
Finding Aid for the Views of the Belgian Congo Album

Finding aid prepared by Beth Ann Guynn

Descriptive Summary

Title: Views of the Belgian Congo Album

Date (inclusive): 1908-1909

Number: 97.R.58

Physical Description: 1.0 album(185 photographic prints)

Repository:

The Getty Research Institute

Special Collections

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100

Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688

(310) 440-7390

Abstract: The album, compiled by an unidentified colonial agent who was in the Belgian Congo from 1908 to 1909, documents one man's experiences in the region during the first year of the newly-annexed Belgian colony's existence. The album records the agent's journey from Antwerp to Matadi and thence up the Congo river to his post at Yoboila (Lomami). The remainder of the album documents the agent's daily life, local inhabitants and surroundings.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the [catalog record](#) for this collection. Click here for the [access policy](#) .

Language: Collection material is in French

Biographical/Historical Note

Central Africa was largely unexplored by Westerners before Henry Morton Stanley's expedition (1874-1878) to trace the course of the Congo river. Excited by Stanley's discoveries, King Leopold II of Belgium, who was anxious to acquire a colony to increase the prestige and wealth of his young country, subsequently hired Stanley to help him establish Belgium's interests in the Congo. In 1884 escalating European rivalries for the region were resolved when Otto von Bismark convened the Berlin Conference to partition the Congo basin. The country of Belgium declined to participate in the colonialization of the area, leaving Leopold to receive Belgium's portion of 905,000 miles - the lion's share of the area - for himself. Leopold ran the Congo Free State as a privately controlled corporation with himself as sole shareholder and chairman. His brutal exploitation of the people and the land for its rubber, copper, and other mineral resources was exposed by British consular reports and by the European and American press to great outcry in the early 1900s, and in 1908 Leopold's private rule ended when the Congo was annexed to the Belgian state. Subsequently renamed the Belgian Congo, it remained a Belgian colony until receiving sovereignty in 1960, when it became the Republic of the Congo.

Access

Open for use by qualified researchers.

Publication Rights

Contact [Library Reproductions and Permissions](#) .

Preferred Citation

Views of the Belgian Congo album, 1908-1909, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Accession no. 97.R.58
<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2001m14>

Acquisition Information

Acquired in 1997.

Processing History

Cataloged by Beth Ann Guynn in 2013.

Scope and Content of Collection

The album, compiled by an unidentified colonial agent who was in the Belgian Congo from 1908 to 1909, documents one man's experiences in the region during the first year of the newly-annexed Belgian colony's existence when King Leopold's prior practices were undoubtedly still little-changed.

The album begins with the agent's journey from Antwerp to Matadi and includes views of Tenerife, Sierra Leone and Leopoldville (Kinshassa), as well as scenes depicting the agent and other travelers during the voyage. From Matadi the album records the agent's journey up the Congo river to Bosoko and his installation at his post at Yoboila (Lomami). A trip to Stanleyville (Kisangani) in 1909 is recorded in two views of a ceremony at the city's cathedral.

The remainder of the album is primarily dedicated to documenting the agent's daily life and the lives of the locals around him. Included are views of the agent's post and quarters, big game hunting expeditions and slain prey, and images of Tom,

the agent's pet leopard cub. The agent, a bearded gentleman whose portrait is pasted onto the album's front endpaper, is present in several images. There are numerous portraits of indigenous peoples, especially focusing on Topoke scarification, local chieftains and warriors. Also included are scenes of village life and life along the rivers and waterways, views of dancing and ceremonies, and the "harvesting" of elephant tusks. Several photographs depict chained prisoners and whippings.

The string-bound album with green percaline covers contains 185 photographic prints on 24 mounts, both recto and verso. Titles are from the French captions written below many of the photographs. Titles devised by the cataloger are in square brackets. Also included is one loose photograph.

Arrangement

In original order.

Subjects - Topics

Big game hunting--Congo (Democratic Republic)

Corporal punishment--Congo (Democratic Republic)

Scarification (Body marking)--Congo (Democratic Republic)

Topoke (African people)

Subjects - Places

Congo (Democratic Republic)--Description and travel

Congo River--Description and travel

Kinshasa (Congo)--Description and travel

Kisangani (Congo)--Description and travel

Sierra Leone--Description and travel

Tenerife (Canary Islands)--Description and travel

Genres and Forms of Material

Gelatin silver prints--Congo (Democratic Republic)--20th century

Photograph albums--Congo (Democratic Republic)--20th century

Photographs, Original

Page Front paste-down	97.R.58_fpe [Portrait of the Colonial Agent], between 1908 and 1909
Page 1 recto	97.R.58_1r_1 Départ d'Anvers S/S "Leopold" Juin 1908, 1908 June
Page 1 recto	97.R.58_1r_2 [On Deck at Departure], 1908 June
Page 1 verso	97.R.58_1v_1 Gare et débarcadère de Matadi, 1908
Page 1 verso	97.R.58_1v_2 [Six Gentlemen on Deck], 1908
Page 1 verso	97.R.58_1v_3 Train Matadi - Léopoldville, 1908
Page 1 verso	97.R.58_1v_4 Gare à Sierra Léone, 1908
Page 2 recto	97.R.58_2r_1 [Lounging on Deck], 1908 or 1909
Page 2 recto	97.R.58_2r_2 Matadi - le chaudron d'enfer au fond, 1908 or 1909
Page 2 recto	97.R.58_2r_3 Chargement d'ivoire à Matadi, 1908 or 1909
Page 2 recto	97.R.58_2r_4 Baobab à Kinshassa, 1908 or 1909
Page 2 verso	97.R.58_2v_1 Allège remorquée par le steamer entre Boma et Matadi, 1908 or 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	Caption continues: La cargaison y est déchargée pour remonter la ligne de flotaison du bateau, le fleuve étant peu profond.
Page 2 verso	97.R.58_2v_2 Poste à Bois sur le fleuve Congo, 1908 or 1909
Page 3 recto	97.R.58_3r_1 Steamer au fond plat "Brabant" séjour 19 jours de Léopoldville à Basako (1908), 1908
Page 3 recto	97.R.58_3r_2 [Boats along the Riverbank], 1908
Page 3 recto	97.R.58_3r_3 [Settlement along the Riverbank], 1908
Page 3 recto	97.R.58_3r_4 [River Scene with Palms] 1908
Page 3 verso	97.R.58_3v_1 Sierra Léone, 1908
Page 3 verso	97.R.58_3v_2 Boma 1908, 1908

Page 3 verso	97.R.58_3v_3 Décoration murale à la direction d'Ilambi-Lomahi, 1908 or 1909
Page 3 verso	97.R.58_3v_4 Poste de Yaboyla, 1908 or 1909
Page 4 recto	97.R.58_4r_1 Le Lomami, 1908 or 1909
Page 4 recto	97.R.58_4r_2 Tête d'hippopotame, 1908 or 1909
Page 4 recto	97.R.58_4r_3 Beatch à Isangi, 1908 or 1909
Page 4 recto	97.R.58_4r_4 [Riverboat Pulled up along the Shore], 1908 or 1909
Page 4 verso	97.R.58_4v_1 Première chasse - un héron, 1908 or 1909
Page 4 verso	97.R.58_4v_2 Village de Yombété, équateur, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 recto	97.R.58_5r_1 Passage d'un gué en forêt, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 recto	97.R.58_5r_2 Passage d'une rivière sur un arbre abattu à cet effet, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 recto	97.R.58_5r_3 Départ en Brousse, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 recto	97.R.58_5r_4 Halte en Brousse, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 verso	97.R.58_5v_1 Ténériffe, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 verso	97.R.58_5v_2 Le Lomahi, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 verso	97.R.58_5v_3 Forgerons à l'ouvrage - grand gong, 1908 or 1909
Page 5 verso	97.R.58_5v_4 Trophées d'une bonne chasse - défenses de 39 kgs, 1908 or 1909
Page 6 recto	97.R.58_6r_1 Poste militaire de Bomba - équateur, 1908 or 1909
Page 6 recto	97.R.58_6r_2 [Gathering in a Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 6 recto	97.R.58_6r_3 Caravane en brousse, 1908 or 1909
Page 6 recto	97.R.58_6r_4 [Villagers Carrying Boxes], 1908 or 1909
Page 6 verso	97.R.58_6v_1 [Riding in a Dugout Canoe], 1908 or 1909
Page 6 verso	97.R.58_6v_2 [Chieftain with Guard and Flagbearer], 1908 or 1909
Page 6 verso	97.R.58_6v_3 [Female Scarification], 1908 or 1909
Page 6 verso	97.R.58_6v_4 [Potters], 1908 or 1909
Page 7 recto	97.R.58_7r_1 Marché indigène, 1908 or 1909
Page 7 recto	97.R.58_7r_2 Pagaieurs, 1908 or 1909
Page 7 recto	97.R.58_7r_3 Maisons d'étape dans un village, 1908 or 1909
Page 7 recto	97.R.58_7r_4 Indigènes d'escorte, 1908 or 1909
Page 7 verso	97.R.58_7v_1 Conacry - 1908, 1908
Page 7 verso	97.R.58_7v_2 Teneriffe, 1908 or 1909
Page 7 verso	97.R.58_7v_3 [Hut among Trees], 1908 or 1909
Page 7 verso	97.R.58_7v_4 Chem. d. fer Matadi-Léo, 1908, 1908

Scope and Content Note

Chemin de fer Matadi-léo.

Page 8 recto	97.R.58_8r_1 [Long Canoe on the Water], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 recto	97.R.58_8r_2 [Two Women in a Village Clearing], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 recto	97.R.58_8r_3 [Wading across a River], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 recto	97.R.58_8r_4 [In the Bush], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 verso	97.R.58_8v_1 Groupe de chefs "Toppokes", 1908 or 1909
Page 8 verso	97.R.58_8v_2 [Group of Chieftains], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 verso	97.R.58_8v_3 [A Chieftain and his Men], 1908 or 1909
Page 8 verso	97.R.58_8v_4 Porteurs traversant une rivière sur un tronc d'arbre, 1908 or 1909
Page 9 recto	97.R.58_9r_1 [Chained Prisoners], 1908 or 1909

Scope and Content Note

Caption for 97.R.58_9r_1 and 97.R.58_9r_2: Opération militaire (prisonniers enchaînés).

Page 9 recto	97.R.58_9r_2 [Chained Prisoners with Officer] 1908 or 1909
Page 9 recto	97.R.58_9r_3 [Officer Overseeing a Whipping], 1908 or 1909
Page 9 recto	97.R.58_9r_4 [A Whipping], 1908 or 1909
Page 9 verso	97.R.58_9v_1 [Long Canoe in River behind a Tree], 1908 or 1909
Page 9 verso	97.R.58_9v_2 [European Man Surveying a Group of Congoese], 1908 or 1909
Page 9 verso	97.R.58_9v_3 Récolteurs de caoutchouc, 1908 or 1909
Page 9 verso	97.R.58_9v_4 [Village Scene], 1908 or 1909
Page 10 recto	97.R.58_10r_1 [Group of Men in a Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 10 recto	97.R.58_10r_2 Jeunes fils "Mogandos", 1908 or 1909
Page 10 recto	97.R.58_10r_3 Pont de lianes, 1908 or 1909

Page 10 recto	97.R.58_10r_4 [Large Gathering with Cargo], 1908 or 1909
Page 10 verso	97.R.58_10v_1 [Military Procession in Stanleyville], 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	Caption for 97.R.58_10v_1 and 97.R.58_10v_2: Stanleyville (1909).
Page 10 verso	97.R.58_10v_2 [Gathering outside Cathedral in Stanleyville], 1909
Page 10 verso	97.R.58_10v_3 Kinchassa (1908), 1908
Page 10 verso	97.R.58_10v_4 [Two Women Posing for Camera with Other Figures Nearby], 1908 or 1909
Page 11 recto	97.R.58_11r_1 [Avenue of Palms], 1908 or 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	Caption for page 11 recto: Mon poste "Yaboïla" - Lomani.
Page 11 recto	97.R.58_11r_2 Ma maison, 1908 or 1909
Page 11 recto	97.R.58_11r_3 [Side View of House], 1908 or 1909
Page 11 recto	97.R.58_11r_4 Tom, 1908 or 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	The agent's pet leopard.
Page 11 verso	97.R.58_11v_1 [Group of Men at Water's Edge], 1908 or 1909
Page 11 verso	97.R.58_11v_2 Savoonia, 1908 or 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	Three-quarter length profile portrait of a woman.
Page 11 verso	97.R.58_11v_3 [Two Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 11 verso	97.R.58_11v_4 [Group Walking away from Compound], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 recto	97.R.58_12r_1 L'escorte, 1908 or 1909
Page 12 recto	97.R.58_12r_2 Entrée du poste, 1908 or 1909
Page 12 recto	97.R.58_12r_3 Arrivé du ravitaillement, 1908 or 1909
Page 12 recto	97.R.58_12r_4 [Agents Sitting at Outdoor Table], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 verso	97.R.58_12v_1 [Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 verso	97.R.58_12v_2 [Woman Standing in front of a Hut], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 verso	97.R.58_12v_3 [Female with Scarification], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 verso	97.R.58_12v_4 [Crocodile], 1908 or 1909
Page 12 verso	97.R.58_12v_5 [Tending Garden], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 recto	97.R.58_13r_1 [Profile Portrait of a Man with Short Braids], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 recto	97.R.58_13r_2 Lumba, Bahutu - Chefs Topokés, 1908 or 1909
Page 13 recto	97.R.58_13r_3 [Two Men with Scarification, One in Profile], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 verso	97.R.58_13v_1 [Hunter Sitting on Slain Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 verso	97.R.58_13v_2 [Men Holding Elephant Tusks], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 verso	97.R.58_13v_3 [Two Women Standing and Three Women Sitting], 1908 or 1909
Page 13 verso	97.R.58_13v_4 [Slain Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 recto	97.R.58_14r_1 [Hunters with Slain Leopard], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 recto	97.R.58_14r_2 [Man Displaying Slain Leopard], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 recto	97.R.58_14r_3 [Woman with Scarification Standing against a Tree], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 recto	97.R.58_14r_4 [Two Women with Scarification], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 verso	97.R.58_14v_1 Tom, 1908 or 1909
	Scope and Content Note
	Agent's pet lion as a cub.
Page 14 verso	97.R.58_14v_2 [Three Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 14 verso	97.R.58_14v_3 Chutes de la Tchopo, Stanleyville, 1908 or 1909
Page 14 verso	97.R.58_14v_4 Village de Yaboïla, 1908 or 1909
Page 15 recto	97.R.58_15r_1 [Long Canoe on a River], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 recto	97.R.58_15r_2 [Hunting Party with Slain Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 recto	97.R.58_15r_3 [Woman with Scarification, Facing Right], 1908 or 1909

Page 15 recto	97.R.58_15r_4 [Woman with Scarification, Facing Front], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 verso	97.R.58_15v_1 [Seated Men Listening to a Standing Man], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 verso	97.R.58_15v_2 [Warrior], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 verso	97.R.58_15v_3 [Woman Holding a Basket], 1908 or 1909
Page 15 verso	97.R.58_15v_4 Perception d'impôts par F.P., 1908 or 1909
Page 16 recto	97.R.58_16_r1 [Agent and Hunting Party with Slain Crocodile], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 recto	97.R.58_16_r2 [Hunter with Slain Wild Boar?], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 recto	97.R.58_16_r3 [Captive Being Lead by Rope Around his Neck], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 recto	97.R.58_16_r4 [Agent and Hunting Party with Slain Leopards], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 verso	97.R.58_16_v1 [Yard Cats], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 verso	97.R.58_16_v2 [Drinking on the Veranda], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 verso	97.R.58_16_v3 [Men with Rifles Rushing towards the Bush], 1908 or 1909
Page 16 verso	97.R.58_16_v4 [Agents on the Veranda], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 recto	97.R.58_17r_1 [Woman Wearing Striped Cloth Sash], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 recto	97.R.58_17r_2 [Woman Wearing Mudcloth Skirt], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 recto	97.R.58_17r_3 [Reclining Nude], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 recto	97.R.58_17r_4 [Circle Dance], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 verso	97.R.58_17v_1 [Evening Sky], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 verso	97.R.58_17v_2 [Trail Break], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 verso	97.R.58_17v_3 [The Bush], 1908 or 1909
Page 17 verso	97.R.58_17v_4 [Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 recto	97.R.58_18r_1 [Woman Watching Long Canoe on River], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 recto	97.R.58_18r_2 [Line of Little Children], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 recto	97.R.58_18r_3 [Three Warriors Opposing a Large Group], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 recto	97.R.58_18r_4 [Four Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 verso	97.R.58_18v_1 [Five Men in a Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 verso	97.R.58_18v_2 [Woman Wearing Printed Dress and Head Scarf], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 verso	97.R.58_18v_3 [Three Women with Scarification Flanking a Tree], 1908 or 1909
Page 18 verso	97.R.58_18v_4 [Bush Fire], 1908 or 1909
Page 19 recto	97.R.58_19r_1 [Three Women near a River], 1908 or 1909
Page 19 recto	97.R.58_19r_2 [A Chieftain with His Men], 1908 or 1909
Page 19 recto	97.R.58_19r_3 [Four Women], 1908 or 1909
Page 19 recto	97.R.58_19r_4 [Four People Engaged in Daily Activities], 1908 or 1909
Page 19 verso	97.R.58_19v_1 [Two Men and a Baby Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 recto	97.R.58_20r_1 [Hunters Squatting in a Circle], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 recto	97.R.58_20r_2 [Men with Dead Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 recto	97.R.58_20r_3 [Enchained Prisoners], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 recto	97.R.58_20r_4 [The Agent with a Slain Elephant], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 verso	97.R.58_20v_1 [Porters], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 verso	97.R.58_20v_2 [Village Scene], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 verso	97.R.58_20v_3 [People Walking down a River Bank], 1908 or 1909
Page 20 verso	97.R.58_20v_4 [Military Scene], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 recto	97.R.58_21r_1 [Full-length Portrait of a Woman with Scarification], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 recto	97.R.58_21r_2 [Chieftains and Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 recto	97.R.58_21r_3 [Chieftain Addressing His Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 recto	97.R.58_21r_4 [Full-length Portrait of a Chieftain Holding His Shield and Spear], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 verso	97.R.58_21v_1 [Four Warriors with Shields and Spears], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 verso	97.R.58_21v_2 [Village Scene with Large Tree], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 verso	97.R.58_21v_3 [Woman in a Dugout Canoe], 1908 or 1909
Page 21 verso	97.R.58_21v_4 [Monkey on a Tree Branch], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 recto	97.R.58_22r_1 [Man Being Whipped], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 recto	97.R.58_22r_2 [Chieftain and Wife], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 recto	97.R.58_22r_3 [Villagers, Some Carrying Bananas], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 recto	97.R.58_22r_4 [Band of Warriors], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 verso	97.R.58_22v_1 [Woman Wearing Straw Hat], 1908 or 1909
Page 22 verso	97.R.58_22v_2 [Agent Supervising Women Clearing Ground], 1908 or 1909

Page 22 verso	97.R.58_22v_3 [Men with Elephant Tusks for Sale], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 recto	97.R.58_23r_1 [Ceremony in Village], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 recto	97.R.58_23r_2 [Warriors Dancing with Large Group Watching behind Them], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 recto	97.R.58_23r_3 [Dancing in a Large Circle], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 recto	97.R.58_23r_4 [Dancing], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 verso	97.R.58_23v_1 [Men Squatting behind a Display of Jugs and Lengths of Branch], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 verso	97.R.58_23v_2 [A Town Street], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 verso	97.R.58_23v_3 [Settlement along a River], 1908 or 1909
Page 23 verso	97.R.58_23v_4 [The Agent and Two Men Lounging on the Deck of a Boat], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 recto	97.R.58_24r_1 [European Toddler in a Chicken Yard], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 recto	97.R.58_24r_2 [European Toddler], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 recto	97.R.58_24r_3 [Full-length Portrait of a Woman Standing before the Post Gateway], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 recto	97.R.58_24r_4 [European Toddler Pushing a Baby Carriage], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 verso	97.R.58_24v_1 [Slain Rhinoceros], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 verso	97.R.58_24v_2 [Slain Antelope with Rifle Propped against It], 1908 or 1909
Page 24 verso	97.R.58_24v_3 [Slain Elephant with Rifle Propped against It], 1908 or 1909
Folder 1	97.R.58_s1 [Portrait of the Agent Standing in the Post Gateway with Tom, the Pet Leopard], 1908 or 1909