

middle or end in more than one of these pieces, and the overall lack of narrative is evidently intentional. But the considerable degree of repetition is unfortunate, as too is the erratic editing, which leaves us with (for example) three different spellings of the same word (benadanti, sometimes italicised and sometimes not) over three pages, and with a consistently repeated misprint (the nonexistent Swahili word 'Adiyisadiki') in the footnotes. Of course, this may be just be postmodern playfulness, but one might desire a little more authorial authority over this aspect of the text, at least.

JUSTIN WILLIS
University of Durham

GAUTHIER DE VILLERS with JEAN OMASOMBO and ERIK KENNES, *République Démocratique du Congo. Guerre et politique : les trente derniers mois de L. D. Kabila (août 1998–janvier 2001)*, Cahiers Africains 47-48 (série 2000). Tervuren: Institut Africain–CEDAF; Paris: Harmattan, 2001, 342 pp., €23.55, ISSN 1021-9994 paperback.

The follow-on to a publication of 1998 which charted the first fifteen months of Laurent Kabila's rule in the Democratic Republic of Congo, this volume chronicles the final thirty months of Kabila's regime and life. It covers the period from August 1998, when the deterioration in relations with Kabila's former allies Rwanda and Uganda sparked off what the authors term a repeat of the rebellion/invasion (p. 13), albeit inversed, which had brought Kabila to power; and ends with his assassination in January 2001. Described as a reference text, the authors provide a wealth of material and information: primary documentary evidence; press reports; political texts and in-depth details of actors involved in the conflict.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I recounts the outbreak of hostilities in 1998, starting with the decision to remove foreign military troops (essentially Rwandans) from Congolese soil. It is particularly concerned with the rebellion in the eastern DRC, looking at the creation and make-up of the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie*, its subsequent collapse into a number of splinter groups, and the (violent) breakdown in relations between Uganda and Rwanda. This rebellion is seen in a different light from the one which brought Kabila to power, which contained the element of liberation from Mobutu's regime. On the contrary, there is very much a sense that the rebel groups constitute an occupying force with their own policies, economics and social relations with the populace. Tensions are exacerbated by rumours of a Tutsi take-over and the pillage of resources by the external 'occupiers'.

Part II tackles the evolution of the Kabila regime in the parts of the country which it controls: the political, legal and institutional frameworks; the political economy of the war-torn country, including resource extraction; justice and repression. The final chapter recounts the events, and questions, surrounding the assassination of Kabila.

As a reference text this volume does an admirable job of providing detailed information. However, the somewhat haphazard pieces of analysis which are scattered through it have little sense of overall purpose, and the final pages, dedicated to characterising the Kabila regime, fail to capture the political complexities in the DRC over the last three years. A more fundamental problem is raised by a footnote on p. 22 which specifies that as the book is essentially about the internal politics of the DRC there will be only limited analysis of the role and motivation of external forces in the war. Nevertheless, while Angola and Zimbabwe are given only fleeting mention, the Ugandan and

Rwandan roles are amply discussed, as is the involvement of Burundians and Sudanese in the eastern part of the country. External interests are one of the driving factors behind the war, both in terms of the countries supporting either Kabila or the rebel movements and in terms of the commercial interests of political and economic elites, including the occupying armies, with regard to the exploitation of the DRC's resources. The inconsistencies and omissions in this respect are striking. Moreover, given that the first page lays out in no uncertain terms the authors' views on the role of Rwanda and Uganda as instigators of rebellion and invaders, the overall impression is that, while the book is presented as a factual text, the authors are far from impartial observers.

RACHEL HAYMAN
University of Edinburgh

LAURENT MONNIER, BOGUMIL JEWSIEWICKI and GAUTHIER DE VILLERS (eds),
Chasse au diamant au Congo/Zaire, Cahiers Africains 45–6 (série 2000).
Tervuren: Institut Africain–CEDAF; Paris: Harmattan, 2001, 240 pp.,
€18.59, ISBN 2 7475 0972 9 paperback.

Chasse au diamant was inspired by a seminar on the informal sector in Congo/Zaire held in 1997. The collection of papers seeks to look beyond the pillage of the Congo's riches by 'gemocrats' (Misser and Vallée's term for political actors whose power is linked with diamonds) and to explore the involvement of ordinary Congolese in the exploitation of diamonds by less formal methods (*artisanal*) as a survival strategy. The book covers various forms of diamond mining both legal and illicit, a distinction which is often unclear, as the terms *artisanal* and *informel* are used to cover both illegal and small-scale, but legal, activities.

The first part of the book provides an introductory overview of the complex dynamics of mineral exploitation in the Congo up to 2001, taking in the fall of Mobutu and the rise of Kabila. Misser and Vallée discuss the increasing importance of diamonds (and minerals in general) in Congolese politics and economics, exploring the commercial interests of political elites, international diamond corporations and the external armies present on Congolese soil. Leclerc adds a reflection on the nature of the politico-commercial networks (*filiales*) linking the various actors involved in the diamond industry at both formal and *artisanal* levels, concluding that predatory exploitation in the interests of the few leaves little hope of Congo's mineral resources being turned to wider developmental ends.

The greater part of the book is dedicated to personal accounts of the diamond industry as experienced 'from below'. Much of the research for these was undertaken in the early 1990s, preceding the civil war and Kabila era. Omasombo's study of the Kisangani area highlights firstly the transformation of the city, whose economic role has been superseded by the diamond villages and where a get-rich-quick culture pervades; and secondly provides a rich insider view of the harsh realities of those villages, which essentially function as autocratic mini-states existing on the edge of legality but shored up by clientelist relations with the country's political elite.

Several articles pertain to the *Bana Lunda* (young urban Congolese mining diamonds in the Lunda Norte region of Angola). Kivilu explores the search for 'paradise on earth' through diamond mining, the appeal of a Wild West style adventure in the face of the decomposition of the state. The hardships (and horrors) are outweighed by the potential riches to be gained for the lucky 'princes' who succeed. De Broeck's sociological analysis of this phenomenon