

THE OPENING OF THE CONGO BASIN TO WESTERN INFLUENCES XVI- XIX CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

This study portrays the various vicissitudes of European penetration in the Congo Basin. European started relations with the Kongo kingdom through evangelization. The discovery of America had pushed Europeans to use the slave trade and the slave was now exchanged against European products. It is only with the abolition of slavery, that Europeans settled all along the coast, and shortly after the pioneers of colonization penetrated to the interior of the country. Slavery impact negatively and accelerated the depopulation of Africa in general and the Kongo kingdom in particular and also led to the disappearance of some villages and civilizations which have existed hundreds or thousands of years.

Keywords: Opening, Congo Basin, western influences, colonization.

INTRODUCTION

Sixteenth to nineteenth century was the Congolese Basin Cape Lopez to Angola, significantly 500km of Atlantic coast. This is in Diego Cao have the primary facility linked to the discovery of the Congo Basin. Indeed it is in 1482 that the Portuguese navigator accidentally discovers the mouth of the great Congo River. Then he successively undertakes reconnaissance trips and friendship from 1484. During his second trip there likely contact between the Monarchs and gradually Kongo contacts were established between Portugal and the United Kongo. These contacts will begin the evangelization of Kongo and the slave trade, which during four centuries bled Central Africa.

The late 19th century marks the second rush which results in colonization. By studying this period of almost five centuries we wanted to read and analyze the mechanisms by which the West had enslaved Central Africa until today to knit from.

The religious argument

The Portuguese start relations with Congo through evangelization of it to which was added the pacification of the territory. A program as regards this project was drawn from Lisbon. *The Atlantic coast would be evangelized very early in the late 15th century and the King of Kongo Nzinga-A-Nkuwu himself was baptized as soon as the 1491 JaoIer in the image of his brother King John II of Portugal. Nzinga Mbemba his son was baptized under the name of Don AffonsoIer. The Portuguese had faith in their evangelization program (1) which suddenly attracted Kongo especially their monarch soon as he had been taught, he converted and declared that he wanted to be a Christian ... King of Kongo took the opportunity to request to the King John II of Portugal to send priests and all that was necessary to the Christian life ... Jean II sent religious, church and other ornaments, crosses, images; he was provided with all that was necessary for such work (2)*

Despite the presence of the Portuguese evangelists in Kongo, only the royal court had followed the evangelistic program, the rest of the country did not accept because meant

abandonment of traditional customs. For three centuries the evangelization of the Congo Basin remained unfinished and it is almost in the middle of the 19th century there was a resurgence of activity.

The Diocese of Libreville, former Apostolic Vicariate of the two Guineas, was the first vicar of the West Coast of Africa, when in the last century and after a break of several centuries, the evangelization of this vast continent kicked off again. It occurred in 1842, this date Pope Gregory XVI entrusted to Bishop Barron, former Vicar General of the Vicariate Philadelphia in America the two Guineas. This vicariate extended from the Sahara to Orange River, with the exception of the Portuguese enclave of Angola (3). Christian missions will gradually expand throughout the Middle Congo, Oubangui Chari and Chad supporting colonization. To cite just one among the many pioneers of the evangelization of the Congo Basin: On August 1st 1881, young P. Augouard, head of a caravan of twenty three Loango arrived on the heights of the Stanley Pool, this huge expansion of the Congo before the first cataracts.

This is where took place the famous meeting with Fr. Augouard Malamine sergeant left by Brazza as the first guardian of the French presence in the Congo. Fr. Augouard had no cock feather in his hat (sign of Brazza's friends) ... he was initially badly received almost gunshots but Malamine soon realized that he was a French and a man of God, so the agreement was quickly restored (4)

The economic argument

Despite the creation in the provinces of churches and schools , this evangelization attempt failed . The Portuguese who discovered the Americas since 1492 had used the slave trade by forcing the African nobility, particularly Kongo to provide slaves. The Portuguese were the first installed on the Angolan coast and many companies had a monopoly on navigation and commerce on the Atlantic coast and the Congo basin. Thus: *In 1576, the government of Lisbon decided to submit this coastal area the same status as Sao Thome and Brazil. But to prevent any disorder and be successful,, the king imposed a system of direct administration of Bantu and plantationsA powerful fortress with a slave depot was created Lwanda and military units received mission force some leaders clans to sell their prisoners or directly capture slaves. Attempts to develop the farming generally failed because the slave trade made more income than the work of the ground (5)*

This is probably the beginning of the sixteenth century when the slave trade had not yet reached alarming proportions, the slave market was limited by the labor needs in farm on the island of Sao Thome. It is known at this period that , Portugal itself and the Spaniards of Santo Domingo were regularly supplied more easily slaves by the clans of Senegal and Gambia.

Other Portuguese traders and missionaries appeared on Kongo lands during the 1530s, but their continual intrigues maintained the kingdom into an artificial agitation no king could control. Despite the Yaka invasion and the Battle of Ambuila, Kongo Christian dynasty have stayed until 1676 (6)

In such relationships, the slave was exchanged against European products which the most important were those of hardware, fabrics, weapons and liquor and prices. Vary one region to depending on the age and gender. An example of brokering Lwango:

Six days after his arrival in Van Lwango Alsten settles into his desk and waited for the brokers to come present their captives in exchange for items of cargo of the African. The 14.143 pieces value parts Nka Mbinda are only 72,677 pieces in Lwango. The custom of presenting only one choice of black slave and her surgeon and exchange him after endless quarrels make the market never crowded with captives and that the entry in the book can be calmly DetailedFrom the 5th September to 7th October 1769, the Ghent slave could buy 37 blacks including 22 who are not twelve years old ... the package of each negro usually contains gun, powder keg, Indian Guinea, Nicanée, tapsel and some other goods according to the wishes of dealer men.

The 21st january1770, the cargo was ready; 186 men, 85 women, 80 black children, 29 negrittes occupy the place crates and bales of European change. The cargo was purchased with no money but in exchange of pieces of goods (7)

Less than a century still on the Atlantic coast, here is an example of selling and buying a slave to Cape Lopez:

In 1856 ... I was visiting the parks or barracoons slaves. Cape Lopez is a department store black; what was once one of the most significant of all the coast and I was naturally very curious about how this traffic was operating ... while I was there, two young women and a boy of fifteen were brought to the market and bought by Portuguese. The boy was sold for a barrel of rum hundred liters few yards of cotton and lots of beads .The women were paid more, each was estimated prices following items: a gun, a napture (large copper plate) sixty meters from cotton, two iron bars two cutlasses, two mirrors, two limes, two plates, two bolts, a powder keg, some beads and a small batch of tobacco. (8)

We have no accurate statistics to determine the number of purchased and transported slaves in Central Africa that had taken America from the road. The slave trade was so intense that today it is estimated that nearly 10 million human beings kidnapped on the coast pigeon. This figure is still the subject of bitter disputes given desertions, deaths and diseases during shipping. Despite the official date of 1848 which abolished the slave trade and slavery in the French possessions, we find with the previous example that the slave trade had continued in Central Africa. It had gradually regressed during the 19th century because Western Europe had discovered mines of gold and other metals in South Africa, which required the scope of the labor on site.

Trusteeship and colonization

The Atlantic coast from 1482 until the end^{of} the 19th century had revealed all its mystery and western trading companies had established trading posts along the coast and a little towards the mouth of the great river. The pioneers of colonization to the interior of the country will leave those points already gained. The path of any ogooé will indicated for this adventure as well:

It is by chasing slaves that French sailors establish contacts with the population. The July Monarchy conscious markets, raw materials and practice English with friends just caution the points of support policy.

The Bouet-Willaumez Commander recognizes the Gabon Estuary in 111837. Two years later he signed with King Denis Head south shore a treaty of alliance with France to transfer two leagues of land (9-2-1839). These two field leagues are unfortunately the most marshy and most unhealthy of the region. Bouet-Willaumez comes into relations with Louis Dowe, head Mpongoué whose land the right bank appear healthier. Also the march 18th 1841 a treaty formally puts King Louis without the protectorate of France. The latter also agrees to give him the land of the ancient village of his father in order to raise such a building or fortification he pleased. Several treaties are concluded with other African leaders of the Cape and Cape Esterias Lopes (09). The French will be interested to rivers (Gabon, Ogooué and Rio Muni) that will take them inside Central Africa. Brazza and his companions as head of mission said three missions in West Africa (1875-1878; 1879-1882; 1883-1885) will in turn explore and occupy within the so convenient to call Today the Republic of Congo Brazzaville. A series of treaties was reached first by Admiral Bouet-Willaumez with Denis and Louis Kings 9 février 1839 Gabon, one of the articles of the treaties stated:

King Denis agrees to cede in perpetuity to France two leagues of land starting from Sandy Point, heading for the village of the King, and the width of the left bank through trade goods referred to below (10).

In addition to the reasons related to the abolition of the slave trade, the French had occupied permanently Gabon and the High Ogooué company had a monopoly of trade in Gabon before installing the concessionary companies. This work will be completed occupation by the skilled hand of P. Savorgnan who successively founded at the confluence of Mpassa and Ogooué on 30 June 1880 the offices of Franceville and September 10th sign a protectorate treaty with Makoko said and occupies the territory Mfoa from the edge of the city on 3 October 1880.

Stanley To complete this series of treaties had been concluded in 1882 in the Niari Kouilou:
On March 12, 1883, the King of Loango concludes with the commander of sagttaire a treaty that puts the country under the suzerainty of France and gives him the freehold land including the so-called Indian Point. But the power of Maloango is reduced and Cordier must sign the same agreement with all the little wrens the coast, including Pounta-Négra, chaired by André Loemba chief Mafoucas who transfer the land including the so-called black tip (12)

France would settle in the Congo Basin from 1882 through P. Savorgnan: *On behalf of France and under the rights conferred on me 10septembre1880 by King Makoko, 3 octobre1880, I took possession of the territory which extends between and Djoué Impila river. The Sergeant Malamine with two sailors remained to guard the flag and was appointed interim head of the French resort of Ncouna (13).*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank everyone who helps us in this scientific work.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this journey through time and across the Congo Basin, we can conclude that the opening of the Congo basin is made from the data we have analyzed above and the data

shows that Central Africa was subject to the oriental civilization in Europe and the end of the Middle Ages and the late 19th century in search of human cattle first and then raw materials and markets strategically. Central Africa carries the heavy burden of these various meetings that have sucked and it's just whether it is doing.

FOOTNOTES

- 1- **Bambi JG 1979** *Chronology of key events in the Congo made from 1482 to 1979*, p6
- 2- **Pigaffeta and Duarte. 1965.** *Description of Kingdom of Kongo and surrounding countries.* Leuven. p. 81
- 3- **Collection Blue Guide. 1962** *Central Africa. P.XCIII*
- 4 -**Bambi JG 1979** *Chronology of key events made in Congo from 1482 to 1979*, p6
- 5- **Donald in 1963.** *Black Africa.* Paris. P. 66
- 6- **Idem** p. 66
- 7- **Rinchon 1961.** *Van Alsten, the slave ship captain.* p 162
- 8- **Rinchon 1961op.cit** p.254
- 09-Collection in Blue Guide p LXXX
- 10 -**GamacheP.1949** *Geography and History of Paris French Equatorial Africa* p 199
- 11 -**GamacheP.1949** *Geography and History of Paris French Equatorial Africa* p 199
- 12 -**Soret M.** *History of Congo capital, Brazzaville.* Paris p 137
- 13-**Gamache P. 1949** *Geography and history of French Equatorial Africa* p 200 Paris

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- 5.Donald(W)., 1963, *The Black Africa*, Paris 1963, 219p.
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- 7.Duchailu, 1936, *travel and adventures in Africa é equatorial 1856-1859*, taken from the military review of the A .E.F October 1936
- 8.Soret (M), 1978, *History of Congo capital, Brazzaville*, Paris, 237p
- 9.Gamache (P), 1949, *Geography and History of French Equatorial Africa*, Paris, 297p