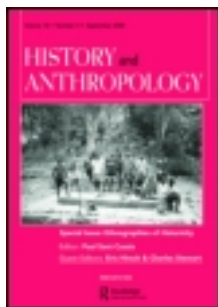


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# Between Regionalization and Centralization: The Creation of the Musée Léopold II in Elisabethville (Musée national de Lubumbashi), Belgian Congo (1931–1961)

Maarten Couttenier

*Since “museumland” was revisited in the 1980s, different authors have studied the history of colonial museums in Europe within a broader discussion on colonial bias, the creation of traditions and the theory of representation. It has become clear, for example, how African utensils were exported to Europe, where they were exhibited as curiosa, ethnographical objects or art. But what happened when the very notion of the museum was exported back to Africa? Who created these institutes and in what context? Was the relationship between colonizers and colonized altered? Did the “social life” of the objects on show change? And what was the relationship between the “old” museums in Europe and the “new” ones created in the colony? These questions have rarely been studied. In this article, the creation of the Musée Léopold II will be used as a basis to offer insight into the links between colonial “science” and “policy”, which proved not to be as monolithic as often portrayed, but rather were complex amalgamations of different opinions and even conflicting interests.*

**Keywords:** Central Africa; Congo (DRC); Colonial Sciences; Museum Studies; Material Culture

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### A Forgotten World Fair: Elisabethville 1931

Although Africans themselves were of course the first to show interest in their own material culture, the earliest European natural history collections on the continent were most likely gathered during the Dutch presence in the Cape Colony. Remnants of the eighteenth century curiosity cabinet of the German Joachim Nickolaus von Dessin, with *curiosa* from Africa, the South Pacific and Northwest America, were transferred to the South African Museum in Cape Town, created in 1825 and re-established thirty years later by the British (MacKenzie 2009, 79–80). The architecture and museological design of later African museums, such as those in Bloemfontein (1877), Pretoria (1892), Bulawayo (1901), Johannesburg and Nairobi (1910) and Dakar (1938), were also based on Western models and ideas (Adedze 2002; Dias 2000).<sup>1</sup> The very centralized colonialization policy pursued by King Leopold II and the Belgian State after 1908 meant that Belgian Congo was a late arrival on the museum scene compared with British, French and Portuguese colonies, but here again the establishment of museums was inextricably linked with the growing number of Europeans. The first exhibitions in the Belgian colony were held in Elisabethville (Lubumbashi), which was only founded in 1910 but soon grew to become one of the largest cities in Central Africa. Closely linked to the growing mining industry in Katanga, the number of inhabitants rose from 15,000 in 1923 to no fewer than 89,000 in 1948 (Fetter 1976, 33 and 74; Ministère des Colonies 1949, 120–121).

Within the rapidly growing population, there were strong links between colonial economics, politics and religion on the one hand and culture and science on the other. These links, which are always taken for granted but hardly ever explained or proven (Wilder 2003, 219), were apparent from the very first exhibition in Elisabethville organized by the members of the Chamber of Commerce in April/May 1913 (Anonymous 1961, 87, 96 and 135). The very title of a 1922 exhibition, *Exposition agricole*, confirmed this connection (Figure 1). Nine years later, the city hosted a high-profile event, a World Fair to celebrate the centenary of the independence of Belgium (Figures 2–5).<sup>2</sup> The Elisabethville exhibition has been almost entirely forgotten, possibly because of the huge amount of press coverage given to the *Exposition coloniale internationale* held in Vincennes (Paris) in 1931.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of setting up a colonial counterpart to these exhibitions came up for discussion once again within the Chamber of Commerce, and gained the support of the provincial governor, Gaston Heenen. Just like the Belgian world fairs, the colonial version held in 1931 in Katanga had clear propaganda aims (Couttenier 2010a; Viaene 2008). The organizers needed to convince both Belgian and South African industrialists and consumers of Congo's economic potential. They also hoped that this massive event would attract visitors from the area around Elisabethville, which should become "a commercial as well as a leisure and entertainment hub" (De Wulf 1931).<sup>4</sup> The Belgian government subsidized the project to the tune of two million francs (almost \$2 million in today's money).<sup>5</sup> The subsidy was used to build access roads, construct the 2000 m<sup>2</sup> Belgian pavilion, a garden, pergola, sports stadium and restaurant in the buildings that had housed the *Exposition agricole*. The exhibition grounds were



**Figure 1.** *Exposition agricole*, Elisabethville. The expansion of Katangan arable and livestock farming was regarded as a cornerstone of the colonial economy (Jewsiewicki 1979). HP.1966.37.50, collection RMCA Tervuren; anonymous photo, 1922, RMCA Tervuren©.

also home to pavilions for the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), the Comité Spécial du Katanga (CSK), the Compagnie foncière du Katanga (Cofoka), the Société d'entreprises de Travaux en Béton au Katanga (Trabeka) and a bar in “rural Flemish style”. The exhibition itself comprised various sections covering trade, arable and livestock farming, industry, art, sport, finance, propaganda and housing. In the art section a series of bronze casts of “indigenous types” was shown, made by the reputable Belgian artist Arsène Matton (Couttenier 2009, 96).

Some of the main characteristics of the creation of colonial museums in Africa have already emerged. First, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized that characterized the discourse in colonial museums in Europe did not change as the concept of the museum transferred to Africa. Although exhibitions were now organized in Congo, the Congolese had no say in the content, which was determined exclusively by Europeans. Second, both the nature of the organizing bodies and the goals of these events pointed to the close links between colonial politics and economics in Katanga, which was to become the richest province in Belgian Congo.

### Plans for a Permanent Museum

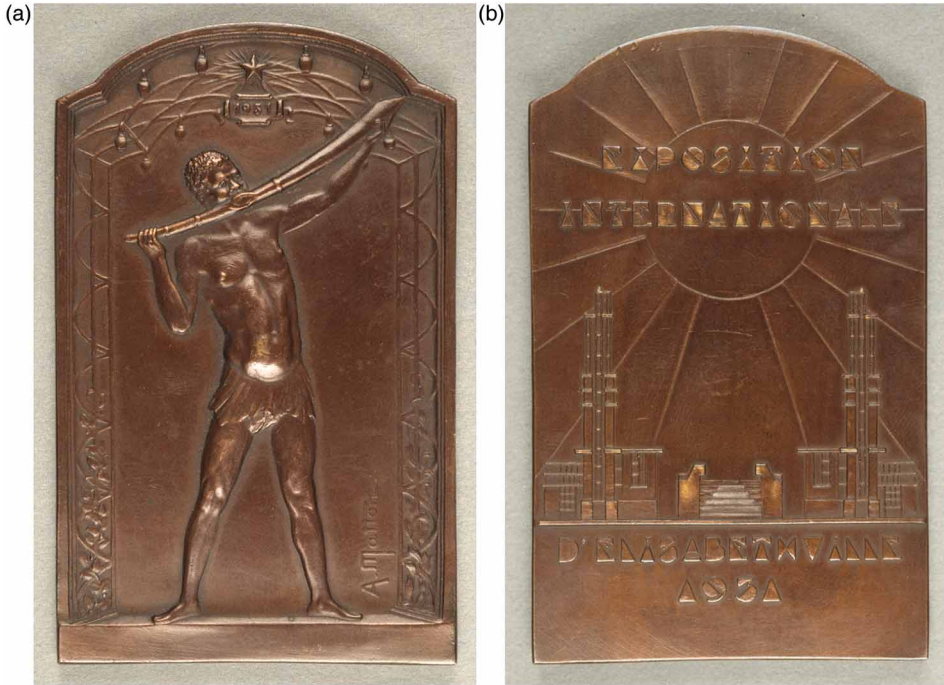
Although plans to convert the Belgian pavilion into “the future museum of Elisabethville or a permanent commercial exhibition” (De Wulf 1931) were in place as soon as the 1931 World Fair was over, it would take almost fifteen years for



**Figure 2.** The 1931 Elisabethville World Fair: on the right the entrance, and on the left the Belgian pavilion with the inscription *Belgique 1931* below the cupola. Once inside, visitors could admire objects such as animal skins, model boats, Edmond Grandfils bicycles and displays by Union Match and the Nouvelles Huileries Anversoises. HP.2004.6.6-18, collection RMCA Tervuren; anonymous photo, 1931, RMCA Tervuren©.

them to come to fruition. In the meantime, the Musée de la Vie Indigène (MVI) had been set up in the Congolese capital, Leopoldville (Kinshasa), by an organization called Amis de l'Art Indigène (AAI).<sup>6</sup> The honorary committee was chaired by Governor-General Pierre Ryckmans, who was to become a staunch advocate of regional museums. He opened the museum in Leopoldville on 14 March 1936. Adrien Vanden Bossche was the first curator, his son Jean taking over in the 1950s. The first exhibition in a former hotel was based on a geographical arrangement “to enable officials and missionaries in Belgian Congo to identify more easily the particular sector of interest to them” (Vanden Bossche 1955, 85).

The AAI also set up seven provincial committees. One of these was based in Elisabethville and had Provincial Governor Amour Maron as its chairman and Procurator-General de Lannoy and Monsignor Jean Félix de Hemptinne as its vice-chairmen (Manoly 1939, 18). Sculptures and “fetish objects” were displayed to a Western audience during the “Katanga Week” held in 1936. This event also featured performances by African dancers, musicians, coppersmiths, a potter and sculptors. As was the case in the “negro villages” at the World Fair in Antwerp (1885 and 1894) and Tervuren (1897), the Congolese had to demonstrate their arts and crafts and were not given an equal voice in the representation of their own culture. A year later the ethnographic collection was arranged according to the materials used, such as textiles, clay, wicker and sculptures in wood, ivory and stone. The sculptor Mayele was brought to



**Figure 3.** Commemorative medal for the 1931 Elisabethville World Fair, created by Arsène Matton. On one side we see a horn player, very similar to another bronze statue by the same artist, and on the other side a stylized representation of the entrance to the fair, bathed in sunlight. HO.1950.15.141, collection RMCA Tervuren, photo V. Everaerts, RMCA Tervuren©.

Elisabethville for the occasion. Known for his “negro art for Whites” (Maquet-Tombu 1939; Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, 490), “this artist’s order books were soon full” (Manoly 1938, 2–3). An actual “Sales Office” was set up, where craft products were sold “to meet the insatiable demand of admirers” (Anonymous 1939, 6).

During Belgian colonization, other museums would be created in Congo, such as the Musée d’Art et de Folklore in Luluabourg (Kananga), the geological museum Musée Léopold II in Costermansville (Bukavu), the prehistoric Musée Frère Van Moorsel in Léopoldville, several mission museums, and the remarkable private museum of the Kuba king in Mushenge (Van Geluwe 1979, 34). However, it was not until the late 1930s that the Belgian government again started considering plans for Elisabethville and the establishment of a permanent “Musée Albert I<sup>er</sup>” in honour of the recently deceased sovereign. The architect Jozef Schellekens designed unrealized plans for a new museum in Katanga as his entry for the *Prix de Rome*. His design comprised exhibition space, offices, housing for the European museum staff and a library. The garden, with fountains and lawns, was to be embellished with statues and masks representing “typical specimens of Negro art” (Figure 6). The museum for ethnography and ethnology, natural sciences, botany, geology and mineralogy was to be constructed in local



**Figure 4.** “Living exhibits” were put on show in the park of the 1931 World Fair held in Elisabethville, as they had been in Antwerp (1885 and 1894) and Tervuren (1897). This therefore brought the concept of “human zoos” to Africa. Visitors were enticed by the prospect of seeing people such as “Princess Kameda. The Smallest Woman in the World”. HP.2004.6.6-20, collection RMCA Tervuren; anonymous photo, 1931, RMCA Tervuren©.

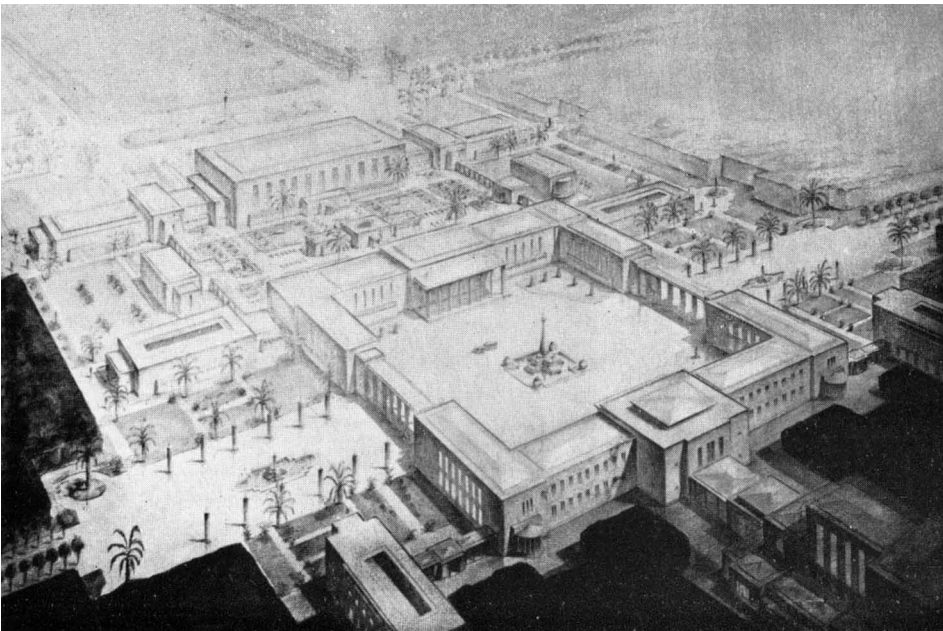
materials, such as Katanga sandstone, and the roofs were to be made of copper in order to withstand the “local conditions and Congolese climate (burning hot sun and rainy seasons)” (Schellekens 1937, 41). At the same time, Ryckmans and Auguste Tilkens, Director of the CSK, were also developing plans for the creation of a “Musée Albert I<sup>er</sup>”, but this time as part of the CSK’s Geological Service. This museum was also intended to become a new tourist attraction, with exhibitions dedicated to natural history, geology, petrography and “Congolese folklore” (Anonymous 1937). Funding for the initiative was to be provided by CSK and UMHK.

The members of the Museum Society of Elisabethville (MSE, created in September 1939) were at the same time attempting to establish a museum for ethnography, geology, mineralogy, botany and zoology in what had been the Belgian pavilion at the 1931 World Fair. Again they had the support of Governor-General Ryckmans. Its members included well-known figures from the colonial scene, such as Aimé Marthoz (Director of UMHK from 1936 to 1945) and de Hemptinne as its driving spirit. In a letter to the Minister of Colonies, Albert de Vleeschauwer, they also tried to persuade Brussels of the need for a museum in Belgian Congo “which will save the treasures that disappear every day” (de Hemptinne, Odon, and van Veen 1939). Fear of a lack of government support led the association to hope for financial assistance from CSK and UMHK, along with donations from the public. However, the latter





**Figure 5.** Aerial photograph of the site of the 1931 Elisabethville World Fair, showing the size of the site and its location in the city. HP.2004.6.6-21, collection RMCA Tervuren; anonymous photo, 1931, RMCA Tervuren©.



**Figure 6.** Plans drawn up in 1937 by the Belgian architect Jozef Schellekens for a Musée Albert I<sup>er</sup> in Elisabethville, which was never built. RP.2011.6.62 (Schellekens 1937, 38).



proposal would eventually win out over the CSK's plans, which were received by the Ministry of Colonies without great enthusiasm, as is evident from a telegram dated 20 November 1939: "Special Committee Project [CSK] concerning Museum does not fulfil wishes Elisabethville population in any way" (de Hemptinne, Odon, and van Veen 1939). In late December, the CSK decided that the creation of a museum was "not essential" and that they were in favour of establishing a "museum of popularization [...] run by amateurs" (Léonard 1939). The outbreak of the Second World War would put the plans on hold once again, however.

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized remained unchanged during the 1930s. The links between politics and economics became intensified and religious officials joined in the debate, thus realizing the "Holy Trinity" between the economy, the State and religion, which was so hard to accomplish at home. It also became evident that Belgian colonization was not a coherent discourse. In addition to the financial crisis, both differences in opinion between Brussels and officials in the colony, and different agendas of different colonial agencies in the colony itself, resulted in the postponed opening of a permanent museum in Elisabethville. The next two sections will discuss the difficult relations between museum personnel in Belgium and Congo.

### **Local Museums in Congo or Centralization in Tervuren?**

The initiatives to establish museums in the colony were of course closely monitored at the Museum of the Belgian Congo (Couttenier 2005, 2010b).<sup>7</sup> According to Henri Schouteden, Director from 1927 to 1946, the museum in Tervuren played an important centralizing role. Any regional museum to be set up in Congo should consequently have a popularizing mission and be targeted at the general public, and not have any specific scientific purpose. In a letter to the Minister of Colonies, Schouteden argued against keeping in their place of origin

collections that were of real interest to Science, which therefore need to be placed in a perfectly equipped environment where all the care required could be provided and where they are easily accessible to experts. It is clear that collections of this kind are of no interest to the general public, but could constitute a mine of precious information to scientists.

If the museum in Elisabethville was to be built, it would have to maintain close links with the Museum of the Belgian Congo. "Otherwise all the work and the documentation will be scattered, which will run counter to the wonderful ideas of our great king Leopold II" (Schouteden 1940).

Tensions between Tervuren and the colony regarding the actual or even merely potential creation of local museums had existed since the opening of the new museum in Tervuren in 1910. Joseph Maes, the then head of the Ethnography section, expressed deep concern at reading reports in the Belgian press on plans by the district commissioner in Coquilhatville (Mbandaka) to set up a "commercial and ethnographic museum". His fears were fuelled by the sudden drop in the number of

items he was receiving from that region. Furthermore, the few objects that were sent to Tervuren were of no scientific value, which meant that Maes' evolutionist research was jeopardized.

Only the collections originating from up-country populations have retained their ethnographic nature, their stamp of authenticity and their primitive form. They constitute the fundamental basis, the essential elements of any serious comparative study. How can the evolutionary cycle of an industry be established if we lack these collections? (Maes 1911a)

Leaving aside the risk that other districts would follow this example, Maes argued that keeping items in the colony was "scientifically undesirable", "impractical" and even "dangerous" because of insect infestation and the lack of equipment, premises and staff with the skills needed to disinfect, classify and preserve collections. Keeping objects on site locally could also have disastrous consequences for the growth of the collections in Tervuren, which "[...] though very rich and extensive, are far from complete. There are many gaps that need to be filled without delay" (Maes 1911a). Surprisingly enough, Maes already foresaw the possibility of returning collections to Congo once they had been analysed in Tervuren:

[...] I hope that within a year or two we shall be able to put together a set of all objects of native life that is as complete as possible, and perhaps we may then be able to consider creating here in the Museum, with the help of our counterparts, well-researched, classified and carefully preserved collections that we can send back to Africa either to form the basis of a general Congolese ethnographic museum in Boma<sup>8</sup> or for distribution among the various local museums that should be set up in the main towns of each of the administrative districts. (Maes 1911b)

The creation of several local museums in Congo also posed the risk of fragmentation, however: "[...] as the administrative districts do not in any way reflect the distribution of the tribes, it is inevitable that collections from a single community will be split up and housed in two or even sometimes three museums" (Maes 1911a).

Alphonse de Haulleville, who was Director at Tervuren from 1910 to 1927, again argued that all objects should be sent to Tervuren where trained staff were available to analyse the collections. After all, the creation of Congolese museums ran counter to Article 1 of the Royal Decree of 1 January 1910, which described how the institution worked:

All objects from Belgian Congo relating to the political, moral, scientific and economic history of the colony and which are not being used by any particular body are to be sent to Tervuren to a general public storage facility called: Museum of the Belgian Congo. (Anonymous 1910, 68)

The then Minister of Colonies, Jules Renkin, took a more diplomatic approach. On the one hand, he supported de Haulleville and argued that the creation of local museums should be discouraged, as this would be damaging to the museum in Tervuren. On the other hand, he would encourage the establishment of local museums in Boma or Elisabethville "[...] as they are an excellent way of allowing colonial civil servants to familiarize themselves with the economic value of their district and the nature of the tribes that live there" (Renkin 1911a, 1911b). Creating local museums could stir interest in

the colony, stimulate initiative and help develop a “spirit of observation”. Renkin suggested that the museum in Tervuren could make sketches and photographs of collections available to Congolese museums, referring to existing and successful initiatives in Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg.

### **Francis Cabu**

Although Renkin already suggested creating a museum in Elisabethville in 1911, and despite the scepticism in Tervuren, a provisional museum was opened in Elisabethville on 10 May 1942, in the midst of war and just five months after the strike of Congolese UMHK workers had been violently put down (Higginson 1989, 185–196). It was housed in four buildings of the *bureau du territoire*<sup>9</sup> on Avenue Limite Sud (Marchal 1999, 196–199). Amour Maron, Governor of Katanga from 1933 to 1946 and a key person in ending the miners’ strike, officially opened the museum on 3 June. In the guest book he wrote: “The provisional Museum was inaugurated today, thanks to the initiative of Dr Cabu whom I should like to thank and congratulate warmly. I hope that premises appropriate for the collection’s treasures can soon be put at his disposal” (Anonymous 1961, 197). Yet despite Maron’s concerns, it was to take almost four years for a new home to be found.

The core of the museum comprised the collections of Francis Cabu, a physically disabled World War I veteran who had begun his colonial career as a second class sanitary agent in 1924. He was an amateur archaeologist and had taken part in digs in Leopoldville in 1934–1935. Almost 12,000 prehistoric objects were found and sent to the museum in Tervuren where Cabu (1935) started with an analysis for his doctoral thesis in anthropology at the University of Liège. After the sudden death of the 35-year-old Jean Colette, head of the Prehistory and Anthropology section in Tervuren, and the surprising appointment of Maurice Bequaert in 1936, Cabu returned to Congo the following year to pursue his archaeological interests, this time in Katanga. The cost of equipment and the wages of Congolese workers were initially paid by the Museum of the Belgian Congo. However, Cabu was no longer willing to send any finds to Tervuren where he had been denied a permanent research position. Even the objects that formed the basis for a study in the Annals of the museum remained in Congo, where Cabu, pending a permanent solution for his museum, had converted his dining room at number 60 Avenue Léopold into an exhibition space (Cabu and Vanden Brande 1938). He did, however, send finds to Johannesburg, where they were examined by prominent experts such as Breuil (1944a, 1944b) and van Riet Lowe (1944).

Cabu’s collection went through nine successive changes of location, including the former court building, and in the summer of 1942 found a temporary home in the *bureau du territoire*. The large number of visitors eventually led to the official recognition of the MSE in the Ministerial Decree of 10 April 1943. At the end of that year, the temporary museum had to close its doors again, however. On 1 January 1944, the collections were packed up for the tenth time and placed in the bar of the 1931 World Fair (de Plaen 1989, 124). It was not until after the Second World War that the MSE really became active again. Unlike the staff of the museum in Tervuren, the MSE did think that they could

perform a scientific role. Four sections were set up: Geology and Mineralogy, Zoology, Botany and Anthropology, the latter headed by Cabu.

In the meantime, the collections had been taken out of their packing cases for the eleventh time and set up in the 1931 Belgian pavilion. The Leopold II Museum opened its doors on 1 January 1946, exactly two years after the previous move. The polychrome ornamentation dating back to 1931 disappeared, as did the inscription *Belgique 1931*, which was replaced by *Musée Léopold II* and two monograms of Leopold II. Although the memory of Leopold II was already contested during the interwar period, the museum in Elisabethville became “a monument dedicated to the memory of the Great King” (de Hemptinne, Marthos, and Derriks 1945). To mark the fortieth anniversary of the king’s death in December 1949, four bronze plaques were put up to the right and left of the entrance, as a *Mémorial aux pionniers belges du Katanga*. The four plaques referred to the four expeditions sent by Leopold II to the South of Congo between 1890 and 1892 and represented the expedition leaders Alexandre Delcommune, Paul Le Marinel, William Stairs and Lucien Bia and Emile Francqui. Stairs’ expedition led to the death of the famous Yeke chief Msiri, whom Cabu described as a “tyrant” (Cabu 1950, 8). The museum contained a copy of *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language* by Krapf (1882), which had been on the Delcommune expedition (1890–1893) and was annotated by Dr Paul Briart. Despite its official name and the inauguration of the memorial, the building was usually referred to by inhabitants of Elisabethville as the “Musée Cabu”. In 1947 at the age of 53, Cabu was appointed its curator (Van Beurden 2009, 197–198). At that point in time, the museum had 1213 mineralogical and 202 geological specimens, 554 palaeontological objects, 759 zoological specimens, 1670 anthropological and 2273 ethnographic objects (Anonymous 1947a). Two years later, enough funds had been raised to allow the MSE to start buying Cabu’s collections, with the exception of the archaeological items. Cabu (1950) slightly exaggerated when he compared this purchase to the importance of Hans Sloane’s collections for the British Museum (5). The number of collection items would more than double from 21,396 in 1949 to 47,742 in 1960 (Anonymous 1950; Waldecker 1960).

Although Cabu was eventually successful in creating “his” museum in Elisabethville, the late opening of the provisional museum in 1942 and the Musée Léopold II in 1946 was symptomatic of Belgian colonization, caught between the need for centralization and the desire to make local initiatives possible. After all, it was not by accident that Cabu was able to realize his dream during the Second World War, while the Ministry of Colonies in Brussels was occupied by German troops and Minister De Vleeschauer had fled to London. On a macro-level, the Belgian government in exile regarded the colony as an important source of income, while local colonial officials who were unable to return to Belgium during the war were keen to establish local power structures. On a micro-level, this conflict of interests resulted in different opinions on the role of the colonial museum as a scientific or rather “popularizing” institute, although very personal conflicts, and at the same time very understandable frustrations, also deepened the conflict. As will be demonstrated in the following sections, tense relations between Elisabethville and Tervuren persisted after the Second World War. But first, let us enter the museum in Elisabethville.

## Inside the Musée Léopold II

### *General Layout*

The museum was opened every day, including Sundays and holidays. “Promenades-causeries” or guided tours, conferences and labels in French, Dutch and English were to attract both specialists and a wider audience. In 1949, the museum was visited by 4303 Europeans and 274,854 (!) “natives” and attracted more visitors than the museum in Tervuren. By 1958, the numbers in Elisabethville were reduced to 5856 and 123,675 (Anonymous 1950; Waldecker 1959a, 7). Although the museum was visited by renowned scientists, Ministers of Colonies, General Governors, the *bami* of Ruanda and Urundi, and Luba, Yeke, Lunda and Chokwe chiefs, visits by “anonymous natives” were considered to be the “raison d’être” of the museum. “Separated from their villages by the imperatives of industrial life and modern economy, they draw strength with us from the ambience of their country and they are happy” (Waldecker 1959a, 10).

The geology, mineralogy, zoology and flora collections were installed in the right-hand hall of the 1931 building, which spanned 2000 m<sup>2</sup>. The other side was dedicated to cultural and physical anthropology, palaeontology and prehistory. According to the *Guide provisoire* published in 1950, a “provisional” guide to the museum produced to mark the CSK’s fiftieth anniversary and which was subsequently to remain the only guide, the museum’s exhibits were displayed chronologically. The first items to be seen dated back to the most ancient geological eras, with the visitors’ attention then being drawn to flora and fauna, ending up with Man, “the latest arrival” (Cabu 1950, 10). A bronze bust of Leopold II, created by the artist Thomas Vinçotte and donated to the museum by the Minister of Colonies, stood in the centre of the entrance hall. Visitors were also given a foretaste of the mineralogical and geological collections in the form of an 800-kg block of uranium ore “which photographers are advised to avoid approaching, as the gamma radiation given off by the substances in this block may fog the films that they have about their person or in their camera” (Cabu 1950, 10). Rather less dangerous was a cast of a Nile monitor made by the Belgian sculptor Johan De Maegt, who had a workshop in an annexe of the museum.

One of his pupils was Munyonga Mulekwa Mayi (Figure 7), who worked in the museum as a security guard (De Wan 1950). In 1949, he was appointed as De Maegt’s assistant, and after that started to create his own works, including the *Lancier Muluba*, which was exhibited in the museum. Gaston-Denys Périer, who visited the Musée Léopold II in 1950, expressed concern, however: “Munyonga has lost the hieratic vision of traditional Negro art. They want to turn him into a monitor” (Périer 1950, 1100). Périer also regretted the fact that local artists, such as Mayele, were producing “tourist art”. He objected to the fact that important works of art, which could have served as an “ancestral stimulus” (Périer 1950, 1097) to contemporary artists, were being kept in European and American museums. Périer was one of the few people in Belgium to defend the existence of museums in the colony where works of art could help local artists give the arts of the past a contemporary interpretation.



**Figure 7.** From right to left: Johan De Maegt, Munyonga Mulekwa Mayi, a statue and its unknown model in a workshop near the Musée Léopold II in Elisabethville. HP.1956.15.7791, collection RMCA Tervuren; H. Goldstein (Inforcongo), 1949, Sofam©.

The right-hand hall contained mainly mineralogical and geological collections donated to the museum by UMHK and CSK. In Katanga, the engine of the Belgian colonial economy, the regional museum could, therefore, count on the support of various local businesses. The Compagnie du chemin de fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga conveyed items of interest to the museum in Elisabethville free of charge. A lack of scientific staff and a competent taxidermist meant that the botanical and zoological collections were rather limited in scope in 1950. The spectacular animal group showing a lion attacking a zebra (Figure 8) was a gift from the Bulawayo museum, the oldest museum in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), which had been founded on the initiative of Cecil Rhodes.

### *Prehistory*

The historical approach continued in the left-hand hall. The central display cases started by giving visitors a chronological overview of prehistoric cultures in Congo, and then moved on to explore ethnography. Cabu used a terminology based on the sites where finds were discovered. Objects from Katanga and Kasai were classified as “Kamoen”, “Lupembien” and “Kundelunguin” and were placed in separate display cases. Objects from other parts of Congo, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola,



**Figure 8.** An animal group in the Natural History section showed a lion attacking a zebra and snapping its spine with its strong jaws. HP.1955.106.252, collection RMCA Tervuren; L. Van Bever (Inforcongo), June 1946, RMCA Tervuren©.

Rwanda-Urundi, Europe and even the USA were presented next to them for purposes of comparison. Cabu (Figure 9) wanted to highlight mankind's very long history in Central Africa and tried to prove that a Palaeolithic age had existed in Africa, as it had elsewhere in the world (Couttenier 2012).

Cabu himself had collected most of the objects, but the collection did also include items donated by Father Adalbert Anciaux de Faveaux, with whom Cabu had conducted excavations (Cabu and Anciaux de Faveaux 1950). Mrs Goethals donated pottery found in the caves of Kyamakela, an important *lieu de mémoire* in Congolese history (Couttenier 2011, 37; Marchal 1996, 27–28). His excellent contacts meant that Cabu also received items donated by Clarence van Riet-Lowe in Johannesburg and Neville Jones, a missionary employed by the London Missionary Society and curator of the Antiquities Department of the Bulawayo museum. The Pentecostal missionary William F. P. Burton also worked at the Musée Léopold II. Burton had previously collected items for the museum in Tervuren, where he met Maes and Schouteden in 1927, and for the University of Witwatersrand (Maxwell 2008).<sup>10</sup> Henri Breuil, who had visited some important sites in Congo with Cabu, even wrote some of the notes for the exhibition. Businesses such as the Régie des Mines d'Or de Kilo-Moto also donated items to the museum in Elisabethville. One of Cabu's main sources for the palaeontological collections was Louis S. B. Leakey, curator of the Coryndon Museum in Nairobi and visitor of the Musée Léopold II, who offered a cast of the lower and upper jaw of the *Proconsul africanus*.





**Figure 9.** Francis Cabu giving a guided tour to Captain José Agapito da Silva Carvalho, Governor-General of Angola. HP.1956.15.9559, collection RMCA Tervuren; J. Mulders (Inforcongo), 25 September 1950, RMCA Tervuren©.

### *Ethnography*

The ethnographic collections, also largely built up by Cabu, were likewise located in the left-hand wing. The regional museum also benefited from a large number of donations from local colonial agents and missionaries, like Daniel Crawford. Unlike museums in Belgium, their counterparts in Congo also had the advantage of receiving gifts from Congolese people, including Kalunga Mwendanabo, a security guard at the museum, Lunda kings Mwant Yav Kaumb and Naweje III. Despite the (admittedly limited) African contribution, the task of classifying the objects was given to Burkhardt Waldecker, a German doctor of philosophy, pianist, polyglot and opponent of the Nazi regime who left Germany in 1935 and mapped the most southerly sources of the Nile in Burundi on 12 November 1937. On Mount Gikisi, close to the sources, he had a monument in the form of a three-metre-high pyramid erected by the local population (Waldecker 1944a). Waldecker moved to Belgian Congo where he was protected by Governor-General Ryckmans at the outbreak of the Second World War. The pyramid on Mount Gikisi was actually formally inaugurated by Madeleine Nève, Ryckmans' wife, in the summer of 1943. She sent Waldecker a photograph of the ceremony, a kind gesture to which he responded with a self-penned poem (Vanderlinden



**Figure 10.** Like the famous life group in the Museum of the Belgian Congo, the Musée Léopold II in Elisabethville had his own “leopard man” made by Munyonga Mulekwa Mayi. Disguised members of a secret society were believed to kill their victims with iron claws (left hand). By using a wooden stick, they marked the scene with leopard footprints to pass the buck to the animal (photo by Y. Kersten in Waldecker 1959a).

1994, 563). At the end of the war, Waldecker became a naturalized Belgian citizen under the colonial statutes.

In January 1943, Waldecker was appointed assistant curator of the Musée Léopold II, where he would eventually succeed Cabu (Cahen 1973; Kishiba 1965). He was in charge of cultural ethnology, which he defined as the study of “people of primitive eras” up to the “contemporary primitives”. For the exhibition, Waldecker made what he admitted was eclectic use of evolutionism, diffusionism and functionalism, “rather along the lines of the Boas school” (Waldecker 1950, 63). In a draft version of the catalogue, he stressed the difference between Adrien Vanden Bossche’s approach and his own scientific method: “In contrast to the Museum of Native Life in Leopoldville which is administratively classified, according to provinces, the Anthropological Museum in Elisabethville is scientifically arranged according to native groups (local ethnography) and objects, customs and ideas (comparative ethnology).”<sup>11</sup>

Waldecker started the exhibition with “local ethnography” and presented Congolese population groups in separate display cases, arranged according to anthropological, linguistic and geographical principles. Inspired by publications of Baumann, Thurnwald, and Westermann (1940) and studies by the Belgian missionary Van Bulck (Van Bulck 1949, 1950; Van Hoof 2005), he first drew a distinction between pygmies, Negroes,



**Figure 11.** Kalunga Mwendanabo, security guard at the Musée Léopold II, who collected ethnographic objects from the Tabwa people for the museum. This photograph was displayed in the same case. EP.0.0.13683, collection RMCA Tervuren; F. Dubus, RMCA Tervuren©.

Hamitics and dolichocephalic Kamites, “the black branch of the Caucasian race”, to which he also thought the ancient Egyptians belonged. He then presented a remarkable linguistic classification according to Sudanese, Nilotic, Nilo-Kamite and Bantu languages. Finally, “regional groups” and “tribes” were defined according to their present location. The entire ethnographic exhibition was made up of nine sections, offering geographical arranged objects, panoplies, busts representing “physiognomy” and hair style, and life groups (Figure 10). As with the prehistoric objects, material from other cultures was also presented for comparison purposes, in this case ethnographic items from the Zulus in South Africa. Next to the Tabwa items, which were collected by the security guard Kalunga Mwendanabo and for which he himself had written a notice, visitors could see a photograph of Mwendanabo in a dancing costume (Figure 11).

Waldecker also seemed to be impressed by aesthetic qualities of objects, like Kuba statues, anthropomorphic beakers and their famous fabrics. Yet the concept of art for art’s sake was foreign to all primitive peoples: aesthetics always served a concrete end.



**Figure 12.** At the end of his career, Waldecker was mostly interested by ethnomusicology. In a special showcase he tried to demonstrate the evolution from a bow (on the left side) to stringed musical instruments. Waldecker also pointed out to the presence of the same type of instruments in ancient Egypt and the possible diffusion of cultural elements (photo by Y. Kersten in Waldecker 1959a).

Although the notion of beauty exists, as evidenced by the painful processes that our beautiful black women patiently undergo in order to be even more lovely, the ideal of beauty is different from ours (artificial deformations, disproportions, exaggerations), and, in particular, art for art's sake is unknown to Negroes. Everything has to serve a concrete purpose external to art and the significance of which is often misunderstood by Europeans [...]. (Waldecker 1944b)

In a final module, Waldecker turned his attention to “comparative ethnology” in which systematic classification of objects, customs and ideas bypassed the “ideological disorder” of ethnography and could reveal the true meaning of the objects. On the one hand, Waldecker used evolutionistic approaches, referring to William Henry Holmes in order, for example, to explain the development of the harp from a bow used in hunting to a multiple-stringed musical instrument with a sound box (Figure 12). On the other hand, he was also strongly influenced by diffusionism. For instance, he thought he had found similarities between Congolese double clocks and those produced in West Africa, while stringed instruments and neck supports were to be found both in the Belgian colony and in ancient Egypt. Elsewhere he argued that the Egyptian queen Nefertiti had exotic tastes, with her “Mangbetu hairstyle, which she might have seen on a slave—thought to be the latest Egyptian fashion, as proven by the sculpture of her head, found in her tomb at Tal el Amarna” (Waldecker 1944b). Circular scarring among the Bena Lulua in Congo was compared to Maori tattoos

(Waldecker 1949). Nevertheless, Waldecker also warned against the dangers of diffusionism: “We must not fall into the trap of Pan-Egyptian obsession, and see Egyptian influence everywhere, as Elliot Smith does” (Waldecker 1950, 72).

As a result, besides physical anthropological and linguistic groups, Waldecker would, therefore, only accept the existence of “culture areas”, a concept he described as “more modest and more real than the reasoned and supra-spatial cultural cycles of the historical-cultural school” (Waldecker 1950, 67). The idea of “culture areas” was developed by Clark David Wissler, a pupil of Franz Boas, and was first applied to Africa by Melville Jean Herskovits (Herskovits 1924). Later on, four culture areas were defined in Congo by Olbrechts: Kuba, Luba, Lower Congo and the North (Olbrechts 1946). Waldecker met with Olbrechts and a critical Herskovits in Elisabethville, but defined only two areas, one with geometric art and the other with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic art. It is interesting to note that the areas described by Waldecker extended far beyond Congo. By arguing that Congo and Nigeria belonged to the same culture area (Waldecker 1947), he seemed once again to be ignoring “more modest and real insights”.

### A Difficult Working Relationship

This “guided tour” of the Musée Léopold II clearly demonstrates that Cabu and Waldecker had scientific aspirations. Relations with the Museum of the Belgian Congo, therefore, remained tense. The museum building in Tervuren was severely damaged by a V1 bomb during the Second World War, and it was only in the 1950s that Olbrechts and his student Albert Maesen, who had succeeded Joseph Maes, were able to reinstall exhibitions on “art”, with different stylistic regions of Congolese sculpture, and “ethnography” arranged according to “tribes” and “themes” (Van Beurden, forthcoming).

In Elisabethville, however, Cabu continued to enjoy the support of Governor-General Ryckmans after the Second World War, as the latter continued to defend the idea of museums in Congo. Referring to top-quality items from Egyptian and Greek antiquity, which Ryckmans thought should be kept in Cairo or Athens, he drew an analogy with Congo, which would have consequences for researchers in Europe:

Today, scholars need to be globe trotters [sic] so that they can study [unique specimens]. I believe that the government has a duty to future generations to impose an absolute ban on the export of unique items. They are part of the Colony’s heritage, and we are responsible as its guardians. (Ryckmans 1945)

After the opening of the Musée Léopold II and faced with a *fait accompli*, Schouteden now also seemed to have changed his mind regarding the existence of the museum in Elisabethville as “fully justified”. Taking a very paternalistic approach, he saw benefits for both Europeans and Congolese:

It is clearly important for Colonials to be able to have local access to information about the country where they are living, and for the natives themselves to be able to see their

customs presented until such time as they are sufficiently educated to understand the various aspects of life displayed in the Museum. (Schouteden 1945a)

At the same time, however, he continued to make the point that the Musée Léopold II could only be an educational museum and that it did not have the same goals as the museum in Tervuren. “I therefore believe that the centralizing role conferred on the Congo Museum by its creator King Leopold II, confirmed by King Albert on his accession to the throne, should be retained” (Schouteden 1945b). Therefore, Schouteden (1945a) argued that if the MSE were to be disbanded, all the collections would have to be transferred to Tervuren to prevent them being lost to “our national and colonial patrimony”. Furthermore, new objects should not be sent abroad, where they might fall into the hands of private collectors, or to other museums, but only to “the official museum of the colony” in Tervuren, where they would contribute to “our country’s scientific reputation”. Schouteden was referring here to the existing links between the Musée de l’Institut Français d’Afrique Noire in Dakar and the Musée National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris, a relationship in which the African museum helped the French museum to expand its collections (Adedze 2002). The head of the Geology and Mineralogy section in Tervuren also advocated establishing scientific institutions in Congo, “the final stage to be reached when the Colony is fully developed” (Leperonne 1945). Schouteden (1945b) took the view that unique objects were “infinitely precious to Science, while a cast would be just as useful to local visitors if the item is of interest to them”. He, therefore, donated a cast of a unique Luba statue to the MVI in Leopoldville (Maes 1939, 11). Schouteden argued that the original piece, which remained in Tervuren, was of enormous scientific importance and that the copy perfectly fulfilled its educational and instructive role in Leopoldville. The ever-recurring concern about the centralization of collections also lay behind Schouteden’s response to Ryckmans’ vision of “learned globetrotters”.

It is obvious that it will never be as easy to study Congolese collections in Congo as it is in Europe, and that experts (even ethnologists) will scarcely be able to consider travelling there to examine items of interest to their research. (Schouteden 1945a)

Despite reservations in Tervuren, the Minister of Colonies, Albert de Vleeschauer, now also seemed to be convinced of the benefits of regional museums in Congo, thus embracing the view of Governor-General Ryckmans. From 1946 onwards, the Ministry even awarded the MSE an annual grant of 50,000 francs, equivalent to almost \$15,500 today. The money was to be spent on maintenance, water, electricity and wages for “native staff”, including the aforementioned security guards Kalunga Mwendanabo and Munyonga Mulekwa Mayi (de Hemptinne and Marthos 1945). The grant was made subject to good cooperation with Tervuren and on condition that if the museum were to close all the items would be transferred to Tervuren.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the grant, which was not exactly popular in Tervuren, de Vleeschauer tried to reconcile the operations of museums in the colony and in Belgium. In a letter dated 22 May 1946, Schouteden was asked to seek a “conciliation formula” to encourage “friendly and fruitful collaboration between the two organizations”. The views expressed were very similar to those put forward by Renkin, his predecessor:

“We must avoid giving the impression that we want to discourage perfectly legitimate colonial initiatives in scientific research. It is in this light that the creation of museums in Congo must be seen as completely normal” (Magotte 1946). In an atmosphere of rising post-war nationalism, Schouteden replied to the Minister that collaboration between museums in Belgian Congo and Tervuren would be clear evidence of patriotism. At the same time, he accused Cabu of a lack of cooperation (Schouteden 1946). Minister de Vleeschauwer continued to try to reach a compromise, and agreed with Schouteden to some extent when he indicated that a museum in Elisabethville should have a purely educational role and would not be permitted to compete with Tervuren, which had to remain the focus for researchers from all over the world (de Vleeschauwer 1946).

Between 1947 and 1958, when the museum in Tervuren was headed by Olbrechts, tensions between the metropole and the colony, and competition within the colonial community, indicated that there were still “competing agendas” (Cooper and Stoler 1997, 6). For example, Olbrechts objected to Cabu presenting himself as a representative of the Museum of the Belgian Congo at the Pan-African Congress on Prehistory in Nairobi in 1947, but did not submit a report on it (Cabu 1952). Olbrechts (1948) also insisted that Cabu should send the objects he had collected in Katanga at Tervuren’s expense to Belgium rather than regarding them as his personal property. However, the few letters from Belgium remained unanswered by Cabu and Waldecker. They did send objects to other museums, but only for temporary exhibitions in other African cities like Cape Town, Johannesburg, East London, Port Elisabeth, Durban, Brazzaville, Bulawayo and Ndola (Waldecker 1959a, 4). As time went on, nobody dared to address the issue of colonial “particularism”.

Relations between Tervuren and Leopoldville did seem to be somewhat better than those between Tervuren and Elisabethville. This is indicated, for example, by Schouteden’s gift in 1939 and Olbrechts’ donation in 1956 of a cast of a figure of a Congolese girl created by Arsène Matton to the MVI (Whyms 1956), where Jean Vanden Bossche created a new “ethnological” and “ideological” exhibition arranged according to “tribe” and “theme” in the former Post Office. Like his father, Jean Vanden Bossche stressed the practical tasks of the museum on African soil, stating that the MVI should be a “laboratory of native policy” that provided answers to the daily questions of its visitors, mainly colonizers “dealing with the local inhabitants” (Vanden Bossche 1955, 86). In the meantime, no donations were made to the “scientific” Musée Léopold II. Whereas Cabu received objects from museums in Zimbabwe and South Africa, relations with Leopoldville remained fraught. Cabu visited the MVI in 1951, but never published in journals such as *Brousse*, an AAI publication (Anonymous 1947b, 1951).<sup>13</sup> The apparent scientific “truths” formulated by the museum, therefore, seemed to be partly the result of individual actions and charisma (Shapin 2008, 3).

### Independence and the Katangan Secession

In the context of the 1961 *Foire internationale d’Elisabethville* which marked the city’s fiftieth anniversary, an event that once again was held a year too late, the Belgian



architect Claude Strebelle drew up plans for a new museum building in Elisabethville (Figure 13), very much against the wishes of Cabu, who was strongly attached to the existing exhibition (de Plaen, personal communication, May 30, 2011). The first curator officially retired in 1954 but decided to stay in Congo with his family. Waldecker even wrote a white book (Waldecker 1959a) and a series of letters to the Minister of Colonies and the General Governor trying to stop “an insane waste” of money to construct a new, fifteen million, and 1000 m<sup>2</sup> smaller museum (Waldecker 1959b).<sup>14</sup> Because the new museum would also be governed by the Official University of Elisabethville, Waldecker was afraid to lose his job to “a gang atheists and freemasons” (Waldecker 1960). Nevertheless, the new building was constructed between 1960 and 1961 in the cultural centre (Lagae 2008, 21; Mwitwa et al. 2008, 52).

After Moïse Tshombé declared Katanga independent and hostilities broke out regarding the Katangan secession, in which Cabu’s son fought as a mercenary (de Plaen, personal communication, May 30, 2011), the new building was first put to use as a barracks for Swedish UN troops. Some of the mineralogical and ethnographic collections were stolen, and zoological specimens were destroyed. Wooden objects were even used as firewood. Nevertheless, the Société des Amis du Musée did manage to rescue half of the ethnographic collections and 30% of the prehistoric collections by



**Figure 13.** The present Musée national de Lubumbashi, designed by the reputable Belgian architect Claude Strebelle, who died in late 2010. HP.2011.46.2, collection RMCA Tervuren; photo by the author, 1 September 2010, RMCA Tervuren©.

taking them to safety in Kipopo (Kipushi). The library and all the scientific documents were plundered, however. In compensation for the damage, the Swedish government offered a subscription to a scientific journal (Cornet 1984, 84–87; Interview with Philippe Mikobi, Musée national de Lubumbashi, 26 August 2010; Guy de Plaen, personal communication, May 30, 2011).

The old Musée Léopold II was to face what could be described as an even worse fate. In July 1961, the building was used for the last time as exhibition space for the *Foire internationale d'Elisabethville*. Destiny struck towards the end of 1961 during the UN Operation Morthor, when Indian Canberra bombers were deployed above the centre of Elisabethville to attack the Katangan base. Key strategic communication centres such as the post office and radio station were bombed. On 12 December 1961, the former Musée Léopold II was also accidentally destroyed along with a beauty shop, the French consul's apartment, the office of the Belgian airline Sabena and the Catholic cathedral (Figure 14). Civilians were also killed (Hempstone 1962, 190–193).



**Figure 14.** The Belgian pavilion at the 1931 World Fair was accidentally destroyed by a UN bombardment of Elisabethville thirty years later. Today only the entrance with its distinctive cupola remains. The structure is now on the playground of the Ecole de Gecamines school on Avenue Camayola in Lubumbashi, built in the 1970s. HP.2011.46.1, collection RMCA Tervuren; photo by the author, 16 August 2010, RMCA Tervuren©.

After the war ended, the remaining collections were brought back to Lubumbashi in 1963. Cabu had left town in the meantime and the “Musée Cabu” had been destroyed, with the collections being transferred to Strebelle’s building, which was renamed the “Musée provincial du Katanga”. Waldecker retained his position after all and would even become conservator, but he died in 1964 during a holiday stay in Italy.<sup>15</sup> From 1964 onwards, the Congolese government paid the wages of Congolese personnel, although senior positions were still reserved for Belgians. It was not until 1986 that the first Congolese Director was appointed. Little changed after independence, as European staff stayed on, and there was scant attention paid to the original function and symbolic context of the objects. Most citizens of Lubumbashi referred to the museum as the “fetish warehouse” (Bundjoko 2007, 75; Cahen 1973). The view that “The museology that became established in Africa was a northern museology impregnated with its own certainties through which southern cultures were categorized and labelled as traditional cultures [...]” (Robert 2007, 16) thus persisted for some considerable time. Mobutu Sese Seko, who regarded the Institut des Musées Nationaux du Congo/Zaire primarily as a means of building national unity and a “retour à l’authenticité”, never actually visited the Musée national de Lubumbashi (Bundjoko 2007, 75). Nevertheless, the Congolese government provided funding to finish the building work between 1972 and 1977, and on completion the new museum was officially opened by the State Commissioner. Since all the collections held by the MVI were lost and the building destroyed after independence, Lubumbashi was the only town in Congo to have a museum building worthy of the name (Cornet 1984, 85; de Plaen 1989, 124).<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

Rather than starting from theories that are often insufficiently founded, this article takes concrete historical reality as a basis for providing insight into the complex relationship between “policy” and “science”. Indeed, it is often claimed that anthropology had a significant influence on colonialism, for instance, in the classification of “races” and “ethnic groups”. Although it is well established that both “knowledge” and “policy” were naturally part of an imperialistic discourse, and that officials in the Ministry of Colonies often made reference, at least in theory, to the adage “better understanding leads to a better policy”, the historical reality and concrete relationship between these two areas appears to be more complex. First, the analysis of the history of the creation of the Musée Léopold II in Elisabethville shows that policy and science need to be defined in broader terms. Political as well as economic and religious factors and players determined the complex relations with science and other cultural areas. Second, it is clear that the influence of the broader colonial policy on science and culture was stronger than the influence in the other direction. For instance, Waldecker’s original museological classification had no impact on the racial classification of Katanga, in marked contrast to the direct and indirect influence of politics, economics and religion on the museum. These influences run from one extreme to the other, from local donations and free transport, grants from Brussels through to international conflicts that resulted in the destruction of the Musée

Léopold II. On the other hand, it is striking that the most important political change in the period under examination, the independence of Congo, initially had little effect on how Congo was represented in the museum in Lubumbashi, which shows the persistence of representations and stereotypes and the difficulty of incorporating different voices into one museological narrative.

Another conclusion that seems to confirm previously established insights is that “colonialism” was not a monolithic bloc vis-à-vis “the Congolese”. This article points out to various tensions within the colonial system: between Europeans in the colony and the Belgian capital, but differences of opinion also existed between individuals in Belgium and in Congo. Questions relating to the tasks and responsibilities of “old” colonial museums in Europe and the “new” institutes in Congo led to friction between Tervuren and Elisabethville. Staff at the Museum of the Belgian Congo were in favour of centralizing the collections in Tervuren and stated that African museums had a mere popularizing role. In contrast to the MVI in Léopoldville, where personnel assumed more practical tasks, scientists at the Musée Léopold II followed their own agenda. In the end, science, as well as policy, has proven not to be a fixed entity, but rather the result of personal actions, and sometimes all too human qualities.

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### **Notes**

- [1] Other “colonial museums” in Africa were created in Cairo (1858), Oran and Pietermaritzburg (1879), King William’s Town (1884), Tunis (1888), Antananarivo (1897), Harare (1903),

- Kampala (1908), Maputo (1913), Livingstone (1934), Dundo (1936), Dakar (1938), Esie (1945), Jos (1952), Bamako (1953), Freetown, Porto Novo and Lagos (1957), Blantyre (1959), etc.
- [2] This took place a year after the actual anniversary, in 1931, because of the centenary celebrations in Belgium and competition from the world fairs in Antwerp and Liège.
  - [3] The terms “universal” and “international” exhibition were used interchangeably until the 1930s. The International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) was only set up in 1928 and has been operational since 1931. Clear criteria allowing a distinction to be made between international and universal exhibitions were established in 1996. No mention is made of the African Expo in Elisabethville in publications about the Paris Expo of 1931 (Hodeir and Michel 1991) or on the BIE’s website <http://www.bie-paris.org/> (accessed 21 January 2011).
  - [4] The citations in this article that are not in their original language are the translator’s own translation.
  - [5] All monetary sums in this article have been converted according to the index and exchange rates for May 2011: [http://statbel.fgov.be/en/statistics/figures/economy/consumer\\_price\\_index/indices\\_prix\\_consommation/indice\\_general/coefficients/](http://statbel.fgov.be/en/statistics/figures/economy/consumer_price_index/indices_prix_consommation/indice_general/coefficients/). It should be noted that the Liège Water Exhibition alone cost forty-five million Belgian francs, the equivalent today of almost \$40 million. Strangely enough, this debt was only paid off years later using proceeds from the Colonial Lottery, an organization set up in 1934 to fund social and humanitarian projects in the colony.
  - [6] Viviane Baeke, Joseph Ibongo and Henry Bundjoko will shortly publish the article “L’évolution des regards sur l’art congolais au travers de la genèse des musées coloniaux et postcoloniaux à Kinshasa”, which deals with the history of the MVI.
  - [7] The present-day Royal Museum for Central Africa was created in 1898 and was called Musée du Congo. After 1908 and the annexation by the Belgian state the name changed to Musée du Congo belge. The new museum building opened in 1910 and in 1952 the scientific institute received the designation “Royal”. The museum was given his actual name shortly after Congolese independence.
  - [8] Before the administrative centre was moved to Léopoldville in 1923, Boma was the capital of the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo.
  - [9] The *territoire* was an administrative colonial division in Congo.
  - [10] Items collected by Burton are still held in both Tervuren and Johannesburg. A variety of objects are on display in the permanent collection in Tervuren. Burton’s collections have also been shown in the Africana Museum Johannesburg (1939–1940), the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and the University of Cape Town (Anonymous 1992), the Musée Dapper in Paris (1993–1994), the Museum for African Art in New York and the National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC (Roberts and Roberts 1996).
  - [11] The document “Projet d’un Catalogue provisoire de la Section d’Ethnologie Culturelle du Musée d’Elisabethville” by Waldecker is kept in the archives of the National Museum of Lubumbashi.
  - [12] Once again, note that this grant bears no comparison with the funding made available for the museum in the Belgian capital, which had a much larger staff and far higher operating costs. The Tervuren museum received a grant of 5,553,500 Belgian francs (over \$1.3 million) in 1949 (Olbrechts 1949).
  - [13] For an analysis of the journal *Brousse*, see Halen (1994).
  - [14] Fifteen million Belgian francs in 1959 would be over \$3 million today.
  - [15] The biographical information is based on the files kept in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Archives, D 655.
  - [16] Donatien Muya and Els Cornelissen will shortly publish an article on the more recent history of the Musée national de Lubumbashi.

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