le contact avec la culture belge et qu'il n'exposait rien que la soi-disant culture locale pure.⁴ Les objets qui étaient « résolument fabriqués pour Monsieur Hutereau, n'avaient pas de réel caractère ethnographique » et étaient donc exclus de la collection du musée.⁵

Pongudu est devenu, au fil des ans, l'incarnation d'un masque de guerre. Toutefois, ce que l'on sait moins, c'est que ce masque a agi comme un moteur dans le discours négatif dirigé contre le peuple Boa et a renforcé l'imaginaire

³ E. Schildkrout, C.A. Keim (eds.), *The scramble for art in Central Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 257.

⁴ Archives, Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (MRAC), N2 Missions, Mission Hutereau.

⁵ *Ibid.*

entourant sa culture, supposée féroce. La présence d'un masque de guerre a renforcé la représentation des Boa comme un peuple barbare au début de la période coloniale. En 2007, l'anthropologue belge Rik Ceyssens a soumis ce célèbre masque et les archives associées à une étude approfondie, montrant que le masque *pongudu* a été associé à tort à un contexte guerrier.⁶

Certes, ces masques sont esthétiques et présentent un réel intérêt historique, mais si nous les observions sous un autre angle, à travers les yeux des objets, et nous départions d'une analyse historique et esthétique uniforme ? Schildkrout et Keim⁷ ont présenté, lors de l'exposition « African Reflections : Art from Northeastern Zaire », une approche processuelle de l'étude et de l'exposition d'une collection ethnographique réunie dans la région d'Uélé par Herbert Lang et James Chapin, dans le cadre de la Congo Expedition menée pour le compte de l'American Museum de New York (1909-1915). La philosophie d'exposition de Schildkrout et Keim s'articule autour de l'idée selon laquelle la décontextualisation de ces objets a un énorme impact sur leur signification.⁸ Le déplacement de ces objets a amorcé « ... un changement biographique de l'objet ... Les Occidentaux ont attribué à ces objets des significations qu'ils n'ont jamais eues. »⁹ Suivant Schildkrout et Keim, j'utilise la collection Hutereau pour examiner les interactions, échanges et changements locaux qui eurent lieu à Uélé durant les premières années de l'empire colonial belge. Pour ce faire, je considère ces objets comme enchâssés dans un réseau de relations sociales. Les considérer comme faisant partie intégrante de l'action humaine, revient à observer les interactions entourant l'histoire de ces objets.

1.2. *La supposée féroce des Boa*

Une méthodologie historico-anthropologique est requise pour étudier l'allure de féroce entourant le peuple Boa et sa culture matérielle. La consultation des archives relatives aux objets Boa du MRAC nous éclaire sur l'origine de ce mythe Boa. Par ce terme, j'entends faire référence à Keim¹⁰ et Ivanov¹¹,

⁶ R. Ceyssens, « The “Bwa war masks” of the middle Uele Region : a review », dans *African Arts*, 2007, pp. 58-73.

⁷ E. Schildkrout, C.A. Keim, *African reflections : Art from northeastern Zaire*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1990, pp. 271.

⁸ A. Appadurai, *The social life of things : Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 329.

⁹ E. Schildkrout, C.A. Keim, *African reflections...*, cit., pp. 15.

¹⁰ C.A. Keim, « Artes africanae : The western discovery of “art” in northeastern Congo », dans E. Schildkrout, C.A. Keim (eds.), *The scramble for art in Central Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 109-132.

¹¹ P. Ivanov, « Cannibals, warriors, conquerors and colonizers : Western perceptions and Azande historiography », dans *History in Africa*, 2002, 29, pp. 89–217.

qui tous deux expliquèrent un processus d'image persistante façonnée par les Européens à propos des Congolais.

En 1900, la région d'Uélé était enchaînée dans des vives tensions. Selon les sources d'archives, c'était surtout le peuple Boa qui « posait problème ».¹² Il s'opposait à l'oppression militaire et se soulevait contre le colonisateur, par des mouvements que les coloniaux qualifiaient de rébellions.¹³ Ceyssens exprime également à juste titre que la rébellion Boa¹⁴ de 1900-1901 et sa répression constituent des faits majeurs dans le processus de construction d'une mémoire collective de ce peuple. Ceyssens utilise en conséquence le terme de « mémorisation sélective ». Les documents officiels faisaient apparaître les Boa à côté du mot « féroce », tandis que les missionnaires Norbertins communiquaient aux fonctionnaires de l'État que la rééducation des Boa (et des Barambo) s'imposait de façon « extrêmement urgente ».¹⁵ Cette sélectivité sur le terrain a joué un rôle tant au niveau du Musée du Congo belge que de la qualification des objets Boa, leurs coutumes et leur essence même.

La contestation contre la présence militaire par un peuple était réprimée, *manu militari* et idéologiquement, entraînant la mort de nombreux grands chefs Boa. En 1901, Armand Hutereau – qui fut militaire de 1896 à 1908 – mena une expédition militaire contre le chef Boa Epatendele.¹⁶ On raconte qu'Epatendele avait mis en garde les Belges de Bambili (Carte 2) contre une embuscade dont il avait ouï dire. Cependant, alors même qu'il avait alerté les Belges, Epatendele trouva, à son retour chez lui, ses épouses pendues, deux de ses fils massacrés et neuf de ses quinze hommes morts. Dans sa lutte contre ses assaillants belges, Epatendele fut blessé. Il prit alors la fuite vers la rivière Bima (Carte 3), où le lieutenant Armand Hutereau l'attendait, au « petit bio », un affluent de la Bima, et le blessa grièvement.

En 1909, le même homme – Armand Hutereau – publia l'ouvrage « Notes sur la vie familiale et juridique de quelques populations du Congo Belge », distribué via les « Annales du Musée du Congo Belge ». La publication compilait des études sur la vie matérielle, économique et familiale, sur les structures juridiques et politiques, ainsi que sur les coutumes religieuses, esthétiques et intellectuelles des populations locales d'Uélé, comme les Boa.

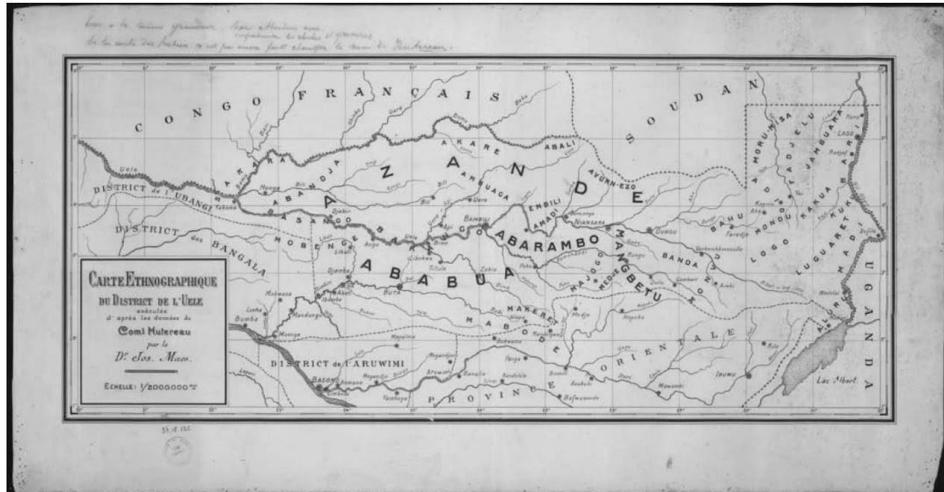
¹² Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Archives africaines (AMAE, AA), AIMO 1578 / 8996.

¹³ Archives, AMAE, AA, AIMO 1578 / 8996.

¹⁴ R. Ceyssens, art. cit., pp. 66.

¹⁵ Archives, AMAE, AA, AIMO 1578 / 8995 & Archives de l'Abbaye de Tongerlo (AAT), section 8, n. 63.

¹⁶ Archives, AMAE, AA, AIMO 1577 / 8941.



Carte 2 : Carte ethnographique du district d'Uélé, réalisée d'après les données du commandant Hutereau, par Joseph Maes.

HO.1987.18.122, collection MRAC Tervuren ©



Carte 3 : Gros plan de la carte ethnographique basée sur les données de Hutereau. Visualisation de l'endroit où se joua l'histoire du chef Epatendele.

HO.1987.18.122, collection MRAC Tervuren ©

Elle reposait sur l'histoire orale et l'étude historique des généalogies. Dans ce livre, cependant, Hutereau ne parle pas de *pongudu*. C'est trois ans plus tard, en 1912, qu'il collecte deux masques *pongudu* et les qualifie de « masques de guerre et de danse ». Et ce, contrairement à un masque *pongudu* collecté plus tôt, avant 1910 – pas par Hutereau – et qui ne présente aucun rapport avec la guerre. En outre, l'article de Ceyssens pointe qu'« aucun

masque en bois n'est jamais apparu pendant les opérations militaires de 1901 ».¹⁷ Selon toute vraisemblance, la négociation de l'identité des Boa se poursuivit au musée de Tervuren et fut renforcée par Hutereau. C'est un exemple des nombreux mythes racistes et statiques façonnés dans nos musées occidentaux à propos de l'autre au début du vingtième siècle. La fonction précise du masque *pongudu* Boa n'est pas connue à ce jour – d'où l'objet de mes recherches, sur la base d'une étude de la multiplicité complexe de cet objet.

2. Une anthropologie orientée vers les artefacts

2.1. Discours d'une approche heuristique des objets

Pour en finir avec les mythes tenaces, une interprétation possible pourrait reposer sur une méthode considérant les objets comme des « objets-heuristiques »¹⁸. Comme expliqué ci-dessus, il est essentiel d'appréhender les significations attribuées à ces objets comme des constructions sociales. Deuxièmement, je m'inscris dans la lignée de Henare, Holbraad et Wastell pour rechercher des « objets-signifiants »¹⁹ dans leur pluralité. Pluriel car l'usage muséologique d'un objet diffère de l'usage qui en était fait à des fins de pratique spirituelle, par exemple.

En ce sens, un objet soi-disant plus petit dans la vaste collection de huit mille objets peut toujours occuper une place importante au sein de l'ensemble. En janvier 1911, le conservateur de la collection ethnographique du musée de Tervuren rédigea quelques remarques sur les objets qui venaient d'être expédiés à Tervuren par l'expédition Hutereau. Il écrit : « Pour les chiffres cinq cent onze et cinq cent douze, je voudrais savoir comment ils étaient utilisés. »²⁰ Arrachés de leur contexte congolais et de leur propre agentivité – et en l'occurrence du système de pouvoir –, ces sifflets furent réduits à des chiffres. Le numéro cinq cent onze fut toutefois facile à retrouver dans l'espace de stockage et la base de données (Illustration 2) et porte le nom d'*ehonga*. Cet objet magnifique est une flûte à une seule note, qui pouvait être utilisée pour arrêter la pluie, la retarder ou l'accueillir, ce qui en expliquerait le son binaire. Ce petit objet, d'apparence insignifiante dans la masse de la collection, pourrait avoir eu une plus grande signification dans la région d'Uélé et est bien plus qu'une simple flûte. Les sifflets pour les esprits de la forêt étaient souvent utilisés pour invoquer la fertilité des terres. Réfléchir à

¹⁷ R. Ceyssens, art. cit., pp. 66-68.

¹⁸ A. Henare, M. Holbraad, S. Wastell (eds.), *Thinking through things : Theorising artefacts ethnographically*, London & New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 236.

¹⁹ A. Henare, M. Holbraad, S. Wastell, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-29.

²⁰ MRAC, Dossier ethnographique n. 212.

travers cet objet, signifie réfléchir à une cosmologie congolaise dans laquelle l'*ehonga* est un objet spirituel.



Illustration 2 : *Ehonga* ou flûte à une seule note.
EO.0.0.4662, collection MRAC Tervuren ; photo J. Van de Vyver, MRAC Tervuren ©

2.2. *Intégration de la recherche d'archives*

Outre l'étude de la collection, les archives associées aux objets jouent un rôle essentiel dans ma recherche. Un détail apparemment insignifiant dans l'espace de stockage du MRAC a ici valeur d'exemple. En 1912, cinq cuillères en bois ou *papa* (Illustration 3) furent également collectées auprès du peuple Boa par Hutereau lui-même. Si ces objets peuvent sembler manquer d'intérêt selon les canons classiques, ils se retranchent derrière d'intenses histoires de contact. Le type de bois spécifique et le lieu de la collecte nous catapultent dans la brutalité de la domination et de la violence belges.

Avec la publication de son livre de 1909²¹, Hutereau gagna en prestige face au Ministère des Colonies. Il fut promu et appelé à diriger une expédition ethnographique pour le Musée du Congo belge, dans la région d'Uélé et d'Ubangi, de 1911 à 1913. En 1912, dix ans après le combat évoqué plus haut avec le chef Epatendele, Hutereau collecta ces cinq cuillères particulières ainsi qu'une coiffe – bien que l'on ne retrouve plus aucune trace de cette dernière – auprès de ni plus ni moins que ce même chef. Nous ne disposons pas de photographies du chef Boa, mais les archives relient les cuillères à Epatendele.

²¹ A. Hutereau, *Notes sur la vie familiale et juridique de quelques populations du Congo belge*, publiées avec la collaboration du baron Alph. de Haulleville et du Dr Joseph Maes, Bruxelles, 1909, p. 104.

Elles peuvent être considérées comme de simples ustensiles, mais leur signification actuelle peut dévoiler une micro histoire. Ces objets donnent à Epatendele une voix dans l'histoire.

Hutereau a donc utilisé le chef Epatendele en particulier, et le peuple Boa en général, selon son bon vouloir. D'une part, les Boa étaient considérés comme féroces ; d'autre part, des objets étaient collectés auprès d'eux pour être exposés au musée. Cette mentalité apparaît dans l'introduction du livre de Hutereau. Déclarant tout d'abord : « Pour gouverner convenablement les populations primitives, il est essentiel de connaître leurs coutumes et les lois qui les régissent depuis des siècles. »²² Cela indique une déclaration politique qui sera réitérée plus tard dans les comptes rendus ethnographiques de Hutereau. Ensuite, nous découvrons l'influence de l'évolutionnisme culturel : « Mieux on connaîtra leur mentalité, leurs idées, leurs usages, leurs conceptions de la vie, mieux on saura les conduire vers un état social élevé... ». Tout cela pour dire que Hutereau ne changera pas vraiment de casquette entre le militaire et le scientifique.

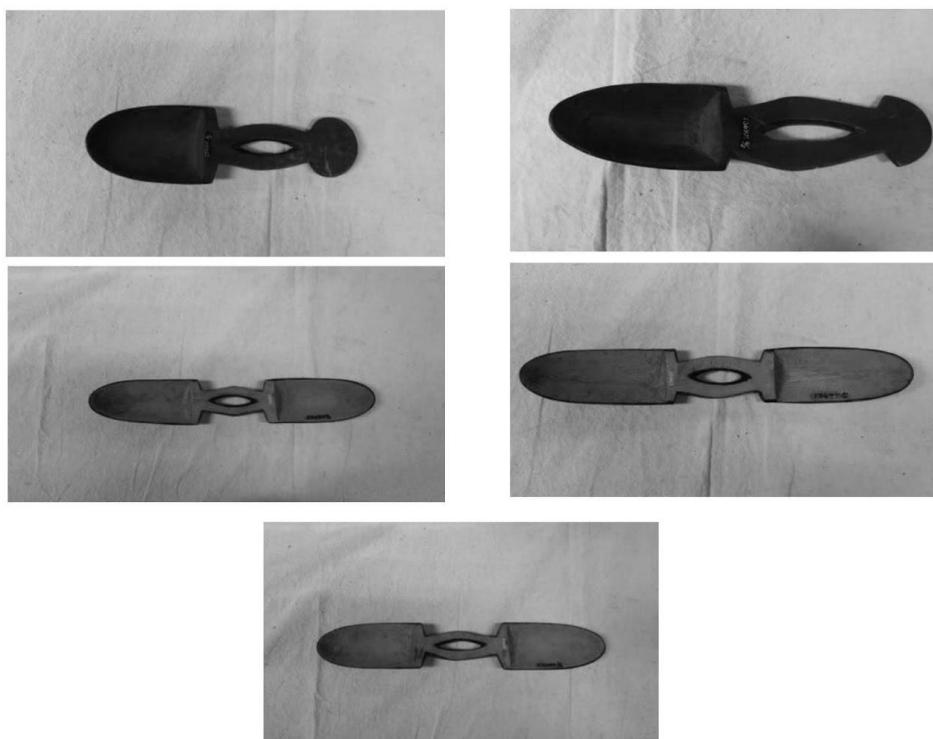


Illustration 3 : Cinq *papa* ou cuillères en bois, collectées auprès du chef Boa Epatendele en 1912.

EO.0.0.13697-1 à – 5, photos de travail, Vandenberghe ©

²² A. Hutereau, *op. cit.*, p. II.

« Pour mieux comprendre les structures locales, pour mieux les gouverner », c'est métaphoriquement la manière dont Hutereau régnait sur son équipe d'expédition. Cette dernière bénéficiait également de l'expertise du botaniste Gustave Alphonse Van der Gucht, du taxidermiste Ceuterickx, du zoologiste Facq et de Geno, qui était soi-disant responsable de filmer et de prendre des photos. À la lumière d'un intérêt international pour la région et d'une compétition entre musées (comme l'American Museum de New York et l'Ethnologisches Museum de Berlin), le but de l'expédition était de combler les lacunes dans les collections et de réunir des objets qui n'avaient pas encore subi l'influence de la culture européenne. En raison d'une vision évolutionniste de l'autre, les populations locales et leurs cultures matérielles étaient organisées dans le musée selon un agencement a-historique des objets par type. Dans la pratique, au niveau de l'expédition, cela se reflétait par l'établissement de longues listes d'objets, avec la classification des objets, des cultures, de l'appellation locale de ces objets et des lieux de collecte. L'expédition avait également pour objectif de prendre des mesures anthropométriques. En tant que pratique de l'anthropologie physique, la photographie servait à capturer différentes personnes avec leurs caractéristiques spécifiques, différentes du soi. Un ensemble de vingt photos – à cet égard unique – a été réalisé par le botaniste Gustave Van der Gucht. On y voit toujours un bâton de mesure sur la gauche (Illustration 4).

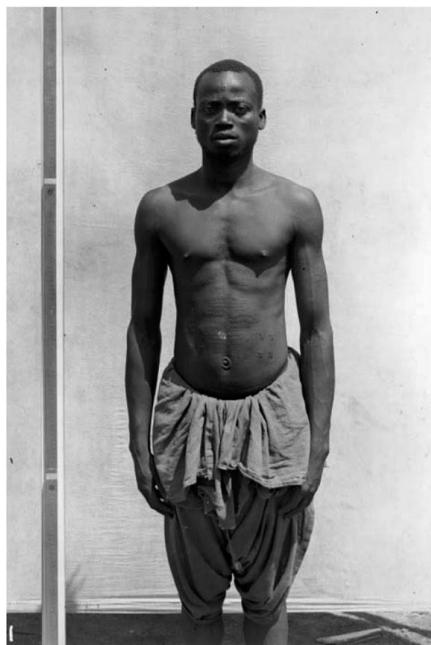


Illustration 4 : Homme congolais photographié avec un bâton de mesure. Photo prise par Van der Gucht.

AP.0.0.11691, collection MRAC Tervuren ; mission Hutereau 1911-1913

L'autre est ici réduit à un rôle de figurant. Dans le cadre de l'expédition Hutereau, nous ne pouvons pas vraiment parler d'un travail de terrain ethnographique, dans la mesure où le rythme de l'expédition était rapide et que les pratiques de collecte peuvent être qualifiées de « collecte en surface ». Fabian parle de *riverain collecting*²³ : « amasser des objets sans informations contextuelles », à comparer avec l'archéologie de surface. Jusqu'à présent, il n'existe pas d'indices réels de relations étroites élaborées entre les membres de l'expédition et la population locale. Cela semble contraster avec l'agenda de collecte d'Herbert Lang, qui a tenu un journal de bord détaillé pendant cinq ans. Ses écrits reflètent une pratique de collecte qui a évolué dans le cadre d'une relation réciproque, avec des interactions croissantes sur le terrain.²⁴ La Congo Expédition menée pour le compte de l'American Museum de New York faisait des escales plus longues dans une localité et Lang finit par comprendre que la collecte des objets dépendait de la relation de confiance entre les deux parties. Le botaniste Van der Gucht avait prévenu, dans sa première déclaration sur l'expédition Hutereau, qu'en raison du manque de relations avec les populations locales, il progressait peu – en l'occurrence pour prendre leurs mesures.²⁵ Van der Gucht reconnaissait sa mission, mais invoquait l'absence d'un camp de base comme principale raison de son échec.

Une recherche plus fouillée dans les archives montre en outre que l'expédition fut perturbée, du début à la fin, par des tensions entre ses membres. L'expédition était partie de Stanleyville le 25 mars 1911 et nous retrouvons une lettre intrigante de Hutereau datée du 4 août 1911, qui nous apprend beaucoup sur les motivations personnelles de ces messieurs :

Monsieur Facq a donné sa démission. Il ne veut plus faire partie du personnel de la mission. Il invoque sa mauvaise santé pour demander son retour en Europe. [...] Monsieur Van der Gucht est devenu fou. Je ne sais pas pourquoi. Il a pris l'initiative d'envoyer une plainte à mon sujet au Gouverneur général. Il affirme que messieurs Facq et Geno ont de sérieux motifs de se plaindre de mon comportement. [...]

Je n'ai jamais fait la moindre remarque à leur égard. La seule chose qui pourrait avoir provoqué le mécontentement du docteur en sciences [Van der Gucht], c'est que j'ai spécifié, dans mon rapport sur Ibembo, les tâches exécutées par chaque membre de l'expédition et j'ai indiqué qu'il ne faisait que s'intéresser à la recherche botanique. [...]

Geno, c'est autre chose. [...] Le temps qu'il perd à lire des nouvelles. [...] J'ai fait savoir à messieurs Geno et Ceuterickx que je suis mécontent en ce sens qu'il

²³ J. Fabian, *Out of our minds : reason and madness in the exploration of Central Africa*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, p. 320.

²⁴ C.A. Keim, art. cit., p. 127.

²⁵ Archives, MRAC, N2 Missions, Mission Hutereau.

est inadmissible d'aller à la chasse, de discuter, de rire et de s'amuser dans les moments où nous devons travailler.²⁶

Bien évidemment, l'expédition ne fonctionnait pas comme un tel ensemble. Alors que chaque membre de l'expédition suivait son propre objectif, c'était les populations locales qui portaient les fardeaux de l'expédition. Des documents historiques et la collection photographique nous montrent que c'est la population locale qui a permis la réussite de l'expédition Hutereau. Une grande partie de la cargaison était transportée par voie terrestre.

Nous pouvons voir, dans la collection de photos, des porteurs emballer des coffres, se reposer dans la forêt après avoir porté ces lourdes cargaisons ou avancer dans les zones densément boisées (Illustration 5). La population locale guidait Hutereau et ses collègues à travers les forêts denses. En outre, en plus d'être porteurs et guides, l'expédition s'appuyait sur leurs aptitudes de traducteurs, d'informateurs, de cuisiniers, de préparateurs et d'hôtes. Dans un rapport, nous pouvons lire que Hutereau n'avait aucune empathie pour le dur labeur qu'abattaient ces hommes pour l'expédition.



Illustration 5 : Porteurs parmi les hautes herbes au sud de Gombari.
AP.0.0.11476, collection MRAC Tervuren ; mission Hutereau 1911-1913

²⁶ Archives, AMAE, AA, AIMO 1414 / II.V.

3. Interdisciplinarité

Malgré les tensions suscitées par mille objets ethnographiques, cinq quatre cylindres phonographiques, treize heures de film ethnographique, trente mal, des espèces animales et des objets sont conservés en sécurité à Bockhaven a réalisé une recherche sur dossiers ethnographiques d'Armstrong. Il compte approximativement huit chiffre officiel de dix mille deux dans le cadre de la propagande ou mythifiée a joué un rôle dans l'iconographie de l'étude ethnographique de la région. Le prétendu autre statique devait résister d'objets.

Pour en finir avec ces visions approche anthropologique et historique d'une anthropologie muséale critiquant la collection Hutereau et de donner une vision propre. Je traite ces objets comme sources pour mettre au jour les contextes liés au travail de terrain et en traçant le Bas-Uélé, je pourrais être en mesure de retracer la vie sociale de ces objets.

Une question pertinente se pose au musée d'aujourd'hui ? Comment peuvent-ils être des « objets de récit » ? L'obscurantisme de Conrad ?

Les questions essentielles de d'une étude de la littérature, d'une recherche d'archives et d'un travail du Congo. La force de cette recherche avec la vision essentialiste de la méthode.

Conclusion

Dans ce chapitre, portant sur ma recherche doctorale, j'ai tracé les contours théoriques et méthodologiques à la base de la façon dont je vais traiter les données historiques. J'ai essayé de montrer qu'il y a eu par le passé une approche trop univoque des collections ethnographiques. Elles ont renforcé les mythes et l'imaginaire entourant les populations locales, créant un discours du « nous » – les patriotes africains (Hutereau et ses comparses) – contre « eux » – les « non-civilisés ». Tout d'abord, j'ai expliqué pourquoi une interprétation historico-anthropologique de ces objets dans notre contexte muséal d'aujourd'hui est nécessaire. Ensuite, j'ai expliqué mon approche heuristique en tant que méthode pour étudier les différentes significations données à ces objets. Enfin, j'ai exposé comment nous devons mener la recherche de façon interdisciplinaire et interactive. Ces approches sont intéressantes à la lueur du musée moderne, qui se veut à la fois musée et institut scientifique.²⁹

27 A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-10.
28 L. Peers, A.K. Brown, *Museums and Global Culture*, New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 304.

²⁹ Cet exposé fait partie de la recherche doctorale intitulée *Chief Maloka (1884-1927) and the Hutereau expedition (1911-1913) : An anthropology of (post) colonial layers of agency and exchange in Northeast Democratic Republic of Congo / The Royal Museum for Central Africa Tervuren (2019)*

