

Book and Media Reviews

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Oceania at the Tropenmuseum, by David van Duuren, Steven Vink, Daan van Dartel, Hanneke Hollander, and Denise Frank. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2011. ISBN 978-9068327526; 216 pages, illustrations, photographs, endnotes, references, index. Cloth, US\$45.00.

This volume is one in a series of catalogs designed to showcase and document the genesis of the spectacular collections at the Tropenmuseum of Amsterdam's Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen). A dozen essays by curators and researchers familiar with the collection provide a substantial context for the images of artifacts and original photographs, and the result is an engaging historical overview of Dutch colonial exploration and collection in Oceania. Oceania, as reflected in the Tropenmuseum collection, largely means Netherlands New Guinea. There are artifacts from Papua New Guinea, Australia, Fiji, Tonga, and Hawai'i, among other locations, but most of these appear to have been acquired from private collectors or through the exchange of materials between museums. New Guinea was the Netherlands' sole colonial possession in the Pacific, and the Tropenmuseum collection is above all a record of colonial endeavor.

The introduction provides an instructive genealogy for the Tropenmuseum—its predecessor, the Colonial Museum, had been established in 1871 in Haarlem to educate the Dutch public in the achievements and potential of their colonies. It focused largely on plantation products until the introduction in 1926 of displays illustrating the material culture and

lives of colonial populations. By then the collection had been transferred to the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam, which was renamed the Indies Institute (Indische Instituut) in 1945, and then the Tropical Institute (Tropeninstituut) in 1950, after the final "loss" (from a Netherlands perspective) of the Netherlands East Indies. The evolution of exhibition policies and aesthetics is traced through several chapters, from the glass cabinets and mass displays of the Colonial Museum to the 2008 exhibition of Asmat *bisj* poles, the museum's largest postwar exhibition on the Pacific. Reports of visitor reception, not all of them admiring, prevent this auto-history from slipping into panegyric.

Two chapters sketch the history of the Netherlands' possession of its New Guinea territory and of its first collections from the region, housed initially in Haarlem and at the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam. The haphazard collection and documentation practices of the nineteenth century, combined with the processes of attrition that inevitably accompany the transfer of collections from one institution to another, have produced an awkward gulf between many of these earliest acquisitions and the well-documented histories of exploration that generated them. There are intriguing accounts of curatorial attempts to reconcile early artifacts with a fragmentary documentary record, and some of the earliest artifacts, deriving from the Etna Expedition of 1858, have only recently been identified.

The most substantial chapter, by former Oceania curator David van Duuren and visual collections researcher Steven Vink, is a very

useful history of exploration, collection, and photography in Netherlands New Guinea during the twentieth century. By 1903, the coastline had been mapped, and a series of military, geographical, and private expeditions were launched to systematically explore each of the major river systems. These expeditions and their collections are described in turn, from the North New Guinea Expedition of 1903 to the Star Mountains Expedition of 1959. It is evident from the artifacts used to illustrate this volume that the Tropenmuseum holds a significant proportion of these collections. Equally impressive are the photographs that show expedition members, their Papuan hosts, and the processes of field acquisition, and Vink offers a short but insightful account of the role of photography in expeditions to New Guinea. Scattered throughout the text are handy page-length biographical sketches of some of the key contributors to the Tropenmuseum collection, most of them more famous for their role as colonial explorers of New Guinea, including C B H von Rosenberg, J E Teijmann, G A J van der Sande, J W van Nouhuys, H A Lorentz, A F Herderschee, H J T Bijlmer, and C C F M Le Roux.

To augment these acquisitions from expeditions, the Colonial Museum commissioned its own field collectors and traded with other museums. During the 1920s, J C van Eerde, the Colonial Institute's director of anthropology, initiated exchanges with the Australian Museum to acquire artifacts collected by Frank Hurley and Alan McCulloch in Papua. He traveled to New Guinea, where he was

presented with collections assembled by administrative officers, whose enthusiasm for collecting was further galvanized by his visit. In contrast with the results of passing expeditions, the quality of the artifacts collected by these long-term residents in New Guinea was exceptional. After the war, an intensive round of exchanges with the British Museum and museums in Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Hamburg enabled curators at each institution to fill gaps in their collections, literally trading on privileged access to their respective former colonies. An entire chapter is devoted to Carel Groenevelt, commissioned by the Tropenmuseum to collect in New Guinea during the 1950s; his letters are revealing of this twilight moment in Dutch colonial collection, caught between the twin forces of the supposed exhaustion of "real Papuan art" and the impending transfer of New Guinea to the Republic of Indonesia.

Finally, a series of bequests or acquisitions from private metropolitan collections, including those of Henry Wellcome, Georg Tillmann, and Gijsbertus Oudshoorn, have furnished the museum with several outstanding individual pieces, while the comprehensive field collections of Swiss anthropologist Paul Wirz and former colonial officer and trained anthropologist Jan Broekhuijse reflect the collectors' immersion in several Papuan communities. A brief chapter on Father Petrus Vertenten is illustrated with three of his vivid portraits, executed in oil during the 1920s, of Marind-anim men in full regalia.

Very much a history of colonial collection and of Dutch perspectives on Oceanic art, the volume says little

of Papuans or of the kinds of relationships currently being forged between the institutions that house these colonial collections and their source communities. The process of repatriating human remains from the museum's large collection has been initiated, but one wonders what potential there might be for a program of reconciliation and re-engagement with Papuan communities, mediated through this remarkable body of material culture and photography.

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Vestiges d'une histoire Marquisienne: Contribution à l'archéologie de Ua Huka, by Eric Conte and Guillaume Molle. Les Cahiers du CIRAP 2. 2012. 108 pages, maps, figures, appendix, list of figures, bibliography.

Te Tahata: Etude d'une marae de Topoto (Nord); Archipel des Tuamotu, Polynésie française, by Eric Conte and Kenneth J Dennison. Les Cahiers du CIRAP 1. 2009. 136 pages, maps, figures, list of figures, bibliography. For information about CIRAP monographs, e-mail Eric Conte (eric.conte@upf.pf).

Over the last three decades, the islands of Central Eastern Polynesia (CEP) have been the focus of renewed archaeological investigation. Given their spatial context, islands in the CEP core have long been considered an important gateway for the eventual settlement of the more remote islands of Eastern Polynesia (Easter Island, New Zealand, and Hawai'i). In the 1960s, Kenneth Emory and Yoshiko

Sinoto argued, from the archaeological evidence, that the Marquesas archipelago was the first region settled in CEP. This developed into an "orthodox model," holding that the Marquesas Islands formed a secondary homeland for the development of Eastern Polynesian culture and the eventual settlement of the rest of the region. In turn, a series of archaeological projects were initiated that focused on identifying other early sites in the Marquesas, along with redating sites excavated in the 1950s that had originally been dated using less precise radiocarbon dating techniques than those now used. The result has been three decades of remarkably stimulating archaeological research in CEP, whereby old theories have been questioned, a wealth of new data has been published, and a new consensus regarding the settlement of CEP and its patterns of social transformation has emerged. Of interest is the indication that the CEP region was only settled in the last 1,000 years. This has required social scientists to reformulate ideas concerning the timing and pace of population growth, the elaboration of sociopolitical complexity, and the development of regional diversity such as that exhibited between the northern and southern groups in the Marquesas Islands with respect to language, architecture, and political systems.

Vestiges d'une histoire Marquisienne and *Te Tahata* exemplify the diversity of methodological and theoretical approaches that enliven CEP archaeological research. Both works are published in the Les Cahiers du CIRAP series, which serves to disseminate principal archaeological data sets that are most often found in