

## Three Recent Publications about Indonesian Material Culture, Art and Ethnography

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CORBEY, Raymond, *Of Jars and Gongs. Two Keys to Ot Danum Dayak Cosmology*, Leiden: C. Zwartenkot Art Books, 2016, maps, photographs, bibliography, 88 p.

CORBEY, Raymond, *Raja Ampat Ritual Art. Spirits Priests and Ancestor Cults in New Guinea's far West*, Leiden: C. Zwartenkot Art Books, 2017, maps, photographs, bibliography, 164 p.

CORBEY, Raymond, *Jurookng. Shamanic amulets from Southeast Borneo*, Leiden: C. Zwartenkot Art Books, 2018, maps, photographs, line drawings of objects, bibliography, 243 p.

The author of the books, Dr. Raymond Corbey, an anthropologist, combines different talents, being trained in philosophy and archaeology, he taught in Tilburg and he is currently attached to Leiden University in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> His interests for the status of tribal art in the West and related cultural issues have developed into a innovative approach of ethnographic collections in the Netherlands, combining a scholarly tradition and a comparative methodology, that adds salt to the publishing of Museum's and private collections.

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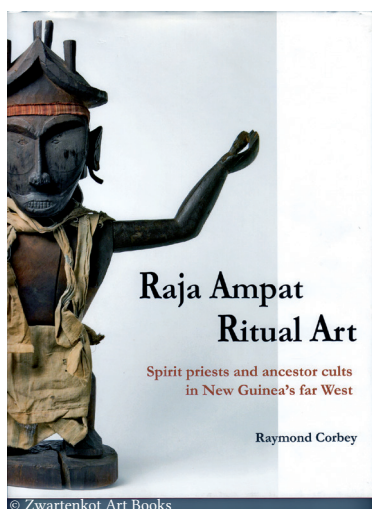
The three books he published recently, at a rate of one volume a year, about Indonesian material culture, art and ethnography are welcome addition to the literature. Indeed, he considers little-known topics in the material culture of the archipelago. Corbey make uses of a set of archival documents, missionary archive and Dutch colonial archives besides other sources in connection to the ethnographic collections he is studying. These lavishly illustrated “monograph” format books—they have roughly between 90 and 240 pages—focus on a main theme, including secondary topics which are investigated by the author.

The approach chosen by Corbey nicely presents an argument for analysing the agency and materiality of ritual objects within a wider cosmological frame. In this perspective, ritual objects can be considered as “persons” with their own spread of biographical events and memories of events that would aggregate materiality and traces (after Gell 1998, Kopytoff 1986). In this framework, ritual leadership being demonstrated and legitimized through display of ritual objects, combined with social and political effects, spreading it to a wider social or kinship network. Power is thus created and recreated as it expands from these objects at key ceremonial moments. Conversely, it may reflect a “hidden” dimension embeded in the object as it does not only represents the priest’s or the chief’s agency, but spiritual power in its capacity to grow. The objects becoming “animated” as by a dynamic force, especially during feasts, are meaningful. The ritual uses of the objects and the offerings carried out by specialists, form a constellation of ideas and gestures that are conveying an actual agency to them. In ritual, especially shamanic ritual, the objects’ agency interacts with the spirits, e.g. ancestral spirits or those of the recent dead, including benevolent or evil spirits that the shaman meet during his journeys in the spirit world. In sum, the rituals, statements and beliefs are part of an encompassing social framework manifested in peculiar objects which have a pivotal role in the ritual. The topics of the three books authored by Corbey fit very well into this analytical framework, pinpointing the ritual efficacy and background of the objects that produces agency in each case.

In the review I am considering the books in two sections, the first part being devoted to the essay on Raja Ampat Island ritual sculpture (2017) and related questions, and those focussing on Borneo ethnography and art (2016, 2018) come in the second part. Although, the later books were published separately, the topics are actually related, they reflect more generally on Dayak spirit and cosmological beliefs.

## RAJA AMPAT RITUAL ART

The book is structured in nine chapters, it links different topics about the cosmology and ancestor cults expressed by the wooden sculptures of



Raja Ampat islands. The author follows an historical approach, focussing at the same time on some peculiar individuals who have collected art, and generally, ethnographic artifacts in the archipelago. By and large, the period considered covers the 19th century and most of the 20th century. The chapters are:

1. Traders, raiders and foragers;
2. Raja Ampat cosmology;
3. The Mayalibit Bay altar groups (1929);
4. Fofak Bay and Rawak Island (c. 1920);
5. F. S. A. de Clercq, a collecting administrator (c. 1890);
6. F.C. Kamma, a missionary's efforts (1930s);
7. The spirit priests' drawings;
8. The *Hollandia mon* (1962);
9. Conclusion: Out of the turmoil.

The Raja Ampat archipelago situated East of the Moluccas comprises seven main islands and many smaller ones, Waigeo, Misool and Salawati being the larger, in the East it borders the West Papua province of Indonesia - the area was formerly known as *Vogelkop*, the "Bird's Head peninsula".<sup>2</sup> It is actually separated from it by the Galewo's strait. Waigeo island is well known for its rich biodiversity and especially the Birds of Paradise. The book retraces the main explorations made by naturalists, colonial administrators and missionaries in the area during the last 140 years.

In establishing the roots of Raja Ampat ritual art, Corbey proceeds by retracing the background and whereabouts of the collections of sculptures—often composed of a group of carved spirit figures on an altar—which were taken back to the Netherlands or Europe during this period. In doing so it maps out the religious and aesthetic configurations of the Raja Ampat islanders, on one hand pointing at connections to the Moluccas (Northern and Southeast islands) and on the other hand to West Papua's Kepala Burung peninsula and Cenderawasih Bay, including its islands (the area formerly known as "Geelwik Bay"). As he writes in the introduction:

Museums curators and art dealers specialized in Insular Southeast Asia have often left the ritual art of the Raja Ampat archipelago to the experts on Melanesia, and vice versa. In many respects—people, genes, subsistence techniques, languages, cosmology, ritual art—this archipelago presents us with a mixture of features which is perhaps more fascinating than the much better studied adjacent style areas (p. 1).

Corbey analyses in detail from the published accounts the earliest examples known of Raja Ampat art that were documented *in situ* and collected by the French maritime expeditions of Freycinet in 1818 and Duperrey in 1823 on Waigeo North coast and on the small island of Rawak (Lawak), off Waigeo coast. Duperrey expedition members saw an impressive altar group of six effigies in a shrine at Fofak Bay—including three *korwar*—a beautiful colour drawing from the expedition's

draughtsman, François-Louis Lejeune is reproduced by Corbey, fig. 26 (p. 66-67). From this drawing it can be noticed that textiles and mats, besides plants-like materials, possibly palm leaves, were combined with the effigies, notably as headgear, and decorated the background of the altar, the later is probably a folded colored pandan cape. The expedition acquired as well a skull *korwar* of the “shield” type (fig. 27, p. 69). The *korwar* effigy functions as a receptacle for an ancestral spirit, it links the world of the humans and the dead. Usually it was made for important men. At the burial ground, the *korwar* was considered as a guardian of the recent dead’s coffins. On special occasions (war, fishing trip, illnesses, etc.), the spirit of the dead person was invited to reside in the effigy by a priest/shaman in order to advise the community. The shaman would hold the head of the figure and be possessed by the spirit who spoke through his mouth. The “shield” in front of the sculpture was done in open work, sometimes showing a snake motif. The later is common in the Cenderawasih Bay’s *korwar*. The one from Mayalibit Bay altar (illustrated in fig. 19, p. 52) has crossed arms and legs, this extraordinary set of figures presently conserved at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam comprises three *mon* effigies and four *korwar*. Both *mon* and *korwar* effigies in the wider region display a style of carving depending on the use of metal tools. De Freycinet’s expedition collected a series of ethnographic items, including sculptures and ancestral effigies kept in French Museums (fig. 32-33). Finally, Jules Dumont D’Urville in his *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* also visited the island of Waigeo in 1826 and acquired some items there (e.g. fig. 34, p. 76, a pandan cape from the Musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac’s collection in Paris).

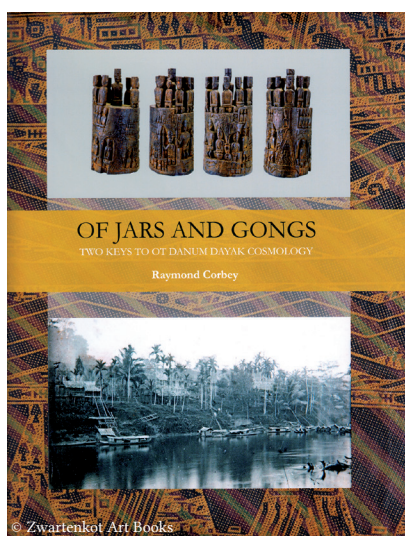
The most characteristic sculptures named *mon*, “spirit”, are usually of a small size but larger than *korwar*, they consist of standing figures with a broad torso and extended arms showing a large penis. In terms of iconography; it is worth pointing out that standing spirit figures with extended arms of various sizes were known in the late 1880s to the 1920s from the Moluccas (Tanimbar island) and Papua’s Cenderawasih Bay (fig. 81, 82). Interesting variations on the *korwar* type were carved in the Raja Ampat archipelago (e.g. fig. 84a, b compare de Clerq’s plate reproduced in fig. 38, p. 81). For instance, the 20 Ayau atoll’s *korwar* acquired by F. C. Kamma have yet a distinct typology, they are small: the height being between 20 cm and 25 cm (fig. 55, 56, 57). These ancestral spirit figures are propitiated by offerings in order to obtain blessings or special favors. Corbey mentions that some effigies of spirits were considered more powerful than others. He provides a lively account of the life and works of the Dutch missionary and ethnologist F. C. Kamma and of his journeys by boat around the Raja Ampat islands in the 1930s (p. 90-99). Kamma took back to the Netherlands many *mon* and *korwar* statues. The bulk of the Raja Ampat collections are presently in the Netherlands (Rotterdam, Leiden and Amsterdam Museums). Corbey examines in detail the iconography and stylistic aspects of the Hollandia *mon* effigy (h. 51 cm) named Kawaro Wammurmi, which was acquired by the famous Dutch collector Jac Hogenbrugge who lived in the area between 1956 and 1962.<sup>3</sup> A story narrated by Corbey referring to a 1930s incident may relate to the Hollandia *mon* (p. 138-139), but it cannot be ascertained.

According to the sources compiled by Corbey, the figure would have travelled from the tiny Mee island off north Waigeo to Hollandia (p. 141-143, map fig. 78a). A drawing by Mrs. Hoogeveen-Seitz, made in 1947, seems to depict the same effigy (fig. 79, p. 143). Interestingly, Corbey considers also the physical condition of the piece (perforations, surface alterations of the wood resulting from accumulated moisture...). He compares it to one of the three Tropenmuseum Mayalibit *mon* that shows also nails' perforations, possibly used to fixate a headband on the effigy (p. 135-137).

A fascinating chapter is devoted to the spirit priest's drawings that situate the ritual beliefs and practices related to the *mon* (spirit) effigies and more generally, the Raja Ampat cosmology. Older ones were made on pandan leaves while the most recent were drawn on Western type paper—coming from either exercise books or notebooks. These drawings helped the priests to find their way in the spirit world and they were used also when chanting invocations in the course of healing rites. Luckily, the manuscripts collected by F. C. Kamma, thought to be lost during WWII, were recently recovered in the Utrechts Archief (2016), concealed in the personal papers of F. C. Kamma. Corbey points out that some of the spirit drawings show analogies to the themes of the bark paintings of Sentani area and Huboldt Bay, east of Cenderawasih Bay. But there there are also similarities with the iconography of rock art found around the Raja Ampat archipelago and Teluk Berau—formerly named MacCluer Golf (compare Wäfler 2017: 155-172; about the iconography of these rock paintings under “Fak-Fak”, “Misool”, “Papua Berau”, “Kaimana”, esp. animals, fishes). These manuscripts were also used by priests in the initiation process in order to train novices. Some drawings depict the Beser Biak people's *benteng*<sup>4</sup> ritual concept in action (p. 113, fig. 62, 62b, 68a, b).

Corbey nicely integrates in his approach the evolution that took place in the Raja Ampat islands toward the end of the colonial period in the 1940s, including the cargo cults and a syncretism with Christian beliefs (p. 102-106). The sculptures

he reproduces are carefully selected. Eventually, at the end of the book (p. 146-153) he considers the changes in ritual and beliefs, for instance about the content of a recent movie about Waigeo's island culture: *Waigeo Island of Sorcerers* [Waigeo Insel der Magier] 2003, that centers on the character of a *kepala suku* named Segir Kasyan.<sup>5</sup>



## OF JARS AND GONGS

*Of Jars and Gongs* is an approach of Ot Danum ritual representations, especially focussing on eschatology and shamanic practice. The Ot Danum of Central and West Kalimantan Province are well known for their elaborated secondary burial rites as their neighbours to the south and east, the

various Ngaju people.<sup>6</sup> The evidence presented refers to the Ot Danum of the upper Kahayan River, actually on a tributary named Sungai Miri, upstream of the locality of Tewah (cf. fig. 1 a map from the Basle mission, it is dated *circa* 1935). The main theme of the book is thus about the depiction of the journey of the dead's souls to the abode of the dead, and how it relates to the traditional heirlooms of the Ot Danum, the Chinese ceramic jars, including dragon jars and other types, and the bronze set of bossed calling gongs (*garantong*). At a cosmological level, as the human souls move to the land of the dead, they meet different kinds of spirits and deities during their journey and they have to overcome a series of obstacles to reach their ultimate destination. The eschatology relates also to the *adat* order practiced by the living in which the jars and the gongs were part of a system of payments (e.g. bridewealth) and fines. In short, the core of beliefs linked to the heirlooms and other ritual objects, such as the *hampatung keruhe*—a “carved block” figuration of deities—and the *daren ehing* rattan ritual mats points to the identity of both humans and spirits. Jars (*balanga*) and gongs are the salient sacred objects relating to social status, especially wealth, and they both have symbolic associations in terms of cosmology in connection to the death rites. The table of contents is the following:

1. Introduction;
2. Ot Danum ethno-history and sources;
3. *Hampatung keruhe* block carvings;
4. *Daren ehing* plaited mats;
5. Conclusion.

The bulk of the analysis is based on the two documented artifacts, the first is a rattan mat<sup>7</sup> that was acquired by the collector Jac Hoogerbrugge (1924-2014) in the province of Central Kalimantan about 1965, at Kuala Kapuas, perhaps from or through the Basel mission, as Corbey remarks. The second, a rare “carved block” comes from Arnould R. Klokke who collected it at Sandung Tambon on the Sungai Miri and donated it later to the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden.<sup>8</sup>

While the other chapters compile an array of sources in order to contextualise Ot Danum/Ngaju ritual objects and notions, the research on these artifacts provides a fresh approach of their cosmology, linking various elements: myths, beliefs and the performance of death rituals. The core of the iconography of the mats revolve on the hardships during the perilous journey of the soul to the land of the dead where he/she will be meeting his/her relatives. On the other hand, the *hampatung keruhe* block carving used during the Tiwah secondary burial rites, represents a set of eleven carved figures made in Bornean ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) inserted on the top; the block itself forming the base or stand is incised with low relief representations of the Upper World, including the cosmic layers of the separated by rivers (the height is 45 cm, w. 23 cm, see book cover). The *hampatung keruhe* functions also a mnemonic device in the Tiwah. These blocks are used by priests called *basir*. The latter can be “possessed” (*manyangiang*) by the *sangiang*

spirits represented in the carvings when dancing and holding them in their hands. The ten figures are placed in a circle around the higher deity Hatara, deity of the Upper World—represented here in anthropomorphic form and sun and moon designs are incised on the breast of this central figure in the block—which is related to the main deity of the underwater Nether World named *Djata* a watersnake<sup>9</sup> carved on the lower part of the base. Corbey stresses that in Central Kalimantan the use of the *hampatung keruhei* is common to the Ot Danum and Ngaju people's death rites, especially at the Tiwah. The souls are conducted to the land of the dead with the help of a conductor of souls, a ritual specialist named *tukang hanteran*, who is also represented on the *hampatung keruhei*. Another, smaller and less complex example, originating from a private collection in Australia, is reproduced by Corbey (fig. 53, p. 74). He shows also a larger *hampatung keruhei* carved by a Ngaju *basir* named Muka, after a photograph of the anthropologist Ann Schiller (fig. 5, p. 26). This one display various elements in the central space, mostly feathers placed on a bamboo or wooden frame and more significantly, a house model.<sup>10</sup>

In short, these two objects—block carving and mat—form a “ritual set” showing analogical correspondances as based on the iconography and the ritual practice. They relate to notions of ancestry, agency and more generally to their role in the eschatology (fig. 52, p. 73). The objects display the socio-cosmic order based on *adat* crystallised in a material form. Then, the combined use of these objects at Tiwah by the *basir* would ensure the efficacy of the ritual and a safe journey for the dead's persons souls, removing all the obstacles on their route (compare Avé [1973b “caption item 451”, 168-170]).

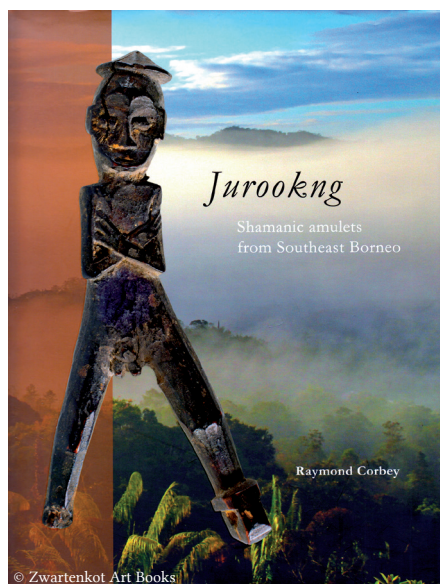
In order to support his argument Corbey uses archive photographs from the Basel mission and other sources, postcards and private archives alongside close up photographs of the *hampatung keruhei* carvings and *daren ehing* mats designs. These are completed by a wealth of ethnographic information gleaned in Harde-land's dictionary (1859). The author gives interesting information on iconographic details, such as the *sawang* plant (*Cordyline* sp.) and its connection to the ceremonial jars used at Tiwah death rites, as on the fauna of the area (sea snakes, hornbill, *Muntjac* barking deer or *kijang*, crocodile, turtle). Items of material culture such as the brass *santagi* pectoral used by the *basir* priests, in the past it was often gold-plated as Corbey notes, p. 59, fig. 34; the *mihing* fish trap, symbolically used in the spirit world to “trap magically” or either to carry heirloom objects such jars and bronze gongs; the high *pantar* commemoration poles to name a few. While the sacred *pusaka* jars such as the *balanga*, *tajau* are differentiated in diverse categories (compare Césard [2014]; Harrison [1986]). Some large bossed calling gongs are named *garantong* by the Ngaju, these are known as *tawak* elsewhere in Borneo (East Kalimantan, Sarawak, Sabah). Possibly they would serve to symbolically call helping spirits during the soul's journey. The hornbill shaped death ships (*banama tingang*) carrying the valuable heirlooms and the death people's souls are figured on the mats, *hampatung karuhei* and also in much detail on a rare wooden panel (fig. 47).<sup>11</sup> The visual impact of close up images i.e. *hampatung*

*keruhe* block carving, *daren ehing* mats and archive b/w photographs add much weight to the analysis. As Corbey concludes:

For the Ngaju and Ot Danum, *hampatung keruhe* and *daren ehing* were crucial *worldmaking devices*, and instrumental in *making sense*, ritually and otherwise, of basic features of existence, not least disruptive ones (e.g., misfortune, disease, death). As [*basir*] Muka's exposition clearly indicates they were repositories of traditional ideas and values, brought into play at critical moments' [my emphasis] (p.81-82).

## JUROOKNG

This thicker book, titled after the shamanic amulets of the Benua'-Bentian, Tunjung and those of related Luangan peoples of Southeast Borneo (*jurookng/jurokng/jurong* but also *gimat*) adds to the literature published on the topic, listed by Corbey (p.9). It is also more ambitious in scope than the two previous ones



and it integrates some data from the author's brief field survey in East Kalimantan (Kaltim) which resulted in interviews with local ritual specialists, or their relatives. The book is centered on the publication of a collection of 64 carved wooden amulets, the bulk was collected mostly at Samarinda in the 1960s by Jac Hoogenbrugge. Later he purchased other amulets from the Roman Catholic missionaries (The Sacred Heart mission at Tilburg, Netherlands) or from private collectors and dealers in Jakarta or in the Netherlands—after he passed away in 2014 his collection found its way to another private collection (p. 15-16, note 7). According to the information provided by a collector who bought a few charms from Hoogenbrugge, he purchased some directly from Dayak people of

the Mahakam who came down to town (note 6, p. 15). Hoogenbrugge himself left notes in a ledger about the provenance of his amulet collection. A series of ten of these amulets was exhibited at Museum's Nusantara exhibition on Borneo cultures in 1973-1974 (Avé & van der Werff 1973a; 1973b: 96, nos. 67-68). Interestingly these items were listed in the catalogue with the larger "*hampatung*", which included also *belontakng* sacrifice posts, and not with the magic charms and amulets (*ibid*: 151-155, nos. 325-330).

Most of the objects in the reference collection are figurative amulets of an anthropomorphic aspect, some are showing also a hybrid character, either zoomorphic or mixed. The book is organised in two large sections: the first comprising twelve introductory chapters to the collection (p. 14-99) and the second



forming the catalogue itself (p. 102-231). Through the book Corbey uses only the term “amulet”, a definition of which is provided by the author (p. 29), he does not consider other categories of charms used by Dayak such as stones, beads, twisted rattans, animal teeth or man-made items such as small brass spherical bells or casted bronze figures.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps this choice reflects the use of the term in catalogues focusing on such figurative carvings (Goldman 1975; Wentholt 2016).

The theme of the book is introduced by a short section “Along the Mahakam River” which locates the area and the major ethnic groups, centered on the middle Mahakam region. The contextualisation of the collection focuses on the shamanic practices, the purification and healing rites of the Tunjung, Benua’-Bentian and related peoples in the Greater Luangan cluster. Judiciously, the author remarks on the variability of the uses and the exchanges that may have occurred between neighbouring or more distant ethnic groups, either between the Bahau-Modang, and possibly the Busang further upriver, and the middle and lower Mahakam peoples, belonging to the Barito culture area (p. 37, 40-41). Actually, some amulets and charms of famous shamans and/or warriors could have travelled and thus be exchanged between their respective territories, while others would be handed down to their descendants in the community as potent ritual objects (*pusaka*). Besides the Mahakam area directly discussed by Corbey, carved shamanic amulets and charms are also known in the Murung area of the upper Barito, as noted by the explorer Carl Lumholz (1851-1922) quoted by Corbey (p. 44), and through the Pasir and Meratus regions of Southeast Kalimantan. Although there are also variations in the practices of the shamans (*tukang belian*, *balian*, *pemeliatn*, *pemelian*) in these later regions. The topics covered in the first part of the book include *inter alia* the Kutai sultanate background in the Mahakam; the Roman Catholic missionaries—Capucins and from 1926 onwards the Holy Family mission (MSF), also from the Netherlands, see Coomans (1980: 14-16, 97ff)—; attribution of amulets; categories of spirits among the Benua’-Bentian and Tunjung peoples; head trophies and sacred skulls; *belian* rituals; influence of Hinduism and Islam. A point that should be stressed is that some of the large carved sacrificial posts (*blontang*, *belontang*, *belontakng*), made in the context of secondary burial rites in the Barito culture area of Southeast Kalimantan,—among the Tunjung and Benua’-Bentian and in the Greater Luangan area—, present strong iconographical parallels with the carved amulets in both anthropomorphic and composite figures. Actually, Corbey acknowledges this point in connection to a protective *tunau* carving from a Bentian longhouse (fig. 15, p. 52). It is also obvious from the drawings of eight hand positions (fig. 25, p. 78-79, the line drawings are by Raf Timmermans) made after the items from the reference collection. A series of drawings by the hand of Hoogenbrugge himself outline 23 carvings of distinctive shapes in his collection (fig. 13, p. 48). While fig. 24 (p. 77) reproduces five amulets from a Carl Bock engraving.<sup>13</sup> These later items, presenting a comparative interest, were collected in the late 1870s—and most probably made earlier—, at the time headhunting raids and war were still raging in the Mahakam area. On the other hand, the interviews made by Dr. Corbey in West Kutai Regency add some contemporary insights on

the uses of the amulets and about their ethnic background. Obviously, the amulets from the Hogenbrugge collection fall in a distinct category from the various *ganti diri* or *patung silih* also used in curative shamanic rites. The former are rather part of the shaman's paraphernalia as evidenced by their current uses in the larger middle/lower Mahakam-Pasir region. Conversely, they may relate to a shamanic journey in search of lost souls through the numerous spirits' places (*benuo*). Others are possibly representations of the shamans' spirit helpers (*sehabat*) summoned during the séance. Benua'-Bentian and Tunjung *belian* healing rituals are summarised from the literature by the author (p. 60-66). Then the short chapter on *belian bawo* style of shamanic ritual, is based on the observations of the Dutch colonial officer Piete Te Wechel in 1911 (p. 67-70) about the first night of the ritual, but it lacks specific information about this particular point.<sup>14</sup>

The catalogue section of the book (p. 102-231) provides very good quality close up photographs of the amulets (often from two or three positions, front and sides and/or back) as details of the carving. The figures are much easier to describe because of the large images, their actual measurement being given mostly in height (in cm). The series of 64 carvings is broadly divided in two groups by the author: the Tunjung and Benua' (about 28) and the "Kayanic" (29) on stylistical ground only. Besides a handful of figures show yet distinct types (7), including those made from woody lianas (climbers). It is likely that some of the amulets would be individually named after spirits entities, the Tunjung and Benua'-Bentian ones showing the suspension holes are genuine *juookng* (Michael Hopes' quote in the book: 73; compare Hopes [1997: 103ff]). In fact, the amulets in the collection are likely not only of a shamanic nature used by shamans in connection to specific rites such as *Belian Bawo*, carved by them or by specialised carvers, they include also personal amulets similar to those carried by warriors during a headhunting raid or war—sometimes attached to the *mandau* sword among the Modang and Bahau—, while others were possibly related to various activities (good luck, magic, travel, trade, fecundity or simply protection against evil spirits). These functions not being exclusive, they can overlap. Then only the spell uttered would be different.

Looking at the morphology of some items in the collection, A10, A21 or A52 are intriguing, they are rather unique by their shape. Surprisingly few of the amulets depict sexual behaviour, e.g. A59 and not one is actually showing a pregnancy, a frequent occurrence of protective shamanic rituals.<sup>15</sup> Although in other examples the figures' genitalia are well exposed (A9, A37, A53). From a morphological aspect another feature is noticeable: a number of the amulets in the collection present a suspension hole in the lower part or curved base. Some of these figures were perhaps included in a shamanic necklace or, alternatively were included in charm bundles—(see fig. 30, p. 92-93) for such an example coming from the Muara Teweh area of Central Kalimantan, presently in collection of the National Museum of World Cultures in Leiden.<sup>16</sup> Except for this charms' bundle no other illustrations of figurative amulets from Museums or private collections are included in the book, a fact which is surprising as the author states that he went through several thousand of such images in books and archives (see quotation

below). At this point, I remark that a good proportion of the items in the collection do not show any evidence of suspension holes (about 31) or roughly half of the collection. These later amulets were either wrapped in cotton cloth, possibly bark cloth, attached to fine fibers strings, usually made from tree bark, on the body, the *mandau* or alternatively kept in a special box or basket. Clearly, they were used by various ethnic groups upriver and on the tributaries of the Mahakam. It remains to be established how the Bahau-Modang and Busang ritual specialists/shamans (*dayung, lun enjuk*) would have seen them as they had their own set of charms/amulets in connection to specific ritual contexts. The same question can be raised about the mountainous regions bordering Kaltim and south Kalimantan provinces. The Lendian area, located at the borders of Kutai, Pasir Regencies and Kalsel, is an area where the charms and amulets combine various features from the Luangan, Bentian and related peoples (see Weinstock 1983: Appendix A 196-228). According to the author:

In sum, it has been argued that (a) most of the amulets in the present set hail from the middle-Mahakam River region, where the two major ethnolinguistic and style areas meet; the majority thereof are “Kayanic” in style. (b) Similar amulets, but thinner, more plain and abstract, were in use throughout the region positioned to the southwest, stretching as far as the middle Barito river region; a few amulets from the present set may hail from this region. (c) A small number of the 64 amulets may well stem from the Ngaju and Ot Danum ethnic groups residing in South Borneo, forming part of the (“Barito”) linguistic cluster as the Luangan groups, and/or, in the case of very few, other regions of Borneo. Consultation with ethnographers and art dealers familiar with these, neighbouring and other Dayak groups underlined all these three points, as did an inspection of a few hundred published ethnographic photographs and several thousand photographs kept in various archives (p. 46-47).

Although it does not include any figurative amulets carved as stoppers and/or used on other objects in the Barito-Mahakam culture area—such as charms placed on a baby’s cradle or carved on the handle of a small knife (*pisau raut*)—this corpus of 64 amulets is an important addition to the published sources. A remark about style and variation: I notice that some amulets show iconographic similarities to other categories of woodcarvings from the Mahakam River and its northern and southern tributaries. Only A31/A49 display the zoomorphic spirit figures (*to’*) of the Bahau Saa’ and Busang carved in a classical style. The “Janus type” figures i.e. displaying double head or full bodies (A17, A35, A36, A42) occur mostly in the Benua’-Bentian and Tunjung area, in the bordering regions of south and central Kalimantan (among Luangan, Ma’anyan and other related groups), but usually not among the neighbouring Bahau-Modang peoples in the middle Mahakam. The same can be said about the composite and/or “hybrid” amulets (A6, A16, A19, A38). While A3 is an unique combination of Kayanic spiral patterns on a Tunjung’-looking stylistic structure. The reddish wood (hardwood?) from which it is carved is also very peculiar in this category of charms/amulets. By and large, the attribution of these figurative amulets raises another issue because of the

carvers propensity to reproduce certain stylistic features of neighbouring peoples' carvings/engravings *ukiran* (e.g. on hands, arms or bulbous eyes) especially among the Tunjung and Benua' in the middle Mahakam area (compare the figures on a Bahau carving, Avé 1981: 68). Somehow, the inspiration originating from the Bahau-Modang styles can also be identified as a "signature" of the carver (*tukang ukir*) and of his superior skills. Until the 1950s-1960s, the art of carving these miniature sculptures involved a strong agency. Some amulets can be used as a "medecine" (*obat*) by the shaman, according to the cases they are curing.

## DISCUSSION

The three volumes authored by Corbey follow basically the same concept: the publication of a collection which is enriched by the compiling of archives and contemporary ethnographic sources, in addition to interviews, personal communications and Museum comparisons made by the author. In *Raja Ampat*, Corbey includes a portrait of the scholar-cum-collector Jac Hoogenbrugge mentioned above (fig. 70, p. 131, taken in 2014 at the end of his life).<sup>17</sup> While *Of Jars and Gongs* is rather focussing on a main theme and provides a deeper analysis of the material culture in relation to the ritual objects described, i.e. the *hampatung keruhei*, the sacred jars (*balanga*), gongs (*garantong*) and drums (*katambang*) in both life situations, ritual and cosmology. Indeed it is a most useful companion volume to Klokke' photographic book (2012a), published by the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden in association with Zwartencot Art books.<sup>18</sup> I note in passing that in *Jurookng* (p. 42-43) some of the items described, charms and amulets of a woman *balian*,—the photographs were taken by A.H. Klooce in Tumbang Tukun on the upper Kapuas River—, were also reproduced in *Of Jars and Gongs* although in a smaller size. Two Ot Danum mats are also included as illustrations in *Jurookng* (fig. 31, 33). Actually, *Jurookng* differs from the two other books by including a separate catalogue section in the fashion of some museographical publications or dealers' catalogues.

As a set the three books are filling a gap in the literature about the uses and values attached to ritual objects in Indonesia, and especially in Kalimantan, which are not considered just as "art" or "ethnographic" objects (Gordon 2011: 66-73, 76). The interpretations advanced by Corbey are mostly based on previously published ethnographies and unpublished archives. Thus, including the immaterial aspects in connection to the amulets, provides a deeper understanding of spirits' beliefs in the region (compare Bonoh 1984-1985, Hermans 2015, Vrendenbregt 1983). In *Jurookng* more precisions on the affinities of the amulets' wood species to the shamanic beliefs or myths would have been a welcome addition (on wood species, see p. 84-85; Hopes 1997: 104-108). Actually, the ritual praxis involved in wooden or bone amulet carving is another fascinating question that would need to be uncovered, as very little is known about it. The actual provenance of the *jurookng* amulets in the collection remains equally obscure in contrast to the objects described in the two other books which are well identified by Corbey. Conversely,

the variations in meanings of spirit representations' on amulets in regard to idiosyncrasic features in either form or beliefs, are issues raised by Corbey toward the end of the first part of the book ("Methodological caveats", p. 81-84). In respect to the linguistic situation in the Mahakam basin, I should stress that Corbey provide few elements, the vernacular terms quoted in relation to the amulets being mostly from Benua'- Bentian and Tunjung languages (*bancis, jata, nayu', timang, tonoi*, etc.). Conversely, he does not include texts or quotes from myths or tales from the same peoples about the uses of amulets, charms, or generally, shamanic ritual and its cosmology. Furthermore, in shamanic practice, gender polarities may relate to the spirit's entities involved in curing/protection and *mutatis mutandis* in amulet uses. The amulet's agency being manifested in the context of ritual, war or other activities, e.g. witchcraft, mostly in relation to spells and silent invocations, *lemu* (see Hopes 1997: 115 ff). In sum, in comparison to *Of Jars and gongs*, *Jurookng* lacks a deeper, hermeneutic approach, of the objects. In order to contextualise the amulets, the author stretching his argument in many directions. While *Raja Ampat* is rather based on an historical approach of the sources and Museums' / private collections that nicely complement each other.

More generally, reflecting on the heritage value and background history of the ritual art presented in Corbey's books, it would be of interest to know how local Museums in Indonesia could take advantage of these publications, for instance Museum Mansinam in Manokwari (West Papua), Museum Mulawarman in Tenggarong (Kaltim) and Museum Lambung Mangkurat in Banjar Baru (Kalsel), not to speak of Museum Nasional Indonesia in Jakarta. A few years ago (2012), Lambung Mangkurat Museum had a simple display in one showcase focussing on the shaman (*balian*) paraphernalia in Southeast Borneo. The staff and visitors alike would certainly appreciate to discover the Dutch collections and the rich iconography from these books which are not available locally. Perhaps then producing a digital version would help?

About the layout, I must point out that the books are nicely illustrated and that the quality of reproduction of the photographs, either in colour or b/w is superb. Furthermore, they read easily. Even the details of the Raja Ampat spirits' priest drawings those papers are in poor condition, are clearly visible. The publisher should be praised for the printing of these books. In *Raja Ampat*, Corbey reproduces many illustrations, including maps, from the 19th century up to the 1940s gleaned from archives and rare publications that further amplify the value of the book. In both *Raja Ampat* and *Jurookng* lavish colour spreads of the natural environment are included, adding a more contemporary touch. The b/w archives images are also enlarged and of a very good quality and printed on thick art paper. In *Jurookng* the situation maps are informative (p. 6-7) combining a colonial period map (c.1935) and a contemporary map<sup>19</sup>. Generally, there is a good balance between texts and illustrations in all three books, Dr. Corbey should be commended for a careful selection of the illustrations, the covers being particularly well designed. Stopping short of the more academic works (Schefold and Vermeulen 2002; Schefold 2017; Sellato 2012; Kuhnt-Saptodewo *et al.* 2010), the

two later books do not include an index or a glossary that would have been most useful for the readers, especially those not well versed in Indonesian culture and ethnography. On the other hand, the bibliographies at the end of each volume are exhaustive, the Dutch/German archival materials and publications being indexed. These books which are well researched and illustrated complement other publications covering similar topics. Conversely their original format (28,5 cm x 23 cm), falling between the large sized coffee-table art books and the more specialised studies of material culture, should be attractive to a larger audience as the selling price of these hardbound books is affordable. They will be of help to Museum's curators, tribal art dealers and students of Indonesian ethnic cultures and arts, especially those who have an interest in ritual art and indigenous spirit beliefs'.

## Notes

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1. His main publications include: *Tribal Traffic* (2000), focusing on tribal art collectors and dealers, *Headhunters from the swamps* (2010) about the Marind Anim of Southwest New Guinea—currently Papua Province, Indonesia—based on Dutch Catholic missionary archives.
2. The archipelago is part of Indonesia's Papua province since the independence from the Dutch on May, 1<sup>st</sup> 1963; it is now integrated in Papua Barat or "West Papua province", a later administrative division (2003, initially named *Irian Jaya Barat*) whose capital is Manokwari on the northeast coast of Bird's Head peninsula, or *Kepala burung* in Bahasa Indonesia.
3. Hollandia: the capital town of Dutch New Guinea, it was later renamed Jayapura, lit. "the City of victory" after the Indonesian takeover of Dutch New Guinea in 1963.
4. From the Indonesian language *benteng*: "fort, fortification"; it refers to a protective or defensive magical action by which the priest assists the soul of an ailing individual in the spirit world.
5. A film by Dr. Thomas Schulze-Westrum; the movie was broadcasted on Arte TV Channel in March 2017 and it is still available on YouTube in German and French versions as Corbey writes. For an earlier survey of burial sites and *korwars* in the region, compare Solheim 1985.
6. They have settled in the main rivers of Central Kalimantan province downriver of the Ot Danum/Ut Danum people. They share much of their socio-religious heritage and material culture and rituals, albeit with some important differences, compare Lumholz (1920), Schärer (1964, 1966), Schiller (1997), Schwaner (1853-1854). The upper Melawi Uut Danum are closely related to the upper Kayahan people, the linguistic grouping (North West Barito subgroup) includes the Siang and Murung peoples living on the tributaries of the upper Barito (see Avé 1973b, Avé 1990: 39-41, Couderc 2012, Hudson 1967, Lumholz 1920).
7. It was published by Jan B. Avé (1923-2011) in the Nusantara Museum catalogue (Avé 1973b "caption item 451", illustration 173 of the catalogue: 168-170).
8. Klokke (2012a: 114-115); the registration number being 4861-1, Klokke (*ibid.*: 170), Corbey (2017: note 20, 39). Corbey notes that this extraordinary item was not published by Avé or Waldemar Stöhr (1981) although they knew of its existence, he adds some useful informations about its *in situ* collecting by Klokke in 1952 (p. 14-15).

9. In current spelling, Jata.
10. Corbey mentions other *hampatung keruhei* currently in Museum's collections, one in Germany at the Museum Alte Kulturen at Tübingen University; while three others are kept at Palangka Raya's Provincial Balanga Museum in Kalimantan Tengah province (79, caption 60). The identification of the one made by the *basir* Muka from the upper Kahayan River illustrated in the book (fig. 5, p. 16) with one from of those of the later Museum is likely. Among the Ngaju, the term *keruhei* or *kerohei* refers also to a specific category of charms (Schärer 1963: 120-123) while *hampatung* has several meanings, in a metaphorical sense it can mean also "substitute" (see Avé 1990: 40-41).
11. About this panel, Corbey precises that it was probably used at a Tiwah in a village upstream of Sampit; the picture, taken in the 1930s, is from the Basle Mission archives (fig. 55, p. 75).
12. At the exception of a photograph of a *jimat* charms' bundle from the Muara Teweh area (Central Kalimantan) kept at Leiden Museum voor Volkenkunde/Nationaal Museum van Wereldkulturen (fig. 30, p. 92-93), the story relating to the charm quoted by Corbey is fascinating. Besides I note a drawing of a small *gerangih* shamanic necklace (fig. 23, p. 75 redrawn after Hopes 1997: 107) showing animal teeth, seeds and rattan alongside eight figurative amulets. While the more spectacular Tunjung and Benua'-Bentian shamanic crossed necklaces (*samang sawit*) are adorned with 33 or 90 *jurookng*; they are known as *sumbang sambit* in Pasir. Comparative archive photos of Luangan and Tunjung shamans showing the crossed necklaces are included by Corbey (fig. 11, a, b, c 38-39; Hopes 1997: 106-108). They protect the shaman during the séance. It is possible to assume that the crossed arms/hands gesture on the chest, carved on some *blontakng* and *jurookng* corresponds to the same idea. Corbey mentions another interpretation: the same gesture may relate to a corpse (126, A12). On the other hand, the Bahau-Modang and Busang *dayung*, *enjuk* (shamans/priests) make use of different types of bead necklaces and bracelets (*leko' juk*, *leku' dayung*) during the rituals.
13. After Bock 1985 [1882]: colour plate 27. The original plate includes actually two figures which are not reproduced by Corbey: the first (n° 2) from the Bentian of Dilang Puti, while the other (n° 1) is probably from the Long Way Medang people of the Kelinjau River, a northern tributary of the Mahakam. These figures are actually not amulets but respectively a larger size *belontakng* and a commemorative post (*bo' jeung*), compare Dewall and Weddik 1849. The other amulets on Bock's plate 27 have probably a mixed provenance: some coming from the Wehea or Long Belah Modang others from the Benua'-Bentian (see Bock 1985: 130, 214).
14. Perhaps in connection to a "shamanic map" of the spirit villages—called *benuo*—where the Benua' shaman travelled. At this crucial time he would possibly need the physical "presence" of amulets near him as helpers or magical "weapons"; about this aspect of *belian bawo* ritual, compare Bonoh (1984-1985: 54-73), Guerreiro & Sellato (2012: 28-29), a line drawing of a shamanic wooden board (private collection), it functions as a mnemonic device for the *pemeliatn*; Herrmans (2015: 91ff); Hopes (1997: 150).
15. The women relatives of the dead shaman would have kept them after he passed away because of the strong value attached to human fecundity, one can assume that they could be used again in the household because of the power they have accumulated through secret spells (*mantra*, *jampi*).

16. It was formed jointly with the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam) and Afrika Museum (Berg en Dal) as a single institution on April 1st, 2014. The new museum, Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, has a collection of more than 400.000 objects.
17. His life history and collecting activities were told in Corbey's *Tribal Traffic* (2000: 141-153) besides those of other collectors and gallery owners in the Netherlands.
18. In this respect Klokke book's glossary is also relevant to *Of Jars and Gongs'* content (Klokke 2012a: 164-165).
19. On the later, I just remark that it should be written on upper left side, *Siang/Murung* rather than *Murung/Ot Danum*. Although the Siang are related linguistically to the Ot Danum/Uut Danum and Duhoi they have a distinct identity and specific cultural features (Harrington 2014, Hudson 1967).

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