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Dialogues between Theory and Practice

Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research

Holistic Visions of Fang Heritage Objects

The Problem of Endogenous and Exogenous Categorisation

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Abstract

In my holistic view of Fang heritage objects, I distinguish between two narratives. One is characterised by the Western vision of African heritage, which views it “from the outside” and which I refer to as an exogenous representation. This exogenous narrative is based on discoveries, explorations, voyages and their subsequent narratives, and ranges from the collections of cultural goods to the preservation, cataloguing and categorisation in exhibitions in Europe. For this reason, the debate on possible restitution should by no means be restricted to this Western view alone, whose narrative would then become the only perception of African heritages. The second narrative, which is in a way an endogenous view, always within the general framework of the holistic approach to African heritage, represents and must represent the “perception” of the African continent itself. This African “narrative” is far older than the European stance, and is based on African worldviews and cultures that have existed since long before Europeans were collecting and appropriating objects, often also inflicting humiliation and violence. For a long time, almost no attention has been paid to the African narrative. But now the African narrative is taking shape.

Visions holistiques des objets du patrimoine fang : la problématique de la catégorisation endogène et exogène (Résumé)

Dans mon approche globale des objets du patrimoine fang, je distingue deux discours. Le premier se caractérise par la vision occidentale du patrimoine africain, qui le perçoit «de l'extérieur» et que je qualifie de représentation exogène. Ce discours exogène est fondé sur des découvertes, des explorations, des voyages et les récits qui en découlent. Il va des collections des biens culturels à la préservation, au répertoriage et à la catégorisation dans les expositions en Europe. C'est pourquoi le débat sur une éventuelle restitution ne doit en aucun cas se limiter à cette seule vision occidentale, dont le discours deviendrait alors la seule perception du patrimoine africain. Le second discours, qui est en quelque sorte une vision endogène, toujours dans le cadre général de l'approche holistique du patrimoine africain, représente et doit représenter la « perception » du continent africain lui-même. Ce «discours» africain est bien plus ancien que la vision européenne et repose sur des visions du monde et des cultures africaines qui existaient bien avant que les Européens ne collectent et ne s'approprient des objets, infligeant souvent des humiliations et des violences. Pendant longtemps, le discours africain ne suscitait guère d'intérêt. Mais aujourd'hui, ce discours prend forme.

In the early 20th century, Pan-African congresses were held in Britain, the United States and throughout Europe, followed by those held in Africa. The African narrative has developed mainly through relevant conferences organised by educated Africans from Africa and the diaspora, and further crystallised by UNESCO's heritage conventions in particular. UNESCO now sets the rules by reinforcing the endogenous aspect of this heritage.

It also received recognition by Modern Art; European artists who discovered African art early on drew inspiration from it for their works (Rubin 1996).¹ These "narratives" of African cultural heritage are the subject of this presentation and the objective of my research, which seeks to contribute to a global view of the perception of African cultural heritage.

An interesting discussion is currently taking place in Europe and Africa, especially between the former colonial powers and the colonised peoples of Africa, concerning the ownership of African cultural property in European museums, galleries and repositories. These objects are mainly considered as material goods, and their inherent spiritual values are not sufficiently taken into account. Consequently, the exchange of intangible values, knowledge

and know-how is not adequately considered, although this aspect of restitution is probably even more important than the material goods themselves. In what follows, I analyse these circumstances, which I mainly encountered during my field research in Central Africa.²

In a holistic consideration of heritage objects, the study of their provenance is the beginning of a process that can lead to a reasoned restitution to the former owners. At the same time, since this is a holistic approach, we must also take into account the circumstances of the circulation of objects, step by step, involving all participants: creator and maker, users of the objects in their circumstances, collectors or buyers, private and public collections. Thus, for a clear vision of heritage objects, the holistic approach to determining the provenance integrates all these parameters at the same time as we will see later: the circulation of heritage objects with all the partners involved, the destination of the objects in the collections (public and private), and eventually the restitution.

The discourse analysis framework of this study ranges from the principle of “more visible” to “less visible”. Objects referred to as “more visible” are examined and the obvious information is available to us, for example in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. On the other hand, the “less visible” aspects are hidden in the data to be collected from the population of origin, the former owners of these objects, who in the past often utilised these objects under various circumstances or rites. With information from the societies of origin, the endogenous nomenclatures of the objects can be extracted and defined to be included in lexicographic reference works (lexicons, dictionaries and encyclopaedias), and in order for application processes to be established. These nomenclatures range from the natural ecological environment of the material, through its manufacture and social use, to its acquisition by a museum or private collection. In other words, an exhibition of an object in a museum should represent both the endogenous and the exogenous aspects of knowledge about its cultural heritage.

The final narrative of the objects thus comprises meaning at different levels as well as names, social values and the circumstances of their uses; ongoing mutations that occurred during their journey from one population to another. This means that a multitude of different data must be researched, evaluated, compared and put into context. And one cannot expect these data to be obvious and easily gathered, as the following examples demonstrate.

We found that there are three knives without proper nomenclature in the ethnographic museum in Lübeck. They are referred to by ethnographers as “throwing knives” and have the following Inventory Numbers: AF 121 (1),

AF 121 (2) and AF 121 (5). This lack of nomenclature has made it difficult to assign them either to the endogenous or to the exogenous category. A reconstruction of the nomenclature of these heritage objects could, however, be based on different contributions such as a publication by Efraim Anderson (“Contribution à l’ethnographie des Kuta I”)³ or “Au Gabon” by Fernand Grébert,⁴ where we can also identify these weapons. The same applies to four helmet headdresses of the Fang with the following Inventory Numbers: 70.13: 4; 70.13: 5; 70.13: 6 and 70.13: 7 (acquisition date 1909), collected by Günther Tessmann (1884–1969). In this case, the endogenous names of these types of headdresses are not identified; nor are their social values and circumstances of use. This lack of data at the Lübeck museum inspired me to conduct a survey among former Fang owners of these headdresses during my field research in 2021 (Equatorial Guinea from 28 July to 31 August, Gabon from 1 September to 5 October, and Southern Cameroon from 6 to 25 October). In this case of our data collection mission related to the nomenclature and uses of the headdresses collected by Tessmann, it was possible to receive all relevant information from the populations of origin.⁵

The objective of this chapter is to unveil and highlight the endogenous vision of the heritage object, considering the history of the society of origin, its customs, its worldview, its cults and rites. Subsequently, I seek to take into account the exogenous representation of these objects, its circulation, the social background of the collectors, their strategy, the conflicts of interest and the circumstances of collecting, right up to the presentation and storage in museums or private collections. As we will see, the holistic restitution of the object starts from the social situation of the creator and the family that commissioned the object for ritual or other purposes, moving through its social use by the community, for which the object is attributed meaning from the beginning, until passing through the hands of collectors.

The core of this work is based on a comparison of historical, ethnological and regional approaches. The diverse historical sources are interpreted by current African and European societies according to their different socialization. However, in the societies of origin, many people are able to interpret the objects collected during the colonial period not only from an African, but also from a European point of view. While they are influenced by their own African traditions, many, especially those from the younger generation, have also been educated at Western schools and universities. Whenever contradictory interpretations arise, we hope to distinguish the issues and assign them to their respective social movements.

As we can see, the notion of community of origin can become ambivalent: It is no longer the (pre-colonial) communities of origin alone that give accounts of their relatively isolated points of view; rather, an analysis within the framework of the diversity of sources must take into account the phenomenon that so-called original societies have meanwhile adapted some exogenous interpretations of their own heritage. In this scenario, we may therefore encounter contexts for data collection, analysis or interpretation that take into account changes due to the diversity of historical situations that are highlighted here, and are therefore based on a multidisciplinary approach. In case of conflicts of interpretation, the multidisciplinary approach may be particularly useful, involving history, politics, ethnology, ritual anthropology (the history of religions), linguistics, human geography, demography, art history, law (convention studies) and hermeneutics. One-sided ethnological assessments and considerations based on colonial expeditions, such as that of Günther Tessmann, made it possible, for example, within the framework of the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885, to allocate African spaces and territories to European nations without hesitation. Alongside the assumed right to appropriate the African continent, its subsoil resources, fauna and flora, among other riches, the European nations also claimed the prerogative to appropriate its intangible heritage (despite deeming it inferior). These objects of African heritage were already covered by the provisions of the Berlin Convention of 1884/85 during the colonial period.⁶

Today, when we talk about the restitution of African objects, some European countries, like France, have to pass laws in order to repatriate these heritage objects, for the simple reason that the latter are considered to belong to the French State. For the most part, they were collected during the colonial period and France became their legal owner. This same Berlin conference of 1884/85 gave the colonizing states the right to control the colonised African societies,⁷ including the execution of rituals. It was therefore possible for the European nations to control and monitor the dances and the production of artifacts of so-called secret associations such as the Ngi (Ngil) among the Fangs, the Mwiri and the Bwiti, to name but a few, among the peoples of southern Gabon. The colonial administrations and the Christian missions worked together to control and prohibit these secret associations, for fear that they might be capable of encouraging rebellion against the administrative and colonial authorities.

We know of the importance of the City of Lübeck in the collection and preservation of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial heritage, since merchants of this north German Hanseatic city were already present in Central

Africa as well as in other parts of Africa and the world. The arrival of these heritage objects at the Ethnographic Museum in Lübeck (*Völkerkundesammlung der Hansestadt Lübeck*) dates back to the middle of the 19th century with, for example, the collection of Heinrich Brehmer (1830–1866) who, as a trader, was in the geographical area of Central Africa. The Brehmer collection is one of the oldest ethnographic collections in the Lübeck museum from the Ogooué basin region of Gabon. The ethnographic collections of the Lübeck museum are also and above all connected with the German presence in Africa. The famous Fang expedition of Lübeck, led by Günther Tessmann between 1907 and 1909, is an example of this and fits in well with the redefinition at that time of the museum in Lübeck, which had been created a few years earlier.

Provenance research, or the history of ownership of a work of art, is a traditional part of museum practice. For the Central African objects stored in the Ethnographic Museum in Lübeck from today's regions of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and southern Cameroon, there was only minimal information available. This was significantly supplemented and documented by Tessmann's field research between 1907 and 1909. Knowledge pertaining to these objects has therefore made considerable progress in the context of their provenance. Let us also remember that Tessmann lived in this part of Africa because of a colonial treaty, which explains his specific ties to Central African companies.

It is between these two poles, one constituting above all the provenance, the other initiating the restitution, that it is advisable to highlight the parameters of a holistic view of heritage objects. In examining these parameters, we establish the steps that determine the path between origin and restitution. In our journey, we have thus far spoken of the "less visible"; that is, the ancient provenance or the loss of these objects for the communities of origin, and subsequently of the "more visible", or the actual location of the objects, currently in public and private collections, for example. Moving from these most visible heritage objects in the collections to the least visible aspects – their prior determination in the hands of their first owners, we will rely on two examples of heritage objects.

The first is a reliquary head, *nlo biay*⁸ or *eyima bieri*,⁹ recorded under Inventory Number 70.13:1 and collected during the 1907–1909 expedition by Günther Tessmann on behalf of the Ethnographic Museum in Lübeck (Figure 1).



Figure 1 | Reliquary Head, Lübeck Ethnographic Collection, Inventory Number 70.13:1 (Collection Günther Tessmann) © Lübeck Ethnographic Collection (Photo: Ilona Ripke)

This reliquary head belongs to the *Melan*¹⁰ cult or the “cult of the ancestors” among the Fangs of Central Africa. Tessmann informs us that these wooden carved “ancestor figures” have several names: *bian* meaning “medicine”, *bian malăn* or simply *malăn*.¹¹ Starting from the “most visible” in our holistic approach, for this example of the carved head from the Tessmann collection we find information about the circumstances of the journey of this heritage object to the ethnographic museum in Lübeck. In his work *Die Pangwe Monographie*, vol. 2 (1913), Günther Tessmann provides information about the endogenous name of the object and the geographical origin of this ancestral figure (head), from the region of *Ntumu*¹² or *Mvai*¹³ in New Cameroon, as well as about the social values and circumstances of its use.¹⁴ According to Tessmann’s analysis, Fang reliquary statuary with “simple heads” attached to the reliquary case with a more or less long stem, seem to be the oldest figurines used to decorate reliquary boxes.

Tessmann continues with his interpretation by stating that a head could better serve the purpose of concealing the true contents of the reliquary case, as the Uninitiated (Women) would have to assume that the body was in the reliquary case and there would be no reason to look for anything else inside.¹⁵ I do not agree to his interpretation, rather assume that this kind of heads served to mark the reliquary case as a sacral object which was reserved for initiated. The Fang community is patriarchal, so only males could be initiated in a dedicated rite.

We learn more about this object from the work of Louis Perrois, a French researcher and former director of the Museum of Arts and Traditions in Libreville, Gabon. According to his book devoted to Fang statuary (1972), this reliquary head collected by Tessmann belongs to a sub-style known as “Betsi single heads”, from the category of helmeted heads known as *nlo o ngo*.¹⁶ Perrois also addresses the inaccuracy surrounding the exact origin of this object. He challenges the statement given by Tessmann when he says that this head-reliquary would be either *Ntumu* or *Mvai* and indicates that this imprecision on the part of Tessmann would be due to the fact that he would have obtained this object indirectly, that is to say that Tessmann did not directly collect this object himself but would have received it as part of a batch, hence his hypothetical indication of its origin.¹⁷ Perrois finally locates the object among the Betsi of the Okano valley.¹⁸

Nevertheless, we have only very limited information about the conditions of acquisition for this specific heritage object. According to two concordant sources, Tessmann’s diary and that of his draughtsman Hans Jobelmann, we

can affirm that during the expedition from Lübeck to the Fang area (from 1907 to 1909), Tessmann and his companions inflicted brutal violence in the villages in order to appropriate heritage objects.¹⁹

Another example sheds more light on the journey of African heritage objects. Recently the press informed about the circulation of an African heritage object that was appropriated by Europeans during the colonial era and in turn was appropriated by descendants of former colonial administrators. This is the case of a Fang mask of the secret society of *Ngil*, which was recently put up for auction by the descendants of a colonial administrator. According to the analysis by the Montpellier experts commissioned for the auction, this *Ngil* mask, probably sculpted at the end of the 19th century, was acquired in Gabon between 1917 and 1918 by René-Victor Edward Maurice Fournier (1873–1931).²⁰ It is important to note that it is not known which specific Fang community was the original owner, let alone its conditions of acquisition. If we rely on the few biographies published, the French colonial administrator Fournier was promoted on 20 May 1917 to lieutenant-governor of *Moyen-Congo*,²¹ a position he held until his resignation on 16 May 1919.²² According to some experts on ritual issues in Gabon, the traditional customary justice rites of several secret associations such as the *Ngil* society were abandoned in the 1910s, causing the creation of the devices that accompanied this ritual to cease.²³ But this particular *Ngil* ritual was still practised secretly around the 1950s and in a new form in certain villages in the north of Gabon, in the province of Woleu-Ntem.²⁴

However, the question remains as to the precise origin of this mask, in which Fang or Pangwe region it was collected, to which community of origin this mask belongs, to which subgroup of the Pangwe (to continue the terminology of Günther Tessmann, who for example distinguishes between the Pangwe subgroups, of which the Fang is one), to which clan, and under which conditions the mask was collected. For this holistic examination, I classify the object with the following four parameters: provenance, circulation, destination and value, ultimately identifying this object as belonging to the *Ngil* ritual. Finally, to conclude the examination of the journey of heritage objects, I will adopt a completely different approach, manifested in the journey of a heritage object within the societies of origin, hitherto referred to as the communities of origin.



Figure 2 | White Masks, Lübeck Ethnographic Collection, Inventory Number 7621b+d (Collection Hermann Cleve) © Lübeck Ethnographic Collection (Photo: Ilona Ripke)

These two white masks pictured (Figure 2) are also from the Ethnographic Museum in Lübeck with Inventory Numbers 7621b and 7621d from the collection of the German military officer Hermann Cleve (1882–1914). According to the museum’s entry book, these heirlooms, along with others belonging to this collector, arrived at the museum in 1914. Initially it was assumed that these two masks must be *Ngil* or *Ngil* masks. However, according to Louis Perrois, the categorisation of these two masks is questionable. In his book *Problèmes d’analyse de la sculpture traditionnelle du Gabon* (Problems of analysis of traditional Gabonese sculpture) published in 1977, Perrois classifies these white masks from the Lübeck ethnological collection as masks of the *ngontang* (white girl), a traditional Fang dance popular in Gabon.²⁵

Before Perrois, Herbert Pepper (1912–2000)²⁶ and Pierre Sallée (1933–1987)²⁷ had already communicated information on the geographic origin,

circumstances of use, and ritual practices related to the category of white *ngontang* helmet masks. The *ngontang* dance and the circumstances in which this mask is worn have been known since the 1920s in the *Estuaire* and *Moyen-Ogooué* regions of Gabon. While the name of the mask evokes a young white girl, we note that the dancer in this performance is a man. This can be understood later in the context of the history of this heritage object.

Finally, according to information from Jacques Binet (1972) and Paulin Nguema-Obam (2005), we know today that the white mask *ngontang* does not refer to a history or legend among the Fangs, that the *ngontang* probably comes from another origin, and would be a borrowing from a Nigerian population that immigrated to Gabon at the end of the 19th century in the Lambarene area.²⁸ During my fieldwork in Equatorial Guinea in 2021, I was told that the *ngontang* is a dance of the Fangs of Gabon. When I arrived in Oyem in Gabon, my interlocutors confirmed that the *ngontang* came from Lambarene. This statement by the inhabitants of Oyem thus proved Paulin Nguema-Obam's observation that *ngontang* is a borrowing by the Gabonese people from a Nigerian tradition that arrived in Lambarene. This case demonstrates how crucial it is to consider circulation within Africa and also the limitations of first assumptions can be, even down to provenance from a single site, as this example from the Lübeck collection shows.

Nevertheless, the secure and precise determination of the origin of these two white masks from the Hermann Cleve collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Lübeck still remains unresolved. The hypothesis that these two masks are *Ngi* masks remains to be proven, because Tessmann does not mention the presence of a mask in the *Ngi* ritual²⁹ in the ceremonies that he was able to attend in his book *Die Pangwe* (vol. 2, 1913). It is important to mention here that Tessmann travelled through the regions of Equatorial Guinea, especially the Ntumu region, southern Cameroon, which is also dominated by the Ntumu and Mvai sub-groups, and through part of northern Gabon between 1907 and 1909 during his *Die Pangwe* expedition.³⁰ For his part, Tessmann mentions *Ngi* figures made of earth, impermeable earth, or clay at certain village sites.

During my excursions in the provinces of Wele-Nzas and Kie-Ntem in Equatorial Guinea, no one was able to provide information on the presence of a mask in the *Ngi* worship ceremony. And a further issue sheds doubt on the assumption that these are masks of the *ngontang* dance: their plastic form shows only one face. While several kinds of *ngontang* helmet mask are known according to research so far, these are all Janus-faced helmets, with two, three

or even up to six sides. The plurality of faces of the *ngontang* mask plays a central role in the practice of this mask dance and for the discernment of the spirits represented in it.

In conclusion, the provenance of these two white masks from the Hermann Cleve collection of the Ethnographic Museum of Lübeck remains inconclusive. Ultimately, it appears that they belong neither to the *Ngi* ritual nor to the *ngontang* dance.

In the holistic view of the heritage object we have indicated four parameters. By origin, we mean the populations that share the use of the heritage object, the community of manufacture, of application, of language and denomination, the latter also being the community of understanding and sharing of the meaning and practice. Simultaneously we have the name, we have the production of the object, the use during rituals or everyday work or the playful use, the learning to use and the transmission of the use.

The second parameter to be defined is the circulation of the heritage object from village to village, from population to population, from seller to buyer, to the partial expropriation and for a new appropriation of goods. Others (colonial administration, private collections and museums), either voluntarily (in cases of transmission through scholarship), or by administrative, ritual or commercial transmission.

The third parameter concerns the destination in private and public collections. This is a new form of appropriation, whether by purchase, ritual (missionaries) or convention (colonial administration). The purpose of public collections is to learn about the peoples to be colonised, whereas private collections are interested in the value of the objects with a view to expanding the patrimony of those who possess these collections.

Restitution seems to be the fourth parameter of the African heritage object. This pillar is still under construction as we are only just starting to erect it. This stage concerns the willingness of states or collection owners to return heritage objects to their communities of origin. It is a question of examining the historical, conventional, material and social conditions of acquisition, selecting objects for return and, once they have arrived at their destination, establishing optimal conditions for their preservation, presentation and social use.

In conclusion, knowing the details of the above parameters can significantly contribute to solutions of restitution, depending on the circumstances and various theories or specific speculations around the object in question, and depending on the legal or physical persons involved.

- 1 Rubin, William (1996) (Ed.): *Primitivismus in der Kunst des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, München; and see also Grisebach, Lucius (2008): *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner und die Kunst Kameruns*. Rietberg Museum, Zürich.
- 2 The ZKFL (*Zentrum für Kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung Lübeck*) has enabled me to conduct scientific research on the topic *Provenance and Restitution* with a scholarship for a doctoral project at the Ethnographic Collection Lübeck (*Völkerkundesammlung der Hansestadt Lübeck*) and to participate in this and other similar conferences. I would like to express my gratitude to the ZKFL for this support, which also gives me access to the Ethnographic Collection's inventory and archives.
- 3 Andersson, Efraim (1953): *Contribution à l'ethnographie des Kuta I*, Stockholm, p. 181.
- 4 Grébert, Fernand (1948): *Au Gabon (Afrique équatoriale française)*. Société des missions évangéliques de Paris, Paris, p. 41.
- 5 I would like to acknowledge the valuable support I received during my field research, mainly from Don Jesús Ndong-Mba Nnegue, priest of the chapel *San Martin de pores y divino niño Jesús* of Añdom-Mbon cdo (Mongomo) as well as from Dr Régis Ollomo, linguist of the Omar Bongo University of Libreville.
- 6 See Bley, Helmut (2005): "Künstliche Grenze, natürliches Afrika? Um die Berliner Kongokonferenz von 1884–1885 ranken sich allerhand Mythen", in: *Informationszentrum 3. Welt* 282, pp. 280–283, <https://www.freiburg-postkolonial.de/Seiten/Bley-Kongokonferenz.htm>, accessed 4 February 2023.
- 7 Ibid.; Eckert, Andreas (2013): "Die Berliner Afrika-Konferenz (1884/85)", in: Jürgen Zimmerer (Ed.): *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 137–149.
- 8 The object's original Fang name. Information collected during my fieldwork survey in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon in 2021.
- 9 See Fernandez, James W. (1982): *Bwiti. An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa*, Princeton, New Jersey, p. 256.
- 10 The "Melan" rite is linked to ancestor worship among the Fang. The "melan" or "alan" is also the name of the plant with the scientific name *Alchornea floribunda Müll. Arg.* used in the rite. See Nguema-Obam, Paulin (2005): *Fang du Gabon. Les tambours de la tradition*, Paris, p. 101, see also Alexandre, Pierre; Binet, Jacques (2005): *Le groupe dit Pahouin (Fang – Boulou – Beti)*, Paris, p. 110.
- 11 See Tessmann, Günther (1913): *Die Pangwe. Völkerkundliche Monographie eines westafrikanischen [...] Ergebnisse der Lübecker Pangwe-Expedition 1907–1909 und früherer Forschungen 1904–1907*. Vol. 2, Berlin, p. 117.
- 12 Fang dialect variant. The Ntumu are located in the regional province of Gabon (Woleu-Ntem), in the south of Cameroon and in the Rio Muni in Equatorial Guinea; see Perrois, Louis (1972): *La statuaire fan. Gabon. Mémoires O.R.S.T.O.M. N° 59*. Paris, p. 13; see also Perrois, Louis (1985): *Art ancestral du Gabon. Dans les collections du musée Barbier-Mueller. Photographies Pierre- Alain Ferrazzini*, Genève, p. 230.
- 13 Fang dialect variant found in the Ntem region (river name in northern Gabon and southern Cameroon; see Perrois 1985, p. 230).
- 14 See Tessmann, 1913, *Die Pangwe*, Vol. 2, pp. 117–118.
- 15 Ibid., p. 117.
- 16 Perrois, 1972, *La statuaire fan*, p. 335.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 345–346.
- 18 Ibid., p. 13; 346.
- 19 See Templin, Brigitte (2015) (Ed.): *Günther Tessmann. Mein Leben – Tagebuch in 12 Bänden (Teil 2)*. Band 3. Lübeck, p. 96; See also Templin, Brigitte; Böhme, Gottfried (Eds) (2017): *Hans Jobelmann. Aus Afrika... Tagebücher, Briefe, Zeichnungen und Photographien 1907–1909*, Lübeck, p. 76.

- 20 See <https://magazine.interencheres.com/art-mobilier/un-masque-fang-de-la-societe-secrete-du-nguil-devoile-a-montpellier/>; <https://www.gabonreview.com/retrouve-un-important-masque-fang-arrive-aux-encheres-a-partir-de-196-millions-defrancis-cfa/>; <https://afrique.lalibre.be/69108/france-un-rarissime-masque-fang-du-gabon-aux-encheres-samedi/>; <https://www.antiquestrade-gazette.com/print-edition/2022/february/2529/international/fang-mask-helps-if-you-want-to-keep-a-secret/> (all accessed 4 February 2023); and “Vente d’un énième masque Nguil en France. Profanation, escroquerie en bande organisée, injure publique, humiliations?”, in: *Echos du nord, Hebdomadaire Gabonais d’informations*. Vol. 17, no. 766 (18 April 2022), p. 5.
- 21 Another name for the territory of *Afrique-Équatoriale française* (AEF), which consisted exclusively of a territory corresponding with Gabon and another with the current Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).
- 22 See <https://magazine.interencheres.com/art-mobilier/un-masque-fang-de-la-societe-secrete-du-nguil-devoile-a-montpellier/> (accessed 4 February 2023).
- 23 See Leroux, L.-C. (1925): “Etude sur le Ngil”, in: *Bulletin de la Société de Recherche Congolaises* 8, p. 3–10; see also Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe (2009): *Les seigneurs de la forêt. Essai sur le passé historique, l’organisation sociale et les normes éthiques des anciens Beti du Cameroun*, Paris, p. 23.
- 24 See Cadet, Xavier (2009): *Histoire des Fang, peuple gabonais*, Paris, pp. 402–403.
- 25 See Perrois, Louis (1977): *Problèmes d’analyse de la sculpture traditionnelle du Gabon. Initiations – Documentations techniques. N°32. O.R.S.T.O.M.*, Paris, p. 66.
- 26 Herbert Pepper (1912–2000) was an ethnomusicologist at ORSTOM and made sound recordings of African life collected in the Congo and Gabon between 1941 and 1956 and published in 1958 in the form of a boxed set of 3 LPs. The populations Pepper surveyed are quite large: Babembe, Bakwele, Bateke, Bateke-koukouya, Fang, Fang-Ntumu, Koukouya, Kouyou, Pygmy, Pygmy: Bangombe, Pygmy babinga bangombe, Pygmy-babongo, Vili and Yombe.
- 27 Pierre Sallée’s (1933–1987) edited sound recordings on the music of Gabon in 1961 were, at the end of his work, published in 1978 in a book entitled: *Two Studies on the Music of Gabon: A Musician among the Nkomi*. The social groups to which Pierre Sallée devoted his fieldwork are the Tékés of Gabon and the Nkomi (Myénè) in the province of Ogooué-Maritime in Gabon.
- 28 See Binet, Jacques (1972): *Sociétés de danse chez les Fang du Gabon*, Paris, p. 45; see also Nguema-Obam, Paulin (2005): *Fang du Gabon. Les tambours de la tradition*, Paris 2005, p. 67.
- 29 See Tessmann, 1913, *Die Pangwe*, Vol. 2, pp.78-94.
- 30 See Templin, Brigitte (Ed.) (2015): *Günther Tessmann. Mein Leben – Tagebuch in 12 Bänden* (Teil 2). Vol. 3, Lübeck.