

the various *bhakti* movements found in other parts of India is its unique spiritual path of Śiva yoga, which is a blend of devotion (*bhakti*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*karma*) yogas. Above all, the Viraśaiva reform movement revolted against all forms of inequality and injustice based on one's status at birth, gender, heredity, occupation, power, and privilege, and created an egalitarian community of Śiva devotees. The Viraśaiva revolutionary¹² saint-poets, through thousands of exquisite devotional lyrics, not only expressed their mystic experience but also revealed, more than eight centuries ago, their radical ideas of a democratic and just society.

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The Kirschbaum Collection of the Missionary Ethnological Museum in the Vatican

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On May 20, 2011, the Museo delle Culture in Lugano, Switzerland, organized a conference titled “L'illustre sconosciuta. La Collezione Kirschbaum del Museo Missionario Etnologico Vaticano” (The Famous Unknown. The Kirschbaum Collection of the Missionary Ethnological Museum in the Vatican). Present were 20 directors, respectively curators, of the most important museums which contained significant collections of Oceanic art (Lugano, Zürich, Bern, Basel, Geneva, Milan, Udine, Rome, Stuttgart, Berlin, Sankt Augustin, Barcelona, Paris, Canterbury, and New York). The one leading the conference was Dr. Christian Kaufmann, former curator of the museum in Basel and president of the Scientific

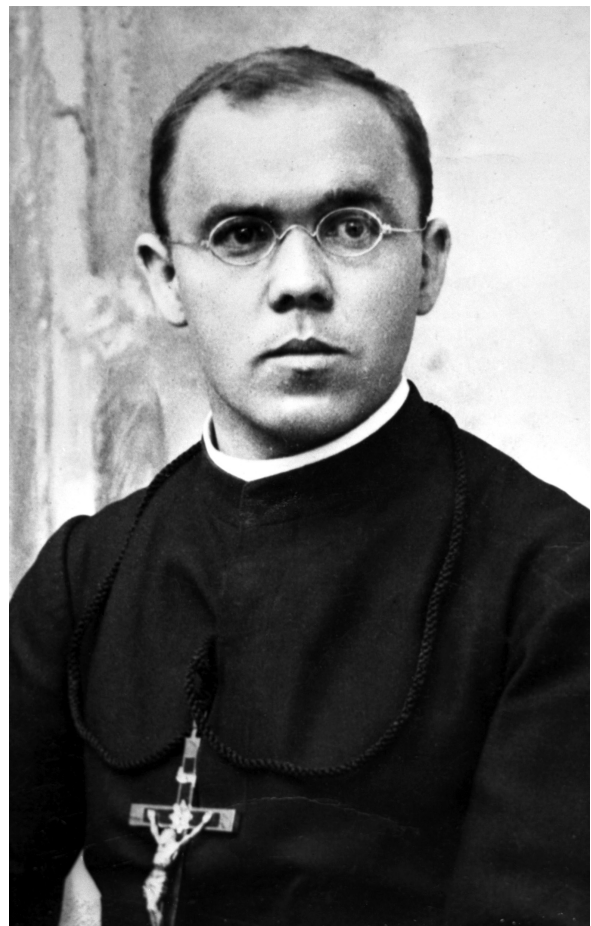


Fig. 1: Fr. Franz Kirschbaum, SVD ca. 1912.

12 A clear analysis of the social aspects of the Viraśaiva revolutionary mystics is presented in Schouten (1991: 21–97 ff.).

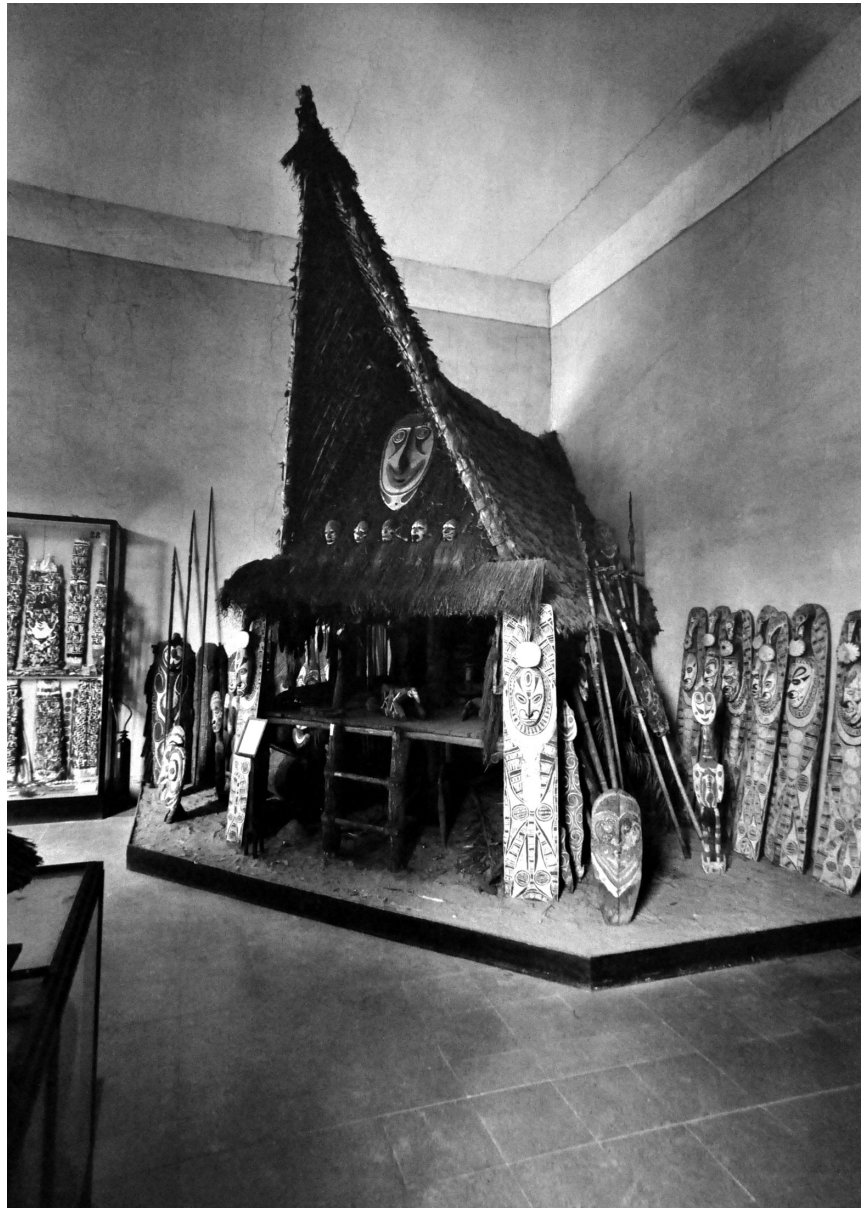


Fig. 2: Model of a house built in 1927 for the purpose of displaying objects from the Kirschbaum collection.

Committee of the museum in Lugano. Dr. Giuseppina Prayer from Rome, who methodically worked on the collection from 2002 until 2009, opened the conference. There were about 850 pieces in the collection, most of which were not well known. Moreover, until now, they were not readily accessible. The collection came to Rome in 1924, where some of them were displayed on the occasion of the “Esposizione Universale Missionaria” in 1925 in the Lateran. When this closed, the collection was supposed to go to the major seminaries of the Society of the Divine Word, St. Gabriel’s in Mödling (in Austria) and St. Michael’s in Steyl. As a matter of fact, these two houses received only a small

part of the collection. Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, SVD (1868–1954), the organizer of the Mission Exhibition and the founder of the *Anthropos* journal, kept most of the Kirschbaum Collection in Rome. After the Mission Exhibition closed, Schmidt was involved in the opening of the permanent Missionary Ethnological Museum, which opened its doors in the Lateran in 1927. Here, the Kirschbaum Collection was the most important source of the objects contained in this museum. In 1973, this collection was transferred to a newly constructed building in the Vatican Museums. The director of this museum, Fr. Jozef Penkowski, SVD, put the bulk of the collection in storage.



Fig. 3: A group of ancestral figures (*atei*) at the entrance of a men's house of a village in the Angoram area on the Lower Sepik.

The Kirschbaum Collection is impressive because of its age and originality and because the objects came from intact village communities. These objects give evidence of maintaining a high stylistic standard, which can be explained by the fact that the majority of these objects have religious significance referring to ancestors, spirits, and gods. This also explains why they were carefully made and displayed. It also speaks to the profound understanding that Fr. Kirschbaum had of the local cultures and religious ideas of the people, that he was able to carefully choose the best art objects. The collection today is of inestimable value.

These objects come from the region of the Lower and Middle Sepik, one of the great river systems of the northern lowlands of Papua New Guinea. Today the name Sepik stands for a special ethnic art style, which is valued by collectors and museums around the world for its high quality. The first contacts of the Sepik people took place in the last decade of the 19th century. The extent of this early contact depended partially on the inability to access parts of the area because it was crisscrossed by rivers and swamps. In the second half of the 20th century under the protectorate supervision of Australia and later after the country achieved independence, the area was opened up to local development projects. When this happened, the local village culture began to disappear and give way to a Western-oriented monoculture, thinking this to be progress. Thus it remained to ethnology and museums to reconstruct

and preserve the cultural assets and artistic creations of the Sepik people. The Museo delle Culture emphasized this point in the handout that was passed out which stated that the European and American collections bear witness “to an extraordinary body of art which is capable of combining a limited number of style elements – in an expressionistic way – in an endless diversity of formal elements. These form the common base for the bold combinations of different motifs and for an amazing freedom of composition” (*Museo* 2011: 4).

The biographical data of Fr. Franz J. Kirschbaum can be quickly listed. Born on February 13, 1882, in Bottrop, Germany, he entered the Society of the Divine Word in Steyl in the Netherlands in 1895. In 1907 he was ordained a priest. In that same year he went as a missionary to the German Protectorate of New Guinea. His first assignment, in 1908, was to the island of Tumleo. In 1909 he transferred to Malol, which was on the coast west of Aitape. In 1912 he founded Marienberg, a mission station on the Lower Sepik. He lived and worked there for 24 years. As an excellent photographer he was able to document the culture of his area and as a pilot of a one-engine airplane, he was also able to document the otherwise inaccessible interior. From 1909 until 1933 he collected specific ceremonial and religious art objects of the local people. Because of his excellent knowledge of the various local languages, he was also able to give good documentation for the objects. Out of his concern to preserve



Fig. 5: *Malu*-board, carved from wood and painted; used among the Sawos from the Middle Sepik to transport skulls, found by Kirschbaum in the region of Tambanum and Parimbai (before 1924).



Fig. 4: A "hook"-figure (*shambwan*), carved from wood and painted; it represents a female water spirit (*kamboraga*) acquired by Kirschbaum from the latmul village of Kamininbit (before 1924).

the local traditions and patrimony of the people, he opened a museum in Rabaul, the capital of the German Protectorate. Unfortunately the treasures in this museum were largely destroyed in 1943 during an American bombing raid. As a resident expert, he also accompanied several important expeditions into the interior of New Guinea, for example, the expeditions of Albert B. Lewis (1909–1910), Richard Thurnwald (1913–1915), Richard Neuhaus (1908–1910), Ebner W. Brandes (1929), and Cornelius Crane (1928–1929). In 1926, he himself, on an expedition up the Ramu River, discovered a hitherto unknown group of pygmies about 10 kilometers west of Atemble in the Schrader Mountain. He described these people with photographs in the *Anthropos* journal (Kirschbaum 1927). He died on August 6, 1939, at the age of 57 in a plane crash shortly after takeoff from Alexishafen.

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The *rongorongo* Schools on Easter Island

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Introduction

The great civilisation of Easter Island, a remote plot of land in the Pacific Ocean, is well known not only because of giant statues, but also because of “talking boards” *kohau rongorongo*. This work is devoted to the study of such an important institution of the archaic society as the school. Only this form of the keeping and transmission of secrets of the script allowed preserving the knowledge of the written language up to the beginning of the 20th century.

I use the nomenclature of the Rapanui classical inscriptions and the tracings of the *rongorongo* glyphs offered by Barthel (1958). Besides, the study

is based on my own classification and translation scheme in deciphering the *rongorongo* signs.¹ Further, I always take into account the vocabularies and rules of alternating sounds of the Polynesian languages (cf. Tregear 1891: xiv–xxiv). The glottal stop is ignored in the transliterations of Rapanui words. First, there is not a special sign for this sound in the Easter Island script. Second, the sound may be omitted in certain words even in most reliable vocabularies of the Rapanui language (Langdon and Tryon 1983: 38, 43), so one can suggest that in some cases both forms of the words, with it and without it, coexisted. Third, natives who wrote manuscripts by Roman letters did not mark this sound in the records (Heyerdahl and Ferdon 1965: Figs. 96 ff.; Barthel 1978: 304–356).

Data about *rongorongo* Schools

Only several tablets and some other wooden specimens covered with signs were preserved. Few inscriptions were incised on stones. Some records from these sources attest that the Easter Islanders were at schools where they learned the signs, mastered the art of writing, and studied ancient myths, songs, and historical documents.

Métraux (1940: 390) says: “At Te Hare-titaha in Anakena I was shown stone curbs which were supposed to be remains of the most famous school for *rongorongo* men.” In compliance with the Rapanui legend “The War between Tuu and Hotu Iti,” this building located near the royal residence was also called Hare-titaa (Métraux 1940: 84). The Rapanui term *hare* means “house,” and the name Tita(h)a means “The border,” cf. Rapanui *titaha*, *titaa* (line, limit, to border on). The main aim of this school was the teaching of pupils to write signs from left to right and then to turn the tablets at the end of every line. Really, the method of the creation of the Easter Island hieroglyphic texts is known as *bous-trophedon*.

Englert (1974: 250) informs us about a narrative of an old Rapanui man, who in his youth went to a *rongorongo* school at Ahu Akapu:

The discipline was very strict. At first, the pupils learned texts by heart. Plays or conversations could not be tolerated, the pupils were necessitated to be attentive permanently, and they kneeled with the arms folded. The manner of the writing was probably determined by one tablet that served as a primer and contained a hymn to the god Make-make. Having learned the recitations, the pupils began

1 Rjabchikov (1987: 362f., Fig. 1; 1993: 126f., Fig. 1; 1994: 3, Fig. 1).