

Netherland, “Election Day” and Pinkster celebrations in New England and New York, and “King” celebrations in nineteenth-century New Orleans and elsewhere to argue that connections between such celebrations and similar activities in Latin America and the Caribbean illustrate not “pan-African communalities” (172) but “Afro-Iberian roots” (174).

Extending this line of thought, Dewulf sees the affinity of some “charter generation” blacks for Dutch Reformed or Anglican churches as being rooted in perceived similarities between Catholicism and these Protestant faiths, the material benefits of joining, and the possibilities that joining could lead to freedom. From there, Dewulf’s narrative ties into conventional understandings of early Black Christianity in colonial America to raise the issue of “whether the presence of Afro-Atlantic Catholics . . . may, in any form, have influenced the development of Black Protestantism” (183). He argues that it did, making connections between Pinkster ceremonies as Pentecost celebrations and Pentecost celebrations elsewhere in the black Atlantic, the possible Kongolesse origins of the “ring shouts” used in rituals of black mutual aid societies as late as the nineteenth century, and other parallels between Afro-Catholic brotherhoods, black American mutual-aid societies, and black evangelical churches, with special attention given to the South Carolina low country.

Engaging with and expanding upon recent scholarship in Atlantic history and American religious history, Dewulf has provided a thoughtful examination of the history of black Catholicism and its shaping of life for African peoples and for the charter generation of enslaved Africans in the Americas. His bold and intriguing arguments for connections between Afro-Atlantic Catholics and black Christianity in the United States should be a starting point for further research and historiographical debate.

John Davies
Temple University
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***Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola.* By Cécile Fromont. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022. xvii + 245 pp.**

On pages 66–67 of Cécile Fromont’s beautifully illustrated book, we find a seventeenth-century image depicting a Capuchin missionary in peaceful dialogue with an African man. The latter, pointing his arrow to the spectacular Pedras Negras rock formations in present-day Angola, is not reduced to a decorative motif or an anonymized character. Both men appear as equal interlocutors amidst the tantalizing beauty of African tropical nature and thereby challenge the assumption that in early-modern European imagery, Africa and the African were typically dehumanized, exoticized, and stereotyped. The scene pictures, Fromont argues, “an even relationship” (150) and “a dialogue between peers” (170).

This powerful image captures the core reason behind Fromont’s decision to publish a corpus of little-known illustrations produced in the context of the Capuchin mission to Central Africa, starting in 1645 and ending in 1834, that consists of a panel from the

1650s, now in the Museo Francese in Rome; a set of sixty-seven paintings likely created in the 1670s, which Fromont calls the Parma Watercolors; and the plates accompanying two versions of Friar Bernardino d'Asti's guide *Missione in pratica* from the 1750s. The book is much more than a critical edition of these largely unpublished materials. Building on her 2014 award-winning volume *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), which discussed Christian visual culture in the Kingdom of Kongo, Fromont analyzes in seven chapters different aspects of the collection: its history, reception, and devotional character, as well as its depiction of Africa and Africans. Of particular interest are the book's three final chapters that deal with the missionaries' hostility against indigenous practices they deemed to be idolatry and, in contrast to that, their interaction with local Catholic interlocutors that was modeled by dialogue and respect. Fromont highlights the latter aspect of this intercultural encounter and characterizes the illustrations it produced not as images *of* but *from* Central Africa. With this characterization, Fromont not only underlines the unparalleled documentary importance of this collection, but also challenges engrained assumptions about African history, colonization, missionary work, and the Christianization of Africa.

The book highlights that the Capuchin mission to Kongo was a unique endeavor in African history since it occurred at the invitation of local rulers who wished to counter Portuguese attempts to instrumentalize Catholicism in order for it to serve their commercial and political interests in the region. Considering that Kongo had declared itself Christian since the beginning of the sixteenth century, over a century and a half before the arrival of the Capuchins, Fromont rightly characterizes Catholicism as "a Central-African religion" (191) and highlights the role of indigenous *mestres*, church masters, in its dissemination in Central Africa. In this way, she shows that it would be wrong to assume that Kongo was Christianized by Europeans. In fact, to a large degree, Kongo Christianized itself.

Fromont demonstrates that Capuchins were highly dependent on the cooperation of *mestres*. This allowed a cross-cultural spiritual, intellectual, and material interaction between Europeans and Africans that challenges the traditional perception of the Catholic mission in Africa as an ally of colonialism. Fromont's methodology, which recognizes the images it produced as creations molded in an intercultural inception, stands in contrast to the early-modern Italian editors and church leaders who either ignored the value of these illustrations or adapted them to the established visual and cultural norms. Significantly, Fromont shows how the above-mentioned African interlocutor at Pedras Negras was probably a *mestre*. Unaware of the importance of these indigenous church masters, however, an Italian printmaker changed the latter's cross-shaped staff into an arrow.

Fromont does not ignore the violent character of the sociopolitical context in which these images were created. Nor does she omit the dubious role of Capuchins in the slave trade and their hostility against what they perceived as witchcraft and superstition. Moreover, her book shows that in their depiction of non-Christian Africans, such as the invading Jagas, Capuchins resorted to the same clichés we find in early-modern images of Natives of the New World. However, Fromont contrasts such images with numerous others reflecting the exceptional nature of a mission that allowed European and African subjectivities to shape each other in a process of cross-cultural negotiation. She thereby also criticizes the shortsightedness of contemporary interpretative apparatuses, most notably postcolonial studies and its tendency to reduce the Christianization of Africa to a history of enslavement and oppression.

It is questionable, however, to attribute the exceptional nature of this intercultural encounter to the Propaganda Fide that “advocated accommodation in its missions in contrast to the policies of forced acculturation implemented in colonial areas” (153). It was neither the Vatican nor the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, but earlier Portuguese missions that had allowed the unique character of Kongoese Christianity to develop. The syncretic variant of Catholicism the Capuchins encountered in Central Africa was the result of Kongo’s complex partnership with Portugal. Not seventeenth-century Italian religious culture but, rather, late-medieval Portuguese traditions and rituals are crucial to our understanding of Kongo’s variant of Catholicism.

As Fromont rightly stated, the syncretic form of Catholicism that developed in Central Africa “was to shape African diasporic religious tradition” (191). Although the endnote to this statement only refers to Fromont’s own publications, truth obliges us to admit that several decades before such ideas appeared in North American scholarship, Latin American scholars such as Arthur Ramos had already noted that certain Catholic customs of Brazil’s black population “came directly from Kongo” (*A aculturação negra no Brasil*, São Paulo: Editora Nacional, 1942:273). This insight makes Fromont’s book not only important for readers interested in African history but also for those who wish to better understand the faith and culture of the enslaved Africans who laid the foundations of black Christianity in the Americas.

Jeroen Dewulf
University of California, Berkeley
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***Heinrich Bullinger: An Introduction to His Life and Theology.* By Donald K. McKim and Jim West. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022. xxvii + 162 pp. \$41.00 cloth; \$26.00 paper.**

As the title indicates, this book introduces the Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger in eleven short chapters. As an introductory guide, it includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter. The purpose of this book is to recognize Bullinger’s importance not only in the Swiss context but also his impact on the larger European Reformation. The evidence for this impact is demonstrated in the publication of Bullinger’s sermons, while his letters reveal his correspondence with various religious leaders all across Europe. Chapter 1 outlines Bullinger’s life from his childhood and early years as a student including his time at the Abbey of Kappel-am-Albis, where he met Ulrich Zwingli and Leo Jud, to his time as a pastor and noted theologian in Zurich after Zwingli’s death. Chapters 2–9 cover theological themes such as scripture, trinity, predestination, covenant, sin, and sacraments. In his work of biblical interpretation, Bullinger combined the theological with the ethical, namely “what to believe and how to live” (18), because he expected scripture and its interpretation to give direction to people’s lives. In the sacraments, Bullinger saw the Holy Spirit’s role as a facilitator that instills the faith for the Word and sacrament to be effective (70–71).