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Sigbert Axelson

**CULTURE
CONFRONTATION
IN THE
LOWER CONGO**



STUDIA MISSIONALIA UPSALIENSIA XIV

Sigbert Axelson

CULTURE
CONFRONTATION
IN
THE LOWER
CONGO

From the Old Congo Kingdom
to the Congo Independent State
with special reference
to the Swedish Missionaries
in the 1880's and 1890's.

GUMMESSONS

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To R. Buana Kibongi

Preface

The Church in which I was brought up, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, has from the eighteen-eighties onwards been marked by an ardent interest in the Congo, along with its commitments in China and East Turkestan (now Sinkiang in China). One of the first books to come my way and capture my imagination as a boy was K. J. Petterson's *Äventyr i Centralafrika* (Adventures in Central Africa). One of the fascinating qualities of this intrepid missionary was his prowess as a big game hunter, and to the generation of boys growing up in the years between the two World Wars, this type of Congo missionary became something of a hero.

In this book K. J. Petterson still plays some part, but it is no longer as a big game hunter that he demands interest. The focus of interest has shifted from the "hero" to all the people who were brought face to face in a confrontation of two cultures. Now our attention is captured by figures like Nils Westlind and K. E. Laman who were sensitive to the values of the alien culture and showed respect as well as sympathy for the civilization they found in Africa.

In 1962 Ruth Slade published her second large work on the Congo, *King Leopold's Congo*, which is an analysis of race relations during the period of the Congo Independent State. It was published just as I had finished my Licentiate's paper on Swedish attitudes and reactions to the African culture at the time of the Congo Independent State. In her account of relations in the Congo as presented both in *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State* in 1959, and in *King Leopold's Congo* in 1962, Ruth Slade, for reasons which she herself has explained, has been unable to pay regard to material deriving from Scandinavian-language sources. Such material might perhaps help to complement the picture, in particular with regard to the Lower Congo, and increase our insight into the Congolese reaction to the white man's presence in their midst.

My continued research was prompted by the desire to attempt such a complementary study of the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, a project which could be realized on my return to Sweden in 1966 after spending three years in the Congo. In the course of my research, two things gradually stood out as being of primary importance. In the first place, I realized that I should have to focus attention on the African part in this confrontation in order to evaluate it with as much fairness as is given to any European. Secondly, I saw a stimulating task in extending the historical perspective of my study as far backwards as possible. One

reason for this was the evidence showing that the Swedish missionaries who round the turn of this century were working in the regions which in the days of the old kingdom of Congo had constituted the Sundi province, had found crucifixes and crosses preserved as "minkisi" by the Congolese.¹ My own discussions with Congolese on the subject of their cultural traditions also showed me that they themselves in their oral traditions adopt a long perspective. Consequently I felt that this approach would be most likely to ensure a fair evaluation of a population which has been settled in one area for many successive generations.

The book which I now present as the result of several year's research is mainly based on and exclusively documented by written sources. In conception, however, it owes much — perhaps even more than its author realizes — to all the conversations and discussions with people in Africa as well as in Europe which remain unrecorded. For that reason I wish to name here some of the people to whom I feel I am most indebted for ever writing this book.

I have dedicated this book to Pastor R. Buana Kibongi, who as Head of the Theological Seminary at Nguedi was my immediate superior during the three years of my stay in the Congo. His unique fund of knowledge, especially of the Sundi culture, which is the combined result of personal experience and scientific study is as impressive as his generosity in sharing his rich experience with others. Pastor Buana Kibongi made the Theological Seminary a center for African studies, an exchange for the collective knowledge contributed by its students regarding the literature, customs and traditions, rituals and games, ideas and social systems of their tribes. I had the privilege of working in this consciously African environment from 1963 to 1966, a period marked by almost daily conversations with Pastor Buana Kibongi on various aspects of culture, conversations in which bantu, bakulu and mindele, nganga, nkissi and ndoki were discussed with particular keen interest. I am deeply indebted to him and his family.

Another outstanding figure of my days at Nguedi was Pastor Ndundu Daniel, an evangelist of strongly prophetic aspect. As the principal leader of the revivalist movement in the nineteensixties, he collected a large following, and in many ways lived closer to the people than any other clergyman I knew. Under his leadership the revivalist movement has retained the genuinely African character which has marked it since its beginning in 1947, and to me and my wife it was an overwhelming experience to enter into the African drama of rhythm, melody, word, and ecstasy, and to get at least an inkling of the power of the drums.

There are other names and topics of conversation I must mention. There is Pastor Nkunku Hilaire, the present Head of the Theological Seminary, to whom I owe acquaintance with the oral traditions describing the reaction of King Makoko and his people to Savorgnan de Brazza and his methods of colonization. There is Mr. Fukiandi Enoch of Luozi and his information about the memories retained by the Sundi of the portage system and the railway construction, and Mr. Jeremia Kibangu's information on the reaction of the Kingoyi to white men who came to their country in 1900, and their ideas about banganga, the nkassa trial, baptism, and Holy Communion. My conversations with the Revs. Hector de Cori and Luyindu Daniel ranged from the ancestors and the functions of nkissi, to race relations and the role of Kimpese. All the African clergymen whom I have mentioned here come from parts of the country which in the days of the old kingdom of Congo belonged to or bordered on the Sundi province.

I am indebted to numerous other Congolese, in particular to the students and all my other friends at Nguedi. Unable to thank them all by name, I make an exception for Mr. Nguimbi Paul, Mr. Nkuka Gabriel, Mr. Ntondo Noë, and the late Mr. Nguala Jonas, for their clear exposition of Congolese culture in terms intelligible to my alien ears.

There are some missionaries to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude for sharing their experience of the Congo with me in many long discussions. Among my Swedish colleagues, it is John S. Jönsson who has taught me most about the Congo and its people, for whom he showed such love and respect. Others I wish to mention by name are Miss Linnéa Almkvist, Miss Gunhild Jönsson, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Berg, Mr. Sven Hagerfors, and the late Mr. Ivar Hylén, all of them with some thirty or forty years' experience in the Congo to put weight behind their conversations. My special thanks go also to Mr. Petrus Westlind of Lysvik, Nils Westlind's son, for his generous hospitality and valuable information.

The academic environment in which this book took shape was made up by a large and fluctuating circle of people engaged in African research. Its unvarying center, the fundamental source to which I always returned throughout my studies, has been Professor Bengt Sundkler. He has encouraged boldness of approach, while at the same time emphasizing the need for careful attention to detail to ensure that any observations would be solidly based on an analysis of local conditions. His very personal and generous guidance has made the work a pleasure. It is Professor Sundkler's scientific production, his lectures and debates, and my private conversations with him that have inspired me with respect as well as humility to-

wards the study of Africa. The fact that Professor Sundkler held the Chair of Missionary History in Uppsala originally decided my choice of university, and I consider it an invaluable privilege to have been allowed to pursue my studies under his guidance for so many years.

Dr. Lars Sundström has given unstintingly from his rich and solid store of knowledge about the African cultures fronting upon the Atlantic and the European-American field, and he has done so with the sense of humour and lack of rigidity characteristic of him. With his specialized knowledge in the field of communications he has given me a detailed picture of the significance which trade routes have had not only in the conveyance of goods, but also of ideas. I owe him great thanks for many years of rewarding communion at the University's Café Alma.

Among other Africanists who in conversations and discussions, or through their criticisms of certain sections of my manuscript have influenced the final result, I wish to mention Mr. David Lagergren, Stockholm, Dr. Stiv Jakobsson, Uppsala, Dr. Erik Halldén, Hagfors, Dr. Anita Jacobsson, Stockholm, Mr. Onésimo Silveira, Uppsala, Dr. Bertil Söderberg, Stockholm, Dr. Harald von Sicard, Uppsala, and Mr. Ragnar Widman, Stockholm, as well as Dr Carl F. Hallencreutz, Dr. Allan Sandewall, and Dr. Åke Hermansson, Uppsala, who have given me their views as historians. I regret that the limited scope of this book has forced me to disregard many of the interesting suggestions they have advanced.

A special aureole surrounds my conversations with such veterans from the days of the Congo Independent State as Fredrik Parelus, Oslo, known as an author and unchallenged expert on the Manyema, Captain Indus Lithman, Göteborg, who plied the Congo shipping route in 1897, and the legendary Captain G. E. Göransson, Kungsbacka, who from 1903 onwards sailed the Congo route for an uninterrupted period of thirty years. As the last secretary of the Swedish Union of Congo Veterans, Captain Göransson entrusted me with its records, which are now deposited in the archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. In the preparation of this book my conversations with these veterans stand out as an unforgettable experience.

For their ready assistance in supplying me with information I am indebted to various archives and libraries, notably l'Archive du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Brussels, the Bibliothèque Africaine, Brussels, the Oslo University Library, containing the archives of the Norwegian Union of Congo Veterans, the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm, the Military Record Office in Stockholm, and not least, the Congo Archives of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. Thanks to the efforts

of its Director, Mr. Ragnar Widman, these archives have become an institution remarkable for its easy access and ready service. For the purpose of this book I have drawn upon no more than a small part of its manuscript section and its unique pictorial records, and many Africanists should be able to put its resources to good effect. I want to thank the African Department of the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, and its artist, Miss Amanda Jasmiin, for three drawings illustrating some important nkissi from the Lower Congo, now in the Museum's collection.

My warm thanks are due to the Swedish Institute of Missionary Research in Uppsala and its staff who have proved themselves such extremely generous and stimulating colleagues. My basis of operations for many years has been Carolina Rediviva, the University Library of Uppsala, to whose staff I wish to convey my sincere gratitude. They have spared no effort in tracing literature from the most inaccessible sources, and it is due to them that the number of important works on the Congo which I had to do without in preparing this book could be reduced to a minimum.

My warm thanks are also due to the two friends who have coped with the ungrateful task of turning the author's awkward Swedish into intelligible English within an extremely limited period of time. Mrs. Sally Götegård has translated Chapters 1 and 4—8, while Mrs. Catherine G. Sundström has translated preface, introduction, and Chapters 2 and 3.

In conclusion I wish to give voice to my feelings of respect and gratitude towards those who are closest to me. My father, Pastor Herbert Axelson of Karlstad, has shown a never-failing interest in my studies, arising as much from his thorough familiarity with the missionary work of the Swedish revivalist movement as from his affectionate concern for me and my family. During our years in the Congo, my wife Marianne showed herself far ahead of me in her intuitive understanding of the African mind in matters of health, illness, and death, and many times she has been able to explain the African outlook on life to me. Nevertheless it is not for this reason that I wish to thank her most, but for the extra burden she has assumed, so that I should be able to devote myself to this study. I wish to thank her, and our boys Örjan, Tomas, and Gunnar, for the love, the loyalty, and the patience they have shown me. It is our common wish that this book be dedicated to our friends in Brazzaville, Pastor Buana Kibongi and his family.

Uppsala, March 1970

Sigbert Axelson.

Introduction

The scope of this book appears from its main title, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, whose first half indicates the orientation of the study on which it is based, while the latter half defines its geographical limitation to the area between the Atlantic and Stanley Pool which has taken its name from the Congo river. I finally chose to use the term "confrontation" after rejecting possible alternatives like "meeting", "contact", "dialogue", "conflict", and "clash". The words "meeting" and "contact" are too weak and too vague to give any idea of the intensity of the process involved. "Culture conflict" might have been a feasible alternative, had it not been for its connotation of class struggle and culture revolution in the political terminology of our days. It cannot be denied, however, that the Lower Congo for many centuries has been the scene of conflict between different cultures, and I feel that some connotation of conflict is also conveyed by the word "confrontation". "Clash" is a strong term, which might possibly be used to describe the eighteen-eighties and nineties, but it is too harsh to be applied to the whole of the period covered by this study.

Of all possible terms the least conceivable is "dialogue" between exponents of opposite cultures. "Dialogue", after all, presupposes that the two parties accord each other some degree of equality and respect. These conditions never existed during the period covered by my study. It is possible that the nineteen-sixties in the history of the Congo may come to be regarded as the decade which saw the emergence of the conditions necessary to a dialogue. It is only in the past decade that the Congolese has finally shed the past, in which the Mindele — the white men — were regarded "as gods", and it is in this decade, too, that the European on his part has begun to abandon his feelings of superiority towards the Bantu — the Africans. The term "confrontation" denotes the strained relationship between the exponents of the cultures which came to face in the Lower Congo, on the one hand the Bantu, on the other the Mindele. *Culture* confrontation means more than a *cultural* confrontation. It means a confrontation between different cultures or civilizations.

Modern research sets out from the premise that European and African cultures must be approached on equal terms and recognizes that the culture of, say, the Congo has an equally long history as that of the Scandinavian countries, for example. The cultural heritage of the Congo is just

as rich and well-developed. The difference between cultures springs from the development of different areas of cultural life.

The culture confrontation remains the central theme throughout this book, with special emphasis given to points of conflict. My approach to each particular era has been guided by the question: What were the areas of incompatibility or conflict between African and European culture in the Lower Congo? By focusing my analysis on the dynamics of this confrontation, the point of contact between Congolese and Europeans, I have marked that the purpose of this study is not to present a characterization of Congolese or African culture as separate entities. Its aim has been to analyse the essential features of the confrontation between the two cultures. The Africans and Europeans who come face to face in this culture confrontation are in this context regarded as representatives of different cultures, the medium through which culture or tradition is transmitted.

The book has a subtitle, *From the Old Congo Kingdom to the Congo Independent State with special reference to the Swedish Missionaries in the 1880's and 1890's*. This designation marks the long historical perspective in which the culture confrontation has been viewed, stretching from the period round the beginning of the sixteenth century to the turn of this century. Much space has been devoted to the centuries preceding the era of modern colonization, largely for two reasons. In the first place it serves to underscore the continuity of the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, and secondly, it enables us to identify points of conflict which have remained to the fore over an extremely long period of time. Identification of such particular points of conflict makes it easier to define the essence of the culture confrontation as a whole. As an example of problems which have remained relevant from the end of the fourteenth century up to our times we find the relationship between the living and the dead, between Bantu and Bakulu, or, in other words, "people" and "ancestors"; the relationship between Muntu and Mundele, or between "person" and "white man"; family structure; polygyny and monogamy; matrilineal and patrilineal rules of inheritance; question regarding the true religion and the role of nganga, nkissi, and ndoki, i. e. "fetishman", "idol", and "sorcerer"; and, finally, the rumours of cannibalism. An additional reason for extending the historical perspective of this study, which I have already mentioned in the Preface, was my hope that it might serve to complement Ruth Slade's studies of the Congo.

The book's subtitle also indicates that my study of the Lower Congo of the eighteen-eighties and nineties confines itself to the relationship

between Congolese and Swedes, specifically the Swedish missionaries. This makes it possible to avoid repetition, since Slade's studies, together with David Lagergren's book *Mission and State in the Congo*, which was published in 1970, provide adequate coverage of the English-speaking Protestant missionaries, who with their Swedish counterparts played the principal role in the culture confrontation which took place in the region between the Atlantic and Stanley Pool at that period. The subtitle's specific mention of the Swedish missionaries is also intended to convey some indication of the geographic scope of the book, since their work lay mainly in the regions which in the days of the old kingdom formed the Sundi province, the country's principal province, or in the areas adjoining the northern border of Sundi. Our interest in these regions, which is evident throughout the book, comes to a head in the last three chapters. This is explained both by the fact that it was this part of the country in particular which felt the harsh impact of the portage system and the railway construction in the early years of the Congo Independent State, and by the fact that it became the center of the activities of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden in the Congo. The aim of our book then is primarily to attempt an analysis of the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo seen in a long historical perspective, and secondly, to make use in this analysis of material for the last two decades of the nineteenth century, derived from hitherto untapped sources from the Scandinavian-language area. My intention is to assign to the Congolese the role in the history of the Congo which is theirs by right, to make them play the principal part in the culture confrontation which took place in the country that was theirs.

As my study covers a time span stretching over no less than four centuries, it has been rather a problem to arrive at a division into particular periods. As the work proceeded, the different periods gradually assumed clearer outlines. The first period, which I have called "The Congo under the Portuguese *Padroão*", encompasses the time between 1482 and 1706. The year 1482 has been chosen because it marks the first contact between the Congo and Europe, as the first Portuguese conquistadore anchored in the Congo mouth. I could just as well have chosen the year 1444, which already stands as a symbol marking the beginning of the Portuguese slave-trade in West Africa. From the time when the first conquistadore anchored in the Congo mouth in 1482 and erected a *padrão* — a stone pillar — as the official sign of Portuguese dominion, the whole of the period up to 1706 is marked by the Portuguese monopoly in the Congo.

The end of this first period is marked by the year 1706, a less well-known, but far more important date. On July 2, 1706, the leader of a Messianic popular movement in the Lower Congo was burnt at the stake as an apostate and heretic. She was known under the names of Kimpa Vita, Dona Beatrice, and Saint Anthony. She was burnt with the sanction of two Capuchin monks, and we might reasonably ask ourselves whether Kimpa Vita should not be regarded as the first Christian martyr of Congolese birth. She tried to rally the people of the Congo into repopulating the kingdom's old capital, which had been abandoned after the Congolese were defeated by Portuguese in the battle of Ambuila on October 29, 1665. By choosing 1706 rather than 1665 to mark the passing of an era, I wish to call attention to the important role which this Messianic popular movement has played in the culture confrontation.

This first period coincides on the whole with the period dealt with in Georges Balandier's book, *La vie quotidienne au royaume de Kongo*, which was published in 1965. The year 1706 can be held to mark the end of the old kingdom, which would never again be restored to its former glory.

The culture confrontation comes to a head during two specific stages of this period of more than a hundred and fifty years. The first of these is the era of Mvemba Nzinga in the first half of the sixteenth century, the second occurs in the latter half of the seventeenth century, in the heyday of the Capuchin mission. Special attention is therefore given to these two eras.

Part II of this book deals with an equally long period, comprising the time between 1706 and 1877. A dominant feature of this period is the slave-trade, but it is also marked by an abatement of the religious contest between the Christian missionaries and the banganga, the priesthood of traditional Congo society. The nineteenth century sees the awakening of a new interest in the Congo, inspired by scientific motives, but this holds no threat to the dominant position of the banganga. Despite the flourishing slave-trade, the period between 1706 and 1877 can be defined more or less as a pause between two periods of intensive culture confrontation, the preceding one in which the kingdom of Congo is destroyed by the Portuguese, and the one following it, in which the people of the Congo are brought under the iron rule of Belgium.

The year 1877 stands as a symbol marking the beginning of the modern colonial era. On August 9, 1877, H. M. Stanley arrived at Boma on the Congo mouth after his 999 days' journey from Bagamoyo down the Congo river, across the whole Congo basin. In European eyes this date

has long stood out as a red-letter day in the annals of exploration, the day on which the mystery of the Congo was solved. To the Congolese, Stanley's arrival at the Congo mouth stands for something entirely different, namely a renewed and horrifying experience of the power of the Mindele. Stanley was given the name "Bula Matadi", which literally means "The Breaker of Rocks", and this name subsequently became a collective designation for the white men, the Mindele.

The third period comprises the time between 1877 and 1900 and forms Part III of this book, which deals with the Swedish role in the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo. These decades represent the real pioneer era in the history of the Congo Independent State, and as its final date I might just as soon have chosen the year 1898 instead of 1900. In July 1898 the railway from Matadi to Leopoldville was opened, and this event marks the end of an era of revolutionary changes in the history of the Lower Congo. My reason for rejecting 1898 to signify the end of this era is that I wish to mark that the opening of the railway in spite of everything did not entail the total relief of pressure for the Congolese which might have been expected. The policy of oppression lasted into the twentieth century. The real pioneer era, however, can be considered at an end round 1900.

It is during these decades that the Europeans conclusively establish their hold in the Lower Congo, beating down all resistance and forcing the people into submission and "collaboration", specifically in the sphere of communications and food supply. From Brussels, Leopold II swiftly built up a colonial administration without considering the wishes of the Congolese. The Lower Congo becomes a transit zone for the passage of goods to and from the vast Congo basin. Europeans of different nationality and religious persuasion settle in the Lower Congo, and European Christianity presents a divided front to the Congolese.

What characterizes this third period is the portorage system and the construction of the railway. All available male labour was forcibly recruited to carry goods for the Europeans up and down country. There was not enough local labour to satisfy the needs of the railway construction as well, and coastal Africans were brought in all the way from Cameroon and Nigeria. Even Chinese labour was imported for the work. All this work required for the colonial development of the Lower Congo put a heavy burden on its people, and many villages along the route of the railway were completely drained of all available labour. A number of villages perished under the pressure of privations and excessive taxation, others were abandoned by the inhabitants, who moved further inland to escape

the various exploits of "Bula Matadi". During these two decades the Lower Congo undergoes a transformation of unheard-of dimensions. Never in its previous or subsequent history has this country witnessed such radical changes. In this context we would indeed be justified in speaking of a "large-scale cultural impact" or of "rapid social change". However, all this is well-known history and needs no further comment.

On the religious scene, however, the question arises whether this period was not a continuation of the age-old contest between Bantu and Mindele, with the *nganga* and the missionary as the principal opponents. The problems that had to be faced in 1900 were still the same and concerned the role of *nganga*, *nkissi*, and *ndoki*, polygyny, and the drums and dancing of traditional ritual. New factors are introduced to challenge the power of the *banganga*. The missionaries establish schools and medical stations, and they bring modern skills and techniques into the lives of the Congolese, introducing them to circular saws and printing-presses, sewing-machines, brick-kilns, and tin roofs.

Practically all historical research on sub-Saharan Africa is seriously hampered by the lack of original sources. The available records are generally provided by non-African sources that is, European and Arab visitors to the country, who came as explorers, conquerors, and missionaries.² As recently as the turn of this century, written material of African origin is still comparatively rare, and the documentary evidence is at all times dominated by European sources. This European dominance — which often can be equated with missionary dominance — also marks the sources on which I have relied for this study, and the lack of African sources must regrettably be accepted as an inevitable flaw. The lack of balance in the available material gives greater scope to European interpretations of the culture confrontation than to the Congolese point of view. This will probably remain a problem in all research on the Congo for a long time to come, unless we are willing to depend on unwritten material. That this is possible has been shown by Jan Vansina, who has published a detailed account of his methods.³

However, I have chosen the traditional method of depending wholly on written sources. It would exceed the scope of this book to rely on oral evidence to any great extent. I wish to make it clear, however, that by choosing to work with written sources I do of course not deny the value of oral evidence.⁴

The history of European discovery in the Congo has been set down by Portuguese chroniclers in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, and some of

them have long ago been translated into English. In addition to the accounts of Rui de Pina, Garcia de Recende, and João de Barros, published by Brasio in the nineteen-fifties, I have for this book made use of *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* by Gomes Eannes de Azurara, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, and translated into English, with an introduction and a bibliography by Ch. R. Beazley and E. Prestige.⁵ Azurara's account is followed by Pacheco Pereira's *Esmeraldo de situ Orbis*, translated into English, with an introduction and a bibliography by G. T. H. Kimble.⁶ Also from the fifteenth century is the account given in *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, in English translation, with an introduction and a bibliography by G. R. Crone.⁷ The English edition also includes descriptions of West Africa by Diogo Gomes and João de Barros.⁸ Barros' account is largely based on that of Garcia de Recende, who in his turn relies on Rui de Pina. I have primarily depended on Rui de Pina's account, using Recende's and Barros' material only when they provide information from other sources as a complement to Pina. With regard to the fifteenth and early sixteenth century I moreover refer to J. W. Blake's bibliographies, and critical analysis of these sources in his two studies *European Beginnings in West Africa (1454—1579)* and *Europeans in West Africa (1450—1560)*.⁹ The evidence provided by these early chronicles must of course be treated with the greatest discernment and caution, and whenever such information does not represent first-hand evidence, this is specifically stated in this book.

An invaluable collection of records concerning the history of the Congo in the sixteenth century are the *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental*, an annotated edition in two series published by Antonio Brasio at the request of the Portuguese Ministerio do ultramar. The first volume, issued in 1952 and comprising the years 1471—1531, among other things presented a large part of the correspondence between the courts of Mbanza Kongo and Lisbon. Some of the material was earlier published in French in Mgr. J. Cuvelier's book, *L'ancien royaume de Congo*, 1946. Brasio subsequently in rapid succession published a number of extensive volumes, the seventh of which, issued in 1957, dealt with the period 1622—1630. The first volume in the second series was published in 1958 and contains documents from the years marking the preliminary stages of the Portuguese policy of conquest and its subsequent rapid expansion towards southern Africa. These two volumes are the last in the series that have been used for this study. What has been of essential interest to this book are primarily documents of Congolese origin, and among such documents the

greatest weight must be attached to the collection containing some 30 original letters and addresses from Mvemba Nzinga (1506—1543) to Lisbon, Rome, and São Tomé. A valuable collection of documents, although it includes but few of Congolese origin is also found in *L'ancien Congo d'après les archives romaines (1518—1640)*, published in 1954 by Mgr. J. Cuvelier and Abbé L. Jadin.

The volumes edited by Brasio of documents recording the early stages of the culture confrontation provide a valuable complement to the material which has so far been available to Congo research. Among these earlier publications particular mention must be made of the work compiled by Paiva Manso, *Historia do Congo, Documentos 1492—1722*, which was published in Lisbon in 1877 and has long been difficult to get hold of, and A. Felner's *Angola, apontamentos sobre a ocupação de estabelecimento dos Portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela*, published in Coimbra in 1933. Paiva Manso was the first to publish Mvemba Nzinga's correspondence, which means that this important material has been available to Congo research since 1877, but very few researchers have made use of it. The most exhaustive use of this material has been made by Mgr. J. Cuvelier for his classic study *L'ancien Royaume de Congo* in 1946.

The best-known sixteenth-century source is a work published by Filippo Pigafetta and Duarte Lopez in 1591, entitled *Relatione del reame di Congo*. The most recent and best edition of this work was published in 1965 in French translation by Willy Bal. The Italian Duarte Lopes (or Eduardo Lopez) was the ambassador of the Congo king Alvare I (1568—1587) at the Holy See in Rome. There he met Pigafetta, who wrote down Lopes' recollections of his years in the Congo in the early fifteen-eighties, which were obviously based on notes made at the time. The impression left by their account is that it in some parts shows a firm grasp of local conditions, especially regarding San Salvador in the fifteen-eighties. But in its descriptions of earlier periods — Mvemba Nzinga's days for instance — its reliability varies greatly, for while some data are based on well-preserved oral tradition, others seem to be pure fabrication, intended to present the kingdom of Congo in a rosier light to the Europeans who would read the book.

From the time round the end of the sixteenth century some sources have been preserved, but they are of little value to this study. They are Andrew Batell's and Anthony Knivet's travel accounts. Andrew Battell was for two decades, from around 1590 to around 1610, kept in some sort of captivity by the Portuguese, during which time he plied the coast between Loanda and Loango. His story was set down by his friend Samuel Purchas,

and first saw the light in 1613 in Purchas' book, *His Pilgrimages*, which was published in a new edition by E. G. Ravenstein in 1901.¹¹ Like Lopez' and Pigafetta's account, this source must be used with great caution. Battell's own notes were not published until 1625 by Purchas, and even then there is a risk that the published account contains additional information not supplied by Battell, as Ravenstein says in his critical analysis of the Battell accounts.¹² The accounts of Anthony Knivet and Andrew Battell have not been used for this book, since there are other, reliable sources for the same period. Anthony Knivet seems to give his imagination free rein in his description of the Congo and can hardly be relied upon in a serious context.

A new literary era sets in for the Congo with the advent of the Capuchin mission in 1645. A succession of Capuchin friars sent reports to the Propaganda in Rome, known as the *Relationes*. The first of these reports is the *Breve Relatione* of Giovanni Francesco Romano, which was printed in Rome in 1648. I have used the annotated French edition of 1964 by F. Bontinck, *Breve Relation de la fondation de la mission des Capucins au Royaume de Congo par le Père frère Jean-François de Rome*. By 1651 the *Breve Relatione* had already been published in seven editions, as well as being translated into other languages. Jean-François de Rome was acquainted with the work of Lopez and Pigafetta, but he states explicitly that he only describes what he has seen with his own eyes. There is nothing else to suggest that he has plagiarized or fabricated his evidence, and his book rates high points as a reliable source.

The Propaganda commissioned Cavazzi de Montecuccolo to write a history of the Congo. His *Istorica Descrizione de' tre regni Congo, Matamba et Angola*, is based both on his personal experience of Angola and on archival sources in Loanda and Rome. The work was finished in 1671, but it was not until 1687 that the book was printed in Bologna. The most recent new edition of this book is one by Graciano Maria de Leguzzano in two volumes, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos do Congo, Matamba e Angola*, published in Lisbon in 1965. This edition contains a valuable introduction giving information about Cavazzi, as well as a bibliography and historical data. Unfortunately Cavazzi's work had a greater effect on the European view of the Congo than Jean-François de Rome's *Relatione*, probably due to the fact that a French translation of Cavazzi's book was published in 1732 by R. P. Labat in Paris, under the title *Relation historique de l'Ethiopie occidentale*. Cavazzi was Prefect of Loanda from 1673 to 1678, but he never visited the Congo, and in this study his data are used with great wariness, even in cases where he obviously relies

on the authority of Jean-François de Rome or Girolamo de Montesarchio.

Girolamo de Montesarchio, "the apostle of Sundi", who worked in the Congo from 1648 to 1668, is the author of a manuscript entitled *Viaggio del Chongo*, written in 1668 and published in 1951 by Olivier de Bouveignes and Mgr. J. Cuvelier under the title *Jérôme de Montesarchio. Apôtre du Vieux Congo*.¹³ This Capuchin priest gives a simple and straight report of what he sees and hears, and his account presents no problems in terms of reliability.

Cavazzi's book was followed by Merolla's famous account of the Congo, *Relazione nel Regno de Congo*, which was published in Naples in 1692. I have used the English version published in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, which appeared in London in 1732. Merolla, or Girolamo da Sorrento, who was in the Congo from 1682 to 1697, presents us with a remarkably vivid picture in describing his personal experiences, and his *Relatione* is of great value to those who wish to study missionary praxis at the end of the seventeenth century.

After Merolla comes Zucchelli, or Antonio da Gradisca, who worked in the Congo from 1696 to 1702. His account, *Relazione del Viaggio e Missione de Congo* was published in Venice in 1712. Like Merolla, Zucchelli concentrates primarily on the Soyo province. His account is a valuable source with regard to missionary praxis round the beginning of the eighteenth century. I have used the German edition, *Merckwürdige Missions- und Reise-Beschreibung nach Kongo . . .*, published in Franckfurt am Main in 1715.

The last in the series of more important *Relationes* is the report of Lorenzo de Lucca, who stayed in the Congo from 1700 to 1720. It was published in 1953 by J. Cuvelier under the title, *Laurent de Lucques: Relations sur le Congo (1700—1711)*. A reliable source, this *Relatione* brings us to the end of the first period of this study.

From the seventeenth century there is an account of somewhat different character, Bras Correa's *Historia do Reino do Congo*, which was published around 1624. It is not a report to the Propaganda, since Bras Correa started out as a secular priest in Sundi for some ten years until he was made a canon in 1906. Eventually he became Vicary General in San Salvador, and it was not until afterwards, in 1626, that he was accepted into the order of Jesuits. *Historia do Reino do Congo* is an anonymous work, but there is no doubt about Correa's authorship. Unfortunately the original book has not been available, but I have been able to use some of Correa's data thanks to Jadin's studies of the last decade, and his publication of a number of documents written by Correa.

Olfert Dapper's description of Africa, originally published in 1668, was in 1970 printed in German in Amsterdam, under the title *Umbständliche und Eigentliche Beschreibung von Africa*. The two most recent editions of this work are Chr. Monheim's French translation of 1932, *La description du Royaume du Congo*, and Rolf Italiaander's abridged version in German of 1964.¹⁴ Dapper compiled his work from other sources, and such of his data as have been used in this study are discussed in their proper context in the chapter dealing with the situation in Soyo around 1670.

These two books, *Historia do Reino do Congo* and *Umbständliche und Eigentliche Beschreibung von Africa*, together with the works of Andrew Battell, Merolla, Cavazzi, and Zucchelli, and the *Archives Congolaises* of 1919, have long been the principal sources for research on the Congo of the seventeenth century. During the past decade, however, entirely new possibilities have been opened to this research with regard to the seventeenth and eighteenth century, thanks to a series of publications by Louis Jadin in *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, which present a great number of previously unpublished and exclusive archival records. This series starts in 1961 with *Le Congo et la secte des Antoniens. Restauration du royaume sous Pedro IV et la "saint Antoine" congolaise (1694—1718)*, followed in 1963 by *Aperçu de la situation du Congo et rite d'élection des rois en 1775, d'après le P. Cherubino da Savona, missionnaire au Congo de 1759 à 1774*. In 1964 followed *Le Clergé séculier et les capucins du Congo et d'Angola aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles. Conflits de juridiction 1700—1726*, in 1966 *Rivalités luso-néerlandaises au Soho, Congo, 1600—1675*, in 1967 *Pero Tavares, missionnaire jésuite, ses travaux apostoliques au Congo et en Angola, 1629—1635*, and finally, in 1968, *Relations sur le Congo et l'Angola tirées des archives de la Compagnie de Jésus, 1621—1631*.

As appears from my references in the pertinent chapters, I have drawn heavily on the seventeenth and eighteenth century records which Jadin has published both in this series in the *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* and elsewhere, I have relied equally heavily on his analysis and characterization of different periods in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Jadin views his material in long historical perspective, and the over-all picture emerging from his collective writings on the Congo is unequalled by any previous research in terms of reliability. In contrast to the approach adopted for this study, which concentrates on the confrontation between African and European culture, Jadin's work primarily focuses interest on the achievements of the Europeans in the Congo and Angola and emphasizes the internal schisms between rival European inte-

rests in the Congo and Angola. Jadin has taken the place formerly held by Mgr. J. Cuvelier as Europe's foremost expert on the Congo.

A small but important work dating from the days of the Capuchin mission in the Congo is the *Pratique Missionnaire* of 1747, published in Editions de l'Aucam, Louvain 1931. It is discussed at length in my analysis of missionary policy in theory and practice, in which I compare it with a similar manual intended for missionaries in eastern Asia, the *Instructions aux missionnaires de la S. Congrégation de la Propaganda, 1669*, published in Editions de l'Aucam, Louvain 1928. These two books provide material for an analysis of theological principles and values underlying missionary praxis in Asia and Africa.

The French mission initiated by Le Séminaire des Missions Etrangères de Paris in 1766 became known to a wider public as early as 1776, when Abbé Proyart published his *Histoire de Loango, Kakongo et autres royaumes d'Afrique*. In 1780 it appeared in translation in Stockholm as the first work on the Congo in Swedish. Proyart based his work on archival records, which in 1953 were subjected to renewed critical examination by Mgr. Cuvelier and published in a reliable, annotated edition entitled *Documents sur une mission française au Kakongo 1766—1777*.¹⁵ I have depended on Cuvelier's version for this study.

The sources which have been named reflect the shifting emphasis of European interest in the Congo. During the fifteenth century the accounts are written by explorers and chroniclers in the service of European monarchs. In the sixteenth century they are succeeded by colonizers, administrators, and royal secretaries, while the seventeenth and eighteenth century literature is dominated by Catholic missionaries from various countries in Latin Europe. Records of Congolese origin are rare, and those which have been preserved are royal letters and addresses from the kingdom's days of glory. In this book much attention is given to Mvemba Nzinga's correspondence. The sources from the nineteenth century in a way are reminiscent of the era of European discovery and consist of travel accounts by explorers like J. K. Tuckey, Richard Burton, and Adolf Bastian, whose accounts have been used for this book as being of special interest with regard to the Lower Congo. Their writings are based on scientific training and present few problems as to reliability.

The sources used to document Part III of this book, dealing with the period 1877—1900, are predominantly of Swedish origin. The English and French sources are too well-known to need special mention in this context. Two French sources should be named, however, both of them personal narratives describing daily life in the Lower Congo of the eigh-

teen-seventies and eighties. The first is Alex. Delcommune's *Vingt années de vie africaine 1874—1893*, published in 1922. Among other things he describes Stanley's arrival at Boma in 1877, at the end of his 999 days' journey. Delcommune gives candid description of the violent methods employed in the disciplinary actions undertaken against the population. The second book which merits particular interest is E. Dupont's *Lettres sur le Congo* (1889). Among other things, Dupont's book describes a journey undertaken in the cataracts district north of the river Congo with a detailed account of his route, giving the names of villages both in the text and on maps. Dupont is with Lieutenant Möller the only one who has provided a booklength description of this territory in the days before the expansion of the Swedish mission north of Mukimbungu, when they established stations at Kibunzi, Nganda, Diadia, and Kinkenge.

Swedish visitors to the Congo in the eighteen-eighties and nineties have left us a wealth of published material, both in the form of books and in articles in newspapers and journals. As early as 1878 Professor G. von Düben published a survey of African research, including the Congo, in his book *Forskningarna i Central-Afrika*.¹⁶ His book seems to have remained unknown in wider circles, however, in contrast to the book *Tre år i Kongo*, published in two volumes in 1887 and 1888. The first volume appearing in 1887 started out with a brief article by E. W. Dahlgren, librarian and historian, describing the history of the Congo's discovery and the foundation of the Congo Independent State. This is followed by Lieutenant P. Möller's account of his experiences in the Lower Congo, where he travelled in the country between Matadi and Manyanga and as far as the Kwilu valley. The 348 pages of Möller's account hold a wealth of illustrations, many of them picturing samples of material culture. Volume II appeared in 1888 and contains contributions by Lieutenant George Pagels, who in 148 pages describes the Upper Congo, Lieutenant Edvard Glycerup, who gives a report of 350 pages of his journey from West to East straight across the African continent and by Lieutenant Arvid Wester, who contributes some descriptions of Stanley Falls and his meetings with Tippu Tip. The second volume is likewise richly illustrated and contains excellent maps. This book caught the public fancy in Sweden and was read by people of widely different backgrounds, from scientists and officers to the members of missionary societies.

In 1888, Lieutenant C. R. Håkansson published a curious little volume entitled *Kristendomen i civilisationens tjänst vid Kongo*, in which he discusses the justification of the Christian mission and defends it as a factor in the task of civilization. Among other things he describes his meetings

with missionaries like Nils Westlind, K. J. Pettersson, and C. J. Nilsson, while his own account contains an exquisite description of the struggles of what he calls a fetish-priest, a nganga by the name of Ngangvan Dimboini, before his conversion to Christianity.

Of the many Swedish sea-captains, only one has published his recollections. This is Gustaf Stenfelt, whose *Kongominnen* appeared in 1889, followed by *Bland negererna* in 1901. In this study I have made use of his first book, but whenever Stenfelt is cited, one must keep in mind that he uses an unusually drastic and juicy mode of expression. It has been impossible to obtain any data on the spread attained by Håkanson's and Stenfelt's books, but it seems to have been fairly slight.

The geographer H. H. von Schwerin paid the Congo a short visit, and while his books have not as much value as those mentioned earlier as an account of the Congo, they seem to have had a certain effect in shaping public opinion and gave rise to a debate, among other things occasioned by his negative attitude towards the mission. In this context we can mention his *Slaveri och slavhandel i Afrika* of 1891, and *Natursceneri på Afrikas Väst kust*, published in 1893.

Among the traders in the Congo, Emil Forssell was the only one to set down his experiences in a book written for a Swedish public. He published his book, *Mr. Foster i Kongo*, in 1898, and even though it is an adventure story, it gives a good picture of daily life in the Boma-Banana area as it was in 1892 when he worked there. Another Swedish trader, T. Westmark, published a book called *Trois ans au Congo* in 1887 in Lille, but so far as I know it never appeared in any version in Swedish.

The Swedish missionaries sent a great many letters and reports to Sweden, more than 90 per cent of which were published during the eighteen-eighties and nineties according to the statistics so far available, but they seem to have had no time to write books. They fell frequent victim to disease, and during the two decades discussed here the mortality rate was as high as 30 per cent. Most of them died in the Congo. A few authors can be found among the missionaries, as for instance the already mentioned K. J. Pettersson. His book, however, was written after the turn of the century and describes events that happened several decades earlier. Missionary Sofia Karlsson published a small volume in 1897, entitled *Kongokvinnan*, which is the first book to focus attention on the situation of the women in the Congo. In her book Karlsson shows great sympathy and pity for the Congolese women and the hard labour expected of them.

Interest in missionary work was great in Sweden, and even the larger

type of collection work had its given circle of readers. The director in charge of the mission sponsored by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, E. J. Ekman, in 1890 published a work in two volumes, *Illustrerad missionshistoria*, which included some twenty pages describing the pioneers of the Congo mission, illustrated with photographs of both missionaries and Congolese. The first larger work to deal mainly with the Swedish mission in the Congo is N. Werner's *På hedningarnes väg* from 1898, a compilation of material earlier published in the journal *Missionsförbundet*. The book is illustrated and has an appendix giving statistics about the missionaries. During the twentieth century — which falls outside the scope of my book — a succession of large volumes appeared at regular intervals, which in various ways illustrate the work of the Swedish mission in the Congo. A publication commemorating the 25-year anniversary of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden was issued in 1903. In 1906 followed *Bildergalleri*, which in addition to photographs of all the missionaries and mission stations in the Congo showed Congolese evangelists and their families, schoolboys, the nkimba school — described as a school for idol-priests in the caption — chiefs' graves, the bustling life at the market, a nganga exhibiting his nkissi on a table, etc. Photographs were at an early stage put to use in mission propaganda.

In 1911 *Dagbräckning i Kongo* appeared a volume of extremely high quality in both text and illustrations. It describes the history and organization of the Swedish mission, and especially the Congolese society in which the missionaries worked. The authors who have contributed to this volume are missionaries writing on their special subjects; special mention deserves P. A. Westlind's contribution on the ideas of the Bakongo regarding nganga and nkissi. It would certainly have been justified to translate *Dagbräckning i Kongo* into French or English and thus present the Swedish mission and its environment in the Congo to an international public. A history of this kind is still lacking and my book cannot be regarded either as missionary history in the traditional sense.

Two similar collective works were published on the work of the Mission Covenant Church in other mission fields, *På obanade stigar*, which appeared in 1917, describes the mission in East Turkestan, while *Tjugofem år i Kina*, which appeared in 1916, contains accounts from China. Together with L. E. Högberg's two books, *Skuggor och dagar från missionsarbetet i Ryssland*, published in 1914, and *Bland Persiens muhammedaner*, which appeared in 1920, this intensive literary activity provides some indication of the extent of the work undertaken by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In 1928 the 50-year jubilee of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden was commemorated by the publication of *Vildmarkens vår*, a unique book in the group of Swedish publications. Its 288 pages comprise some forty essays, all written by Congolese ministers, evangelists, and teachers. These Congolese authors set down their personal recollections of the eighteen-seventies, eighties and nineties, they relate how the first white men, or Mindele, who came to their part of the country were received, they describe old market laws, customs and practices, they analyze the role of nganga, ndoki, nkissi, and nkassa in traditional Congo society, they explain the Congolese concept of work, and they give a brief description of the expansion of their church. This book deserves to be translated into French and English, which would make these Congolese views accessible to a wider public. A few Congolese documents in Swedish translation had been published by Nathan Söderblom as early as 1908 in his *Främmande religionsurkunder*, in which our attention is caught in particular by an account of a former nganga by the name of Titus Makundu describing the ritual surrounding the nkassa trial. His account is the most detailed description of this highly important ritual published in the days of the Congo Independent State. In the book *The African World*, published in 1965, J. D. Fage stresses the importance of making sources like those in the Scandinavian languages accessible to international Congo research. The publication of the above-mentioned Congolese documents should make an excellent beginning. In this book I have given numerous quotations from Congolese sources — as well as from several Swedish ones — so that the reader as far as possible may judge their character for himself. This would not have been necessary if the sources had been published in any of the international languages.

The Swedish visitors to the Congo published articles in a number of Swedish periodicals. It is primarily two of these which are of interest to this book, *Ymer*, published by the Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography, and *Missionsförbundet*, published by the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. *Ymer* published scientific essays on the Congo, as well as travel accounts and reports by Swedish officers. Among its more well-known contributors in the nineteen-eighties were Lieutenants Möller, Pagels, Glerup, Wester, C. R. Håkansson, the geographer H. H. von Schwerin, and F. Ulff, Director of the Compagnie des Produits, Congo.

The journal *Missionsförbundet* — which for three years was called *Svenska Missionsförbundet* — started in 1883, and published practically all letters and reports from missionaries received by the Director in charge of the mission programme, E. J. Ekman. Ekman's own correspon-

dence with the missionaries is preserved in the archives of the Mission Covenant Church in Stockholm. Scrutiny of these records shows the principles underlying his selection of the missionaries' letters for publication. Ekman was anxious to receive as many reports as possible from the Congo, and in almost every letter to the missionaries he urges them to write about their daily life, about Congolese customs and practices, about their successes and difficulties. He is particularly persistent — not to say stubborn — in his pleas for photographs from the various mission stations. In a letter to K. J. Pettersson, dated January 26, 1892, Ekman wishes to "remind the brothers of the importance of not writing to any other journals than *Missionsförbundet*", so that the editors of other papers had to get their information from this journal.¹⁷ Ekman says that he is anxious to increase the circulation of *Missionsförbundet*, which is one of the reasons why material from the Congo is important.

A comparison between the unpublished and the published correspondence shows that the information kept from the readers mostly concerned internal tensions in the missionary force or controversies between some missionary and the Board in Stockholm. Tensions of the former type might arise from difficulties in collaborating with other missionaries, marriage plans, or terms of payment. An example of the latter type of conflict is the polemic exchange between E. J. Ekman and Nils Westlind regarding literary production and the training of Congolese evangelists.¹⁸ Westlind suspected that the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden were unwilling to give his work on Mukimungu their wholehearted support, to which Ekman replied that the situation was rather the reverse, and that Westlind would get what he asked for.

A more serious controversy developed between Ekman and K. J. Pettersson regarding the costs of establishing Londe transport station in Matadi.¹⁹ Ekman maintained that the costs of the Londe projects were far too high and threatened to wreck total havoc in the finances of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. Pettersson claimed that it was impossible to say what was expensive or not in the Congo from the vantage point of Stockholm, and took Ekman's words as an accusation of fraud. Ekman for his part felt that Pettersson in his letters used "an anything but humble mode of expression". It is exclusively this type of correspondence which was not published, and since there is no reason to take account of this kind of questions within the scope of this book, my data have as far as possible been drawn from the columns of *Missionsförbundet*, which has published all the information of interest in this context. As a general observation concerning missionary correspondence,

one might say, that nearly all the missionaries during the 1880's and 1890's made it a habit of reporting to Sweden from their daily life, just as Ekman wanted them to do; after 1900, when the missionary routine was well established at the mission station, the number of letters decreased considerably and reports were given from more solemn occasions such as baptisms and Christmas feasts.

There are two more reasons why I have preferred to rely on this published material. One is a desire to demonstrate the usefulness of the journal *Missionsförbundet* for Scandinavian research on Africa, the second, and the decisive reason is that I indirectly wish to convey an impression of the picture of the Congo which was presented to the Swedish readers of the journal. This second point leads on to research about the effect on public opinion, and throughout this book I have tried to view publications of various kinds with an eye to this aspect. Gunnar Hallingberg in Sweden, who is doing research on mass media, has drawn attention to this new departure in research and discussed its conditions in a recent article called *Mission, litteratur och opinionsbildning*.²⁰

Valuable unpublished material is found in the diaries of some missionaries. Those which have proved most interesting for this book are the diaries of Mina Svensson, C. J. Nilsson, and Ivar Johansson. I have glanced at Nils Westlind's diary when I visited Petrus Westlind at Lysvik, but I have not had an opportunity to work on it. Nils Westlind's linguistic material is deposited at the Museum of Värmland in Karlstad, and has so far remained untapped by research. If and when at some future time it is decided to write a book on the model of Jenssen-Tusch's great work *Skandinaver i Congo*, there are two archives, in addition to those of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, which will be of value. These are the archives of the Union of Swedish Congo Veterans (SMF) in Stockholm, and of the Union of Norwegian Congo Veterans, deposited at the University Library in Oslo. There must be similar Danish records, but despite several year's investigations I have been unable to trace them. The Military Record Office in Stockholm holds no material from the Swedish officers in the Congo, nor do archives in Brussels provide much that has proved of interest to this book. The University Library in Uppsala contains a number of documents by M. Juhlin-Dannfelt, while the University Library in Lund holds documentary material left by H. H. von Schwerin. Numerous letters from Swedish visitors to the Congo are probably preserved in private archives, but the difficulty is both to trace them and to get permission to use them for research when the search has been successful. Many families have been found wary of letting such material

go out of their hands, in a few cases because of unfortunate experiences in the thirties, when the Mission Covenant Church was given the loan of private records which were subsequently lost.

Among the works of Swedish Africanists who have given particular attention to the Congo there are a few I must mention, because I have relied on them for my over-call conception of the culture of the Lower Congo. First of all there are two works by Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo*, published in 1958, and *Churches at the grass-roots*, which appeared in 1968. Both are indispensable for a study of the history of the Church in the Lower Congo. Far from being mere chronological accounts of the expansion of the Church, his works are predominantly characterized by a sociological orientation. By relying on both written and oral sources, Andersson's studies comply with the expressed wish for a combination of these approaches put forward in a number of recent works, such as *The Historian in Tropical Africa* (1964), *The African World* (1965), *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (1968), and Holger Bernt Hansen's *Studiet af religion i Afrika* (1968). Bertil Söderberg's book, *Les instruments de musique au Bas-Congo et dans les régions avoisinantes* (1956), is an ethnomusicological study dealing not only with the various instruments found in the Congo, but equally much with the social function of ritual. It is an important book to anyone interested in the traditional religion of the Lower Congo. In his book, *The Trade of Guinea* (1965), Lars Sundström analyzes the internal as well as the external and international trade of the Congo in the context of a wide cultural framework. He has ordered his material according to various trade goods, rather than regions. Its analysis of the large sector of cultural life which is directly influenced by trade and communications makes this book a valuable contribution to our understanding of the commercial and economic life of the Lower Congo.

The works of these Swedish Africanists are all based on written sources, according to the method traditionally followed in Swedish universities, and from which I have had no reason to depart in this book.

Karl Edvard Laman concludes the list of my Swedish sources. Laman, a missionary in the Congo from 1891 to 1919, is with Nils Westlind and K. J. Pettersson one of the authors cited with greatest frequency in this book. His letters were regularly published in *Missionsförbundet*. Laman brought a large ethnographical collection home from the Congo, now deposited at the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm. His plans for the publication of a large monograph based on his researches, were not realized during his lifetime, and after his death in 1944 almost ten

years went by before Sture Lagercrantz in 1953 published a first volume under the title *The Kongo I*, by Karl Laman. Since then three more volumes have been published by Lagercrantz in *Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia*. All four volumes display the same strength and the same weakness. While indispensable as a detailed ethnographical survey of the Lower Congo, particularly with regard to the Sundi region, they are at the same time difficult to use as a source of scientific research because of their doubtful reliability. It is in many cases impossible to localize Laman's information either in terms of time or of place. It is moreover often impossible to determine what evidence derives from Laman's personal information and what is borrowed from other authors, whom he fails to indicate, as is obviously the case with the theories advanced by Laman on the migrations in the Lower Congo. As a general principle these four volumes must be approached with the greatest wariness. Despite these reservations, they are of great value to future research on the Congo. In the context of this book *The Kongo III* (1962) is of special interest, since it deals at length both with the various kinds of nkissi in existence and with the role of the banganga. Laman's terminology is occasionally somewhat obscure; he makes for instance free use of terms like "ancestor cult", "nkisi cult", "worship of minkisi", and "magic", but we are left to wonder whether what he describes really represented cult and not ritual.

Still, terms like fetish, magic, etc. are freely used by an author like Albert Doutreloux, who published his study *L'Ombre des Fétiches. Société et culture Yombe*, as recently as 1967. Doutreloux goes so far as to characterize the culture of the Yombe, who live next to the Sundi, by the term "mentalité magique". The conceptions underlying his use of these terms are dubious, and if they are to be used at all, it must be done with strong reservations. A recent contribution to the discussion in Sweden is Helmer Ringgren's analysis of these problems in his *Religionens form och funktion* (1968), in which he puts the question whether it is possible to distinguish between religion and magic and whether a change in religious terminology might not be called for.

I have strived for consistency in the spelling of Congolese words, but in cases where linguistic usage has fluctuated I have accepted the spelling adopted by a particular period or author. Some examples are Soyo, which is also spelled Sonyo or Sohio, Nsundi which alternates with Sundi, Pemba which is variously spelled as Mpemba, etc. Nzambi has on the whole been written with the prefix N, even when it has been omitted in the sources. Following modern linguistic usage, the letter r between two vocals, has usually been written as d, so that Kariapemba reads Kadiapemba, and

Matari becomes Matadi. The spelling of easily recognizable words of familiar occurrence in both Portuguese, French, German, and Scandinavian sources has not been standardized. Some examples are words like nganga, ndoki, nkissi or nkisi, muntu, bantu, mundele, mindele, and bakulu or bakuyu. The O-sound is most difficult to reproduce correctly. I have chosen to write Pombo instead of Pumbu or Mpumbu in designating what is now Stanley Pool. The most familiar words in Kikongo have been translated or explained when they occur for the first time, but not in subsequent cases. I have found it impossible to follow the spelling set down in Laman's *Dictionnaire Kikongo-Français*.

Hoping to make this book as readable and useful as possible, I have restricted my use of footnotes to a bare minimum and listed them as well as all bibliographical references at the end of the book. No source references are given in the footnotes for data which can be derived from manuals or textbooks on Africa, while the bibliography lists only those books and articles which are directly relevant to the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo.

PART I
CONGO UNDER THE PORTUGUESE
PADROADO. 1482—1706

Chapter 1. Mvemba Nzinga's Era. 1482–1543

The Portuguese established close and deep-rooted contacts with the so-called Old Congo Kingdom, four centuries prior to Stanley's arrival in the Lower Congo. The Portuguese-Congolese culture confrontation can be seen under three headings, all of which stress Portugal's, or the European's initiative: conquest policy, christian mission and the slave trade. Congolese opposition to this Portuguese overseas policy was to prove successful in only one sphere, namely that of religion.

From a Congolese point of view it would appear that the determining aspect for Portugal, was the slave-trade. Slavery and the slave-trade were, for the Congolese, phenomena from which, for several reasons, they were unable to protect themselves and had difficulty in handling. The principal reason for these difficulties was very likely, that slavery and the slave-trade were traditional and accepted social institutions both in Portugal and Europe, and in the Congo and Africa at the close of the European Middle Ages. Charles Verlinden in his research on the slave-trade between Mediterranean countries during the Middle Ages, has carefully surveyed this European institution.¹ Dieudonné Rinchon, among others, made a study of the European slave-trade in Africa.²

The above mentioned resemblance does not stop at the presence of parallel institutions in Africa and Europe and is not restricted to the distinction between serf and slave, *esclave domestique* and *esclave de traite*, which is often made in both continents.³ The resemblances are apparent on both sides determining the circumstances by which a person shall become a slave: by birth, sale, war or as a result of felony. In both Portugal and the Congo, a slave was treated as other property and was sold, given away, exchanged or inherited. During the Middle Ages, slavery and slave-trade, was hardly an ethical problem for the Church. Verlinden concludes that the Church was interested in one question only "*celle de la foi des esclaves*", that of the faith of slaves.⁴

An important change which occurred towards the end of the fifteenth century, was in the first instance to influence the modern history of the Congo. The change was such, that the slaves, not least those in Portugal and Spain, were to a greater extent recruited from Africa and not as previously from Eastern Europe and Asia Minor.⁵ From the sixteenth century, slavery is closely connected with a new phenomenon, that of colonization: a result of the "conquistadors" so-called "discovery expeditions". From the perspective of culture confrontation, colonization and

the slave-trade were inseparable concepts for those continents connected with each other by the South Atlantic and were for several centuries to dictate conditions of life for Angola and the Congo.

Portugal's overseas policy

In 1400 some hundred slaves were transported from the Canary Islands to the Iberian peninsula⁶ and under Henry the Navigator the slave-trade took on somewhat greater proportions during the first half of the fifteenth century, although development was still slow. After the Portuguese victory in Ceuta 1415, over the Arabs, their muslim enemies, it took approximately twenty years before the conquistadors succeeded in rounding Cape Bojador. Bojador was the last obstacle along Africa's west coast with which shipping had to contend before reaching the mouth of the river Senegal.⁷

In 1441, Antoine Gonçalvez captured two or three Africans from the coastal region, for Prince Henry, so that he could prove to the world, that his assumption that Africa was inhabited south of Cape Bojador was correct. A ship, which had been sent out from Lisbon at the same time and on the same mission, arrived with an additional ten Africans who had been taken prisoner by the two crews during a night attack on a coastal village. In triumph, the prisoners were transported to Lisbon and Prince Henry.

In 1442, gold was shipped for the first time from Africa's west coast to Lisbon and the success which these Portuguese mariners could display, by bringing slaves and gold to Portugal, meant a substantial increase in Portugal's interest for West Africa. Nevertheless, their principal interest was still concentrated in India, where the trade in spices was profitable.

A slave-trade company was established in Lagos (Portugal) and on 8 August 1444, Captain Lanzarote arrived with a cargo of more than two hundred-and-thirty slaves.⁸ This date can be regarded as the beginning of the European slave-trade in Africa.⁹ Prince Henry saw his plans realized, and gradually endeavoured to procure Papal recognition to Portugal's right to the newly discovered areas. According to Pacheco Pereira, Henry thought that these regions must become the common property of all Christian countries, Respublica Christiana, and doubted that they could belong exclusively to Portugal.¹⁰ There was no other international authority at this time than the Pope, and his word had to be taken as law. In the Bull *Rex regum* 1436, Eugene IV answered Henry's request and urged all Christian rulers to support the Portuguese in their struggle

against the Moors (muslims). He added, that “all the lands newly conquered would belong to the King of Portugal”.¹¹

After the promising “discoveries” during the middle of the century, Portugal’s hold on the West Coast strengthened, due to Nicholas V’s bull, *Dum diversas*, 1452, which gave the king the right to make war against the heathens and reduce them to serfdom, if they did not voluntarily convert to Christianity; and the Bull *Romanus pontifex*, which gave the king of Portugal the right to the sea-route to India: the legal right to land and sea, islands and ports.¹² Thereby, Portugal had acquired the monopoly of the lucrative sea-route to India. The “heathen” Africans should be under the Christian and civilizing Portuguese influence.

During the fifteenth century, the missionary idea played an important role as the motive for the overseas policy, besides that of economic interest and the thrill of discovery. The king was not only Supreme Head of State, but also Supreme Head of the Order of Christ. These privileges and duties are called Portugal’s patronage, or the *padroão*. But Papal Bulls were not respected by all. During their expansion eastwards from Senegambia the Portuguese were forced to fight European rivals for thirty years in order to secure their monopoly. They finally succeeded in approximately 1480, Diogo Cão’s era.¹³

The island São Tomé was first sighted about 1470 by Fernão Gomes’ men and due to its strategic position, it was to play a dramatic role for the Congo Culture. In 1469, King Affonso V, had granted Gomes a five year trade monopoly of the Guinea Bay, on the understanding that in return a considerable piece of the coast from Sierra Leone eastwards, was placed under Portuguese rule.¹⁴ Gomes kept his part of the agreement, which was subsequently renewed for a further five years,¹⁵ and naturally he made his fortune due to this trade monopoly.¹⁶

São Tomé became a colony and the population acquired a heterogeneous composition. Those leading the community were Portuguese, in some cases of noble birth, but the majority were exiled Jews, expatriates and exiled Portuguese who were to serve their sentences on the island.¹⁷ Enslaved Africans worked on the newly laid-out plantations. João II’s order that every man should receive a slave-woman led to a quick increase in the population. According to Mgr. Cuvelier the colonizers’ life on the island bore the stamp of libertinism and irresponsibility, while the population was said to be ignorant, superstitious and corrupt.¹⁸

João II, as Knight of the Order of Christ, regarded it his self-evident duty to make provision for the African’s spiritual welfare, i. e. christianize and baptize them. This policy followed that which Henry the Navigator

had given vent to and that which the Papal Bulls had stipulated as the condition for the *padroão*'s privileges. Church building formed an integral part of the task. The first corner-stone in Portuguese expansion in West Africa was Mina, or Elmina, where slaves were exchanged for gold. Just as business needed protection, so did evangelization and therefore in 1482 a fort and a church were built.¹⁹ That it was the Gold Coast Mina which was chosen as a starting point for evangelization, was the consequence of the unity of the overseas policy, where Christianity and trade were held together in both theory and practice. In Mina, thanks to its gold, money was made and it came naturally that a church should be built right there.

The Portuguese desperately needed the fort in order to protect their trade and missionary monopoly from the Spaniards, Flemish, English and French, who also wanted their part of the lucrative traffic, despite all Papal Bulls in Portugal's favour.²⁰ In Mina, the merchants from São Tomé bartered slaves for gold: the more slaves, the more gold. However, a large number of slaves were also needed to work on the island's plantations.

In 1485 São Tomé had been granted the trade monopoly of the Guinea Bay, which was later extended to the Congo-Angola coast.²¹ This monopoly gave the São Tomé colonists an incomparable position of power over the southern waters of the Guinea Bay, especially after 1500 when Fernão de Mello ruled the island.²²

Long before Diogo Cão's men approached the Congo estuary, the fate of the Congo had been determined by Portugal's already powerful position in West Africa and the Guinea Bay.²³ Rome had granted Portugal both the spiritual-cultural and politico-economic monopoly of Africa and the sea-route to India. Portugal in its turn, had given the colony, São Tomé, a free hand in the Guinea Bay. This could lead to one thing only, confrontation in the Congo: European colonization and an African struggle for independence: propagative Christianity against an African concept of community life: Portuguese customs, practice and law against Congolese prescriptive right.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Portugal had become so powerful, that when the Congo was drawn into the European power-game over the seas, the Alexander Bulls were to prove of little significance. Direct negotiations between João II and his neighbours Ferdinand and Elisabeth resulted in the Tordesilhas Treaty of 7 June, 1494, which confirmed the line of demarcation between Spain's and Portugal's hemispheres. This parallel was fixed at three-hundred leagues west of the Cape

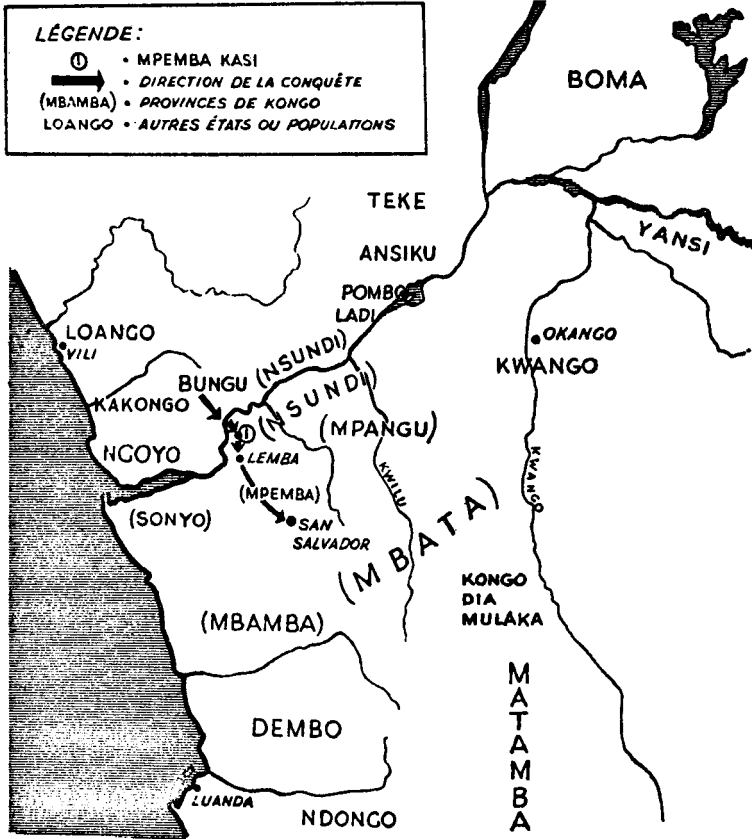
Verde Islands.²⁴ Thereby, Brazil after 1500 came under Portugal's rule and thus was established one of the determining prerequisites for future slave-traffic across the Atlantic.

The Congo Kingdom

It would be desirable to use African and not European terminology when discussing the old Kingdom of Congo, but at this stage it is impossible, as it was referred to by European chroniclers and the Congolese themselves as the "Kingdom". This current terminology developed in Portugal at the time of gradual transition from a feudal community to a monarchy, King, Queen, Crown Prince, Duke, Count, Baron, Marquis etc. The shortcomings and dangers of this terminology can never be sufficiently emphasized when applied to an African community, which thereby can easily be described as a little Portugal in Africa, and this is misleading. Yet, it is not possible to avoid this word.

The latest and most comprehensive attempt to describe the Old Congo Kingdom was made by George Balandier, who well aware of the dangers, quotes Van Wing, who warns us for "deceptive words", la piperie des mots.²⁵ Despite this awareness, Balandier does not entirely succeed in penetrating the "deception" and on this point, his book has been the subject for strong criticism from Jan Vansina.²⁶ Thus, in this study wherever the deceptive words, king or kingdom are used, in a report or commentary, it is with tacit reservation for the European concept, which belongs in Portugal alone and where it was in use before the so-called "Age of Discovery". This I wish to emphasize, so that it is quite clear that before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Congo Kingdom was by no means an imitation of a European monarchy, even if the unity of the Kingdom was such, that the power was to a great extent centralized to Mbanza Kongo.

The Kingdom was quickly subjected to Portuguese influence, especially court ceremonial, and it was later to undergo profound changes. The changes were such that it is very difficult to ascertain how the Kingdom was composed and functioned at the close of the fifteenth century. Vansina allowed himself however, to use the "deceptive" word, in his small but important study of the Congo's origin.²⁷ Contrary to the majority of Congo scholars, he claims that the conquerors must have come from the north and not from the east. The question of northern origin is important for this study as the author will proceed to study the Swedish missions



The Congo origine as illustrated by Vansina 1963.

which worked in Sundi, the northern part of the Kingdom, at the close of the nineteenth century.

Vansina bases his argumentation on the reliable sources from Sundi, namely on Girolamo da Montesarchio, on Bernardo da Gallo and that of the anonymous author of *Historia do Reino do Congo*, Bras Correa. All three had been active in Sundi and spoke Congolese. Bras Correa had grown up in the Congo. He finds further support for his thesis in oral traditions recorded by modern field research workers such as K. E. Laman and E. Andersson, who also had a good command of the Congolese language. To this can be added the direct support of Lopez-Pigafetta, who in 1591 claimed that "Sundi was regarded as the most important of the Congo's provinces" and that Sundi was Ntinu Wene's first conquest.²⁸ In all probability immigration occurred from the north.

The Congo Kingdom had hardly managed to establish itself properly, when Portuguese caravels explored the coast further south of São Tomé. As far as can be judged, the Kingdom was still expanding and continued to spread south-west, when at the beginning of the 1480's it came into touch with the Portuguese conquistadors. Here were two peoples prepared for expansion, who were about to encounter one another.

According to Congolese oral tradition, there should have been only four rulers between the conqueror and founder, Ntinu Wene, and Nzinga Nkuvu who was in power in 1482.²⁹ Ntinu Wene had been accepted by the oppressed or victimized Ambundu people, only after he had received a ritual confirmation of his authority from Nsaku ne Vunda. Ne Vunda was the people's religious leader, the mediator or intermediary between the living and the dead.

Cuvelier's interpretation of the old tradition is that Ntinu Wene contracted an illness through not having taken due consideration to the country's religious tradition. He asked Nsaku ne Vunda for help. Nsaku ne Vunda struck Ntinu Wene with his buffalo tail and the illness was cured. The verb is *wanda nsesa* "to sprinkle with water". The purport of the rite was that the usurper, through his prayer should recognize Nsaku ne Vunda's authority. Nsaku ne Vunda initiated the usurper to the highest political office. This implied recognition by the people, and by the dead members of the clan, *bakulu*, who dwelt underground or in the waters. The rite ensured the country's protection from drought and death.

Ntinu Wene married Nsaku ne Vunda's daughter, the result of which was a peaceful conclusion between conqueror and conquered. Polygamous marriage served the same purpose, to unite one clan after another with the central authority, *Mani Kongo*. It was in this way the *bakongo* are said to have settled in the Lower Congo.

Discussion concerning the extent of the Congo Kingdom is not of vital importance to this study; however, there have been lively discussions on this point and opinion is divided.³⁰ Much points to the fact that as early as 1500 Loango, Kakongo and Ngoyi were in practice independent, despite their linguistic, cultural and hereditary ties with Mbanza Kongo from the time of conquest. In the middle of the seventeenth century Soyo received partial recognition of independence. The following provinces, from Pombo south-west to the Atlantic belonged to the Congo Kingdom proper: Sundi, Mpangu and Mbata whose three main centres were situated along the banks of the Inkissi river; Mpemba, the main town being Mbanza Kongo and finally Mbamba. The Congo's authority can hardly have been said to have extended north of Loango or south of the Kwanza river. The

western bakongo formed a cultural unit which can be regarded as the nucleus of the Congo Kingdom.

1480's — Primary Contact

When Diogo Cão “discovered” the Congo estuary, he erected a stone pillar, *padrão*, to mark the Portuguese conquest. This symbolic act was to prove of significant importance.³¹ Naturally the Congolese could have had little idea of what this pillar meant for the Portuguese. Two years later, when Diogo Cão came into closer contact with the Congo Kingdom, he found its inhabitants less “repulsive and ugly”, than the people along the northern coast and that they were inquisitive and not afraid of the Portuguese.³² They cordially received the Portuguese and trade commenced. These favourable circumstances prompted Diogo Cão to send some generous gifts, from João II, to Mani Kongo in Mbanza Kongo, which was situated inland: A journey of seventeen days on foot and over difficult terrain.³³

Nzinga Nkuvu welcomed the strangers and their gifts and the message from the king in Lisbon, assuring them of the white people's peaceful intentions and charitable disposition. The prospect of a mutually profitable exchange of trade was also referred to in the message. Hitherto, no known source has made it clear that Mani Kongo was aware of the significance of the *padroado*, or the understanding that Portugal had the “right” to start a war with the Congolese in the case that they opposed peaceful Portuguese expansion. The over-all picture given by the Portuguese chroniclers is one of voluntariness and reciprocity and any indication of threat to the Congo cannot at this time be traced.

When Diogo Cão's messenger failed to return from Mbanza Kongo, he took four men on board as hostages and promised, as he set sail, to return the hostages and collect those fellow countrymen whom he had left behind in the capital. According to the chroniclers, the Congolese under the leadership of Nsaku in Lisbon and the Portuguese in Mbanza Kongo received a kindly and respectful reception in both towns. An integral part of João II's plans to christianize the Congo, was the use of persuasion and as far as possible to avoid the use of violence. Consequently in 1487 Diogo Cão set out on his third voyage to the Congo, in command of a fleet equipped with still more expensive presents for Mani Kongo and the hostages, who as promised, were to return home.

The home-coming was a joyful occasion for both Nsaku and his

companions and Nzinga Nkuvu and his people in Soyo and Mpemba. Those who returned wore the clothes of Portuguese noblemen and the onlookers from the shore were amazed, "Mindele miandombe", black whites, is how Cuvelier describes the scene.³⁴ In Mbanza Kongo, Nzinga Nkuvu had arranged a grandiose reception for João II's ambassador, in gratitude for the magnificent presents he had received from Lisbon. In his speech to Nzinga Nkuvu, the ambassador pointed out that it was thanks to the Portuguese who had remained in the Congo, that Nkuvu had come into contact with Christianity. He suggested that Nsaku and one or two others should be sent to Portugal to receive tuition and be baptized. They in their turn could ask João II to send missionaries to the Congo to spread the teachings of Christ. Nzinga Nkuvu consented to this proposal. The centuries of prayers for missionaries for the Congo have their origin in this Portuguese directive to Nzinga Nkuvu. As early as 1924, Weber observed that it could hardly have been a spontaneous request on the part of the Congolese.³⁵ But the King obviously understood what the Portuguese expected of him. When Diogo Cão set sail, Nzinga Nkuvu sent a gift to João II in the form of ivory tusks and hand-woven raffia, to secure, as he believed, the friendship.³⁶

Nsaku, in his capacity as ambassador to Lisbon, requested stonemasons, carpenters and other craftsmen, in order that the Congo could build houses of the same quality as those to be found in Portugal. But his primary request was for priests and all that was needed for correct religious worship, in order that Nzinga Nkuvu and his people might be baptized.³⁷ Cuvelier writes, "It was thus that the chroniclers formulated Nzinga Nkuvu's requests",³⁸ and his mistrust in the chroniclers is most certainly well-founded. It is unlikely that Nzinga Nkuvu, of his own accord, would have put priests and Church requisites before bricklayers and carpenters on his list of requests. Over a two year period, Nsaku and the other Congolese in Lisbon received tuition in the Portuguese language and religion. They were baptized in 1489 and Nsaku — Cacuta as he is referred to by Rui de Pina — received the name Dom Johan da Silva.³⁹ Through this baptism was instituted the Christian habit of replacing the Congolese name with a new name and a new identity, both Christian and Portuguese. Sometimes a Portuguese title such as Dom or Dona was also added. During these two years João II prepared a missionary expedition to visit the Congo in order to comply with Nzinga Nkuvu's requests.

If one may believe the chroniclers, cultural confrontation during the 1480's was, on the surface, characterized by a certain degree of mutual cordiality between Lisbon and Mbanza Kongo. João II stressed the

advantages of friendly trade and the necessity of baptism for Nzinga Nkuvu, and it was evidently unnecessary for him to resort to threats. On the other hand, Portugal's Papal and de facto monopoly of trade and cultural exchanges with the peoples along the sea-route to India, was not mentioned. Neither was any reference made to the slave-trade along the northern coast or the scramble for gold. João II appears to have succeeded in presenting the matter in such a way, that this Christian responsibility was the primary motive for Portugal's interest in the Congo. Four centuries later, the Belgian monarch, Leopold II was to use the same technique in order to launch his Congo enterprise.

If the 1480's as such did not reveal the real point of conflict between Portuguese and Congolese culture, it is worth noticing that the Congolese did not use the expression bantu for the white people, but another, very probably mindele, who as revenants were associated with bakulu. Thus from the first contact the question was posed: Are these creatures really men, Bantu?⁴⁰ The expression molele meaning cloth and which resembles mindele, who wore clothes, also occurs at about this time.⁴¹ God's name "Zambemapongo" was noted at approximately this time and according to Rui de Pina means Senhor do Mundo, Lord of the Earth.⁴² That this has been recorded must be interpreted as an interest for the Congolese culture, even if it was only for purposes of evangelization.

It is difficult to interpret and interesting, that Rui de Pina as early as the primary contact refers to the question of "fetisheer" and "idols". Is it possible that Diogo Cão's men, after a fleeting visit, were able to form an opinion of what they had seen of the Congolese religion?⁴³

1490's — Rapid Changes

Nsaku died from the plague during his return voyage to the Congo in about 1490—1491. When Mani Soyo learned of this news he declared himself willing to become a Christian.⁴⁴ This was a promising start for the Portuguese missionary expedition to the Congo. The aged Mani Soyo requested that he be baptized immediately. Being aged, he was so eager that he did not dare to wait until Mani Kongo had been baptized. On Easter Day 1491, the Mani Soyo and his son were baptized. They received the names Dom Manuel and Dom Antonio respectively.⁴⁵ The name of the Portuguese king was reserved for Mani Kongo; Manuel on the other hand was the name of one of João II's uncles. After the baptism, the leader of the expedition, Rui de Sousa and the missionaries

from St. Eloy (the Order of St. John the Evangelist) arranged a sumptuous feast on board their ship for the newly baptized.

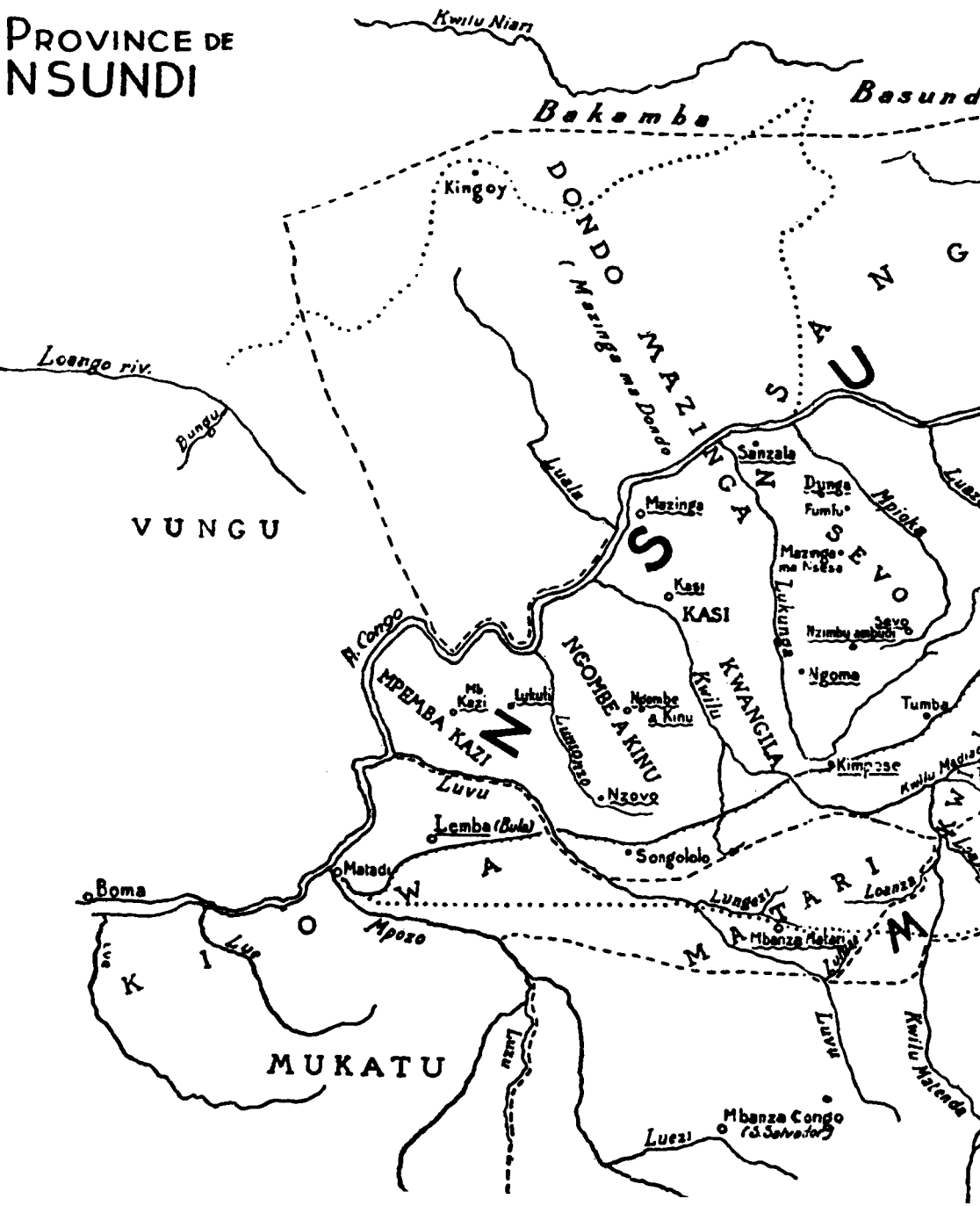
That same evening the newly baptized Dom Manuel asked the priests what he should do for the salvation of his soul. The answer he received touched upon a very delicate point: Do away with all idols (idollos) in the country. According to Catholic belief, one God only shall be worshipped.⁴⁶ The newly baptized old gentlemen appeared to take the missionaries' advice without protesting and ordered that all idols be brought out and burned. This order was executed and the first nkissi-bonfire had been lighted.

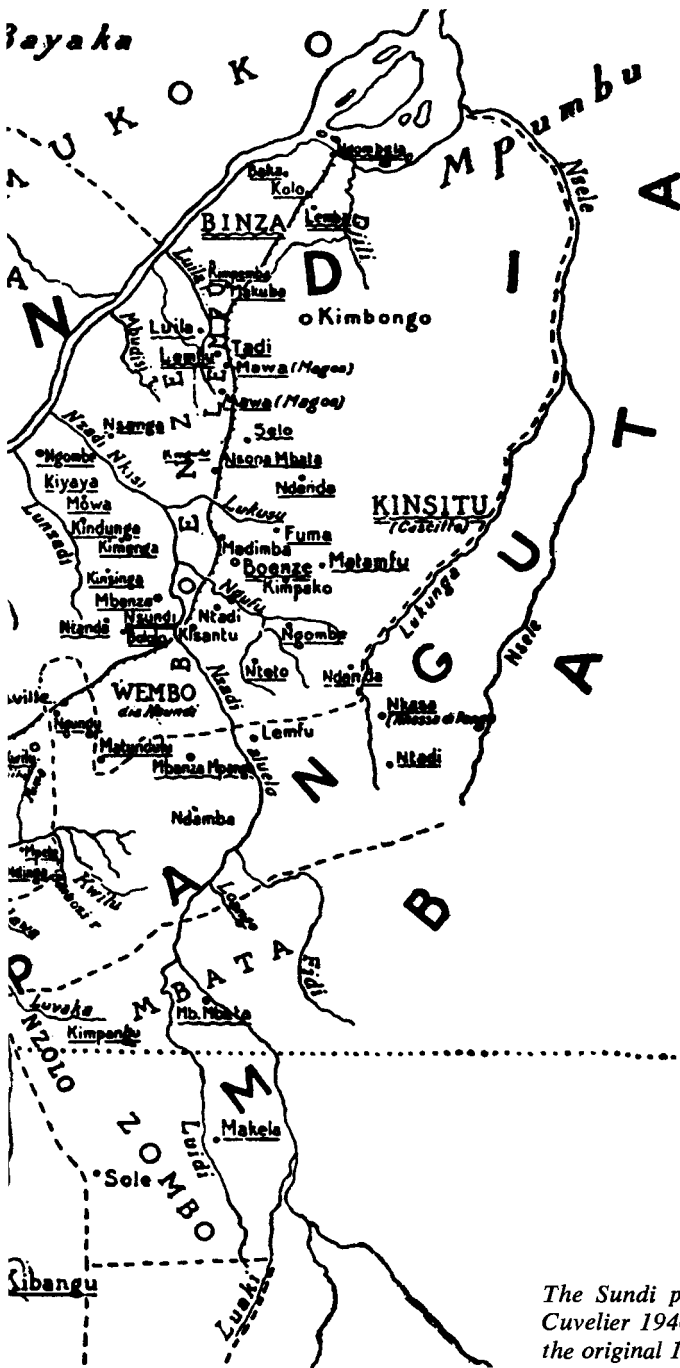
After the baptismal festivities in Soyo, Rui de Sousa took his presents from João II to Mbanza Kongo where he received a hearty welcome.⁴⁷ Mani Kongo was also anxious to be baptized without delay and the ceremony took place as soon as a simple church had been erected. Nzinga Nkuvu was ceremoniously and magnificently baptized on 3 May, 1491, a month after Mani Soyo.⁴⁸ Nzinga Nkuvu received the name João, after his colleague in Lisbon. Six other leading personalities were baptized and christened and received the Portuguese names, Dom Francesco, Dom Gonçalo, Dom Jorge, Dom Lopo, Dom Diego and Dom Rodrigo, but there is no mention of any women being baptized. The people in Mbanza Kongo were also urged to burn their idols and the second nkissi-bonfire was lighted in the presence of Nzinga Nkuvu. Simultaneously with this attack on one of the principles for the Congolese culture, a new element was introduced, through the building of a church in the capital.⁴⁹ A large richly adorned church might probably have compensated part of the loss of nkissi and biteke in the eyes of the Congolese.

According to the chroniclers, the cross and the crucifix were introduced in another way. Rui de Pina and Garcia de Resende relate, that just after Nzinga Nkuvu's baptism, two of the newly baptized, Dom Jorge and Dom Diego had a similar dream in which the Virgin Mary was the focal point.⁵⁰ Dreams in connexion with conversion and the call to serve in a special ministry were common in Africa throughout the centuries, and the dream was often interpreted as a message from the ancestors.⁵¹ Mgr. Cuvelier maintains that these two dreams were of special importance for the Congo in 1491.⁵²

The two men who experienced these dreams were both Nsaku (ne Vunda or Kilau). They were important people who were held in high esteem. According to Cuvelier they represented the ancestors. The beautiful woman who appeared in the dream told the baptized men that they were now invincible and she urged the King to make his entire

PROVINCE DE NSUNDI





LÉGENDE :

SOYO *province*
 KASI *district*
 Kasi *village*

----- *frontières de provinces et districts.*
 *frontières*
 ~~~~~ *villages visités par le P. M. de Montesarchon et les autres*  
 ——— *villages visités par L. de Collanissette et Marcelino d'Atri (1951-1952)*

Echelle 2.000 000  
 1cm = 20km.

The Sudi province as illustrated by Cuvelier 1946. In this enlargement of the original 1 cm=14 kms.

Kingdom Christian. It is said that the next morning Dom Diego found a remarkable stone on the ground, in the form of a cross, resembling that which he had seen a missionary use at the baptism. The cross was regarded as a sign from heaven and was taken in procession to the Church.

There is no reason to doubt that the two Nsaku had similar dreams, but it is possible that it was the chroniclers who identified the very young and beautiful woman as the Virgin Mary. The promise of protection from the enemy and the appeal that the Kingdom should be made Christian can be expressions for both an African and European line of thought.

Another month was to lapse before Nzinga Nkuvu's consort was baptized. She received the name Leonor after João II's Queen and his eldest son Mvemba Nzinga received the name Afonso, after João II's son.<sup>53</sup> Afonso was the most usual royal name in the first Portuguese dynasty and among others to have this name, was the very first king of Portugal.<sup>54</sup> In Sundi the same pattern was repeated as in Soyo and Mpemba: all idols should be brought out and burned.<sup>55</sup>

In connexion with baptism and conversion to Christianity, the Congolese had not only to desist from their nkissi, but also their wives; they were allowed only one wife. Polygamy was nullified.<sup>56</sup> Polygyny, one of society's established institutions and upon which regional and national unity was to a certain extent dependent, was to be dissolved. It was considered an honour to be married to a chief and the women who were repudiated from the dissolved marriages were soon to demonstrate their attitude to the new fangled idea which this kind of divorce constituted.

After the baptism Nzinga Nkuvu was presented with "a Bandeira de Christus", The Order of Christ's Banner of the Cross.<sup>57</sup> This gift was connected with the promise of Portuguese military help against Nzinga Nkuvu's enemies.

One notices that polygyny, which was a unifying institution, was replaced by the missionaries with weapons and outward splendour in Mbanza Kongo and that nkissi and biteke were replaced with richly adorned churches, crucifixes and banners of the Cross. According to the chroniclers all this received divine sanction through the experience of dreams. The nucleus of this process is the baptism which is enveloped in pomp and splendour. Here occurs de-Africanization and Portugalization. To be among the first baptized was to become a special honour, and was emphasized by an honorary title "Ntete ndia mungwua muna Kongo", I was the first in the Congo to eat salt.<sup>58</sup> It is worth noticing that here the Congolese emphasize not the use of water but that of salt in the Catholic

baptismal rite and they call the entire act of baptism, *dia mungwua*, to eat salt.<sup>59</sup>

Interesting information, taken from *Memoria*, a source from the 1780's, from Sundi, on a remarkable incident following the first baptism, is noted by Mgr Cuvelier.<sup>60</sup> In the *Memoria* it is stated that after the baptism the Africans spoke a foreign language, "they all spoke Portuguese and Latin".<sup>61</sup> Mgr Cuvelier appears inclined to attribute this information from a three hundred year old oral tradition, to a figment of the imagination. Yet one can ask oneself if there is not some truth in the information to be found in the *Memoria* and that this can contain a glimpse of the reality of the 1490's. Even if the languages "Portuguese and Latin" can be traced to a later interpretation this need not however be the case.

It is however, difficult to totally disregard the presence of glossolalia in Sundi during the 1490's. Glossolalia is frequently referred to in the New Testament, in connexion with conversion and baptism and was classed among the so-called "spirituals gifts", the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Glossolalia can be of two kinds; on the one hand that in a state of ecstasy a foreign language is spoken or on the other hand, that what is said is unintelligible. This is what could have taken place in Sundi. That something very remarkable occurred is more than likely, especially as the tradition preserved this information for three centuries.<sup>62</sup>

At the beginning of the 1490's the Portuguese could record further rapid and successful achievements. But George Balandier refers to this kind of conversion as "un faux mariage" — a bogus marriage.<sup>63</sup> This description is quite reasonable. The Portuguese seem to have aimed at securing the Congo's central power, the people's foremost leaders, as quickly as possible and it was therefore that the Court was the first to be subjected to Portuguese influence. Nevertheless the transition to Christianity was soon to present some difficulties. The peripheral regions were quick to react.

On the same day that the "Queen" and "Crown Prince" were baptized a war alarm went out in Mbanza Kongo. A revolt against Nzinga Nkuvu had broken out. Consequently the Portuguese were immediately forced to fulfil their promise of military help on behalf of João II. Rui de Sousa stepped in on the side of Nzinga Nkuvu and after violent battles their united forces, under the banner of the Cross, effectively defeated the rebels.<sup>64</sup> After this delay Rui de Sousa was able to set sail in order to continue his search for what was called Priest John's empire and the sea-route to India.

Of course there can be many explanations for this war, even outside

the sphere of Portuguese-Congolese confrontation, but one of them is that the war can be seen as a reaction against the disturbance of the balance of power within the community, due to different forms of favouritism shown to Mbanza Kongo at the expense of other regions.

Perhaps the war should be considered as a protest against the entry of Christianity, which resulted in nkissi-bonfires and dissolved marriages. The burning of nkissi and dissolved marriages must have been obvious warnings for those who wished to remain faithful to their ancestors. On the one hand Mani Kongo's position was strengthened by the Portuguese contribution of new commodities, weapons, techniques and institutions, but on the other hand his position was weakened through his dissolved marriages with women from different clans and regions. Communication with the ancestors was thereby broken down. This was a game of power.

The dreams experienced by Dom Jorge and Dom Diego in May 1491 drew attention to the power, ngolo: "Ensure that Your kingdom be Christian. Thereby Your power will be strengthened", translated Cuvelier.<sup>65</sup> Balandier interprets this period as one when Christianity was accepted as a source of power, "source de ngolo, puissance".<sup>66</sup> It can be said that Christianity as ngolo upset the balance within the Kingdom. Inferior nkissi were burned and replaced with the superior banner of the Cross and crucifix.

Mbanza Kongo had received further reinforcements through the mere presence and knowledge of mindele. Mindele steps out of the Big Water and, just as bakulu, has a white skin. Thereby is formed the basis for the supposition that mindele and bakulu were of the same kin. Mindele brought knowledge and power, attributes which bakongo had above all accorded their ancestors, and thereafter the aged. The white people could be messengers from the ancestors and perhaps they would forebode their return and a better world. Balandier concludes, "This monstrous misunderstanding formed the basis for the first attempts to christianize the people".<sup>67</sup> Despite Balandier's generalization, his analysis captures at least one of the explanations for the unreserved manner in which the Congolese welcomed the white people. However 1491, the year of the rebellion, the year of stately baptisms, foreboded a more serious and profound confrontation between Congolese and Portuguese culture.

By the following year the old religion had already begun to regain part of its former position. Rui de Sousa had returned to Lisbon and had left behind only a few priests in Mbanza Kongo, who without the expedition's leader were endowed with little gleaming power and splendour. Two of

the priests remained in Mbanza Kongo and the other two set out for Sundi.<sup>68</sup>

Nzinga Nkuvu noticed how the nkissi-bonfires and divorces, in the name of the Church, had caused nervousness in the country. The people reverted to their nkissi in order to protect themselves from all evil. This reaction was headed by the King's son, Mpanzu aNzinga, together with Nzinga Nkuvu's repudiated wives and banganga.<sup>69</sup> The battle against these new-fangled ideas was expressed in the word "fu kia nsi", this is the custom of the country. Allow us to preserve our customs. Let us revert to them.<sup>70</sup> This was the "traditionalist's" slogan.<sup>71</sup> According to custom, banganga's principal task was to maintain harmony within the community and to ensure that the old traditions were respected by the people. Banganga's influence increased.

The struggle between the "traditionalists" and the "modernists" expressed itself in that the latter's leader, Mvemba Nzinga in Sundi, was accused of being ndoki, he who is thought to be responsible for all evil within the community. Addressed to him was the cry "fwa bandoki", death to bandoki, or according to Cuvelier's translation "mort aux sorciers".<sup>72</sup> This cry was a severe warning for Mvemba Nzinga, as according to the country's custom, a ndoki should die. "Nsi ifwidi", said the traditionalists: "The country is dead". Had not Ntinu Wene been sprinkled with water by Nsaku ne Vunda, in order that this danger might be avoided?

The situation became precarious for the Christians in Mbanza Kongo in 1495. The missionaries, together with the foremost in the community, namely those who had been baptized, were forced to flee northwards to Sundi, which was Mvemba Nzinga's territory. The focal point for Christian influence was thereby transferred from Mpemba to Sundi and a church was built in Mbanza Sundi. Despite all the traits of "légende dorée", Mvemba Nzinga must be said to have been one of the leading personalities in this first missionary enterprise to Sundi.<sup>73</sup> Dona Leonor alone, stood by her husband in Mbanza Kongo.

The fraternal conflict between Mpanzu aNzinga, guardian of the traditions and Mvemba Nzinga, was considerably accentuated during Nzinga Nkuvu's last years. The father had reverted to his wives and once again followed banganga. Contrary to expectation, his final wish, from his deathbed, was that Mvemba Nzinga, and not Mpanzu aNzinga, should be his successor. However, this did not settle the matter of the succession to the throne. After their father's death, the two brothers came to blows

in Mbanza Kongo in the struggle for power.<sup>74</sup> Mvemba Nzinga's army was victorious and Mpanzu aNzinga slain.<sup>75</sup> With the termination of this struggle in 1506, a new phase in culture confrontation in the Lower Congo commenced. The King of the Kingdom was known to be Christian and he was to lead the people for almost forty years.

## Mvemba Nzinga's struggle against banganga

From start to finish Mvemba Nzinga's period of reign was characterized by conflict in one field or another. He fought for Christianity's breakthrough in the country, for his people against the slave-traders from São Tomé and for his people's right to self-determination in relation to Portugal. Mvemba Nzinga's partial success in consolidating his Kingdom, caused São Tomé and Portugal to put great pressure on him, which culminated in 1540 in a Portuguese attempt on his life during a Church service. Portuguese chroniclers, scholars and Congolese oral tradition are unanimous on one point: Afonso Mvemba Nzinga was the greatest of the Congo's kings. It is not however, for this reason that considerable attention is paid to him in this study, but that it can be said that the entire history of the Congo was determined during his reign.

After the victory over his brother, Mvemba Nzinga could, by customary law, have seen to it that Mpanzu's general commander, a Nsaku ne Vunda, was executed. This he probably did not dare to do and instead he pardoned the Nsaku, who was baptized and received the name Pedro. The Capuchin missionary, Merolla, says that Nsaku was to be condemned to death if he did not turn Christian, and "chose rather to be baptized than to die a martyr to his former opinion".<sup>76</sup> Mvemba Nzinga went a step further and gave Nsaku ne Vunda an honorary task. This task corresponded to the task which a Nsaku ne Vunda fulfilled, as the people's supreme religious leader. A role which the Mani Kongo did not usually play.<sup>77</sup> In the Lower Congo Nsaku ne Vunda belonged to an older generation than bakongo, and it was he who initiated the conqueror Ntinu Wene to the office of political ruler, through striking him with a buffalo tail and sprinkling him with water. The newly baptized Nsaku ne Vunda was accorded the task of supervising the building of churches and the responsibility for the baptismal water.<sup>78</sup>

The assignment of these official duties to Nsaku ne Vunda, connected Mvemba Nzinga to the forefather's tradition, while at the same time guiding it in a new direction. Nsaku ne Vunda, or Pedro, united within

himself what would appear to be, two contradictory roles: according to African religion he was his forefather's guardian of the Holy water and in the Christian Church he guarded the baptismal water. In both contexts the water had a profound symbolic importance for life. Mvemba Nzinga's strategy seems to have been successful as the uneasiness within the country died out.

Mvemba Nzinga's choice of a *Nsaku ne Vunda* for a Christian office, even if the practical implications of this are not clear, illustrates that he regarded the Congolese equally worthy of official Christian positions, as Europeans, but above all it reveals how *bakongo* could conceive Christianity, even in the case that it opposed *banganga*.

Christianity was regarded as a strengthening element in the life of the people and not as a religion, which in every respect excluded tradition. Balandier emphasizes this aspect in his interpretation of culture confrontation in the Congo.<sup>79</sup> To the extent that Christianity was now accepted, it ought to have been regarded as inclusive rather than exclusive.

Mvemba Nzinga was soon to run into trouble with the Portuguese. Two priests had prayed for Mvemba Nzinga in his struggle for power in Mbanza Kongo and after the victory they decided to return to Portugal. Very fittingly, Gonsalve Rodrigues (Gonçalo Royz), who had come from Elmina, arrived in the Congo in 1506.<sup>80</sup> Under false pretences, he said he was to return the missionaries to Lisbon on behalf of King Manuel.<sup>81</sup> Mvemba Nzinga was delighted at the possibility of becoming acquainted with the new king in Lisbon and sent him presents in the form of copper bracelets, *manilhas* and slaves.<sup>82</sup> He also despatched similar presents to the leader of the São Tomé colony and requested priests to preach the Gospel in the Congo. From Fernão de Mello he made a further request for a cannon and a musket, with which to set fire to the *nkissi*-houses and defeat the opponents of Christianity. Mvemba Nzinga could at that time, however, have little idea that he was dealing with unscrupulous scoundrels, who had little interest in the "Holy Catholic Faith".

Gonsalve Rodriguez loaded the expensive gifts and took with him the two missionaries, one of whom was to die during the return voyage. When sickness broke out on board, all of those who were ill were put ashore on a deserted coast and abandoned, while the Captain impounded their possessions. The slave-women's infants he found useless and threw them overboard: he also threw a slave into the sea alive. On an uninhabited coast he left a sailor, a slave, a released prisoner and a young boy, to their fate. This was first disclosed, several years later on São Tomé, 1511—1512, during an enquiry into the Captain's proceedings.<sup>83</sup> All the



valuable gifts, which were meant for King Manuel had been kept by Gonsalve Rodriguez for his own use, and the ship was virtually empty when it arrived in Lisbon.

Despite several such experiences of Portuguese ruthlessness towards the Congo, Mvemba Nzinga did not give up hope of establishing good relationships between Europeans and Africans. He had gone so far as to send slaves to Fernão de Mello as advance payment for requested services and wares. But Fernão de Mello retained Mvemba Nzinga's gifts without reimbursing him. According to Weber, he could not sell cannons and muskets to Mani Kongo for two reasons. Firstly because the Pope had forbidden the export of weapons to infidels and secondly that in the hands of the Congolese, weapons would be a danger to the Portuguese.<sup>84</sup> It was possible that certain doubts might prevail in European circles, as to whether Mvemba Nzinga was really Christian and if he really intended to use the weapons in the struggle against so-called paganism.

According to his own report of 5 October, 1514, Mvemba Nzinga decided to burn all "idollos", without outside help and propagate the belief in Jesus Christ throughout the country.<sup>85</sup> The people vigorously opposed this burning and Mvemba Nzinga came close to being burned at the stake by embittered fellow-countrymen.

This is the first time one notices a reaction to nkissi-bonfires, which during the Capuchin missions heyday in the Congo, was to be repeated time and time again. The people threatened to kill those who violated their biteke and minkissi. On this particular point the struggle was bitter from the start and continued in the same way some four-hundred years later.

Simultaneously as Mvemba Nzinga conducted a vigorous struggle against banganga, nkissi and their doings, he replaced nkissi with the crucifix, which he formally presented to the chiefs.<sup>86</sup> Mvemba Nzinga, it would appear, argued that just as nkissi was replaced by a crucifix, so should modern knowledge succeed the old wisdom and to attain this renewal, missionaries and teachers were required. Once again he requested missionaries from Portugal and in 1508, both missionaries and craftsmen were sent out to the Congo.<sup>87</sup>

On their arrival, Mvemba Nzinga should have preached a sermon, which he outlines in his Carta, 5 October 1514.<sup>88</sup> Both Weber and Couvelier translated this sermon to German, Flemish and French respectively and Weber regards the sermon explicitly as an example of missionary preaching during that era.<sup>89</sup> Even if Mvemba Nzinga did preach a sermon of this substance, which is quite possible, there is however,

nothing particular in its content which can eliminate the possibility that a Portuguese missionary could have preached the sermon in exactly the same way. It gives the impression of not being particularly African.

“Brethren, you shall know that the entire faith which we hitherto embrace is but illusion (famtasma) and wind, but the true faith, is faith in our Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth, as he created our father Adam and Eve and put them in a paradise on earth and forbade them to eat a certain apple which was to be found there. Our mother Eve was tempted by the devil to eat and infringe God’s commandment; she sinned. Afterwards she made Adam commit the same sin and for this reason we are all condemned. Now when we see that they, by having trespassed against one commandment be lost, how lost are we who have sinned tenfold?

Hence, you can understand how merciful is our God and when he saw how our ruin was occasioned by one women, he wanted to deliver us through another, who is Virgem gloryosa nosa Senhora and through her precious womb he sent his beloved son to become a human being, in order that He might redeem and save us. He took upon Himself death and suffering in order to deliver us and He sent twelve apostels to preach and teach His holy faith to the whole world. Those who believe shall be delivered and gain the Holy Kingdom.

Nevertheless, up until now it has been impossible for us to know Him. But brethren, now he has shown the way for us and for our salvation. Rejoice and become Christian and learn that which belongs to faith. Follow the example of those who are His servants, who observe complete chastity and live in great severity, who fast and conduct a very Holy life. As regards stone and wood, which you worship, Our Lord God has given us these stones to build houses and the wood to make fire.”<sup>90</sup>

Later in his Carta, Mvemba Nzinga reports that, as a result of this sermon an innumerable number of men and women converted and became Christian. This short sermon would appear to be a parallel to both St. Peter’s Pentecostal sermon and the teachings of St. Paul in the New Testament.

If this is a typical missionary sermon, as claimed by Weber, it more than probably reflects just as much of the teaching Mvemba Nzinga had received from the missionaries as what he had read for himself. Brasio claims that Mvemba Nzinga read at least three well-known books in Portuguese, namely the Vida de Christi, the Evangelhos and the Vidas dos Santos.<sup>91</sup>

The corner-stones of this concise salvation story are composed of the

creation, the fall of man, the incarnation, the reconciliation, the justification and the missionary command. The sermon concludes in a similar way to St. Paul's Aeropagus speech, with an appeal for conversion followed by an exhortion; the practical instruction to build houses of stone instead of worshipping stone images, established a connexion with the arrival of stonemasons and craftsmen. Further, it is worth noticing that the Devil is mentioned in the biblical analysis and not in connexion with "wood and stone". Certainly, it is implied that the people in some way worship "wood and stone" but it is not argued that they therefore worship the Devil. It is important, in view of later discussion, to observe whether the Congolese ever had a dualistic conception of God, where God and the Devil stand opposite one another.

1509 is the starting point for the European education system in the history of the Congo. From St. Eloy, Portugal, about a dozen missionaries arrived, together with eight stonemasons from São Tomé. Mvemba Nzinga should have built a large boarding-school to cater for four hundred pupils and with homes for the missionaries who were to teach at the school.<sup>92</sup> But five of the eight stonemasons returned to São Tomé without even beginning to work. They were summoned home on the pretext that Fernão de Mello had greater use for them on his island. The other three began to build a house which was never completed. Despite this passive opposition, Mvemba Nzinga took this building project into his own hands and saw to it that the pupils, nearly all of whom belonged to the royal clan or "court", participated in the building in order that they might receive training in a useful skill.

The following year further missionaries arrived and this reinforcement made it possible to begin teaching in the school. After a few years there were over a thousand pupils in the schools, both boys and girls, writes Rui de Aguiar from the Congo in 1516.<sup>93</sup> One can possibly suspect Rui de Aguiar for withholding many of the difficulties which must have arisen and presenting instead a rather flattering picture of the school project. He mentions it in the same breath, as he draws an exquisite picture of Mvemba Nzinga as apostle and missionary. It is true however, that Mvemba Nzinga put great emphasis on the school project and that it had established itself. It is also true that girls as well as boys were accepted as pupils, that they learned to read and write, were taught the Portuguese language and the Christian faith.

During Mvemba Nzinga's first year of office the way was paved for the conception that Christianity and literary learning were related, just as Christianity and technology. At an early stage, the ability to read and

write became a sign that one was Christian. For Mvemba Nzinga this school work filled another and no less important function.<sup>94</sup> It was necessary for him to form his own elite, which could administer the country and thereby strengthen his position. This group would make possible a more independent position against the alien power Mputu. Among other things he wanted a Congolese secretary, as he could not rely on the Portuguese.<sup>95</sup>

## Mvemba Nzinga before Sao Tomé, Lisbon and Rome

In his Carta of 1514, Mvemba Nzinga declares himself satisfied with only a few of the missionaries. He was grateful to those who had made a contribution to the Congo's welfare, but the others had given him cause for great anxiety and profound disappointment.

The missionaries were not in agreement among themselves and this friction threatened the entire schoolwork. Half of them demanded more money than was reasonable for their up-keep. Mvemba Nzinga had taken over some of the duties, which according to the Portuguese patronage were the responsibility of the king of Portugal. Mvemba Nzinga now had the responsibility for the up-keep of Christian priests. They used their money to finance trade, even slave-trading and this irritated Mvemba Nzinga. One of them, Pero Fernandez roused the people's resentment through the way in which he enjoyed himself with Congolese women. Fernão de Mello continued to plunder Mvemba Nzinga's gift cargoes to Manuel, even though he also received manilhas and slaves from Mvemba Nzinga.

A Portuguese teacher, Rui de Rego, broke an explicit promise which he had made to Mvemba Nzinga to respect the time of fast. He arranged a feast and publicly invited people to come and partake of a newly slaughtered ox. Rui de Rego's apparent contempt for Church order, caused the people to complain that the rules of the Catholic faith were harder on the Congolese than on the Portuguese, and they considered this unjust.

A man by the name of Esteuam da Rocha arrived in the Congo with his own boat, and passed himself off as one of King Manuel's friends. He offered to transport gifts and travellers to Lisbon. Mvemba Nzinga trusted him and six-hundred manilhas, a number of slaves, together with some exotic animals were loaded aboard. When the loading was completed and the passengers on board, da Rocha lifted the anchor, forcing the passengers to leave the vessel and he set sail with a rich booty. Mvemba Nzinga

was utterly cheated. The majority of the Portuguese had little respect for the man they called the King of the Congo and behaved as it suited them. This incorrigible state of affairs caused Mvemba Nzinga to turn to both Lisbon and Rome in order to secure the establishment of a judicial system for the Portuguese living in the Congo.<sup>1</sup>

In view of Mvemba Nzinga's detailed accusation, Manuel decided to appoint an ambassador to Mbanza Kongo in order, as he put it, to restrict the actions of the swindlers and schemers from São Tomé and to prevent a complete breakdown in the amicable relations between Lisbon and Mbanza Kongo.<sup>2</sup>

This highly trusted fidalgo, Simão da Silva of Lisbon, received as ambassador instructions — a regimento — which clearly expressed Manuel's official and unofficial intentions in the Congo.<sup>3</sup> The ambassador should show respect for Mvemba Nzinga and should act only as adviser and organizer; not as governor. The Congo could be conquered by peaceful means on the basis of Portugal's cultural and trade monopoly and there was no need to resort to violence. A number of gifts were despatched to Mvemba Nzinga which could not be compared with the valuable presents Mvemba Nzinga used to send to Lisbon.<sup>4</sup>

To aid the country's re-building work, stonemasons, carpenters and other craftsmen were sent out, together with animals, monks and secular priests. These were all intended for the building of Europeanstyle churches and palaces in Mbanza Kongo. Gold and silver crosses, crucifixes, pictures of saints, chalices, bells and banners etc, were sent for Church use. These preparations would thoroughly portugalize the way of life in the Congo.

As early as 1924, Weber emphasizes the value of this regimento as a source. It was for the private use of Simão da Silva and was not intended for Mvemba Nzinga, into whose hands it eventually arrived. It was for the ambassadors only and should have been kept a secret.<sup>5</sup> It consequently reveals the genuine intentions behind King Manuel's Congo policy.<sup>6</sup>

By different means the São Tomé colony succeeded in sabotaging this convoy of five vessels. Only two were to reach the Congo, one of which had been pillaged on São Tomé. Furthermore Fernão de Mello had seriously insulted one of the Congolese who was returning home after a year's study in St. Eloy. He was called a dog — a pagan dog. This type of insult was at that time already regarded as serious and was forbidden by the Ordenações.<sup>7</sup> The people of São Tomé were quite aware that a judicial system in the Congo, even for Europeans, would drastically reduce their possibilities for pillaging.

When Simão da Silva arrived in the Congo, the above mentioned Rui de Rego succeeded in slandering Mvemba Nzinga to such an extent that Simão de Silva was doubtful about visiting this King in Mbanza Kongo.<sup>8</sup> Other information however convinced him that he should travel, but he died before arriving in Mbanza Kongo. A successor was appointed, despite opposition from Fernão de Mello's men, who claimed that King Manuel's representatvie in the Congo opposed the trade privileges which his predecessor, João II had granted São Tomé. Fernão de Mello's trading station in the Congo might suffer.

The establishment of this embassy in 1512 introduced a period of intensive struggle for power between King Manuel's representatives and Fernão de Mello's people. The object of this struggle was the defenceless Congo.

### *The Regimento, 1512*

The Regimento, 1512, elucidates more fully than any other document Portugal's intention with regard to its foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> A later Regimento from 1520 is also interesting in this context but primarily concerns Angola.<sup>10</sup> The Portuguese scholar, da Silva Rego has analysed the Regimento of 1512 and put it into its political context.<sup>11</sup> Da Silva Rego indicates that the Portuguese representative's main task — Da Silva means that he was not ambassador — was to instruct Mvemba Nzinga in Christian statesmanship. "His chief concern was to help D. Afonso to maintain himself within the *Respublica Christiana*. The regimento took it for granted, that D. Afonso would always obey Simon da Silva's suggestions, but no reasons are given for such conjectures. Christianity was to be the substructure on which the Portuguese-Congo alliance was to be built."<sup>12</sup>

It is clear that the Congo, in order to belong to *Respublica Christiana* was considered in need of reorganization, at least with regard to its administrative machine, so that it fitted the requirements of a Christian state — in this case Portugal. On the one hand this can be seen as an attempt to portugalize the Congo, but on the other hand it can be interpreted as an expression of respect for the Congo, in that the Portuguese acknowledged Mvemba Nzinga's profession of faith and were to show him the consequences this implied. The Congo was accepted as a Christian state within the great community and thereby followed special demands.

In his instructions concerning the Portuguese nobility, da Silva Rego states that the regimento is very detailed "as it was going to be copied in Africa. These instructions were most important, as nobility was then

the framework of European society".<sup>13</sup> Great emphasis was placed on the introduction of the Portuguese administration system, titles and heraldic weapons. The Court was to function in the same way as in Portugal, but with Congolese "noblemen".<sup>14</sup> After 1512, the Congo can be said to have deserved the European word "kingdom", but not previous to this date.

Simão da Silva should also instruct Mvemba Nzinga in the *Ordenações do Reino*, which was Portugal's common law at that time. The *Ordenações* should form the base of the Congo's judicial system. They bore the stamp of Canon and Roman law.<sup>15</sup> This naturally did not suit the Congo and Mvemba Nzinga found the laws severe. They were not applicable to his country, but must be modified.<sup>16</sup> If one was to judge by them, one would not have time for anything else than to punish people for breaking the law, said Mvemba Nzinga. He posed the following question to Balthasar Castro, and by doing so made it clear that he found the Portuguese laws absurd: "Castro, which punishment is given in Portugal to the man who puts his foot on the ground?" But according to the regimento, Portuguese law should be successively introduced into the Congo "in order to avoid any social convulsions".<sup>18</sup>

Both Weber and Cuvelier assessed this regimento and the *Ordenações* as unacceptable to Mvemba Nzinga, as it would deprive him of his most important function; that of Supreme Judge in the Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> At the same time Mgr Cuvelier, maintains that King Manuel did not see this portugalization of the Congolese judicial system as a threat to the Congo's independence. Da Silva Rego takes this interpretation a step further: "The Congo was fully recognized as an independent kingdom, no political ties whatsoever binding it to Portugal".<sup>20</sup>

These scholars are well aware of the implications of the *padroão*; that Portugal alone might establish contact with the Congo. It is however, perfectly clear that Mvemba Nzinga regarded both the Regimento and the *Ordenações* as a danger to his Kingdom. These laws went further than he could possibly have anticipated when he requested help to organize the army and the judicial system.<sup>21</sup> Mvemba Nzinga held his own with the Portuguese on this point and maintained that the new laws must be adapted to the Congo's own laws, by which he always judged.<sup>22</sup>

The foremost reason for Mvemba Nzinga's request for Portuguese help to organize the army and establish a judicial system, had been the ruthless behaviour of the Portuguese in the Congo. The changing of laws for *his* people was a secondary question. But contrary to Mvemba Nzinga's request, the regimento and the *Ordenações* gave priority to the opposite questions. The regimento however, put more emphasis on the conduct of

the Portuguese in a foreign country, and those who did not behave themselves were to be sent home to Portugal. On this point Manuel complied with Mvemba Nzinga's request. But there was no sign of improvement in the discipline among the Portuguese after 1512: on the contrary. Neither is there any reference in the source material to any malefactor definitely being made to leave the country. Mvemba Nzinga's powers of legal jurisdiction were limited to his own people.

Mgr Cuvelier, 1946, assesses this phase in the Congo's history as one of positive friendliness towards Portugal and he thinks that King Manuel's assurances are earnestly meant. He claims that the regimento does not give expression to a power policy: "In this document, it is not a question of occupation or conquest of the Congo".<sup>23</sup> In 1959, Da Silva Rego uses the same words to describe the same situation: "There was not a single word about any military action or occupation".<sup>24</sup> On the basis of the regimento, Cuvelier broadens the perspective and formulates a general opinion. The *padrão* which João II had erected at the mouth of the Congo estuary were neither "un signe de prise de possession" nor "un symbole de conquête".<sup>25</sup> On this point, Cuvelier's interpretation is by no means convincing. On the contrary, it was probable that Portugal, due to the power of the patronage and her own actual powerful position, endeavoured by political means to strengthen her already established monopoly over Congolese trade and evangelisation, through adding a third factor: legislation. If the *padrão* is to be seen as a symbol, it must be seen as a symbol for the *padroão*: the sole right of Portugal.

If the Congo did not voluntarily open itself for trade and evangelisation, Portugal, according to the *padroão*, could use weapons against the "pagans" and even reduce them to serfdom.<sup>26</sup> Neither Nzinga Nkuvu nor Mvemba Nzinga appear to have been aware of the existence of the *padroão* and thereby unaware of Portugal's right to their own African country. The regimento, 1512, also reveals that Manuel was impelled by covetousness which he tried to conceal. Weber makes ironical comments on this point.<sup>27</sup> It is true that Manuel claimed that his foremost wish was to serve the Holy Catholic faith, but this was costly. Simão da Silva, in a subtle way, should let it be known to Mvemba Nzinga that ivory and slaves would be appreciated in Lisbon. "As for ivory Simão da Silva was to be very frank", comments da Silva Rego, "as for slaves, he was to be very careful".<sup>28</sup> It should not be apparent that King Manuel was interested in the slave-trade. Simão da Silva was to present the question in such a way that it was he who was interested and not King Manuel. This is evident from Mvemba Nzinga's Carta of 1514, as he sent him a



thousand slaves in gratitude to King Manuel's care for the temporal and eternal welfare of the Congo.<sup>29</sup>

Mgr Cuvelier's interpretation of the regimento on this point is that King Manuel's real aim was to secure the slave-trade for himself and not to take measures against the slave-traders as such, "plutôt par esprit de lucre qu' avec le dessein de mettre des limites à la traite".<sup>30</sup> Cuvelier, who otherwise consistently interprets Portuguese presence in the Congo in as a benevolent way as possible, indicates that concerning the slave-trade, the Portuguese behaved in a completely ruthless and greedy manner. He has great understanding for Mvemba Nzinga's desperate struggle against the slave-traders.

On one point, Mvemba Nzinga took the advice of the regimento and he sent an embassy to the Pope in Rome in order to declare his obedience.<sup>31</sup> Mvemba Nzinga had been encouraged to follow the example of the other Christian heads of state. His own son Henrique, who studied theology in Portugal, and who could speak Latin was to participate in the embassy. King Manuel had even suggested to Pope Leo X, that Henrique should be made a bishop. After much hesitation, Dom Henrique was appointed bishop in 1518 and consecrated in 1521.<sup>32</sup>

Da Silva Rego comments that the proposal had caused great commotion in Rome. "How could a negro be a bishop? How could that defeito de sangue be overcome?"<sup>33</sup> According to da Silva Rego, this should have been the first time that a qualified Church forum had been confronted with a racial question. Unfortunately da Silva Rego does not give the source on which he bases this statement. Georges Balandier's opinion is that the expression defeito de sangue might just as likely refer to illegitimate descent according to Canon law.<sup>34</sup> Balandier refers to one of Leo X letters, but does not specify which letter. In all probability it was the Breve of 22 May, 1518.<sup>35</sup> In such a case defeito de sangue, defectum Natalium, can hardly have been a race question as interpreted by da Silva, but a question of Mvemba Nzinga's marital relations. Leo X writes, that it is the Pope's wish that Henrique shall be in charge of a congregation, even if he is the victim of dubious or illegal relations between his father and his mother.<sup>36</sup> This kind of hereditary defect is mentioned even in Leo X's Breve to Manuel I.<sup>37</sup> The difficulty which the Pope experienced in convincing the Cardinals in Rome of Henrique's suitability, must have depended not on the question of race, but on Henrique's youth and his dubious line of descent.<sup>38</sup> On this basis, one is forced to question da Silva Rego's opinion that defeito de sangue was connected with the question of race.

It is evident from the Carta 1514, that difficulties in the Congo increased after 1512. The slave-traders established themselves and slave-traffic increased, and this created uneasiness among the people. As the slave-trade increased, so did the import of alcohol. Portugal's foremost exports to the Congo were wine and spirits, and these were accepted by the Congolese as desirable wares. Mvemba Nzinga was aware of the danger and protested indignantly against the sale of alcohol in his Kingdom. But his power was already such that the Portuguese had no need to respect his opinion. Alcohol and the slave-traffic increased.

Exchange of trade between Portugal and the Congo appeared to have been based to a great extent on alcohol and slaves, and from which only one partner was to benefit. That these relations should enrich one partner and impoverish the other were in line with Portugal's general foreign policy. This is how it appeared to Mvemba Nzinga and he assessed such trade as devastating for his country.<sup>39</sup> Neither did São Tomé's policy change for the better.<sup>40</sup> The Congo had no choice but to export slaves, the country's own manpower.

It is in this way that one can summarize the situation at the time of Mvemba Nzinga's comprehensive communication of 5 October, 1514.

#### *Mvemba Nzinga becomes more insistent*

A letter in 1515 from Mvemba Nzinga to King Manuel, once again requested stonemasons and carpenters, in order that schools might be built.<sup>41</sup> At the same time he criticized the immoral lives led by the missionaries, which he said bore no resemblance to Catholic ethics. Mvemba Nzinga judged their vices very seriously and thought their behaviour more sacrilegious than the Jews who crucified Christ, although Christ allowed himself to be crucified. But today, says Mvemba Nzinga, He is crucified in the Congo against His will, by the immoral lives led by the white people. The following year he complained again about the prevailing disorder among the Portuguese.<sup>42</sup>

The regimento, 1512, had not affected the conduct of the Portuguese in the country. Three Portuguese are named, however, as being Mvemba Nzinga's friends with whom he was on an equal footing and could trust. They were Rui de Aguiar, Baltasar de Castro and Antonio Vieira.<sup>43</sup> When Antonio Vieira travelled out to the Congo with presents from Portugal, like so many others, he fell into the hands of the colonizers on São Tomé and they requisitioned his gifts. Life on São Tomé was characterized all the more by lawlessness and ruthlessness.<sup>44</sup>

Rui de Aguiar has become the most well-known of the three above mentioned Portuguese as he played the major role in posterity's conception of Mvemba Nzinga, portraying him as a deeply religious man, devoted to the Catholic Church. He sketched a portrait of his friend in his famous letter of 1516.<sup>45</sup> Aguiar says that Mvemba Nzinga bears more resemblance to an angel than to a human being. Saintly and uprightly he passed his life as the Congo's apostle. He knows the prophets, the Gospel better than we do ourselves. He preaches and teaches so well that the Holy Spirit seems to speak through his mouth. He studies with great earnestness and besides this he zealously devotes his time to literary studies, denying himself everything else and often falls asleep over the books. He conducts the struggle against heathenism partly through preaching and partly through punishing idolaters, but above all through the development of the education system. "Pune grandemente hos que adoram idollos e com hos idollos hos manda queimar", he administers severe punishment to those who worship idols and he orders that idols shall be burned.<sup>46</sup> Apart from this he has systematically organized the struggle in such a way that the judges are commissioned to take charge of those people possessing idols and practising fetishism, "que tem idollos ou fazem feitiçarias".<sup>47</sup> Aguiar's portrait of Mvemba Nzinga has to a great extent contributed to his appearance in a saintly light.

The picture which is supported by other sources, must be considered in the main to be correct, but it is however one-sided and the vocabulary belongs to the *légende dorée*. Even in our century, this one-sidedness has dominated the image of Mvemba Nzinga and his kingdom. This traditional picture does not show us his struggle against the Portuguese, both priests and laymen, which is just as intensive as the struggle against the idols in the Congo. A stage in this struggle for self-determination is Mvemba Nzinga's request to the King of Portugal in 1515, to be allowed to purchase his own ship, primarily to be able to transport goods to the Congo which were required for Church usage.<sup>48</sup>

Behind this application to be allowed to purchase a ship, was almost certainly his bitter experiences with São Tomé, an island which he wanted to avoid. There is nothing in this letter which indicates that Mvemba Nzinga was aware of the import of his application, or that from the start his request was futile. Naturally Portugal did not grant his wish and another request concerning a ship was unsuccessful.<sup>49</sup> This Portuguese policy impeding the Congo from becoming a sea-faring nation was in complete accord with the *padroão*, which had granted Portugal the sole right to the sea-route to India.

In addition to the problems facing Mvemba Nzinga at home, came another from abroad. According to their teacher, the Congolese students in Lisbon made very little headway while Mvemba Nzinga had hoped that they would return to the Congo well fitted for the important task of evangelization. Mvemba Nzinga felt himself becoming old and was disappointed by the unsatisfactory results of their studies, so he wrote to their teacher, telling him to flog the Congolese students so that they would improve.<sup>50</sup>

A fortnight later he wrote a couple of letters which were more optimistic. On behalf of Rui de Aguiar, who supervised the development of school-work, he requested a number of things for the Church and more craftsmen for the building of schools and churches throughout the country.<sup>51</sup> These letters show, above all, the importance Mvemba Nzinga attached to the country's education system.

Towards the close of the decade, Mvemba Nzinga was to have cause for rejoicing. The Pope, Leo X, appointed his son, Dom Henrique, Bishop of Utica, the "first African bishop".<sup>52</sup> Mvemba Nzinga's dream was that his son, as bishop, might further spread the Gospel as he himself had endeavoured.

#### *1526 — Optimistic plans and decisions*

Mvemba Nzinga's letters from the 1520's prove that despite many setbacks, he did not consider himself a beaten man. It appears as if the appointment of his son Henrique as Bishop gave him new strength. There was also a degree of authority in his attitude towards the local governors on São Tomé, where he deported some Frenchmen whom had been taken prisoner in Soyo's harbour. Frenchmen were not allowed to navigate these waters.<sup>53</sup>

In 1526, Mvemba Nzinga tried to realize the plans upon which he had meditated for many years. He wrote no less than five long and comprehensive letters to King João III, who in 1521 had succeeded Mvemba Nzinga's old friend, Manuel I. The Congolese secretary wrote the four most important of these letters. The first letter was a short summary of what Mvemba Nzinga considered of greatest importance in his relation to Manuel I, and he also pointed out how many times he had requested missionaries for the Congo.<sup>54</sup> Now he was old, he said, and must consequently make provision for future missionary work. Therefore, he presented João III, with a comprehensive plan for the Congo's evangelization for which he would need Portugal's assistance. He required fifty missionaries who would be divided between the different provinces, of which

Sundi, in the north, was the first mentioned. Bishop Henrique was of course in the Congo and he was welcomed to visit the entire kingdom. But, it is said, he cannot be expected to do everything and is needed most of all in Mbanza Kongo. The bishop would need six chaplains from St. Eloy to assist him with pastoral work in the capital. Mvemba Nzinga would also need medicines from Portugal, not exclusively for his own use, but also for the struggle against paganism.

In this request one can see how Mvemba Nzinga regarded the practices of the *nganga nkissi*. It was more a question of a cure, than a question of idolatory. It is perhaps too much to claim that Mvemba Nzinga expresses himself as though the medical service was a missionary method, but his words point in that direction. However, the first letter of that year clearly states that medical service is a missionary instrument.<sup>55</sup> In this letter Mvemba Nzinga requests doctors and chemists for himself and his people. The Kingdom was suffering from an acute lack of medicine. For the sake of the Catholic faith it was imperative that Congo received people from Portugal who had medical training, so that banganga's influence could be restricted. Accordingly in 1526, Mvemba Nzinga had taken a step further on the way to replace old with new. The old medicine was now to be replaced by a new and more effective type from Europe.<sup>56</sup> This was an attack on banganga's power.

Included in Mvemba Nzinga's plans was Mbanza Kongo as the episcopal see, with his son Dom Henrique as bishop and his cousin Dom Afonso acting as auxiliary bishop. The country's sons should evangelize the people.<sup>57</sup> Such a request could only be understood as an attempt by Mvemba Nzinga to create a national and rather independent Church administration, headed by the Congolese, but the Portuguese took exception to these plans.

Prayers for more teachers and missionaries were continually repeated and in 1526 Mvemba Nzinga requested three or four language teachers, five or six bricklayers and ten carpenters, in order to complete the building of churches and schools. He appears to have been most anxious for the Igreja de nossa Senhora de Vitoria, "que começamos em hua muy forte mata, honde antigamente se os Rex enterravam, segundo sua antiga idolatria; a quall toda rompemos e cortamos, que era coussa muy difycil de fazer".<sup>58</sup>

Mvemba Nzinga says that he began to build a church, which later was called Ambila, in an extensive forest, where the past kings were buried. This was the place for the old idolatory, which he tried to break down and terminate, a task which was not easily accomplished.

Mvemba Nzinga specifies here, more clearly than in any other case, his method of replacing old with new. In no other place than the forefather's burial grove, a kind of cult place, did he allow the building of a church for the new cult, in order to serve God — *por servico de Deus*. Mvemba Nzinga could not have chosen a more suspect place and it is evident from the emphatic tone of his letter that he was quite aware of what he was doing. A Christian burial church in the forefather's burial grove, was a profound challenge to the old tradition. That the old burial ground remained a burial ground was for the people, perhaps more important than the construction of a church there.

1526, was also the year when Mvemba Nzinga tried to overcome the afflictions of the slave-trade, by prohibiting the white slave-traders in the Congo.<sup>59</sup> The white slave-traders constituted a danger to the people, as they did not limit their purchases to those people who, according to Congolese tradition, were slaves. Such injudicious trade was unacceptable to Mvemba Nzinga and he wanted to ask the slave-traders to leave the country.

He did not, however, have the power to effect such a decision, and it was too late to save the Congolese people. When it proved impossible to forbid the slave-trade, Mvemba Nzinga considered that it could at least be controlled and regulated, so that free men and women were not enslaved.<sup>60</sup> The white slave-traders were to register themselves at Court. But Mvemba Nzinga's plans were again far too optimistic. The slave-traders let nothing disturb them. They were required to show little consideration. They sometimes bought and sometimes stole the Congolese without distinction and the Congolese were enticed to follow their example, explains Mvemba Nzinga. Uneasiness and uncertainty mounted in the country.

In approximately 1535, between four and five thousand slaves were shipped annually from Pinda.<sup>61</sup> Only the lack of tonnage prevented slave export from attaining further heights. "Portugal was inundated with slaves", comments Weber and in certain places the number of black people was stated to have exceeded fifty percent of the total population.<sup>62</sup>

Mvemba Nzinga did not have the resources required to stop or control the slave-traders from Portugal and São Tomé and he could expect no help from João III.

### *Increasing disappointment*

When Mvemba Nzinga saw that his grandiose plans for mission and his firm decision to put an end to the slave-traders' ravagings could not be

realized, the old man appears to have lost heart. Correspondence with Lisbon is rather insignificant compared with that written during King Manuel's reign. Mvemba Nzinga's son, Bishop Henrique had died at the end of the 1530's and a Congolese successor was not appointed. A painful setback was that the slave-trader's island, São Tomé became the episcopal see in 1534, instead of Mbanza Kongo. Furthermore the episcopal see of São Tomé was to have Church jurisdiction over the Congo.<sup>63</sup>

Mvemba Nzinga more than likely had no knowledge of this Papal decision which was contrary to the wishes he expressed in his Letter of Obedience to the Pope, which was presented by an embassy to Rome in 1535.<sup>64</sup> In this letter Mvemba Nzinga presents the Church's situation, declares his humble obedience, and requests of the Pope the same privileges as others in his position usually received. Shortly afterwards Mvemba Nzinga received two replies from Rome. The first was that São Tomé was the episcopal see and that a Portuguese bishop had been appointed. The second was that the Pope appreciated Mvemba Nzinga's evangelistic zeal and encouraged him to remain loyal to the Catholic faith.<sup>65</sup> In a final attempt to obtain some Papal favours, Mvemba Nzinga sent a Congolese embassy to Rome in 1539.<sup>66</sup> On behalf of his people and himself, he promised obedience, but this embassy proved no more successful than previous attempts.

Thus, the contacts with Rome had failed and nothing else could be expected, as the padroão had given Portugal the explicit "right" to the Congo. But Mvemba Nzinga knew nothing of the padroão's significance. He was caught in the grasp of the Portuguese and never succeeded in freeing himself.

Mvemba Nzinga had lost the struggle for his people against the Portuguese, who became all the more impudent. The aging Regent had been frightened by the experiences of the white people's behaviour and when a European ore-pro prospector appeared in the Congo, together with some melters, Mvemba Nzinga feared that they would deprive him of the royal symbol — a copper forge in Mbanza Kongo.<sup>67</sup> It remains to be seen, if Mvemba Nzinga also feared that, in addition to all the slave-traders, the Congo might also become inundated with gold-diggers. He had reason to fear the worst. But in Portugal it had been stated that there was no gold to be found in the Congo.

The last two letters which have been preserved were written by Mvemba Nzinga as late as 1540 and at that date he should have been over eighty years old.<sup>68</sup> They can be read as a summary of his fifty year long connexion with the Portuguese. In the same breath as the old gentleman expresses

a degree of gratitude to Portugal for introducing the Christian faith in the Congo, he does not miss the opportunity of reminding Portugal of all the advantages and benefits derived through connexions with the Congo.<sup>69</sup> Concern for the country's temporal and eternal welfare still demanded Portuguese assistance.

Mvemba Nzinga wanted, among other things, to borrow five thousand *cruzados*, in order to be able to send an embassy to Rome. This help was not forthcoming which was probably deliberate as João III was well informed of the deplorable situation among the Portuguese in the Congo. He had received a letter from Gonçalo Nunes Coelho, who had spent fourteen years in the Congo and who was familiar with the situation.<sup>70</sup>

Gonçalo Nunes explicitly warned João III that the strained relations between the Portuguese and Congolese could result in a tragic end. Nunes puts the blame entirely on the white people. He wrote, "they are guided by envy, avarice and covetousness". The white people's morals had sunk so low, that an improvement was not believed to be possible. Therefore, Gonçalo suggested that João III should see that all white people, priests and layman alike, left the country. This would be of advantage to both the Church and the Congo. People more suited to the task should later be sent out to the Congo.<sup>71</sup> This is discussed in the same letter as he mentions copper, lead and silver deposits. Lisbon, however, disregarded this explicit warning from the Congo.

For the seventh time, Mvemba Nzinga broached the subject of his own ship, in a letter of 17 December, 1540.<sup>72</sup> He gave his reasons for the country's need of a vessel, but it was naturally labour in vain. On this point it was impossible to by-pass the *padroão*.

Mvemba Nzinga's last letter is, quite significantly, a bitter protest, praying for help against the Portuguese, who over the years had enjoyed the hospitality of his Kingdom. They now repayed good with evil and had even tried to do away with him. Mvemba Nzinga was embittered. A "vertuoso padre frey Alvaro", accompanied by seven or eight other white men, forced their way into the church where Mvemba Nzinga and his people were attending mass on Easter Day. They discharged their weapons in the Holy Room, but missed Mvemba Nzinga. They succeeded in killing one of his nearest men and wounded two others. "All this for no other reason than to have me dead, so that they could appoint another king. But God saved my life", said Mvemba Nzinga.<sup>73</sup>

In a letter to João III, Mvemba Nzinga reported that a man called Alvaro Peçanha, had planned an attempt on his life. This information however, was contested by five Portuguese who wrote to João III in



1541.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, nobody denied the attempt on his life in the church on Easter Day.

According to the country's custom, Mvemba Nzinga could have ordered the execution of these would-be assassins, but he obviously did not dare to punish them.<sup>75</sup> The regimento, 1512, decreed that the Portuguese living in the Congo, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Portugal and not Mvemba Nzinga. Therefore it was to João III he turned, recommending that the malefactors be punished.

The people, however, were furious over this Portuguese attempt to murder Mvemba Nzinga and intended to seek revenge by killing the sixty or seventy Portuguese in the country.<sup>76</sup> Mvemba Nzinga succeeded in preventing this blood-bath, as he wanted, in the long run, to maintain good relations with the Portuguese. He hoped that João III would deal with the culprits, but the King took no action.

Over the years the white people had put themselves in an indefensible situation and they began to fear for their lives. Many had already begun to move southwards to new hunting grounds. But this migration was too late to heal the wounds inflicted by their slave-raids. When Mvemba Nzinga died in 1543, it was a seriously lacerated people he left behind. The priests who remained were not interested in the welfare of either the Church or the people. One generation of Portuguese had succeeded in reducing the old Congo Kingdom to a broken power. They paid no attention to the date of Mvemba Nzinga's death, but it was later reported that his last resting place was Ambila, the church which he had built in 1526, in the forefathers' burial grove.

The position of the grave speaks its symbolic language of the struggle to which Mvemba Nzinga had devoted his life. As a Christian he was buried in a church, where the altar symbolizes a tomb, according to Catholic faith. This church had been erected on traditionally holy ground. The two contending religions met in the forefathers' grove. Outwardly it might appear that the Portuguese Christian cult was the victor, as the church dominated the burial ground. But other questions come to mind. Why did the forefathers' burial ground attract a Christian burial church? Was there not enough power in the new religion to break with the old burial tradition, by building a church with an altar in some other place than the forefathers' grove?

One can presume that Mvemba Nzinga chose his own burial church, as he had been forced to ponder over his eventual death, both due to his old age and the Portuguese attempt on his life: he chose Ambila.

## The Mvemba Nzinga era, a survey

### *Bana ba nzo, bantu a nzimbu and bisi kanda*

The slave trade was that feature of culture confrontation which during the first fifty years was to become more and more pronounced. One can ask oneself, why Mvemba Nzinga so persistently and so energetically protested against and condemned the Portuguese slave-traffic, when he himself kept slaves and sent slaves as presents or as means of payment to Lisbon and São Tomé.

Research workers agree that the population of the Congo Kingdom was divided into three categories: serfs, which were not sold, were called *bana ba nzo*, "children of the house", while slaves had other names, for example *bantu a nzimbu* "nzimbu people" or "purchased people". Besides these two categories were *bisi kanda* "the people of the clan", the free. *Bisi kanda* could use the title *mfumu*.<sup>77</sup>

*Bana ba nzo*, serfs or esclaves domestiques, were bound to obey *bisi kanda*, but lived and functioned in general as any other member of the bakongo's household. Their parents, or at least mother was a serf or slave. A slave which is purchased and proves competent and faithful receives by and by, the same positive treatment as a serf, and the children become serfs.

As a servant, the serf enjoyed a greater degree of prestige and had more secure terms of employment than the slave, and in some cases a respected slave took the place of the master of the house in the latter's absence.<sup>78</sup> The longer a slave or serf remained in the service of the same *bisi kanda*, so his terms improved. The terms "newly acquired" (*bana mpu*) and those "acquired a long time ago" (*bana nkulu*) point to this fact.<sup>79</sup>

A family normally kept its serfs and slaves in order to help with the work. It was only when a difficult situation arose, or in such cases where a slave had misbehaved, that slaves were sold. In extremely difficult years, such as after the Yaga invasion in 1569, a family, in order to survive, was forced to sell its *bisi kanda* to the Portuguese as slaves, in order to be able to buy food. Members of the family or the clan were not normally sold.

Slaves proper should also be treated according to certain norms, despite the fact that they might be prisoners of war or malefactors of some kind, which one tribe had acquired from another. When *bisi kanda* should receive punishment for some serious crime, slavery was considered a severe sentence. The slave-trade between *bateke* and *bakongo* was conducted on this basis.<sup>80</sup>

Serfs and slaves functioned as carriers, builders of houses and cultivators. The earth should be cultivated by the women, which is the reason why women were so desirable from an economical point of view.

Mvemba Nzinga did not oppose slavery as an institution, but he did oppose the indiscriminate and brutal way in which the Portuguese conducted the slave-trade. A slave and least of all a serf, was not to be subjected to violent or humiliating treatment. The unwritten laws of the Congo community, gave even these people definite rights, while slaves in Europe had a rougher deal. The majority of research workers agree in principal with the opinion expressed by Van Wing in 1929, namely that the everyday situation for free men and serfs and slaves differed little. "En somme la condition des esclaves ne différait guère de celle des hommes libres."<sup>81</sup> Mgr. Cuvelier makes a personal assessment of this: "L'institution de l'esclavage, comme elle existait au Congo, paraissait tolérable".<sup>82</sup> It is important to emphasize the fact that slavery in the Congo was an organized institution within society and not an uncivilized practice.

The Portuguese and especially those on São Tomé, had on the other hand a completely different view of the slave. The slave had absolutely no rights and only those who were transported to Lisbon could expect relatively good treatment.<sup>83</sup> Those who were left in the sugar plantations on São Tomé were subjected to harder terms. Three out of every ten slaves who had survived the journey to São Tomé were put ashore by the slave-traders, as a kind of tax, which is why there were already a considerable number of slaves on the island in 1529, before the Atlantic slave-trade commenced.<sup>84</sup> These slaves were continually ill-treated and were handled as cattle, or worse.<sup>85</sup> At least the cattle was fed by the owner, but the slaves received neither food nor any form of up-keep from their owners. All day and everyday, with the exception of Saturday they were forced to work for their owners. On Saturdays they should cultivate their own allotments in order to provide themselves with food.<sup>86</sup>

At the beginning of the 1520's, the Portuguese in Brazil — "discovered" in 1500 — had not begun to purchase Congolese slaves, as they first enslaved the Red Indians which was less expensive than transporting slaves from Africa.<sup>87</sup> When at a later date the Congolese were transported to Brazil, the treatment they received was no better than on São Tomé, but on the other hand the possibility of escape was greater than on the island.

The Congolese whom Mvemba Nzinga sent to Lisbon to study, must have found it exceptionally humiliating to see how the dead slaves were buried, or rather, were not buried. Congolese culture concerning death and burial developed ritual respect for the dead. In Lisbon, however, the

slave-owners threw their dead slaves into a ditch outside the house, where they were left to the dogs. Due to the increased number of slaves in the city, this practice and the unhealthy dimensions it involved, occasioned King Manuel in Lisbon to order that a vast ditch be dug, into which all the slave corpses should be thrown; the ditch should be covered with lime at regular intervals.

Lisbon developed into an extensive slave-market and soon surpassed Lagos, where the first cargo of slaves had arrived from Africa on 8 August, 1444. According to de Goes (1501—1570), at the beginning of the sixteenth century, between ten to twenty thousand slaves annually were imported to Lisbon from São Tomé's trading areas.<sup>88</sup> Approximately half this number came from the Congo.

King Manuel was anxious that the slave-trade continued and his regimento, 1512, was not intended to support Mvemba Nzinga's struggle against the slave-traders, but rather to reduce the lucrative slave-traffic from the colony of São Tomé. He wanted the greater part of this trade for himself. It was the slave-traders injudicious action which made Mvemba Nzinga so indignant. They sometimes bought and sometimes stole the Congolese, bana ba nzo, bantu a nzimbu and bisi kanda, without making a distinction. According to Mvemba Nzinga, the Portuguese were forbidden to enslave members of a family or clan, free men and women and transport them to the slave-markets in either São Tomé or Lisbon. The enslavement of bisi kanda created uneasiness within the country and the Kingdom's future was threatened.

Mvemba Nzinga took three measures against the unsatisfactory state of affairs, all of which were unsuccessful. He put guards along the roads used by the slave-caravans, so that they could prevent bisi kanda from being kidnapped. In 1526 he prohibited all trade. Finally he suggested that the slave-trade be supervised by specially appointed inspectors. But all this was in vain. In Lisbon it was assessed that the import of slaves, together with the export of manufactured goods and alcohol, were necessary for Portugal's economy. Therefore, no consideration could be taken to the Congo's interests.<sup>89</sup> Mvemba Nzinga's protest against the involvement of the Portuguese priests in the slave-trade was just as fruitless.<sup>90</sup> The priests had the excuse that due to their low salary they were more or less forced to participate in the slave-trade. They received their salary, or allowance, in the form of nzimbu, shells, from the royal island Loanda.<sup>91</sup>

Nzimbu as currency was only exchangeable with slaves, which in their turn could be sold in return for all products and services. In order to

take advantage of the nzimbu salary, the clergy were forced to involve themselves in the slave-trade. This method of paying their salaries was adjusted in João III's regimento of 1529.<sup>92</sup> The responsibility taken by the Church for slaves was not only for their temporal, but also for their eternal welfare. In 1516, Pope Leo X decreed that the slaves should be baptized so that they might not die as heathens. Baptism could take place during loading, during the voyage or during unloading. From the point of view of the Catholic Church, this eternal blessing was regarded as more important than the slave's right to a life on earth.<sup>93</sup> There was no Church opinion against the slave-trade as such, because due to these conditions, it was considered better that a Congolese should die as a baptized slave, than live as a heathen.

Only in his old age did Mvemba Nzinga realize that the Portuguese had ruined his kingdom and it was then too late to do anything about the slave-trade. It was bound to increase.

### *Judicial system and trade*

It is difficult to assess to what extent the Congo had legal and political relations with Portugal. If Portugal's policy shall be called colonial or not, is a question of taste. Ruth Slade is one of many who claim that, contrary to Angola for example, the Congo in the formal sense of the word, did not become a colony. It would appear that this observation, among other things, has occasioned Slade to judge the Portuguese behaviour towards the Congolese as friendly, in contrast to that of the Belgian's four-hundred years later. "So the Congo never became a colony of Portugal, but remained an independent kingdom", writes Slade, "it was bound to Portugal by ties of interest and friendship, but it never became a tributary state".<sup>94</sup>

One must not, however, neglect the fact that the Congo played no part in the formulation of the treaties which regulated its status in relation to Portugal and Europe. The so-called *padroão*, which for three hundred years decreed that Portugal and Portugal alone was allowed cultural and economical ties with the Congo, was intentionally designed and applied in such a way, that the Congo should become isolated from other European powers. The Pope and the King of Portugal had drawn up the *padroão*. On the other hand the King of the Congo had not influenced the formulation of any clause in the *padroão*, which did not only prevent the Congo from purchasing its own vessels, but also, to a great extent,

aggravated relations with the Vatican. Even the Pope had to respect the padroão.

The implications of the padroão for the Congo, are mainly formulated in the regimento, 1512, but the regimentos 1520 and 1529, can be seen in the same light. In 1512, the Congo should have been incorporated into *Respublica Christiana* and totally reconstructed in accordance with Portuguese requirements. A slightly modified version of the Portuguese laws, the Ordenações do Reino, were to be successively introduced in the Congo. Following the Portuguese pattern, a Court with noblemen acting as officials was formed. It was Canon and Roman law which were to be the country's law and no consideration was taken to Congolese customary law.

Mvemba Nzinga regarded both the regimento 1512 and the Ordenações do Reino, as a threat to the Congo and therefore considered them unacceptable. The intentions of the Portuguese were evident, when in 1540, eight or nine people tried to murder Mvemba Nzinga, so that they might appoint a more compliant king. It is true that they were not successful, but it was not long before the Portuguese played a decisive role in the choosing of a king. Thus, in practice, the Congo was under Portuguese control, even if the country was not a colony in the formal sense of the word.

The padroão had prevented the Congo from enjoying cultural exchange with countries other than Portugal and the same situation arose on the question of trade.

Mvemba Nzinga's most ardent request was that he wanted to freight, on his own keel, certain products to the Congo. These consisted of equipment intended for school and construction work, accessories for the Church and the administration of the sacrament. On the strength of its monopoly Portugal needed to pay little attention to Mvemba Nzinga's requests. On only one point was Portugal unsuccessful in its estimation of the Congo. The large mineral deposits of lead, copper and silver, of which there had been rumours, were never found, and the small deposits which were located were not worth exploiting. The king in the Congo had the sole right to the smithery. That the Portuguese did not deprive him of this right, probably depended more on the insignificance of these deposits, than their respect for Congolese tradition. Perhaps the lack of precious metals in the Congo saved the country from a worse fate than that inflicted by the slave-traders.

### *Teaching and medical service*

On a parallel with Mvemba Nzinga's continual prayers for missionaries, were his requests for teachers. For his part the aim of the schoolwork was twofold. Firstly that he wanted to evangelize the people and secondly that he wanted to educate his own elite to administer the country. He learned to read and write and diligently studied books, both in Portuguese and Latin. Students were sent to Lisbon for further education, especially theology. The schools in the Congo were principally concentrated to Mbanza Kongo, but even other centres benefited from this regular school activity. The pupils consisted of both boys and girls from the country's foremost families.

The schools never reached other strata of society, but instead served the new "nobility". The teachers, with the exception of one or two, were Portuguese, often priests, and tuition was concentrated around the Church. Rui de Aguiar and Mestre Gil were frequently referred to as excellent teachers. The people learned to read and write Portuguese, but the main subject on the curriculum was divinity.

Schoolwork never really stabilized itself and this was due to the lack of teachers. The influx of pupils appears to always have been satisfactory. Despite Mvemba Nzinga's strenuous efforts to establish a comprehensive education system, his attempts failed, owing to Portugal's evident inability and sometimes even disinclination, to effectively help him in this respect. Mvemba Nzinga together with many of the missionaries, considered that regular schooling was a good missionary method, but the majority appeared to have hesitated in giving Mvemba Nzinga their whole-hearted support. It is possible that many realized that for Mvemba Nzinga schoolwork did not only signify evangelization, but also a greater degree of independence through the rise of an educated elite. Owing to inadequate resources and the half-hearted support of the Portuguese, schoolwork became a question of hardly more than sporadic — even though energetic — attempts.

Despite the short-comings of the schoolwork in the Congo a small, but literary elite was created, of which Mvemba Nzinga's old friend and co-worker, his secretary Joam Teyxera, and Bishop Henrique were members. One does not see mention of any prominent Congolese teachers in documents from this period.

In connexion with the building of schools, the pupils were trained to build with stone and wood, partly because Mvemba Nzinga did not receive the craftsmen from São Tomé and Portugal to the extent he had requested and partly that they might learn a useful skill. Mvemba Nzinga longed

to build his capital in the same style as Lisbon. But not even this plan was practicable.

Despite good help from some of the missionaries, Mvemba Nzinga struggled in vain for his great cause; that his folk might learn to read and turn Christian through schoolwork. Due to this failure, it was easier for banganga to retain their power and hold over the people, just as the Portuguese could also retain their position. Mvemba Nzinga must have experienced this as a double defeat.

Adjacent and subordinate to teaching, the medical service also appears as a missionary method. Mvemba Nzinga requested medicines, doctors, surgeons and chemists from Portugal, without result. Even this intended medical service had a double purpose. Firstly to keep alive the country's limited elite, primarily Mvemba Nzinga and his son, and secondly to help the people in times of illness. If they do not receive help of this kind, they will turn to banganga, argued Mvemba Nzinga. Both the schoolwork and the plans for the medical service consequently threatened banganga's power, and it can be said to have only indirectly threatened the Portuguese. It is evident that the plans for schoolwork and the medical service played an important role in Mvemba Nzinga's policy for an independent Christian country.

If Mbanza Kongo received few or no answers to the prayers for craftsmen, doctors and teachers, it sometimes proved more successful to pray for preachers. The spiritual conquest of the Congo appears to have seriously interested at least King Manuel and was second only to his interest for profits. The missionaries and priests who arrived in the Congo were whole-heartedly supported by Mvemba Nzinga, who had taken over some of the responsibilities which the *padroão* had placed upon the King of Portugal. Mvemba Nzinga contributed money himself, as a kind of compensation for the so-called tithes and he ordered that the people, without expecting reimbursement, should provide the missionaries with all that they might need in the way of food, accommodation and services, during their visits to the villages.

Despite the fact that Portugal's and the Congo's official interests in evangelization coincided, it was proved that the Portuguese missionary effort was not strong enough to give continuity to Church work in the Congo. Neither within the Church was it possible to foster a new elite. In this field, Mvemba Nzinga's plans were obstructed by the Portuguese, who, even if they had wished, could not have consented to all his plans, as Portugal's resources were not sufficient to provide for all her colonies.



### *Nkissi-bonfires and counter-reaction*

If the Portuguese and Mvemba Nzinga had entirely different opinions on the question of trade, legislation, education and the medical service, they were in agreement on one point, namely in the struggle against nganga nkissi, the leading figure in the traditional religion. The missionaries and Mvemba Nzinga also worked against polygyny, although Mvemba Nzinga did not show his normally so characteristic devotion to the cause. With regard to this apparently unambiguous struggle against banganga, one must ask oneself whether it implied the same for the Portuguese missionaries as for Mvemba Nzinga. As early as the 1490's in connexion with his baptism and on the missionaries advice, he had repudiated polygyny and arranged a nkissi-bonfire, first in Sundi and after 1506 throughout the country.<sup>95</sup>

Apparently the Congolese did not regard baptism as a stumbling-block and the documents do not relate any controversies regarding the baptismal rite. No protest was made over the fact that due to baptism they had to renounce their Congolese names and adopt a Portuguese name. On the contrary, it appears that they found this attractive. On the other hand those who were to be baptized and become Christian must renounce both their wives and minkissi and it was this which evoked opposition and active resistance. These two types of divorce shook the foundations of the society as it ultimately concerned the harmony or balance within the community: ngolo — vitality.

Banganga never lost their hold over their followers, despite the success of Christianity among the royal family and its closest circles. *Fu kia nsi*, it is the custom of the country; *Nsi ifwidi*, the country is dead. These two slogans gave expression to what they wanted to protect, namely the vitality of the culture, through being faithful to the old traditions. These words can also be seen as polemic expressions against Dom Jorge's dream in 1491, "See that Your kingdom becomes Christian. Thereby Your power will be strengthened". Banganga meant that it had the opposite effect: Christianity threatened the people's ngolo.

*Nzinga Nkuvu* was the first Mani Kongo to become Christian but he could not resist the pressure put on him by the old tradition. A year after his ceremonious baptism he was retrieved by banganga and returned to his wives and nkissi. It was virtually unthinkable for a Regent to renounce polygyny, partly because the number of wives was a measure of a man's status and partly because they connected the Regent with different tribes, which in their turn were enriched by the offsprings of the Regent

and his respective wives. The women's marriage to Mani Kongo was a guarantee of the kingdom's unity. To dissolve his marriages implied a threat to the political equilibrium within the country and the kingdom's existence.

*Mvemba Nzinga* on the other hand, withstood the pressure of tradition. The most serious accusation known by the community was directed to him. You are *ndoki*. From you comes all evil. *Fwa bandoki*. Death to *bandoki*. On account of the missionaries' moral support in Sundi, he had been successful in taking power in the kingdom in 1506 and his actions as the Congo's ruler reveal something of how the *bakongo* regarded the relation between Christianity and their own tradition. Consciously or unconsciously, be that as it may, *Mvemba Nzinga* appears to have systematically replaced *banganga's* accessories with those of the Christian ministry.

He tried to fill the old religions given forms, with a new content, but without changing either the form or function. It is true that he forbid *nkissi* and instituted *nkissi-bonfires*, but at the same time, he replaced *nkissi* with the crucifix and pictures of saints. The army received the Banner of the Cross and the newly baptized new and "elegant" names; the foremost in the kingdom received Portuguese clothes, titles and weapons; old temples were demolished and replaced. In place of *nsinda* or *kimpassi*, which were occasionally burned together with their *nkissi*, churches with altars, crosses, pictures of saints and crucifixes were built.<sup>96</sup>

*Mvemba Nzinga* gave *Nsaku ne Vunda* the responsibility for the baptismal water, instead of guarding the Congolese holy water. His burial church he built on holy ground, in the forest of the deceased. Thus the proximity to *bakulu* was emphasized. Finally the role of *banganga*, the old ministry, was to be transferred to the Christian priests, the new ministry.

All these measures prevented the occurrence of a religious vacuum. For a Congolese at that time, a crucifix should have had the same function as a *nkissi* and received approximately the same significance, perhaps that the difference was that the crucifix was stronger, or mightier. To exchange one with the other did not meet with too much opposition and it is probable that people in general, kept their old *nkissi* at the same time as they accepted the new crucifix.

In an otherwise complicated picture of *Mvemba Nzinga*, one trait in his character is firmly pronounced; he was an ardent revivalist and preacher.<sup>97</sup> His profound intention was to teach his people the Gospel and both his teaching and preaching served that purpose. At the same time his different

actions showed that he adapted the new faith to the old praxis. Accordingly one cannot interpret the life-work of Mvemba Nzinga as an absolute disassociation from the old culture. The new order he sought to obtain was basically Congolese. It was never a question of copying the Portuguese culture without making modifications. He emphasized an independent Congolese conduct in all that he did.

On the other hand the missionaries' task was to nullify, to abolish and to replace; not to supplement. They have given no indication that they suspected that a crucifix or a cross might play the same role as a nkissi for a Congolese, or that they, as priests, were considered by the Congolese to have taken banganga's role. One can observe that the missionaries encouraged Mvemba Nzinga's short-termed struggle against nkissi, nsinda and banganga, through prohibition and bonfires, while they proved themselves far less enthusiastic at the prospect of his long-term struggle for the people's up-bringing, the schoolwork and the medical service.

An important factor remains to be mentioned. The missionaries and Mvemba Nzinga wanted to make the new religion attractive to the people. European clothes, adornment, schools, furniture and fire-arms were impressive methods of demonstrating that the power in the country was centred around the new system. The people's reaction was positive towards the festivities, the splendour, the fire-arms, and the schools etc, but extremely negative on two points; the enforced divorces and nkissi bonfires. Their actions were especially violent in regard to the latter. Mvemba Nzinga came close himself to being burned, when on one occasion he arranged a bonfire of this kind. This showed that the people were deeply attached to their nkissi.

### *Bantu, bakulu and mindele*

The Congolese directly associated mindele (the whites) with bakulu (the ancestors), due to their fair skin, when they first caught sight of the Portuguese in 1484. Bakulu was considered to have faded in the realm of death and lost their healthy colour "after death". (There is an English equivalent to this use of language. One uses the term "deathly pale".)

Bakulu lived their own lives, but retained a certain contact with the surviving villagers, which was effected by the elders in the clan. The elders were nearest to bakulu, as they too were soon to die. Due to this connexion with bakulu, via the aged, bantu was able to reach the profound sources of life where bankita were to be found, the first father's of the clan, but above all the Supreme Nzambi Mpungu. The Supreme God

was not usually addressed in prayer. On the other hand, one tried in different ways to win bakulu's goodwill. They dwelt underground and in water-wells and therefore the "Lord of the Earth", mfumu nsi, was an important person. The life of the bantu was either a *via banganga* or a *via bakulu*. In this way one could protect oneself from the dreaded bandoki, who had the ability to dia muntu, to eat man.<sup>98</sup>

The newly arrived white people were not classed as bantu, but were given the name mindele, singular form mundele, which is more difficult to interpret. But they were in some way associated with bakulu. They were evidently regarded as revenants, possibly messengers from the deceased's paradisiacal life. This first culture contact was to touch a cardinal point of confrontation and posed the question; who is man? Were mindele bantu? If not, were they then bakulu who had returned to earth?

The uncertainty concerning mindele's origin and their possible connexion with bakulu, ought to have contributed to the fact that the Congolese received the first Portuguese with such respect and in such a friendly and unreserved way. This respect gradually diminished as the Congolese became acquainted with the Portuguese and noticed that their behaviour did not correspond to the old and good custom. Towards the close of Mvemba Nzinga's period of rule, this respect had been forfeited for contempt and distrust. An additional reason for this disdain was that the white people, who posed as slave-traders, flagrantly disobeyed Congolese law. Another sign of weakness was that the white people could not agree among themselves, and their disputes were made public. The attempt to murder Mvemba Nzinga, in 1540, ought to have influenced the Congolese opinion of mindele. It was hardly credible that bakulu should send out emissaries to murder a revered elder.



## Chapter 2. From Mvemba Nzinga to Garcia II. 1543–1641

A century lies between the two eras in the history of the old kingdom which extensive research has made most familiar — the reigns of Mvemba Nzinga (1506—1543) and Garcia II Afonso (1641—1661). For the Lower Congo it was a century of great changes and severe hardships. The wealth of published source material now available is still untapped for a study of wider scope, designed to trace in detail the historical development of this period which in many respects presents an extremely fragmentary picture. In this chapter, however, we shall only touch upon a few significant dates and pursue a few lines of enquiry which have a direct bearing upon the culture confrontation either during that period or in later times. In the next chapter we shall then focus our attention with all the more emphasis on the Capuchin mission and some figures of special interest. The Capuchins arrived in the Congo during the reign of Garcia II, marking the beginning of a period of intensive culture confrontation throughout the country. Both in reach and in character it can be compared to Mvemba Nzinga's era.

### *The banganga return to power*

The hundred years following Mvemba Nzinga's epoch can be characterized in many ways, and one notable feature was that it constituted a period of recovery on the part of the banganga. This is particularly true of the first fifty years. The fight against banganga and nkissi tapered off with Mvemba Nzinga's declining years and death. "By the middle of the sixteenth century the mission died out, leaving hardly a trace of its existence", says Stephen Neill, inevitably forced to generalize in a work like his *Christian Missions*.<sup>1</sup> It is a simplification of the facts, for numerous traces naturally remained, and Duarte Lopez tells us that the memory of Mvemba Nzinga was still vividly alive in the capital three decades later. Eugen Weber heads the last chapter of his work on the Congo with the title "Tiefstand der Mission", thereby seeking to characterize the years immediately following Mvemba Nzinga's death.<sup>2</sup> From the point of view of the Church, the lack of priests had catastrophic results for Congolese Christianity upon the death of its leader and evangelist, "le roi apôtre", as Louis Jadin calls him, "un virtuose de cet apostolat".<sup>3</sup> The fact that there was no trained Congolese clergy made it all the easier for the banganga to regain control.

The primary object of the Portuguese mission had been the conversion of "the heathen", which was accomplished through baptism. Tens of thousands had been baptized without receiving any catechetical instruction either before or after baptism. Weber puts the blame for the decline and downfall of the Congo mission mainly on this inadequate missionary approach. To the Congolese convert, having once "eaten salt" (=been baptized) constituted the ultimate mark of difference, perhaps the only sign of his conversion to Christianity, which did not prevent him from clinging to the nkissi cult and polygyny.

The Jesuit missionaries arriving in the Congo only five years after the death of Mvemba Nzinga described in gloomy colours the hold which such customs had on the Congolese.<sup>4</sup> In order to explain the banganga's swift and unchallenged return to power, we must remember that they had continually represented the genuinely African element in the Lower Congo, whereas the Church stood for the Portuguese, the foreign way of life. Where the Portuguese began to lose their power or fell to abusing it, the attraction of the Church also diminished. Weber feels that what he calls the failure of the mission can partly be explained by the fact that "Christianity and the Portuguese way of life in the Congo were passed as equal coin, or at least allowed to be accepted as such by the native population . . .".<sup>5</sup> The banganga had stubbornly clung to the old way of life, defended the traditional customs of the country, and when the Portuguese way of life began to lose its gloss, they emerged victorious. They practised their rites openly at court, where polygyny also became common practice once more.

### *The increasing slave-trade*

The death of Mvemba Nzinga allowed the slave-traders to gain an increasingly strong foothold in the Congo, eventually reaching the point where they were in a position to decide the royal succession. Diego I (1545—1561) maintained relations with the Portuguese king. He continued in the usual fashion to ask for missionaries — probably on the advice of his court chaplain Diogo Gomes — and complained of most of the Portuguese he came into contact with.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Diego I wished to renew the contract concerning the slave-trade dating from Mvemba Nzinga's days.<sup>7</sup> São Tomé was to retain its monopoly in the Congo on condition that it should only be carried on with the peoples under the dominion of Mbanza Kongo.<sup>8</sup> In this way Diego assured himself a share in the profits of the slave-trade, since the export of slaves went by way

of the kingdom's harbour Pinda in Soyo, where he levied taxes. By mid-century some twelve to fifteen slavers yearly exported from four hundred to seven hundred slaves each from Pinda, while more than ten European slave-trading companies were established in the Congo. Diego's concern to ensure that the slave-trade would not pass him by was due to the fact that the King of Angola had come alive to the possibility of turning the profits his way if the trade could be deflected to the south instead of to Pinda.<sup>9</sup>

## Portuguese Angola, a new threat to the Congo

João III responded to king Diego's request for missionaries by sending four Jesuits to the Congo in 1548.<sup>10</sup> Their activity was short-lived, however, for already in 1555 they were like all other whites expelled as a result of the sharply increased tensions between king Diego and the white residents. Nevertheless, they managed to conduct some interesting educational experiments by starting teaching projects, founding a seminary for the training of Congolese priests, and publishing the first Catechism in Kikongo, which was printed in Lisbon, probably in 1558. Neither the Catechism nor the teaching schemes made much of an impact, though.

The failure of their endeavours in this field must to a great extent be blamed on the Jesuits themselves, says Louis Jadin. Like the secular clergy, they allowed themselves to be "seduced by the lure of pecuniary gain and the trade in slaves to the profit of their family".<sup>11</sup> One of the slaves which a Jesuit priest brought home to Portugal in 1552 had the monogram of Christ, IHS, burned into his skin.<sup>12</sup>

On the political scene, on the other hand, the work of the Jesuits helped to bring about major changes. Diego's counterpart in Angola, king Dambi, took advantage of the Portuguese expulsion from the Congo in 1555 and offered Lisbon trade with Angola to satisfy the Portuguese demand for slaves in replacement of the Congo trade.<sup>13</sup> The Jesuits were the first to investigate these new possibilities for expansion, and they accompanied Paulo Dias de Novais on his two expeditions in 1560 and 1575. The Jesuits and the European colonists advanced side by side in this colonization venture.<sup>14</sup>

The early emergence of Angola as a threat to the Congo was due to the fact that the Portuguese followed an entirely different policy in Angola from what they had done in the Congo. They established themselves in the country by armed force without giving even formal recogni-



tion to any African authority, which they had done in the Congo. By making Angola into a fortified colony ruled by a Portuguese governor, the Portuguese from the start gained a firm grip on the coastal area and the river mouths, which increased interest in Angola even more, to the cost of the Congo. Within a year Loanda with its strong fort became the largest port for the export of slaves on the Congo-Angola coast, and as early as 1576 it is reported that three hundred Portuguese had settled in Angola.<sup>15</sup> These were golden days for the slave-traders. According to the same source, the annual export amounted to 12000 slaves. Towards the late sixteenth century this number had increased to an average of 30000. And this was merely the beginning of the expanding slave-trade.

To the Congo, the major significance of the Portuguese colonization of Angola lay in the fact that a neighbouring country replaced the more remote São Tomé as the most serious threat. During the fifteen-sixties the southern Congo provinces were disturbed by repeated Yaga invasions, and once the Portuguese had established themselves in Angola, the hostile incursions from the south became even more of a trial to the Congo. During the seventeenth century it often had to face the combined forces of the Yaga and the Portuguese.

The Portuguese-Brazilian empire was crying for slaves to provide labour for the Brazilian plantations, and Loanda in Angola became the base from which the slave-hunters, the "pombeiros", penetrated further and further into the African continent on their raids to collect people for the slave-caravans.

This political shift in emphasis from the Congo to Angola was accompanied by a similar change of focus on the part of the Church. Europeans felt more secure under the protection of Portuguese soldiers, and for that reason Loanda attracted a large white population.

### *The Yaga invasions*

The position of the Congo was weakened for many reasons, as shown by various signs. The days of Diego I were numbered, and in his old age he was offered solace by the new bishop of São Tomé. In return for the spiritual guidance given to the king in 1560, this bishop managed to secure certain favours for his nephew, "qui fit le commerce d'esclaves avec profit", comments Cuvelier-Jadin.<sup>16</sup> Spiritual guidance and slave-trade were by no means incompatible, and not all slave-traders had moved south to Angola. Those who remained were divided amongst themselves,

however, as became apparent by the events following Diego's death. One group succeeded in having one of Diego's sons placed on the throne, only to have their candidate deposed by his brother Bernardo who was supported by another group of Portuguese. In the ensuing retaliation many Portuguese were killed because of their interference with the royal succession.<sup>17</sup>

Bernardo I (1561—1567) had to contend not only with these enemies inside the country, but even more with the continuous attacks on the Congo by neighbouring peoples. The most dangerous of these incursions were the attack on the Sundi province by the Anzika (Bateke) and the Yaga attack on the Mbata province. However, it was Alvare I (1568—1587), whose reign is well-known thanks to Duarte Lopez' contemporary account, who was left to face the most massive Yaga invasion. So weak was the Congo by that time that it was utterly defeated by the Yaga.<sup>18</sup> The Yaga destroyed Mbanza Kongo and burnt the churches.

The people were driven to the north, towards the Congo river, where they sought refuge on an island. The island was far too small for the large number of refugees. They were plagued by disease and death and threatened by famine. To the slave-traders of São Tomé this catastrophe meant an opportunity for highly lucrative business, enabling them to buy slaves very cheaply among the refugees. The situation became so desperate that one refugee sold the other into slavery. "Driven by necessity, father sold son, brother sold brother, as everyone tried to obtain food by no matter what villainy."<sup>19</sup> Among those sold as slaves were "des personnes de sang royal et des seigneurs de haut rang".<sup>20</sup>

So strong was the impact of this defeat that the most fundamental rules of Congo society collapsed, so that people sold members of their own clans and families, and even royal personages to the Portuguese. They had reached the point where nothing but starvation awaited them. The kingdom of Congo had been crippled by the Yaga invasions.

In the depth of this humiliation and misery the King was converted to Christianity, asked for forgiveness, and did penance. He turned to the King of Portugal with a request both for military assistance against the Yaga and for missionaries. The first condition for obtaining any help at all, says Balandier in commenting the situation, was to adopt the Christian faith.<sup>21</sup> Portugal responded by sending several hundred soldiers and adventurers to the Congo in 1571, as well as four Dominican priests.<sup>22</sup> With combined forces the Yaga were after a year and a half of fighting driven from the country. Alvare I could install himself in Mbanza Kongo once more, fully aware of the fact that he owed this to the military support

of the Portuguese. Duarte Lopez states that the King, who previously had had several wives and lived according to the traditional customs of the country, became an excellent Christian.<sup>23</sup>

Otherwise the Christian influence in the Congo had almost vanished by the late fifteen-sixties, according to Lopez. Lopez-Pigafetta sees the Yaga invasion as a divine judgement on the King and his people, who had been led astray by the younger generation, notably by one Dom Francisco Bullamatare.<sup>24</sup> This written document from 1591 is the first in which we encounter this epithet, *Bula Matadi*, which three centuries later was bestowed on Stanley and his men. Dom Francisco Bullamatare was baptised and belonged to the nobility, but he openly opposed the Church, declaring that it would be foolish to have only one wife, and that it would be better to return to the old ways. He himself had already done so in practice, in company with many others, including the King. "Tous se laissaient aller à la licence charnelle".<sup>25</sup>

It was not until catastrophe overtook him, that the King came to realize his sin and repented, says Lopez-Pigafetta, and then God helped him once more and restored him to power. In accordance with this brand of theology all ends well, as indicated by the passage: "The King, reinstated in his former authority and having restored order in his kingdom, became an excellent Christian; he married dona Catarina, who is still alive today. With her, he had four daughters . . .".<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he did not omit to send entreaties to Portugal requesting more missionaries.

The Portuguese intervention against the Yaga ordered by King Sebastien may have another explanation, though. Rumours were rife about gold and silver finds in the Congo.<sup>27</sup> Sebastien sent some skilled smelters to investigate the matter, but Alvare I followed the example of Mvemba Nzinga and saw to it that this sort of artisan was not allowed to settle in the country. At that the Portuguese lost interest in the Congo, says Lopez-Pigafetta. "As a result, few priests went there anymore".<sup>28</sup> This shows how closely interwoven the interests of trade and the mission were even in the eyes of contemporary observers.

The Congo was in dire need of outside help to rebuild the country, especially the capital which lay in ruins after the Yaga invasions. When the Portuguese proved uninterested in this sort of effort, Alvare turned elsewhere, to Spain and Rome. Portugal's position in Europe had weakened, and since 1580 the country belonged to Spain, whose position as the leading seafaring nation remained unchallenged until 1588. In this political context Duarte Lopez' mission as Congolese ambassador to Spain and Rome in the years 1583—1589 should be seen as an attempt to

circumvent the *padroão*, the Portuguese privileges dating from more than a century back.

### *The effect of Lopez-Pigafetta's book on contemporary opinion*

Alvare I had several motives in sending his *fidalgo* Duarte Lopez to the Pope.<sup>29</sup> He was instructed to ask for holy relics, blessed objects, a picture of the Virgin Mother, as well as for priests and missionaries, and finally a theological college. In the entire Congo there were only seven or eight priests for more than two million converts. According to the Spanish Carmelites who arrived in the Congo in 1584 there were only four priests.<sup>30</sup> This vast number of converts suggests that the population density was high before the plague (1655), the hostile incursions from the south by the Ambundu, Yaga, and Portuguese, the slave-trade, and the civil wars decimated the population.<sup>31</sup> It was certainly not without calculation that Lopez painted the Congo in bright colours and dwelled extensively upon Mvemba Nzinga. Moreover he held out the promise of rich mineral finds, but at no time did he disguise the fact that his mission primarily had spiritual object, which was to provide better Christian teaching for the Congolese converts.

The São Tomé diocese had in 1571 tried to remedy the lack of African priests by the establishment of a seminary on the island itself.<sup>32</sup> This did not solve the problem for the Congo, since the fear of being sold into slavery, as had been the fate of so many of their countrymen, left the Congolese afraid to come to São Tomé.<sup>33</sup> The attitude of the Congo was that the training of priests should be moved to Mbanza Kongo. The requests which Duarte Lopez was instructed to present on behalf of the Congo had been pressed repeatedly before without producing any result, and Lopez had no greater chance of success than the next man.

What finally turned public opinion in favour of the Congo was Lopez-Pigafetta's book, *Relatione del Reame di Congo et delle circonvicine contrade*, which was written in Italian and published in 1591 in Rome. The book was a great success, and was translated into Dutch in 1596, into English in 1597, and into Latin in 1598. It is not impossible, moreover, that a Portuguese edition may have existed.<sup>34</sup> Public interest in educated circles focused on the Congo and was to be caught by this exotic and Christian country. In colloquial terms, the Congo was boosted by this book, which played a more or less similar role in setting the trend of public opinion in contemporary Europe as the works of Livingstone and Stanley did some centuries later. Before long this effect on public opinion

in Europe following the book's publication in 1591 was beginning to be noticeable in the Congo.

When Alvare II (1587—1614) in 1594 sent one of his close relatives, Antoine Vieira, as his ambassador to Rome, his first request was not for a seminary. He went one step further and demanded that the Congo be separated from São Tomé and form its own diocese.<sup>35</sup> By that time the number of priests in the Congo had already increased to about twenty, while the number of churches amounted to six or seven.<sup>36</sup> On May 20, 1596, the Church of San Salvador was raised to cathedral status, and the Congo formed a diocese together with Angola.<sup>37</sup> This, the bishop of São Tomé noted in his report *ad limina* in 1597, is contrary to established Portuguese policy.<sup>38</sup> There is no doubt, at any rate, that it at least effected a breach in the *padroão*. The Portuguese no longer held an absolute monopoly of the culture contacts with the Congo, and the Holy See was beginning to assume a wider responsibility.

The bishops do not seem to have played a particularly important role in the Congo, and in any case constituted no great threat against the position of the banganga outside the capital itself. This was now called San Salvador, after the cathedral, instead of Mbanza Kongo. The first bishop came to San Salvador in 1601 and died one year later, in 1602, the second came in 1606 and died in 1608, the third, Manuel Baptista Soares, came in 1613, presented his visitation report *ad limina* in 1619, and died in 1620, the fourth came at the end of the year 1624 and died very shortly afterwards, while the fifth, Francisco de Soveral, who was appointed in 1627, never came to the Congo but installed himself in Loanda. He presented his report *ad limina* in 1631 without having visited the Congo, and no bishop came to the Congo after him.<sup>39</sup> This means that San Salvador in practice served as the seat of the diocese only during the first two decades.

The man who represented the element of continuity and served as the mainstay of the Church's work was the secular priest Bras Correa, who enjoyed the greatest confidence in all circles. He came to the Congo in 1593 a sixteen year old orphan, received instruction from Portuguese priests in San Salvador, and was ordained around 1600.<sup>40</sup> Working for several years as an evangelist in the northern Sundi province, he got to know the region, extremely well. Around 1606 he was made a Canon and eventually rose in the clerical hierarchy to the rank of vicar-general to the Bishop, even though he never was made bishop. His influence was greater than that of the bishops, though, for one thing because he acted as confessor to three kings.<sup>41</sup> It is worthy of note that it was the Sundi

province which received the benefit of Bras Correa's services, as it earlier profited from the work of Mvemba Nzinga and later from that of Girolamo de Montesarchio and Bernardo da Gallo. All of them must be counted among the great Christian figures in the history of the Congo Church.

## New relations with Rome

The selection of San Salvador as the seat of a diocese, despite the weak and sporadic part played by the bishops, yet meant that cultural interest in the Congo was kept up, which at least to some extent served to counteract the biased mercenary interest of the European slave-traders. As a consequence of the Holy See's interest in the Congo the state of the Church — more than the state of the country — was described and analyzed in letters and reports of an official character provided by two sources. One source was a succession of ambassadors which the Congo sent to Rome, and the correspondence entailed by this, the other was supplied by European missionaries and bishops stationed in the Congo. Rome was in other words kept well informed about the activities of the Church in the Congo, which laboured under a constant lack of priests.<sup>42</sup>

In 1604 Alvare II sent one Nsaku ne Vunda, Antoine Manuel ne Vunda, as his ambassador to Rome.<sup>43</sup> In his instructions to Nsaku ne Vunda, Alvare II dwelled extensively upon the protests he wished to enter both against the intrigues and misrepresentations of the priests, and against the fact that the Portuguese in Loanda were robbing him of nzimbu, among other things, and enslaved his people on the island of Loanda.<sup>44</sup> The King promised to reserve a part of any mineral finds for the benefit of the Pope in return for the latter's protection against the Portuguese in Angola. Alvare II felt himself seriously threatened by priests, traders, and colonists, alike, and he was fighting for his kingdom's independence.<sup>45</sup>

The Congolese ambassador did not reach his destination until 1608. He received a surprisingly warm welcome from the Pope, but died shortly after his arrival in Rome from the after-effects of his long and arduous journey.<sup>46</sup> In addition to his impressive reception by the Pope, Antoine Manuel received the further honour of being buried in Rome as befitted a royal ambassador and of being commemorated in a bust.<sup>47</sup> In 1610 the Pope wrote to Alvare II to tell him of the magnificent funeral which Rome had bestowed upon the Congolese ambassador, but on the subject

of Alvare's protests against unworthy priests in general, and Portuguese colonists in particular, he did not reply.<sup>48</sup>

Alvare received this missive in 1611, and replied to it in 1613 by a letter of his own, which mentions his thanks for the honour received merely in passing, and continues to renew his protests against Bishop, secular priests, and Dominicans alike. The Bishop is accused of engaging in slave-trade and of gambling with the tithes of the Church, while he is unequalled in his lack of respect for the King. "The foreign priests who come to the Congo poor, have no other concern but to enrich themselves and to return to their country, and do not concern themselves with winning souls for Heaven."<sup>49</sup> Only the mendicant friars, "Mariani", were credited with a favourable reputation.

In the same letter the learned theologian Jean-Baptiste Vivès in Rome was appointed to succeed Antoine Manuel as the Congo's ambassador to the Pope.<sup>50</sup> Already during the reign of Alvare III (1615—1622) Mgr. Vivès initiated negotiations to send Capuchin missionaries to the Congo. His main task, however, was to seek protection for the Congo against Angola, which served as a base from which the Portuguese together with Ambundu and Yaga made continuous raids upon the southern Congo.<sup>51</sup> Philip III of Spain and Portugal defended himself to the Pope against these charges and claimed that he had given the governors in Angola orders not to use the Yaga to help them in their military operations, "the Yaga who eat human flesh and who have destroyed the villages of the King of Congo".<sup>52</sup>

Philip III placed the blame for the wretched state of the Congo on its priests. "They are mainly occupied with trade and with acquiring worldly goods".<sup>53</sup> It went so far, says Philip III, that Bishop Manuel Baptista expelled all priests from the country. It is true that relations between the priests and the royal house of Congo were extremely strained, but not all of them were banished and at least one of them, Bras Correa, managed to retain the lasting confidence of the King and the people, despite false accusations brought against him. He even managed to mediate between opposing parties in internal conflicts in the Congo.<sup>54</sup> Bras Correa received from king Alvare III a testimonial never before awarded to a white man, "he is like one of us".<sup>55</sup> Almost all other priests were described as only interested in profit, from the Bishop down to parish priests and friars of various orders. As soon as they had amassed sufficient wealth from their business dealings they returned to Europe. Despite this criticism, which included the friars, Alvare III warmly welcomed Vivès plans to send Capuchin missionaries. Mgr. J.-B. Vivès held a strong position in

Rome, and according to François Bontinck he took active part in the preliminary work for the Propaganda.<sup>56</sup> When the Propaganda was established in Rome in 1622, the Congo's ambassador became one of its influential members. This gave the Congo a privileged position in this newly founded supreme college of the Church which under the direct authority of the Pope was to co-ordinate and supervise all missionary activity. Tangible proof of the favourable attitude towards the Congo was subsequently provided by the massive action after 1645 initiated there by the Propaganda. It would seem as though the Congo became somewhat of a pet project to the Propaganda, not only for the ten years during which Mgr. Vivès was able to influence its policy, but for long after his death in 1632.

*“As Sheep having no Shepherd”*

The sources available for the hundred years between Mvemba Nzinga and Garcia II leave us with the dominant impression that both European and Congolese authors subscribed to the leading theory that the Congo was a Christian nation, where evangelization was no particular pressing need. The surrounding peoples, on the other hand, were described as pagan, although it was not expressly suggested that they were in need of evangelization. The Christian converts in the Congo were considered to be in need of education, and this was the most serious lack, the only one of any importance. Priests were demanded to remedy this lack, and a number of orders each sent a handful of friars at various times, to tend the flock. This also explains why we find no trace of the intensive struggle to challenge the power of the banganga which had marked Mvemba Nzinga's era, and which was not resumed until after 1645. Nor do we find any reports of *minkissi* being burnt. The banganga were left to their practices with little interference. Now and again priests and missionaries made some attempt to conquer polygyny, without any results. Polygyny was the general practice. Accounts of a comprehensive character, like Lopez-Pigafetta, the compiler Confalonieri, and De Statu Regni, have a tendency to glorify Congolese Christianity.<sup>57</sup>

Sometimes, though, another reality emerges even in works of this kind. De Statu Regni mentions the lack of priests in the Congo, putting the number of priests at no more than some twenty, and discusses the ignorance of the people who lack any form of teaching. “Questioned about religion and faith, the inhabitants only answered one thing: we have eaten salt, because according to the ritual of the Roman church, salt is



placed in the mouth of those about to be baptised".<sup>58</sup> One of the topics discussed by Mgr. Confalonieri is the great power of the banganga. "They have a great veneration for their fetishes and priests, whom they call Ganga, and obey them in everything, as though ordered by God."<sup>59</sup> This is a mere statement of fact, without any aggressive or pessimistic overtones. A different note, however, is heard in the visitation report *ad limina* presented by the Bishop of São Tomé, François de Villanova, in 1597.<sup>60</sup> The Congo has given him nothing but trouble. The people refuse to pay tithes despite repeated reminders, they pay no heed to the priests, live in polygamy, and many cling to their idols. The Bishop considers it futile to raise the Congo to the status of a diocese, since the Congolese lack conviction when they call themselves Christians, François de Villanova claims.

The first two bishops of San Salvador never had time to present a visitation report *ad limina* (apostolorum limina). This was left to the third bishop, who did so in 1619, after more than ten years in the Congo.<sup>61</sup> Bishop Manuel Baptista Soares mentions the lack of priests in his diocese, Congo-Angola, which is served by only twenty-four priests. The Sundi, like the Pango, Bata, Pemba, and Soyo, have only one priest. It is true that the people willingly have themselves and their children baptised, but they change their customs only with the greatest difficulty, the Bishop complains. They mix Christian customs with pagan practices, "in a way resulting in a truly barbarian confusion".<sup>62</sup> The reason is insufficient instruction in the Catechism.

The few priests to be found baptise people without giving them any instruction either before or after baptism. Polygyny is the rule, and the King himself keeps concubines. On top of all this they have a craving for strong drink. In their oaths they disdain baptism, reject the Christian faith, revile the priests and bishops, and ask them to leave the country. The Bishop had even met chiefs (sobas), who claimed to be Christians but could not even make the sign of the cross. One of them had 120 wives, while the others had 70, 60, 30, 20, and 10 respectively. Lawlessness is rampant in the country, and the Bishop's protests had been of no avail against the corrupting influence of the slave-trade.

The picture is further darkened, in Manuel Baptista's eyes, by the intrusion of Protestant Dutchmen who had been settled in Pinda for fifteen years. They engaged in trade and spread their faith in opposition against the Roman Catholic church. The Bishop himself had met with them and failed to curb them. Bishop Manuel Baptista Soares finally summarizes his report with the following words: "Everywhere in this kingdom, in all

its provinces, among Christians as much as among pagans, the worship of idols, black magic, sorcery, divination, and other kinds of superstition are practised".<sup>63</sup> Manuel Baptista drew the conclusion from his report that a seminary for the training of priests must be built in San Salvador, for only an adequate supply of capable priests would be able to remedy this wretched situation.

This Bishop's report leaves no doubt whatsoever that the traditional African religion with the nganga as its central pivot had a firm grip on the people.

It took some years before the desired seminary was established, and it was not given to the Capuchins to found it, despite the fact that they had been prepared to leave for the Congo as far back as in 1620. The task fell to the Jesuits, whose work had reached a certain stage of consolidation in Loanda, where they already had a seminary.<sup>64</sup> In 1619 two Jesuit priests, Mateus Cardoso and Duarte Vaz, set out from Loanda to San Salvador to investigate its suitability as the seat of a seminary. This it was found to be and when Mateus Cardoso in 1625 returned to San Salvador as its rector, following an interval of two years spent in Portugal, the seminary was already in operation.<sup>65</sup>

Like the Jesuits working three-quarters of a century before in San Salvador, who had taken the initiative towards the publication of the Catechism in Kikongo printed in 1558, these Jesuit priests felt it was essential for the Congolese Christians to be instructed in the Christian faith, preferably in a way which could be understood by the people. Mateus Cardoso led the way in a reformation of the educational scheme based upon the native language. In 1624 he had Catechism in Kikongo printed in Lisbon, which he had prepared, probably unaware of the existence of the Catechism published in 1558. This Catechism he brought to the Congo in 1625. The gospel precepts and prayers were sung in an African rhythm so that the young generation would be able to learn the contents by heart and in their turn teach their elders to sing the Gospel. The experience of a hundred and fifty years had shown that Latin was difficult to understand and impossible to learn for the Congolese. The same role which Mateus Cardoso played in the Congo in breaking new ground in the field of education, was in Angola assumed by the more famous Pero Tavares, who occupies a major place in some of Louis Jadin's studies.<sup>66</sup> The little seminary at San Salvador with its interest in native languages and music can be seen as a precursor to the deliberate linguistic research undertaken by the Capuchins. In the sixteen-thirties

Francisco Paconio in Angola prepared a grammar and Catechism in Ambundu. The Catechism was printed in Lisbon in 1642.<sup>67</sup> The Congolese, both young and old, appreciated learning the Catholic doctrine through songs in African rhythm in their own language. This form of catechesis became very popular.

In his letter of September 14, 1625, Mateus Cardoso's main topic is his journey to San Salvador and on the baptisms and catechesis dispensed en route.<sup>68</sup> He professes himself happy about the kindness shown him by the people, and on his arrival at the capital he makes for the church, where he falls on his knees and thanks God for a successful journey. He also addresses his gratitude to "notre patriarche saint Ignace et saint François Xavier", whose statues stood on the altar in the church.<sup>69</sup>

One cannot but wonder what thoughts were aroused in the Congolese members of the company by the sight of this Jesuit priest addressing his prayers to two altar statues, which must have been reminiscent of the well-known nkissi figures.

Mateus Cardoso was well received by some women, as well as subsequently by the King. With the latter he had a long conversation, which apparently dealt mostly with the question of how Kikongo could be used in teaching the Christian faith. Dom Manuel Jordão from Sundi also showed himself very interested and managed to learn some prayers in Kikongo before returning to the north.

In his report *ad limina* in 1631, Bishop Francisco de Soveral in Loanda reviewed the short history of the diocese and included an analysis of the Congo, although he had not visited it in person.<sup>70</sup> Information about the Congo is scarce, and the bishop dwells mostly on the precarious situation of the Church both as regards its finances and its staff. The cathedral is too small for the large population, it is badly built and lacks not only embellishment, but even a baptismal font and a vestry. The other churches and chapels have been allowed to fall into ruins and no one cares about them any longer. The number of priests, however, has since the mid-twenties risen from twenty-four for the whole of the diocese to some fifty, even though this is far from sufficient. In Sundi there is still only one priest.

The ignorance is overwhelming and for that reason "dominant librement la sensualité et les autres vices".<sup>71</sup> The few priests, poorly trained and highly isolated, live among a people who go about naked. "They are consequently on numerous occasions exposed to sensuality. One can only report this with the very greatest sadness".<sup>72</sup> Thus in 1631 the bishop seems to have regarded the people's nudity as carnal and — by implication

— sinful. This nudity, representing carnality in European eyes as it did, exposed the European priests to temptation. Perhaps European missionaries were already in the sixteen-thirties as strongly convinced that nudity was equivalent to carnality and immoral practices as for instance the French missionaries in Loango in the seventeen-sixties, who expressed this attitude in no uncertain terms.

There were some tendencies which the bishop is pleased to note, such as the willingness of the Congolese to be baptised, and their musicality, but otherwise he sees a prospect of unmitigated gloom stretching ahead. In particular he is concerned about the extensive trade journeys made by the Congolese, which takes them to far-off pagan areas. Here they forgot their duties as Christians and relapsed into pagan practices. They mix Christian rites with pagan customs, achieving “un amalgame barbare”.<sup>73</sup> In his opinion Christianity was in a wretched state.

In his own town of Loanda, though, Francisco de Soveral initiated a number of projects to remedy the lack of Christian leaders and teachers. He trained catechists who were to instruct candidates for baptism and taught the younger generation grammar and music, Catholic doctrine, and good habits. The bishop continued with his training of secular priests for over a decade, until he was forced to flee into the interior when the Dutch took Loanda in 1641.<sup>74</sup> Francisco de Soveral’s term of office lasted long enough for him to present a second ten-year report to the Pope and the Propaganda, which he did in 1640.<sup>75</sup> This report shows a striking difference from the one presented in 1631 by its optimistic tone especially with regard to the Congo. Much had in the Bishop’s view changed for the better in ten years. The cathedral at San Salvador had been put in order and was richly adorned. It had a staff of twelve white and a few Congolese priests. Among the latter we find for example Manuel Roboredo, ordained in 1637, who subsequently was to gain such repute as language teacher to the Capuchins. Like his colleagues Miguel de Castro and Simão de Medeiros, Roboredo was a mestizo. All three were related to the royal house and their ordination can be seen as a result of the bishop’s efforts to raise the level of the indigenous secular clergy. Apart from the cathedral, eight other churches were in operation, and even in the provinces there were a few churches and priests, even though their number was far too small. Sundi, Soyo, Bamba, and Pamba, for example, only had one each.

A new element entered the picture with the expansion of the Church in the sixteen-thirties, in one case following in the wake of a Portuguese conquest, in another due to the personal initiative of the bishop. The

Portuguese had conquered the powerful chief of Ambuilla, and as a result the chief received holy baptism. A church was built in Ambuilla, and a great many people were converted. This development consequently followed the pattern typical of Angola, with soldiers and priests working side by side.

An entirely different approach was adopted for the kingdom of Kundi on the other side of the Kwango river, almost on a level with Pombo. The Kundi were a trading nation who exchanged their skilfully made fiber textiles for gold and silver in Loanda, and both Portuguese and Spanish went to trade in Kundi, says the bishop. Having first collected exact information about the kingdom of Kundi and its inhabitants, the Bishop proceeded to select a single priest to be dispatched to Mbanza Kundi as a missionary. After a long conversation with the queen who ruled Kundi, this missionary managed to convince her that the Catholic faith was the only true creed. She allowed herself and her family to be baptized, followed suit by practically all of her subjects. This success was extremely promising in the Bishop's eyes.

Whereas a brighter outlook for the Church could be discerned in the Congo, developments in Angola had led in the opposite direction. Outside Loanda there were four Christian communities with a church and a priest, located in the four garrisons, the military posts established by the Portuguese. These were under continuous attack by enemies. The garrisons were also supposed to protect the Christian chiefs, or sobas, who fell under the authority of Spain. The bishop tried to supply these four regions with African priests familiar with the local language, but their number was far too small to reach everyone with their teaching. In Loanda itself the Bishop showed his interest in secular schemes taking the form of a hospital which treated both Africans and Europeans free of charge, and the dispensal of alms to destitute widows. In addition six or seven Franciscans and twelve Jesuits were working in Loanda. But the harvest is overwhelming and the workers few, Francisco de Soveral concluded his second report ad limina the year before the advent of the Dutch caused a radical change in the conditions under which the Church had to work, resulting in an even greater lack of priests.

## Gathering threats facing the Congo, Bumbi 1622

All through the period between the fifteen-sixties and the sixteen-twenties, the Congo was exposed to repeated attacks from the south by the Yaga

and Ambundu, which proved to have at least as devastating an effect as the Portuguese slave-trade. Once the Portuguese had established themselves in Angola, they often joined forces with the Ambundu and Yaga in raids upon the Congo during the first decades of the seventeenth century. Most notorious for his role in these raids became the Loanda governor João Correia de Sousa, who was behind the battle at Bumbi in 1622. His aim was to depose the newly elected king of Congo, Pedro II Afonso (1622—1624) and lay part of the latter's country under his dominion. The governor's candidate for the throne was a two-year old son of the former king.<sup>76</sup>

Two accounts have been preserved of the battle at Bumbi on December 18, 1622. One report is by the hand of the Congo Canon André Cordeiro.<sup>77</sup> Combined Portuguese and Yaga forces first ravaged and plundered Namba Congo, after which they proceeded towards Mbanza Bumbi in the southern part of the Bamba province. Faced by this threat, Mani Pemba and Mani Bamba joined forces and marched against the Governor's army. Both Congolese chiefs fell in the battle at Bumbi, together with many other leading men and numerous soldiers. Others were taken to Loanda as prisoners and sold into Brazilian slavery.

After their victory, Portuguese soldiers and Yaga pillaged all of Bamba, and the fact that they were called Christians, says André Cordeiro, "did not prevent the converts from disappearing into the stomach of the man-eating Yaka".<sup>78</sup> However, the Bumbi people took revenge by slaughtering all Portuguese found within their territory.

Complementary, and on some points more specific information is provided by Mateus Cardoso, who likewise reports that the Yaga ate some of their conquered enemies, including the two Congolese leaders.<sup>79</sup> Cardoso states that more than a thousand Portuguese were in the Congo and threatened by retaliation. Due to the protective intervention of King Pedro the massacre was almost wholly restricted to Bamba, but there all Portuguese, men women, and children, were killed. According to Cardoso the Yaga army had smoked human flesh in store for six months to come, following the combined Yaga and Portuguese victory at Bumbi.

Governor João Correia de Sousa was severely criticised by the Jesuits for his policy, but refused to change it despite the fact that he lacked the support of both Portugal and Spain. Mateus Cardoso holds this governor entirely responsible for the strained relation between Congolese and Portuguese in 1622, which entailed that the Portuguese families began to leave the Congo and settled in Angola instead. This exodus continued all through the seventeenth century.

The Congolese defeat at Bumbi in 1622 can be seen as a mere indication of what was still to come, and their defeat against Portuguese and Yaga in the battle of Ambuilla in 1665 would be even more agonizing. As a Portuguese colony, Angola had become the Congo's most serious threat, a threat which had not existed at the time of Mvemba Nzinga's death.

In the northern border regions the situation was likewise troubled. Pedro II Afonso was worried about the devastation of the kingdom of Bango, or Vungu in the Mayombe and the killing of its King, which was sanctioned by Loango. "The king was much distressed, because this kingdom was the root and the origin of the Kings of Congo", writes André Cordeiro.<sup>80</sup> At the same time Dutch men-of-war made their appearance in the Congo mouth.

Only a few comments remain concerning some precursors to the Messianic movements of later times. During the reign of Alvare I (1568—1587) Francisco Bullamatere gained a certain authority in San Salvador as the leader of a revolt against the Church. As the leader of this successful rebellion against the Church he pleaded for a return to traditional customs, including polygyny. He has aroused only brief comment, though, and a clear picture of him fails to emerge. Thanks to Pero Tavares' account of the Bengo in Angola from the sixteen-thirties, we have a somewhat clearer picture of a recent convert by the name of Francisco Casolla whom Jadin describes as "un précurseur du prophétisme" and "le faux prophète".<sup>81</sup>

Pero Tavares was known for his implacable habit of burning any nkissi or nsinda he encountered on his missionary travels, to the intense indignation of the local population. Pero Tavares heard about Casolla and during Lent of 1632 he set out for the Dande and Lifune rivers to find him.<sup>82</sup> Tavares describes Casolla as an intelligent man who spoke Portuguese and used to attend Tavares' catechetical instruction, which he obviously absorbed, seeing that he subsequently set out to preach against the Catholic faith and Tavares' teachings. He healed the sick and performed strong feats, attracting large crowds of both Christians and pagans.

Tavares was firmly resolved to find this rebel and put him behind bars. He aimed at any price to stop the activities of this enemy of the Church, "ce monstre-là", or "cet anté-christ", as Tavares called Casolla.<sup>83</sup> Casolla was sheltered by the people, however, and since no one was willing to betray him, Pero Tavares failed to capture the popular leader of the

revolt. Casolla had the qualities which Bullamatatare lacked. As the son of God he was prophet, healer, and miracle-worker, the same qualities which mark later figures like Kimpa Vita and Simon Kimbangu.

## Summary

The strong fluctuations marking political developments in the Congo-Angola region during the hundred years between Mvemba Nzinga and Garcia II probably did not affect the power of the banganga in the Congo to any appreciable degree. In practice the traditional religion held the people firmly in its grip. The banganga's main opponents, the Christian priests, emerge throughout as more interested in slave-trade and other commercial enterprises than in administering the sacraments, preaching the faith, and teaching. Throughout this period the Christian priests remained a small force, even though their number had increased tenfold from two or three to over twenty and the Congo theoretically was held to be a Christian region.

If we look at European politics, the greatest change with respect to its effect on the situation in the Congo was the faltering power of the Portuguese. When acquired a controlling influence over Portugal during the years between 1580 and 1640, the padroado could not be defended as energetically as before. But even Spain's influence diminished after the defeat of the Armada by England, which gave the Protestant nations England and Holland wider scope at sea. During the first half of the seventeenth century the European struggle for power was extended to Brazil and the Congo-Angola region. Taking advantage of this situation, the Congolese began trading with the Dutch at Pinda.

Portugal's weakening commercial position in relation to the Congo was accompanied by a similar development in the strategy of the Church. In 1622 the Pope created a body in Rome, the Propaganda, which was to coordinate all missionary activity, one of the more significant results of the Counter Reformation as far as Africa was concerned. Congo's diplomatic activity had earlier shown notable results in two particular instances. Ambassador Duarte Lopez' book, *Relatione del Reame di Congo*, which had been published in 1591, focused the interest of educated circles in Europe on the Congo. This interest was increased thanks to the Congo's ambassador in Rome, Mgr. Jean-Baptiste Vivès, who during the first decade of the Propaganda was one of its most influential members. This turn of events meant, that the initiative in Church matters had de-



finitely passed from Lisbon to Rome, even though the padroão do was still valid.

The Portuguese, on their part, gradually shifted their interest from the Congo to Angola, which offered at least as good a slave market as the Congo. All Europeans, both in Angola and in the Congo, seem to have been involved in the slave-trade in one way or the other, whether they were laymen, secular priests, or friars. With a few notable exceptions, such as Bras Correa and Mateus Cardoso among European priests and Manuel Roboredo among the Congolese, the clergy showed little interest in religious activities in addition to their business dealings.

## Chapter 3. From Garcia II to Kimpa Vita. 1641–1706.

### Two hundred-and-fifty Capuchins to the Congo and Angola

During the reign of Garcia II Afonso (1641—1661) some of the trends we have discussed reach their dramatic conclusion. The arrival of the Capuchins at Soyo in 1645 can be seen as confirmation of the new era lying ahead of the Congolese people. This event marked a victory for the missionary policy initiated by Mgr. Vivès during the first ten years of the Propaganda, but for two decades opposed by Portugal (Spain). What had been instrumental in breaking up this resistance was the growing power of the Dutch as a seafaring and trading nation. During the first half of the seventeenth century they gradually succeeded in undermining the influence of the Portuguese, at the same time consolidating their own position on the Loango-Congo coast, where the English were active as well. Louis Jadin has presented a detailed analysis of this rivalry between Dutch and Portuguese in his study, *Rivalités luso-néerlandaises au Soho, Congo, 1600—1675*.<sup>1</sup>

The battle of Bumbi, gave rise to a spreading fear of the Portuguese among the Congolese, and Mani Soyo turned to the Dutch factories in Loango to assure himself of their help in case of a Portuguese attack upon Pinda. This request came at an opportune moment for the Dutch, for even though they were unable to send out any expeditions from Loango, the newly established West Indische Compagnie provided an effective instrument for aiding Soyo against the Portuguese. Following their capture of Pernambuco — what is now Recife in Northeastern Brazil — and the resulting demand for slaves, Dutch interest in the Congo—Angola coast increased. Ten years later they had become strong enough to take Loanda from Portugal, which one year before, in 1640, had freed itself from Spain. Garcia II took a favourable view of collaboration with the Dutch, an additional reason why Lisbon could no longer prevent the Propaganda from sending Capuchin missionaries to the Congo.

Thus it was a Protestant nation which helped the Holy See to circumvent the *padroão* and paved the way for the Propaganda's missionaries. Once the Capuchins had installed themselves in the Congo, they consolidated their position. In 1650, when the Dutch had been driven out and the

Congo and Portugal entered into peace negotiations, they not only managed to hold their own, but even succeeded in securing some sort of missionary monopoly for themselves, entailing that only Italian Capuchins would be allowed to enter the Congo.<sup>2</sup> This can be regarded as an addition to the *padroão*, which was still in force.

The Capuchins who came to the Congo belonged to an order which had already acquired vast missionary experience by sending missionaries to Brazil (1612), the Near East (1625), Egypt (1630), Canada (1632), the Antilles (1636), Senegal (1637), Madras (1642), and Dahomey (1643).<sup>3</sup> The leader of the Capuchins in the Congo was Bonaventura d'Alessano, a zealous principal who from San Salvador directed both the educational work and the widespread mission tours to the far interior, stretching as far as Pombo, or what is now Stanley Pool.<sup>4</sup> One of the missionaries included in the first group of Italian and Spanish Capuchins which came to the Congo under his leadership was Giovanni Francesco Romano (Jean-François de Rome), author of the book *Breve Relatione* published in 1648. Within three years no less than seven Italian editions of this work were published, and it was translated into French, German, and Spanish. Its effect on contemporary European opinion was less striking than Lopez-Pigafetta's *Relatione* had been in the fifteen-nineties, however. An annotated translation published by François Bontinck in 1964, entitled *La fondation de la mission des Capuchins au Royaume du Congo (1648)*, has made this book available to a wider public.

On May 25, 1645, the twelve Capuchins landed in Pinda, what is now Vila de Santo Antonio do Zaire, where they found a small church with an altar, and a cross standing outside the church.<sup>5</sup> Proceeding to Mbanza Soyo, they were overwhelmed with joy at the sight of its church, which displayed a church-bell and a cross and whose altar was adorned with two old statues representing the Madonna and Saint Antonius of Padua.

They were given an enthusiastic reception by the population who had been without a priest for several years. Their commercial relations with the Dutch, thus had not turned the people of Soyo into Calvinists, and to the Missionaries they remained Catholics. One of the new missionaries, however, remarks rather critically immediately upon arrival that people worship the Cross and the images without having been taught either Catholic doctrine or morals.<sup>6</sup> The Capuchins immediately started baptizing, using a complete ritual, Jean-François de Rome states with some pride. They brought Holy oil along, whereas previous Congolese converts had to be content with salt and water. In the early years they registered five thousand baptisms and about one hundred marriages each year, while

some five hundred children attended catechetical instruction. The Capuchins were off to a promising start.

Despite the fact that relations between Garcia II and Mani Soyo were openly hostile, the Capuchins proceeded to San Salvador, where they continued the struggle against polygyny which had been attempted by so many of the missionaries that had preceded them. The picture presented by Jean-François de Rome was one in which the indigenous population both in Pemba and in Soyo willingly left their "concubines", "married", and lived a Christian — that is to say, monogamous — life. Not only that, but they also did penance for their sinful ways with such fervor that they whipped themselves, "avec tant d'ardeur qu'ils répandaient beaucoup de sang".<sup>7</sup> They were likewise devoted in their exercise of other religious duties; they were diligent in learning the Catechism, eager to send their children to the schools established by the Capuchins, regularly attended Mass and received the sacrament.

The first part of the *Relatione* of 1648, describing the Capuchin mission's early years in the Congo, shows the same tendency to idealize Congolese Christianity which marked Lopez-Pigafetta's work. This tendency is lacking in the book's second part, which is considerably more interesting and describes the country's nature and climate, its flora and fauna, and the missionary reaction to native traditions and practices. Jean-François de Rome states that his account only presents his own observations, but occasionally he also quotes the native point of view on some small point. He was told, for instance, that, formerly the Congo was large and densely populated, but internal strife has changed this. "Le Congo n'est plus le Congo", the old people say.<sup>8</sup>

Among other ideas quoted by the author as representing native views, is the conviction that beauty is proportionate to blackness of the skin, so that albino is regarded as a monster. J.-F. de Rome dwells rather extensively on the dress of the Congolese, which he regards as a standard of civilization. The country's ruling classes had adopted Portuguese dress, and the King himself wore "l'habit et la croix de Chevalier du Christ". Great splendour was on occasion displayed by the court at San Salvador, where numerous churches, or the remains of them, stood as imposing memorials to the glorious beginnings of the Church in this country.

Following this fairly traditional account of the Congo, Jean-François de Rome strikes a novel course by his attempt to describe the Congolese character in general.<sup>9</sup> He describes them as uninterested in architecture and trade, and living a more or less carefree life without bothering about amassing riches. As a result they are always happy and ready to smile.

They are skilled artisans in many fields; smithery, carpentry, pottery, weaving, and basket-work. They are poor farmers, on the other hand, which may be explained by their penchant for stealing the produce of their neighbours.

They are a musical people, and love to dance all night long to the accompaniment of various instruments, both of their own manufacture and such as they have bought from the Portuguese and Dutch. Apparently J.-F. de Rome was capable of appreciating both Congolese dance and music — even though he criticized their habit of beating the drums with their hands instead of with drum-sticks — and what he denounced was in fact only the traditional marriage customs and the role of the banganga in sickness and death. These things he denounced in no uncertain terms as "l'artifice du démon", inventions of the devil.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic Church, says Jean-François de Rome, has succeeded in conquering the Calvinist threat — by burning their books, for instance — but abolishing the heathen form of marriage, "le mariage coutumier" and replacing it by Christian practice presents a greater problem. The man presents "la dot" to the woman's parents and takes the woman on trial for some years, and if they feel they are compatible they get married with great festivity. Even among slaves this is the general practice. It is true that they go through a Catholic form of marriages in church, but this does not satisfy them and is followed by festivities in which the newly-weds are the centre of frenetic celebrations.

What annoys the Capuchin priest is the show of magnificence surrounding marriages, a quite excessive display of grandeur, in his opinion. The newly-weds receive homage as though the occasion was the conferment of a doctorate, with its cries of "Long live the doctor". The immoral aspect of this practice is that man and wife for many years can live "en état de concubinage", due to their difficulty in making up their minds, the man prolonging the payment of instalments on "la dot" from year to year.

The Congolese defend their custom of a mutual trial period before marriage by the argument that their eventual union is meant to last for life. Therefore one has to be careful. "If I cannot have her on trial", says one Congolese about his intended, "I prefer not to get married rather than running the risk of living a life which would be a constant hell".<sup>11</sup> But if the man repudiates the woman after some years of trial marriage, says Jean-François de Rome, no one else will have her either, and her children will be dispersed and deprived of any chance of education. It is not a good system.

Jean-François de Rome is even more vehement in his condemnation of

the banganga's interference in cases of illness. "Ces démons de sorciers opèrent par artifice diabolique", he says, "ils invoquent le démon".<sup>12</sup> This comment embodies the attitude of many missionaries, who sincerely believe that the banganga worship the devil. Jean-François nevertheless grudgingly notes that the banganga knew how to use medicinal herbs which succeeded in curing some diseases. Otherwise he finds the people, and especially the women, extremely superstitious.

These verbal condemnations of the banganga are fairly mild in comparison with the forcible attacks launched upon them by later missionaries. Some of them, i. e. Georges de Geel, Girolamo de Montesarchio, Merolla da Sorrente, and Bernardo da Gallo, we shall discuss below.

Jean-François de Rome describes a ritual at the court of San Salvador which seems to him important but puzzling. The two principal dignitaries stand by holding a horsetail whisk, seemingly as though to whisk away flies from the King, but there are no flies. They wave the horsetail as though they wish to "asperger le roi d'eau bénite".<sup>13</sup>

Jean-François de Rome was unable to find an explanation of this function which had such a principal part in the court ceremonial. It is clear, however, that this ritual alludes to the double role of a Nsaku ne Vunda, which we have discussed earlier both in connexion with Ntinu Wene's conquest of the Congo and in the context of Mvemba Nzinga's succession to the throne in 1506. Thus the old enthronement rite dating back for more than two hundred years has in changed form managed to survive as the principal element of the court ceremonial, which otherwise was entirely modelled on that of Portugal.

After one year Jean-François de Rome returned to Italy to deliver his report on the Congo and secure reinforcements. In 1648 this reinforcement arrived in the form of a first contingent of twelve more Capuchins, including the "apostle of Sundi", Girolamo de Montesarchio. Twenty more missionaries were sent out in 1651, and new groups kept arriving all through the next ten years. During each of the five following decades between thirty and forty missionaries arrived, which means that over half of the total missionary force sent out, by the Capuchins during the one hundred-and-ninety years of their work in the Congo-Angola area left Europe during the first sixty years. All the same, this energetic effort to strengthen the missionary force did not mean that there were plenty of missionaries in the Congo, for the rate of mortality was extremely high and those who arrived in the years after 1654 were barely sufficient to fill the gaps left by missionaries who had died or returned home.<sup>14</sup> The number of Capuchins simultaneously at work in the Congo never seems to have exceeded

about thirty, and often their number was only half as much or even less.

We shall discuss only a few of the outstanding missionary figures from different decades and their attitude to the native culture of the Congo. They have been selected because each of them pinpoints characteristic features of the culture confrontation, Jean-François de Rome in the sixteen-forties, Georges de Geel in the next decade, Girolamo de Montesarchio in the sixteen-fifties and sixties, followed by Merolla, Girolamo da Sorrente, and round the turn of the century by Bernardo da Gallo, Lorenço da Lucca, and Zucchelli da Gradisca. The Relations which they have written provide valuable first-hand information of the Congo, specially the northern provinces. A second-hand source is provided by Cavazzi, who never visited the Congo himself but compiled material supplied by members of his order posted there. Kilger and Hildebrand, for instance, base part of their studies on Cavazzi's work.<sup>15</sup> In the following section, while attempting to present the material as concisely as possible, we have tried to arrange the facts so that an over-all picture of the course of events in the Congo will emerge.

## Georges de Geel, a victim of his own policy of Violence

Georges de Geel has become known as the first "martyr" in the Congo. When Jean-François de Rome during his visit to Europe in the sixteen-forties came to Holland, he recruited missionaries for the Congo-Angola field among Capuchins familiar with the language of the Dutch rule in Loanda.<sup>16</sup> Among the Flemish Capuchins who volunteered was Georges de Geel, who takes the central place in Hildebrand's substantial study from 1940, *Le Martyr Georges de Geel et les Débuts de la Mission du Congo (1645—1652)*. The Italian missionary and his Flemish counterpart traveled together to the Congo in 1651. On arriving Jean-François de Rome immediately proceeded to San Salvador to present Garcia II with the silver crown which the Pope had bestowed on the monarch.<sup>17</sup> While pleased to receive the gift, the King was extremely vexed by the Pope's failure to sanction a change in the rules of succession in the Congo which would make it possible for his son to become heir to the throne. When Georges de Geel shortly afterwards arrived at San Salvador, relations were very strained between the King and the Capuchins, who were maligned both by secular priests and by Jesuits.

In accordance with Capuchin practice during the seventeenth century, Georges de Geel devoted the beginning of his stay at San Salvador to lingu-

istic studies. His teacher was Manuel Roboredo, under whose guidance he compiled a Latin-Spanish-Kikongo dictionary for his own use, but this was not printed until 1928, when Van Wing and Penders published it under the title, *Le plus ancien dictionnaire bantu, vocabularium P. Georgii Gelensis*.<sup>18</sup> In 1659 a Kikongo grammar was published by Giacinto Brusciotto de Vetralla. More than two centuries later, in 1882, this was published in English by Grattan H. Guinness, followed by a Portuguese edition in 1886.<sup>19</sup> Since it was Guinness who published this Capuchin grammar in London in 1882, it seems highly likely that both Nils Westlind and Holman W. Bentley were acquainted with Brusciotto's grammar when they prepared their own.<sup>20</sup>

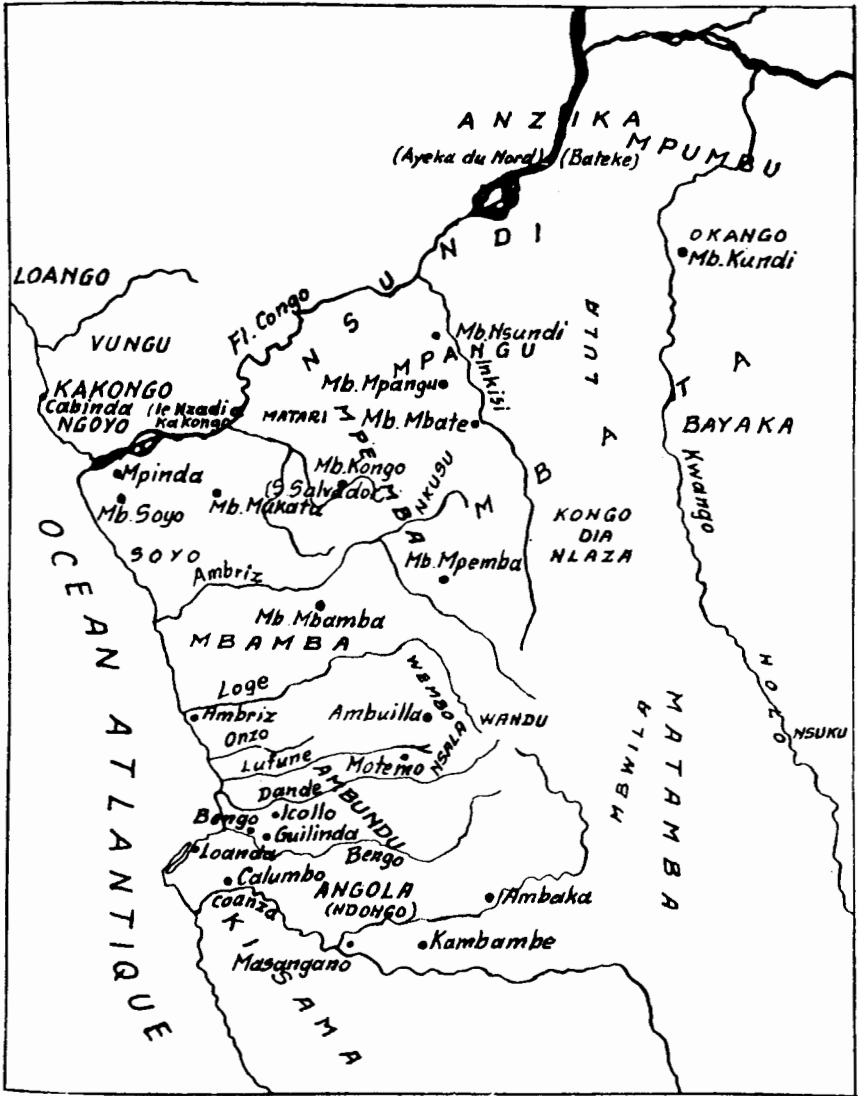
The Capuchins were far more concerned than their predecessors in the Congo that the missionaries should learn African languages, and consequently applied themselves zealously to literary production. As early as 1650 they printed a Catechism in Kikongo, Portuguese, Latin, and Italian.<sup>21</sup> For many years this linguistic work revolved around Manuel Roboredo, to whom Hildebrand assigns the credit for its successful results.

In contrast to the practice of earlier missionaries, it was the Capuchin policy to reach as large a portion of the population as possible through personal visits. As a result the missionaries were dispersed throughout the country to cover the various provinces. In addition they made frequent field trips, or apostolic tours, to the villages. In the early sixteen-fifties more than thirty missionaries were working in the Congo, often in a group of two or three, but sometimes singly. Georges de Geel was sent out alone to cover the northern field between Pemba and Sundi, establishing himself first in Matari. His appearance caused the population to flee in alarm, since they remembered the Capuchin missionary who had visited the region two years before and who had persecuted the banganga and burnt the people's nkissi and biteke. When Georges de Geel arrived in 1652, they feared he would continue in the same style.

Hildebrand's book takes up the vital question of the Church's attitude towards banganga and nkissi. Personally he considers it a fallacy to regard nkissi as idols. "In the strict sense of the word, idolatry does not exist in the Congo; no image or statue is regarded as a deity there".<sup>22</sup> This declaration does not prevent Hildebrand from trying to justify the missionaries' zealous campaign against banganga and nkissi on theological grounds, by dragging the antithesis God-Satan into the argument and taking it for granted that Congolese who did not worship God, worshipped the Devil in their cult.

In answer to this line of argument we must say that no known sources





*The old Congo Kingdoms as illustrated by Cuvelier-Jadin 1954.*

so far have provided clear evidence of professed devil worship among Congolese deprived of Christian influences. The nganga is on the contrary in communication with Nzambi, the good (and fearful) deity. Hildebrand is entirely in sympathy with the early missionary view that all banganga were Christianity's worst enemies and that all paraphernalia of their cult should therefore be destroyed.

Especially in the sparsely populated rural districts it was difficult for the Capuchin missionaries to attack the position of the banganga. It was to one of those regions that Georges de Geel had been posted. As a matter of fact, Garcia II had received a suggestion from Rome to concentrate his people in villages of five or six hundred "hearths" or households, forbidding them to live scattered through the forest and bush.<sup>23</sup> Such a concentration would make it possible for every village to have its own church, priest, and school. One of the motives prompting this suggestion was no doubt that it would make it more difficult for the banganga to keep themselves out of reach. But Garcia II, very seldom inclined to further the mission's cause, did not take this scheme seriously.

In Ngongo Mbata in the Bata province some Dutch traders had settled. Georges de Geel set out on a crusade to convert the Dutch in their headquarters. He succeeded in converting some of them and burnt the "heretics' " writings.<sup>24</sup> His campaign against polygyny and "fetishism" was officially supported by the King himself, which perhaps made him and other missionaries somewhat over-confident.<sup>25</sup>

In late November 1652, during one of his village tours, Georges de Geel, came to the village of Ulolo, some forty kilometers from Ngongo Mbata. There he was distressed to witness how the Christian converts took part in "heathen" rites conducted by Chief Nkuluntu and Nganga Nsungu in some large hut or temple. The missionary immediately interfered, warning the Christians against taking part in such rites and rebuking them severely. Thereupon George de Geel proceeded to wreck destruction on the temple, collecting all nkissi and biteke into a large bonfire and burning the lot. Even the temple (kimpasi) was burned down, while the missionary sang psalm 68. (67). "Let God arise: let his enemies be scattered, let them also that hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." At this point the assembly broke out in rage against him; the first blow was struck by the nganga, while others stoned and

battered him until he was bathed in blood. Believing him dead, his assailants withdrew. But Georges de Geel survived the assault itself and was taken to Ngongo Mbata, where he succumbed to the effect of his wounds on December 8, 1652.

News of these events swiftly reached Garcia II, who according to the available sources sided against the population of Ulolo who had been disturbed in the exercise of their religion by the Flemish missionary. The King, determined to mete out a severe punishment in order to set an example, at first meant to kill the entire population, between one hundred and two hundred persons in all. On the advice of the Capuchins this punishment was subsequently somewhat mitigated by his decision to sell them as slaves in Pernambuco, a universally dreaded punishment which moreover provided an answer to the King's need to improve his finances.

In March 1653 the King's decision in this question was proclaimed to all his people, his proclamation lavishes praise on the poor and devoted Capuchins.<sup>26</sup> Special stress is laid on the necessity of keeping up an indefatigable fight against banganga and minkissi, as the kingdom is a Christian country. The proclamation states that Georges de Geel had the right to burn the people's nkissi, and forbids all future attempts to stop the missionaries from preaching, baptising, destroying the idols, or persecuting the sorcerers, all meant to wipe out every vestige of pagan customs, diabolical rites, depravity and offensive practices, which are incompatible with the holy doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. This injunction occurs twice. The Capuchins are to be treated with respect and given every assistance.

The reliability of this proclamation as an expression of the King's own views is open to question, even though it is quite possible that he actually did sign it himself. But both contents and linguistic style strongly suggest that the Capuchins wrote it for him. Hildebrand personally feels that while it may be true that the proclamation was inspired by the Capuchins, "this is a point of no consequence"; the crucial point is that Garcia II signed the proclamation.<sup>27</sup> Bouveignes gives it as his opinion that the proclamation is inspired by the Capuchins.<sup>28</sup> In the *Bibliotheca Missionum*, Serafino Vagnucci da Cortona or Giacinto da Vetralla are mentioned as possible authors.<sup>29</sup>

It is clear at all events that this royal proclamation cannot be held to reflect the King of Congo's true feelings with regard to Capuchins and banganga. Rather it should be regarded as a condensed summary of the Capuchins' opinion of themselves and the mission entrusted to them. As a matter of fact, Garcia II neither before nor afterwards ever showed him-

self particularly eager to fight the nkissi cult, polygyny, etc., rather the opposite, in fact. He certainly was no new Mvemba Nzinga.

It is remarkable that Georges de Geel was the only one of several hundred missionaries to fall a victim to the reaction inspired by the policy of physical violence which they themselves practised. Practically all missionaries stationed in the Congo during the seventeenth and eighteenth century tell how they used to persecute banganga, occasionally beating them up, and rounded up all objects of the nkissi cult for burning. A string of notorious incidents exemplifying this method of procedure is listed in Hildebrand's book from 1940 and in the Archives Congolaises of 1919.<sup>30</sup> On many occasions the missionaries had been threatened in the same way as once Mvemba Nzinga himself, occasionally they had been beaten by enraged Congolese whose rites they had interrupted, but except for Georges de Geel none of them had succumbed to their wounds.

The sentiments of the missionary corps are embodied in the following statement by Bernardo Cutigliana: "En brûlant d'innombrables fétiches, plus d'une fois je me suis vu en danger de mort; mais je n'ai pas été trouvé digne de pareille faveur".<sup>31</sup> It was a martyr's death which lay in store for the missionaries if their violence should bring forth a violent reaction. Thus the burning of nkissi, biteke, and nsinda or kimpasi was common procedure, and the Missionary Practice issued a hundred years later, in 1747, states that it is the missionaries' duty to destroy all nkissi, burn all temples (nsinda, kimpasi), and flog the banganga.

We shall encounter the same brutal missionary approach in Girolamo de Montesarchio in Sundi. The object of Hildebrand's argumentation is to have Georges de Geel acknowledged as a martyr, even though his book explains why the Church cannot recognize as a martyr someone who has been killed as a result of having destroyed the idols of the native population. But, says Hildebrand, the Congo was not a pagan country; it was a Catholic nation, and for that reason he feels that the missionaries had the right to burn the idols. Hildebrand's argumentation is scarcely convincing, though, and it cannot be claimed that Georges de Geel was killed for the sake of his beliefs. Rather, his death was due to his violation of the beliefs of others. Even though this was the accepted practice in the Congo-Angola region, the Propaganda had nevertheless in its Instructions for Missionaries (1669) in principle repudiated forcible methods in the work of evangelisation.<sup>33</sup> These outcrops of violence against the native cult are as much a part of the picture depicting the culture confrontation in the Congo after 1650 as the internal strife, the Portuguese war against the Congo, and the extensive slave-trade.

## Girolamo de Montesarchio burns and baptizes

The work of the Capuchins extended into every province of the kingdom. Georges de Geel's crusade in the Mbata province is but one example of their extraordinary mobility. Another exponent of this policy is Girolamo de Montesarchio, who has earned himself a place in the history of Sundi along with such figures as Mvemba Nzinga, Bras Correa, and Bernardo da Gallo. Responding to the Propaganda's request, Girolamo also set down his experiences in a *Relatione*, entitled *Viaggio del Congo* and published in 1668. In 1951 it was published anew by Olivier de Bouveignes and Mgr. J. Cuvelier in a French translation with a commentary inserted in the text.<sup>34</sup> These two prominent Congo scholars, discussing the common Capuchin practice of destroying biteke and kimpasi, claim that the Capuchin were following and old, classical example set by England's apostle, Augustinus. They cite him as follows: "When you have gained possession of a region, you will destroy the altars, the temples, and all gods . . . Do this when you have received the power to do it. As soon as we receive the right to act: until we have been given this right, we refrain from action."<sup>35</sup> Bouveignes and Cuvelier in interpreting the state of affairs in the Congo during the reign of Garcia II claim that the Christian faith had been the official religion of the country since the reign of Mvemba Nzinga and that this gave the Capuchins the right to burn, "les autels, les temples et tous les dieux". While it might be formally correct to maintain that the Congo was a Christian nation, and even though Augustinus' words may refer to this kind of templeburning, we must remember that Garcia II in practice did not regard his kingdom as a Christian nation, while his successors subscribed to this view even less.

None of the other missionaries matches the number of nkissi and kimpasi bonfires described by Girolamo de Montesarchio in his account of his twenty years as a missionary in the Sundi province. Burning everything he could lay his hands on, he and his colleague in Sundi, Bonaventura de Sorrento, encountered frequent resistance and often came close to losing their lives, since the population proved to regard their kimpasi and biteke not only with respect, but with devoted affection.<sup>36</sup> On one occasion he seized upon the biteke of a Nganga Ngombe, who showed himself extremely annoyed at this outrage, at which the missionary threatened to burn the Nganga Ngombe as well. This succeeded in calming his anger, at any rate on the surface. The missionary shirked no means.

Of special interest in the present context is Girolamo de Montesarchio's information about the country surrounding Mpemba Kasi and Dondo

Mazinga, where the Swedish mission of the eighteen-eighties and nineties had its first centre, in Mukimbungu, a neighbouring village to Kasi and Mazinga. Mpemba Kasi was ruled by a woman who wore the title of Mother of the King of Congo. This, says Girolamo, was because the founders of the kingdom of Congo had started their conquest from the north and chosen this particular place to settle down. It was particularly in these regions that the missionary won striking successes, registering 16 328 baptisms in four months, whereas his work in previous fields had resulted in 7 300 baptisms.

Some of the villages in this neighbourhood were tributary to the king of Makako (also known as Micoco or Mucocco), who ruled on the northern bank of the Pombo in what is now Brazzaville at Stanley Pool. The population of these villages also allowed themselves to be baptised, while those who were cannibals promised to stop eating human flesh after their baptism, another "mark of difference".

Two features stand out with overwhelming dominance in the work of this missionary on his widespread travels in Sundi and its adjoining regions; in the first place his burnings of nkissi and kimpasi, and secondly his baptisms. In addition he undertook occasional campaigns against polygyny. The same approach seems to have been followed by all other itinerant Capuchins.

#### *Girolamo Moves to Congobela on the Pombo*

According to Prefect Bonaventura d'Alessano, King Makoko had in 1650 made a request for priests to be sent to his kingdom on the Pombo, as he and his people wished to be baptised.<sup>37</sup> The Prefect himself was willing to travel to Makoko's kingdom, and Rome had agreed to the proposed expansion of the mission into the far interior of Africa. Garcia II, on the other hand, was definitely opposed to any such project. Girolamo was instructed to explore the most suitable route to Makoko's kingdom and set out for the neighbouring country of Congobela on the south bank of the Pombo. Girolamo reported on this exploratory journey in a letter to the Propaganda in Rome, dated in Sundi, October 13, 1653.<sup>38</sup> Among other things, he was able to report 41 520 baptisms in the country of Congobela. He was well received by the population, and King Makoko sent a messenger to bid Girolamo welcome to his great kingdom.

The Propaganda decided to expand the work of the mission in two directions, and to appoint two new prefects, one for the kingdom of Matamba east of Angola, and one for Makoko's kingdom. This was in the

early sixteen-fifties, when the missionary force in the Congo-Angola region was at its most numerous, but due to the opposition of Garcia II the Makoko prefecture was never realized. When Girolamo learned of the decision to make Makoko a prefecture, he decided to make another journey to Congobela to see how the land lay.

In Congobela the Capuchin missionary was received with enormous curiosity by the local population, who called him *bankita*. "They said I was a 'Banchita', which is more or less the same as saying that I was a man who had come back from the other world".<sup>39</sup> Thus on the Pombo in the sixteen-fifties the *mundele*, the white man, was thought to be a ghost, someone who was in close touch with the *bakulu*. King Congobela was baptized together with his third wife, sending his other wives away. Numerous other people also declared themselves willing to receive baptism, but there was one obstacle, says Girolamo, which made it impossible for them to be baptized; they were cannibals. They refused to abandon this custom, on the grounds that human flesh was "the world's best meat".

The King offered Girolamo one of his daughters for his wife, prompted by a desire to have "descendants du prêtre du Pape", while others offered him their daughters and sisters. This illustrates the role of polygyny with regard to social status. People were anxious to have progeny descended from some important person, in this case the white missionary. It is probably this incident which came to Merolla's ears and which he cites as the experience of an anonymous missionary visiting King Makoko.<sup>40</sup> After a stay of twenty-two days in Congobela, Girolamo returned without having met Makoko, but he had accomplished his object of exploring the route to his kingdom and of making sure that the missionaries would be welcome. Even though the way had now been paved for an expansion of the mission, the resources of the Capuchins did not stretch far enough to cover both Makoko and Matamba.

From 1654 onwards Garcia's hostile attitude led the Capuchins to shift their interest more and more towards Angola, which explains why they chose to send missionaries to Matamba.<sup>41</sup> At the close of the sixteen-fifties only twenty-six Capuchin missionaries remained on their posts, divided equally over the Congo and Angola.<sup>42</sup> Of the sixty-two missionaries sent to these regions up to that date, twenty-two had died and sixteen had returned to Europe. In a few short years the number of Capuchin missionaries in the Congo had been reduced by half, which meant that Girolamo de Montesarchio saw himself forced to assume even greater responsibility than before, extending it beyond Sundi to include other provinces as well. During the two years of the Plague which followed, he

travelled through large parts of the country, and he himself was laid up by the disease for half a year. He witnessed the devastating effects of the plague at close hand. Bouveignes-Cuvelier's book comments the plague in the Congo by stating that it probably reduced the population by half, and by pointing out that Italy was ravaged by the plague in 1656.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps this is meant to suggest that communications between Europe and Africa in the sixteenfifties were brisk enough to warrant the question whether there might not be a connexion between the plague in the Capuchins' home country Italy and the epidemic in the Congo. There is no doubt that the position of the Congo was enormously weakened during the two years of the plague. This was shortly to become apparent in the wars against the Portuguese (1665, 1672), who met with a feeble resistance.

### *A Ravaged Congo*

Garcia II Afonso died in 1661 in San Salvador without having made his peace with the Capuchins, and the situation did not improve during the reign of his successor, Don Antonio I, Vita a Nkanga (1661—1665). More and more the missionaries deserted the Congo, and in 1663 Girolamo de Montesarchio was the only missionary left in Sundi. Antoine de Serravezza was in the same plight in Bamba, while François de San Salvador (Manuel Roboredo) was left in San Salvador with one lay brother. In Soyo four men remained, among them Bernardin de Hongrie who had extended the field of the mission to Loango and baptised the King of Loango.<sup>44</sup> An equally small number of missionaries was left in Angola.

But Girolamo refused to be disheartened and with undiminished zeal continued his fight against the banganga in Sundi, Batta, and Pangu. One of his exploits in Batta was to launch an attack on a secret society open to both men and women, who indulged in strange dances, sexual debauchery, "de très graves superstitions", and faith-healing. A cross, the symbol of Christianity, was painted at the entrance to their meeting-place. It was a dreadful society, says Girolamo, which held the population in the grasp of fear, "plus redoutée même que ne le sont chez nous les Ministres de la Sainte Inquisition".<sup>45</sup> The name of the society was Chimpassi Chianchita (Kimpasi kia nkita). Supported by the official sanction of Mani Mbatta, Girolamo launched a broad attack on this society. He soon found out, though, that the chief's influence in matters of religion was practically non-existent, which threw Girolamo back on his own resources. His first step was to find their temples, or kimpassi, and burn them. Everywhere he encountered strong resistance, organized by Nganga Kita. But the



missionary was implacable, and continued burning one temple after the other, unconcerned about the protests and pleas of the banganga. The remarkable thing, says Girolamo, was that Nganga Kita himself ended up by converting to Christianity.

Girolamo organized a society of his own, "the defenders of the faith", whose task it was to spread Christianity and burn all nkissi; biteke, and kimpasi. Their zeal was specifically directed against the kimpasi. They were successful and managed to burn forty-seven temples to add to the number of those which Girolamo burnt down with his own hands when he returned to Sundi after his stay in Batta.

## The Congo defeated by Portuguese and Yaga at Ambuila, October 29, 1665

In 1665 Wandu and Ambuila, two provinces in the country bordering on Angola revolted against Antonio I and applied for support to the Portuguese in Loanda.<sup>46</sup> The Portuguese seized on this chance to attack the Congo, for they had hopes of finding gold there. Antonio I collected an army of seventy thousand men, including some three hundred mestizos and about ten Europeans, and marched against Ambuila where the rebel army of twenty thousand men waited, reinforced by six or seven thousand Yaga soliders and three hundred-and-sixty well-armed Portuguese veteran soldiers from Loanda. The battle was fought on October 29, and on its very first day Antonio I was killed and his large army forced to flee. A large-scale massacre of the defeated Congolese ensued, and about one hundred of the kingdom's ruling leaders died in battle or were killed as they tried to flee. Among those who lost their lives was the Capuchin priest Manuel Roboredo.

Girolamo de Montesarchio describes how the news of the King's death at the hands of the Portuguese spread through the Congo. A cry for revenge was set up, demanding the death of all white men. The new king, Dom Alvaro (1666—1667) was on friendly terms with Girolamo and showed the missionary every possible consideration. But in 1667 the King was killed by Soyo's army and a series of internal conflicts ensued which resulted in the complete break-down of the kingdom of Congo. San Salvador lay in ruins, and the general anarchy hastened the white exodus towards Angola. Within the country an intensive and bloody struggle went on among rival claimants to the royal throne, all of which contributed to complicate the situation and strengthen Angola's position in relation to

the Congo. In 1672 the Portuguese again enlisted the help of Yaga soldiers in an attack upon Soyo, intended to crush the only province of the old kingdom of Congo which still held a strong position.<sup>47</sup> However, the Soyo army managed to repel the Portuguese attack, thanks to the fact that they had been able to buy arms from the Dutch in Pinda.

The Portuguese attack created strong irritation in Soyo, and relations grew increasingly strained between Mani Soyo and the two Capuchin missionaries Tomaso de Sestola and Andrea Buti, who were accused of having inflicted a draught upon the country. The story behind this was that they had excommunicated Mani Soyo, warning him of the dire effects which an excommunication might have. When subsequently the rains failed and a severe draught ensued, the native population, taking the Capuchin missionaries at their word, were convinced that their God was master over the rain. They were given three day's respite to ask their God to send the rain back. Finally, at Christmas in 1673, Mani Soyo had the two missionaries flogged and driven from the country. They were put into a canoe and pushed out into the Congo river. They were rescued on the other side of the river and went on to Malemba, the seaport on the Atlantic coast. Only a year later, though, a Capuchin missionary again established a post in Soyo, to be followed by several others, among them Merolla da Sorrente.

#### *Manuel Roboredo, the first Congolese priest*

Following the Congolese defeat at Ambula in 1665, the whole situation in the Congo underwent a radical change. Several of the leading figures had disappeared, and what made itself particularly strongly felt was the loss of Antonio I whose policy had been primarily directed at creating an independent Congo and strengthening its position against the Portuguese. The royal chaplain, Manuel Roboredo, likewise left a great void behind him in San Salvador where he for several years had played a central role. Laurenz Kilger has in 1958 sketched a sensitive portrait in his article "Der erste einheimische Ordenspriest in der alten Kongomission."<sup>49</sup> This brief sketch of his life attempts to give Manuel Roboredo the merit he deserves amidst all the European missionaries, who usually attract greater interest in the history of the Church than their Congolese brothers.

Roboredo was through his mother related to Garcia II and Antonio I. He received a European education at the Jesuits in San Salvador, and among other things mastered several European languages in addition to African dialects. He was one of those to welcome the Capuchins on their

arrival in the Congo in 1645. He provided them with lodging in San Salvador and served as their interpreter. He declared his desire to become a Capuchin friar to Bonaventura d'Alessano, who managed to secure dispensation for him, and in 1652 he was admitted to the order of Capuchins friar under the name of Francisco da San Salvador. He rapidly earned himself a reputation as a skilful teacher and catechist, who spoke the local language and therefore was able to use catching figures of speech and parables. Thus he won the people's confidence and became one of their favourite confessors. So great became his popularity that he found himself the victim of slanderous reports spread by a jealous member of his own order. It was left to the Jesuits to defend him, and they gave him the credit for the steadily improving religious climate in the capital.

Francesco Conghese, as his fellow missionaries called him, instructed the Capuchins in the local languages, dividing his students into pedagogically effective groups of two or three. His work as language teacher laid the foundation for both Georges de Geel's vocabulary and Giacinto de Vetralla's grammar.

In the sixteen-sixties he acted as royal chaplain and adviser to Antonio I, but the King seems to have ignored his advice to try to avoid the great war of 1665. Faithful to his sovereign to the end, he died by his side on the battlefield, having admonished the Capuchins not to take part in the war. He had a reputation in wide circles as a great man, and it is said that when he was killed, he was eaten by Yaga soldiers because, says Kilger, "they believed that the flesh of a monk would have a specially sanctifying effect".<sup>50</sup> Thus one of the most striking figures in seventeenth-century Congo history met his death.

Girolamo de Montesarchio resigned his apostolate in 1668 after twenty years of missionary work, whose size he hinted at by stating that he had carried out more than 100 000 baptisms. We may add that he certainly burnt as many nkissi and biteke. His death marked the end of the pioneer era of the mission in the Congo, an era of change and turmoil. ~

## Dapper's Congo, 1668

The central Congo had been savagely scourged by the plague, the wars against the Portuguese in 1665 and 1672, and the continuous internal strife. By contrast, the position of Soyo grew stronger. The Portuguese definitively shifted their interest to Angola, while the Dutch, and to some

extent the English, were primarily interested in the Loango coast with Soyo as its most Southern point.

The Dutch interest in these regions was among other things manifested by an important book on Africa, compiled by Olfert Dapper and published in Amsterdam in 1668. It was translated into German in 1670, under the title *Umständliche und Eigentliche Beschreibung von Afrika*. Dapper never visited the Congo himself, but relied on the evidence of Dutch seafarers and traders who had described the coastal regions, filling in the gaps in his countrymen's descriptions with material from other sources, such as Lopez-Pigafetta. Here we shall only discuss a few pages of Dapper's work presenting evidence supplied by his Dutch informants which serves to round off our picture of the Congo coast before 1670<sup>51</sup>

Dapper begins his book with a general reflection on Africa's place among other continents, and quotes an old theory claiming the world's three continents to have been populated by Noah's three sons. Sem settled in Asia, Ham in Africa, and Japheth in Europe.<sup>52</sup> Personally, however, Dapper considers this division out-of-date, a rather unique point of view in comparison with contemporary as well as later authors describing the Congo.

Merolla refers in his book to the old saying that the Africans — or Ethiopians in the parlance of his day — were descended from Ham, "cursed by Noah for his unbecoming curiosity in looking upon his father's nakedness".<sup>53</sup>

Zucchelli carries the argument one step further by pointing out that God cursed Ham (Genesis 9) and made him his brothers' slave. This curse is transmitted from generation to generation (Numerus 14), so that God's hand still rests heavily and sternly on the poor Africans.<sup>54</sup> Just as Ham knew no shame in gazing upon his father's nakedness, the Africans are likewise unashamed to show themselves naked.

In contrast to Merolla and Zucchelli, Dapper was no theologian, and it is perhaps interesting to note that it was just he who took a skeptic view of the story of the curse inflicted on Ham and the whole division of races after the sons of Noah.

Some of Dapper's reflections on the subject of banganga and nkissi are qualifiable as an analysis of this part of African culture. He gives a detailed description of the fabrication and consecration of nkissi by the banganga, and of the uses they are put to on various occasions. He discusses a dozen or so specific nkissi and their respective functions.<sup>55</sup> When describing these rituals, he often uses compound words incorporating the word Devil to denote the nganga and his activities. But when Dapper sets out to give

his own interpretation of the beliefs surrounding the nkissi cult, he states that it is strictly speaking incorrect to talk of idolatry among these peoples (Ngoyi, Kakongo, Loango), as they recognize neither God nor Satan. Dapper adds that the object of their "Zauberkunst" is to preserve health, offer protection against illness and death, and to improve fertility. Banganga and nkissi on the whole serve the cause of goodness in his opinion.

This interpretation and the point of view it reflects differs from the reaction evinced by a majority of the missionaries of that day, who not only speak of superstition — this Dapper does too — but also of idolatry. They are wont to explain African customs and rituals in terms of the Devil. Dapper and his Dutch informants were laymen, after all, and probably felt no need to interpose concepts which would fit a Christian interpretation of other peoples' idolatry. Dapper does not stress the point, but frames his observation that the nkissi ritual cannot be regarded as idolatry in brief terms, almost in passing.

Dapper cites a report from Loango which shows Christian influence to have spread beyond the borders of the Congo, as the local population is found to have incorporated symbols of Christianity with their nkissi collection. The principal nkissi is said to consist of a rosary known as a Paternoster.

Being Dutch, Dapper's interest is naturally enough mainly focused on the coastal Soyo in his description of the Congo. Using an apt figure of speech, he reflects on the African proclivity for incorporating alien rituals with their own traditional cult. "They usually have two arrows to their bow: namely the Roman religion and their idolatry, or so-called fetishes."<sup>56</sup> To all outward appearances, says Dapper, the Soyo people are Christians, but behind the back of the European missionaries they practise their old rites. Dapper's description of this duplicity tells us two things, first of all that he himself expected uniformity in religious practices, and secondly that his informants were sufficiently observant to note the Soyo people's adherence to two religious systems which were incompatible in the eyes of the missionaries, but not in theirs.

## Soyo, stronghold of the mission

Despite all their set-backs in the Congo through the reduction of their numbers by illness and death, despite post-war weariness and the people's antagonism against slave-traders and missionaries, the order of Capuchins continued to send missionaries to Angola and the Congo. During the last

two decades of the seventeenth century, Soyo became the stronghold of the mission.<sup>57</sup> At one period in the late sixteen-eighties no less than six missionaries were working in Soyo at the same time, and for a while, supported by Mani Soyo and others, they were able to register great success. The eight existing churches were repaired, educational work expanded, and Congolese youths were trained as assistant teachers. Each year seven or eight hundred Christian marriages were performed, and many had their children baptised. Merolla, Girolamo da Sorrente, has a record of more than ten thousand baptisms in ten years.<sup>58</sup> Religious festivals were celebrated with great magnificence and attracted a considerable attendance.

Even in the political sphere the Capuchins gained a stronger influence, and in 1689 they succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between Mani Soyo, or Dom Antonio, and the Portuguese, after many years of conflict following the war of 1672. An ambassador was sent to Loanda as a sign of the improved relations, which never became very good, though.

Merolla has left us a vivid record of this period in his *Relatione nel Regno de Congo*. He arrived in Soyo in 1683, and obviously expected the solid support of Mani Soyo in his fight against the banganga. Merolla felt that the new Mani Soyo was far too lax and easy-going, for a captured nganga occasionally managed to escape his punishment.<sup>59</sup> It was different in the days of the old chief, says Merolla. Then the missionaries were given effective assistance in their work, and the sorcerers were decapitated. "He imitated but ill his predecessor count Stephen, who after having extirpated these wicked wizards almost totally of his dominions, commended his governors that wherever they were found any time to have returned, they should immediately be seized, and have their heads lept off without any further ceremony . . . After this manner were our missionaries assisted in their endeavours during count Stephen's reign."<sup>61</sup>

Even though it has not been established that any nganga really was put to death in this manner, it is not inconceivable, for Zucchelli describes harsh and brutal methods in the pursuit of the banganga during the time following Merolla's days. All the same, Merolla's words give an indication of the intensity of the contest waged by the priesthood of the two different religions, the banganga and the Capuchins. There is no doubt that the Capuchins became more rigorous in their pursuit of the banganga. Their forcible attacks were directed against the banganga themselves, and not only against their nkissi and kimpasi. The religious struggle for power was intensified.

Merolla tells how he literally comes to grips with a nganga, emerging victorious with the nganga as his captive. But the missionaries had problems

with the banganga — described as wizards or sorcerers — who became their prisoners as they often managed to escape thanks to the willing assistance of the missionaries' own "slaves". The mission kept so-called "slaves of the Church", who were not slaves in the strict sense but some sort of factotum, combining the functions of gardener, cook, servant, assistant teacher, porter, etc.

Even these "slaves of the Church", then, were found unreliable by the missionaries and helped the banganga to escape. "To remedy this", says Merolla, "we generally took care at any arrival of any European vessel to embark our prisoners on board, and to transport them to other countries".<sup>62</sup> This was how banganga through the agency of the missionaries came to be shipped to Brazil with slave transports.<sup>63</sup> On the other side of the Atlantic they continued to pursue their calling amidst their countrymen among the slaves. This happened both on the plantations of the slave-owners and in the free seventeenth-century state Palmares in Pernambuco.

As the missionaries continued their forcible attacks, the banganga on their part adopted various maneuvers to protect themselves. Merolla quotes a typical remark made by a nganga to a patient who had sought his help. "If you have in mind to be cured", says this nganga, "be sure not to send for any confessor, for his presence will not only take away the virtue of the remedy, but likewise deprive you of your life".<sup>64</sup> This nganga's explicit warning against the Church's confessor is prompted by his certainty that a confessor's first words to his patient will be: Have you been in touch with a nganga? His warning recalls the words with which the banganga admonished Mvemba Nzinga, *nsi ifwidi, fwa bandoki*. From the white way of life follows death. Thus the banganga protected themselves against exposure, to avoid falling into the hands of the missionaries, and risk being sold to slave-traders.

Merolla's book gives us other examples illustrating missionary policy in areas of conflict. A man who according to the custom of the country inherited the wife of a deceased relative and took her as his wife was given a caning, or *bastinado*. Levirate was put on a par with polygyny and condemned by the Church. In the case cited by Merolla the young man was given a beating because he had obeyed tradition and taken care of a widow. Corporal punishment was in other words an accepted feature of Church discipline.

Merolla relates an episode concerning a woman who came to him to have her child baptised.<sup>65</sup> But as he had noticed that the woman wore a "pagan" string round her waist, an abomination in the eyes of the missionary, he immediately gave orders to have the woman flogged. This

task was entrusted to the "slaves of the Church", and one lash was enough to make the woman fall on her knees and beg the missionary for mercy. She escaped further brutality or, if one wishes, Church discipline, and was let off with only one stroke of the whip, but the story fails to mention whether her child was allowed to receive holy baptism.

During the last two decades of the seventeenth century, the missionaries in Soyo had considerable political power, as described at length by both Merolla and Zucchelli.<sup>66</sup> Merolla perhaps exaggerates his own influence at the expense of the Mani Soyo in describing their relationship.<sup>67</sup> The Mani Soyo was expected to see to it that his people went to Church and listened to the missionaries, and neglect in this field resulted in retribution on the part of the missionaries. "For we make it our business to get such a person removed from his employment, even within a year".<sup>68</sup> Even though the missionaries could not depose a Mani Soyo of their own account, for some years they enjoyed considerable power. This was most noticeable on the commercial scene.

To Pinda came Dutchmen, Englishmen, Spaniards, and Portuguese to buy slaves and ivory. A letter from Cardinal Cibo of the Capuchins, Merolla says, expressed dismay at the fact that the widespread slave-trade continued unchecked. But Merolla found it difficult to restrict the trade, since ivory and slaves were the Congo's only export commodities of any importance. However, this letter provided him with an excuse to take steps against the activities of the Protestant Dutch and English, in favour of the Catholic slave-traders.<sup>69</sup> A slave who landed on a protestant plantation was for ever damned. Faced with this alternative, it would be better for him to become a slave of the catholics, since in that case he would at any rate save his immortal soul, Merolla argued.<sup>70</sup>

This policy aroused the opposition of Mani Soyo, who needed trade with the "heretics" to obtain arms and ammunition. Without arms, he had no chance of warding off Portuguese dominance in Pinda. It was the arms bought from the "heretics" which had saved Soyo when the Portuguese attacked them in 1672. Merolla reacted to Mani Soyo's opposition by excommunicating him, with the unhappy result that the "slaves of the Church" deserted him to join up with Mani Soyo's people. Merolla for his part refused to shift ground, and eventually forced the ruler into docility. Mani Soyo was obliged to kneel before the missionary and kiss his feet as a sign of repentance and contrition, before the ban was lifted.

Thus a missionary could permit himself such dictatorial behaviour only some ten years after the expulsion of the Capuchins in 1673. Many passages of Merolla's account project a picture of secular power exerted in



the name of the Church. Nor was Merolla an exception among the missionaries. Zucchelli describes a similar state of affairs.

## The religious tolerance of the Africans

In Merolla's account of the Congo we find several minutely described episodes which serve to illustrate crucial features of the culture confrontation. Merolla, although officially stationed in Soyo, did get to visit other regions. He travelled to Kabinda and Kakongo across the river and was among other things invited by the King of Ngoyo. Merolla has some remarkable stories to tell, especially from his sojourn in Kakongo. He saw his own role in Kakongo as that of an Eliah fighting the prophets of Baal, and challenged the banganga to an open contest of faith. The missionary asked the King to assemble all banganga, or at any rate their leaders, to a debate about the true faith. The adversaries would meet in front of all the people, and Merolla was determined to show them which of them was sent by God. He would strip the banganga of their reputation and destroy their power by revealing their faith as a false teaching.

No such meeting was ever arranged, however, since the banganga for natural reasons kept out of his reach. The white man's attitude and forceful zeal were notoriously feared. If the missionary longed for an open contest, the banganga preferred to work under cover and certainly not quite openly before the white missionary.

That same year, in 1688, Merolla visited Norchi (Noki) on the Congo river, some way upstream from Pinda. Here he baptised one hundred and twenty-six converts in two days.<sup>71</sup> After this promising start, the Mani realized that Merolla would need plenty of room to conduct a service, so he suggested they use the church. They set out forthwith. The church was a large one, and as usual a cross had been put up in front of it. At the entrance to the church, the missionary found himself suddenly deserted by everybody and left alone before the closed door, which he had to force open. He describes his dismay at the sight that faced him inside the church.

"Instead of an altar there was a great heap of sand, wherein was stuck a streight horn about five spans long, and on one side of the wall hung two coarse shirts, such as I had seen in the kingdom of Angoij. Being astonished at this sight, my hair stood on end, my tongue cleav'd to the roof of my mouth, and I began to cry out aloud, enhancing the offence as much as possible; 'Are these the effects of the instructions ye have learnt from our missionaries? Is this the fruit of so much toil and anguish

as have been undergone in your conversion?' with several more expressions of the like nature . . ."<sup>72</sup> In putting these questions to the people of Noki, Merolla certainly had no idea that he might be facing a typical example of the impression which the work of the mission had made on Congolese culture. Instead he deliberated whether he would burn the temple or not. He decided to spare it, for two reasons. One reason was the risk of the fire spreading to the surrounding dwellings, the other his fear of retaliation on the part of the people. Standing before this temple dedicated to Kadiabemba, he remembered other missionaries deserted in the middle of the wilderness by their carriers, when they had a grudge against their masters. He had also heard a story about another Capuchin, Filippo da Galesia, said to have been beaten to death in Sundi and eaten by cannibals. So he desisted from burning the temple and chose to demonstrate his views of the people's place of worship by refusing to baptise their children, another of the punishments to which a missionary had recourse.

Merolla's account of this incident, while brief, clearly illustrates the generous tolerance in religious matters displayed by the Congolese, as we have seen in previous instances. In their place of worship Christian ritual merged with the Kadiabemba cult. One symbol, the cross, did not preclude the other, the pile of sand. The pile of sand with its horns had taken the place of the altar, the Sepulchre. Like the altar, this sand pile probably represented a sepulchre where the ancestors made their presence felt. Here, then, we encounter the same idea as manifested by Mvemba Nzinga, in building his burial church in the ancestral grove. Here a church had apparently been taken over by Kadiabemba disciples, but it is also possible that the church had been built on the site of an even older place of worship.

As Merolla was informed by the people, the temple was dedicated to Kadiabemba, and the Christian cross in front of its entrance enhanced Kadiabemba's power in relation to other nkissi. Naturally, Merolla failed to see things this way and recoiled in horror from the temple, as any of his contemporaries would have done. In the eyes of the missionaries Christianity excluded every other faith or form of worship and on principle did not tolerate the introduction of elements from any other religion or form of worship into the Christian ritual. Neither Merolla nor anyone else could conceive of a cross or a crucifix representing a nkissi. On one occasion Merolla kisses a Congolese king's crucifix, who in his turn kisses Merolla's.<sup>73</sup> Merolla took it for granted that both of them were aware of kissing a Christian symbol, whereas the king obviously imagined himself to be kissing a fine nkissi.

In quite a different context Merolla states that as far as he can see, Africans can make almost anything into a nkissi. He had heard Tommaso da Sestola deliver a request from Pombo, or, more exactly, from the king of Makoko, which may be identical with what Girolamo de Montesarchio reports from Congobella on the Pombo. In Merolla's version the King phrases his conditions for allowing himself to be baptised as follows: "Father, before I am baptised I would beg two favours of you, which you must not deny me, and they are, first, to grant me half of your beard: and secondly, to afford me a successor from your loins, for which purpose I will cause all women to be brought before you, to the end you may chuse her you like best, we are all mortal you know and therefore if you should either die, or take a fancy leave of us, who shall support or maintain the new religion, which you have planted among us? To which purpose should I submit to entertain a new law, if I have no prophet of continuance; Grant therefore that I may have a son of your body, who possessing his father's rare qualities, may be a means to transmit this doctrine more securely to posterity. I must beg you not to refuse me, for I cannot consent to be baptised if you do."<sup>74</sup>

The missionary to whom this appeal was addressed did not deign to consider these conditions, Merolla for his part believed that the king intended to use the beard for a nkissi, so that it might become an object of worship. As a matter of fact, it is quite conceivable that the king coveted the Capuchin's beard as a source of power, for according to popular belief power often centered in the body's extreme parts, in a nail, a claw, a tooth, a feather, or something similar. A similar conception is reflected in another passage of Merolla's, in which he describes a personal experience. A grave had been found and they were going to open the coffin in which a popular priest had been buried. "When it was opened, some body out of zeal took out two of his teeth and the point of his hood".<sup>75</sup> While this may conceivably reflect the Catholic custom of preserving relics from saints, the fact that it is the teeth and the point of the Capuchin's hood that are preserved for posterity shows the Congolese notion to be dominant.

The King's second condition for baptism does not arouse any comment. Otherwise it would have been interesting to discuss the idea of some sort of prophetic succession in earnest. However, the Church compelled the missionaries to a life in celibacy, and the idea of fathering children with a Congolese woman to them must have seemed perfectly grotesque as well as sinful.

All these incidents clearly show one thing. The Africans are in process of incorporating alien ritual patterns of European origin in their own

religious world. Little by little Christian attributes, even the missionary himself, are transformed into nkissi, thereby enabling the native banganga to control and master them.

### *Burial Ceremonial*

In Soyo the mission had made All Souls' Day an important religious festival.<sup>76</sup> A special ceremonial was developed for the commemoration of the dead. Guns which the Capuchins had bought from the Dutch were set up by the church and fired in salute on all religious festivals. The festival of the dead moreover involved a ceremony in which people with hymns and prayers marched to the burial ground to set out candles on the graves. We are told that the entire population participated in this ceremony. This was in Soyo, where the missionaries had great influence. It was only there that the Church had managed to make use of the Congolese veneration of the dead and canalize it. Elsewhere the Church had failed.

Merolla describes another burial ceremony, found in Loanda, which is called *tambi*.<sup>77</sup> Even Christians take part in this *tambi*, flouting the explicit veto of the mission. All sexual prohibitions are lifted for the duration of the *tambi*.<sup>78</sup> The widow is at everyone's disposal, and vice versa, young girls and slaves are irresistably drawn to the nocturnal dalliance. The drum leads the dancing and serves as an accompaniment to the sexual orgies, says Merolla, and the drum is the Devil's instrument. Proceeding from this experience, Merolla ponders the general situation in the Congo. When even in Loanda, the seat of the diocese and the religious orders, Christians can participate in these *tambi* ceremonies, what state of affairs can one expect then in the rural districts where Christian influence is very slight or non-existent, Merolla asks in horror.

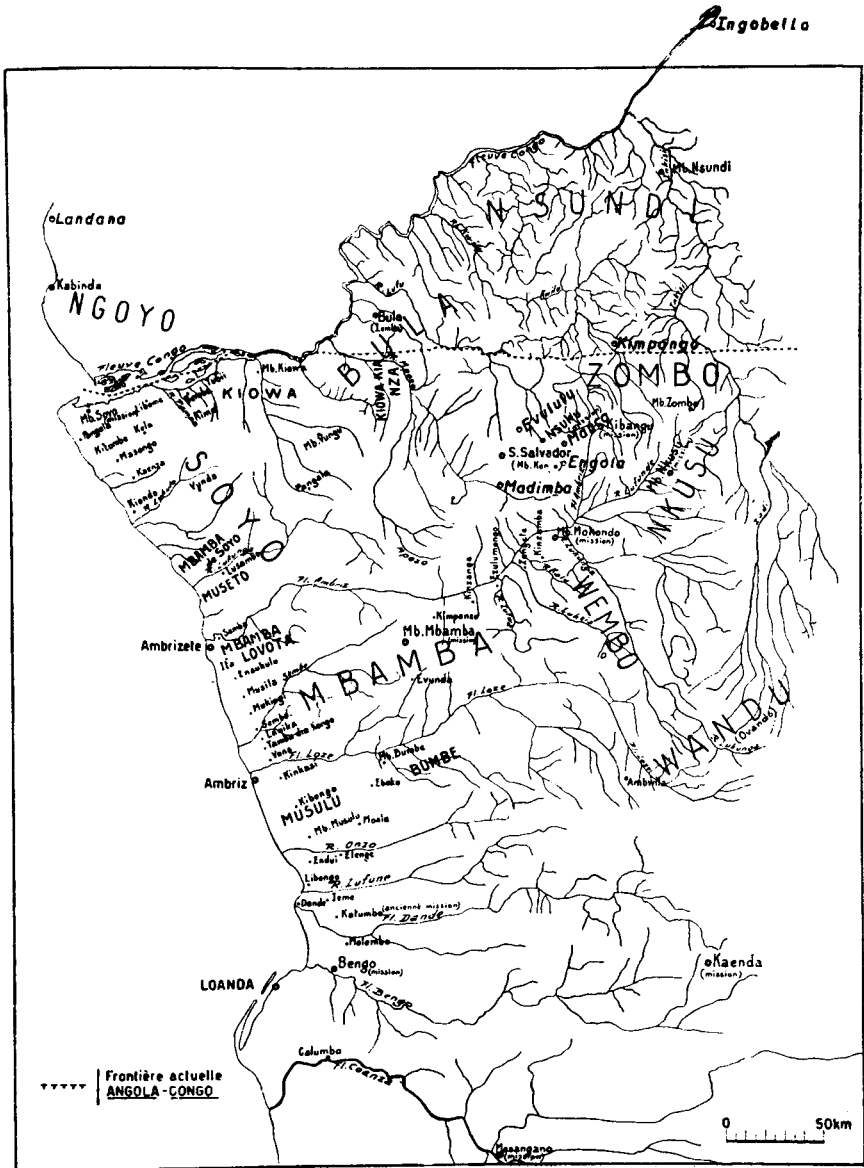
The *tambi* ceremony appeared to be immune to the attacks of the missionaries. For as long as we can see in the cultural history of the Congo, burial rites have always occupied a central position in the life of its people. A good relationship with the ancestors was of vital importance, and death was surrounded with customs and rites to a great extent by the full force and pressure of tradition. This naturally intensified the clash, backed when it came to a confrontation of tradition with the demands of the new religion. The burial ceremonial of the church was based on an equally long tradition, and the missionaries could not conceive of any other.

## The slave-trade of the priests

In the sixteen-nineties the conflict between the Capuchin monks and the secular priests in the Congo-Angola region was intensified, a controversy which not only had to do with the administration of the Sacraments, that is, the right to baptize, celebrate Holy Communion, consecrate marriage, hear confession, excommunicate, and give absolution, but also concerned the behaviour of the individual clergy towards the African population. This conflict dated far back, and was to be intensified to the point of overt hostility in the eighteenth century. This conflict regarding the jurisdiction of the Church has been discussed at length by Louis Jadin, who assigns it great significance and considers it one of the causes of the decline of the Church in the Congo.<sup>79</sup>

There was an enormous difference in the way of life practised by the Capuchin monks on the one hand and the secular priests on the other. While most evident in the different attitude they took to the slave-trade, this is also reflected in their attitude towards marriage and strong drink. The Capuchins largely conformed to the ideal of poverty set by their order and did not involve themselves in business dealings. The parish priests, on the other hand, the secular clergy, were not guided by any ideal of poverty. The parish priests were under the direct authority of the Bishop of Angola, and rarely moved outside their own community. When they did undertake a journey, it was usually to carry on slave-trade.<sup>80</sup> The Capuchins, on the other hand, very seldom had anything to do with the slave trade, although it did happen in Soyo, for instance, where they deported captured banganga to other countries and steered the slave-trade towards Catholic captains.

The Bishop of Angola himself had some interest in the slave-trade, since the supreme college which supervised the coordination of various branches of the Church and which was responsible for the organization and financial support of the Catholic mission, the so-called Missionary Junta, was financed by the slave-trade.<sup>81</sup> This Junta consisted of the governor, the bishop, and the heads of the various orders, Capuchins, Jesuits, Carmelites, and Tertiaries. The internal schisms went very deep, however, and the Junta seems to have been of little use to the Capuchins. The Bishop for his part was anxious not to lose his revenues, an essential part of which was vouched for by the captains of the slavers, who "à titre de priorité", paid for seven hundred slaves a year for the Brazilian market. Jadin himself naturally takes a critical view of this kind of financial support: "Les



The Congo and Angola as illustrated by Jadin 1961.

marchants négriers y trouvaient leur bénéfice, tout en soutenant par cet étrange procédé les œuvres missionnaires".<sup>82</sup>

Especially in Sundi, in the regions bordering on Makoko's kingdom, the priests were actively engaged in the slave-trade. The most notorious among them was the Portuguese Estevão Boteglio, a notoriety earned not only during his stay in Sundi from 1693—1705, but also during the two decades in which he held the leading office of the Bishop's Vicary-General in San Salvador.<sup>83</sup> The Bishop had several times received slaves from Boteglio.

Between 1693 and 1701, two Capuchin priests, Luca de Caltanisetta and Marcellino d'Atri, who incidentally have a top record of fifty thousand baptisms each to their name — were working in Sundi. They name several secular priests and a few Jesuit monks who were involved in the slave-trade in the north. The slave-trade was allowed to go before their religious duties. One of those who specifically are mentioned is Thomas Morena, the priest who refused to accompany Mani Sundi to Pombo in 1696 to attend the baptism of King Congobella. The priest did not dare to risk the journey to Pombo, for he might lose both the slaves already in stock and the sacks of zimbu which he intended to invest in more slaves.

Like their fellows in the Congo the white priests of the local communities in Sundi were notorious slave-traders in the late seventeenth century and the early years of the next century. The situation remained unchanged far into the eighteenth century, and the reports of the Capuchins to the Propaganda time and again reveal that it was quite usual for priests not only to take part in the slave-trade, but also to charge a high price for administering the Sacraments in order to finance their business deals. They lived a dissolute life, keeping women, drinking, and carrying on traffic in liquor, and even taking part in pagan ceremonies, we are told.<sup>84</sup>

Among the offences and violations of Christian morals with which the white secular clergy is charged, the most hideous are those of having eaten human flesh and of having poisoned another priest.<sup>85</sup> It is not entirely sure whether we can dismiss such charges as figments of the imagination, for the concrete examples given by numerous contemporary observers paint an extremely distressing picture of the moral standard among the secular clergy. The recurrent theme in the criticism leveled at the secular clergy — European as well as African priests — is that they are solely interested in personal gain. On the part of the Congolese this commerce carried on by the clergy was probably regarded as one among

many European involvements in the slave-trade and therefore not particularly surprising.

In his study of the slave-trade in the Congo, Rinchon discusses a development earlier testified to by the missionaries, i. e. that the slave-trade during the seventeenth century was spreading towards Pombo and even further inland.<sup>86</sup> This was due to the fact that the ravaged coastal areas had been deprived of more than half their population. The Congo and Angola were turning into sparsely populated districts.

The pombeiros — white or half-caste slave-buyers — moved on to Makoko, to Masa Mandombe (Lac Léopold II), and probably as far as the East African lacustrine area. The major slave market in Makoko was situated not far from the Pombo-Congo junction. Its counterpart on the other side of the Atlantic was Pernambuco in Brazil, to which a large part of the slave traffic from Angola, the Congo, and Loango was directed. Around mid-century, every slave that was sold netted a profit amounting to approximately 1 000 per cent. in Rinchon's calculations, while the average annual export from the Congo amounted to over 10 000 slaves.

The slave-trade resulted in a transference not only of African labour, but also of African culture to America. One of the most remarkable manifestations of this cultural export is a small African polity in north-eastern Brazil, in the Pernambuco hinterland which remained in existence as an independent state during the whole of the seventeenth century.<sup>87</sup> It was called Palmares, and ruled by King Ganga Sumba from its capital Makoko. Here escaped African slaves created themselves a kingdom obviously constructed on the model of the Congo and Makoko kingdom. Both in this small Negro kingdom and on the plantations in Brazil the banganga continued their practices. Thus there was also an export of religious custom from Africa to America. The priests in Brazil complained that Christian influence was weak on the plantations, not only because the slaves from Angola were entirely ignorant of the Christian faith and hardly knew whether they were baptised or not before they were shipped across the Atlantic, but also because every plantation in Brazil had two or three "fetishists" practising their "pagan" rites.<sup>88</sup> These secondary manifestations in America of the culture confrontation in the Congo is a phenomenon which merits further research.

A new element entered the slave-trade on the Congo-Angola coast during the seventeenth century with the emergence of international competition in what previously had been an exclusively Portuguese concern. Dutch, English, and Spanish traders became eager competitors.



## Kimpa Vita or Saint Anthony, saviour of the Congo

The deeply felt impact of the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo is most strikingly manifested by the birth of a Messianic popular movement in the early eighteenth century. From the despair facing the people in a ravaged country emerged a movement, centering round a Congolese woman of about twenty years old. She had many names — Nganga Marinda, Kimpa Vita, Dona Béatrice, and Saint Anthony. The significance that must be attributed to this popular movement is so great that in the context of this book it marks the end of the history of the old kingdom of Congo.

If we are to show Kimpa Vita in the proper perspective before attempting an interpretation of her emergence as a saviour, we might begin by taking up the question of martyrdom. If anyone is to be called a martyr, or the first Christian martyr in the Congo, whom do we choose — Georges de Geel, or Kimpa Vita? European historians, headed by P. Hildebrand, have described the Flemish Capuchin missionary as a martyr to this faith, but no one so far has considered Kimpa Vita in this light. And yet it is clear that Kimpa Vita, in contrast to Georges de Geel, really did die for her faith. She has been called a heretic or a false prophet, and the movement she inspired is described as a sect. African historians are likely to arrive at a different evaluation of Kimpa Vita when they in due time write the history of the Congo church viewed in their own perspective.

Kimpa Vita had a few African predecessors who had stood up against the Catholic Church, such as Francesco Bullamatore in sixteenth-century San Salvador, and Francisco Casolla in seventeenth-century Bengo. These two, however, seem to have had no clear conception of what they wished to achieve, apart from their revolt against the Church. This rebellion against foreign dominance is an element also found in Kimpa Vita, but what characterizes her mission is its visionary quality. Her aim was a new Congo, as a symbol of which she wanted to rebuild San Salvador from its ruins. Her mission linked up with a bygone era of greatness when the Congo was a kingdom commanding respect, and her aim was to recapture this greatness. While it is true that Kimpa Vita failed in her object of reuniting the people into a new state, no one after her succeeded in this task either, and no one ever gained such impressive successes in such a short time without resorting to violence as she did in the years 1704—1706. It is not impossible that she came close to offering the Congo a new future.

Her emergence in what remained of San Salvador is well-documented

by the Relationes of the two Capuchin monks Bernardo da Gallo and Lorenzo da Lucca, which have been published and analyzed by Louis Jadin and Mgr. Cuvelier, respectively.<sup>89</sup> Both Capuchins personally witnessed Kimpa Vita, or Saint Anthony, and her husband Barro, also known as Saint John, on July 2, 1706 being burnt alive at the stake as heretics. Bernardo da Gallo is the better witness, even though his account was written four years after their death. He had an excellent knowledge of the people and their language, he had watched the development of the Prophet movement at close quarters, and he had obviously made notes on which to base the account he wrote in 1710. Lorenzo da Lucca had personally met some "petits Antoniens" in Soyo, but otherwise he merely happened to arrive at San Salvador at the end of June 1706, in time to witness the execution.

We have previously outlined the political and religious background to the prophet movement, following the break-up of the kingdom as a result of the battle at Ambuila in 1665. Ever since Angola had represented a constant threat to the Congo. Only a residue remained of the Capuchin mission in the Congo, and only Soyo continued to have a regular staff of missionaries. Like Bernardo da Gallo, some of these missionaries undertook more or less extensive "apostolic tours" in Sundi and Bambi. Sundi was given greater attention than the other inland provinces. But otherwise contact with the most northern provinces was largely restricted to the slave-traders who came to Pombo. Educational work was abandoned and there was no prospect of it being resumed. Under these conditions Bernardo da Gallo worked for nine years. In his report to the Propaganda in 1710 he records his confrontation with the African culture.<sup>90</sup> Like all other Capuchins, he tended to ascribe all resistance encountered by the missionaries to the work of the Devil, but on a few points he presented some interesting observations and opinions which deserve to be noted. The Congolese are no fools, he says, they are intelligent people. One merely has to become familiar with their language, customs, and traditions to establish contact with them.

Bernardo da Gallo recounts an oral tradition recording the arrival of the first Portuguese at the Congo mouth, at the end of the fifteenth century, in which the Congolese wonder what kind of beings that suddenly appeared on the sea.<sup>91</sup> The Congolese shouted "Amindelle, Amindelle". "Ntelle" means whale, "Muntelle" something resembling a whale, and "Amintelle" those who resemble whales. Even now, says Bernardo da Gallo, the white men are called Muntelle or Amintelle.

The missionary continues his contemporary account by saying that the

principal leader of the native religion is called Nganga Nzumba (in Bengo). "Nganga means priest, physician, surgeon, priestess".<sup>92</sup> As we see, Bernardo da Gallo had noted that a nganga can combine several functions in his person, or that there may be different banganga serving different needs.

Before dealing with the suppression of Kimpa Vita, he discusses the three kinds of "superstition" a missionary in the Congo has to fight. The most widespread problem were the many taboos. For one it was forbidden to eat elephant meat, for the second to eat goat's meat, for a third to eat buffalo meat, while others were not allowed to eat various kinds of fish or birds.<sup>93</sup> All this was "superstition diabolique", which had to be fought, Bernardo da Gallo claims.

The second "superstition" had to do with the ngassa or nkassa trial. Ingassa is a kind of redwood, "so bitter and poisonous that the birds cannot endure even its shadow".<sup>94</sup> A piece of this wood is pulverized and baked into a pie, from which each of the accused is given a bite to eat, but not until the judge, Incolangassa, has taken a small dose of nkassa himself. After that he hands a portion to each of the accused. The guilty retain the nkassa and succumb to its poison, while the innocent throw up the poison and survive.

The third evil to be fought, according to Bernardo da Gallo, were the kimpassi. Like Girolamo de Montesarchio and many others, he set about burning them in Sundi, encountering the same tenacious resistance as his famous brother Capuchin fifty years earlier. All three of these grave superstitions, says Bernardo, are like other abuses difficult to curb, and they can never be suppressed unless the kingdom is restored in every respect. For that reason all effort must primarily be concentrated in the political sphere, with a view to having a legitimate king elected and acknowledged as the kingdom's sole and highest authority.

However, the election of a king presents a difficult problem, says Bernardo da Gallo, and there is one thing which further complicates it. This is the fact that the population of the Congo is actually made up of two peoples, and unless this is recognized it will be impossible to solve the problem of the country's unification. One people are the immigrants, or conquerors, from the north, the Essikongo, the other are the original inhabitants who were vanquished, the Akkata or Akumbu. Bernardo's subsequent argument is somewhat obscurely phrased, but he seems to suggest that the immigrants lived in the large populated centers and constituted the ruling class, and that it was they who became Christians and received the benefit of whatever education was offered. The original inhabitants

settled in the country regions, the bush, and if they were baptised, they were at any rate excluded from any form of education or schooling. That was why they had to a great extent preserved their traditional rites and customs intact.<sup>95</sup>

There is much to support this theory of Bernardo da Gallo's, but a thorough and detailed investigation will be required before we can indeed assert that the difference between the conquerors and the vanquished people after several hundred years still was that great. All the same, there is adequate proof that the schools were indeed established in the populated centers, and that their students were recruited from the ruling class of society.

In his second report to the Propaganda in 1710, Bernardo da Gallo recounts his personal observations of Kimpa Vita and her previous history in the San Salvador region.<sup>96</sup> As early as 1703, Bernardo da Gallo had heard people singing an addition to the Ave Maria. They added the words Sari, Sari, meaning mercy, compassion. Inquiring about the reason for this addition, he was told that the Madonna had shown herself to a woman, saying that Jesus Christ was angry with the people. That was why they begged his mercy. Around the same time a rumour circulated of a child having said that God would punish the Congolese if they did not immediately return to San Salvador.

At Easter in 1704, at the foot of Mount Kibangu, Bernardo da Gallo, encountered an old woman, known as Maffuta or Appollonia. She had a vision of the Madonna, who had told her that Her Son was troubled and displeased, especially about the fact that the King stayed on at Kibangu. She wanted the people to come down from the mountain and rebuild San Salvador. Maffuta showed the missionary the sign proving the genuineness of her vision, a stone she had found in the river. The stone was a head of Christ, defaced by knife and hoe marks. Rumour of this woman, who burnt nkissi, wrought miracles, and was regarded as a saint by the people, spread swiftly. The missionary tried to get the king at Kibangu, Pedro IV (1694—1718), to take steps against Maffuta, but the King gave no help in scotching the woman's activities.

We see from the above that the merging popular movement held unmistakable political elements. Its aim was clearly defined — San Salvador was to be rebuilt. The political agitation was cloaked in a veil of religious language, in which visions played an important part.

One week after Bernardo da Gallo's encounter with Maffuta, a man came and told him that a woman known as Saint Anthony had arrived at Kibangu. The people claimed that she performed miracles — where she

passed, fallen trees raised themselves. She tells the King, the anonymous man continued, that what the old woman has said about you is true. You are moved by envy when you refuse to admit that there are saints in the Congo. Moreover, you oppose the resurrection of the kingdom. Saint Anthony, on the other hand, demands that San Salvador be repopulated, she preaches against you, against the Pope, and against the Holy Catholic faith.

Two weeks later Bernardo da Gallo was allowed to meet Saint Anthony in the presence of the King. The interval she had spent in the Ambriz valley in company with Maffuta, burning nkissi and crosses. It is clear that the young woman appeared before the King and the missionary in a state of ecstasy, characterized as devilish by Bernardo da Gallo. In his interrogation of the woman, the missionary begins by asking her who she is. She replies that she is Saint Anthony from heaven. "Tell me then whether there are Congolese in heaven and whether they are black there", he continues.<sup>97</sup> She replies that there are baptized black children from the Congo in heaven, as well as adults who have obeyed God's law. But their colour is neither that of a European nor that of an African, for in heaven there are no colours.

Bernardo da Gallo then tried to sway the woman from her false beliefs, at which she took fright and began to cry, denying that she had set herself up against the Pope, the Church, and the missionary. At that point a man came forward to console her, promising to protect her from the missionary if he should try to harm her. At that Saint Anthony took heart, and the interrogation continued. She did not deny that she had burnt crosses together with nkissi, because the cross was associated with superstition.

If you are a woman, asked the missionary, how is it that you are called Saint Anthony (who after all was a man). The woman told him that she had been very ill and close to death. In her agony a man dressed as a Capuchin monk appeared to her, telling her that he was Saint Anthony whom God had sent into her mind. She was to preach to all the people and resurrect the kingdom. And then her own soul had been replaced by Saint Anthony, and having recovered her health and her strength she had set out to preach, exhorting the people to return to San Salvador.

Following this interrogation, Bernardo da Gallo talked to the King alone and explained that the woman, far from being Saint Anthony, was possessed by the Devil. The King confessed to a similar belief, for she was known as "une femme de mauvaise vie", concubine of two men, and a nganga. The King avowed himself faithful to the Pope, the Church, the missionary, and the Sacraments, leaving the missionary to rejoice. The

next Sunday the King and his retinue came to Mass, all of them wearing a metal or wooden cross on their forehead. At the sight of this cross, Bernardo da Gallo's suspicions were roused, and he wondered what sort of novelty this was. They soothed him by saying that they wore the sign of the cross because they were Christians and in their hearts affirmed their belief in Christ. The missionary was lulled by this answer.

Saint Anthony continued her activities and earned a reputation for being able to cure sterility in women. They came in flocks to seek her help. After a period of working in Bula, finding the King unwilling to move to San Salvador, she took her following along and established her headquarters by the ruins of the old cathedral. People came streaming in from near and far, and the deserted town came to life again. "De cette façon, la fausse sainte fut faite la restauratrice, dominatrice et seigneur du Congo", says Bernardo da Gallo.<sup>98</sup>

By 1705 the movement had gained a wide spread, thanks to the disciples which Saint Anthony had sent out to preach in various parts of the country, and some of whom Bernardo da Gallo had encountered in Sundi, and Lorenzo da Lucca in Soyo. The African saint had become a power in the land, and on February 24 the King finally decided to come down from Kibangu. Bringing the cross from the altar with him, he installed himself closer to San Salvador in the hope that he would be able to vanquish his rival Kibenga and resurrect the kingdom.

Bernardo da Gallo maintained relations with both of the principal rivals for the supremacy, Kibenga and Pedro IV, claiming that he wished to keep himself aloof from direct involvement in the struggle for political power. He was moreover instructed by his order not to mix himself in their affairs. All the same, his sympathies lay with Pedro, and he repeatedly pleaded for restoring the royal authority. A year passed and Kibenga still stood his ground. Saint Anthony's influence increased, and Pedro moved still closer to the ruined capital, to Evululu, only one day's journey from San Salvador. The situation was approaching its crisis.

## Saint Anthony burnt at the stake on July 2, 1706

Saint Anthony was originally called Kimpa Vita, and on her baptism received the name Dona Béatrice, which indicates aristocratic birth. The leader of a ritual society known as Marinda, she herself was a Nganga Marinda. As a child she had dreamed of two white children who came and played with her, holding rosaries of beads in their hands. She became

aware of being chosen at an early age, and her vision of Saint Anthony confirmed her in her calling which made her champion her people's cause by word and deed.

Like the missionaries, Kimpa Vita was engaged in a fight against superstition, but they meant different things. She burnt every kind of nkissi, with no exceptions, which meant that crosses and crucifixes had to be burnt too. As a *nganga* she had a better knowledge of native custom and knew that to her people a crucifix or a cross worn on the forehead served as a nkissi. That was why it had to be burnt. Her zeal in burning crosses can therefore not be interpreted as an affront of or a revolt against Christianity, since it was intended as a purge, or purifying action. Kimpa Vita also changed some of the more popular parts of the Catholic liturgy, singing *Salve Antoniana* instead of *Salve Regina*, and thereby assuring herself homage as a saint.

She wore some kind of crown, reminiscent of the original royal crown, the *impua* or *mpua*, which was worn by the King before the court had adopted Portuguese custom, and indeed long afterwards. The crown was made from the bark of a certain kind of tree, *musenda*, from which the black race was said to be descended. The white race, according to Kimpa Vita's teaching was on the other hand descended from a kind of white chalk, known as *fama*. Kimpa Vita was the only woman to wear this kind of crown, the largest of which was worn by Kibenga himself, suggesting that he must have belonged to the Prophet Movement.

The outstanding feature of the doctrine taught by Kimpa Vita is its emphasis on the intrinsic worth and dignity of the Congolese and their country. She strove to give them self-respect. To this end she sometimes used the method of contradicting Catholic doctrine, at other times of paraphrasing the history of the early Church to fit African conditions. We black people have saints too, Kimpa Vita declared, but the white man won't let us. The Church does everything to hamper us. So we have no use for its baptism, nor for its marriage, or its confession, or its prayers, or its good deeds. She uttered hostile sentiments against the Pope and the missionaries.

Jesus Christ was born in San Salvador, Bethlehem, and baptized in Mbanza Sundi, Nasaret. Mary, Jesus' mother, was born of a slave in the house of Nzimba Npanghi, while Saint Francis belonged to the *Nsaku ne Vunda*'s clan. They were all of Congolese origin and members of the black race. From her headquarters at the cathedral, Kimpa Vita declared that a rich life was in store for the people of San Salvador, for below the roots of the trees gold and silver lay just waiting to be found. God promised the Congo

redress. This she knew, for regularly each Friday she would die, take a meal with God and plead the Congo's cause, to come back to life on Saturday.

Kimpa Vita gave birth to a child — fathered by Barro, or Saint John, said Bernardo da Gallo — which she claimed had been given to her by Heaven, thereby emulating the patron saint of Lisbon, Saint Anthony, who is often portrayed with a child in his arms, and alluding to the virgin birth.

In May 1706 Kimpa Vita was arrested, together with her husband and the child, and brought before the King at Evululu. The King, considering this to be a theological affair, decided to send them to Loanda and refer the decision to the Bishop. This decision was vehemently opposed by Bernardo da Gallo, who felt there was a great risk that the leader of the movement would escape en route, set free, or possibly banished from the country and left to spread her false doctrine even farther abroad.

The missionary had another scheme. Not daring to confide in the King, whose reliability he was dubious about, he sent for a trusted friend, Dom Manuel. Meanwhile, he stayed close to the King to watch developments. "Dom Manuel arrived some days later", writes the Capuchin missionary, "and joined the other members of the King's council in the King's presence, without intervention on my part, as though this affair were none of my concerns. They deliberated together, after which they pronounced the death sentence, condemning them to be burnt alive".<sup>99</sup> The sentence included both Kimpa Vita and Barro, and Mafutta, but the latter subsequently managed to escape, taking the child with her.

Exactly around that time, Lorenzo da Lucca arrived at Evululu, and together with Bernardo da Gallo was an eyewitness to the execution of the death sentence. Wood was collected to make a huge pyre, and the condemned both renounced their "heresies", avowing their Christian faith. But to ni avail, for on July 2, 1706, they were burnt alive at the stake for their "heresy".

"Poor Saint Anthony, who was in the habit of dying and coming back to life, this time died, but did not come back to life", Bernardo da Gallo comments.<sup>1</sup> He felt that this was the best possible solution for the sake of the true faith, for during the night he saw people going down to the remains of the pyre and stift the ashes for fragments of bone to be preserved as relics. People were saying that it was true that Saint Anthony's body was dead, but that Saint Anthony was alive. It was easy to imagine, said the missionary, what rumours would have been spread if the women had not died.

Lorenzo da Lucca was not equally impassive about the execution as



Bernardo da Gallo.<sup>2</sup> His eyes filled with tears when he heard the condemned couple confessing their Christian faith prior to being thrown into the fire.

Bernardo da Gallo's account is confirmed on all points by Lorenzo da Lucca, who completes the picture with some additional items. Discussing the spread of the movement, da Lucca states that its adherents comprised practically the entire kingdom. "Les petits antoniens" were found everywhere, stirring the people into rebellion against the missionaries. They forbade mothers to have their children baptised, and adults to be married in church.

The people met the missionaries with cries of Sari, Sari, Kadiamquemma, Jesus, Maria, Sari, Sari (Mercy, Mercy, Kadiapemba, Jesus, Mary, Mercy, Mercy). It is interesting to note that it is not Nzambi, but Kadiapemba who is mentioned in the same breath with Jesus and Mary in this prayer asking to protect the people from the wrath of Jesus. From the seventeenth century on, Kadiapemba has always been translated as Demon or Devil, including by Jadin in 1961. Personally, however, I feel that an interpretation of Kadiapemba along those lines calls for caution. For the present the question of how he should be interpreted must remain open. If we consider this little prayer in the context of Bernardo da Gallo's theory seeing the conquered section of the population in the rural districts as more or less untouched by Christianity, and the Prophet Movement as a revolt against the Church, the question may arise whether Kadiapemba possibly belongs with the original population and Nzambi with the immigrants, or conquerors.

The movement did not die out, but gained new ground after Kimpa Vita's death. Her disciples appear to have grown more aggressive towards the white men, and Lorenzo da Lucca was robbed of all he owned on the way from San Salvador. Unrest in the country was growing and it was not until February 15, 1709, that Pedro IV finally managed to defeat his rival Kibenga, and take San Salvador. But he did not succeed in restoring any degree of stability in the country, failing as dismally as those who were to succeed him.

In summary we may say that Kimpa Vita has more in common with the Prophet of the nineteen-twenties, Simon Kimbangu, than with the precursors Francisco Bullamatare and Francisco Casolla. Somehow her mission shows a modern touch through the highly constructive nationalist element which is its outstanding feature. The visionary aspect of the movement and its practical quality are likewise features shared by the movements of later days. The desire for political reconstruction is a mani-

festation of national pride, and there is nothing in the records to suggest that Kimpa Vita could even consider the idea of European help in restoring the kingdom. On the contrary, she emphasized the Congolese people's own powers and responsibility, maintaining that the white men had destroyed their country and shown themselves the enemies of the Congo.

As a former Nganga Marinda, religion was her special field, but we have a rather hazy picture of her activities in this sphere. The only original feature which stands out clearly is her penchant for placing crosses and crucifixes on a par with nkissi and biteke in her crusade against superstition of any kind. This is the first time we are confronted with evidence expressing the Congolese conception of the principal, man-made symbols of the Catholic Church, the cross and the crucifix. What Kimpa Vita wished to convey was presumably that if nkissi and biteke are evidence of superstition, so are crosses and crucifixes. What is more difficult to fathom, though, is her zealous campaign against everything to do with nkissi. Perhaps this trait can be taken to indicate that she took her roles as a Christian seriously. Her revolt was not directed against Christianity but only against the Church, seeing that she claimed to bring the full Divine Revelation. She also envisaged a reform of religious practice.

In many other respects she followed a familiar pattern. She surrounded herself with disciples and trained them to become apostles of her doctrine, she herself dispersed her teachings and prophecies from her house behind the cathedral, and preached public sermons in its ruins. She prayed for the sick, especially for barren women.

An important feature of Kimpa Vita's mission is her claim of bringing the full and true Divine Revelation as a direct messenger from God. Her difference from the prophets of the Church, the missionaries, expressed itself on two levels. In the first place she had no need to study, since she, unlike the missionaries, received her revelations directly from God. In the second place, she transmitted all that was revealed to her and, unlike the missionaries, kept nothing to herself. Through her, the people of the Congo would learn all secrets and need no longer be deceived by the missionaries who had kept the most important secrets to themselves.

Here africanization of Christianity manifested itself in various ways. The Virgin Mary, Jesus, Saint Francis, and Saint Anthony were all transformed into Africans. This must be seen as a boldly conceived attempt to eliminate Christianity's foreign character and to incorporate its principal personages with the Congolese culture.

The Messianic element in Kimpa Vita's character emerges clearly. She was resurrected after death (even though this happened weekly), and was

on familiar terms with God in Heaven. No one was closer to God than she.

The effect of her activities was striking. The people shed their apathy, and once their hope and faith in a promising future had been awakened, started working towards it with renewed zeal. San Salvador was rapidly repopulated and rebuilt, agriculture was resumed, and commercial life seems to have revived with a spurt. Kimpa Vita's execution put a stop to this promising progress. San Salvador would never again return to its former greatness, and its importance diminished simultaneously with the general decline of the kingdom of Congo all through the eighteenth century, even though San Salvador was to remain the royal capital for a long time to come.

## Missionary policy in theory and practice

The struggle of the missionaries, or let us say the European clergy, against their African counterpart, the banganga, culminated in Kimpa Vita's death at the stake in 1706. Burning at the stake as a form of execution is a European introduction and has no origin in Congolese culture. Since the end of the fifteenth century, the Inquisition in Spain had fostered the auto-da-fé as a form of Church discipline against backsliders, as pointed out by Charles Moeller in his 1913 analysis, "Les bûchers et les auto-da-fé".<sup>3</sup> Moeller points out that the Inquisition's object was to save the deviator's soul and make him repent. The role of the Inquisitor must be seen as that of a confessor vis-à-vis a sinner, rather than that of a judge facing a criminal.

The object of the Inquisition was threefold: to prevent the evil from spreading, to make the offender confess his error and renounce his false beliefs, and to decide on a suitable atonement. Those who confessed to their mistaken beliefs and renounced them would be pardoned and would not have to pay with their life. In order to protect the backslider or heretic, three requirements had been set up, all of which had to be fulfilled before the accused could be sentenced to death at the stake. This punishment was only meted out when there was a great risk of the false gospel spreading. The three conditions required that the accused had been baptised, had openly contradicted the teaching of the Church, and despite corrections persisted in his false beliefs.

If we consider Kimpa Vita's case from this point of view, it is clear that the missionaries in the Congo, and specifically Bernardo da Gallo

who was directly involved in the case, felt that there was a great risk of the "infection" spreading. In addition, Kimpa Vita was baptised, she had expressed open rebellion against the Catholic faith and the Pope, and finally, persisted in her "heresy" up to the time when they started gathering wood for her funeral pyre. Only then did she renounce her "heretic beliefs" and avowed her faith in the Christian gospel as preached by the missionaries. If the principles regulating the Inquisition's ultimate punishment had been followed to the letter, Kimpa Vita would at this point have been pardoned, but nothing in Bernardo da Gallo's or Lorenzo da Lucca's letters suggests that a pardon was even discussed. Nor do we know whether they were aware of their right to secure a pardon for her from the King when she repented.

Questions of this nature present themselves time and again when we try to analyze the Capuchins' confrontation with the African culture. Was there any agreement between theory and practice; did they, in fact, have any clear theories at all?

It is particularly hard to find any justification for the elements of violence in the work of the mission, and we are left to wonder whether the missionaries did not use more force than necessary. Such reflexions are no anachronism, since some Capuchins of that day indulge in them themselves. Antonio Zucchelli da Gradisca, for instance, in 1712 offers his readers the comment that many are perhaps surprised at the harsh behaviour of the missionaries who treat the Congolese to blows and stripes, and flog them instead of meeting them with love and patience.<sup>4</sup> But the experience of many years in the Congo has taught us that people only grow worse if we treat them mildly, Zucchelli claims, and like Merolla he offered numerous examples of the floggings he himself had administered, for instance to banganga.

The same attitude is apparent in the comment offered by the author of the *Missionary Practice of 1747*, in response to an implied criticism on the part of the reader against the missionary practice of keeping slaves.<sup>5</sup> It is true that we keep slaves like all other Europeans, the author says, but the difference is that we make no money out of them and do not sell them to slave-traders, they merely work for us and are happy to stay with us, since we treat them better than the others do.

Reflexions of this type show that the ethical code of the missionaries in their relations with the Congolese was a topical problem in the circles of the Capuchin mission. There is one book in particular which devotes itself to a systematic discussion of these questions, based on an evaluation of Congolese culture as a whole in the light of Christian standards. This

is the famous *Missionary Practice* of 1747, written by the Capuchin prefect of Loanda, who had acquired personal experience as a missionary in Soyo.<sup>6</sup>

The object of this book was to give some advice and information to the missionaries who were to work in the Congo and Angola. This advice had been compiled from more than a century of experience and praxis, which had shown the necessity of following some general principles or lines of policy. The author illustrates these principles with examples provided by his personal experience.

In some respects it is extremely profitable to compare this *Missionary Practice* of 1747, which consequently also mirrors the period at the end of the seventeenth century, with a similar source intended for the missionaries of the Propaganda in the Far East in the late seventeenth century the *Instructions for Missionaries* of 1669<sup>7</sup>. These *Instructions* from 1669 show a far greater interest in the theological basis determining the missionary's attitude towards the alien culture found in Asia than what is evinced by the *Missionary Practice*. The *Instructions* contain continuous references to the theories and principles of the Propaganda, whereas the *Missionary Practice* only rarely refers to the Propaganda. On several important points the *Instructions for Missionaries* help to clarify the principles underlying the Propaganda's policy which also applied to the Congo.

During the nineteen-sixties some members of the order of Capuchins have entered the debate about missionary policy by defending their early colleagues from any criticism that might be leveled at their methods.<sup>8</sup> It should be possible, though, to discuss the methods of the mission without resorting to either polemics or apologetics. Here we shall consistently try to examine these problems within the framework of the culture confrontation.

The *Missionary Practice* divided Congolese customs according to their degree of acceptability to the Christian moral code into three categories, comprising neutral customs, bad customs, and good customs. Every missionary must learn the native language in order to be able to penetrate the country's customs and practices and so to use the right approach in his sermons and teaching. The missionary's role is that of a Jeremiah, "à déraciner et détruire, à perdre et dissiper, à édifier et planter".<sup>9</sup> Until he has reached the stage where he can decide by himself what is to be destroyed and what needs building up, he will have to stick to the simple and well-tried praxis of the Capuchins in his contacts with the Congolese, says the author. Fortunately, he says, the Congolese fear the white men, whom they

call Munta Esulu, people from heaven. Despite the constant oppression and tyranny of the white man, they do not revolt. If they wished, it would be easy enough for them to rob the white man of his power.<sup>10</sup> The worst are the slave-traders who destroy whatever the missionaries have laboriously built up. The missionary is advised to be extremely careful to preserve his authority and never to speak of himself in terms of humility, for instance by admitting that he is a sinner like everyone else. When in need of help, he must never ask for it, but give an order, never allow anyone to come close to him, but always preserve a certain distance. He must show that he is master in all situations, and never allow himself to show fear.

If a missionary should come upon "the sorcerers", he is to flog them, destroy the objects of their cult, and burn their huts.<sup>11</sup> On this particular point the *Missionary Practice* expresses a view which is contrary to that maintained in the *Instructions for Missionaries*. The latter stresses the missionary's duty to show respect for the priests of other religions, and the *Propaganda* explicitly forbids the use of any kind of violence.<sup>12</sup> At the same time these *Instructions* stress the importance of studying the native language and culture in order that the missionary will have a firm foundation on which to base his respect for the foreign country and its people.

In the Far East it also happened that missionaries used force, even against priests, but it never became a systematic practice in the same way as in the Congo, where the banganga and their places of worship were regularly exposed to forcible attacks from the missionaries.<sup>13</sup> The violent nature of their attacks upon the banganga is, in fact, the most characteristic feature of the religious war waged by the missionaries.

On the administration of the Sacraments the advice is simple, for any problems which may arise are easily overcome, says the *Missionary Practice*. The Congolese of old believe that baptism only consists in receiving a mouthful of salt, anamungua. They must learn not to leave the baptismal ceremony before they have been sprinkled with water. The Lord's Supper is popular with the rich aristocracy, who come to it to show off to the common people. It is more advisable to admit the poor and slaves to the Lord's Supper, for they do not try to beguile the missionary with beautiful speeches.

Confession takes a special form because of the language problem, so that confession is always made through an interpreter. The interpreter understands the local population better than the missionary ever can, so it is necessary to be careful in the choice and training of an interpreter, on whom he will have to place such strong reliance. Marriage presents

the greatest problem. The country is large and the number of priests very small, so there is practically no possibility for the people to have their marriage blessed by the Church. This means that they are forced to marry according to the native custom. If polygyny is encountered, the Church will regard that woman as the man's legitimate wife for whom he has paid a dowry.

Following this practical advice concerning the day-to-day affairs of the Church, the *Missionary Practice* proceeds to analyze and evaluate Congolese culture as a whole. The missionary must not interfere with so-called neutral customs, which do not harm anybody, however ludicrous and foolish they may seem. This applies to styles of building, habits of food and drink, table manners, dress, and matters of etiquette. The missionaries who have tried to introduce a reform in these fields have exerted their efforts in vain, as exemplified by the author.

The culture of the Congo also holds many good customs, which must be preserved. Among these are the people's strict laws against theft, their deep respect for the older generation, their marital fidelity, their generous hospitality, and the security of their markets.

The Congolese are peaceable, cleanly, and modest, so that no men bathe in the same place with women. It is true that the people go about almost naked, says the *Missionary Practice*, leading one to believe that they would be prone to breaking the Sixth Commandment (regarding adultery), but that is not at all true. The people have a high standard of sexual morality. The people who are dragged down into depravity are those who come in contact with the slave-traders. Personally the author claims never to have witnessed any kisses, embraces, caresses, or obscene dalliance between the sexes.

On this point, however, it seems as though the *Missionary Practice* has failed to express the collected experience and general opinion of the missionary force. Several missionaries have regarded nudity as such as immoral and demanded that the people wear clothes for the sake of decency.<sup>14</sup> As we remember, this nudity was occasionally even held to confirm that the Africans were the accursed sons of Ham, who were not ashamed of nakedness.

In dealing with the bad customs, the *Missionary Practice* largely concentrates on "idolatry" and "the ordeal by nkassa", which may give us an answer to our earlier question as to what can have motivated the policy of violence in the work of the mission. On one hand the author of the *Missionary Practice* clings to the theory regarding the Congo as a

Christian country, but on the other hand he is forced to admit that the Congo shows few signs of being Christian. He says that paganism is by no means abolished; there are regions entirely submerged in idolatry.

The people actually worship the Devil, we are told, "c'est proprement le diable qu'ils adorent".<sup>15</sup> The Devil's name is given as curiapemba (Kadiapemba), which etymologically means "dévoreur, destructeur". In his honour they make sacrifices, play music, sing, and dance, and fashion images. It is not love, however, which drives them to worship the Devil, but fear.

Zucchelli was one of those who maintained that this cult, headed by the banganga, violated the most important Commandment in the law of the Lord, the Commandment which says: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. The Missionary Practice regards the activities of the banganga in the same light and condemns it in vehement terms. Nevertheless the authors of this handbook concede that some diseases which in Europe are incurable can actually be cured by some "sorcerers" in the Congo, due to their knowledge of effective medicinal herbs.

At the same time the Missionary Practice states that in spite of their Devil worship, the people cannot be regarded as atheists, "for they avow their belief in one true God, the master of the universe".<sup>16</sup> This one true God they call Nzambi ampongo.

Here we are once more confronted with the mysterious Kadiapemba, who obviously played a crucial role for the missionaries' total understanding of the Congo culture. Kadiapemba's relationship to Nzambi Mpungu is ambiguous, but the views put forward by the missionaries of that period on the subject of Kadiapemba follow the same tenor as the Missionary Practice.

To fit the theology of the Church, with God and Satan as the two opposite poles, it was eminently suitable to assign to Nzambi the role of God, and to make the pattern match, Kadiapemba has been given the role of Satan. Yet it is extremely dubious whether the people of the Lower Congo shared this conception. The sparse comments on the Congolese point of view that are to be found in the sources rather seem to suggest that the same qualities were attributed to both Nzambi and Kadiapemba.

There is reason to suspect that the opposite roles assigned to Nzambi Mpungu and Kadiapemba are an invention of the missionaries. This point of view was necessitated by the theoretical system which formed the theology of the missionaries, for it was only as instruments of the Devil that the banganga could be persecuted and flogged, and the nkissi and kimpassi



destroyed and burnt. The missionaries regarded the banganga as being allied with the Devil, which was sufficient to justify the implacable campaign against them.

None of the sources provides explicit evidence that the missionaries tried to justify their forcible methods against the banganga by relying on the Scriptures, but it cannot be denied that they acted upon the very same commands as Moses gave to Israel, i. e. to "overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods" (Deuteronomy 12,3). In the event of any false prophet appearing, Moses says, "and that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death" (Deuteronomy 13,5). Even though the missionaries made no direct reference to these particular passages of Scripture, they undoubtedly felt themselves to be living in some sort of Old Testament atmosphere in the Congo.

To the Congolese, in spite of everything, the banganga represented the good and reassuring elements in life, and were intimately associated with Nzambi Mpungu. Those who constituted a threat in life were the bandoki, and since they were unknown to the missionaries, they went scot-free. No white man knew which person or persons were regarded as bandoki. Those whom the missionaries had chosen as their principal enemies and called the Devil's children, the banganga, to the Congolese were a vital force in the service of life.

On the whole the Capuchins seem to have been comparatively well liked in the Congo, in spite of the violent methods they adopted in their campaign against the banganga. They were not out for personal gain, they left the Congolese women alone, and their behaviour in every respect compared favourably with that of the slave-traders, in the experience of the Congolese. The Capuchins shunned every kind of commercial activity. On that point they followed the principles laid down by the Propaganda to the letter. According to the Instructions for Missionaries, the Propaganda regarded business dealings on the part of a missionary as "une hérésie plus-apostolique".<sup>17</sup>

The trade dominating the entire commercial scene, as we know, was the slave-trade, and in this the Capuchins had no part. They accepted the slave-trade carried on by others, but criticized its brutal and callous methods. The trade was full of abuses, cruelties, and tragedies, we are told, and the liquor traffic carried on at the same time made the people's situation even more distressing.<sup>18</sup>

The Congolese feared the slave-traders more than anything else, and their area of contact with the slave-traders was far greater than that with

the missionaries. To the average Congolese the slave-trade no doubt constituted the only major problem of the culture confrontation. Zucchelli reported that the people's terrific fear of America and Brazil was caused by the belief that the white slave-owners there butchered their African slaves and used their fat to make butter and cheese.<sup>19</sup> This small item shows that the Congolese were convinced that anything at all could be expected from the white men. Their fear was to some extent justified, for the slave-traders had for two centuries failed to show the slightest respect for the value of the human being. Under these conditions the Capuchins stood out as honest and humane men. Thanks to them, the Congolese picture of the Europeans was probably somewhat modified, even though it inevitably came to be wholly dominated by the ruthless attitude of the slave-traders.



PART II  
ONE AND A HALF CENTURY OF BANGANGA  
DOMINANCE. 1706—1877



## Chapter 4. The Struggle between Banganga and Missionaries fades

### The Capuchin missionaries withdraw from the Congo

Naturally, it is a simplification to claim that the cult life in the Lower Congo was completely dominated by banganga for one and a half century after Kimpa Vita's death. The slave-trade dominated the over-all picture of culture confrontation during that period and even if the leaders of the Christian cult were extremely few and weak, they tried to offer some resistance to banganga. Banganga, however, had nothing special to fear and by degrees recovered their former position.

The Capuchin missionaries successively abandoned the Congo during the eighteenth century, but even at the beginning of the nineteenth century they succeeded in paying sporadic visits to the forsaken Catholic groups. The secular clergy continued as usual, but because they did not involve themselves in parochial work and even less in the struggle against banganga, their presence in the Congo was of little significance in the struggle between the two religions.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian clergy were thus impaired, through both lack of personnel and indifference and were paralysed by personal conflicts among themselves. To this must be added that some of the secular clergy conducted a life which did not correspond with the moral standards of the Catholic Church. They are reported to have conducted slave-trade and made money out of the administration of the sacraments; they had several women and drank an excess of alcohol.

A significant source from 1760 states that banganga had gained a footing, even among the Christian clergy and had won them to their cult system.<sup>2</sup> A number of the white population and the secular clergy had abandoned the Christian praxis and actively participated in the cult led by banganga. Banganga's dominance can hardly be demonstrated more distinctly.

On the other hand the religious situation, after Kimpa Vita's death can be said to have been ambiguous, as the number of baptisms reported, at regular intervals during the nineteenth century, was surprisingly high in San Salvador as well as in Sundi. This problem is discussed by L. Jadin in his study, *Aperçu de la situation du Congo en 1775*, who, with certain reservations, is inclined to believe in these baptismal figures from 1765—1814.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of their sporadic visits in the hinterland, the Capuchin

missionaries up until 1760 reported between 10,000 to 15,000 baptisms annually in Congo-Angola.<sup>4</sup> But even after 1765, when the Congo in practice became cut-off from Italy, due to the measures taken against so-called foreign missions by a Portuguese minister, the Marquis of Pombal, the baptismal figures were high for the individual missionaries who visited the Congo.

Cherubino da Savona worked in the Congo for fifteen years, between 1759—1774 and he claimed to have administered 700,000 baptisms and 37,000 marriages; these figures are inconceivably high.<sup>5</sup> In the 1780's when even Sundi received visits from missionaries, Castelo de Vide reported 388,000 baptisms over an eight year period. Raimonodo da Dicomano administered 25,000 baptisms in San Salvador alone, during the years 1792—1795. In 1814 Luigi Maria d'Assis administered 25,000 baptisms in the same town during an eight months stay in San Salvador, 1819—1820, Pietro da Bene baptized 5,000 children, but no adults, and as late as the 1840's, after the white missionaries had abandoned Congo-Angola, it is claimed that an African priest, Francisco das Necessitades, from Loando, administered 100,000 baptisms during an eighteen months missionary visit.

Naturally, one must accept these figures with certain reservation, as the number of baptisms is not comparable to the estimated total population of approximately two million. A possible explanation of these high figures is that the same individual was baptized once, twice, or several times. Apparently, in certain places, it was popular to *dia mungua*, to eat salt, i. e. to be baptized. The missionaries touring the country did not know the people personally and statistics were not always carefully entered up.

These baptismal statistics are interesting, however, as they indicate that the Congo received occasional visits from individual missionaries during the whole of the eighteenth century and for a couple of decades at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Congolese Christian community, Sundi included, seemed to have some contact with the Catholic Church, even at the time of Tuckey's expedition, in spite of the fact that since the middle of the eighteenth century the kingdom had been without resident missionaries.

This contradictory picture of the Congo during the one hundred and fifty years, with banganga's complete dominance and tens of thousands of baptisms, is explained in the same source which reported the enormous success of baptism. In 1760, Rosaria dal Parco writes that despite baptism the Christians live their lives as others, in "idolâtrie, superstition, concubinage et polygamie".<sup>6</sup> A similar picture is given by Cherubino da Sa-

vona, 1775, by Raimondo da Dicomano, 1798, and by Cardinal Stefano Borgia in Rome, 1805.<sup>7</sup>

The cult tolerance shown by the Congolese, in all probability, was expressed in that they participated in the cult and feasts which were organized by banganga, and when a missionary arrived in the neighbourhood, which in itself was an uncommon event, and invited them to baptism, they had their children baptized. Many years could pass between these visits and banganga do not appear to have obstructed these baptisms. Baptism by no means threatened their position.

## A French missionary attempt during the slave-trade hey-day

The over-all picture of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, is dominated by the slave-trade, but this did not threaten banganga's position or religious worship. It would appear to have contributed to banganga's increased influence, as the people sought protection and security in the religion which had been handed down from father to son, and from its priests. One must constantly remind oneself that for several centuries the Congolese lived in constant fear of the white man; the slaver and his purchaser.

The slave-trade was extensive during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, and Jadin cautiously estimates that the already severely decimated population in Congo-Angola, was reduced with 500,000 inhabitants during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. The annual export of slaves from Loanda and Benguela is said to have reached between 20,000—30,000.<sup>8</sup> Included in this figure is not the number who lost their lives due to slave-hunting on the continent. Moreover the slave-traffic towards Malemba, Mayombe, Loango and Cabinda substantially increased due to the growing need of slaves by the French in their colonies. According to Rinchon, the annual export from the entire Loango-Congo-Angola coast can be roughly estimated at 50,000 during the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The slave-trade in the Congo increased during the first half of the nineteenth century, due to the fact that England closed its colonies to the slave-trade, but not until about 1875 was the slave-trade in the Congo brought to a close. In 1860 the annual export of slaves from the Congo region to America had decreased to 30,000 and in 1875 was only 2,000 per annum.<sup>10</sup>

In the midst of France's time of prosperity as a slave-trading nation, a



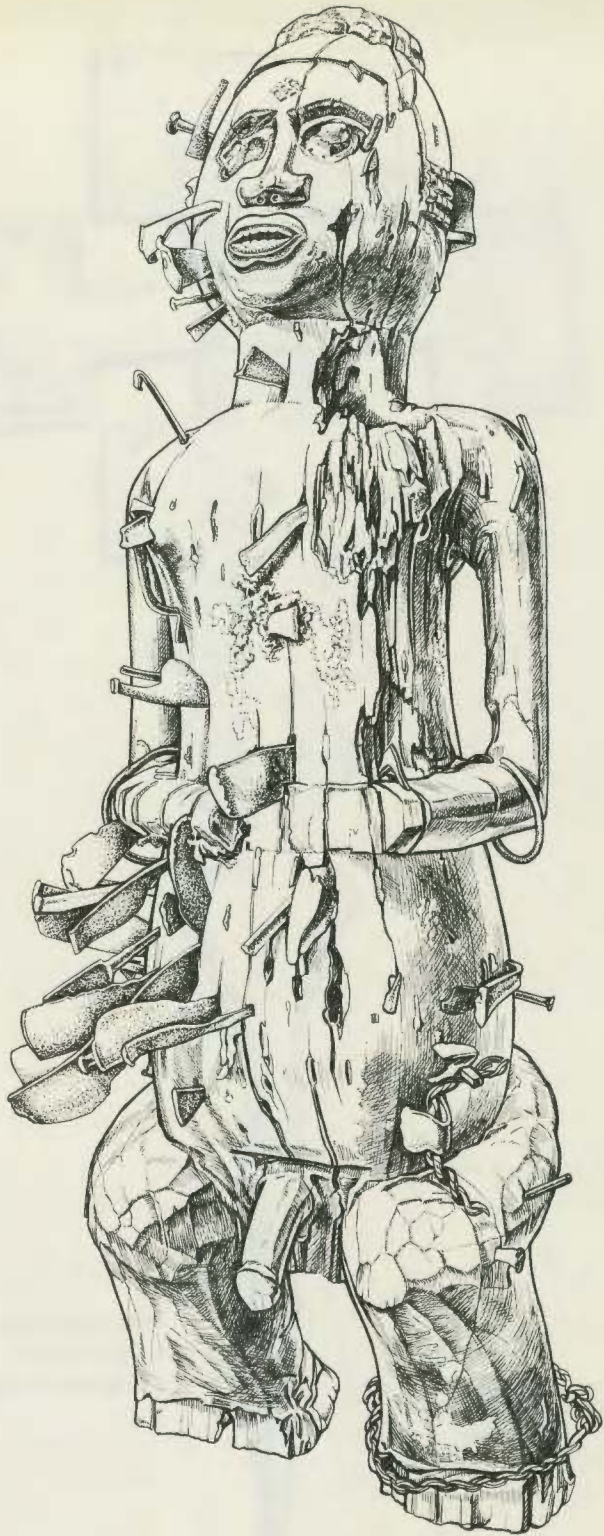
few decades before the French revolution, an interesting but brief, French missionary attempt was made on the Loango coast, 1766—1776. During this period of French dominance within the slave-trade, French slave-boats operated along this coast, and it was consequently of no difficulty for the missionaries to travel from France to the Congo.<sup>11</sup> After 1763 the Congo was closed for missionaries, due to the restrictive measures taken by Portugal and the Frenchmen's interest for the Congo's closest neighbour was convenient for the Propaganda.

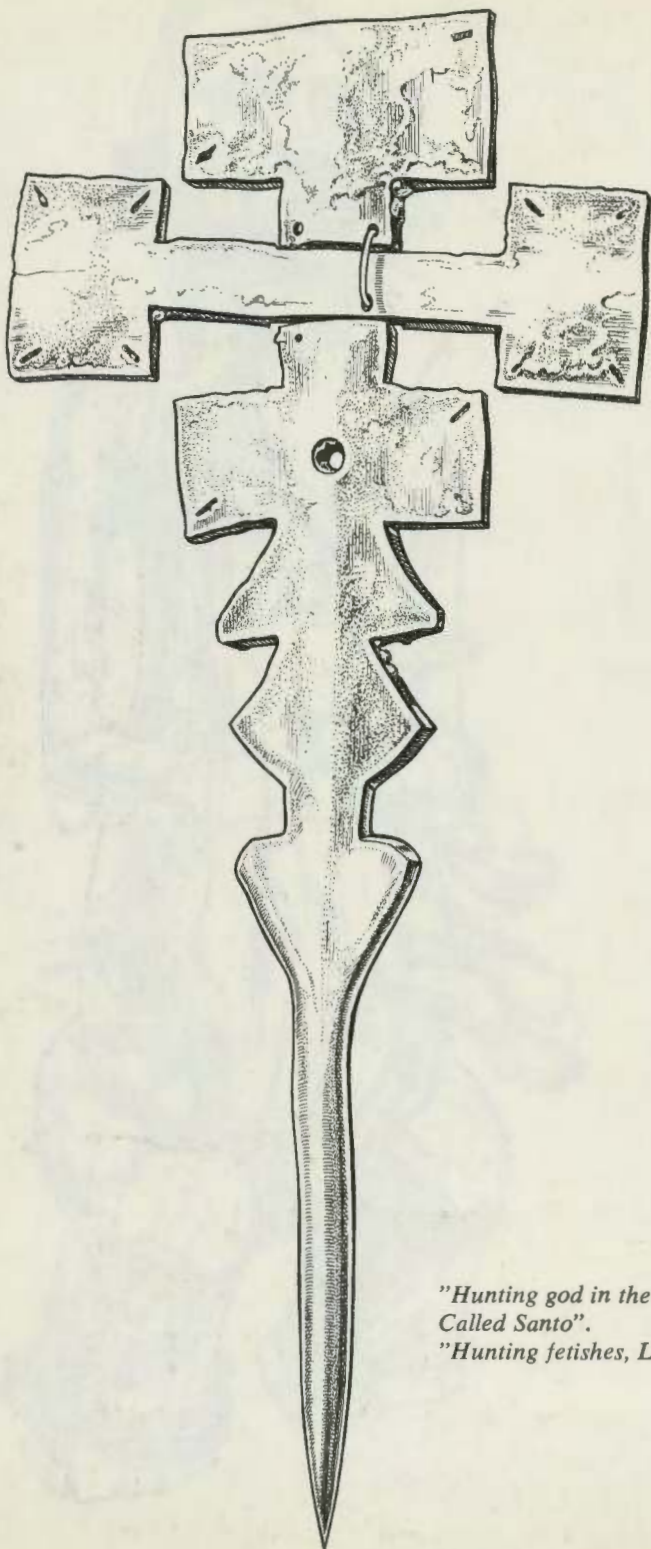
In our context this brief missionary effort by the French, is worth attention, as the French missionaries carefully studied the people's culture and language, and evaluated the African culture at a time when there is a lack of other sources. The mission was started on the initiative of the French bishops and not by any Orders. In addition to this, it was organized and functioned at a time when racial theories developed in Europe and especially France.<sup>12</sup> One can, on the grounds of such current ideas and those expressed by the Encyclopedists or the Enlightenment, expect to find new opinions about the Africans, represented among these French missionaries. If, for example, they do not give expression to racial ideas, this is also worth noticing.

Abbé Proyart's book, published in Paris in 1778 helped to spread information about this French mission at an early date. It is the first book concerning the regions of the Lower Congo to be published in a Scandinavian language, and appeared in Swedish as early as 1780 under the title, *Rese Beskrifning innehållande märkvärdiga Underrättelser om Loango, Kakongo och Flere Afrikanske riken*, (Description of Travels containing remarkable information about Loango, Kakongo and other African kingdoms).

Proyart was not himself a missionary in Africa, but based his study on the same sources as Mgr Cuvelier has made available in his book *Documents sur une mission Française au Kakongo 1766—1776*, which was first published in 1953. Proyart remained faithful to his source material and the picture he gives corresponds to that rendered by the missionaries themselves. In this study we shall concern ourselves with Mgr. Cuvelier's primary material, published in 1953 and which is to be found partly in the archives of the Propaganda in Rome and partly in Paris at Les Missions Etrangères de Paris, the head-office of the mission.

Before the start of the mission on the Loango coast, the Séminaire des Missions Etrangères put certain questions to the Propaganda, in order that they might be informed of conditions in the Congo and especially San Salvador. The answer from the Propaganda was as follows: "One cannot





*"Hunting god in the form of a cross.  
Called Santo".*

*"Hunting fetishes, Lower Congo".*





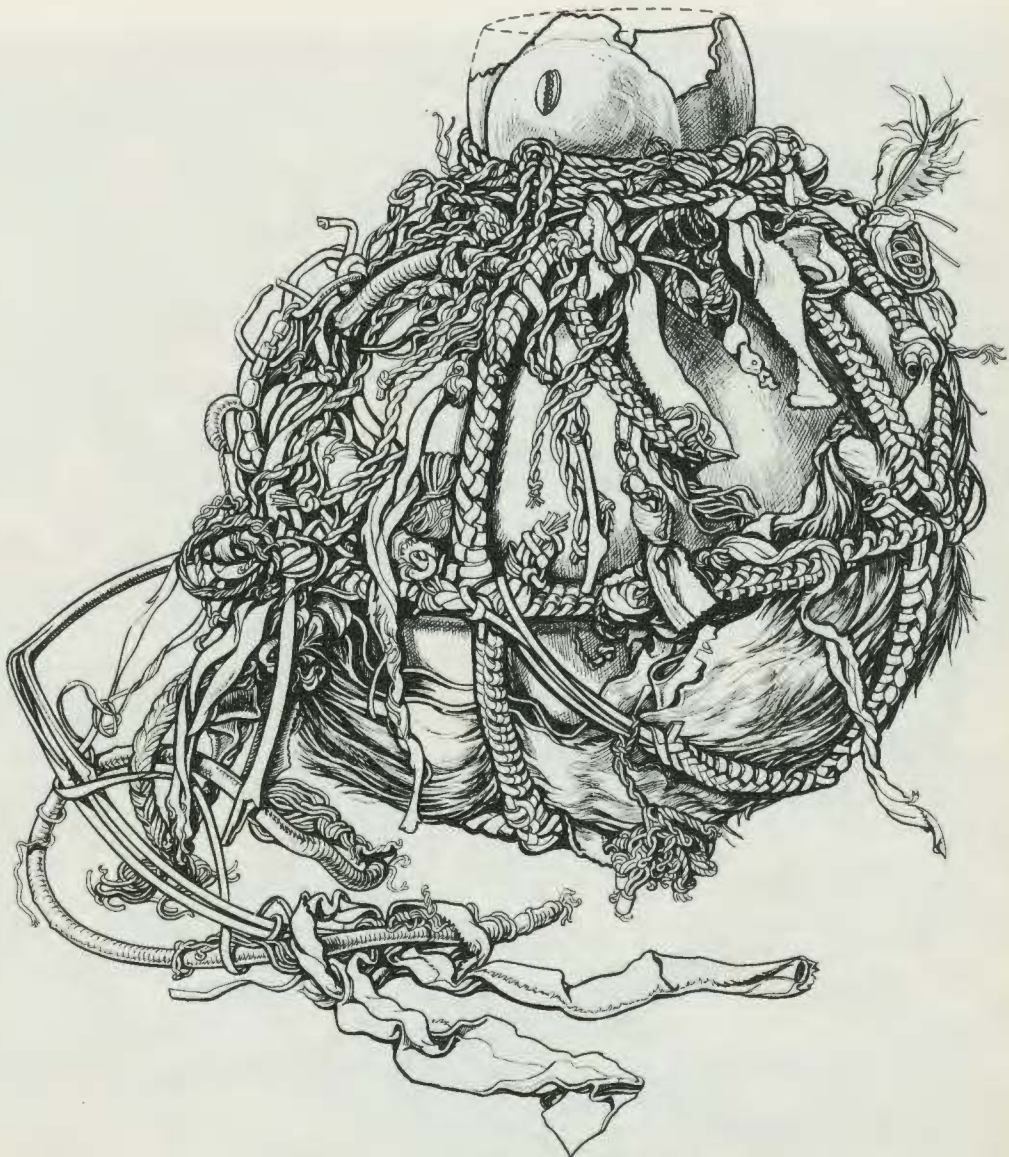
*A nkissi-bonfire. Illustration, Lopez-Pigafetta, 1624.*

*"The burning of idols". Lower Congo.*

*"Christmas morning at Mukimbungu".*











*Baptism by immersion. Lower Congo.  
Mani Soyo's baptism. Illustration, Lopez-  
Pigafetta, 1624.*



*Andriano  
Corona in testa*

*collo*



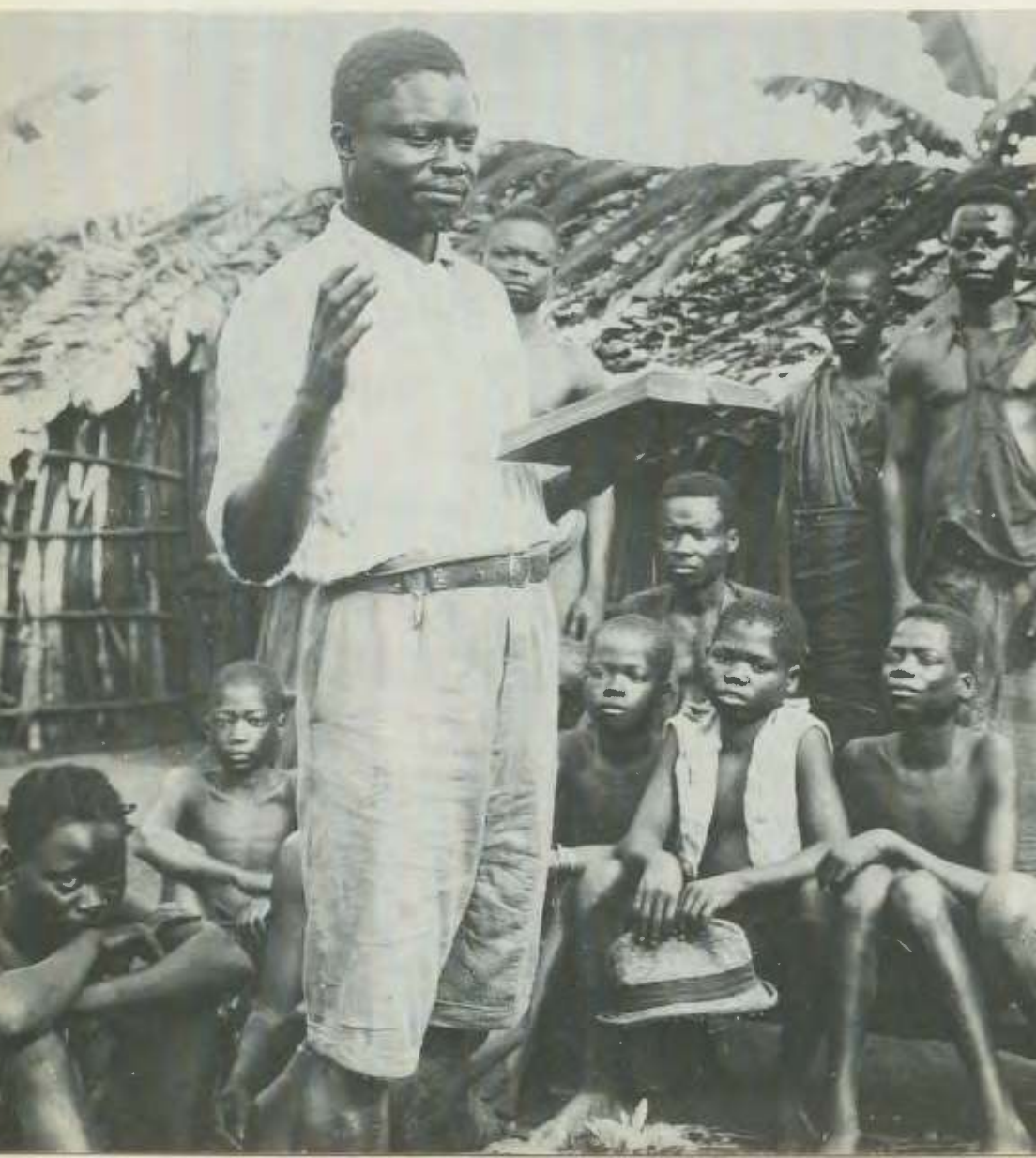
*Kimpa Vita, or Saint Anthony.*  
*"Original and 'civilized' costumes; basundi".*



*Chief Makasa Biala  
with four of his wives, at Kinkenge.  
Congolese hair-styling.  
The Makosi family at Mukimbungu.*





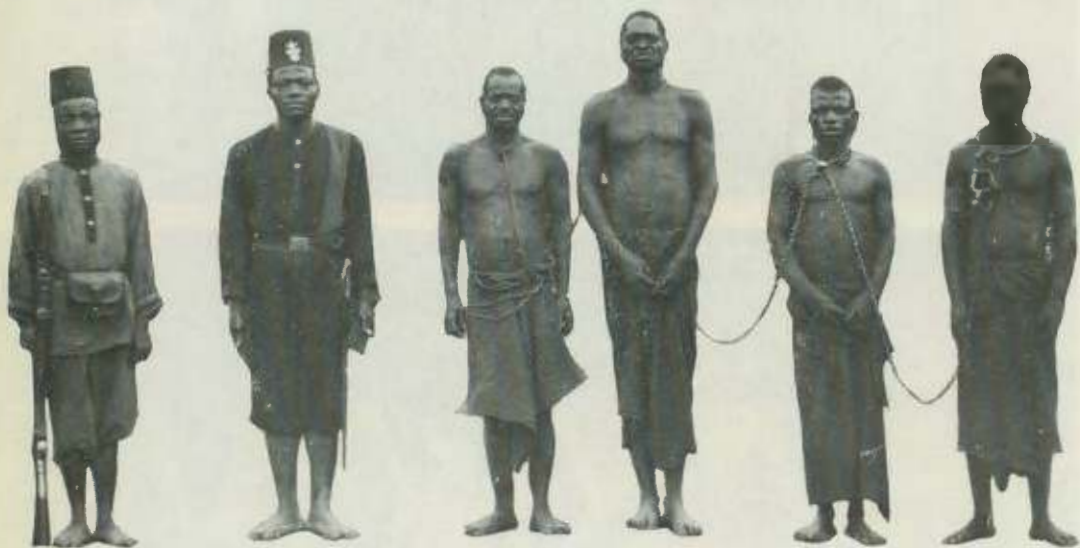


*Propagating the Gospel.  
Congoese trained for the new ministry.  
The Kibunzi class, 1891.  
Congoese trained for the old ministry at the  
Nkimba-school.*





*Two state policemen with four prisoners,  
accused of practising nkassa, at Nganda.*



specify the present situation for the Congo missions, as for several years no letters or reports concerning this country have been received, due to controversies between the Court, in Rome and Portugal respectively. However, it is known that San Salvador was destroyed a long time ago and that the bishop no longer resides there, but in Saint Paul-de-Loanda, Angola's capital, where all the Portuguese live."<sup>13</sup>

This answer comments on the crisis which occurred after the Marquis de Pombal had closed the country to the Italian Capuchins in 1763. The answer also reports that the bishop in Loanda does not send missionaries anywhere in the diocese, as neither the regular nor secular clergy leave Loanda and its neighbourhood. The answer from the Propaganda supported the French conviction, that the Loango and Kakongo kingdoms were suitable fields for mission. They received permission from the Propaganda to work in Loango, which they did, but the French missionaries transferred their activity further south to Kakongo, situated between Loango and Ngoyo, north of the Congo estuary. Thus, they entered a region which, at a much earlier date, had had contacts with the Catholic mission, even if no missionary had resided there for more than a year at a time, for example Bernardino da Ungheria (Hongrie) who settled in Loango 1663 and 1664. Due to coastal trade, this kingdom maintained active communications with Soyo and even with San Salvador and Pombo<sup>14</sup>.

In 1766, the first missionaries were sent out to the Congo from the Séminaire des Missions Etrangères de Paris, and the first reports already contained information which is especially valuable for the study of culture confrontation. The missionaries, Belgarde and Astelet de Calais, sailed southwards along the Guinea coast and came to Iombe, north of Loango.<sup>15</sup> The people in Iombe told them that they could expect to be cordially received by the King in Loango as he was Christian. He was also said to be "idolâtre". The mode of expression is interesting. "The King is Christian as a European, although at the same time an idolater as all other negroes."<sup>16</sup> The people describe the King in two roles: Christian as the Europeans and idolater as the Africans. The people make a distinction between the King and 'the other negroes', and mean that the King, in contrast to the others can be called Christian; the others were apparently only idolaters, according to language usage at this time.

When the missionaries arrived at Loango they did not meet the King — he had died six months prior to their arrival — but they were cordially received by the people, who showed both kindness and curiosity. The missionaries however immediately reacted to some of the cultural phenomena

and habits of the people. When the missionaries visited the villages they wanted the women to cover their naked breasts. Proyart mentions that as soon as a missionary came in sight of a village, the women shouted "Fuka mabene, fuka mabene: Nganga Nzambi Kwiza-e", which freely translated means, Cloth, cloth, God's priest is coming.<sup>17</sup> Nakedness which was natural for the African, was not accepted by the missionaries. The women's nakedness even embarrassed the missionaries in Kakongo, and they say that they had to restrain their evangelistic zeal among women, so as not to give cause to the slightest suspicion. But women were the most ardent listeners.<sup>18</sup>

The first report from the missionary leader, Belgarde, characterized the people as thievish, rather inclined to material gains and not at all interested in religion and philosophy. The people were said to lack "superstition", which according to Belgarde must be understood as a lack of cult in any form, for instance a nkissi-cult.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this observation, the missionaries were sure that the people would adopt Christianity, allow their children to be baptized and accept teaching. A vital requirement for success, was that the missionaries learned the people's language, in order to be able to converse with the children and instruct catechists. When the language studies proved more difficult than expected, among other things due to the people's trade relations with the European slavers, the missionaries intimated that surely they had a task among the white people along the coast; for instance among the hundred Frenchmen in Malemba.<sup>20</sup>

Three years after their arrival the missionaries were still occupied with their language studies; they worked on a grammar and on a dictionary which they intended to publish.<sup>21</sup> They had been fortunate in acquiring a young man as their teacher, who had been in France and spoke a little French. The language studies progressed so far that the missionaries managed to prepare the manuscripts for a grammar and two dictionaries.<sup>22</sup> *Un dictionnaire Congo-Français A—Z* in seventeen volumes, and an *Essai d'une grammaire Congo, suivant l'accent Kakongo ou Malemba* have been recovered from the Propaganda's archives. In the Grenville Library at the British Museum is kept *Un dictionnaire Français-Kakongo*, the pendant to the first mentioned glossary. These pioneering linguistic efforts on the Loango coast, were of little significance, due to the limited duration of the French mission, but they must however be mentioned as an example of a mission's aim and interest in an African language and culture.

After a few years, the missionaries despaired of success and turned

their attention southwards, to the regions which had once been christianized, but temporarily lacked teaching and pastoral guidance. The people who had at one time been Christian crossed themselves, prayed the Ave Maria and other prayers in their own language, but they did not know of The Lord's Prayer and the principal articles of the catechism.<sup>23</sup>

Belgarde abandoned this missionary attempt in Loango and his successor was Jean Descourvières. It was he, together with a small group, who set out for Kakongo, in the hope of greater success. They were cordially received by both the people and the King. A document from Kakongo which has been preserved, is of fundamental significance for a study of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo. The document is neither signed nor dated, but as Mgr Cuvelier convincingly shows, the *Relation de la mission des prestres séculiers pour le royaume de Loango et les environs*, must have been the work of Descourvières from the first half of 1770.<sup>24</sup> Descourvières describes the court, the king, and his power and right; he describes different kinds of cultivation, manioc, bananas, pineapples, oranges, lemons, gouyaves, cane-sugar and cotton, etc.

Polygyny is common says Descourvières, but poor men have no women, as the rich have the resources to acquire several wives. Women were virtually their husbands' slaves. They cultivated the ground, managed the household, brought up the children, waited on their husband, with whom they were not even allowed to eat.<sup>25</sup> The woman had her own fields, gardens and serfs, says the author, but does not modify his opinion that the woman acts as the husband's slave. He also indicates that the right of inheritance, in the same way as kinship, is matrilineal. Monogamy can occur in the case that a "princess" enters into a marriage. She can choose her own husband and also repudiate him and take another. In comparison to the Capuchins and their judgement of polygyny, Descourvières appears objective and not moralizing.

Descourvières makes a character study of the people's every-day morals and he finds the most apparent trait to be indolence. "Negroes are, of course, indolent and lazy. The majority of men and youths live a life of almost continual inactivity."<sup>26</sup> He says that there are, however, exceptions among the professional groups such as fishermen, salt-makers, smiths, basket weavers and builders. Tradesmen are said to cheat the people and pilfer. Moral standards in other fields were said to be rather high and certain crimes were severely punished; those who committed murder were sentenced to death, and slavery was the punishment for theft and infidelity.

It is a strikingly positive opinion which Descourvières expresses concerning the friendliness and generosity of the Kakongo people. They take

care of each other. Hitherto an opinion of this kind has seldom been expressed and it deserves a quotation: "They are gentle and compliant and are only too pleased to help strangers. But the most outstanding trait in their character is their constant readiness to share with others what they have. The rich and the poor have nothing that they can call their own, and the rich are soon as poor as those they have helped."<sup>27</sup> This evaluation is almost certainly characterized by the missionaries' good intentions, at the start of a new missionary attempt, to interpret everything as positively as possible. This statement reveals that Descourvières had both the ability and the desire to understand the Congolese culture as positive. He saw a weakness in the system regarding generosity and helpfulness, in that the indolent enjoyed the same advantages as the industrious. Diligence was not rewarded in such a milieu.

In regard to rites, Descourvières forms an opinion on only a few phenomena, but he does not condemn. Even in this case his description is factual and gives the impression of a genuine interest for the culture. Dance and song are described as essential elements in the people's lives. The dance at the full-moon was considered particularly important. The day of rest, *sona*, fell every fourth day and Descourvières condemns neither dance nor *sona*. The author talks of the widely spread practice of wearing *nkissi*, which he refers to as idols. *Banganga*'s role is observed, but they are called priests and not sorcerers. Even if Descourvières does not regard *banganga* as colleagues, he does not condemn them, but shows them a degree of understanding. Neither is the custom of giving suspects *nkassa*, in order to ascertain who is guilty of a crime, the object of anything more than a description.

Descourvières' *Relation* gives the impression that the religious struggle was subdued in comparison to previous eras. He remains quietly observant and obviously exerts himself to render a factual picture of the foreign culture with which he was faced, even if he uses the term "superstition" concerning some African habits. This term does not appear to be especially prejudiced for Descourvières, but a rather neutral term in 1770.

On one point Descourvières renders an African conception of God.<sup>28</sup> As background to the current discussion of God's name "Nzambi" in the Lower Congo, his description is both valuable and original. The people professed to one God, who is supreme: he has created everything and he governs everything. He is believed to dwell in heaven. They have also a conception of an evil spirit, *zambi ambi*, which means the evil *zambi*. But this is not considered as the reason for evil, or its origin. On the contrary, it is thought that God himself, is the cause of death, illness and

all other evil to which people are subjected. God is not the object of any cult, comments Descourvières, as the people say that they do not know him and that they know not how to worship him. He is, however, feared and the most solemn oaths are those which are sworn in God's name.

Later in his Relation, Descourvières remarks, that one cannot rule out the Christian influence in this context and we know that the Loango-Kakongo coast had active connexions with the Congo and Europe for many years. It is worth noticing that in a source from the 1770's, it is established that God — whether he was called Nzambi, or not, is not expressly clear from the document, but this was in all probability his name — was a High God and a Creator. This God had not retired, but continued to govern. The conception of God, Nzambi is known from the Congo estuary, since the close of the fifteenth century, while it is the first time that one runs across the expression zambi ambi. Nzambi, like Nzambi Mpungu, the Supreme God, was conceived as a Creator and a good God. In 1770, Nzambiambi was said to be the evil god, but there is no explanation of the key-word Nzambi. It is also worth noticing that Descourvières does not mention Kadiapemba as the evil god.

From Descourvières we also receive some valuable information on how people on the slave-coast received the French missionaries. The people's attitude to mission was ambiguous. On the one hand, it is said that the king and leaders of the community were favourably disposed to the newcomers, but on the other hand, some of the missionaries report, that it was labour in vain to preach to the people as they were far too malevolent. Some of them promised to accept the new religion and have their children baptized as soon as the king set them an example. The king, however, was not to be persuaded and did not become Christian. Thereby the leader of the community remained indifferent to the new religion and naturally his decision influenced the people. This attitude among the people in Kakongo was not unusual: they agreed to Christianity provided the king took the first step, but the king had several wives, was protected by nkissi and could obviously see no advantage in being baptized, relates Descourvières.

If the missionaries had been many and well-equipped, the king might have taken another attitude towards them, but the French missionaries comprised only a couple who had no riches or any other status. They could not improve trade relations for the king and could not, in the main, offer him any material advantages. This powerless and impoverished mission had no success and was faced with a serious crisis.

## The people remain loyal to their tradition

A document from 1772, of which Descourvières was certainly the author, acknowledges that the mission in Kakongo had so far been unsuccessful, but it argues for a continued missionary effort due to certain hopeful signs.<sup>29</sup> Among other things the document refers to the king's readiness to allow Christian preaching, but at the same time it points out for the Board of Missions in Paris, the obstacles which had to be overcome. The object of the document is to convince those who gave the mission their financial support that there was a possibility of success and it is for this reason that one must reserve one's judgement concerning the degree of accuracy with which the people are described. The author probably improves the picture a little in view of conditions in Paris.

Eight points explain the basis for a positive assessment of the mission's future. 1. The people in the kingdom are peaceful and they are characterized by their gentleness. 2. The people are helpful; they take responsibility for one another. 3. With the exception of those who conduct trade with the Europeans, the people are generous, even towards foreigners. 4. The people have simple habits and are thrifty. 5. The people willingly obey and would even throw their nkissi into the ocean, if a missionary promised to settle in their village. 6. Decency and cleanliness are characteristics of the people. Improper relations between boys and girls do not occur and their language even lacks words to describe embracing and kissing. Men and women dance separately and the men look in the other direction if, for some reason a woman must show herself naked; for example when crossing a river, etc. 7. They want their children taught by missionaries. 8. The people easily memorize religious truths.

It is said that a general praxis concerning the right to land made it easier for the mission to establish itself in Kakongo. Land which was not cultivated was considered vacant and he who gave the chief a suitable gift, had the right to cultivate the land. It was not a question of ownership in the European sense of the world, for as soon as the land was left untilled, the right to the land expired. Thus, the missionaries counted on residing there and cultivating what was necessary for their up-keep, which would reduce the cost of the entire enterprise.

According to contemporary views, five, fancied or real, obstacles also presented themselves in the path of the mission. Even these are carefully explained and discussed, despite the fact that the author must have been aware that he could more easily achieve his purpose by concealing the difficulties. The argumentation in 1772 deals with the vital questions of

culture confrontation. 1. The people manifest a certain reluctance towards the missionaries. They reject the Gospel. But in the document it is stated, that this kind of obstacle must not be allowed to prevent mission, which must always be prepared for resistance. 2. In 1772, the author writes, that in certain circles it is said that the people's character is an obstacle for the mission. They were said to be traitors, ruthless and callous. They sold one another as slaves: even parents sold their children. According to some reports they were said to be indifferent, lack the ability to plan and they did not think. Their laziness was total, they stole and practiced polygamy.

On point after point, the author successively refutes such statements in our document, which he considers far too general. Descourvières means that the people in these regions were better than their reputation painted them and no more ruthless than other people. The slave-trade between Africans was regulated and according to the country's law, they were forbidden to sell their own people as slaves to the European slavers. The slaves which were sold in Loango originated from the interior regions.

The people's maintained indifference was nothing other than an expression of their different needs and outlook. Their conception of what was important and necessary was different to that of the European. They did not need to plan, or think so much for the future, because the climate and nature provided them with all that they needed for their daily subsistence. The author says that polygamy ought not to be an insurmountable problem for the mission, as the chief had declared himself willing to accept the Gospel and knew that the Church would not tolerate polygamy. Moreover, half of the male population would probably be in favour of a reform as they had no wives due to the rich man's polygyny. People did not steal from one another and they trusted each other. In the country, they did not even lock their doors at night. Those who stole were tradesmen and this they had probably learned from the Europeans, writes Descourvières.

Indolence was widespread among tradesmen and therefore, farmers and women worked all the harder. But Christianity would surely encourage diligence. This is how Descourvières supported the Kakongo people. 3. The climate was also a problem, but the author claims that this could be mastered with increased experience. 4. Descourvières meant that the slavers on the coast constituted a real problem. They have a negative attitude towards mission and can possibly obstruct missionary development. But he continues; their resistance can also be interpreted in another way. The slavers attitude can also be seen as a sign of the people's



susceptibility to Christianity, otherwise they would have nothing to fear from the mission. Furthermore, all Christians must contend with demonic powers. This is maintained by the author in a way which gives one to understand that he means the slave-trade.

5. One difficulty concerns the mission's limited resources, as they were dependent upon those Church circles in France who were interested in mission and were not supported by any religious Order. The author means that this circumstance must not prevent a well-planned missionary venture. Descourvières did not make light of the difficulties, but he analysed them and provided an answer to the different problems. He took the African culture seriously and did not treat it as a romantic or an exotic milieu.

The communication had the desired effect in Paris and new missionaries were sent to Kakongo, simultaneously as the plans for mission extended still further south, to Soyo, situated south of the Congo estuary. Descourvières was himself prefect for the regenerated missionary enterprise, which lasted only four years. When it was abandoned in 1775 it was principally for three alleged reasons: the high death-rate among the missionaries, disease and the population's indifference to the Gospel.<sup>30</sup>

A document which was neither signed or dated, probably from the spring of 1774—1775, reveals the missionaries view of the slave-trade.<sup>31</sup> It appears that they, just as the Caupchins, accepted the slave-trade as something quite normal. But the French document reveals two original points of view, which in both cases concern the opinion of what was to be considered immoral within the sphere of the slave-trade. The first point took up the question of trade ethics. The white slavers on the coast cheated the African slavers from the hinterland, by secretly paying a third of the slave-price to an African middleman on the coast. Is *this* right asks the author? The second point concerned the nakedness of the slaves. Did the captains of the slave-ships have the right to transport slaves who were naked, men and women together during an entire voyage? Should not the captains be bound to clothe the slaves in some way, at least the women from the waist downwards? This is how the questions were posed, but no seriously meant answer was forthcoming from France.

The last document from this ten year French mission gives the reasons for abandoning the whole enterprise.<sup>32</sup> It presents a much more sombre picture of the Africans than the bright and expectant picture of 1772, when it was a question of supplying arguments which would justify an increased missionary effort. In 1775 after some years of experience, it was found that the deceitfulness and mendacity of the inhabitants was

such an everyday occurrence, that it seemed to be a trait in their character. They formulate a number of beautiful words, only in order to flatter and gain advantages. The documents state that, in the beginning the missionaries made the mistake of believing what people said. But time has shown that it was only pride and self-complacency, which dictated the beautiful words.

It was considered an asset to have a missionary in the village, as this increased the status of the village. Not even the Christians which the missionaries met in some of the villages — those who had migrated from Soyo — wanted to have anything to do with them. It was vanity which caused them to have their children baptized and it was considered a gain of prestige to be baptized. The Christians despised the non-Christians to such an extent, that they hardly regarded them as human beings. One did not even know if they believed in the Christian truths which they said themselves to embrace. Their explicit wish to repudiate their wives and become Christian, must also be questioned continues the completely disillusioned author. The Christian's customs did not differ from others. Sensual pleasure, superstition, polygyny, indolence and pilfering are said to apply just as much to Christians as to non-Christians.

If the document from 1772 has a tendency to glamourize African reality in order to justify further missionary efforts, the document from 1775 appears to paint the situation such as to justify and motivate the reasons for the definite retreat from Kakongo in 1776. As examples of the missionaries' aspirations and disappointments, the documents are exceedingly revealing and the confrontation between the two cultures is clearly reflected.

The missionaries had obviously transferred their disappointments in the religious field to the entire African culture. The basic reason for this change of attitude must stem from the discovery that the people's kind reception of the mission was not dictated by a wish to become Christian, but by aspirations of social advantages through the missionaries' presence. The missionaries brought nothing new from Europe which these coastal people did not have already. The king, or chief, promised to become Christian, allow his children to be baptized, renounce polygyny and accept teaching, on the condition that the missionary resided in his village. But in practice these promises were never fulfilled, as the promises in the eyes of the Africans, surely, only corresponded to what they considered to be the missionaries' foremost wishes.

The picture which remains, after the different documents from the French mission on the Loango-Kakongo coast, is quite clear regarding an

important point in culture confrontation. The African culture is consistently described as being structurally firm, and social order was solid. The tendency to disintegration of traditional African ethics, to which the Frenchmen drew attention, concerned those living on the coast who had contacts with Europeans, particularly tradesmen who had close connexions with the European slavers. One result of culture contact was that respect for the other man's property decreased, as did honesty and fidelity. The missionaries' evaluation does not seem to have been influenced by any racial ideas.

Despite the disappointments expressed by the missionaries, they never denied that in relation to one another, the people were generous and considerate and industrious as far as agriculture was concerned, capable smiths, basket makers, salt-makers and fishermen. One finds no hateful attacks on banganga. Illness, lack of personnel and money finally made it impossible for the mission to continue.

It was after the Missions Etrangères de Paris had thus failed to establish itself on the Loango-Kakongo coast and as the Congo was inaccessible to the Propaganda, due to the Vatican's political complications with Portugal, that European interest for mission in this area faded. Only the slavers continued, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century a completely new interest for the Congo developed; various kinds of scientists and travellers wanted to explore the river Congo.

## Chapter 5. The Lower Congo as an object of research

For several reasons, attention must be drawn to the literature referred to in this chapter as important. It contains certain impressions from the Lower Congo during the era prior to the Stanley epoch, and these impressions of Congolese culture were to strongly influence European opinion of the Congolese past. The works of Tuckey, Bastian and Burton were widely read, and to a large extent these three authors were to become the authorities to whom reference was always made on questions concerning the Congo. Furthermore, the literature is somewhat polemic in regard to the Capuchin mission, and for a long time this polemic was to strongly colour European evaluation of this mission. During the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's the attitude of the Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the Congo, towards the old Catholic mission, appears to have been influenced by the works of these authors. This warrants a somewhat detailed discussion of the most important nineteenth century literature, before the Stanley era.

The authors, who are dealt with in this chapter, have one thing in common; they all interpret the traces of the Christian cult, which they saw in the Congo, as antique, and of no significance. They do not regard these traces as evidence of a living tradition, which had maintained important traits from the Capuchin mission. Our analysis, among other things, is based on the assumption that much of what was written by these nineteenth century authors, from Tuckey to Bastian, can be interpreted as a living heritage from older times.

For three centuries, two professional categories had dominated among the Europeans in the Congo, slavers and missionaries. For natural reasons, such as vocational training and personal interest, it was principally the missionaries who left written reports from their work, together with interpretations and evaluations of the culture they had met. During the nineteenth century, the Congolese came into touch with a new type of European<sup>5</sup>. The slavers, it is true, held out longest in the region, but their influence diminished after the middle of the century and eventually ceased to exist. Such missionaries as the Congolese had the possibility of meeting, were extremely few and they were used to them.

The new element in culture confrontation was the exploratory expeditions which began to show an interest in the Lower Congo, its people and culture. Those to whom attention is paid in this study are J. K. Tuckey, Ladislaus Magyar, Adolf Bastian and Richard Burton, all of whom

preceded H. M. Stanley. It was a scientific interest which these explorers showed for the Congolese and not primarily a missionary or commercial one. Their task was to observe and describe a foreign culture. In some cases commercial interests played a role, but common for them all was that they, for methodological reasons, respected the Congolese culture and refrained from influencing it in a certain direction.

Trade on the Loango-Congo coast, after the middle of the nineteenth century, was concentrated on new products, such as tropical wood, palm oil, ground-nuts and rubber. Until the beginning of the Stanley era, this new trade contact was, for the Congo people, of a more lenient nature than both the preceding slave-trade and the succeeding rubber boom. The trade in ivory increased substantially during the time of the Congo Independent State.

It is the period between Tuckey and Stanley which we shall briefly study, and as in previous chapters, the study is concentrated on those issues which were to become of fundamental importance to the analysis of culture confrontation during the pioneering years of the Congo Independent State.

This new kind of Congo literature describes and assesses the contemporary Congo culture and at the same time criticizes missionary efforts during preceding eras. The nineteenth century explorers of the Lower Congo pursued, in other words, broad-scale criticism of the mission. This, in itself, is worth detailed analysis, but it can only be touched upon in the case that it is of relevance to the issues within the framework of culture confrontation.

## 1816 — Captain Tuckey's Congo expedition

In 1816, on behalf of the British Admiralty, Captain J. K. Tuckey led the first scientific expedition which was sent to the Congo. The results of this expedition were carefully explained in the report, *Narrative of an Expedition to explore the River Zaire*, which was published in London in 1818.<sup>1</sup> Also included in this report is the diary of the Norwegian professor, Christian Smith, which was published separately in a Norwegian translation in 1819.

The character of the expedition was such as to throw light on the general knowledge of Africa, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Captain Tuckey was to investigate the possibility of the Niger and the Congo being the same river. "The termination of the Niger and the source

of the Congo, are alike unknown."<sup>2</sup> Africa's interior was unknown in Europe and there had also been discussion of a possible connexion between the Nile and the river Congo.

For centuries, pious fantasy had imagined the unknown interior to be a Christian kingdom, which was governed by the legendary Priest John. His kingdom was believed to be surrounded by Muslim states and a connexion from the ocean to this isolated Christian kingdom would establish a suitable starting point to conquer the Islamic empire. One observes that, even when the British Admiralty equips an expedition, the theological motive plays a part and the dread of Islam comes to mind. This aspect, however, was not so significant at this time, as it was in the period of the Portuguese conquistadors. Among the sources of information on the Congo, of which the expedition was aware, is mentioned Andrew Battell, Dennis Carli, Lopez-Pigafetta and Girolamo Merolla. The preparations for the expedition also included a certain degree of historical study.

On the outward voyage to the Congo estuary, on the boat called 'Congo', the expedition anchored on 30 June, 1816, in Kakongo's port, Malimba, which was said to have been abandoned by the Frenchmen. On the other hand, in Ngoyo's port, Cabinda, south of Malimba, where the Portuguese were resident as slavers, nine Portuguese ships and one Spanish waited for cargo. In Malimba, Tuckey received a visit on board from a gentleman by the name of Tom Liverpool, who wanted to sell slaves. He complained about the bad times, and explained that during the last five years only one slave-boat had called at the harbour to buy slaves from him and he wanted better connexions. A statement such as this, throws light upon the fact that the French slave-trade had decreased considerably as early as 1816, while the Portuguese still continued.

Captain Tuckey's expedition was in the first place a geographical exploration, supplemented by botanical investigations, under the leadership of the Norwegian professor, Smith. But these investigations also concerned the study of the people's customs and practices. One of the Captain's statements, shows an awareness of the necessity to show consideration in relation to the foreign culture which is to be studied. "As one of the objects of the expedition is to view and describe manners, it will be highly improper to interrupt, in any manner, the ceremonies of the native, however they may shock humanity or create disgust; and it is equally necessary, in the pursuits of the different Naturalists, to avoid offending the superstitions of the natives in any of their venerated objects."<sup>3</sup>

The ethical aspect expressed by Tuckey is interesting. Despite the fact that he uses words such as disgust and superstition about African customs,

he demands of the members of the expedition, that they show a degree of respect for these customs and do not interrupt them. The statement also illustrates that there is a profound difference between this scientific mission and those of a political and Christian character. Tuckey's men did not intend to pursue trade or oppress a people, or to propagate a certain creed; their fundamental aim was to observe and record. In order to fulfil this aim, they were forced to show discretion and good taste in relation to the Congolese.

This matter-of-fact attitude allows us to attach importance to the observations made by the expedition, even though it was in touch with the Congolese people for only three months; July—September 1816.

### *Traces of Christian Mission*

When the 'Congo' anchored at Shark Point, Soyo men came aboard and related to both Tuckey and Smith that nearly all of them were Christian.<sup>4</sup> They had been converted by Portuguese missionaries, says Tuckey, but Smith maintains that they were converted by Capuchins from Loanda. Smith's and Tuckey's attention turned to one of the Soyo men, as he functioned as a priest. He possessed a kind of diploma which confirmed his official authority. He could write his own name and that of Saint Anthony, "and he could also read the Romish litany in Latin."<sup>5</sup> We receive no information as to why he could write this particular name, but it is not improbable that the Soyo man had heard about Kimpa Vita, Saint Anthony and professed himself as an adherent of that movement. Naturally, this assumption is highly hypothetical and there were many other reasons for a man, at that time, to attach importance to the name Saint Anthony.

Smith presents a chronological enlightenment, which supports the information, that even during the nineteenth century, the Capuchins took a certain responsibility for the Congo Kingdom. The Congolese relate that the Christians had only recently been baptized. "They were baptized by these monks two years ago at St. Antonio, situated seven days journey from hence."<sup>6</sup> The baptism should have taken place some time between the years 1813—1815 and was administered by a Capuchin from Loanda.

Other indications of European presence in the Congo estuary during the nineteenth century, are a couple of statements from Tuckey in Boma, which relate that the King's sons spoke tolerable English. That is to say, that the king showed Tuckey a written document from 1813, addressed to the King of Boma "from the Governor of St. Paul de Loanda, complain-

ing that the Sonio men had killed some of the missionaries and cut off a Portuguese trading pinnace."<sup>7</sup> No other sources report that a missionary should have been killed in Soyo, but it is probable that the Soyo people, with some success, defended themselves from the Portuguese slavers, especially if they penetrated the Congo estuary as far as Boma.

On August 17, the expedition arrived just east of Boma and even at this point, Tuckey notices that the further inland one penetrates, the fewer European articles one sees in circulation among the people. He also records Congolese information, that in San Salvador there was a resident white population. This is not confirmed by other sources, but neither is it considered impossible.<sup>8</sup> Even if this information is correct, it does not change the opinion that the culture contact which occurred in the Lower Congo at the beginning of the nineteenth century between Europeans and Africans, was between the resident Africans and the slavers from the boats.

The Soyo priest, "this barefooted black apostle", as Smith referred to him, had five wives. Tuckey presents more specific information and says that according to the priest's own words, he had only one wife, but five concubines and referred to a great apostle in the New Testament. The Soyo priest added, "that St. Peter, in confining him to *one* wife, did not prohibit his solacing himself with as many handmaids as he could manage."<sup>9</sup> This example of Congolese Bible usage is shrewd and somewhat mechanical, but probably not so far from the method of Bible interpretation the Congolese had heard from the missionaries. The Soyo priest, almost certainly had no Bible himself, but made use of the knowledges he had acquired in other ways. The pertinence of this is, that the priest gathers support from the Bible for his many women.

It is of significantly more interest for the study of culture confrontation, in this corner of the world during the nineteenth century, to notice the unanimous information which speaks of the wearing of crucifixes by the Christians in Soyo. "All these converts were loaded with crucifixes and satchels containing the pretended relics of saints, certainly of equal efficiency with the monkey's bone of their pagan brethren" says Tuckey.<sup>10</sup> After Tuckey first noticed that the Christians wore crucifixes and carried satchels containing relics, he expressed his own view of this and said that they serve as "the nkissi of their pagan brethren". Thus, he noted the inclusive trait of African cult tolerance in the encounter between the religions. That the one had a "Christian" crucifix and the other a "heathen" nkissi, made no difference to Tuckey.

Tuckey returns to this theme a couple of times during the expedition and establishes that the people were not influenced by the teaching of all



the missionaries who worked in the Congo during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His statement is probably grounded on his opinion that nkissi and the crucifix are expressions for the same thing. Belief in the power of nkissi is "by the way", not "more ridiculous than the augury of the Romans, or the inspiration and beatific visions of certain Christians".<sup>11</sup>

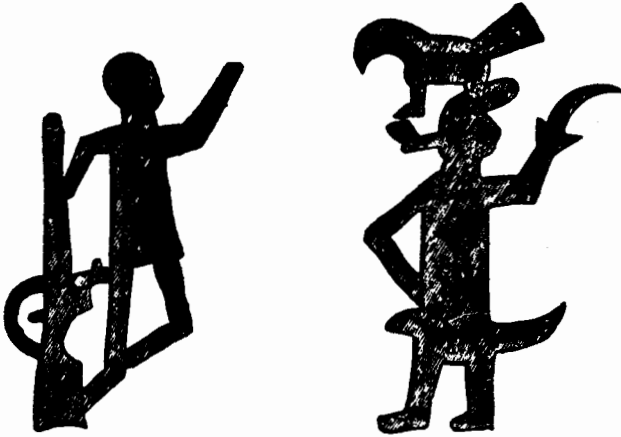
Accordingly, Captain Tuckey appears to have disassociated himself from prophets and dreams, or similar phenomena, in both cultures. Apart from this generally negative attitude, Tuckey does not really criticize the Capuchin mission, as does Professor Smith. Smith notes that the results of three hundred years of missionary work were insignificant. The missionaries should have been more tolerant towards polygamy, says Smith, as thereby the people would have found it easier to accept Christianity. The missionaries first task should have been civilization: "If the exertions of the missionaries had been deliberately directed towards civilizing the natives, what good might not have been effected in the course of so long a period."<sup>12</sup>

In 1816 the Norwegian professor regards the terms "civilize" and "christianize" as competing interests. He considers that the missionaries applied themselves to christianizing the people and neglected their responsibility to civilize, and criticizes them for not giving priority to the task of civilizing the people. The English captain, on his part, maintains that colonization would give results. "If we mean to accelerate the progress of civilization, it can only be done by colonisation."<sup>13</sup> There is no better starting point for colonization in Africa than the Congo estuary says Tuckey, who does not himself appear as a colonizer.

The British captain made a curious interpretation of the results they had seen of earlier culture contacts on the coast. The Soyo people were influenced by the Portuguese and dirty, he said. The Malimba people on the Kakongo coast were influenced by the French and clean and elegant.<sup>14</sup>

### "WHITE MEN ARE GODS"

The members of the expedition, who approached the Yellalla rapids, encountered people who claimed that they had never before seen a white man. Tuckey mentions that the white people were called moudela, which was used in the greeting "izacalla moudela".<sup>15</sup> Tuckey was at that time so exhausted and worried over the sick members of the expedition that his notes become shorter for every day which passes. He does not give a translation of "Izacalla moudela", but it ought to mean, something like "Welcome, white man".



*"Two war fetiches", as illustrated in Narrative 1818.*

Fitzmaurice, the Master Surveyor of the Expedition, reports from Banza Cooloo a more significant expression, namely "Mindele zaambie m'poonga", "white men are gods".<sup>16</sup> The context in which the Congolese use this expression is such that it gives a certain explanation of why the white men were called gods. The Congolese found the white people's ability very remarkable. The chief in Banza Cooloo had a war nkissi, which was said to protect its owner in a marvellous way. If somebody tried to shoot at this nkissi, "the flint would fall out, and the person so attempting would fall down dead".<sup>17</sup> Fitzmaurice and his colleague Hodder, wanted to test the nkissi's power, but the chief said that he loved them too much to dare to let them try. However, they succeeded in persuading him, with among other things two bottles of brandy, and the next morning the attempt was to take place.

During the course of the evening, the chief and his men consulted one another about the white men's idea. They asked the white men's interpreter, if he believed that the white men really would shoot at the nkissi and he replied in the affirmative. It was then that they cried out "Mindele zaambie m'poonga". Because they showed such exceptional courage in intending to take a shot at a war nkissi, the white men were believed to be

in communication with the divine powers. The problem *muntu-mundele* is brought to the fore in our context, but one does not reach a solution.

### *Slaves and Serfs*

The slave-trade continued during the 1810's and Tuckey tried to assess its extent in the Congo estuary. He enquired of the Portuguese slavers and the resident population whom he met and estimated that trade comprised approximately 2,000 slaves per annum. The chiefs expressed their surprise in that Tuckey's expedition could travel to the Congo from Europe for other reasons than war and slave-trade: "When then come for, only to make walk or make book",<sup>18</sup>

Tuckey makes a definite distinction between the two forms of slavery: "Slavery here is of two kinds", he says, "which may be denominated household or domestic and trading".<sup>19</sup> Serfs are never sold for any other reason than committing a serious crime. They are treated well, and if not, can leave and find themselves another master. The real slaves "are those purchased from itinerant black slave merchants and are either taken in war, kidnapped or condemned for crimes".<sup>20</sup>

The evaluation of the consequences of the slave-trade for the community, is of more interest than the former, well-known, distinction. Tuckey claims that the abolishment of the slave-trade itself, will not influence the terms of a serf. The gains made concern something else, which would be of great significance to civilization, namely, providing safety on the pathways. "By rendering the communication between different parts of the country free from the danger of being kidnapped", the Captain says, the people from remote villages would dare to leave their own region and establish contacts with other villages.<sup>21</sup> Tuckey considered these difficulties of communication to be "the greatest obstacle to the civilization of Africa". Tuckey's reasoning in this question shows that he thinks of the Congolese's own possibilities of establishing contact between themselves. He does not appear, in the first instance, to consider this as a difficulty which would face a colonial enterprise.

In a critical assessment of the slave-trade, Tuckey accuses the European slave-traders, not only for kidnapping, but also for being the cause of Congolese civil war. At the same time, he notes that even the Congolese magnates are anxious to see the slave-trade continue, for just as for the Europeans, it is their source of income. The people in general were anxious to see the slave-trade brought to an end. "Every man I have conversed with indeed acknowledges, that if white men did not come for slaves, the

practice of kidnapping would no longer exist and the wars, which nine times out of ten result from the European slave-trade, would be proportionally less frequent", says Tuckey.<sup>22</sup>

This is the first time a so well-known European, in an official report, puts forward an opinion which places the blame on the Europeans, for the war between Congolese villages and tribes. Tuckey had only been in the Congo for a few months, while others who, for several years, had the opportunity to study the situation, had not seen this connexion between an African so-called civil war and the European slave-trade. Perhaps one should add that Tuckey must be considered to have good reason for his evaluation of this problem.

The Captain becomes ironical in his criticism, when he mentions the kind of presents given by the Europeans at the conclusion of a slave purchase. "The only presents made by the Europeans concerned in the slave-trade, were brandy, muskets and gunpowder, all promoters of civilisation and encouragers of population".<sup>23</sup> Rifles and gunpowder alike were of course designed for civil war, but they would not match up to the superior weapons with which the slavers were equipped, in the case that the Congolese decided to fight against the white man. Brandy was probably considered to make the Congolese more compliant. Already in 1816, one notices European criticism of the Europeans attempts to introduce alcohol into Africa.

#### *The Rumours about Anthropophagy are false*

In the third part of the report, under the heading "A concise view of the Country along the Line of the Zaire — its Natural History and inhabitants — collected from the preceding Narratives and Officers employed on the Expedition", are to be found the results of the expedition's ethnographical study, based on the diaries of Tuckey and Professor Smith.<sup>24</sup> The information is based on the combined experiences of the expedition and not only of the two leaders.

The supposition that the Congolese might have been cannibals is dismissed. "There do not appear however to be the slightest grounds for supposing that they ever eat human flesh, not even that of their enemies, but that all the accusations of this nature are totally false."<sup>25</sup> This is probably a polemic on the part of the expedition against those who earlier described the Congo: Battell, Carli and Merolla. Thanks to this polemic, the picture of the people of the Lower Congo was appreciably corrected, even if the expedition's information about the Congo and the defence it



*Early European idea of Congolese cannibalism. Detail from an illustration in Lopez-Pigafetta, 1624.*

took on the part of the Congolese, had difficulty in being accepted in Europe.

Another pertinent point in this reasoning, which is included in the report, concerns a possible explanation of the numerous statements concerning cannibalism, made by the Capuchin missionaries. It sometimes occurred that the different tribes spoke badly of one another in front of the white men; "they always take care to represent one another in a bad light: and usually fix upon cannibalism as worst".<sup>26</sup> On this point, Tuckey's expedition makes a statement in opposition to current European opinion, that the people of the Lower Congo were cannibals.

In another polemic against, among others, Dennis de Carli, it is said that the population was not so dense as stated. On the contrary, it is very sparse.<sup>27</sup> While Carli and Tuckey are separated by one-and-a-half century, with significant demographical changes, due to war, the plague and above all the hunt for slaves, it is worth noticing that the criticism of the Tuckey expedition concerning those who earlier described the Congo, is

not interesting as a polemic, but interesting regarding the density of the population, which was to be the subject for intense discussion during the 1880's when the railway was planned.

In certain other questions of evaluation, one hardly notices the difference between the report of the Tuckey expedition and descriptions made by the missionaries in earlier eras. The men are said to be characterized by indolence and this state of affairs influenced the woman's place in the community in such a way, that she is regarded as the man's (father's or husband's) slave.

The men's happiness is their laziness, it is said, and this appeared to be composed of "a total relaxation from all bodily exertion, except when animated by the sound of his rude native music calling him to dance, in which he is always ready to join with the greatest alacrity".<sup>28</sup> Dancing to the drum and marimba is the only thing which is said to put life into the men. For this scientific expedition, neither the dance or the drum, was an ethical problem to which a definite position had to be taken, as it had been for the preceding generation of missionaries and those who were to succeed them.

The African was judged as more friendly and more human than "the savages of the Pacific and South Sea Islands".<sup>29</sup> But it is said that the Congolese people belonged to that category of African peoples who were least developed. It was maintained however that a positive trait in their character was that they were honourable. Tuckey found them honest and noticed that they never stole. Another trait in their nature was that they were hospitable. They are "extremely hospitable to strangers and always ready to share their pittance, sometimes scanty enough, with the passing visitor".<sup>30</sup>

The people's sexual morals were reported to be high. It is true that the members of the expedition were offered women, according to the praxis which was introduced by the slavers. This was not interpreted, in Tuckey's report, as immoral, but it was noticed that among themselves, the Congolese appeared very strict concerning their sexual life. Moreover, the members of the expedition consequently declined the offer of women. The general evaluation of the people of the Lower Congo, made by Tuckey's expedition in 1816, hardly differs from that made by the French during the 1770's, of the people just to the north of the Congo estuary. Attention is drawn to their hospitality and emphasis is put on their friendliness towards strangers.

### *"Gangam Kiskey"*

The Tuckey expedition came into touch with the banganga and the nkissi; cult, during the short time they remained in the Congo, and it was not only a question of nkissi as a parallel to the Christian crucifix, on which we have already commented. Attention is drawn to the part played by banganga in cultural life, especially the role he plays as judge in certain cases.

The accused is brought before nganga and is tried according to the nkissi trial. The innocent party vomits the poison and survives, whereas the guilty party retains it and dies. On one occasion Tuckey posed a question to the people, concerning nganga's authority, as it could well be imagined that an innocent person is singled out as guilty. The answer he received was, that in such a case, it was not nganga, but his nkissi who would be blamed. "The accused considered the kiskey to be the only to blame, and that moreover the gangam could not be hurt, his kiskey always forewarning him of danger".<sup>31</sup> This Congolese answer illustrates that nganga's social position was strong. The people had confidence in banganga and possible mistakes were blamed on inadequate nkissi. Nothing prevented the replacement of a weak nkissi with a stronger, but nganga themselves had a secure position.

Further, the report says that Gangam Kiskey was turned to, not only for trials, but also in cases of illness, when the usual medicinal herbs were not sufficient to cure the sick. If even nganga did not succeed, the patient was handed over to Nzambi Mpungu. "When the Gangam, who acts in the threefold capacity of priest, public accuser and physician, sees the case to be desperate he gives the patient over to Zamba M'Poonga".<sup>32</sup>

Tuckey's report, under the heading 'superstitions', discuss both Nganga's function which was concerned with cult and rite, and the function of nkissi. "Every man has his fetiche and some at least a dozen".<sup>33</sup>

The things which can serve as nkissi or "fetiche" include a number of objects ranging from plants to animals i. e. extremities of animals, such as horns, hooves, hair, teeth, nails, feathers, beaks and claws. The 'power' was considered to be found in these extremities. A reproduction in the book of a nkissi, a kind of rosary, indicates that European products were also acceptable: in this case a padlock.

These nkissi were considered to protect from all evil. Those who had the power to make nkissi work were banganga who may be considered to form a kind of priesthood "and they had apprentices whom they trained as their successors in the ministry".<sup>34</sup>



*A Congolese rosary, serving as "an infallible charm against poison". Illustration, Narrativie 1818.*

Beside the individual small nkissi, there were also huge, immobile nkissi, such as the so-called Fetiche Rock, on the southern bank of the Congo river, at the point where it entered the estuary. The engraved figures and signs in this rock, were said to originate from a learned nganga from Nokki, who taught the art of reading them, to anyone who wished to pay him. Lieutenant Hawkey reproduced thirty-three of these rock carvings and jotted down explanations of twenty three. Six decades later, when Adolf Bastian visited the same place, there was nobody who could decipher the writings or the signs.

A reproduction of a calabash shows the same kind of figures to be found in the rock and this is evidently a question of an arts tradition, which hitherto is relatively unknown. Tuckey relates that when he visited the king in Boma, he saw many "fetiches", wooden or stone sculptures, and two were reproduced in the report with the intention of demonstrating "in what a low estate the art of sculpture is among these people, which indeed could hardly be otherwise where writing is utterly unknown".<sup>35</sup>

The reproductions illustrating the report show some form of artistic style and tradition, which during the twentieth century were regarded in a



completely different light than during Tuckey's time. More important than Tuckey's aesthetical valuation of the Congo art, is that he saw the connexion with the people's religion. It is said that the figures "had something of the fetiche or sacred character attached to them".<sup>36</sup> How the sacred character revealed itself is not said, and Tuckey continues to speak of the conceptions of God. In this context, the names Nzambi Mpungu and Kadiapemba are used as parallels.

The Congolese had "some idea of a good and an evil principle", it is said, "the former is distinguished by the name of Zamba M'Poonga; the latter by that of Caddee M'Pemba".<sup>37</sup> This statement is far too reminiscent of Merolla's, of which the Tuckey expedition was aware, and therefore, as an example of the situation during that era this paragraph from the report of the 1816 expedition should be handled with great reservation. The material is too scanty to allow an analysis of this close connexion between Nzambi Mpungu and Kadiapemba, and one must still remain sceptical to the opinion that they constituted opposites as God and Satan in the Christian religion.

Seembi, "the spirit which resides over the river", is mentioned as an important deity, whose dwelling was to be found in the Fetiche Rock.<sup>38</sup> The report does not tell us anything about the relationship between Seembi, the ruler of the water, and Nzambi Mpungu and Kadiapemba.

The over-all impression one receives of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is that it had been reduced to certain slave-trade connexions and possibly one or two visits by missionaries. The significance of Tuckey's expedition for the Congolese, is impossible to assess, but it is clear that there were no conflicts between the members of the expedition and the Congolese. The Lower Congo had become a backwater in a double sense. The intensive contacts with the white-people were now past and the slavers had moved south, towards Benguela and Loanda, and north to Cabinda and the Loango coast. The Congo estuary attracted only a few boats per annum, as slave transport from Pombo, for topographical reasons used the ports north and south of the estuary. There was no resident white population along the Congo river.

It is Captain Tuckey's evaluation of a crucifix and nkissi, as the same thing in the hands of the Congolese, which in our context is an interesting point of view in the cultural situation at this time. The traces of Christian worship were evident but still more obvious was banganga's total dominance over the cult life in the Lower Congo.

The expedition finished tragically. Eighteen of the fifty-four Europeans

died of fever and exhaustion, and this was to deter seafarers from visiting the Congo for several decades. One of those to die was the Norwegian botanist, Christian Smith. Tuckey's expedition did not succeed in solving the mystery of the source of the river Congo, but penetrated the first cataract, which was considered an achievement. Thirty years were to pass before the Hungarian adventurer and explorer, Ladislaus Magyar, reached almost as far up river. The population did not need to worry about any kind of aggression or mission for several decades.

## 1848 — Magyar and the Congo

Ladislaus Magyar is best known for his explorations in Angola's interior, during the 1850's, but in 1848 he undertook a two month expedition up the Congo river. His diaries and correspondence have not hitherto been found, and the sources available are the few letters which he wrote to his father in Hungary and which were published by A. Petermann, several years after this expedition.<sup>39</sup>

Magyar's material help for his study of the Lower Congo was significantly inferior to that of the well-equipped Tuckey expedition, but the results still have some significance for our understanding of culture contact during that time, even though the sources are sparse.

Magyar set out on 9 May, 1848 from from Ambriz, the Portuguese slave harbour situated between Loanda and Soyo. The people in this region said themselves to be the subjects of the Congo's King, which indicates a degree of solidarity, which still manifested itself in 1848 between the Old Congo Kingdom's southern region and Mbanza Kongo, despite the fact that in practice the royal power was non-existent.

Magyar passed the latter part of May in a newly established slavers station, Punta da Lenha, in the Congo estuary, situated between Banana and Boma. According to Magyar there was a resident white population, consisting of slavers to be found there. They had moved in after 1816 and their presence may indicate that the slave-trade had increased in the Congo estuary.

In 1816, Tucky estimated the annual export of slaves to 2,000, while Magyar in 1848 estimates the number to be 20,000. Both figures are approximate, but it is probable that the slave-trade had increased considerably over this thirty year period.

Magyar stayed in Boma for three weeks, and regarded Boma as one of southern Africa's largest slave-markets, which comprised about fifty

slavers' houses, plus servants' quarters. If this information is correct, the slave-trade ought to have been quite substantial in the Congo estuary at the close of the 1840's. Much points to the fact that a change occurred during the period of time between Tuckey's and Magyar's respective visits. The confrontation between Europeans and Congolese had once more become intense and again it is the Portuguese who come to the fore.

Magyar reached the cataracts on 1st June, 1848 and he probably tried to pass them, in an attempt to reach the Interior, but his Congo account finishes here. Magyar's information is valuable, as it helps to ascertain the date of increased European interest for the Lower Congo. A resident white population is a sign which forebodes more violent confrontation.

## 1857 — Bastian and the Congo

Included in the sources suitable for a study of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo prior to the Stanley era, are the books of the German geographer, Adolf Bastian, whose ardent ethnographical interest influences both his works.<sup>40</sup> Bastian's final report from the Congo in 1874, brings us to the dramatic turning point at the close of a long era, which was characterized by the slave-trade and the repercussions of the struggle, during earlier centuries, over the question of religion. Bastian's visit to the Congo in 1857, is characterized by the relatively settled conditions which prevailed in 1816 and continued until 1848. The German Loango expedition during the 1870's, has an air of nervousness and restlessness about it and appears to forebode the massive European impact which occurred after 1877, under the leadership of H. M. Stanley and King Leopold II, when the Congo suddenly came into the lime-light of world opinion.

In 1857, Bastian was faced with continued difficulties concerning his desire to visit the old capital, San Salvador, which was still the residence of the royal family. In Europe, the Congo was regarded as the white man's grave, due to the tragic end experienced by the Tuckey expedition and this rumour had been heightened by the slavers in the Congo, says Bastian, in his book, *Ein Besuch in San Salvador*, "in order that they might protect themselves from every encroachment".<sup>41</sup>

As the European states had followed suit in prohibiting the slave-trade, it was to the slavers' advantage that the Congo became a kind of no-man's land. The Lower Congo was outside their sphere of restriction and therefore, in the middle of the nineteenth century was one of the few remaining slave-markets. It is also revealed that Bastian did not reach the Congo

river on his first voyage in 1857, but was successful on his second attempt in 1873. By this time the slavers' power was, in practice, dissolved.

Bastian relates, that the town of San Salvador was, for the Congolese, associated with what would appear to be, two contradictory feelings. People warned Bastian against going there, "to an unknown region, which at that time had never been visited by a white man".<sup>42</sup> It is hardly possible that the people were ignorant of the white man's earlier visits to San Salvador, but it was probably a deliberate attempt on their behalf to prevent Bastian from travelling to the old town. On the other hand, San Salvador was associated with social prestige. The porter who had offered his services to Bastian was proud to be on his way to that particular capital and the people were amazed at the plans for a proposed visit. It is obvious that the old town had captivated the people's feelings, despite the fact that its hey-day was past.

When he finally arrived in the old town, Bastian was informed that the way to Boma and the river were unknown in San Salvador. Of course, this cannot have been the case. The inhabitants were forced to say this — probably on the advice of the slavers — in order to prevent mundeles from reaching Boma. One evening Bastian happened to meet a man who belonged to a group of slavers living in Boma, who originated from Kabinda and it was revealed that he knew the way to Boma, Kabinda and Loango. That night the man took off, in all secrecy, with twenty slaves.

#### *Bastian on the side of the Congolese*

Bastian is very critical of the Portuguese slave-trade in the Congo, both in former centuries and, on reflexion, of the contemporary slave-trade.<sup>43</sup> His tone is almost bitter, when he thinks of the time when the Bishop of Loanda regarded the baptism of slaves, to be transported across the Atlantic, as his only concern for them and how he allowed the slave-trade to run itself. Bastian's criticism becomes ironical, when he notes that only real Christians, i. e. Catholics, were considered capable of conducting the slave-trade, while only Christians, i. e. those who had been baptized, were suitable as slaves.

One incident in which Bastian and his company were involved, illustrates how severely the people in the Congo experienced the afflictions of the slave-trade, even in 1857. Bastian and his men were forced to undertake a night march in order to reach a village in which they intended to camp. When they arrived, they found the villagers ready for action. They were scared of night-attack "which often occurs, in order to bring the

population to slavery".<sup>44</sup> The slave-trade continues on a large scale, notes Bastian, despite the fact that it had been officially forbidden ten years previously.

The entire region between San Salvador and Boma, together with Kabininda, was considered by Bastian to be permeated by Spanish and Portuguese crews from the slave-boats and they were armed with revolvers. He considered the slave-trade to be so gruesome and so well established that he asked himself the question, if it would not be better for the Congolese people if the slave-trade at least was legalized and thereby regulated and controlled, as it would at this stage be difficult to enforce its total termination. However, Bastian dismisses this idea of a regulated slave-trade.

He also brushes aside liberalisms' ideas, that open competition on the slave-market would improve the terms for slaves, as the access to slaves would be greater and the price would fall. Consequently, lower prices would reduce trade.<sup>45</sup> An other idea which Bastian considered plausible, was the French proposal of so-called regulated emigration. It could be said that it would be better for the Africans to work hard in Brazil and survive, than to remain in Africa to be killed, or die of starvation. Bastian did not approve of this argumentation, as he referred to America's desolate expanses which would function like a gigantic suction pump and attract all the African peoples.

Information concerning the reaction of the Congolese to the slave-trade, is rendered by Bastian in his analysis. It is a horrific reaction which was formulated, as it had been formulated one hundred-and-fifty years previously, according to Zucchelli. The Congolese had a profound distrust of the Europeans: "Among the negroes one thought was established; that the olive oil imported to the Congo was made from slaves who had been transported to America and that the slaves in America were sold to cannibals."<sup>46</sup> Bastian does not comment on this African reaction to the white man's atrocities and he records the information without showing surprise. It is possible that he found Congolese suspicions about American oil manufacture and cannibalism quite reasonable. For present day observers it is incomprehensible that the Congolese should have reacted with anything than fear and hate against the white people.

Bastian, for his part, says that never before had he been received with such kindness and generosity, a phenomenon which is verified by nearly all those who have described the Congo during the centuries. Only once did he hear a Congolese say that the white people should leave Africa. This occurred in San Salvador on an occasion when the informant was

drunk. Sometime before, when sober, he had proclaimed himself to be the white man's brother. The question is, on which occasion he did speak from his heart.

It is striking how often Bastian tries to view the culture situation in the Lower Congo, from a Congolese perspective. This is true concerning major questions and minor details alike. Thus he notes that on the coast an albino, or *dondo*, plays a particular role at court, where the albino stood in high esteem and enjoyed several privileges. They functioned "as fetiches which protected against European influence."<sup>47</sup> It is interesting that the Congolese used this colourless *dondo* as protection against the equally colourless *mundele*. One possible interpretation of the situation, where an albino played this protectionist role, is that an albino was also considered in some way to be connected with *bakulu*. The elevated social prestige which an albino enjoyed at court, can also indicate that the task of protecting the people from the white man was considered important.

Bastian tried to see the question of hygiene without prejudice. The new fashion of wearing clothes is only unhygienic in an equatorial climate, he said, and it is unnecessary to introduce European clothing.<sup>48</sup> The clothes soon become sweaty and dirty and thereby a hotbed for vermin. It is more hygienic to be naked. Bastian shared neither the missionaries' ethical view concerning clothes, nor that of the businessmen: both these categories wanted to see the African clothed.

Bastian reacted sharply against the European practice of using alcohol as a means of payment, not least concerning travel.<sup>49</sup> He meant that it was better to proceed without resorting to snaps, but he did not make a major point of his criticism of the European's attempt to introduce alcohol to the Africans, he merely expressed his own view. This shows, however, that he saw the problem from the African's point of view.

When Bastian discussed the question of the African's alleged low morals, he made the same observation as one or two of those who had previously described the Congo. The low moral standard must have originated from the influence of the European's morals. In the case that the white people despise the Africans, Bastian says, they for their part feel themselves free to act as they wish in regard to those white people.<sup>50</sup> Where no solidarity is to be found, there is no room for mutuality in morals: one lives in two different ethical worlds.

Bastian repeatedly emphasizes terror as an important element in the African's reaction to culture contact. Contact between people of equal merit promotes progress, says Bastian, but when the foreign culture's influence is too strong, the contact paralyzes the weaker partner, in this

case the Congolese.<sup>51</sup> The weaker partner is paralysed by terror or lives under inhibiting tensions. Bastian more than anyone, emphasizes the weaker partner's dread of the stronger in culture confrontation, and this should be kept in mind when studying the milieu of the Congo Independent State. There can be no doubt that the facts to which Bastian drew attention must be attributed to the brutality of the slave-trade, which until the 1680's occasioned profound uneasiness in the Lower Congo. The slave-trade statistically decreased from the middle of the nineteenth century but this does not naturally indicate whether or not brutality decreased.

### *Criticism of Missions and Analysis of Rites*

Not only the slavers were the object of Bastian's critical attention, but also, at a later date, the missionaries of the previous periods. This criticism tramples on both the missionaries' collaboration with the slavers and their treatment of the resident African population. Bastian took the side of the population, at the same time as he could use the expression "the cursed sons of Ham", when referring to the Yaga. Bastian detested and disassociated himself from the 1600's practice of putting the Congolese in bond, a bond which was lifted only after humiliating penance. Bastian refers to the missionaries praxis of cuffing and flogging; it could occur that even ladies-in-waiting were flogged. "The public scourging belonged to the daily routine".<sup>52</sup> Bastian says that when the missionaries carried out these floggings, they sometimes called upon St. Michael and his angels to give them strength.

He was also critical of the missionaries attempts in San Salvador to introduce patrilineal in preference to matrilineal succession. They did not succeed in doing this, as the matrimonial system was so strong.

On the basis of his own observations, Bastian says that it was usual to replace different kinds of nkissi with a crucifix or cross.<sup>53</sup> Crosses are to be found every where, by the sea, by the roadside, in the fields; and in the houses different kinds of crosses can be seen. Similar to Tuckey and Smith, Bastian explicitly states that, in reality the cross has the same significance for the Congolese as nkissi. "Das Kreuz wird vielfach in Süd-afrika als Fetisch benutzt", he says.<sup>54</sup>

The information that the cross was known before the arrival of the Portuguese, is rendered by Bastian and this statement is interesting in the sense that it indicates that the Congolese had difficulty in separating that which was genuinely African, from that which had originated from Europe. These difficulties surely increased during the centuries. Bastian states that

the form of the crucifix and cross was influenced by African traditions and that the cross was furnished with figures, reproductions of missionaries or the Pope.

Bastian gives an explanation of why the king and not the common man adopted Christianity. The people told him "that the Portuguese Desu was a far too powerful fetiche for the common man and could only be assigned to the king."<sup>55</sup> It is difficult to interpret this Congolese opinion, but Desu was probably a Congolese form of Jesus or Deus, mindele's God. A strong muntu — for example the king — was demanded, in order to approach mindele's Desu, and the safest path for the average man was to keep to the old traditions. It would appear as if an attempt had been made to replace the central conception of God, Nzambi, with Desu, but Nzambi had triumphed.<sup>56</sup>

Bastian gives an example of how one rite replaced another when Christianity was introduced into the country. He states that tattooing was replaced by baptism.<sup>57</sup> In many tribes it is said that children were tattooed directly after birth, so that they might be initiated to a certain nkissi. But, according to Bastian, if there was a Capuchin priest in the vicinity, the child was baptized instead. No other source which has been consulted for our study has stated that the missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should have replaced tattooing with baptism, but much can be said for Bastian's statement, that the parents actually behaved in this way. This example of how one rite in one cult system is replaced by a rite from another, is interesting, as baptism is considered by the Church as a very important rite de passage.

Moreover, Bastian states that baptism was interpreted by the Congolese as an easily dispensable rite; admittedly one eats salt, dia mungua, but that was not one of life's necessities.<sup>58</sup> Elephants do not eat salt and still they are big and fat. Bastian has more than probably taken this information from Merolla, even if he does not claim to have read this source; but Bastian also renders another remarkable note, namely that a king demanded half of a missionary's beard, before allowing himself to be baptized. This story Bastian probably could have taken from no other source than Merolla and he more than likely bases his criticism of mission on the information of either Zucchelli or Merolla.

Some loose-pages from a Latin Missal, together with a diploma, which Bastian saw with his own eyes at the Court in San Salvador, provided concrete evidence of traces of Christian influence.<sup>59</sup> It was typical that the diploma concerned the Caballero del orden de Christo, a memory from the Portuguese days of glory.



Bastian received the most impressive reminder of the old Christian culture, in the Congo's capital, when he saw the Church ruins. It is true that they were in a state of disrepair at the time of his visit in 1857, but not entirely destroyed. High walls remained and Bastian became slightly lyrical, when he for the first time saw San Salvador. It reminded him of Jerusalem, he said.<sup>60</sup>

He was shown the site of the kingdom's first church, the foundations of which had been laid by Rui de Sousa in 1491 and where, it is said, Nzinga Nkuvu was baptized. In another church, St Michael, it was said, the greatest of all was buried, Afonso Mvemba Nzinga. According to the people, a third church was also maintained to be a royal burial church. In San Salvador, Bastian also saw an unexpected and varied selection of vegetables, which was a living memory from the time when Friars of various Orders cultivated the land.

In San Salvador, 1857, Bastian experienced the royal burial feast, which illustrated that the church ruins did play a role, and did not only belong to history. Study of the feast re-establishes our interest in the first stages of culture confrontation, to one of the most important events of that time: the house he also saw some furniture and a throne with a canopy, to-burial grove.

Dom Pedro, the pretender to the throne, after the deceased king who was his uncle, showed Bastian the house containing the king's mummy. In the house he also saw some furniture and a throne with a canopy, together with armour and weapons, which Bastian dates to the time of the first Portuguese in the Congo. Part of the smithwork had been manufactured in San Salvador long ago, but the art of smithery had been forgotten. The room contained many objects which were reminiscent of earlier Christian influence. "In one corner of the room, there were three life-sized figures in Capuchin costume, which clearly depicted St. Francis and his disciples. When the counsellors informed the Congo's king that the Desu feast-day was imminent, the people carried pictures of saints to the different church ruins, accompanied by dance and song, and in every ruin a section of a book was read."<sup>61</sup> When the corpse had been left twelve months to dry, it was swathed in a quantity of cloth and the burial took place in two stages, and the corpse was finally taken to its grave in one of the three burial churches.

Here we see that the living rite had absorbed elements from the country's old Church tradition and further developed them after the missionaries had left the town. We keep in mind however, that the African priest, Francisco das Necessidades visited the Congo during the 1840's and administer-

ed thousands of baptisms. Only forty years prior to this event, Luigi Maria d'Assis and Pietro da Bene administered baptism in San Salvador. During the 1850's, Dom Pedro and his contemporaries, seem to have regarded these rites as genuine African burial feasts, while Bastian particularly notes that which he considered to be of Roman Catholic element.

The nucleus of the burial feast is obvious enough; the king was buried in a church ruin, in one of the old burial churches. The two cult systems encountered one another there: in a church, in the traditional burial grove of the Congolese's ancestors. The burial centre had united two religions in the Lower Congo and in 1857, the Congolese in San Salvador appear to have experienced the burial feast as a unity without any tensions. In one respect, Christianity had left a deep impression in the Congolese culture.

## 1863 — Burton and the Congo

After Bastian's visit, several years were to pass before the experienced traveller and geographer, Richard Burton, visited the Congo in 1863, but he did not publish his reports from this Congo visit until 1876, in two volumes, *Two trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo*.

Burton's description of the Congo is rather unwieldy as a source. This is not only due to the length of time which elapsed between 1863 and 1876, but in his text he sometimes confuses his own experiences with discussions and literary accounts which were published before and even after his Congo trip, in 1863. Despite these difficulties, the part which deals with his own experiences is usable, and can serve as a complement to Bastian's picture of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo during the 1860's. Burton visited the regions which Bastian did not succeed in reaching during his visit in 1857.

"In 1863, I found that all traces of Christianity had disappeared", writes Burton about the Congo estuary.<sup>62</sup> What he means with this statement is difficult to interpret, as earlier during the visit he notes that the Soyo people, from Shark Point to San Antonio, wore crucifixes. His Congolese guide, Tom Peter, had shown him old and extremely well preserved cult centres, such as the ruins of a Capuchin convent. In Banza Soyo, Burton saw a church bell, dated 1700, with the inscription "Si Deus cum nobis, quis contra nos?"<sup>63</sup> In the largest hut at the centre, he also found "a lot of old church gear", consisting of, among other things, the Virgin, saints, crucifixes and a baptismal font. Burton had seen for himself the traces of Christian influence, but he seems to have regarded them as mu-

seum pieces and forgotten. But the discovery of Church objects which were one hundred and fifty years old, at a definite cult site, points to the fact that these objects had been carefully looked after by the Soyo people, or they would have been removed from the cult centre and scattered around the country long before Burton's visit.

Burton gives a rather detailed account of the previous centuries of extensive missionary work and as Bastian, strongly criticizes that era of missionaries as brutal and ruthless in their dealings with the Congolese.<sup>64</sup> Burton considers that the result of this old mission is comparable to the Israeli cult in Assyria during King Shalmaneser's era, "who feared the Lord and served their graven images". (2 Kings 17: 53—41). In other words it is the Congolese way of combining elements from two cult systems in their rites, which Burton characterizes with reference to the Old Testament. "Their only traces are the word 'deus', foully perverted like the Chinese 'joss' and the crucifix which is called *cousa de branco* — white man's thing".<sup>65</sup> The crucifix had received the name *cousa de branco*, white man's thing, from the Congolese, which thus points to the fact that they were aware of its foreign origin, even though they had adapted it to their own ritual of every day life. Burton means, that in a comparison between the influence of Islam and Christianity on the Africans, that Islam "enobles the African", while Christianity, only in exceptional cases signified something positive.<sup>66</sup> Burton does not see any difference between what he calls "Christian and Pagan idolatry".<sup>67</sup> The people did not improve of either.

Similar to Bastian, his contemporary, Burton remains exceedingly critical of both the professions which up until that time had dominated among Europeans in the Congo: the slavers and the missionaries. The missionaries had been despots: "The religious despotism was complete, a tyranny grossly aggravated by the age, because such things are of all ages".<sup>68</sup> The slavers for their part naturally did not treat the Congolese in a better way, rather the opposite, says Burton, and by no means is a return of the old slave times desirable. But as the Europeans still needed black labour — "the lower races" — for cultivation of tropical regions, the slave-trade as an institution should be replaced with a similar but voluntary system, claims Burton, "a bona-fide emigration".<sup>69</sup>

Six years prior to Burton, Bastian had expressed doubts over such a system of transference of labour, but Burton saw no problems and meant that the matter could be elegantly handled and need not be a copy of the trading company MM Régis et cie, who made their contract workers into serfs who had no legal rights.<sup>70</sup> Burton's reference to the African's as

"the lower races" can possibly explain the difference between himself and Bastian on this matter. Bastian did not express any racial ideas.

Burton hopes, however, that the slave-trade will totally cease and that the slave will be replaced with palm oil, ground nuts and other export goods.

## 1873 — Bastian and the Congo

On his second visit to the Congo in 1873, Bastian arrived in the area he had hoped to reach on his first visit in 1857, namely the Congo estuary itself and the regions lying to the north thereof. In the two volumes, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, he consequently describes to a great extent the same regions which had previously been described by Dapper, Descourvières, Tuckey and Burton. This gives us the opportunity to compare the different reports and study the profound changes which took place during the contacts between Europeans and Congolese.

Bastian's second visit to the Congo takes us up to the time immediately prior to the Stanley era. As early as 1873 there was a factor of unrest and excitement in the Lower Congo. One has the feeling that the years just before and after 1875, constituted a definite dividing line between two very different eras. Prior to 1875 development was slow, but after this date a number of dramatic changes took place. At this turning point, Bastian made his second visit to the Congo.

The number of white people which had settled in the Congo estuary had increased from none at the time of Tuckey's visit in 1816, to a handful during Magyars visit in 1848, and Bastian informs us that when the white people at Factori Rotterdam and Factori Holland in Banana had a meal together, there were about thirty guests at table. Even if one includes the other white settlers along the river as far as Boma, the number could hardly have exceeded fifty. The Europeans who were resident in the Congo estuary were exclusively tradesmen; they traded preferably in ground-nuts and palm oil, but ivory and rubber were also among the export products. The Germans were interested in trade in these regions and it was partly trade interest which took Bastian to the Congo on behalf of the German Loango expedition. It proved difficult, however, to find a suitable starting point for the expedition due to the fact that all the ports and trading stations were intimately associated, in the eyes of the Congolese, with the gruesome slave-trade conducted by the Europeans.<sup>71</sup>

Another unwelcomed difficulty for the Germans was that Portuguese and Spanish slavers were in debt to the Congolese for products they had already received and the Congolese considered every white man obliged to pay the former's debts, "da sie alle als Brüder einer Familie betrachten".<sup>72</sup> Here arose a point of conflict between the European's more individualistic view of responsibility and debt and the Congolese more collective conception, concerning responsibility for agreements previously entered into. The tension between European and Congolese view of individual and collective responsibility belongs to one of the most intricate problems of culture confrontation, and one can see how it is reflected during the periods dealt with in this study. In the case that Bastian describes, there was no doubt about the fact that the Congolese had unrealized demands on the Europeans slavers, as the slave-trade had continued until only a few years prior to this event.

A memory of a completely different type from the times of slavery, were the names of two villages on the Kabinda coast. They were called Puerto Rico and Pernambuk respectively.<sup>73</sup> Bastian claims that they had received these names from slaves who returned to the Congo. The names reflect the slave-markets in Latin America, and was it not in Pernambouc's hinterland, that the slaves from this very Congo region had governed the independent state Palmares during the whole of the seventeenth century?

In Kabinda, Bastian also met one of Don Pedro's grandsons. Don Pedro was the pretender to the throne with whom Bastian had become acquainted in San Salvador in 1857. The grandson's presence in Kabinda is one of the many examples of the mobility which existed between the different parts of the old Congo Kingdom.

### *Nganga, ndoki and nkissi*

Bastian's ethnographical or cultural interest for the life of the people in the Congo, dominates his observations in 1873, just as in 1857. Many of these observations and interpretations are highly interesting. He speaks of a number of different so-called fetiches, and mentions Cariabemba and Zambiapungu and he renders both songs used in dance and coronation texts.<sup>74</sup> Most valuable in our context is Bastian's view of the relationship between nganga, ndoki and nkissi.

Bastian tries to observe this relation from a Congolese perspective, even if he uses European vocabulary. This very relation has been one of the most fundamental problems of culture confrontation for several centuries and was a topical question well into the twentieth century.

Clearly and in a concentrated form, Bastian establishes the relationship between the three in the following way. Nganga manufactures nkissi as protection against ndoki.<sup>75</sup> In an other context, Bastian's view appears equally sharp, when he writes that "when somebody dies Ganga Angombe is called upon, who after asking his nkissi, can see the ndoki in the mirror."<sup>76</sup> Nganga is helped by his nkissi to reveal the ndoki which has caused the death. The inimical ndoki is to be fought and the struggle against this dangerous enemy is led by this very nganga and his nkissi, means Bastian.

In the second volume of his Congo account, Bastian is possibly even more clear on this point. "Nganga's principal task is, as said, to protect against ndoki's attack and render them harmless."<sup>77</sup> No one before or after Bastian has expressed this relationship so clearly and unequivocally and the following quotation from Bastian, brings to an end the many discussions and interpretations of nganga's role which were made by Europeans. "On the Loango coast the Feticero, the witch, is called ndoki, who is opposed by Nganga, the priest, der Meister der Zauberer . . . Ndoki is at the same time anybody or nobody. Nobody (with certain exceptions) confesses himself to be ndoki, and anyone can be suspected of being ndoki. On the contrary, Nganga belongs to a recognized clergy, which in some cases is instituted by the chief. It is a clergy which, in regard to the distribution of work according to different functions, constitutes a kind of hierarchy."<sup>78</sup>

Disregarding the European vocabulary, Bastian has succeeded in doing justice to the previously slandered banganga. He saw their positive function in the community, which the missionaries during the previous centuries had never understood. Seen from Bastian's interpretation of nganga's role, it is understandable that he so strongly criticized, and was bitterly ironical concerning the missionaries choice of banganga as their greatest enemy and that he was embittered at their choice of combat in the struggle: to burn their nkissi, their houses and even banganga themselves.

### *Mundele and muntu*

A couple of African myths of creation, which are rendered by Bastian, should be given some attention in this context, as they illustrate the important question of the Congolese view of the white man. In the first myth from Angoy, Kabinda, it is said that from the beginning all human beings were created white by Nzambi.<sup>80</sup> In Portugal, Mputu, a couple who were deeply in love, sought out a forbidden but remarkable room. They happened

to knock into a barrel of black paint which spilled over them and as a punishment for the visit to the forbidden room, they became black. Horrified, they fled from Mputu to the Congo river. The second myth relates that the country was originally inhabited by apes, which had, however, ceased to honour Nzambi and instead reviled him.<sup>81</sup> Nzambi thus decided to create human beings and he brought forth two couples: Nomandamba and his wife and Mundele and his wife. On the morning of the first day Mundele woke first and ran to the well and washed himself: he became white. Later Nomandamba washed himself in the water and became black.

These myths illustrate important points. Firstly, that the Congolese people searched for an explanation of why they were black and the strangers white, and secondly that their black skin constituted a punishment of some kind. In the first case it was punishment for disobedience and in the second case for indolence and sluggishness. Mundele is portrayed as superior to Nomandamba.

Another of Bastian's words illustrates a question which can be discussed in this context and which concerns the term bakuyu, singular mkuyo, nkuyu or kuyu. "At death the spirit Lunsi ascends to heaven. Those who return from the dead are called umkuja".<sup>82</sup> It was with these bakuyu or bakulu, who returned from the realm of death, with which the white people had been associated since the beginning of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo. Mundele were probably considered by the Congolese as a sort of mkuyu and not as muntu.

### *The Congolese Rain Cult in Soyo*

Even on his second visit to the Congo, Bastian criticizes the missionary efforts which had been made in the Congo. In 1873, as in 1857, he saw living traces of Christian influence. He visited many of the places in Soyo which Burton had visited ten years previously and the chiefs had maintained many of the Christian practices such as tonsure, the rosary the act of making the sign of the cross, prayer and folded hands.<sup>83</sup> Even in Boma there was trace of this.

San Antonio was the village which had been visited by both Tuckey and Burton, before Bastian. Its port was called Pinda, where the old Mani Soyo and his son had been baptized on Easter Day, 1491. They had taken the names Manuel and Antonius. On this site a convent had been built in 1516 and a church had been erected to the memory of St. Anthony of Padua. When Bastian visited this place in 1873, he states that the people

had built their own temple from the church ruins, a nkissi-house. Mso-kikisse.<sup>84</sup> The temple was used as a place of worship.

Every year the people participated in a rain cult. The rain procession took place in front of a figure by the name of Sa Manuela. Thus, the old Christian Mani Soyo had become a "Rain God". Another figure of St. Anthony had been erected inside the temple and Bastian relates that the roof over him leaked and had to be repaired. The chiefs participating in the rite, congregate at full-moon and conduct communal prayer which is said in chorus. They cross themselves, wear rosaries, and a book, which however they can 'read' only in their own particular way, is used in the rite. In this rain, or Chimbi, cult, elements from two different cult systems are welded into one ritual unity. In the first system can be included the Bible, the sign of the cross, folded hands and chorus prayer; in the other can be included the choice of the time of the cult, the full-moon, together with the intention to bring about rain.

This Congolese cult-tolerance is most distinctly seen in the way the temple was built up from the church ruins and that it was erected on the same site. In this case the Congolese cult can be said to have adopted and used for its own purpose central elements from Roman Catholic worship. From a religious point of view, if one wishes to use such terms, the Congo culture had triumphed, at the same time as a change had taken place, in that it had not rejected but accepted new rites from Europe.

### *On the Threshold of the Colonial Era*

According to Bastian 1873, shipping on the Congo river below the cataracts encountered certain difficulties, which he blames on the old missions.<sup>85</sup> Bastian was to travel from Banana to Boma, but was forced to wait in Banana several weeks. The geographical distance between the two places was not so great that it required the preparation of a large expedition and the waterways were technically quite navigable.

The people who lived in the Lower Congo Estuary prevented communications; they had lengthy contact with the mission and had become what Bastian called "half-civilized bandits". They showed, at least, a degree of civilization in that they did not kill the seafarers, but practised a more refined form of piracy. They captured the travellers, held them prisoner and speculated in ransom money. Bastian is irritated over this unexpected "result of mission", this European influence on river etiquette. It is perhaps odd that Bastian considers that insecurity on the river was prompted by contact with the missionaries and not with the slavers. If the Congo-



lese had learned of others how to conduct trade, it must surely have been from the European slavers.

Adolf Bastian is the last in the line of explorers to the Lower Congo who belonged to the same era as Tuckey and Magyar. A new era begins with Stanley, only a couple of years after Bastian's second Congo visit, and the number of white people in the Lower Congo rises very quickly. During two decades the number increased from a hundred to two thousand. For the Congolese, this invasion brought with it new European forms of labour, new bouts of pillaging and a new horror of *mundele*, after almost a century of stability and relative calm. The old slave-trade had become routine, even if it always was horrifying to the Congolese. The modern colonial time for the Congo's part commenced with Stanley's voyage from east to west, and his arrival in Boma on 9 August, 1877 can be seen as the symbol of that new era. This era brought a multitude of new ideas to the Congo and banganga's position was seriously threatened for the first time during one and a half century. Stanley was accompanied by a long line of captains, navigators, pilots, servicemen, administrators, and missionaries. The Congolese came into contact with a number of previously unknown nationalities, professions and churches. In this connexion Scandinavians also became involved in culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, which developed into a kind of transit zone for the Europeans, who were anxious to penetrate the Interior.

From a technical point of view, the Congolese are equally defenceless during Bastian's and Stanley's eras, as during the rule of Mvemba Nzinga and they are to encounter still more effective firearms and brutal methods. From a religio-cultural point of view it is once again banganga who are the centre of the contest.

This study cannot embrace the whole of culture confrontation which influences the time of the Congo Independent State, but it will deal with a rather small section, which so far has been overlooked by international research. It will deal with Swedes of different professions and categories and primarily with missionaries who both studied and intervened in the Congolese culture and brought about change. Their role will be studied in the following chapter.

PART III  
SWEDISH PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE  
CONFRONTATION. 1877—1900



## **Chapter 6. Portage System and Railway Construction: the New Milieu of the Lower Congo**

Immediately after Stanley's discovery, that the Congo river was navigable above Pombo, far into the continent, rapid changes created in the Lower Congo a new milieu, which is characterized by the portage system and the railway construction. For four hundred years, the Lower Congo had been of interest to Europeans, firstly due to the extensive Congo Kingdom, and secondly on account of its cheap slaves. Pombo had always been connected with the Congo estuary, but for topographical reasons, the two main routes led either south of the river via Mbanza Kongo to Loanda, Soyo or Kabinda, or north of the river to Loango. Centuries of experience had taught Congolese traders, European slavers and missionaries, that the lower river was impassable, and therefore, the traditional routes avoided the cataracts, and connected Soyo with Sundi via San Salvador.

In 1877, it took Stanley nearly five months of hard labour to force his way down the river and through the cataracts, but he demonstrated the chance, which the new colonial era had to conquer Africa for Europe, thanks to great confidence in a new technique. Nothing could prevent Stanley, neither mountains or rapids, nor climate or tribes. We do not know if the Congolese associated Stanley with broken mountains or broken peoples, when they gave him and his men the nickname Bula Matadi, the Rock Breaker. It is clear, however, that this sixteenth century designation, Bula Matadi, used by the Congolese during the nineteenth century, referred to the white man's ability to crush all forms of resistance. The Congo was to be conquered with new weapons and machines, and one can hardly think of a better description than Bula Matadi, for these modern colonialists.

Due to Stanley's peculiar choice of route from Pombo to Soyo, the white man's interest for San Salvador waned, and the old province of Mpemba lost its importance. It is true that Portugal attempted to use King Pedro V, in San Salvador, to their own political advantage in the European power-game, and that the Baptist Missionary Society, tried to follow the traditional routes from Soyo via San Salvador to Pombo; but both the Portuguese and Baptists soon discovered that San Salvador was not a suitable starting point for political or missionary expansion. A fact which showed how completely the old Congo Kingdom had disintegrated was that Pedro V was powerless outside the boundaries of his own village. The

European's only interest was the shortest route to Stanley Pool, the name given to Pombo, after Stanley's arrival, and in 1885, the frontier was so designed that San Salvador came under Portuguese Angola and not the Congo Independent State, the city had lost all significance. The colonizers and missionaries, during the 1870's, were apparently unaware of how intensive and lengthy the contact had been, which the people living above and below the cataracts had experienced with Europeans. For instance, they do not seem to have been aware of the fact, that Sundi had received visits from missionaries, and that thousands of baptisms had been administered, as late as, only ninety years before Stanley's appearance on the river.

In an attempt to characterize the milieu of the culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, from Stanley's voyage in 1877 to the turn of the century, the terms porterage system and railway construction as keywords, emphasize that the entire region was regarded as a transit area which appeared to the Europeans to lack intrinsic value, and which only obstructed communications. It was the Congolese and other Africans who were to overcome these obstacles for the Europeans.

The male labour to be found in the Lower Congo, did not suffice for both the porterage system and the railway construction work when it commenced in 1890. The porterage system had monopolized the men who were available. Everything required by the Europeans for their up-keep and work in Stanley Pool, had to be carried on Congolese heads through the Lower Congo. The porterage system did not cease when the railway, Matadi-Leopoldville, was completed in 1898, but continued well into the twentieth century in those regions where the railway had not solved the problems of communication.

The construction of the railway was suggested at the end of the 1870's, planned during the 1880's and was built during the 1890's. Its completion brought to an end the most dramatic era experienced in the history of the Lower Congo. The railway construction cost thousands of Africans their lives. Exactly how many has never been ascertained. Even today, in those areas which were involved in the railway project, it is said that every sleeper cost one African life and every telegraph pole one European life; in actual fact only one hundred-and-ten white people lost their lives during the railway's construction.<sup>1</sup> The same oral tradition has also preserved the memory of the terror and horror which seized the people, due to the ruthlessness and the brutality with which the construction of the railway was carried out.

The political situation during the era of the Congo Independent State,

has been described and analysed by Ruth Slade, in two praiseworthy studies, *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State (1878—1908)* published in 1959 and *King Leopold's Congo*, 1962, to which we refer and on which we often base our generalizations. These studies must always be considered in regard to research into the Congo Independent State. The Swedish research worker, David Lagergren, has recently published his study, *Mission and State in the Congo*, a study of the Relations between Protestant Missions and State Authorities in the Equator District, 1885—1903. His work is referred to for detailed analysis of King Leopold's Congo policy and its influence on missionary work; particularly the significance of the so-called *domaine privé* and *domaine de la couronne*.

In this study we need only touch upon those features of the political development, which are directly concerned with culture confrontation in the Lower Congo; in other cases we refer to Slade and Lagergren.

### *"The Scramble for Africa"*

During the nineteenth century, the European big powers considered Africa as largely inferior to Europe, not least morally, and subsequently it was considered that Africa should be the object of European intervention in different fields. "Noblesse oblige", was the motto, and in Europe, one spoke of the duty which rested on mankind's aristocracy. The white man must accept the burden, "the White Man's burden", of civilizing and developing other peoples. Commerce and Christianity were considered the methods which would achieve the desired development in Africa and the slogan was "Civilize and Christianize". The scramble for Africa was inspired by humanitarian, political, commercial and missionary incentives.

Belgium did not belong to the European big powers, and it was for this reason, that these powers allowed Belgium's monarch, Leopold II, to decide how this "scramble" should take place in Congo. The Congo was a country to which, so far, no power had laid claim. In 1876, Leopold II led the Brussels Geographical Conference, a result of which was the *International African Association*. The Association got in touch with Stanley in 1877, who on account of his 999 days' travel, had already opened the central part of the continent for colonization. But, it was to England, that Stanley offered his services and the territory through which he had travelled. Leopold II, however, intended to pursue his plans for the newly discovered Congo Basin, and in 1878, he founded his *Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo*. The name implies that it was the Upper Congo, and not the lower

regions in which the European powers were interested. England did not accept Stanley's offer, and in 1879 he was engaged by Leopold's enterprise, as the King's representative in the Congo.

In 1882, Leopold II changed the name of his colonial enterprise to the *International Congo Association*, which despite its name, was a one-man enterprise. The three different names with which Leopold II juggled, during a short period of time, created confusion in the Congo, where it was commonly called, quite simply, the Association. Leopold II's version was that his Association, in the first instance, was inspired by philanthropic interest, which among other things would combat the Arab slave-trade in the eastern Congo Basin, and moreover that the entire region would be made into a free-trade area. He expressed, furthermore, a scientific interest for the Congo. "His aims were well hidden, however; in the early 1880's an impenetrable aura of mystery surrounded the activity of Leopold's Congo enterprise", writes Ruth Slade in 1962.<sup>2</sup> It was necessary for Leopold to conceal his excessive economic interest for the region until he had acquired a tighter hold on the Congo.<sup>3</sup>

"The Scramble for Africa" has many dimensions, and one can even speak of a missionary scramble. Livingstone's and Stanley's achievements, had to a large extent captured the interest of Protestant groups in Europe, particularly Revivalists, who were seized by enthusiasm for Africa. Ruth Slade writes, with reference to England, that "the evangelical revival was to affect the evangelization of Africa in two ways. It awakened the social conscience of Christians and gave a great impetus to missionary vocation".<sup>4</sup> The same thing can be said of the evangelical revival in Scandinavia during the nineteenth century, when interest for Africa appreciably increased. The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, Svenska Missionsförbundet, took an interest in the Congo at a very early date.<sup>5</sup>

One trait shared by both the British missionaries and the colonizers in the Congo, was that they regarded the Lower Congo as a transit area. Their interest was in the Upper Congo. The missionary stations which the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and the Livingstone Inland Mission (LIM) built in the Lower Congo were in every respect links in the transport chain between Boma and Stanley Pool. Before the British society had managed to install itself at the Pool, it had been decided that each society should have its own steamer on the Upper River. In 1884, the BMS had procured their missionary steamer the "*Peace*" and LIM their steamer "*Henry Read*", which was later to be taken over by the American Baptists (ABMU).

Only one society chose to totally concentrate its resources to the Lower

Congo, instead of aiming at quick expansion above Stanley Pool. This was Svenska Missionsförbundet, (SMF), who never acquired a missionary steamer. The American Baptist Missionary Union (ABMU), had only a couple of stations above Stanley Pool and worked principally in the Lower Congo. The Swedish and American missions involved themselves in the Congo somewhat later than LIM and BMS, and they decided to start their own missions at the time of the Berlin Conference, seven years later than the BMS.

The Roman Catholics showed no corresponding interest for the Congo Basin and hardly for the Lower Congo either. The Holy Ghost Fathers had a missionary station in Landana, on the Atlantic coast, since 1873, but it was not until 1881, that they began to plan for Stanley Pool. De Brazza had succeeded in persuading Father Augouard not to give the Protestants too much of a start. De Brazza estimated that the Catholic mission could secure the position held by France at the Pool, due to the "treaty" with King Makoko. Other incentives inspired the White Fathers to approach the Congo Basin from the east. It is true that Cardinal Lavigerie was alarmed by the ardent interest the Protestants showed in the Congo, but he considered that the Great Lake region, in East Africa, should be the object of the White Father's mission. In 1878, a station was established on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Many years later, interest in this region was directed to the Arab slave-trade in the Congo Basin; a slave-trade which Cardinal Lavigerie regarded as a challenge.

The missions, which thereby come to the fore in a study of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo, are the Baptist Missionary Society, (BMS), the Livingstone Inland Mission, (LIM), the American Baptist Missionary Union, (ABMU) and Svenska Missionsförbundet (SMF). The English-speaking missions have been studied by Slade, and we shall concentrate our interest to the Swedish mission.

## The seizure of Congolese land

The Berlin Conference 1884—1885, had the same significance for the modern history of the Congo, as the *Padroado* had for the Congo's political position during the fifteenth century and some centuries after this. In 1884, it was neither the Pope, nor Portugal, which dictated the terms for Africa, but the new big powers of Germany, England, France and USA. It was Bismarck who took the initiative to the Berlin Conference, in order to solve controversial issues between France, Leopold II, England



and Portugal.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, no Africans were invited to participate in this decisive African conference, and the solutions to current problems were sought, quite regardless of African wishes. Thus, after four centuries, the situation had not changed; Africa's problems were solved, exclusively by white people, in Europe. This was true of both the Padroão and the Berlin Conference. The Conference commenced on 15 November, 1884, and continued until 26 February, 1885, and during the course of the Conference, Leopold II gained recognition of his Congo region as an independent state; the Congo Independent State, with Leopold II as its supreme ruler. Norway and Sweden recognized this new State on 15 September, 1885.

The majority of decisions taken at the Berlin Conference, are characterized by the fact, that it was the Congo's interior which interested Europe; but several decisions were of great significance even for the Lower Congo and the situation under which the Swedes were to work. The first and most important point in the Berlin Acts decreed, that all nations had the right to use the Congo river for free-trade and navigation.<sup>7</sup>

The most interesting parts of the Berlin Acts, in our context, are Chapter I, Article 6, concerning "the protection of the natives"; and Chapter II, Article 9, which deals with the slave-trade.<sup>8</sup> These articles state the Congo Independent State's official view of its task in the Congo, but on several points the articles are vague. On one point the acts say that all the powers who have influence in the Congo, are bound a) to ensure that the native population is preserved — that is to say, not exterminated — b) to abolish slavery and the slave-trade, and c) to improve the inhabitants' moral and material conditions.

The Berlin Acts are not explicit on what is implied by the clause to improve the natives' moral and material conditions of life. It is probable that the aim of the signatory powers was the abolition of so-called barbarism, and, as far as possible, the introduction of European civilization. No mention is made of responsibility for the Congolese, concerning education, medical treatment, housing, food, terms of employment or salaries, but when the Berlin Acts speak of tuition, they think of private, religious scientific and humanitarian institutions. Theirs was the task to "teach the natives and give them an understanding of the advantages of civilization".<sup>9</sup> It is said, that organizations working in this field, would be supported and guaranteed total religious freedom. This religious freedom obviously did not apply to those Africans who wished to remain faithful to the religion they had inherited from their ancestors, if it was contrary to what the European powers considered to be civilized. Thus, from the start, the

European powers took a negative attitude towards anthropophagy, traditional African slavery, poison trials and the execution of market thieves etc. Freedom of religion was designed for the different Christian societies and, with some hesitation, Islam.

The prohibition of slavery is not clearly specified, but it is obvious, that in the first instance, the Acts referred to the Arab slave-trade in the eastern regions of the Congo Basin, and to the Africans traditional form of slavery, but not to the European praxis of forced labour. Chavanne, only, interprets article nine in this way: that trading houses and trading stations were obliged to release their slaves. This formally took place, at the same time as they were offered a contract to remain at the trading station, as so-called free-workers.<sup>10</sup>

The land question was dealt with in Berlin 1884—1885 concerning the problem of which European country had the right to African land, if, for example, both France and Leopold II, or Portugal and Leopold II, lay claim to a certain region.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the right of the Congolese to land, was not dealt with, and there was no discussion as to whether the contract which African chiefs had signed could be declared valid or non-valid, due the fact that the party concerned was illiterate. The chiefs who signed these contracts, under pressure from Stanley or de Brazza and their men, naturally, never suspected that in doing so, they had given away all their land.<sup>12</sup>

Leopold II was not slow in taking advantage of the Berlin Conference's opinion that the Africans had no right to their own land, and the first ordinance issued by the Congo Independent State proclaimed, that the newly founded State had the right to what was called "terres vacantes", "vacant lands".<sup>13</sup> The term "terres vacantes" implied all the land which Africans did not for the moment inhabit or cultivate. Thus, Leopold II had these "vacant lands" at his disposal and could distribute them as he thought best. This did not imply that negotiations with the Africans took place; even this decision was taken by the Europeans solely, who took no consideration to the fact that certain tribes migrated from one place to another, within a rather extensive region. Leopold II's conception that, in theory, he was the owner to almost all Congolese land, did not have such fatal consequences for the people in the Lower Congo, as for those inhabiting the Congo Basin. The Lower Congo did not produce any appreciable quantity of rubber, and in all other respects its natural wealth was small, in comparison to that of the Equator district, Katanga and Kassai.

The decree of 14 September, 1886, further develops the attempts from 1885, concerning Leopold II's land policy, and it was decided that all

acquisition of land in the Congo must be registered with the authorities of the Congo Independent State in order to gain legal force.<sup>14</sup> No mention is made in this decree, that those wishing to acquire land needed to negotiate with the Congolese chiefs. On the contrary the Congo Independent State regarded itself as supreme. On the other hand, it is said, that land inhabited by "the natives", even in the future, should be managed according to their custom and practice. Thus, on paper, one finds a pronounced respect for Congolese tradition.

Still more far-reaching is the stipulation of 30 June, 1887, which states that the State shall take possession of all land, whose ownership is not adjudged another, and this confiscation did not concern only the land, but even its products, such as forests and ore.<sup>15</sup> A couple of years after the Berlin Conference, the tendency was quite obvious: the Congolese were successively deprived of their land, what they cultivated and what was to be found in the earth, by the one-sided decision of the Congo Independent State. Negotiations with Congolese chiefs, concerning these decrees never occurred.

Similarly, on 25 June, 1889, a decree was issued which prohibited elephant hunting in the Congo, without a special permission of the State.<sup>16</sup> This prohibition was said to have been issued in order to prevent the extermination of elephants and to assert the laws of the State. It was the Governor General of the Congo, who had the right to decide which terms were applicable to elephant hunting and the price of a permit. There can be no doubt about the fact that, the real object of the decree was to monopolize the ivory trade. Moreover this decree nullified the old Congolese praxis of prescriptive right.<sup>17</sup> Neither on this occasion, is there any indication that the Congolese, who were effected by this law, were consulted.

The decree of 17 October, 1889, nationalized the exploitation of rubber, and this was to have a drastic effect on the Upper Congo.<sup>18</sup> The tendency is the same, in that Leopold II is trying to gain control over every sphere of life in the Congo Independent State.

## The requisition of Congolese labour

Leopold II's labour policy has to be seen as a consequence of his land policy. In order to exploit the land to which he had laid claim, he was forced to recruit labour, and this could not be done on a voluntary basis. It is true, that slavery had been abolished, and in the decree of 8 Novem-

ber, 1888, it is stated, that the black people were to be protected from so-called slave-contracts, designed by the Europeans, but instead a so-called labour-contract was to be drawn up.<sup>19</sup> The number of years stipulated for the longest contract was seven, and in theory the employee was assured of good treatment. In cases of bad treatment he could appeal to the law courts, and the contract would be nullified. In practice the Congo Independent State's law courts did never function in favour of the congolese, and the assurance of good treatment became nothing more than an empty promise.

The decree issued on 5 August, 1888, concerned the organization of La Force Publique, and it was held in the same tone as former decrees.<sup>20</sup> It mentioned the recruitment of soldiers, but nothing on the decisive question of how the soldiers were to be recruited. Not until 1891 did the Congo Independent State make an official statement on this point, where in a decree it was laid down that conscription would come into force.<sup>21</sup>

A decree, exclusively for the Lower Congo, was issued on 12 March, 1889, which concerned forced labour in regard to the portorage system.<sup>22</sup> The Congolese were obliged to work as porters, but this should be in accordance with fixed regulations. The intention behind this decree was said to be to the benefit of commerce and the native population, and at the same time to supervize recruiting and prevent abuses, which might interrupt transport through the Lower Congo to Stanley Pool. All those wishing to employ a porter, must apply for a licence through the Governor General, and the Capita, the porters' leader, must also have a licence. Thus, the Congo Independent State had instituted state control of land and people, which, with time, restricted the freedom of the Congolese and subjugated him to a foreign power. At this time, there were hardly more than four hundred-and-fifty white people in the Congo, of whom about two-thirds were resident in the Lower Congo and the rest at Stanley Pool. The number of loads had increased during the 1880's, and reached the figure 1,000 in 1882, 12,000 in 1885, 50,000 in 1887, and according to Wauter's assessment continued to increase to 80,000 in 1893.<sup>23</sup>

In 1890, the year of the commencement of the railway construction, Leopold II, had severe financial problems with his Congo enterprise, and Ruth Slade interprets these difficulties as the starting point for his more severe policy of exploitation during the 1890's.<sup>24</sup> Leopold II, tried alternative ways to save the situation, but found that the most sensible solution was to take advantage of the English opinion against the Arab slave-trade, in the eastern Congo Basin. "He was not insincere when he talked of suppressing the slave-trade and bringing civilization to the

Congo, but the economic aspect of his African venture was far more important in his eyes", writes Slade.<sup>25</sup> Leopold calculated, that the European big powers, would understand that it cost money to combat the slave-trade and therefore, would allow the Congo Independent State to impose taxes and other charges.<sup>26</sup> Cardinal Lavigerie and the White Fathers, had already taken up the fight against the Arab slave-trade and Leopold also took advantage of this opinion.<sup>27</sup>

Leopold II assembled the Brussels Conference in 1889—1890, in order to discuss the question of slavery. Two reports from the Congo, on the Congo Independent State's legislation concerning slavery, together with its application, were published as preparatory material.<sup>28</sup> In these reports it is stated that, the Berlin Acts of 1885 were considered to constitute part of the legislation concerning slavery, which was applied in the Congo Independent State.<sup>29</sup> It is very clearly stated, that every contract between employer and employee — "entre maîtres et serviteurs noirs" — must be entered into on a voluntary basis. Force must not occur and all forms of slavery are prohibited.<sup>30</sup> It was further emphasized that the decree of 8 November, 1888, was designed to safeguard the freedom of the individual.

The section of the report, which discusses whether these laws influenced praxis in the Congo, is of particular interest. Le Directeur de la Justice says in this report that "it is wrong to imagine our black workers as unaware beings, passively compliant and who do not protest against arbitrariness".<sup>31</sup> The workers are said to take good care to acquire a detailed contract, a so-called moukanda. This was the situation in the Lower Congo, where labour conditions, were settled, due to the stipulation laid down in the decree of 1888, concerning seven year contracts. According to the report, conditions in the Congo's interior were different to those of the Lower Congo. Slavery continued and large areas had still not been "pacified" the term then used for the oppression of the African people. Legislation was assessed by the report to be adequate protection for the Africans from the Arabs.

The second report reviews the measures taken against the slave-trade, from the time of Stanley's difficulties with the Arab slave-hunters in 1883, to 1886 when the Stanley Falls station succumbed to the Arab attacks, until the time of the organization of La Force Publique in 1888. The military resources, however, were still considered too limited for a powerful attack on the Arabs.

The problems dealt with at the Brussels Conference, were those of the Upper Congo, but some of the decisions taken were to directly influence the Lower Congo.<sup>32</sup> Officially, the Conference claimed that it wished to

protect the Congolese people against slave-traffic, and create peace in the country. The people should be "civilized" which, among other things, implied that their standard was to be improved, with regard to agriculture and crafts, and the so-called barbaric customs were to be obliterated. Special mention was given to cannibalism and human sacrifice. It was the same train of thought from the Berlin Conference, which was again brought to the fore, and the phrase "civilize" was applicable to the Lower Congo, as well as the Interior. The Congo Independent State, however, did not train the people in agriculture and crafts, and such decisions were very seldom effected, as they were not profitable for Leopold II.

The Congo Independent State, however, was not successful in making the Congolese voluntarily work for Leopold's plans. Consequently, they had to be induced to work in another way, as the colonizers in the Congo, were reliant upon African labour. "This was obtained in two ways: a labour tax was imposed which would compel the Africans to work, and a system was introduced by which it was hoped that they would be persuaded to work for remuneration", says Ruth Slade.<sup>33</sup> The so-called labour tax system was enforced. This tax system has got many names; the *corvée* system, or the medal-chief system; the entire system was based on the fact that a chief was authorized by the Congo Independent State — who was recognized by a medal — and should see to it that the people worked and fulfilled their duties. This system was to influence life in the Lower Congo, as it implied that the Congolese's freedom had been radically restricted, in that he was compelled to work for the Europeans. This decree was issued on 6 October 1891.<sup>34</sup>

The Lower Congo was divided into five districts; Banana, Boma, Matabidi, the Cataracts and Stanley Pool and each district had its own District Commissioner, who, in his turn, had so-called medal-chiefs acting under him. One of their duties was to draw up a register over the inhabitants of his village, men, women and children and to specify the location and size of the village. The State extorted certain accomplishments from the village, various forms of taxes. The chiefs "on behalf of the District Commissioner, were also to draw up a register of the annual accomplishments, which the village was to deliver in the form of natural products, (maize, millet, palm oil, groundnuts) and in the form of *corvées*, such as workers or soldiers".<sup>35</sup> It was also stated that, in other respects, the chiefs were to continue to exert their authority, according to current customs, provided that the customs did not conflict with the laws and regulations of the State.

From a Congolese point of view, the labour tax system differed little from serfdom or slavery, as their only possibility of escaping forced labour

was to abandon their villages. Many villages were thus depopulated, and thereby the villagers lost the right to their land, as the Congo Independent State had previously declared all uninhabited land, as "terres vacantes". From Leopold II's point of view, this system was satisfactory, as it was effective, and the Congo Independent State's economy developed favourably, beginning with the first couple of years after 1892.

The recruitment of porters had been regulated in 1889, but during the first year of the railway construction, a new decree was issued, which in detail regulated or restricted the employer's right to recruit porters.<sup>36</sup> The District Commissioners received exceptional rights to withdraw the licences of private people, private companies or missionary societies. Thereby, the State had given itself priority concerning the recruiting of porters. These regulations were used, during the 1890's against the missionary societies which up until that date often had been more successful than both the State and the commercial companies, in employing porters. The missionaries were forbidden to engage porters, in those areas where it was less difficult to recruit them.<sup>37</sup>

The recruitment of soldiers was less extensive at the beginning of the 1890's but increased rapidly. A kind of police force was needed to maintain order on the railway; this was established in 1890 and comprised fifty men.<sup>38</sup> In 1891, a decree was issued which increased the railway militia, which claimed to protect the people who worked on the railway, and the railway itself from the Congolese.<sup>39</sup> Fox Bourne, was one of the first to express doubt over the said intention that this military force on the railway was to protect the workers, and he assumed that their real task was to see that the employees really worked.<sup>40</sup>

The army proper, La Force Publique, had been established in 1888, and it was substantially increased during the 1890's, in order to fight both Arabs and Congolese. In 1891, it was stated that recruitment was to be voluntary, but it was the labour tax system which was in fact used to procure soldiers for the Army.<sup>41</sup> In 1894, La Force Publique already comprised 4,500 men, and that very year Leopold decreed that 3,500 men were to be recruited.<sup>42</sup> These figures concerned the entire Congo but the Lower Congo, especially was hit hard by this recruiting campaign.

The tax system was not only exploited for the recruiting of porters, the railway militia and soldiers for the army. The State employees and the railway construction's labour force needed food, and this was ordered from the villages, in large quantities, at a price determined by the State: in such cases that payment at all was made for the deliveries. The District Commissioner had the authority to determine how much each village was

to contribute, and no mention is made in the official document, of the size of grocery deliveries.<sup>43</sup> In any case, it is quite obvious, that the villagers were not allowed to negotiate the extent of the deliveries.

The causes for conflict between Europeans and Africans in the Upper Congo, during the 1890's, were to a lesser extent to affect the Lower Congo, as the Lower Congo had proportionally less rubber and ivory. The activities which dominated in the Upper Congo were the hunt for rubber and ivory, and the struggle against the Arabs. Accordingly, the land policy and the tax system were practised in different ways, in the Upper and Lower Congo respectively.

A decree of 12 July, 1890, established that it was the duty of the State to provide for the freed slaves and the children who had become orphans as a result of the slave-trade.<sup>44</sup> Article I clearly stated, that the State was bound to take charge of children who had become orphans, as a result of their parents' arrest or, the subversion of slave convoys, and those who had been abandoned or mismanaged. From the day a child arrived at one of the colonies built for them, it was under the exclusive supervision of the State.<sup>45</sup> These colonies were called "children's colonies", but the term is misleading, as the children concerned were already twelve years old. On instructions from the Governor General, they could be forced to work and could be detained at the colony until they were twenty-five years old. The work they performed was remunerated by the State in the form of food and lodgings, and medical care. This so-called philanthropical project of "children's colonies", can be considered as one method among others of recruiting labour and soldiers.

In 1892, the State allowed philanthropical and religious societies to establish similar colonies and receive children, who according to the law were adjudged to the State.<sup>46</sup> These privately established colonies were obliged to follow the working programme used by the State.<sup>47</sup> A decree issued in the same year, expressly connected the work of these colonies with military training.<sup>48</sup> A day at the colony comprised three hours military exercise and theory, three hours of school work with religious instruction and two hours practical work, in grocery production. The success of the "children" in this sort of school determined the nature of their future employment; worker or soldier.

The entire system of forced labour taxes and "terres vacantes", was instituted to serve the purposes of one man: Leopold II. Ruth Slade comments on this situation by making the following evaluation: "The system in itself engendered abuses".<sup>49</sup> Both State and company officials acted independently and uncontrollably in the Congo Basin, and had just one



aim; to collect as much rubber as possible. "Armed African soldiers were employed to supervise the collection of rubber; thus a widespread system of local tyrannies was established."<sup>50</sup> One of the best descriptions of this system in the 1890's, was made by a Dane, in his time the well-known author Jürgen Jürgensen, in his book *Christian Svarres Congoferd*.<sup>51</sup>

The contents and tone of the official documents, Bulletin Officiel, never give the impression of brutality or violence against the Congolese, and it is uncertain if Leopold II ever realized the extent of the brutality which his Congo Independent State brought with it. Critical voices were raised at the end of the 1870's, against Stanley's formidable methods, and later against officials. The Congo Independent State did not react to this, until the middle of the 1890's, when a regulation concerning professional secrecy among officials, was brought into force. A special decree concerning professional secrecy was not issued, but the clause was incorporated in the common rules and regulations for State employees, in a clause which principally referred to the employees business connexions, and it forbid them to take on commitments other than those concerning their state services. The State officials were sworn "to never divulge to anyone outside the Administration, or without special permission, allow the publication of information concerning the State's affairs, or give information about such things, of which they in their capacity as State officials had knowledge. The duty to keep professional secrets remained — as a point of honour — even after the employee had left his post in the Congo Independent State".<sup>53</sup>

It was not, however, State officials, who released this information about abuses and atrocities, but missionaries and other professional categories. Thus, professional secrecy proved of little significance in the forming of public opinion in Europe. In 1896, this European opinion induced Leopold II to appoint a Commission for the Protection of the Natives, but its formation was such, that it became, and remained, ineffective as protection for Congolese interests.<sup>54</sup> Leopold's intention was not to protect the Congolese, but to protect his own good reputation in Europe, and in this he partially succeeded. Professional secrecy among State officials, could have become a problem in source criticism, but the Swedish commissioned officers, who served in the Lower Congo, for instance Lieutenants Glimstedt and Juhlin-Dannfelt, do not appear to have considered that they had reason to conceal their work, even in the case that it involved conducting punitive expeditions, and the burning of villages. It obviously demanded spectacular executions and mutilations before the officers considered it a question of atrocities, which should not be brought to the

notice of people in Europe. But such atrocities seldom occurred in the Lower Congo. In our context, professional secrecy is of no measurable importance, and it can be virtually disregarded concerning the Lower Congo.

## Scandinavians in the Congo

Various professional categories from Scandinavia were involved in the Congo, as early as 1878 and among those to become well-known as pioneers within LIM, can be mentioned the Dane, Ström, the Norwegian, Fredriksen, and the Swedes, Nils Westlind and K. J. Petersson. The dominant professional category among those Scandinavians, who engaged themselves in the Congo, was not, however, missionaries, but seamen. It is this group who, with the exception of the officers, receive the most detailed attention in the only study hitherto made of the role played by Scandinavians in the Congo Independent State, namely *Skandinaver i Congo*, by H. Jenssen-Tusch, published in Copenhagen 1905. Jenssen-Tusch registers over nine hundred Scandinavians in the country, during the first twenty-five years after 1878; the year that Ström, became the first Scandinavian to visit the Congo during the colonial era.<sup>55</sup>

The number of white people increased rapidly, after the year of 1885, when the Congo Independent State was officially recognized. Before the establishment of the Congo Independent State, the number of Scandinavians amounted to about forty, and the number of Englishmen and Belgians was about eighty, of each nationality.<sup>56</sup> During the period 1879—1884, Scandinavians comprised 16 % of the white population in the Congo, 10 % at the close of the 1890's and only 6 % in January 1904. Despite the fact that their percentage fell to under 10 %, the actual number of Scandinavians remained constant at about one hundred-and-fifty, while the total number of white people increased, and exceeded 2,000 in 1901, and 2,500 in 1904.

The Scandinavian personnel, who worked directly for the Congo Independent State totaled approximately forty-five, during the first ten years and ninety during the final five years of the 1890's.<sup>57</sup> This statistical information can, perhaps, give a conception of the position held by Scandinavians, in comparison to other nationalities in Leopold's Congo enterprise. Naturally, it was the Belgians who dominated among the white people in the Congo, and their share increased, by degrees, to about 75 % at the beginning of the twentieth century, thanks to Leopold's policy of

giving preference to Belgians. The Italians came next among the white population, followed by the Scandinavians and the Englishmen.

It was typical, that the first Swede to serve in the Congo was a sea-captain, A. E. Andersson, who was in command of the Association's famous "*Royal*", on the route, Isangila-Manyanga from 1881.<sup>58</sup> During the 1880's, he was followed by twenty-seven sea captains, machinists, helmsmen and ship carpenters. In the 1890's no less than one hundred and thirty-seven men of these professions came from Sweden. A total of five hundred from this category arrived in the Congo, from Svandinavia, during the twenty-five years following Captain Andersson's arrival, and of these approximately two hundred and eighty were Swedes, one hundred and sixty Danes, and sixty Norwegians.<sup>59</sup> During both the 1880's and 1890's, Scandinavians dominated among the sea-officers involved in Congo navigation, below the cataracts as well as above Stanley Pool, and Jenssen-Tusch comments on the situation, by saying that is was above all "the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian sea-captains, helmsmen, machinists and chip-craftsmen, who in reality, made possible the Belgian conquest of the Congo".<sup>60</sup>

This Scandinavian dominance may appear remarkable, but it is explained, by the fact that the Scandinavians, of old, had taken part in Belgian shipping. Belgium lost its ports to Holland, when the country became independent in 1830, and the Belgians lacked a merchant fleet of their own. Belgium became dependent upon seamen from other countries, and among these were a good many Scandinavian captains, helmsmen and machinists. When Belgian interest expanded outside Europe, to the Congo, the Scandinavians continued to work for the Belgians.

Missionaries were the second largest professional category of Swedes to leave for the Congo. A hundred missionaries arrived in the Congo, during the twenty-five years after 1878, i. e. approximately 25 % of the total number of Swedes in that period. In contrast to the seamen, all the missionaries were to work in the Lower Congo, where at the turn of the century, the Swedish mission was the largest of all the missions. Seen as a whole, it was only BMS, which had sent more missionaries to the Congo, than SMF had done, during the time of the Congo Independent State, followed by the Congo Balolo Mission and ABMU.<sup>61</sup> This comparatively large missionary effort in the Congo, by the Swedes, was in part a result of the influence, that Livingstone and Stanley had on public opinion even in Sweden.<sup>62</sup> One branch of the evangelical revival in Sweden had taken the form of a Free Church, Svenska Missionsförbundet, which disclaimed the Lutheran National Church, and all kinds of confessionalism and sec-

tarianism. This Swedish Free Church looked for a partner in Africa, with which it could co-operate, and found that LIM shared the same basic view. Theological reasons motivated and allowed Svenska Missionsförbundet to have their first three Congo missionaries, C. J. Engvall, Nils Westlind and K. J. Petersson, to work for LIM in the Congo, under the direction of Messrs. Guinness, of Harley House in London.

LIM's mission station, *Mukimbungu*, was situated south of the river on the northern caravan route, between Kongo dia Lemba and Manyanga. When this route was abandoned, in favour of a shorter route further south, *Mukimbungu* was no longer needed as a transport station, and in 1885 it was handed over to ABMU, which in its turn, put it at the disposal of SMF. Within the next two decades, *Mukimbungu* was to become the centre for the Swedish mission, mostly due to the linguistic and literary work of Nils Westlind at this station. If one compares *Mukimbungu*'s location, with those places known from the old Sundi province, one notices that *Mukimbungu* is situated between the villages Mazinga and Kasi, which were visited by Girolamo de Montesarchio in 1649—1650, and from which he reported thousands of baptisms.<sup>63</sup> In Mazinga, immediately north of *Mukimbungu*, Girolamo had administered 30 baptisms on the first day, 100 on the second, 900 on the third, and on the fourth day, 1,600. The entire region was called Dondo Mazinga and bordered on to the Mpemba Kasi region, which, at the time of Girolamo's visit, was governed by a woman, "the Congo King's mother". It was in these very regions, that the conquerers, from the north, crossed the river, during the fourteenth century and began their expansion southwards. However, neither the Swedish missionaries, nor the Missionary Board in Sweden, were aware of this fact, and there was absolutely no strategic plan, which lay behind their decision, to make *Mukimbungu* the centre for the Swedish mission. Their presence there, in the middle of the old Congo Kingdom's culture centre was mere accident. This centre was, however, not so significant to the Italian Capuchin missionaries, who concentrated their efforts to Mbanza Sundi, which was near the Inkissi river.

The third professional category of Swedes in the Congo, was made up of commissioned and non-commissioned officers. They were sixty in number, for the first twenty-five years after 1878, i. e. one eighth of all Swedes.<sup>64</sup> These servicemen worked all over the Congo Independent State, and only a few of them in the Lower Congo. There are two explanations to why so many Swedish servicemen worked for the Congo Independent State, and not for other colonial enterprises. One refers to a Swedish gymnastics team, which participated in a show in Brussels, in 1880, to

mark the fiftieth anniversary of Belgium's independence.<sup>65</sup> This Swedish team included, among others, eleven officers from the Military Institute of Advanced Studies, in Karlberg, and it is said, that the performance of the team made a great impression on Leopold II, who afterwards asked the leader, Captain Viktor Balck, to recruit Swedish officers for the Congo enterprise. In 1882, the two lieutenants, von Krusenstjerna and Sundvallsson, departed for the Congo, to work for the Association, and they were followed, later, by the well-known Congo veterans, Lieutenants Möller, Pagels, Gleerup, Juhlin-Dannfelt and Ling-Vannerus.<sup>66</sup> An other explanation was given in a Swedish daily paper, which in 1887 claimed that it was Stanley who drew Leopold's attention to the Swedes, as Stanley had very good experiences of Swedes in the Congo, and he considered them to be capable people.<sup>67</sup> It was the Captain of the "*Royal*", A. E. Andersson, whom Stanley most appreciated.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the three above mentioned professional categories, seamen, missionaries and servicemen, individual representatives for other professions were also attracted to the Congo, such as tradesmen, engineers, a few doctors, scientists and lawyers; they numbered hardly more than twenty during the first twenty-five years.<sup>69</sup> Some attention will be devoted, in this context, to only one of these, the geographer H. H. von Schwerin, for his frank statements on conditions in the Lower Congo and his missionary criticism.

The Swedish efforts in the Lower Congo, must be considered rather extensive, in comparison both to those of other nationalities, and to Swedish achievements in other parts of the world. In no other country was their contribution so intensive, as in the Congo. In this book, however, their work will not be studied in detail, or chronologically, but the intention is to analyse the attitude and behaviour of the Swedes, towards the Congolese and their culture tradition. A study, similar to that made by Jenssen-Tusch, at the beginning of the century, would naturally be desirable, but such a study must be postponed until a future date. Our study is confined to the Lower Congo, which means that many officers and captains fall outside the scope of this thesis, but their opinions will, as far as possible, be rendered as a complement to the analysis of the culture situation in the Lower Congo, during the 1880's and 1890's.

The two following chapters attempt to study the Swedes' confrontation with, and evaluation of the individual Congolese on the one hand, and Congolese traditions, customs and practices on the other. It is not always possible to maintain the difference between individual and group, between the private person and his collective environment, and, therefore, we con-

fine ourselves to attempt an analysis along those lines. The analysis could be made in many other ways, but the systemization under two headings does justice, at least, to one important aspect; that the Swedes in the Lower Congo experienced the situation as problematical within these two dimensions. This was particularly true of the missionaries, who discussed both individual and collective types of culture questions rather thoroughly, as they were forced — as propagators — to take a definite stand to both the form and content of Congolese culture.

## Chapter 7. The Problem of Racial and Personal Relationships

### ”The negro character”

During the modern colonial era, race problems, that is to say the particular interest for the differences between peoples or so-called races, played a greater role for the Europeans than in any previous era. ”The Europeans who came into contact with the Bantu speaking peoples had not the slightest doubts of their own superiority”, writes Ruth Slade, 1962, concerning Africa, ”Europeans of this period were well satisfied with themselves and with their own civilization”.<sup>1</sup> Ruth Slade writes this on the grounds of her extensive research work into English and French sources, and our Scandinavian material confirms, to a large extent, Slade’s generalizations. A number of qualifications must naturally be made, but in general Europeans in the Congo assessed the African culture and the Africans from their own superior attitude. The characteristics which were brought up as typical for the Congolese, were those which were considered poor according to European standards. The differences between Africans and Europeans are frequently emphasized in the European documents. In this chapter the Swedes’ view of Congolese characteristics and ability will be discussed and the personal relationships analysed.

In a number of extreme cases it has been questioned whether the Africans on the whole can be regarded as human beings, and it occurs that Africans are likened to, or compared with apes. In international literature one can find various examples of this.<sup>2</sup> One reason for making such comparisons is the alleged kleptomania.<sup>3</sup> The ape is said to be a confirmed thief, just as the Africans. It is related from the Congo, that the hunters exploited the ape’s kleptomania as a method of trapping. The hunter puts out the bait and if the ape took the bait, it would rather let itself be captured than release its prey.<sup>4</sup> Macaco, ape, became the white people’s degrading form of address to the Congolese. The Swedish sea-captain, G. Stenfelt referred to the Africans in Sierra Leone as ”half-civilized apes”, but otherwise it is difficult to find written evidence that the Swedes in the Congo, called the Congolese, apes.<sup>5</sup> The lack of written evidence, however, is not surprising, as macaco was used in common parlance as an abuse, and it is impossible to say how frequently it was used by Europeans.

The Swedish professor, G. von Düben established as early as 1878, in

a scientific publication on investigations into Central Africa, that the rumours of the tailed people are false, and originated due to a misunderstanding.<sup>6</sup> No Scandinavian source indicates that these rumours were believed, but that the rumours were discussed indicates that, despite everything, some people showed an interest in some Darwinists' search for "the missing link" between apes and human beings. Comparison between coloured people and apes is, however, older than Darwinism. The Swedish globe-trotter, C. P. Thunberg, made a comparison between Indians and apes, when he was in Batavia, Java in May 1775: "Without wishing to do injustice to India's blackish-brown natives, one can say that the difference between Indians and Europeans is greater than that between apes and Indians".<sup>7</sup> This statement, made eighty years before the publication of the *Origin of Species*, among other things, indicates two points: that the comparison between coloured people and apes is older than Darwin's theory of evolution, and that the comparison in 1775, already was considered a delicate question.

In a letter from Kibunzi of 18 January, 1897, K. E. Laman mentions that many likened the Congolese to an ape.<sup>8</sup> Laman, however, gives no example of when this occurred and confines himself to, and totally disclaims such comparisons, without giving his reasons for so doing.

To place the Congolese among mankind presented difficulties for certain people. The geographer, Baron H. H. von Schwerin, referred to the Congolese half-animal level.<sup>9</sup> This 19th century Swedish scientist writes of the Congo: "Here in the vicinity of the Equator where the foremost stimuli for physical life, i. e. warmth and humidity, are concentrated, there is no place for the intellectually and morally perfectible man. Only the animal instincts are developed and for the whole of its life, a child remains at the half-animal level. In other words, they become permanent children of nature."<sup>10</sup>

In the book *Tre år i Kongo*, 1887, Lieutenant Möller describes the Congolese as half-animal and half-human. He regards the Congolese as mediocre, that is to say, people who lack character. "To a great extent the Bakongo are distinguished by their want of development, in one direction or another: they are half-human, among which one is hardly likely to find a confirmed scoundrel, or a distinguished personality".<sup>11</sup> Lieutenant Möller continues that the Congo's negroes are, in general, "mendacious and cowardly, indolent and vain, and deceitful and ungrateful".<sup>12</sup> The people were said to be so idle, that they did not even bother to take revenge. "This is another proof of the people's half-human nature; they lack depth and could never resolve themselves for any kind of bold action or decisive



steps".<sup>13</sup> Möller claimed that neither education nor visits to Europe can alter this "negro disposition". The book, *Tre år i Kongo*, was widely distributed in Sweden and received much attention. Evidently Möller's thoughts on the so-called negro disposition, influenced public opinion in Sweden on Africans, where ordinary people made little difference between the Lower and Upper Congo. Möller claimed that the people in the Lower Congo were better than those of the Upper Congo.

"Intellectually, the Bakongo are well equipped", says Möller, "they are intelligent and quick to learn, and have a particular ability for languages. On the coast one meets natives who speak several European languages. To teach the children to read and write is almost as easy as in Europe."<sup>14</sup> The question of the Africans intelligence was treated in general, with superiority by Europeans, who considered themselves more intelligent than the Africans. It is this reasoning which occasionally appears in the works of both Möller and von Schwerin, who mention that African children are intelligent, but that development thereafter ceases.

A typical discussion on how puberty was considered to check the Africans intellectual development, and instead initiate retrogression, can be taken from Cureau, whose ideas summarize what had been said a couple of decades before the turn of the century.<sup>15</sup> As a child the "negro" is elegant, quick to learn and active. But the sexual awakening during puberty stops the favourable development and the intelligence slowly declines over a fifteen year period. Decreptitudes rapidly occur. In comparison to the white race, the black people are totally inferior with regard to intelligence. Individual variations do not occur among negroes, while the intelligence of Europeans varies considerably from person to person. The highest intelligence a negro can have, falls short of the lowest intelligence of Europeans. The reason for retrogression after puberty, at twelve years of age, is that sexuality prevails and takes all energy. The intellectual life is strangled by the sexual life.

This image of the African's intelligence was not embraced by all Europeans, and among the exceptions one can mention, Wilson 1856, Bentley 1893, and Chavanne 1887.<sup>16</sup> The Bakongo, the people of the Lower Congo, who had built up the old Congo Kingdom, were considered more intelligent than other African peoples. The missionary, Nils Westlind, noticed during his first year at Mukimbungu in 1882, that the Swedes had underestimated the Congolese. "The people are not without talent, as many imagine; the children here learn as quickly as those in Sweden."<sup>17</sup> It is worthy of note that Westlind said *as* quickly and not *almost as* quickly.

One notices the same positive evaluation of the Congolese intelligence, expressed by many missionaries during these two decades: K. F. Andrae 1887, J. W. Håkansson 1888, O. Nordblad 1895, and Ivar Johansson 1896.<sup>18</sup> One of the missionaries from the 1890's who most ardently stressed the Congolese as an intelligent people, was K. E. Laman, who emphasized his opinion particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> Of the above mentioned missionaries Nils Westlind and K. E. Laman were the foremost linguists, which implied that it was they who had the best contacts with their Congolese co-workers, and became personally acquainted with many of them. They found the Congolese to be interested in languages and to have a great linguistic ability.

The Swedish missionaries, without exception, emphasized the intelligence of Congolese children, but none of them mentioned retrogression. With the exception of Baron von Schwerin, the majority of Swedes in the Congo, who commented on this question, considered that the Congolese, by nature, were endowed with an equally good intellect as the Europeans. Environmental conditions and lack of stimulating education, were said to have impeded development. Therefore, many considered the Congolese to have a child's knowledge and experience.<sup>20</sup>

The Europeans in Africa frequently connected the Africans' indolence with their deficient intelligence. Lieutenant Wester formulated his view of the passivity in the following way: "When no pleasure in life is real, as long as man, through indolence sleeps away his time, and as the inhabitants of Central Africa, who live in a luxuriant land, are particularly inclined to indolence, the work of civilizing must be aimed at teaching them to understand the necessity of work".<sup>21</sup> The same view was expressed by several officers in the Congo; for example, Count Chr. Posse, lieutenants Pagels, Möller and C. R. Håkansson.<sup>22</sup> In the book, *Tre år i Kongo, 1887*, Möller says that the people's indolence and disinclination to work, depends upon the oppressive climate and on deficient intelligence.<sup>23</sup> The people in the Lower Congo, were said to be better than Africans in general. "The natives in the Manyanga district are the most industrious and most intelligent negroes I have met in this part of Africa", says Lieutenant Möller.<sup>24</sup>

As it was not only the officers who emphasized this trait of indolence in the Congolese, this attitude cannot be put down to professional jargon among servicemen. Even the missionaries expressed similar opinions. In a letter from Mukimungu in 1882, Nils Westlind, says that the people there "are extremely indolent".<sup>25</sup> Westlind's colleague, K. J. Petersson, shares this view: "They are never in a hurry, and they never do a whole

day's work", he writes in 1883.<sup>26</sup> About ten years after these two statements, the otherwise very patient and calm missionary, Ivar Johansson, writes in his diary, from Kingenge, the following words, which were unusually drastic to have come from his pen: "At times it tries one's patience to be involved with these lazy, pretentious and false people".<sup>27</sup> Johansson was in a trying situation when he wrote these lines, in the midst of the building of a new station, so the statement is not typical for him.

Olof Nordblad cried vehemently from Mukimbungu in 1895: "Oh, what indolence is to be found among these people! If this was not so, especially among men, one would soon see blooming plantations, where at present there is only long tough grass, as there is no lack of fertile ground".<sup>28</sup> Immediately following this out-burst on the people's indolence, Nordblad describes how the people were tormented by severe illness, but he does not put two and two together. That illness might reduce the people's capacity for work, was not discussed seriously at that time. In 1895, in the Annual Report from the Diadia mission station, Henning Skarp indicates some of the causes for "this abominable indolence".<sup>29</sup> The climate plays a part, he says, but indolence is, in the first instance, a moral question. "The essential reasons, however, must be looked for in the prevailing vices and the irregular manner in which they live their lives, together with the excessive drinking of palm-wine".<sup>30</sup> In addition he names aquavit, which was introduced by the Europeans. What Skarp might mean with "vices" is not said, but he probably refers to their sexual lives, cola-chewing and palm-wine.

Baron von Schwerin also speaks of "the black peoples' inveterate abhorrence for all work", but he claims that one cannot blame this indolence on the effects of the climate.<sup>31</sup> He considered the climate in the Congo to be the healthiest in Africa.<sup>32</sup> The important question of how the Congolese themselves regarded work, was not discussed during the time of the Congo Independent State, but belongs to a later period. In 1924, for example, K. E. Laman posed the question of the Congolese attitude to work.<sup>33</sup> His principal view at this stage is that, above all, the African wants to be free. When he works for the Europeans, he does so to realize his own plans, perhaps in order to be able to build a house. "He wants to be free. He loathes binding agreements. He infringes them easily and leaves everything to its fate, when his craving to return home becomes too strong. The white man can not control him, as negroes in the tropics are not dependent upon him."<sup>34</sup>

Most opinions concerning Congolese moral qualities voiced among Scandinavians in the Congo, are negative. The Congolese were said not

only to be lazy, but also mendacious, thievish, cowardly, cruel, false and ungrateful. The positive judgements which most frequently occur and compensate for part of the negative opinions, are those which say that the Congolese are good-natured, friendly and hospitable.

Professor von Düben, who never visited the Congo himself, wrote in 1878, that one had a very poor knowledge of the peoples of Central Africa, but that he understood them, in general, to be intelligent and hospitable, for example towards Livingstone: and that they showed a certain cunning towards strangers.<sup>35</sup> During the 1880's Lieutenant Pagels speaks of the Congolese as artful in business matters. "Honesty, integrity and the like, are not esteemed by the savage as good points. Dishonesty, or I would rather say, to be 'artful', is that characteristic which the savages praise exceptionally highly. If at the conclusion of a purchase, or for that matter at any other time, one can cheat one's neighbour, one is considered to have a superior personality."<sup>36</sup> Even Lieutenant C. R. Håkansson, briefly touches upon this problem, and he considers that the Congolese have a vague conception of truth.<sup>37</sup> When these Swedes claim that the Congolese are cunning and try to deceive the other party, it is really ethical conceptions they discuss, and not how one should interpret an expression such as, "Yes, we have no bananas". No thorough analysis of the Congolese conception of truth materialized, other than these rather sweeping statements.

In 1883, K. J. Pettersson gave vent to the fact that the people at Stanley Pool were thievish, when he arrived there, as one of the first Europeans at the beginning of the 1880's. "The people among which we are now staying are, namely, the most thievish I have ever met. It has even occurred that table knives have been stolen, while we partook of our meals."<sup>38</sup> Pettersson did not know the people at Stanley Pool so well as those in the cataract regions, Manyanga, Lukunga, Mukimbungu, and his words refer to the inhabitants of Stanley Pool alone.

Lieutenant Pagels, whose experience of the Congo had principally been the Upper River, makes a generalization, and claims that thievishness is part of the African's character. "As a rule, the natives were not allowed to cross the threshold of the white man's house", says Pagels, "the reason for this is thievishness, which constitutes one of the basic traits in the negro character".<sup>39</sup> The sea-captain, Gustaf Stenfelt, also mentions the same characteristic, although he does so in his own inimitable way: "... as the negroes ignorance vis-à-vis grammar, and in particular the possessive pronoun, the difference between mine and yours etc, is clearly pronounced, a native who is not employed at the factory is never allowed

in the store, but he is only allowed to imagine what is inside . . . Look but don't touch."<sup>40</sup> That the Congolese were not allowed in the white man's house or store, applied particularly to the European tradesmen. Among the missionaries there is no example of this restriction, and, it is true, they did not have many possessions of which to be robbed. Even the Congolese themselves could regard their people as thievish. The evangelist, Abeli Kiananwa, in a letter from Banza Nsanga, 1892, condemns the thefts made by his people, their murders and poison trials.<sup>41</sup> Kiananwa has probably assumed part of the European opinion of the Congolese.

There were exceptions to the current opinion that the Congolese were thievish. Lieutenant C. R. Håkansson is one of those who most energetically claim the opposite in a polemic against the Swedish missionary paper "Missions Tidning", 1883, and the picture it gave of Africa.<sup>42</sup> Håkansson had read in *Missions Tidning*, "that almost all people are thieves", but he claims that such a statement is false: "a thief always arouses ridicule, and if a negro, in relation to a white man, considers himself to have a less distinct conception of mine and yours, this is because he believes the white man's riches to be inexhaustible".<sup>43</sup>

What Lieutenant Håkansson says here, is that between themselves the Congolese are reliable and honest, while they can allow themselves to behave differently towards the Europeans. The reason for following another moral, in relation to the European, is the opinion that he is inexhaustibly rich. According to the Congolese way of thinking, it is not so terrible to take a little from one who has more than he requires for his own use. Håkansson rejects every thought that the people's character was characterized by thievishness.

In general, cruelty was not considered as a race problem by the Swedes in the Congo, but most of them appear, consciously or unconsciously to have made a distinction between cruel people, or cruelty as a characteristic on the one hand, and cruel customs on the other. It was mainly the officers who worked for the Association, or the Congo Independent State, who spoke of the individual's cruelty and cowardice. Lieutenant Möller described how his Haussa-soldiers transported a prisoner, tied to a bamboo cane, suspended by his hands and feet which were tied together over the pole. Möller thought this went too far: "Such is the negro; he has no sympathy for his neighbour's suffering".<sup>44</sup>

From the Lower Congo, Lieutenant Gleerup relates an episode which illustrates how the officers showed great sensitivity for suffering, which was not occasioned by European techniques, such as weapons or forced labour, but was part of the Africans everyday life. Gleerup speaks of

"the negroes' heartlessness and cowardly cruelty".<sup>45</sup> On one occasion, he had camped for the night in peace and quiet, after a long journey, ". . . an idyllic calm prevailed and we enjoyed the rest to the full, after a very strenuous day. Suddenly, I was disturbed by the lamentable bleating of a goat. The sound was so melancholic, that I could not lie still and rushed out to see what was happening. I found one of my porters, who with a heavy and sturdy cane, was trying with all his might to thrash the life out of a goat, which had been tied up, so as not to escape the torture: a crowd of natives were grouped around him and laughed for all they were worth."<sup>46</sup> Such sensitivity shown here by the Lieutenant towards the goat, is uncommon among officers for the Congolese, who often flogged the Congolese with canes and chicotte.

Lieutenant Wester formulates a general trait of character, in the following way: "A characteristic of nearly all negroes is their singular combination of cowardice and cruelty which reveals itself in their behaviour. They know no other power than that of brute force".<sup>47</sup> Only one of the Swedish lieutenants who comments on this matter, C. R. Håkansson, ardently defends the Congolese from the accusation that they were cruel.<sup>48</sup> He tries to see their conduct and attitudes as a result of Congolese customs and practice, and religious conceptions, instead of speaking of characteristic traits.

A long article in the paper *Missionsförbundet* 1883, claimed that the people of the Lower Congo were not so cruel as, for example, the people of Dahomey and the Niger, but the situation was still painted in sombre colours.<sup>49</sup> In general, the missionaries should have understood the situation in the way expressed by the missionary P. A. Westlind: "Nevertheless, the Congolese are by nature neither malicious nor cruel. It was religion which dictated cruelty."<sup>50</sup> No other colleagues showed so profound insight into the Congolese way of thinking, as the missionary Richards in an interview with Mrs Guinness at Banza Manteka.<sup>51</sup> Richards meant, that it was love and consideration for one another which occasioned the Congolese to behave as they did in certain situations, and only strangers, who did not understand the culture considered the actions cruel.

The image of the Congolese, as cowards is typical for the officers Christer Posse, Lieutenants Glerup, Möller and C. R. Håkansson, who in various contexts expressed the opinion that the Congolese lacked courage.<sup>52</sup> "These people, as said, lack personal courage . . . In this case the Congo negroes are way behind their black brothers, such as the Zanzibaris, Kaffers, Haussas, etc . . ." <sup>53</sup> War terminology is expressed by some Swedes in the Congo: "One finds no heroes among the Congo

negroes; they are all big poltroons".<sup>54</sup> Pagels obviously expects an unarmed Congolese to attack someone who was armed, when he formulates the following judgment: "Twenty savages are courageous when they have *one* individual in their midst, who has his arms and feet tied. But if this one individual was free and armed, these twenty would hesitate to attack him . . . The savage's lack of courage explains, how we, with only a few soldiers, have so many times triumphed in our dealings with the savages, whose number was many times greater than ours."<sup>55</sup> This quotation by a lieutenant who worked for the Congo Independent State, shows how difficult it was for him to imagine himself in the other party's situation. Pagels, would probably also have hesitated to unarmed advance against armed forces; but when the Congolese show hesitation, the Swedish officer speaks of cowardice and lack of courage. It would appear from the quotation, that the Swedish officers were often engaged in combat with the Congolese. No other professional categories commented on cowardice.

An opinion of the Congolese, which is not dependent on any particular professional category, is that he is ungrateful. As usual Lieutenant Pagels expresses himself drastically. "There is not the remotest degree of gratitude in the savage. Neither does his language possess a word for thank-you. The Bateke people express thank-you, by clapping their hands three times. At the Equator not even this form of expression exists. Give the savage all you have in your store and he will, with a look of complete innocence, ask for your shirt and shoes."<sup>56</sup> Many others mention that the word "thank-you", is not to be found in the Congo.<sup>57</sup> Other Swedes confine themselves to noting that the Congolese actually are ungrateful.<sup>58</sup>

The missionary, Henning Skarp at Diadia says in 1890, that the Congolese need all the gifts they can receive from Sweden, and that their desire to receive gifts can be considered as a form of gratitude, which, however, they do not articulate.<sup>59</sup> The missionary, Wilh. Sjöholm at Kibunzi replies to the question posed by some Swedish supporters of the mission, concerning the Congolese reaction to the presents they receive.<sup>60</sup> He says that the answer is short, "as gratitude for them is an unfamiliar virtue, the more gifts they receive, the more they demand. If they are not successful in this, they frequently become ill-humoured, and if their wishes are granted, they afterwards laugh at 'mindele', who is so stupid that he gives away his possessions".<sup>61</sup> Both Skarp and Sjöholm are, however, anxious that the friends in Sweden continue to send gifts, as they know that the Congolese need them.

There are also statements which express quite another view of the problem of gratitude. When Christmas was celebrated at the Swedish

mission stations, it was part of the tradition to distribute Christmas presents to the Congolese, and on such occasions they expressed delight and gratitude.<sup>62</sup> From the Christmas celebrations at Kibunzi in 1892, Laman relates that the Congolese were able to express their feelings after the distribution of presents. "We heard a roaring 'utondele kwami', thank-you very much".<sup>63</sup> The verb which was noted by Laman in this connexion, has since this time always been translated by thank-you, we thank-you, tonda, utondele. Accordingly, there was both gratitude and words for thank-you in the Lower Congo in 1893.

Closely associated with the conception of the Congolese as thievish, mendacious and ungrateful, is the idea that he was selfish.<sup>64</sup> It occurred that one went as far to say that the Congolese totally lacked ethics. "Where there is no law, there is no infringement", wrote the missionary Selma Karlsson, 1892.<sup>65</sup> The missionaries tried to make the Congolese understand what was implied by sin, but a Congolese woman answered Selma Karlsson that sin belonged to the white people alone: "Your people, who are white perhaps sin, but we who are black, we are of another kind: never have we sinned."<sup>66</sup>

A lieutenant also considered that the people totally lacked moral standards. "Ethics, love and friendship are for the savage utterly unknown", wrote Pagels.<sup>67</sup> He said that he had looked, in vain, for one good point in the Congolese character. He was not alone in questioning whether love and compassion was to be found in the Congolese character.<sup>68</sup>

More refined statements were made in certain cases, and we shall give a couple of examples from European literature. Joseph Chavanne wrote in 1887, that the fiote in the Lower Congo displayed a singular mixture of contradictory traits in their character.<sup>69</sup> Faithfulness and reliability is united with falsehood and kleptomania, good-naturedness and general fair-play, with violence and covetousness, credulity with suspicion. Chavanne does not discuss in which situations these traits reveal themselves and his summing up becomes, despite everything, not very clear. He considers that sympathy, compassion and gratitude are lacking.

In the interview which Mrs Guinness made with Mr. Richards from Banza Manteke, the ethical question was seen in an unusual perspective for this period. "Are they affectionate, kind, grateful, faithful to those they love, like Europeans?" asks the interviewer and the missionary answers: "That is just what *they* ask about white men! My dear wife was very ill one night; I was up with her and anxious, and I suppose I looked pale next day. Lydia, a woman who kindly came in to help, observed it, and I overheard her saying to a neighbour; What *do* you think? These



white people *actually love each other like we do!* She is ill, and he looks pale? It was evidently a new discovery to her that white folks had human feelings."<sup>70</sup>

Some of the white people made a similar discovery, that the Congolese had human feelings. K. J. Pettersson, wrote in a letter from Lukunga, dated 19 October, 1882, that the people were friendly and willing to work as porters.<sup>71</sup> He had anticipated great difficulty on the way from Lukunga to Stanley Pool, as the people offered resistance to the white men, which was a result of Stanley's men who "painted their way with blood, nearly every time they were obliged to go up, or down country".<sup>72</sup> Pettersson tried, however, to reach the Pool, from where he wrote home, to Missionsförbundet on 30 December, 1882, and still maintained his judgement of Stanley's caravans and their violent methods, "how they shot the natives and burned their villages and towns", but he revised his judgement of the people along the route from Lukunga to Stanley Pool.<sup>73</sup> "Now I have travelled this route, I am glad to say, that almost without exception, we were kindly received by the natives. When one shows them friendship they return it, but exceedingly little would induce them to take to their murder weapons."<sup>74</sup> K. J. Pettersson's opinion that the white man is received by the Congolese in the same way as he receives them, is related in connexion with the missionary's explanation of the difference between the Association's violent methods and those of the Mission, which is why he evidently is not surprised that he was kindly received. Several other missionaries expressed the opinion that the Congolese were a friendly people.<sup>75</sup>

The missionary, K. F. Andrae gives an example of the readiness of the Congolese to help a white enemy, in a letter of 30 November, 1893, from Nganda, only a couple of weeks before his death.<sup>76</sup> On November 16, two Belgian officers and their men had been attacked, while erecting a state post, one-and-a-half hour's journey from the mission station at Nganda. They had aroused the people's displeasure. Six soldiers and one of the Belgian officers were killed, but the other, whose name was Baltus, escaped and reached the mission station, where Andrae was living. On 23 November, fifteen officers, three of which were Swedish, and one hundred-and-fifty African soldiers arrived in Nganda to punish the population. The mission station looked like a military camp, said Andrae, and it was from there that the punitive expedition set out. "Their villages were burned, the fruit trees were cut down, pigs, chickens and goats, and plantain fruits, among other things, fell into the hands of the victors. Day after day the burning and pillaging continued. One or two natives were discovered and

they were shot, hanged or taken prisoner."<sup>77</sup> Two men from the villages which had been subjected to this punishment, who were at the mission station with Andrae, were experts at removing bullets from wounds. Baltus had been hit by six bullets, stones, and these were removed by the Congolese. The missionary Andrae does not comment on their readiness to help the Belgian officer, but merely notes the source of the help.

In the year 1900, the missionary Wilh. Walldén, comments on Congolese hospitality and friendliness. The Swedish mission wanted to build a station at Kinkenge, and were to choose a site. The people gave the missionaries permission to build on an old burial ground. Walldén was very surprised at this kindness: "It was more than strange that the natives ceded this site to us, as the entire station area would cover the old burial ground, where their ancestors were buried and whose graves they had adorned with trees. The site for them is a holy place."<sup>78</sup>

It is evident that the Congolese showed greater kindness towards the missionaries than, for example, towards the officers and tradesmen. Lieutenant C. J. Håkansson made a note of this already in 1888 and said that, "there is no example of a missionary who has been killed in the Congo".<sup>79</sup>

## Some Congolese individuals

So far, our account has dealt with necessarily generalized judgements of the Congolese character. It is observations, generalizations and stereotypes which we have observed. Such a study of the Swedes' observations on "negro mentality" etc, gives no surprising results, as the Swedes do not differ appreciably in their attitude from the English, Belgian, or American Congo travellers. The Congolese are anonymous in these descriptions and evaluations, and therefore the Swedish judgement appears rather vague and undecided. As early as 1887, Chavanne criticized these superficial observations, which Europeans made in Africa.<sup>80</sup> If one only travels through the country and never stops, one never becomes acquainted with either individuals or the people, claims Chavanne.

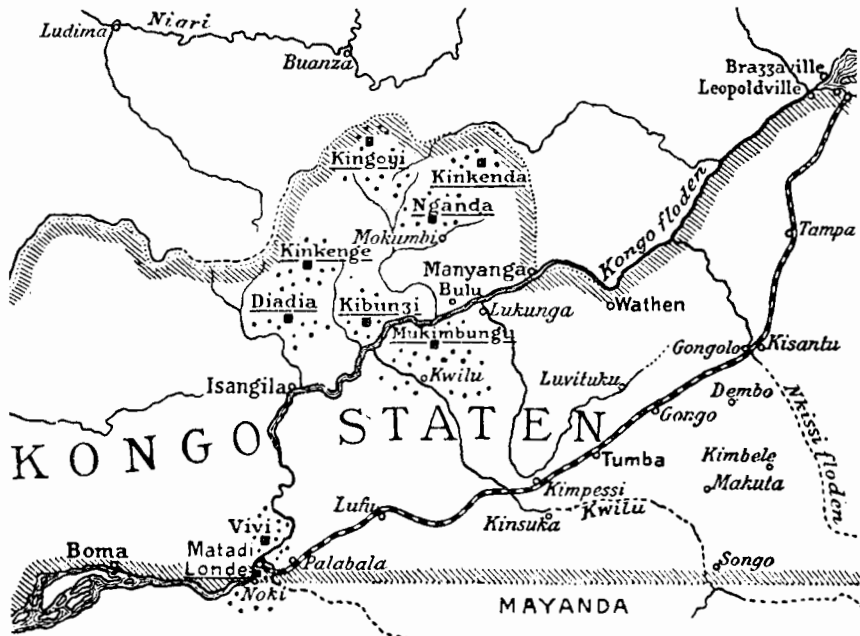
In the Swedish material which has been preserved from the 1880's and 1890's, there is a good deal of information about the Congolese, who almost certainly will become leading characters when the Africans write their own Church history. We shall now present some Congolese individuals, for two reasons: firstly in order to study how race problems could be pushed into the background by Europeans at that time, and secondly in order to draw attention to some of those who signified so much for the

Church in the Congo, but who, until now, have taken second place to the foreign missionaries. The existence of documents in Swedish by some of the Congolese are of great value as sources for the study of the Congolese reaction to the Europeans in culture confrontation.

Nils Westlind, at Mukimbungu was the first of the Swedes in the Congo, to thoroughly get to know the people in one place, and the first to become a personal friend of the Congolese. A young African, *Mavosi Mayala Mayanda*, spent his childhood in Westlind's home, even during his first period in the Congo and they became well acquainted. Mavosi accompanied Westlind to Sweden in 1885, and became the first Congolese to visit Sweden.<sup>81</sup> Mavosi was depicted as faithful, of strong character, and a good Christian. With this background, it was natural that the Swedish missionaries paid particular attention to him in the struggle between African traditions and Christian belief. Mavosi was to become a drastic example of the personal conflicts caused to the individual by cultural confrontation. The missionary K. T. Andersson renders an episode from Mukimbungu in *Missionsförbundet* in 1889, which clearly illustrates this conflict.<sup>82</sup> Mavosi's wife, Toma Tala, gave birth to a son on Wednesday 22 May, 1889, but the child died shortly after the birth. The following Saturday Toma Tala also died, and Mavosi grieved them deeply. According to the tribe's custom he should "lie beside the corpse" before the funeral, and he asked the missionaries, if, as a Christian, he needed to follow this custom, as he personally wanted to break with it. The missionaries said that this was not necessary "as the dead have nothing to do with the living".<sup>83</sup> His own people, however, forced him, against his will, to follow the burial customs and also to lie beside the corpse.

None of the missionaries reproached or criticized him for this, as they understood that he had no choice, and that 'heathenism', had a tight hold on the people, even at Mukimbungu. Mavosi sent a greeting to his friends in Sweden: "I, Mavuzi, my mother and brothers are healthy. God is with us. We pray to God for ourselves, and for all who love God and for all who do not love Him. God loves us every day. If every day we pray to Him for His Spirit, He will send it to us. Greet all my friends in Sweden! Mavuzi."<sup>84</sup> In this little letter a theological line of thought is reflected, which was typical for *Svenska Missionsförbundet*: God's love for all people. This love is the nucleus of Mavosi's greeting. Mavosi died from sleeping-sickness on 13 July, 1891 and the three missionaries, Nils Westlind, Wilh. Walldén and C. J. Nilsson, who participated in the funeral, wrote that they were deeply moved by Mavosi's death.<sup>85</sup>

A similar expression for the relationship of profound friendship which



SMF mission stations as illustrated in MF 1904.

could exist between a Congolese and a Swede, is the grief shown by the missionary Henning Skarp for a deceased chief.<sup>86</sup> The chief had kindly received the missionaries when they searched for a site for a new missionary station, and he had taken them to Diadia. Besides this he had allowed two of his sons to attend the mission's school. The chief and Skarp, were not closely acquainted, but a profound friendship appears to have existed between them. "When I heard of his death, I had difficulty in withholding my tears", wrote Skarp.<sup>87</sup>

*Ngangvan Dimboini*, from Banza Manteka is the focus of a dramatic episode which C. R. Håkansson describes in 1888.<sup>88</sup> Lieutenant Håkansson observes how the individual fights with himself over the question of the Christian message, on whether he should convert to Christianity, or remain faithful to his customs and traditions. First the scene is depicted. "There sat the village's supreme chief, the old sinner, Makokila, devoutly listening to the stream of words which flooded from the missionary's lips, together with Ngangvan Dimboini, the local trouble-maker and the rascal Mvamba, who Lieutenant Möller mentions as an ardent participant in his elephant hunts."<sup>89</sup> Lieutenant Håkansson had come to Banza Manteka on duty, and had arrived in time to attend a Church service, which was evidently led by Mr. Richards. After the service, people came forward and

abandoned their nkissi. "Heaps of this discharged witchcraft was hurled at the missionary's feet. They competed to liberate themselves from all that was heathen".<sup>90</sup> For the majority it appears to have been easy for them to separate from their nkissi and decide to become Christian, but Håkansson noticed one who struggled.

"The above mentioned Ngangvan Dimboini accompanied by his five wives and a betrothed, entered the missionary's room and wanted, at once, to become Christian . . . The missionary went so far as to say that he would allow him to keep his five wives, but the sixth, to whom he had only given presents, and was considered as his betrothed, he should leave. Poor Ngangvan. He thought over the matter for some time, heaved a deep sigh and left the room. The last condition he found much too hard".<sup>91</sup> Håkansson does not say what he thought about the missionary's conditions, which in comparison with many other missionary rules, were rather tolerant, when he went so far as to allow Dimboini to keep his five wives.

"When he came out into the garden, I watched him through a hole in the shutter. He took some steps towards the gate, stopped and pondered, took a few steps more and sat down on the ground. Inwardly, he evidently fought a terrible battle. His wives observed him with tense anxiety. But whether a decisive desire caught him, or that he was ashamed to not be 'following the fashion', he turned around, knocked on the missionary's door and asked in a humble voice if he might come in. The missionary wasted no time in opening. Ngangvan pointed to the young girl and said that she was free and could go where she pleased, although it cost him many pieces of cloth. He was registered in the novices' book, which before I left Banza Manteka, contained the names of more than 700 people."<sup>92</sup> The pieces of cloth were part of the gifts which a woman received before the "bride-price" was given, and the man could not demand the return of the gifts.

Lieutenant Håkansson considered himself to have been an eye-witness to an incident which, in due course, was to be of historic significance, "and Banza Manteka shall for eternity, have the honour to be the first Christian congregation in the Congo."<sup>93</sup> That a lieutenant did not know of the Congo's ancient Church history is understandable, but not even the missionaries saw the similarity between the situation during the 1880's and the preceding centuries' Capuchin mission in Sundi, when nkissi were burned, polygyny was combated, and hundreds of people were baptized. It is, however, worthy of note, that it is an officer, who so sympathetically followed an individual Congolese in his struggle, with regard to the missionaries' preaching and challenge to conversion.

*Mose Nsiku*, from Kibunzi, belongs to that group of Congolese who appears rather clearly as a personality, and among other things, he wrote several letters to the paper *Missionsförbundet*, during the 1890's, where he reached a wide public.<sup>94</sup> Even his wife wrote to Sweden and her letter from Matadi, of 21 August, 1901, is one of the oldest known documents from a Congolese woman.<sup>95</sup>

Mose Nsiku was boy in the household of the missionary, C. J. Nilsson at Kibunzi, when he requested to be baptized.<sup>1</sup> He was the first in Kibunzi to become a Christian. It is typical that it was a missionary's boy who was the first to request to be baptized. He was baptized on 1st December, 1889, together with two other Congolese.<sup>2</sup> Mose Nsiku accompanied C. J. Nilsson to Sweden, and was introduced at Svenska Missionsförbundet's annual general meeting in Stockholm, 1890. It was this that made him known in Swedish mission circles.<sup>3</sup> Mose Nsiku accompanied Nilsson in 1890, just Mavosi had accompanied Nils Westlind round the country, five years previously. A great deal of attention was paid to the Congolese and they became popular in Sweden, in their capacity of being the missions' "first fruits" from an exotic country. It was the personal contacts with Swedish friends which Nsiku wished to maintain, through his letters from Matadi. In Matadi, he was to work at the mission's printing press for more than a decade, and of which he became manager.<sup>4</sup>

More than anything else the visits by the Congolese to Sweden, contributed to modify the image of the "savages" or "barbarians" from Africa, and the Congolese's own letters had the same effect. Here we have only the space to render a few main points from Mose Nsiku's and Anna Nsiku's letters, which partly reveal the Congolese view of their new life and partly those points which helped to eliminate racial prejudice among the Swedish readers.

In the first letter Mose Nsiku refers to a situation which was all too typical for the Lower Congo in the 1880's and 1890's<sup>5</sup> Some porters had come down to Londe from Isangila, in order to carry for mindele. After they had received their loads it began to rain heavily. One of the porters had a very powerful nkissi with him, to which he directed his prayer. This prayer is the nucleus of Nsiku's story, which he calls *lusambulu luankisi*, that is to say, the nkissi-prayer, but the missionary Nordblad translated it to *The Worship of Idols*. Nsiku does not write idols in Kikongo, but nkissi, which is worthy of note. The porters beseeched their nkissi to stop the rain, so that the paths would be passable. This occurred, but only for a brief period, after which it began to pour with rain again. Nsiku concludes, without making any comment of his own, by posing a question

to his readers: "But you, my friends, who triumphed, the nkissi, who was called Jahangu or Nzambi?"<sup>6</sup> Nsiku considered the answer so obvious that he did not need to point out that the nkissi Jahangu was the loser.

The missionary Nordblad, who translated Nsiku's text to Swedish, appended a note on the relationship between nkissi and Nzambi. Nkissi is the name for every visible god, he writes, and the nkissi is thought to have communion with Nzambi, the invisible god. This is, however, an interpretation which was not made by Mose Nsiku.

*Anna Nsiku's* letter from 1901, is remarkable in several respects, and reflects in many ways, the immense changes which occurred in the Lower Congo at the close of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> She relates that as a child, she was stolen from her family and her tribe, and taken a long way from her home to Londe. She had been there for four years and had been well treated by the white people. "The same happened to me, as to Joseph in bygone days. What I considered a terrible accident became for me a great blessing. Here I have learned to know Jesus, my Saviour . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Anna Nsiku, or Zinu Nduku as she previously was called, said that she had hesitated to write to Sweden, as it was not usual for a woman to write. But she wanted to contact her friends, and tell them about her everyday life. "The ground in the vicinity of Londe is very stoney and infertile. I have tried, however, to plant a few peas, potatoes, beans, and all this seems to have taken well. I prepare my husband's food, and when there is a lot of work at the printing press, I assist with the book-binding. Sometimes, I can also help mindele, Emma Sjöholm to sew, and this I thoroughly enjoy."<sup>9</sup>

The work of the Congolese women, in the new situation, is concisely described in this letter. She cultivates the ground, prepares her husband's food, as in former times, but she has also learned certain European techniques. Emma Sjöholm relates that Anna Nsiku owns her own sewing-machine. The Nsiku family occasionally invited mindele for a cup of tea and cakes, which Anna Nsiku had baked herself.<sup>10</sup> Mrs Sjöholm recommends both Mose and Anna as peaceable, industrious and proper, who both help with parochial work. Anna Nsiku's letter reveals that already in 1901, the real pioneer era was past. The atmosphere which pervades in this description from Londe, indicates a pronounced difference from most descriptions during the 1880's and 1890's.

*Daniel Nzinu* at Diadia is an interesting person, as an example of the white man's attitude within culture confrontation, as he was a cripple. After Christmas 1889, the missionary Henning Skarp took care of a boy who was between five and six years old, who used to creep to the mission

station every weekend, as he was lame in both feet.<sup>11</sup> He proved to have a gift for learning, and the missionary Rangström, his teacher, put him at the top of the class. Moreover, he was bright and proper, it was said.<sup>12</sup> The cripple was accepted as one of the family and entrusted with tasks, due to his evident talents.

When Nzinu was eight years old, that was his estimated age, he became the chorus leader at Diadia.<sup>13</sup> He also worked as assistant teacher at the school, and his friends called him "dokuta", the learned. He helped with parochial work in different ways, despite his handicap, and in 1896 he was made responsible for the so-called out-station, Mbanza Nsanga, and succeeded Abeli Kiananwa.<sup>14</sup> Soon after this he died of sleeping-sickness, on January 24, 1897. Nzinu received a very favourable obituary from the missionaries with whom he had worked.<sup>15</sup>

A few letters from the hand of Daniel Nzinu are also preserved, and were published first in *Missionsförbundet* and afterwards in the book *På hedningarnas väg*, 1898.<sup>16</sup> He expresses joy and gratitude for the presents he received from his Swedish friends, and only in one letter does he deal with the struggle between the old traditions and Christian belief.<sup>17</sup> It is the conceptions of nkissi and ndoki, with which he deals very briefly, and the Swedish translation writes idol instead of nkissi. "Behold, the people in this country, they make their means of protection and their idols. Others pray to the sun, moon and fire, but these people think that, if someone is ill, they should send for the fetiche man, in order that he might be saved, as they believe that another, who is a sorcerer, has eaten the sick person. But no, in truth, no person can eat another's soul, therefore we know this is not true."<sup>18</sup> The Congolese words which lie behind this translation are, in all likelihood, nkissi for idol, nganga for fetiche man and ndoki for sorcerer. Accordingly, it is evident that nganga use their nkissi to combat ndoki. But Nzinu claims that he, for his part, no longer believes in all this.

These are the talented young men, to whom the missionaries paid most attention, and with whom personal contacts were established. This was also the case with *Jakobi Nzuzi*, who must be included as one of the leading pioneer figures in the Congo Church, as bible translator and co-worker to Nils Westlind. The missionary Walldén called him "the most prominent of the natives".<sup>19</sup> Nzuzi worked with Westlind until he died of pneumonia at Mukimbungu on 5 December 1892. Westlind's group included Esaja Ndaki and Daniel Makosi, who both accompanied Westlind on the journey which was to be his last, and which finished in Las Palmas in March 1895.



Westlind was evidently very attached to Nzuzi, and in 1892 he wrote a long and fully detailed biography of his friend.<sup>20</sup> He writes as if it was Nzuzi himself who told his life's story, and how he and his people experienced the first white men who penetrated the country. One cannot always distinguish from the text what were Nzuzi's own words, or what was Westlind's interpretation, but the story is unique and must be noted here, despite the obvious difficulties of interpretation.

Jakobi Nzuzi was born at the beginning of the 1860's, and said that he had heard mention of white people on the coast ever since his childhood. "This is how the story went: for example that the white people had only one eye in the middle of their foreheads and one leg. Also that they bought people and kept slaves to make things for them, which they sold to the people. Further, it was said that they could remove their heads and feet, and that they wore an unnecessary amount of clothes, which was the reason why they were called mindele: those in cloth. But worst of all, it was said that they were man-eaters. It was not possible to believe that these monsters were human (bantu) which is why one carefully avoided referring to them by this name."<sup>21</sup> So far the story gives the impression of being authentic Congolese information and its continuation alludes to Stanley's 999 days journey, and here the document mentions the year 1877, which is probably Westlind's specification of Nzuzi's story. The people were surprised that the white men came from the interior of the country, as this they had never seen before.

Nzuzi had told Westlind that three white men passed through his village, Mukimbungu in January 1882, on their way up country, but three days later two of them returned. They had buried the third who had died. "Consequently these white people were mortal."<sup>22</sup> The incident related by Nzuzi, was how the missionaries Clark, Fredriksen, the Norwegian, and Lanceley had passed by. Lanceley had died and the other two had stayed at Mukimbungu and begun to build there.<sup>23</sup> The pertinence of Nzuzi's story is in the notation that mindele was mortal, as this the people had not believed earlier. Nzuzi worked for the missionaries and got to know them, and once again he took up the question of the white men being man-eaters.

One day the missionaries offered him pork without the rind, but in the Congo it was customary to leave the rind on the meat, so that one could determine from what kind of animal the meat originated.<sup>24</sup> When Nzuzi showed the pork with such a white rind, to the others, one of them said that it must be human flesh. They decided to find out the truth by giving the pork to the cat which, it was said, did not eat human flesh. The cat

did not eat the pork, and the rumours about man-eaters gained new support. "A woman had seen a white man washing the intestines of a man."<sup>25</sup> This information about the problems which faced the Congolese with regard to what and who the white man was, cannot have been the work of Nils Westlind, but must be considered as Congolese. It is interesting that Nils Westlind notes this Congolese questioning on white man's cannibalism, as he originated from a region in Värmland, Sweden, where the Congo was called "Cannibalia".<sup>26</sup> Both partners in culture confrontation suspected the other of being man-eaters. Perhaps, Westlind wanted to rectify this prejudice from his native land by rendering in detail, what Nzuzi and his people thought of the white man?

Nzuzi was baptized together with four other Congolese, on 17 May, 1885, at Mukimbungu by the missionary Harvey, says Westlind, and "this was the first baptism to take place in the Congo."<sup>27</sup> We remind ourselves of Girolamo da Montesarchio, who, in this very region, administered thousands of baptism in 1649—1650, but it is probable that these and other baptisms during the entire eighteenth century in Sundi, had been forgotten by the majority of the Congolese, and had never come to the missionaries' knowledge. Accordingly Jakobi Nzuzi became known as "the first fruit" in the Church history of the Dondo—Mazinga region. He worked together with Westlind and two other friends, Nimba and Ngumba in order to translate the bible to Kikongo.<sup>28</sup> The other Congolese who, in the first instance were to have the honour of working with Nils Westlind on linguistic research and the translation of the New Testament, are the above mentioned Esaja Ndaki and Daniel Makosi. The group who worked for Westlind included more than four, but exactly how many is not known.

*David Malangidila*, appears as one who had a great gift for languages and it was he who helped K. E. Laman revise the New Testament and translate the Old Testament. He participated in the whole of the comprehensive literary work, and some of his letters have been preserved in Swedish.<sup>29</sup> Malangidila spent two years in Sweden together with K. E. Laman and in his letter from 1903 he tells his Swedish friends that he has travelled through the Congo and talked about Sweden, and answered questions about the missionaries' country. In 1904, he expressed great joy over the completion of the Bible work. Through such men as Mavosi, Mose Nsiku and David Malangidila, Sweden had personal and regular contact with the Congo, at the same time as the Congolese had the opportunity to study in Sweden and inform their fellow-countrymen about Sweden. What this personal contact signified for culture confrontation, during the 1880's and 1890's and even later is difficult to say, but one

can presume that it meant a great deal for the Christians in both countries.

One catches a glimpse of many other Congolese personalities, among the letters from the missionaries, and it is only those who work in the Christian congregation to whom attention is paid in this manner. The material which exists from the professional groups, such as officers and seamen, is not rich, and one must be cautious when evaluating their personal relationship with the Africans. Lieutenant Håkansson's description of Ngangvan Dimboini, is a sign of profound interest for the Congolese personality, and at the Equator station, Lieutenant Pagels seems to have been a good friend of old Sikumposse.<sup>30</sup> Lieutenant Gleerup at Stanley Falls was a friend of the Arab chief, Raschid ben Mahomed, and Lieutenant Wester had excellent relations with none other than Tipu Tip at Stanley Falls.<sup>31</sup> Raschid and Tipu Tip respectively, were Arabs and members of the famous merchant family Maskat in Zanzibar, and were not what we call Congolese.

These individuals, in general, were more positively assessed than the people as a whole, and on which was frequently passed a rather generalized and negative judgement. This fact can be interpreted in two ways: that these Congolese individuals represented a positive selection; they were more talented than the majority and thanks to their talents they had gained admittance to the white man's world; or another explanation for this positive attitude, was that the missionaries, through personal contacts at the mission stations, by degrees saw the individual within his collective group, and even succeeded in discovering the personal traits and talents of the Congolese. Which ever of these interpretations is correct, one thing is however obvious, that race prejudice and stereotyped clichés were dismissed when attention was paid to the individual.

## The question of superiority

Frequently, it is the linguistic habits which reveal attitudes, the language changes constantly and words can also change value and colour. In this book African and Congolese are used as neutral conceptions, in which there is no ethical valuation. Congolese is a word which has been in general use since the 1960's, but it occurred much earlier. To the best of our knowledge, the first Swede to use the word was von Schwerin in 1887 in a daily paper.<sup>32</sup> Neither did the expression "primitive people" occur during the nineteenth century in common parlance, and did not become general until during the twentieth century, when it was used, among others,

by the evolutionists and the French school of sociology. The term has probably always expressed superiority, on the part of the white man towards the people he called "primitive".

The terms such as "native" and "negro" were used during the 1880's and 1890's, as neutral words and were not prejudiced. It was only during the twentieth century that they acquired a negative tone. These words occur throughout the material used in this book, and when they are referred to, they should be considered as neutral. It is difficult to determine exactly what the term "savage" signified in the European languages during the 1880's and 1890's. Savage is used by the Swedes in the Congo, during the twentieth century, in different contexts, and it is uncertain if it then gave expression to disdain or desparagement.<sup>33</sup> For the majority, however, who used the word savage, it is probably disdainful and gives expression to a superior view of the people. The expression "brute savage" also occurs, and there is no doubt about its being strongly negative.<sup>34</sup> The Congolese themselves used the expression savage about other peoples, but not of themselves. In answer to a question from a missionary regarding the character of the neighbouring peoples, the villagers at Diadia answered: "There are many many people, but they are naked and savage".<sup>35</sup> It is possible that they had borrowed the mode of expression from the Europeans as they connected "to be naked" with "to be savage".

There need be no doubt, with reference to the expression "barbarian" that this is a conscious classification of people of barbarous and civilized nations. Barbarian is clearly negative in all sources. It is the most distinct expression of the Europeans' attitude of superiority towards other peoples, and the expression characterizes their disdain for those referred to as barbarians. According to Congolese opinion, the expression which appeared to be the most humiliating was "macaco". The expression occurred already during the 1870's, and since that date it has been used very frequently by Europeans, who wished to intimate that the Congolese were not humans, but apes.<sup>36</sup> In order to study the expression macaco, one must use oral traditions, as it seldom occurs in writing, and therefore is outside the scope of this study. "Nigger" was regarded by both black and white people, as negative during the 1880's. Captain Gustaf Stenfelt confirms this fact, when he talks of a visit he made to Sierra Leone. When he came to a town ". . . with motley coloured negroes, white soldiers, black clerks, or office workers, who called themselves 'coloured gentlemen' and considered the word 'nigger' the worst insult they could imagine."<sup>37</sup>

Forms of address and the designation of groups are delicate points in

culture confrontation, and intimately associated with the race problem: the problem of superiority-inferiority.<sup>38</sup> The tendency is such, that all collective terms, which the Europeans use for the Congolese, in course of time, acquire a negative meaning, even, if from the start they were neutral. The terms become discriminating. The terms such as "native", "negro", "negress", and "coloured", have undergone this development. This indicates that the African reacts not to the word as such but to the feeling implied by the word; they catch the European attitude lying behind such words.<sup>39</sup>

Naturally, the white people considered themselves superior to the Congolese in most respects, when they began to colonize the Congo, but neither segregation nor discrimination appear to have been practised as a common pattern in personal relationships during the 1880's. During this decade, the white people in the Lower Congo were still few, and dependent upon the Congolese for their subsistence, and quite simply, did not dare to appear too insolent outside Banana, Boma, Matadi and other places with a concentrated white population. During the 1890's the tension between the Africans and Europeans in the Lower Congo increased considerably, as the number of white people rose, and the construction of the railway progressed. It was then that segregation and discrimination systematically were put into practice.

Only the very first pioneers, for example Nils Westlind and K. J. Pettersson, shared the material terms with the Congolese during the 1880's. In 1885, one must consider this time as past, as the white people had much better living conditions. They procured better houses, food, furniture, medicine, etc, than the Congolese, and they had higher salaries. The greatest difference between the Europeans and Congolese, during the 1880's and 1890's, is evident in the fact that all the Europeans had Congolese servants, while not one of the Congolese had a European servant. The entire colonial enterprise in the Lower Congo, the missions included, was built on this master-servant system. Mavosi, Nzinu, Nzuzi, Malangidila and all the others, had begun as the missionaries' servants, and it was they who later became Bible translators, evangelists, teachers and craftsmen etc.

The boy, or boys, were to make the beds, prepare the food, brush shoes, fetch water, do the washing and ironing, carry their master's baggage, pitch tents and be willing to do everything. This situation appears clearly from all the descriptions made by Swedes, and was just as typical of missionaries, as of officers and seamen. The name for them was all-round boys and these boys to a great extent, did the same task for the missionaries,

as the "slaves of the church" had done during the time of the Capuchin mission. None of the Swedes protested against this system, or tried to manage without a boy, but they accepted the system without discussion.

The majority of missionaries behaved in a friendly and patriarchal manner towards their boys. In most cases it was the most talented children who they chose as their servants. During the 1890's, when girls began to be employed, they were also called 'boy'. Generally, the Swedes in the Congo had the best contact with boys and men, as pupils and co-workers respectively. In the Nganda mission station's annual report in 1893, an example was mentioned, which was typical for the Lower Congo.<sup>40</sup> At the end of the year, sixty-six boys attended the mission's school, but no girls. The male dominance among the pupils, happened to correspond to a male dominance among the Swedes themselves. The officers and seamen did not have their wives in the Congo with them, and even among the missionaries, during the 1880's, it was the men who dominated, but this situation adjusted itself, when during the 1890's about thirty women missionaries, and the equivalent number of men, went out to the Congo.

The missionaries, and especially the women, considered that something must be done for the Congo's girls, and at Nganda in 1893, "they bought children", in order to recruit girls for the school. "In order that we might begin direct mission among the women, we have bought three little girls, who are now being brought up at the station . . . we regard them as 'part of the family'."<sup>41</sup> The custom of "buying children" for the mission, had been practised by the missionaries, and others, since the beginning of the 1880's. In a letter from Pallaballa of 22 September, 1881, C. J. Engvall, discusses this custom for the Swedish readers of the paper *Missionsförbundet*: "We have now eight children. The majority we have bought from the king, so that they are the exclusive property of the mission . . . Each child costs between six and seven pounds (about 115 Crowns). This must sound very strange to Swedish readers, to talk of buying children, and must appear similar to the slave-trade, but it is for the children's best, both from a spiritual and corporeal point of view. It would be dreadful, if the children, after having been with us for a few years and learned to read and write and, besides this, better etiquette and behaviour, yes perhaps also have become Christian, should be taken from us by the king, and compelled to be his slaves . . . I wonder if there is anyone in Sweden, who has a five pound note to donate to us, so that we can ransom some of these small children from slavery."<sup>42</sup>

From the start, the missionaries considered it necessary to recruit pupils for the schools, through following the established custom of "buying

children". Engvall speaks of the African slavery and the necessity to ransom children from it, but the Congolese probably did not regard themselves to have definitely "sold" a child to the missionaries, but it was more a question of "lending" a child to the foreigner. Thus the expression "to buy children" is hardly adequate for either the Swedes or Congolese opinion of what this involved. No-one claimed that one could own a child, as one owns a sewing-machine, but it was a question of paying for labour, or compensation for loss of income. Accordingly it was not a question of slavery.

In a letter from Lukunga of 19 October, 1882, K. J. Pettersson mentions how the transaction was conducted, and from this we catch a glimpse of the Congolese view of the matter.<sup>43</sup> Pettersson complains that the mission had too few children, but that those whom they had already bought, were progressing well. If the mission had more money, it could buy more children, and thereby it would be more successful. ". . . and if the children are not bought, and made the property of the mission, one cannot do anything for them, as if the parents send their children to the station for a day or so, they demand to be payed for so doing. On the other hand, they are willing to sell their children, and the children are, in most cases, exceedingly willing to be sold. Occasionally parents, or chiefs, come and offer us children, but frequently we do not have the resources to buy them."<sup>44</sup> Even K. J. Pettersson asks the supporters of the mission in Sweden, to place means at the mission's disposal.

Pettersson mentions a voluntary transaction, and claims that all three partners, were in agreement; the "buyer", the "seller", and the child. Not all the children, however, were happy to be sold to a stranger. On the contrary, they were often frightened, which is evident from Daniel Mayala's document from Kibunzi in 1889.<sup>45</sup> Mayala relates that he and his brother were sold by the chief when they had grown up, and were taken away. "And I cried so much", he says.<sup>46</sup> "Then they resold me to the white man P (Pettersson). He was then alone in Lukunga with two black men. It was they who told him of my presence. He bought me. Then I cried so much and thought of my mother, the chief of my clan, and my brothers and sisters, and I cried profusely. The white man took my old clothes and gave me new clothes and a shirt. But I did not stop crying, due to my immense grief. May God punish those who sold us."<sup>47</sup> Mayala wrote this several years after he had been sold to K. J. Pettersson and still expressed bitterness. "May God punish those who sold me". He had left Lukunga and came to Mukimbungu, where he became acquainted with Nils Westlind, and here he became a Christian and was baptized, after

which he went to Kibunzi and C. J. Nilsson. Despite all these moves he had not forgotten the treatment to which he had been subjected, and his evaluation of the custom of "buying children", is strikingly different from Pettersson's.

Nils Westlind relates how he "ransomed" a six year old boy called Mubiandi at Mukimbungu in 1883, and succeeded in vanquishing the boy's fear.<sup>48</sup> He had payed sixty shillings for the boy and estimated that his annual up-keep would cost fifty shillings a year, if a Swedish congregation were prepared to take on this responsibility. "After I had received the boy, I immediately cut his hair and washed him, which is the first thing one must do. For a few seconds he was frightened of me, but I took him in my arms and began to speak kindly to him, and I immediately won his confidence, to such an extent that he started to smile and told me his name. Although I have only had him a couple of days, he is now rather open and can very easily repeat every word that is said for him".<sup>49</sup> This was the pioneer's routine at the beginning of the 1880's. They "bought children", washed and clothed them, and immediately began to teach them the ABC. These children were the first pupils.

The Swedish missionaries followed the custom of "buying children" during the 1880's and 1890's until it ceased in 1899, when they were forbidden to "buy children" with the mission's money.<sup>50</sup> It became easier to recruit pupils for the schools during the 1890's, and it was no longer necessary to "buy children", for this reason. The system had played its part to the full, and it had been experienced by some as an ethical problem. In a commentary to the decision to prohibit the custom in 1899, the missionary S. A. Flodén claimed, however, that if the mission was not going to pay, then the individual must do so, as occasionally one must ransom children in order to help them.<sup>51</sup> A girl, was to be sold to someone a long way away, and forced to leave her home and friends. In order that she might remain in her home district, Flodén bought her, and she made new friends with the other girls at the mission station.

In one or two instances, the missionaries "ransomed" children who were ill or in great distress, and in some cases children were given to the mission during famines. From Mukimbungu in 1892, it was related that the mission received a boy, as he was so ill that the child's parents thought he would die.<sup>52</sup> Jöns Larsson 1896, relates from Diadia, that during a famine in the region, the missionaries ransomed fatally ill children from parents, who had given up hope and left the children without care.<sup>53</sup> In these cases the missionaries ransomed the children so that their lives might be saved. At that time the Congo community did not have the resources



to help all the sick children in times of distress. The missionaries did not ransom the children in order to recruit pupils, but to save their lives; thus they did not, in these cases, ransom children according to their talents. Examples of "bought" or "ransomed" adults can not be traced in the Swedish documents.

The missionaries, particularly the men united in their person various, but similar roles towards the Congolese, with which they had the closest contact. He was "father", employer, teacher and maybe even owner. There is no information in the source material on how the Congolese experienced this relationship, but it would appear as if the Congolese accepted their roles as pupil, child, employee. The system was naturally patriarchal, but it seems to have functioned in a spirit of friendliness and confidence, at least during the 1880's and 1890's. This was the era when the evangelists were to a great extent recruited from the groups of "ransomed" children, who were subsequently, more or less, owned by the mission. The Congolese did not oppose the system until the twentieth century.

On certain occasions this authoritative system was relaxed a little, and this occurred particularly at the administration of baptism and Christmas celebrations. The Swedish mission had the custom of extending the newly baptized "brodershanden", "the fraternal hand", a parallel to the "fraternal kiss". Baptism caused offence among the Congolese, and on this point the attitude had changed radically since the time of the Capuchin mission. The actual baptismal rite is the centre of the encounter between religions during the 1880's and 1890's.<sup>54</sup> From Kibunzi in 1889, K. J. Pettersson relates what happened when Neياما Luzanu was baptized: ". . . the boy was escorted into the water and baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. After the immersion, further songs were sung, and some praised and thanked the Lord, after which the fraternal hand was extended to the newly baptized, who had taken the name Josua".<sup>55</sup> Later that evening the little group celebrated Holy Communion.

The missionaries of that era, neither analysed nor commented on the custom of giving the newly baptized a new name, and neither did they explain the significance of the "fraternal hand". The practice of the giving of names was on a line with the old Catholic praxis, and at the close of the nineteenth century, it does not seem to have presented any difficulties for the Congolese. Evidently all the Christians shook hands with the newly baptized, and welcomed him into the congregation. It was not a question of collective conversion, but one by one, the Congolese were baptized, and the congregation slowly developed. The fraternal hand, can

be seen as a symbol for fellowship, which is without boundary within the Christian Church: any other interpretation of the custom is difficult.<sup>56</sup>

The Swedish Christmas celebrations in the Congo reveal certain traits, which appear to have been a conscious attempt to relax the authoritative state of affairs. Christmas was celebrated at the mission station, in, more or less, the same way as in Sweden with festivities and extra arrangements. The missionaries invited the pupils, employees and members of the congregation to a Christmas meal, where food was in abundance, and there was Bible reading, song and Christmas presents.<sup>57</sup> The school hall or the church was decorated, the Christmas candles were lit and the guests sat down to dinner. The principal characteristic of the entire Christmas party, was that the white and black people exchanged roles, and even the women were allowed to sit down to dinner with their husbands. K. E. Laman emphasizes the exchange of roles, in a description from Christmas at Kibunzi in 1892. "We sit down to dinner, but not we white people, as we are now their servants . . . we say grace and begin to eat".<sup>58</sup>

It is important to note this, as outside missionary circles there is no example of the white people exchanging roles, for even one day, and waiting upon the black people.<sup>59</sup> The Christmas celebrations at the mission stations were always described as festivals of rejoicing, for both the Swedes and the Congolese.

The personal relations between the Swedes and Congolese were to a great extent characterized by a benevolent paternalism, and there are only one or two examples of genuine friendship. A Congolese who evidently won the missionaries confidence, and even seems to have practised pastoral care among them, was the carpenter, Anania Makaka, at Mukimbungu.<sup>60</sup> He had learned his trade at Mukimbungu, and built his own house and furniture, and invited the missionaries to his home. It was, at that time, uncommon for a Congolese to invite missionaries to his home, and when this occurred, it was due to good personal relations between the host and his guests.

Only a few of the Congo travellers reflected upon the relationship between the Congolese and the European. The missionary Ivar Johansson, claimed that in theory, one can say that we are brothers, but it is difficult to put this view into practice. "I notice all the more, that one must assume an authoritative expression, if one is to win the respect of these people. It is strange that they understand so little of love."<sup>61</sup> Johansson was foreman at the mission station and had tried to lead the work on a fraternal basis, but had found it difficult. He had been in the Congo

only two months when he said this, and later he tried again to apply fraternal methods.

Lieutenant Håkansson made some reflections on the problem of racial relationships, in his book in 1888.<sup>62</sup> He claimed that both parties had something to give each other, but that the relation still became one-sided, as there was an obstacle which separated white from black, he said. "However, the philosopher soon notices that the more he becomes acquainted with the negro, he finds that he is not a human being in the same way as we are. To a certain point we come close to one another, but then no further: a wall is erected between him and us. It is not easy to describe this 'something' which separates us. You can look in, and look down into the white mankind, as into a clear water-source, you can see the bottom; the black mankind lie their like a source of ink, you see nothing, you do not even know if there is a bottom to the source. You stand perplexed and at a loss before this obscurity, where all fast points disappear in indefiniteness, where all contours dissolve in the mist."<sup>63</sup> Having noted that this difference is to be found between black and white, Lieutenant Håkansson continues his analysis of the two following phases of personal relationships. If one finds the black man's door closed, one can stop knocking on the door. Out of pride one can, in anger, turn away and degrade the black man. It is at this stage that the majority of white people stop, claims Håkansson, but there is a further stage, when the white judges the black man after his own conditions and adjusts his views and claims to these. At this stage, the white man can experience relations between white and black, as harmonious and personal, but not many Europeans come this far, according to the Swedish Lieutenant. Many other Swedes formulate thoughts which are similar to these, but not so meditated, and none have interpreted their feelings so concisely as Lieutenant Håkansson, whose opinion was quite common at that time.

## Chapter 8. Society and Social Institutions

In the preceding chapter our discussion concerned the individual within culture confrontation, and in this chapter we will direct our attention to society's customs and practices. Many of the Congolese customs and practices and structures of society, were judged by the Swedes to be problematical. This was above all true of the so-called cruel customs, such as the poison trial, executions, mutilations, slavery and even polygyny. The discussion also concerned the manner of dressing, drinking habits, dance, drums and adornments. The attitudes of the Swedes to these social institutions will be analysed, and in connexion with the discussion of nganga, ndoki and nkissi, Congolese points of view will also be observed. Further, the missionary policy in theory and in practice will be dealt with, in which theological motives and ideas play a certain part. We shall very briefly mention what such new institutions as schools, dispensaries, books and machines meant to society. On this point we only need to recall, how profound the changes were, which affected the society at all levels. Finally, a certain degree of interest will be shown to the Congolese view of *mundele*, a crucial problem in culture confrontation.

### The use of violence

Europe conquered Africa with violence during the nineteenth century, and naturally the Congo was not spared from this. All the Swedes in the Lower Congo, during the 1880's and 1890's in different ways, came into touch with Leopold's violent regime, and each, according to their professions, took their respective positions to the use of violence. In their professional capacity, the officers were forced to use violence against the Congolese, and the same applied to the sea-captains. The missionaries had other tasks, and in principal they repudiated the use of violence, even if one or two of them occasionally "used the cane" for disciplinary purposes. The violence exercised against the population in the whole of the Lower Congo, consisted partly of the conscription of porters, labour and soldiers, and partly of pillaging, sacking and executions. In common parlance, Bula Matadi was the designation for all State officials and the terror for them was general, and just as pronounced, as it had been for white people during the hey-day of the slave-trade.

Violence towards the Congolese in the Lower Congo hardly constituted an ethical problem worthy of discussion for the Swedes, as the different professional categories to a great extent, followed their fixed patterns. Without simplifying the situation too much, one could say that the officers used violence, while the missionaries did not. This judgement, naturally, requires further explanation, and some typical phenomena will be studied, at which particular attention will be paid to the Congolese reaction to European activity. The two following episodes throw light upon the general attitude among Swedish officers and missionaries, and both are fairly illustrative of their respective professions.

In his book from 1901, Captain Gustaf Stenfelt renders an incident in the Congo concerning an execution which Lieutenant Juhlin-Dannfelt had to perform.<sup>1</sup> The Law Courts in Boma had sentenced a post robber to death, and the execution was to take place in the morning, before breakfast. Dannfelt gave the order to fire, and the victim was hit by a number of bullets, but did not die. "Quick as lightning, Dannfelt seized his rifle, which was on the veranda. His steady bullets instantaneously put an end to the wretche's suffering. Stony and serious, without a tremble in his voice, Dannfelt then said: 'Messieurs, allons déjeuner'."<sup>2</sup> Stenfelt certainly did not imply that Dannfelt was cruel. On the contrary, he had performed his professional duty.

In his diary from 1898, the missionary Ivar Johansson relates how he once caned the Congolese. "I have been forced to be more severe than I wished. I have had to cane even grown men. Had to! God knows. Perhaps I am too irascible. Oh God, give me the true wisdom."<sup>3</sup> The examples are not chosen to demonstrate the differences between Darnnfelt and Johansson on the question of choice of method, or attitude to violence, but in order to give a glimpse of the not too uncommon professional situations.

Stanley's violent methods on his 999 days' journey were criticized by many, and in the beginning he made no secret of his methods, and the difference between him and Livingstone appeared distinctly. In his diary, on 17 July 1877, Stanley summed up the struggle he had conducted. "We have attacked and destroyed 28 large towns, three or four score villages, fought 32 battles on land and water . . . We obtained as booty in wars of \$ 50,000 worth of ivory, 133 tusks and pieces of ivory . . ."<sup>4</sup> The Swedish professor, G. von Düben in 1878 met the criticism of Stanley and his thirty-two battles, and claimed that the people Stanley encountered were so hostile, that even Livingstone would have been forced to resort to violence in order to travel through their country.<sup>5</sup> But in Stanley, Africa

had its Bismarck, "who with iron and blood fought his way to a new land".<sup>6</sup>

The first missionaries in the Congo, Nils Westlind and K. J. Pettersson, were from the start, opposed to all forms of violence. On their journey out to the Congo, they both reacted against the violence they witnessed against the Africans.<sup>7</sup> In a letter from Mukimbungu of 19 September 1882, Nils Westlind established that Stanley's path to Stanley Pool was unusable for mission, as it is bloodstained, and those who propagate the Gospel, can not use violence.<sup>8</sup> Thereby, Westlind joined with LIM principles, and referred to a biblical motivation.<sup>9</sup> In the same way, K. J. Pettersson repudiated violent methods in the first letter he wrote from the Congo in 1882, to the paper *Missionsförbundet*: "Stanley's men have now gone so far, that they paint their way with blood, nearly every time they are obliged to go up, or down the country. We cannot have anything to do with this. A servant of the Lord, who has come here to propagate peace to the peaceless, should never hurry, but as the king of peace, make his way slowly".<sup>10</sup> In his last letter for the year 1882, Petterson relates how Stanley's men "shot the natives and burned villages and towns" and pillaged.<sup>11</sup>

The Swedish Mission Board, in Stockholm was aware of the problem, which the missionaries had brought to the fore, and pastor E. J. Ekman had received LIM's assurance, that King Leopold, during a conversation with the LIM's secretary, had explained that he had urged Stanley to refrain from all cruelty and bloodshed, and to make his way by the use of peaceful means only.<sup>12</sup> Neither Pastor Ekman in Sweden, nor Westlind and Pettersson in the Congo claimed that H. M. Stanley himself, encouraged violence, but they believed his men to have pillaged and burned, probably against Stanley's will. During the 1880's and 1890's, about twenty letters from missionaries were published, which rendered Bula Matadis atrocities in the Lower Congo for the Swedish readers.

The disciplinary methods used by both State officials and business agents against the individual Congolese, consisted of corporal punishment, and among the most frequently used flogging instruments were the chicotte, the palmatorion and thumbscrews. No example of a Swede using the so-called thumbscrew has been found in the source material, and it was probably not a usual method in the Congo.<sup>13</sup> Neither does the palmatorion appear to have been in common use among Swedish officers.<sup>14</sup> On the coast the palmatorion was used, but seldom further inland. The palmatorion is a little wooden club, in which small holes have been bored. With this instrument, the victim's palm is beaten and the palmatorion bleeds

the skin white. Captain Stenfelt, in his book *Kongominnen*, 1889, relates how the kitchen personnel at a trading-station could be punished.<sup>15</sup> A boy had not done the washing-up properly and in front of the guests, he was punished with the palmatorion. At the first stroke, the boy managed to control himself, but after four or five strokes, the pain got the better of him and he screamed for all he was worth. This maltreatment was stopped at the request of the guests, who did not wish to see more. In 1887, Chavanne relates, that this form of punishment was part of the daily routine at the trading-station, where the boys received between twenty and a hundred strokes in the morning and were then forced to work for the whole day, with bloody and swollen hands. This was one of the more lenient forms of punishment.

The most usual and severe form of punishment, was flogging with the *chicotte*. In 1887, Chavanne states that the *chicotte* should have been forbidden, but such a ban can not be traced in praxis. The *chicotte*, or hippopotamus whip, was made from raw hippopotamus skin, twisted like a screw, with razor sharp edges. After only a couple of strokes of the *chicotte* on naked skin, blood begins to seep from the wound. Twenty-five strokes can leave a permanent mark, and between twenty-five to thirty strokes, can lead to unconsciousness. One hundred strokes can imply death, or both physical and psysical invalidity for life. This information was quoted by Jenssen-Tusch and not by a doctor, who had investigated the matter, and it is possible that the information that twenty-five to thirty strokes led to unconsciousness, is somewhat exaggerated.<sup>16</sup> Slade has dealt with the use of the *chicotte* in the Catholic so-called *chrétientés*, where it was used as a disciplinary measure.<sup>17</sup> There is no evidence of the use of the *chicotte* among Swedish missionaries.

All the Scandinavian lieutenants, who were employed by the Congo Independent State, appear to have used the *chicotte*. The Danish District Sub-Commissioner, A. Schou relates in 1894, that he had punished so-called rebellious tribes in the Upper Congo: "One after the other they were brought forward and received their regular fifty strokes of the *chicotte*".<sup>18</sup> Another Dane in his diary on 24 December 1891, noted a punishment which comprised fifty strokes of the *chicotte* and twenty-five strokes of the palmatorion.<sup>19</sup> In the Congo, there was apparently no uniform praxis concerning the number of strokes, but the Europeans levied the punishment according to their own judgement. The Swedish officers, during the 1880's levied between twenty and one hundred strokes. In 1889, Gustaf Stenfelt renders his visual impression of Count Christer Posse in the Congo, and the *chicotte* was closely connected with this. "Old, honourable Christer.

I still see you as you stood, in your little station which was just completed. The 'chicotte' under your arm. Those blue eyes . . ."20 Lieutenant Möller in 1887, relates how he punished a Haussa in Matadi with twenty-five strokes, for stealing meat from the Congolese.<sup>21</sup>

From an experienced African traveller, Lieutenant Pagels had received the advice to make frequent use of the whip, in regard to the African, and Pagels furthers the advice: "Treat him hard . . . and if you are not strong enough, then he will finish by literally frying and eating you . . . If you must impose corporal punishment upon a savage, do it without letting a muscle in your face betray your feelings".<sup>22</sup> If one arrives in a new place, where one is to serve, the whip is essential, says Pagels, and there "you shall from the start, as a good and reliable ally, use the 'chicotte', cut out of hippopotamus skin, which at every stroke cuts bloody runes".<sup>23</sup> At the Equator station, on 28 August 1885, a thief received twenty strokes from Pagels.<sup>24</sup> Lieutenant Glimstedt, on one occasion, considered sixty strokes too few, and mentioned that one hundred were appropriate.<sup>25</sup>

Lieutenant Glerup said that he wished to avoid flogging his men, but was forced to do so in order to maintain discipline, until he learned other methods. "It always tormented me to have to flog the negroes, and experience taught me that this necessity was only an admission of failure for the white man. An experienced African traveller seldom needs to strike his people."<sup>26</sup> Glerup is not the only Swedish officer to express his doubt over violent methods. Lieutenant Wester said that he did not accept violence against the Congolese, except in emergencies, and Lieutenant Dannfelt repudiated violent methods for recruiting porters.<sup>27</sup> These officers repudiate unmotivated violence but in principal, they never repudiate violent methods. Sometimes one must use violence, they claimed, and they acted according to their professional practice on punitive expeditions etc. The only Swedish officer, who appears to have had violent character and never hesitated to use violence was Knut Svensson, who in his diary, states that his four months of duty in Bikora, Upper Congo in 1894, cost 527 Africans their lives.<sup>28</sup>

In general the officers, sea-captains and tradesmen alike, considered that violence, even if deplorable, was unavoidable. Some criticize the missionaries for not using violence. Lieutenant C. R. Håkansson writes in his book, 1888, that many claim that the missionaries are not "suitable as pioneers of civilization, due to their reluctance to shed blood".<sup>29</sup> Håkansson claimed that the missionaries worked well in their own way. Baron H. H. von Schwerin, however, concurred with the criticism of the missionaries as poor civilizers: "missionaries of all categories, are not suitable



as civilization's *pioneers* and *outposts* in Central Africa, and this is because it is contrary to their principles to shed blood, which unfortunately, all too frequently cannot be avoided".<sup>30</sup> This type of criticism affected, not least, those Swedish missionaries in the Lower Congo, who lived in the districts which were sacked and pillaged by Bula Matadi. A typical expression for the missionaries' attitude are M. Rangström's words in 1890: "They can shoot us, but they cannot kill our soul. It ascends to heavenly dwellings. *We* will kill no-one."<sup>31</sup> These words are from a sermon, and in reply to the sermon the Congolese answered "mbote, mbote" i. e. "that is good, that is good". If the missionaries rejected the use of weapons for their part, they could however acknowledge that sometimes the authorities needed to use weapons. "The power beareth not the sword in vain", it was said, with reference to the apostle Paul in Romans 13, 4.<sup>32</sup> In principle, the missionaries could allow the powers that ruled the country to use violence, but they themselves repudiated violent methods, and they did not protest against the authorities until they went to extremes.

### *Bula Matadi's Expeditions*

It was the so-called punitive expeditions which most seriously affected the Lower Congo. They developed from the transport expeditions on the caravan routes, during the 1880's. Bula Matadi's expeditions, between Matadi and Leopoldville, had been criticized for their brutality. They literally fought their way forward and stole provisions from the population along the caravan routes. At the close of the 1880's, a new type of expedition had begun to operate which was to punish those who practised the forbidden "barbaric" customs, such as the giving of poison and the burial of living victims. These expeditions did not affect entire villages, but rather the individuals, particularly banganga, of course. Nils Westlind from Mukimbungu in 1889, relates how the State "took a pagan priest, whose name was Mboma and hanged him".<sup>33</sup> This type of expedition was in operation during the entire 1890's, but it was two other types of expeditions which dominated: those whose task it was to recruit porters, workers and soldiers, and those expeditions which were to punish the villages who resisted, or defended themselves from the European regime. These two tasks were often combined in the same expedition, and it would also appear that all expeditions had followed the same pattern, as those during the 1880's to help themselves to provisions by sacking the villages through which they passed.

The Congolese reacted in two ways against the massive violence, which was exercised against entire villages and regions. The most usual reaction was that, out of terror of Bula Matadi, they abandoned their villages and moved elsewhere. This large scale migration began along the caravan routes between Boma and Leopoldville and was repeated along the railway, between Matadi and Leopoldville. The further the expeditions penetrated the country, in order to recruit porters, or punish the population, the greater were the regions which were abandoned by the Congolese and left deserted. The other reaction was active resistance, when the Congolese defended themselves against Bula Matadi. Three such defensives, which Europeans at that time called 'rebellion', will be touched upon in this chapter: the so-called Nganda—Kasi rebellions 1893, and Boma rebellion 1900.

Exactly how many porters were engaged in the portage system at different times, is impossible to say. Lieutenant Lemaire discussed the matter in *Congo Illustré* 1895, and his estimation was approximately 50,000 porters.<sup>34</sup> The State engaged about 11,000 porters, private enterprises 9,000, and the missionaries approximately 5,000. Approximately 110,000 loads were carried annually to Stanley Pool, and every load weighed approximately 35 kilos, and therefore the quantity of goods for the year 1895, can be estimated at between 3,000 and 4,000 tons. The recruiting centre for porters was Lukunga, where K. J. Pettersson was active during the 1880's. The goods which were transported down the Lower Congo were ivory, rubber and palm kernels, among other things, and up country the loads comprised food, gunpowder, rifles and alcohol.<sup>35</sup> The men of the Lower Congo were the backbone of this enormous transport apparatus.

In 1887, Chavanne relates how a combined recruiting and punitive expedition could be arranged in the proximity of a caravan route. The Swedish lieutenant, Posse, conducted an expedition to the villages Tundua and Lufundi in 1884, as both these villages were not prepared to provide porters.<sup>36</sup> Just after midnight, the expedition surrounded the sleeping villages, where none of the villagers suspected their presence. Lieutenant Posse led the attack, and seven men were killed, six were taken prisoner, but many succeeded in escaping. Ten women were taken prisoner, the huts were set alight and the villages sacked. The prisoners were taken to Vivi and then to Banana. The punishment did not produce the desired effect, and the people still offered opposition, and therefore, a new punitive expedition was sent out to the region to burn more villages to the ground. Lieutenant Pagels relates how, in 1885, he conducted a punitive

expedition from the Equator station, from which he could count as his booty, goats, palm oil, bananas, household utensils and a canoe.<sup>37</sup>

During the 1880's, there is no example of the Congolese using armed resistance against these and similar expeditions. The people only fled from their villages and plantations, which caused great uneasiness in the Lower Congo. In 1889, certain signs of uneasiness were noticed on the northern banks of the Congo river, and Henning Skarp at Diadia sent a message for help to Bula Matadi, as the mission station was threatened by the people.<sup>38</sup> A Belgian lieutenant set out for the Diadia region to restore calm, and one of Skarp's colleagues relates how "the rebels houses were burned to the ground and sacked", and on the way back from Diadia, Bula Matadi brought "groceries, goats, pigs, chickens, eight guns, cloth, fetiches etc".<sup>39</sup> Uneasiness in the Diadia region increased and the people continued to behave in a threatening manner towards the white people.<sup>40</sup> Another punitive expedition was sent to Diadia and among others they took women as prisoners. At this stage, however the missionaries intervened and forced Bula Matadi to release the women. These expeditions created a certain degree of calm, writes Skarp "but an alarming panic prevails in the villages. As although everyone has remained quiet and neutral, they have nevertheless been frightened."<sup>41</sup> The Diadia region was very densely populated and the uneasiness prevailed.<sup>42</sup>

At the beginning of the 1890's the tension increased, and in the villages it was noticeable that the Congo Independent State put great obligations on both the Congolese and the immigrant Europeans, such as missionaries and tradesmen. In 1891, when Nganda was under construction, the missionary, Jöns Larsson complained that the State put obstacles in the way of the mission.<sup>43</sup> K. J. Pettersson had the principal responsibility for the Swedish mission's practical work, and criticized the new taxes and duties more severely.<sup>44</sup> He said that he did not want to "discredit" the State, but he still wanted to say what he thought of the new taxes, which revealed that the State was not a philanthropic institution: "No, it is nothing but a matter of money, which recently has clearly been revealed. If the State was philanthropic, it would not demand money from the missionary societies."<sup>45</sup> Pettersson, however, was anxious to point out that the State was useful in many ways, and that it had been benevolent and obliging towards the mission. The only thing he questioned was its philanthropic purpose.

### *Congolese Resistance at Kasi and Nganda*

Towards the end of 1893, two Congolese resistance movements, if one wishes to refer to them by this name, developed in the vicinity of two mission stations, which belonged to Svenska Missionsförbundet. The first was active south of the Congo river, and directed its aggressions towards the Belgian, Rommel, in Kasi, just south of Mukimbungu. The second worked in the Nganda region, north of the river and started as spontaneous opposition against two Belgian State officials. Both resistance movements were paid a great deal of attention in the paper Missionsförbundet, which published running reports from the missionaries.

The missionary C. N. Börrisson from Mukimbungu wrote on 2 February, 1884, that "the horror for the white man, which until 1846 the slave-trade had created among the people, had hardly begun to yield, before Bula Matadi arrived, and from the start roused hatred through their ruthlessness. And as Bula Matadi gained more and more of a footing, these wretched people have felt their iron sceptre. I do not know, perhaps Bula Matadi has included some brutal rights in his Constitution, which enable him to traverse this difficult transport, such as forcing men to carry loads, through imprisoning their wives and children, burning their villages etc, but to repeat all this in all imaginable cases, this I cannot believe to be lawful."<sup>46</sup> With these words Börrisson fills in the background to why the people at Kasi used armed resistance against Rommel and his soldiers.<sup>47</sup>

In his capacity as State official, Rommel had settled in Kasi in the middle of 1893 and built a station, in order to procure porters for the State. He soon became known for his merciless and relentless harrings against the Congolese.<sup>48</sup> It was typical that he called his station "Baka Baka", "capture, capture" and he imprisoned the women in particular, at the same time as he attacked the men. The missionary, Strandman points out that Rommel's method of imprisoning and taking away the women from their village and home, signified for the men that they were without support, as traditionally it was the women, exclusively the women, who cultivated the ground and produced the provisions.<sup>44</sup> The men argued that they could just as well combat Bula Matadi and be shot down in battle, than stay in the village and starve to death. In the struggle against Bula Matadi, the Congolese sung their battle song:

*"We are tired of living under this tyranny.*

*We cannot endure that our women and children are taken away  
and dealt with by the white savages.*

*We shall make war against Bula Matadi.*

*We know that we shall die, but we want to die.  
We want to die.*"<sup>50</sup>

In December, 1893, the Swedish missionaries at Mukimbungu learned that Rommel had been killed and that "a rebellion" had broken out. The leader for the Congolese was the chief Nzansu, who was called by the missionaries, the Congo's Engelbrekt, or Gustav Wasa, famous liberation leaders in Sweden's history. Rommel had cunningly been taken by surprise and killed; the entire station had been burned to the ground. After this Nzansu's men burned and pillaged the State posts Nkenge and Kwilu, while they spared the mission station, Mukimbungu. In the midst of the riots, the chief Nzansu had sent a message to the missionaries that they had nothing to fear, as they would come to no harm. We missionaries have "always shown that we were the black people's friends", wrote K. T. Andersson at Mukimbungu, who comments on Nzansu's attitude by saying, "but to the State's men, he has sworn death".<sup>53</sup> The missionaries Börrisson and Andersson commended Nzansu's high battle ethics, as his men had shown consideration and presence of mind during the battles, and even spontaneously given the missionaries some loads which they had found on a caravan route.

Both Nzansu's people and the missionaries, were quite aware in which way Bula Matadi would punish the Kasi people, and the punitive expeditions were quick to react. But it showed itself that Nzansu and his people resisted powerfully during the whole of 1894.<sup>52</sup> The following year several punitive expeditions were sent to the Kasi region and the people moved away and abandoned their villages for good.<sup>53</sup> Other villages had been abandoned, after being burned and pillaged by Bula Matadi, and only a minor part of the population was left.<sup>54</sup> As late as 1899, the missionary Börrisson writes that the State was not entirely successful in suppressing the Kasi leaders.<sup>55</sup>

The riots in Nganda began in a similar way at the same time as in Kasi. Two Belgian officers, Planck and Baltus had begun to build a little station, one-and-a-half hour's journey from the mission station Nganda, and had caused the people's displeasure, wrote the missionary K. F. Andrae on 30 November 1893.<sup>56</sup> Under the leadership of Mbonza, the people attacked Bula Matadi on 16 November 1893, and one of the officers was killed. K. J. Pettersson visited Nganda at the beginning of 1894 and put the blame for the riots entirely on the State's men, while J. A. Norén in his annual report from Nganda in 1893, hardly touched upon the reason for the riots. Norén in a couple of lines mentions "the war between the State and the rebels."<sup>57</sup> When S. A. Flodén discusses the riots at Nganda in a

letter to *Missionsförbundet*, he formulates strong criticism of many of the State's officers. He speaks of the state of alarm among the people and says the reason to be clear enough.<sup>58</sup>

"Some of the officers and their soldiers, have been too hard in the villages, and in a satanic way have stolen and pillaged, imprisoned men and women, the former which they will sell, and the latter with which to amuse themselves."<sup>59</sup> These words of Flodén reflect the general attitude among the Swedish missionaries. Their sympathies were with the Congolese, and they criticized Bula Matadi for brutal methods. Despite the many open accounts and critical points of view expressed by the missionaries in *Missionsförbundet*, these punitive expeditions, however, do not appear to have caused any debate in Sweden. To burn and pillage villages had evidently ceased to be news to which attention was paid, during the middle of the 1890's.<sup>60</sup>

The consequences for the people in the Nganda region was poverty and famine, as the villages plantations had been sacked by the State's men. This in its turn created profound suspicion of all white people for several years, and not before the people recognized the white people as missionaries, could the latter feel secure when visiting villages. This applied to the entire region north of the river, where the Swedish mission was active in Diadia, Nganda, Kinkenge. In 1900, Kinkenge received a visit from the so-called Boma mutineers, who had escaped from Boma and were on their way home to Tanganyika, from where they had been recruited as soldiers and stationed at Boma.<sup>61</sup> The soldiers had been badly treated by the white people at the fort Shinkakassa, quite close to Boma and said that they had been detained in service longer than the prescribed seven years. The mutineers had aimed the fort's cannons at the town and its harbour, where a vessel was lying at anchor, which they then subjected to a bombardment. The mutiny was suppressed after a couple of days and quite a number of the mutineers managed to escape. They took the northern route along the river, which had brought them to Kinkenge, where they arrived on 2 May. The missionary W. Walldén and the villagers received them, and gave them food and medicine, and despite the fact that he said himself to understand that their accusations against the State were justified, he called them rebels and robbers. Walldén wrote in *Missionsförbundet*: "With great secrecy, we wrote two reports and sent couriers in two directions . . . who procured guides for the next phase in their journey".<sup>62</sup> At the same time the couriers had gone to the military post at Luozi, from where a troop of one-hundred-and-fifty men and

nine officers were sent to Nganda. From there they would attack the "rebels".

Walldén said, that he was close to tears, when he realized that his guides had directed the "rebels" straight into the hands of the State's men. He imagined that he would receive reproach from some readers, that it was a pity to send them straight to their death, as Walldén had actually done, but Walldén said that it was his conscience which made him act as he had done, as otherwise he would have collaborated with the "robbers". The State troops found the refugees at the appointed place and at dawn they attacked. Five were killed and many wounded. Others fled to the river and drowned, but others managed to escape to security on the French side. Four wounded refugees managed to return to the mission station, and surrendered their rifles and received food and medical treatment. Walldén secured information from them of the whereabouts of the other refugees, which he passed on to Bula Matadi in the region. Accordingly, he continued to play two roles, one as a generous host at the station, and one as Bula Matadi's informer.

Only one of the four other missionaries who wrote articles in the same edition of *Missionsförbundet*, expressed some degree of understanding for the refugees.<sup>63</sup> This was W. Sjöholm, who had met the missionary Laman in Londe; the latter had been in Boma when the mutiny broke out and was well aware of the treatment to which the mutineers had been subjected, during the many years they had been soldiers. The others used words, such as robber, band of robbers, malefactor, rebels, to describe the refugees from Boma, and showed no sympathy for them. C. N. Börrisson defended the State troop attack on the refugees against the criticism which the readers might direct towards the State: "It was cruel of the State, you say. Yes, but they had also shot at the capital and at steamers, with cannons; killed and wounded a couple of white men and destroyed the fortress, to the sum of 2,000,000 francs".<sup>64</sup> In the same letter, however, he adds that the villages were sacked and pillaged, just as much by the troops who pursued the refugees, as by the refugees themselves. The pursuing troops consisted of Senegalese, who confessed themselves to be Muslims, added the missionary.

In this case, the missionaries showed that their sympathies were with Bula Matadi, while in connexion with the riots in Kasi and Nganda 1893—1894, they sympathized with the Congolese. The conclusion that can be drawn from the situation is that, in principal, they were guided by the opinion that "the power beareth not the sword in vain", when it was a question of protecting the people from uneasiness. In regard to Kasi and

Nganda, they considered that "the power", i. e. Bula Matadi, caused alarm and insecurity among the people, but it was the refugees "the Boma mutineers" who created uneasiness in 1900. Accordingly, in the latter case the bible quotation could still be applied.

### *Depopulation in the Lower Congo*

A result of Bula Matadi's violent regime was extensive migration, and large areas were depopulated. The decrease in the population was not only caused by punitive expeditions, but also by epidemics of smallpox and sleeping sickness. When the railway was planned, there was thorough discussion whether the population of the Lower Congo was adequate for both the portage system, which constantly demanded more people, and the railway construction.<sup>65</sup> All the investigations pointed to the fact that the population was sufficient, and it was particularly noted that the regions south of the river were densely populated, and this was where the railway was to be constructed. There was no doubt among those responsible for the construction of the railway, that the population of the Lower Congo would suffice. When the railway was completed, it was said that the population had not sufficed for both these efforts.<sup>66</sup>

Depopulation in the Lower Congo began during the 1880's, when the first villagers moved away from the vicinity of the caravan routes. In the Swedish press no attention was paid to this situation until 1887, after Stanley's so-called Emin Pasha relief expedition had marched through the region, when Nya Dagligt Allehanda published a letter from Juhlin—Dannfelt, who had then been in the Congo for four years and could compare the present situation with previous years.<sup>67</sup> "There remain comparatively few of those numerous villages, which were to be found earlier along the caravan routes. The State soldiers, Zanzibaris, Haussa and Bangala have devastated the country, and what was possibly left, has been stolen by Stanley's troops, when they passed through last spring. The natives have moved to the interior, to still unexplored regions, and have taken with them what was left of their homes, after they had been burned and their plantations ruined. All that remains are the caracasses, or skeletons of porters or soldiers, who fell ill during the march and without help were left to die. All this gives a deplorable impression."<sup>68</sup> Even the missionary C. J. Nilsson was made to feel the suspicion, which Stanley's caravans had created towards the white people, when he descended the caravan route shortly after Stanley's expedition.<sup>69</sup> For some of the people, who had



moved from their villages, the mission stations became a place of refuge into which they moved and built new villages in the vicinity of the stations. Mina Svensson from Mukimbungu relates in 1889, that people had moved to the mission station with their property, in order to escape Bula Matadi's raids.<sup>70</sup> The mission stations were spared by Bula Matadi, just as both the Kasi and Nganda riots showed that the Congolese acted in the same manner, when defending themselves from Bula Matadi. The number of people who moved into the mission stations never took on great proportions, as in general the people moved to remote regions where they could support themselves.

An exception to this was Diadia mission station, from where in 1898, the missionary Josef Lindén reported that the village had become several times larger, as no less than five surrounding villages had moved and built new homes in the vicinity of the mission station.<sup>71</sup> The reason for this migration was horror of Bula Matadi. "They want to move here to profit from the mission's protection, as they know that the State's men do not practise conscription of porters in the vicinity of our stations", wrote Lindén.<sup>72</sup> Ivar Johansson at Kinkenge confirms Lindén's information of the Congolese view of the mission station, as protection from Bula Matadi.<sup>73</sup> The Swedish lieutenant, Glimstedt had arrived in Kinkenge in December 1897, in order to recruit five hundred porters who were to carry a boat from Manyanga to Leopoldville, and he avoided using the mission station, but the surrounding villages were not spared. In February 1898, Ivar Johansson commented, with great bitterness, in his diary, on the consequences of the recruiting of porters. "Now there is *not one* village to be found on the route to Diadia. All have fled in terror of B. M. One can surley say that such a government eats up its people. Information has also been received that many of the porters who were forced to go to Mpumbu to carry, are now dead and buried".<sup>74</sup>

The missionary W. Sjöholm made an extensive journey in the Lower Congo in 1896, during which he visited Kimpesse, among other places, and a village called Kongo, which was said to be famous from the time of the Catholic mission, during the sixteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The extensive regions through which he travelled, caused him surprise, as they were so sparsely populated. Sjöholm considered that some had been wasted by disease, as even villages which had had no direct contact with the white people had been obliterated. "Otherwise it is common parlance that where the white man settles, the people die."<sup>76</sup> Where the railway was being constructed, there were no people at all. It was literally a deserted country, said Sjöholm, who estimated that the death-rate was so high among those who

worked on the railway, that "never more than one third, returned with their lives".<sup>77</sup> Sjöholm attributed the high death-rate to the inhumane treatment to which the people were subjected, by their white masters. So deserted was the region that Sjöholm expressed surprise at the sight of the town Kongo: "It was very peculiar to see a village, which had been spared from the white men's pillaging expeditions. The State had, with regard to the village's past history, forbidden that it be pillaged."<sup>78</sup> Neither this article in 'Missionsförbundet', nor the other reports of depopulation in the Lower Congo, attracted much attention. Neither in 1896 was the reaction very strong, when several letters from missionaries reported how entire villages had been abandoned and left deserted.<sup>79</sup>

It is certain that Gustav Palmer expressed an opinion which was embraced by the majority of the Swedish missionaries, when he formulated his view of the consequences of the portage system for the people of the Lower Congo. He says that it gnaws like cancer. "These poor people die, as if they had been sentenced to extermination and no more to exist as a nation. The reasons could surely be many. The portage system gnaws like cancer and breaks multitudes of the country's strong men and brings them prematurely to the grave."<sup>80</sup> From a caravan route lying south of the river, the missionary J. E. Lundahl summarized the situation at the close of the century. "Sometimes it feels as if we wander through an enormous cemetery, when we see heaps of skeletons. These are the skeletons of porters, who during the extensive transport on behalf of the State, have fallen ill and been left to die in the wilderness."<sup>81</sup> The situation along the caravan routes was evidently the same in 1899 as in 1887, when Juhlin—Dannfelt reported finding skeletons.

The changes which took place in the Lower Congo during the 1880's and 1890's were of such a character, that they profoundly interfered with the everyday life of the entire population. The change was caused by the white people, and the methods which were used both in the portage system, and the railway construction were severe, not to say brutal. The profound terror which the Congolese experienced for Bula Matadi, appears to have been that feeling which dominated the inhabitants of the Lower Congo, at the close of the nineteenth century. It is against this background, that one must see the Congolese question of who *mundele* really was. The missionary Ivar Johansson formulated one of the most pertinent questions in culture confrontation, when he said that a government such as Bula Matadi, can be said "to eat" its people. In using the term "to eat" he consciously or unconsciously, used an expression which the Congolese have always regarded as *ndoki* terminology. This word was also turned against

Mvemba Nzinga during the fifteenth century, that he "ate" his people. because he was too close to the Portuguese, and ever since the Congolese suspected the white people, officers, businessmen and missionaries alike, for "eating" people. The white man's violence had always been a problem for the Congolese philosophy.

## Banganga's central and vulnerable position in society

The social institution which proved to be the most vital and long-lived was banganga and their functions within society. During the centuries surveyed in this thesis, banganga have constantly been in the centre, together with the phenomena with which they were associated, namely nkissi, ndoki and the nkassa-trial; that is to say, the role of doctor, priest and judge. The royal power has alternated, and the chiefs' power has changed, but banganga's central position has remained constant. In the Swedish sources from the 1880's and 1890's, banganga played a principal role for authors, officers and missionaries alike. Attention was also paid to chiefs and "kings", but not to the same extent as to banganga.

According to the way of thinking at this time in the Congo, many observers asked themselves if the ritual life, which was led by banganga, could be called religion or not. The BMS missionary, Holman Bently, was of course familiar with banganga's role, and claimed in his book, *Life on the Congo*, 1893, that "there is nothing, that can be said to take the place of religion throughout the whole region of the Congo".<sup>82</sup> Jenssen—Tusch formulated his thoughts in a similar way in 1905, but at the same time recognized nganga's central position.<sup>83</sup> Lieutenant Möller claimed that Congolese religious conceptions were very vague, while on the other hand, everything was centred round so-called sorcery and evil powers, from which only the "fetiche man" and his "fetiches" could give protection.<sup>84</sup> Even K. E. Laman maintained as late as 1907, that the Congolese lacked religion, but in 1920 he had changed his opinion, and in 1923 strongly emphasized that the people were genuinely religious.<sup>85</sup> The doubt expressed by these authors can depend on two things, partly that they made a difference between "religion" and "sorcery", and partly that the Congo culture had not isolated, to a particular sector, what is usually referred to as religion: but that rites and drama belonged to all sectors within society. Accordingly, it was difficult for strangers in the Congo, to understand this totality, which was so different from the European society, where religion constituted a minor sector within cultural life.

Even those Swedes in Europe, who studied the Congo, could consider that the people lacked religion. An example of this is Professor G. von Düben in his book in 1878, and Professor K. Ahlenius in his lectures in geography and ethnology at Uppsala University, at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>85</sup> An article in *Missionsförbundet* in 1883, which gives a general survey of the whole of Africa, expresses what many thought of the African society, before accurate information had been received from friends, who had gone out to Africa. The quotation which is rendered here, may serve as a Swedish cliché on Africa: "With few exceptions, the tribes have come so far in their development, that they have formed particular societies. But nearly all of them are at continual war with each other, and one can hardly note any progress during the last two thousand years, in this unfortunate part of the world. The curse of Ham weighed heavy upon Africa.

Some tribes appear to lack nearly all form of religious conception and all developed and finer feelings; and those who have formed some kind of religion, worship all varieties of man-made objects as gods. At their services, human sacrifice is not uncommon and gross sorcery prevails."<sup>87</sup> The same thoughts were expressed, and almost as crudely, by the mission director of SMF E. J. Ekman, in 1890, in his extensive work, *Illustrerad Missionshistoria*, in which is mentioned, among other things, the "fetiché priest's" great power and its abuse.<sup>88</sup> One notices that the old conception of the Africans as Ham's cursed sons was still topical in Swedish missionary circles during the 1880's. To what extent this idea played a role, is difficult to ascertain, but it is so frankly mentioned in our quotation, and has such a central position in the general line of thought, that the idea of Ham's sons as cursed by God ought to have been taken seriously.<sup>89</sup>

As in so many other cases, Nils Westlind in a series of articles in *Missionsförbundet*, 1886, was the first to seriously study banganga's function within society, but three years previously K. J. Pettersson had said that one could anticipate banganga as the mission's opponents, almost as dangerous as "white nganga", with which Pettersson probably means Bula Mata-di.<sup>90</sup> He considered that banganga had fabricated a story about the white people, in order to frighten their own people, and Pettersson says, that the people, believe that we white people are here on behalf of "the Devil, to buy dead bodies, which we then send to Europe, where, as slaves, they must make cloth etc. They say that at night, the Devil goes out and collects the dead, which he sells to the white man".<sup>91</sup> Pettersson claimed

that it was banganga who had invented such stories, and in the future they could cause many difficulties for the mission.

In 1883, Nils Westlind rendered an interesting observation from Mukimbungu, concerning the people who had lost respect for banganga and nkissi. "It appears as if the people become worse, when they loose confidence in their gods. Here, there are three or four (people) who have totally abandoned their idols, and now fear nothing and do as they please."<sup>92</sup> Westlind does not make any closer analysis of the way in which social order was connected with nkissi, but it is the first time that a Swede notes that nkissi functioned as law, in a judicial system. A year later, Nils Westlind said that he had met resistance from banganga, just as had been anticipated by Pettersson.<sup>93</sup>

At about the same time as Westlind published his series of articles about the Lower Congo's culture, Lieutenant Pagels published an article entitled *Some Words on Customs and Practice Among the Savages in the Upper Congo*, and Lieutenant Arvid Wester an article entitled *The Geography and People in the Heart of Central Africa*; both articles were printed in *Ymer* in 1886. Lieutenant Peter Möller made a comprehensive description of the Lower Congo's culture in the book *Tre år i Kongo*, and in all these analyses of the Congo's culture, nganga, the so-called fetiche man plays the central role. The two longest of Westlind's four articles in 1886 are devoted to the significance of "the fetiche man" for the Congolese society.<sup>94</sup> At the beginning Westlind defined the missionaries' relation to banganga, in the following unequivocal terms: "The fetiche men, or idolator priests, are the mission's most dangerous enemies."<sup>95</sup> Any of the Capuchin missionaries, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, could have passed the same judgement. Banganga's ministry is not hereditary, says the Swedish missionary, but at an early stage, boys are chosen to be "fetiche men", as long as they have the "required qualities", namely "the cunning to deceive and the facility to lie".<sup>1</sup> It is in the so-called Nkimba-school where they are trained for their future profession. Here elimination takes place, so that only the most diligent finally become "idolator priests".

When a child is chosen to become nganga, a rite is performed, to which attention must be paid in our context, as with all probability, it can be seen as an example of how the Congo cult had adopted elements from the old Christian mission, and incorporated them into their own cult. The rite concerned, is reminiscent of the Catholic baptism. Westlind writes: "In order to be accepted (at the Nkimba school), the child must be sprinkled with water and circumcised. The sprinkling of water takes place a few days after the birth. This is administered by an idolator priest, who empties

a pitcher of water over the child, gives it a name, blows and spits on it which represents that he blesses the child, and ensures that it will not profane anything sacred, i. e. that it will always show obedience to the idolator priest."<sup>2</sup> The giving of names and the blessing, in connexion with infant baptism has here, quite evidently, amounted to an initiation ceremony, a rite de passage, within the traditional sphere over which banganga were masters. After the boy has been educated at the Nkimba school, a new name-giving ceremony takes place and the boy, or the young man, receives a new name, and he is not allowed to remember his old name. After this initiatory rite, some apprentices are chosen, who are to follow the "fetiche priest" in all that he does, and then on his death, take over the ministry.

In the second article which explained nganga's function within society, Westlind takes up the question of nganga's struggle against ndoki, how he makes his nkissi and how he conducts the nkassa trials.<sup>3</sup> Nkissi was said to protect one from all evil, but every nkissi had its particular task, which is why a number of nkissi were needed, in order that a person could protect himself from different dangers. Westlind claims, that banganga constructed this system for their own benefit, as banganga both made and sold nkissi, and naturally they wanted to assure themselves of the greatest possible market.

In regard to the conception of ndoki. Westlind claims that nobody admits to being ndoki, or "sorcerer", "witch", but that it is banganga's invention: "They allege, that all suffering and even death ultimately stems from the Devil, and in order that he can achieve evil, he makes use of people, whom they call sorcerers or witches".<sup>4</sup> The Congolese word which lies behind "the Devil" is difficult to ascertain, but behind "sorcerer" or "witch" lie, in this case the word ndoki. Those who are suspected of being ndoki must have their innocence, or guilt tried, through the eating of poison, which is the notorious nkassa trial. In Westlind's description, the ndoki belief and nkassa trial are closely connected, and the account is devoted much space. "When the accused have taken the poison, they must begin to dance, and shall continue to do so for twenty-four hours. During the dance, they are not allowed to eat or drink anything, or show any signs of fatigue, or let any natural needs manifest themselves. Those who fall short of any of these requirements are considered guilty and can await their death."<sup>5</sup>

The relation continues with an account of the methods of execution which face the guilty, and it is still nganga who takes the initiative. "The executions can occur in many ways. Some are drowned in the rivers,

another can have his head cut off. Some are hanged, others burned at the stake. Many are shot and others buried alive."<sup>6</sup> The method which Westlind evidently considers the most unfamiliar in Sweden, and thereby typically Congolese, is that they bury their victims alive. At the market place a deep pit is dug, in which the victim is placed. The pit is filled in, so that only the head is above the ground, and then a pole is driven straight through the body. He does not comment on other methods, and one asks oneself which of these methods had been borrowed from Europe. To shoot, burn at the stake, and drown, are methods which can be suspected to have originated from Europe, but the methods are not the nucleus of Westlind's account. The principal lines he draws are the descriptions of the different stages, from being suspected, being accused, brought before the court, receiving sentence, and finally accepting the punishment. Nganga's function, in relation to his nkissi, the ndoki and to the nkassa trial, can in other words, be characterized as the backbone of one of the judicial systems in Congolese society. Westlind concludes by pointing out, that even banganga must obey the same laws, and can be brought to court, that is to say, undergo the nkassa trial.

Nils Westlind's account of the connexion between nganga, nkissi, ndoki, nkassa and the executions, is the most concise and specific analysis of the society's institutions, which are to be found in the Swedish literature during the 1880's and 1890's. One can say that almost all of the Congo travellers who published their writings, observed one or two of these phenomena, and took a negative attitude towards them. The Europeans evidently never discovered that, what they saw as a fragment, was part of a unity, which we can call a judicial system; to them the fragment, for example capital punishment, appeared cruel and loathsome.<sup>7</sup> The former nganga, Titus Makundu, in Nathan Söderblom's book *Främmande religionsurkunder* in 1908, and other Congolese documents from the 1880's and 1890's, confirm the accuracy of Westlind's account.<sup>8</sup> None of the later accounts or analyses of these phenomena have differed considerably from Westlind's conception in 1886, but all have confirmed his account of Congolese practice. This for example was true of P. A. Westlind, 1911, Laman (1962), Mgr Cuvelier, 1937, and Buana Kibongi 1969.<sup>9</sup>

A year later, Nils Westlind again took up the question of the relationship between banganga and the missionaries, and banganga had already begun to feel that, their so far unchallenged position was threatened, due to the missionaries' presence.<sup>10</sup> People began to wonder if what banganga said was true, namely that those who availed themselves of certain nkissi could have contact with the dead in the forests. People were anxious to main-

tain this form of contact, and procured nkissi, but saw no dead in the forests. They then began to doubt banganga's credibility, and uncertainty was the consequence. In 1886, several missionaries related how ordinary people and banganga began to come to the missionaries with their nkissi, "idols", in order to renounce the old tradition.<sup>11</sup> Westlind appears to have received an "idol" as a Christmas present, which he intended to send home to Sweden. Nganga's waning power revealed itself, in that a couple of the congregation's members at Mukimbungu, refused to take nkassa, despite the fact that banganga had threatened them with both their knives and their nkissi.

It appears as if the Congolese, both at Mukimbungu and Kibunzi, 1886—1888, spontaneously handed over their nkissi to the missionaries, in some cases to be burned. C. J. Nilsson from Kibunzi relates the following, about the boys at the school. "Eight days ago we burned a collection of fetiches (idols), which the boys had publicly renounced and left to be burned. A boy of about nine years old, went home to his father and requested his fetiches, which he had kept in his home.

'as', he said, 'now they will be burned, and all that I have learned in the fetiche school is surely only deception. From now on. I want to believe and trust God, and not pieces of wood and feathers etc.'

'You can wait until another day' said the father.

'No, I want them now', said the boy.

'Take them', said the father, 'but you must be prepared to take the consequences yourself'.

The boy took his fetiches, and when they were burned he rejoiced."<sup>12</sup> Was it the missionaries who inspired these nkissi bon-fires, and if so, from where did they receive the idea, or was it the people, themselves, who took the initiative to burn their nkissi? The praxis, which developed after 1886, and during the 1890's, in the Lower Congo, appears to have come from the Congolese themselves, who quite simply, handed over their nkissi to the missionaries, and in this case, it was probably a question of a praxis, which stemmed from the old Catholic mission, from the previous centuries. For example, we remind ourselves, that "Sundi's apostle", Girolamo de Montesarchio, in the very regions of Mukimbungu, between 1649—1650, arranged many nkissi bonfires. During the twentieth century, when the Swedish mission expanded further north of the Congo river, it is evident from Swedish sources, that it was the missionaries who inspired the burning of nkissi. It became a praxis which was closely connected with conversion.

Towards the close of the 1880's, banganga was exposed to a double



threat, which partly undermined their prestige and social position within society, through the missionaries' teaching, preaching, medical care and technical knowledge, and partly that after 1889 they were actively combated by Bula Matadi, when the Congo Independent State, had forbidden the giving of poison, cannibalism, tribal wars and living burial.<sup>13</sup> It was, above all, the nkassa trial and capital punishment, which roused the distaste and repugnance of the State authorities and missionaries alike. But Westlind considered that things had gone too far, when Bula Matadi's expeditions began to execute banganga, because they had given nkassa.<sup>14</sup> Broadly speaking, however, Westlind and his colleagues, W. Walldén, K. F. Andrae and Jöns Larsson, considered that the measures taken by the State, against banganga, had their uses, as they helped to create respect for law and order among the people.<sup>15</sup> When they expressed this opinion, they obviously did not realize that the institution combated by the Congo Independent State and the missionaries, in different ways, was one of the central institutions of the judicial system in Congolese society, which aimed at maintaining authority. Buana Kibongi comments in 1969 on the situation in the following way: "In the second place, nganga founded and strengthened the idea of authority in Congolese society, and perhaps in the African world as a whole. It was from him that in the olden days the politician drew its power. Nganga does not give orders, but without him, spiritual, social and even juridical authority is in danger of crumbling."<sup>16</sup>

The readers of *Missionsförbundet* were well informed of the measures taken by the State against banganga, and of Bula Matadi it was said, that as soon as he had got hold of a nganga, he hanged him in the nearest tree. During the whole of the 1890's the struggle against banganga continued, and among others, the Swedish lieutenant, Glimstedt was engaged in the punitive expeditions in the Kinkenge region, 1897—1898, against the nkassa trial, and Lieutenant Juhlin—Dannfelt 1896, in the Diadia region.<sup>17</sup> In this instance, banganga had a resolute state power against them, and not an undecided authority, as at the time of Garcia II.

One can find one or two examples of good relations between a nganga and the missionaries, but it is more than probably with those banganga, who had nothing to do with the nkassa trials or living burials. Jöns Larsson related from Nganda in 1891, that he had difficulty in recruiting labour for the construction of the mission station.<sup>18</sup> A nganga called Malemka had, however, showed that he liked the missionaries, and when he saw that they had difficulty in recruiting labour, Malemka himself and a group of youths, registered voluntarily for a six month period of employment, to build the mission station. The missionary wrote home to Sweden, not wit-

hout certain gratitude to this "idolator priest", that the building of the mission station, thanks to him, was secured. This gratitude was, one might say, objective as it was dependent upon Malemka's practical help and not due to the fact that he confessed himself Christian, which he did not do. This example can be said to be unparalleled, as those cases where good contacts were established between a missionary and a nganga, only occurred after the nganga had become Christian.

The general attitude of the Swedes to banganga appears clearly from the terminology they used. Nganga was characterized as a fraud, liar and hypocrite; he was called sorcerer, idolator priest or fetiche man. In general, nkissi were referred to as idols, or fetiches, and the entire ritual world, of which banganga was the centre, was called, quite simply, for fetichism. Fetichism, however, was not considered to belong to the same category of respectable religions, such as Islam or Buddhism, but fetichism was synonymous with idolatory, and the fetiche man was the incarnation of the Devil himself. Thus banganga were regarded as the mission's and the true God's foremost opponent. It was probably this opinion, which caused the missionaries to sympathize, to a certain extent, with the measures taken against certain banganga by the Congo Independent State.

The atmosphere which prevails in the Swedish documentation, concerning banganga, and this is true of nearly all longer letters and relations, is reminiscent, to a great extent, of the atmosphere which prevailed in the Capuchin missionaries Relations. In a manuscript which was never published, P. A. Westlind referred to nkissi, "idols", as "loathesome old scrap-heaps", and this disdainful expression interprets what many missionaries felt at the sight of the nkissi, which belonged either to banganga, or to the ordinary man.<sup>19</sup> The fetiche man became a well-known, and if one can use the expression, a popular figure in Sweden; a blood-curdling figure who was exploited by the missionary propaganda, to demonstrate the need of still more vigorous efforts to break the realm of darkness in the Congo. On the other hand, the greatest sign of progress for the mission, was when they could report that "a fetiche man" had left his "sorcery" and become Christian. These attitudes were not only typical of the 1880's and 1890's, but the Swedes' opinion of banganga was of a similar nature well into the twentieth century. There are, in fact, still Scandinavians in the Congo who regard banganga as the Children of the Devil.

## Missionary policy in theory and practice

So far in this study, a good deal has already been said about the Swedish missionary policy in theory and practice, which has mainly concerned the missionaries' inimical attitude to banganga, which to a great extent was the same as that taken by the Capuchin missionaries: their sympathy for the Congolese against Bula Matadi's gross violence, their method of recruiting the first pupils for the mission's schools, by ransoming children; their personal interest and stimulating measures for the emergence of a Congolese elite, and their Swedish Christmas festivities, with the exchange of roles etc. If all these fragments are put together, one has a rather accurate picture of the Swedish mission during the 1880's and 1890's. We shall now devote some interest to certain guiding principles, or theological motifs, which were directly connected with culture confrontation, and we shall begin by viewing the missionaries' policy of equality, as seen by the outsider. This is possible, thanks to the controversy among Swedish Congo travellers about the principle of equality, which was criticized by Baron von Schwerin and Lieutenant Möller, while another lieutenant defended the stand taken by the missionaries.

In a much debated speech, held by Baron H. H. von Schwerin on 25 November, 1887, at the Society for Geography and Anthropology, after his visit to the Congo, he severely criticized the Protestant mission, as a threat to the work of civilization in the Congo.<sup>20</sup> Von Schwerin claimed, that the poor missionaries, through their awkward and deplorable lives, and their preaching, undermine the respect which the Congolese had for the white man. They were "previously accustomed to regard the white man as a strong, always quick witted, and superior person", and this view the Baron considered correct. "All hopes that in one go, one can rouse the negro from his natural state, to equality with a civilized person and Christian, are futile, and this the missionaries will not accept."<sup>21</sup> Von Schwerin was a strong opponent of the missionaries' policy of equality between the races, and in a book (1891) he again dismisses the idea "that the negro is our brother, our equal."<sup>22</sup>

The tone and mode of expression of the Baron's criticism of mission, is in accordance with Dennett's, to whom he refers as a friend from his time in the Congo, and with whose opinions he concurred.<sup>23</sup> Dennett was an English businessman, who had been in the Congo for seven years, and he considered the Congolese to be so inferior "that he was not susceptible to education."<sup>24</sup>

Lieutenant C. R. Håkansson, von Schwerin's fellow-traveller, scrutinized

his criticism of the mission, in his book *Kristendomen i civilisationens tjenst*, 1888. In the foreword, Lieutenant Håkansson says that he wants to give a just and correct picture of the situation. Håkansson rejects the Baron's opinion, that the Congolese is definitely inferior to the European. "It is even claimed that the black people, through such white (people) as the missionaries with their piety, lose all esteem and respect for our race. This appears to me, even as a generalization, to be a mistake. There is . . . a great need for the indifference and haughtiness, which the layman must observe to maintain his empire, to be somewhat compensated by a more fraternal relationship towards these people, whose native land we encroach, without consideration".<sup>25</sup> This is how discussion of equality and superiority between races, was conducted by two Congo travellers during the 1880's. Håkansson defended the policy of equality which the missionaries propagated, but a couple of years previously he had expressed his own opinion of the European culture: "Surely, if the European culture is not perfect, it is nevertheless the best we have. Broadly speaking, we belong . . . as white men to the same class, mankind's aristocracy. Noblesse oblige, it is said, and the European has not hesitated to fulfil his duty."<sup>26</sup>

In the Congo, von Schwerin's criticism of "awkward missionaries", was dismissed by the missionary J. W. Håkansson. He tried to see with humour, the Baron's critical disdain for the missionaries, who were recruited from the lower classes, but he still felt offended. It was also true that the officers, in contrast to the missionaries, were recruited from the Swedish upper class, and to which the Baron belonged. J. W. Håkansson retorted with a story about a fellow who had a wooden leg, and was bitten by a dog. They wondered why he didn't scream and he answered "I felt nothing".<sup>27</sup> J. W. Håkansson, ardently defended the missionaries honour, and claimed that it was not a disgrace to come from the working class in Sweden, to work in the Congo; one did not need a Doctor's degree to perform an honourable task. He also referred to the fact that the Baron had never visited a Swedish mission station, was in the Congo for only a few months, could not speak the language, and therefore his opinions of the Congo were of no measurable importance.

Lieutenant Möller delivered the same criticism of the missionaries in his book, *Tre år i Kongo*, as did Baron von Schwerin. "It would certainly be to the black man's benefit if the missionaries retained in them the respect for the white man, and not, as now is frequently the case, immediately receive the idea that they are as good as we, an opinion for which, in reality, these crude barbarians are not mature", wrote Möller.<sup>28</sup> The accusation was directed against the missionaries' preaching, that "they are

as good as we". This criticism prevailed, and in 1893, it was dealt with in a major article in *Missionsförbundet*, under the heading "He is Your Brother".<sup>29</sup>

The principle of equality was defended and justified from the Bible. "The world makes jokes about, and laughs at, 'our black brothers' in the Congo. But he who believes in God, and in the Scriptures, yes, those who only believe in the unity of mankind, for him this is an important idea, which should impel sacrifices: *All are my brothers* . . . Even they are human, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, whom we must help."<sup>30</sup> The idea of equality and fraternity was justified in the text from the story of the Creation, which portrays all races and peoples as brothers, because they all have the same origin; in biblical language Adam and Eve. As an example of how a missionary speaks to his pupils, we can quote Mathilda Flodén from *Diadia* 1898: "I usually say to them, that we are people just as they, and have the same needs, only we are white and they are black".<sup>31</sup> This idea, naturally, is not restricted to Swedish missionaries. Richard at Mbanza Manteka expressed the same thought: "They are exactly like us inside, the difference is only skin deep".<sup>32</sup> Ruth Slade summarizes the general Protestant opinion, when she writes that "the missionaries were forced by their message to preach the fundamental equality of white and black, as children of God."<sup>33</sup> This opinion is well supported by Swedish evidence, thanks to the criticism made by von Schwerin and Lieutenant Möller, and which was contested by Lieutenant Håkansson. Even the national press in Sweden drew attention to this criticism of mission, but put emphasis on von Schwerin's opinion of the missionaries as unworthy figures, whose work was detrimental to civilization.<sup>34</sup>

It was no accident that the motif of creation was discussed in 1893, as the explanation, why the Christian must consider all races equal, despite the external differences of colour, skin etc. The first President of SMF, E. J. Ekman wrote a long theological article in the first edition of the paper *Missionsförbundet*, 1883.<sup>35</sup> Ekman based his article on Jesus' command to his disciples, to preach the Gospel throughout the world, and then points out how this task must be fulfilled, because the world was not only created *by* God, but also *for* God. The Church has the same mission as Christ, to be sent to the world, says Ekman, and alludes to the second coming of Christ and the coming of the Kingdom of God. The article unites the three motifs: creation, mission, and eschatology, in one biblical quotation, which has a distinct universal and cosmic significance: "And that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father", (Pilipians 2: 10—11). The theme which stands out as conclusive, to the Glory of God, the Father, proved itself central for both the Missionary Board, and the missionaries during the 1880's and 1890's.

An editorial in *Missionsförbundet* in April 1883, again discussed missionary policy, and expressly warned against the race for results, and called for faithfulness in service, as the disciples had not received the task to convert the world, it was said, but to preach the Gospel for the entire world.<sup>36</sup> The emphasis was thus put on preaching and not on conversion, which is worthy of note. The editorial further claimed that the Christian, when he is judged shall not be judged according to "the number of souls" he has saved, but according to his faithfulness in his witness. A third theological exposé was published in *Missionsförbundet* in 1888, which followed the same lines as the previous two articles, and Ekman was more than likely the author of this too.<sup>37</sup> The principal idea was the same as in 1883, that the mission should *glorify God*, just as Jesus glorified the Father, who sent him. God is glorified when the people are saved from fright, distress or misery, as they then praise the Lord, and thus Jesus Christ's return is hastened.

The same theological theme was accounted for, by various delegates at a SMF quarterly meeting in Halmstad in 1887, when missionary policy was discussed.<sup>38</sup> At this meeting the justification for conducting mission received particular emphasis, namely the need of the people. Their material needs demand extended efforts claimed the delegates.

When we examine the missionary incentives mentioned by the missionaries in the Congo, we find the same theology, and the theme which is most emphasized is that of the glorification of God. K. T. Andersson from Mukimbungu in 1889, renders a view of one of his colleagues, which he also shared: "Our *foremost* aim, is not to convert the Congo to God, but our *great* and *splendeous* aim is to *glorify* God."<sup>39</sup> The wording recurs almost word for word, from a woman missionary at Kibunzi: "Our *aim* is *one*: *The glorification of the Lord* among the people".<sup>40</sup> The theme to glorify God is one, which totally dominated among missionaries during the 1880's and 1890's.<sup>41</sup>

It is not difficult to feel a polemic tone in several of these statements, against the idea of "converting pagans", or "the harvesting of souls", but it is hardly a question of antagonism between the two different ideas. It is a matter of emphasis, and the emphasis is put on the theme of the glory of God, and that idea is founded on the story of the Creation. All mis-

sionaries rejoiced at every conversion they witnessed, and they naturally tried to convert the Congolese to Christ. In such contexts it was said that the people had the same "right" to the Father and the Son, as before their Creator all people are equal.<sup>42</sup>

From this biblical idea of the unity of mankind, or the principal of equality, can many of the missionaries statements, or working methods be explained or interpreted. One of the aims which was formulated was, that one must "make oneself superfluous". In a theological essay, published in 1883, in *Missionsförbundet*, Professor Christlieb in Bonn, claims that missionary work is aimed at creating autonomous congregations, governed by the country's own sons.<sup>43</sup> School work, medical care, the literary and practical work, must be aimed at making the missionaries dispensable, as regards parochial work, and allow the Africans to take over the responsibility. The goal is, that the African congregation might build its own chapels, schools and teachers' quarters, pay their own pastors, and in every respect become an independent missionary congregation. This is the so-called "three-self-movement", with which the readers of *Missionsförbundet* became familiar during its first years. The congregation should be self-governing, self-promoting and self-supporting.

In the Congo, Nils Westlind most energetically maintained that all efforts must be placed on the task of educating African teachers and evangelists, and the missionaries must bear in mind, that they must make themselves dispensable.<sup>44</sup> "We work, and ought to work to make ourselves superfluous here", wrote Westlind in 1887, and this expression has become a classic among Swedish missionaries.<sup>45</sup> On this point, Lieutenant Håkansson, regarded Westlind as a spokesman for the Swedish missionaries, when he quoted the expression in his book in 1888, and claimed, that it was magnanimous to regard one's task in the Congo in this way.<sup>46</sup> There is no example that opinion among the Swedish missionary corps differed on this point, and Westlind's opinion appears to be typical of the missionaries at that time.

One of the more important consequences of the missionaries principal of equality, is the work which can be derived from the motto "the Bible for the people".<sup>47</sup> The Swedish missionaries originated from revival circles in Sweden, they were so-called "läsare", "readers" for whom the Bible occupied a central position and the missionaries also wanted to make the Congolese into "läsare".<sup>48</sup> For the "läsare", it was not only the Bible, but all forms of Christian literature which were important methods of evangelization. The "läsare" published booklets, books, periodicals and distributed literature among the people everywhere. This method was used

also in the Congo. The method can be called democratic in the sense that its fundamental basis was, that each person should make up his own mind about Jesus Christ through turning directly to the documents about him, or interpretations of his teachings. The "läsare" claimed that everyone was equal before God in this respect, and that everyone could understand God's word.

With this Swedish background, it was natural for the missionaries in the Congo to devote themselves to linguistic and literary work. Every missionary was required to learn the Congo language when he arrived at his mission station, a praxis which even the Jesuits tried to follow, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Capuchins during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even if they did not always succeed. There is no example of a Swedish missionary who worked in the Congo for a longer period, who did not succeed in learning the language, and Kikongo was not considered difficult. The problem of language is the first, and one of the most pertinent obstacles which confront the partners involved in culture confrontation. This was experienced even by the Congolese, who prayed to God that the white man, their teachers, might learn to understand their language.<sup>49</sup> Nils Westlind claimed that the most decisive and fundamental work for those, who devoted themselves to Christian mission and cultural work, was to learn the Congolese languages thoroughly.<sup>50</sup> K. J. Pettersson reported from Stanley Pool, where there were many tribes, that he was in the process of learning four different languages, namely those spoken by the Bakongo, Bateke, Bayansi and Buvumbo.<sup>51</sup> At the beginning of the 1880's the problem of language was much discussed in Missionsförbundet but towards the close of the 1880's and during the 1890's attention was divided between linguistic work, literary production and translations.<sup>52</sup>

Westlind, J. W. Håkansson, K. E. Laman, K. S. Walfridsson, Ivar Johansson and others, considered that Kikongo was a very rich language, and the same applied to Lieutenant Juhlin-Dannfelt, as among the officers, it was he who devoted himself to linguistic work.<sup>53</sup> There were, however, other European missionaries, who did not share this opinion. On one occasion some English missionaries laughed at Westlind, with whom he wanted to discuss certain forms of the verb "tonda", thank-you.<sup>54</sup> To them, the forms appeared far too advanced to exist in an African language, as they were not even to be found in English. They "laughed at this, as if it was madness", wrote Westlind indignantly.<sup>55</sup>

Two long articles in Missionsförbundet in 1883 and 1890 respectively, put the problem of language within a greater cultural context.<sup>56</sup> In 1890,



it was said "that it would be better for the less talented preachers to remain at home, but on the other hand, send the most talented to the pagans".<sup>57</sup> The justification for this principle of selection of missionaries, was that a talented person had less difficulty in learning the language, the key to the "pagans' ideas and philosophy", and could understand the import of their different customs and practices. The talented would be free from prejudice and "free from the incapability to conceive the other's situation, and adjust themselves to it".<sup>58</sup> Thus the nucleus of this reasoning is, that knowledge of the language was seen as the gate-way to the whole of the African culture, in which the missionaries were to integrate and adapt themselves. Accordingly, the Swedes' intensive linguistic work, can be seen as a consequence of their respect for the Congolese language and culture.<sup>59</sup> Among the pioneers Nils Westlind became the most respected linguist in the Lower Congo and as early as the 1880's he published an ABC-book, a Kikongo Grammar and a hymn book, and the Gospels according to St. John and St. Matthew. Because Mukimbungu happened to be situated in the centre of the old Sundi province, and as the Mukimbungu dialect became the missions "lingua franca". Westlind's work was of decisive significance for the whole of the Lower Congo's written language and literature.<sup>60</sup> Later K. E. Laman took over Westlind's role as the leading linguist.

Jenssen-Tusch states that Lieutenant Juhlin-Dannfelt published a French-Kikongo dictionary, but this has never been retrieved.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand it is known that Juhlin-Dannfelt worked on a dictionary, and his correspondence with Westlind concerned, among other things, the linguistic problems of Kikongo.<sup>62</sup>

On a parallel with their own linguistic studies, the missionaries conducted schoolwork among the children. C. J. Engvall, for instance, promptly began to teach, when he arrived in the Congo in 1881, to work for LIM, and in the same manner, Nils Westlind in 1882, started a little school with six pupils at Mukimbungu, which in 1884, comprised twenty pupils.<sup>63</sup> From the start, the pupils were exclusively boys, ransomed children, and only when women missionaries arrived in the Congo, was attention seriously devoted to girls, according to the principle of equality, which before God was applicable to both of the two sexes. Every mission station functioned as a school. The school work was seldom theoretically justified, and when this occurred reference was made to the theological view: the Bible for the people. The school work was started, in the first instance, to combat illiteracy and teach as many as possible to read so well, that they could read the Bible themselves.

At the close of the 1880's, new types of schools developed, such as Sunday-schools, girls schools, and teacher-evangelist colleges, and ten years later, vocational training for bricklayers, carpenters and tailors was introduced. The evangelist-teacher training, was considered to be the most important of all the different forms of education, as through this, the Congolese were directly prepared to take over the missionaries' work, as teachers and preachers. A revival had started at Mbanza Manteka, where the congregation at the end of 1886, had approximately one thousand members, while Mukimbungu had only thirty-nine. This revival brought to the fore the need for Congolese teachers and evangelists and Nils Westlind at Mukimbungu, who was the driving force behind the plans for evangelist training, claimed that one must be prepared for a similar revival at Mukimbungu, and in this case the missionaries would not suffice for all those who needed guidance.<sup>64</sup>

Westlind also claimed, as early as 1886, that the Congolese, were superior to the Europeans in the respect of contact with the people: "I consider that the white people can do little in comparison with those whose mother tongue is Congolese, and therefore, it would be better to allow them to take over the responsibility".<sup>65</sup> In 1887, Westlind expressed himself still more clearly in favour of the Congolese, and claimed that, "Africa will never have the Gospel, unless it is preached by her own sons".<sup>66</sup> His assessment of the conditions, was optimistic, as he considered that the entire work could soon be conducted by the Congolese. Westlind was very anxious to promote a Congolese elite, and he considered that the evangelist training did not receive sufficient support from the Mission Board in Stockholm. In a letter to J. W. Håkansson, E. J. Ekman in Stockholm explained however, that Westlind had completely misunderstood the matter: "How wrong can one be, when on the contrary, the training of natives to become evangelists, is one of our most important goals. If there is anything we support, it is, above all, this kind of activity".<sup>67</sup> Ekman formulated this opinion in letters to Westlind and K. J. Pettersson too, and repeated that it was particularly evangelist training, which was "the most important part of mission work", and that it was "a vital necessity for our mission".<sup>68</sup> Because of this misunderstanding between Mukimbungu and Stockholm, both parties were forced to specify their position concerning the training of Congolese evangelists, and there is no doubt about their both considering it of the greatest importance.

Some idea of how far the Swedish mission had succeeded in its ambition, to make even the Congolese into "läsare" (readers), can be obtained by rendering the approximate extent of the literary production, and sales

of books. The following list is proof of the intensity within that branch concerned with linguistic work, translations and teaching in Kikongo:

The New Testament in Kikongo: Nils Westlind, 1891

The Book of Psalms: K. S. Walfridsson, 1898

The Bible: K. E. Laman, 1904

Biblical History: Westlind, 1888, 1st Ed. 300 copies

1897, 3rd Ed. 5,000 copies

Hymnbook: Westlind, 1st Ed. 13 songs, 100 copies, 1887

4th Ed. by missionaries and Congolese, 6,000 copies, 1895

ABC-Book: Westlind, 1888, 2,000 copies

ABC-Book: Anna Baur, 1893

ABC-Book: Ruth Walfridsson, 1898, 4,000 copies

ABC-Book: Wilh. Sjöholm, 1900, 5,000 copies

Congo Grammar: Westlind, 1888 (in Swedish)

Congo Grammar: Laman, 1899, 2,500 copies

Illustrated Geography: Laman, 1902, 2,500 copies

Illustrated Science Textbook: Laman, 1901, 2,500 copies

Arithmetic Book: Laman 1900, 600 copies

Almanac, published regularly since 1892

Minsamu Miayenge, illustrated monthly magazine published from 1892.<sup>69</sup>

Minsamu Miayenge was widely distributed and the number of subscribers doubled during a five year period, from 400 in 1892; the editors during the 1890's were Wilh. Sjöholm, K. J. Pettersson and K. E. Laman. The contents were composed of Bible passages, Bible interpretation, letters, together with essays in History, Geography, Arithmetic, Zoology, Botany etc, which were later used as the material for text books. Thanks to this literary work, the Mukimbungu dialect became the standard language of the Lower Congo.<sup>70</sup>

In those areas where the Swedish mission was active, it is evident that the Congolese became läsare, and a number of teacher-evangelists opened new village schools, in the vicinity of the mission stations. The ability to read became a mark of difference, and to be Christian was considered synonymous with the ability to read. K. E. Laman, likened the entire work of the mission to an educational institution, a variation of the theme "civilize and christianize". "The mission work now performed at our stations in the Congo, is in several respects, comparable to a large educational institution. One must think of the people's best, both spiritually and materially, that is to say, one must transform them to an industrious, vigorous, and diligent people . . . one must also teach and train them in

agriculture, and other useful trades and professions, so that they might attain a better and independent position, and whose aim is that they might become a civilized and missionizing people", writes Laman, 1899.<sup>71</sup> Laman's words can be said to summarize the general attitude embraced by the Swedish missionaries, during the 1880's and 1890's, concerning the various branches of activity, such as preaching, schooling, medical care, literary production, building, agriculture, and minor industries.

As early as 1885, when E. J. Ekman after he had been officially appointed President of SMF, and editor of *Missionsförbundet*, expressed this view in a mission service in Stockholm: "With the blessing of the Gospel, civilization will also spread. Although mission is one thing and civilization another, they are, however, closely connected."<sup>72</sup> Among the principles applied by the Swedish mission, there were two which could easily conflict with each other, namely the policy of equality, or respect for the other party's culture, and the work of civilization, or the ambition to "raise" the people. During the entire 1880's and 1890's articles and editorials recurred, in *Missionsförbundet*, which emphasized that the mission must be on its guard, not to make the African European, but in the endeavour to build an autonomous Church in the Congo, one must make certain that it should be African and not European. "In this context one must remind oneself of a duty, which the mission has to even the crudest people; namely, that in the attempt to make them Christian, one must not destroy their national characteristics. If this was so, one would inflict upon them an irreparable loss", and therefore, the converted, should, as far as is consistent to a Christian life, "remain and genuinely be a member of his people, and live as them".<sup>73</sup> This was an editorial written in 1883, and 1890, in the same paper, it was said that the mission should preach "a Gospel, without any European or theological flavour".<sup>74</sup> In 1894, an editorial said with still greater emphasis, that it was fundamentally wrong of that mission, which wanted to transform "the negro to a Christian European, instead of a Christian negro."<sup>75</sup>

In theory, the missionaries in the Congo embraced the same view, concerning the preaching of the Gospel, without any European flavour, but as early as 1893, Westlind realized how difficult it was to put this theory into practice. In a major article in 1894, after ten years SMF work in the Congo, Westlind analysed the mission and found, among other things, that the generation gap had begun to reveal itself in the Congo, due to the work of the mission, as it was the children who learned to read and write, while the adults remained in their traditional world. "Another danger is that the children become so familiar with the white

man's way of speaking and thinking, that they become as alien to their people as we", wrote Westlind.<sup>76</sup> K. J. Pettersson, K. E. Laman, and others emphasized that the missionaries should try to adapt themselves to the Congolese and their customs, and not the opposite.<sup>77</sup> As we have already seen, the Christmas celebrations at the mission stations were typically Swedish, and this was a sign that the mission station unavoidably represented a miniature Europe, and those who come in touch with it, or became Christians were initiated to a European cultural sphere.

That outsiders criticized the missionaries on this point was a fact, and Lieutenant Möller wrote in *Tre år i Kongo*, that the missionaries tried to subject the Congolese to European influence, and he thought particularly of clothing. "It appears as if some missionaries endeavour in every way to remodel the negro to a type of 'dandy', with shoes, stockings, trousers and collar."<sup>78</sup> Möller considered that European clothes did not suit the Congolese. Lieutenant Håkansson, on the other hand, claimed in his book, 1888, that there was no professional group in the Congo, which took so much consideration to "the savage's character, habits and peculiarities", as the missionaries.<sup>79</sup> When Möller mentioned clothing he touched upon a delicate question, where the missionaries obviously did not take consideration to Congolese custom. All the photographs which were published during the 1880's and 1890's were consequently of naked "pagans" in the Congo, and more women than men were photographed naked; the Christians were clothed and the evangelists and teachers were particularly well-dressed.

In 1896, G. Warneck is quoted in *Missionsförbundet*, on the discussion of clothing, and what he says is typical of that generation's way of reasoning; it is worthy of note, that he does not justify his argument from the Bible, but from a Western moral conception, when he claims that nakedness was tantamount to immorality. "Christianity's ethical discipline, must in this case try to achieve a change. The introduction of clothing among the converted pagans is, therefore, such a general requirement that the wearing of clothes and being baptized, or belonging to the catechumens is often synonymous . . . In both respects the mission paves the way for trade."<sup>80</sup> It was both to the missionaries', and businessmen's advantage to oppose nakedness. The missionary propaganda considered nakedness to be similar to immorality, and the business propaganda considered that nakedness was similar to poverty, and that clothes and shoes were a sign of education and civilization.<sup>81</sup> On this question, the missionaries took the same attitude as the Catholics during the previous centuries, but they did not explicitly mention the curse of Ham, in connexion with nakedness.

The missionary conference, 1900, finally decided that Christian women should be urged to "discard the old national costume, consisting of two small scraps of cloth, and instead clothe themselves in proper cloth, wound round their waists, and in the best event to wear dresses", and it was hoped that the training of tailors, would be encouraged, and clothes would be on sale at the mission stations.<sup>82</sup> In a document from 1895, two Congolese evangelists, Samuéli Kiasungwa and Josua Lusanu, say, that the members of the congregation, had agreed "not to drink palm-wine, smoke tobacco, or to play the gimbibila or nzanzi, and to ensure that we and our women are decently dressed. Besides this we shall also preach the Gospel to the people."<sup>83</sup> The legalistic tone of this statement, also belonged to the heritage which had been transferred, from Sweden to the Congo, by the missionaries, and the prohibition of the already mentioned so-called abuses, was in this case not given a biblical justification.

The missionary conference, 1894, had passed an important resolution, on the attitude towards Congolese customs, and Kiasungwa and Lusanu, appear to have been influenced by the opinion which prevailed among the missionaries. The resolution concisely summerizes the Swedish missionary policy: "Old customs, habits and conceptions, such as dance, all forms of idolator feasts, hair cutting feasts, funeral feasts, gun-salutes and wailing for the deceased, together with the drinking of palm-wine at such feasts, and at palavers, should be vigorously opposed and exterminated."<sup>84</sup> The missionary W. Sjöholm commented on this policy in 1895, and said that missionary praxis had hitherto allowed the Congolese to retain those customs and practices, which did not conflict with the Word of God, "those which may perhaps be regarded as national", but many such "innocent" customs had drawn the members back to "heathenism", and it was therefore necessary to oppose even such customs, which did not directly conflict with the Bible.<sup>85</sup> Sjöholm, for his part, evaluated these things as trivialities and called them "the external shell, without a kernel", but nevertheless, he considered the measures justified. Olof Nordblad expressed the same attitude; that the Congolese should retain their old customs and practices, which did not conflict with the teaching of Christ.<sup>86</sup> The missionaries' struggle against Congolese customs had, as a whole, expanded, and embraced not only the rites conducted by banganga, such as poison trials and burial customs, but also those which concerned adornments and instruments were considered heathen.

In 1894, the missionary, C. N. Börrisson claimed that the congregation's decision to abstain from palm-wine, was a spontaneous decision from the Congolese and that the impulse had come from Mbanza Manteka, the

principal congregation in the Lower Congo.<sup>87</sup> The decision was justified, not only by the fact that palm-wine belonged to burial feasts, executions, poison trials, etc, but that similar to aquavit, it had a devastating and intoxicating effect. The congregation also protested against the practice of the Congo Independent State "to give aquavit as part of the porters salary".<sup>88</sup> The congregation's struggle against palm-wine and aquavit continued during the whole of the 1890's and during the twentieth century, and the problem was further complicated by the fact that Bula Matadi demanded that the Congolese should deliver palm-wine as a form of State tax.<sup>89</sup> The missionary conference, 1903, in this instance, took a definite stand for the Congolese, against the labour tax system enforced by the Congo Independent State, and said, "that a member of the congregation should not tap and give palm-wine to the State's men, but if he was forced to do so by the soldiers, and subjected to violent assault, this should be reported to the State".<sup>90</sup>

On the question of the drinking of alcohol, the congregations under the leadership of the Swedish missionaries, opposed both old Congolese traditions, where palm-wine played an important role, and the State officials who demanded palm-wine from the population and payed their porters with aquavit. The problem of alcohol was extensive in the Congo, and in 1899, Leopold II called an international conference in Brussels to come to grips with the situation.<sup>91</sup> The statistics which were returned, concerning the European export of alcohol, to Africa showed that in 1896, thirty-eight million litres had been exported, and the export did not decrease. Mr. de Winter said in his report at the Conference, that the situation was the same in 1899, as ten years previously, and that he was pessimistic about the future, as the interests which had conflicted with one another, were business and humanitarian, and business interests usually proved themselves to be the strongest. Thus the Congo Independent State in theory supported the missionaries' temperance work to a certain extent, but it was opposed by certain State officials in the Congo.

Baron von Schwerin found the mission's temperance work completely unnecessary, and objected to international opinion which worked against the liquor traffic. "To talk of aquavit's curse in the Congo is nonsense. Alcohol has not been the cause of any disturbances among the natives", wrote the Baron in 1887.<sup>92</sup> On the question of alcohol, the missionaries were resolute, and the congregations in the Lower Congo became in practice temperance societies.<sup>93</sup>

On the question of alcohol, and the above mentioned problem, the Mission Board in Stockholm emphasized, that it was important that the

missionaries followed SMF's basic principal, to scrutinize everything in regard to the Bible, and not to set up man-made rules, as a condition for membership of the congregation. In 1897, a new Constitution was discussed for the congregations in the Congo, and on several points the Mission Board warned the missionaries from sanctioning anything for which support could not be found in the Bible.<sup>94</sup> In 1897, the missionaries intended to intensify the struggle against polygamy, while the Board considered that the decision which had been taken in 1894, was well-advised; to allow polygamists who had not known of the teachings of the Bible, on the question of marriage, when they entered into marriage, to become members of the congregation.<sup>95</sup> On behalf of the Board, Ekman in 1897 wrote, that monogamy must be carefully introduced, so as not to incite divorce. It was claimed that it would hardly be right, that the first measure for the Congolese as a Christian, should be to break the promises he had already made. It was considered that even polygamist marriages should be respected, as they followed Congolese customary law.

The Mission Board and Ekman made it still more clear that they did not agree with the suggestion, that a condition for membership of the Congregation in the Congo, should be that one abstained from palm-wine. There was no support to be found in the Bible for such a decision, and it was only a man-made rule. The missionaries were urged to faithfully follow the Bible, and not to invent anything which could be misleading.<sup>1</sup>

On the same basis the Mission Board opposed the suggestion to forbid finery, such as small bells, pearls, necklaces etc. In Stockholm it was claimed that the Congolese had the same right to dress themselves according to their taste, as the missionaries had the right to wear brooches and other jewelry. One should not "prohibit, what for them is a national peculiarity".<sup>2</sup>

In the Congo, the debate on the missionaries' attitude to polygyny, palm-wine and jewelry continued for several years, and year after year, the final decision was deferred. During this time, a rather intolerant praxis was stabilized, which did not follow the recommendations of the Mission Board, and the Constitution which was adopted in 1907, for the congregation, became standard for many years, and it can be seen as a confirmation of praxis.<sup>3</sup> The prohibition of palm-wine, and other intoxicating liquors was established, but it was not justified by a biblical text. Concerning polygyny, it was said that a "man in a polygamous marriage can not be accepted as a member of the congregation, but a woman who is part of a polygamous marriage can be accepted".<sup>4</sup> No mention was made of the divorces, which must consequently arise, if a man wanted to become



a member of the congregation. Various Congolese customs and practices were expressly forbidden, and great efforts were made to search out a biblical quotation, in order to justify the prohibition. In our context, the most important paragraph of the Constitution, 1907, is rendered here in its entirety.

”§ 16. The following customs are forbidden: dance, Matthew 14: 6—8; drumming at palm-wine feasts and dance; confined sittings during a prescribed period of mourning for the deceased; mourning songs for the deceased which are not suitable, Luke 8: 52—54; to swear by idols and to seek cure through idols; hair cutting feasts for the deceased, and any participation whatsoever in the worship of idols.

Other customs which are not suitable are: Gun-salute for the deceased, tattooing, drilling or the removing of teeth (as a tribal characteristic), decoration of the ears or nose with finery, 1 Corinthians 3: 16—17, small bells, anklets and unsuitable hair styles, red or black painting of the body and other such pagan customs.”<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt about the fact that this missionary policy was also put into practice, and this quotation shows how difficult it was for the Swedish mission to apply such principals as that of cultural equality, and that of respect for the Congolese customs, that of allowing the Congolese themselves make up their own minds in regard to the Word of God, that of preaching the Gospel without any ”European flavour”. The result, after all, was that the Congolese congregation was subjected to European influence, concerning mode of dress, food, drinking habits, way of thinking, and customs. Not many of the Congolese customs and practices remained acceptable to the missionaries, after the prohibition of the traditional family formation, all that belonged to banganga’s world, and everything which belonged to feasts of various kinds, where the use of the drum, dance and palm-wine occurred, and all adornment and decoration of the body.

Strictly speaking, the only African form of expression which had been unreservedly accepted, was the Congolese language, and this was respected and admired by the missionaries. All teaching, preaching and the entire literary work was in Kikongo. When the Swedish mission was confronted by the Congo culture, it did not succeed, in practice, in discriminating between what was European and what was biblical. The Christian brotherhood was, however, for all the missionaries a living and fundamental principle. All statements which discussed the Europeans and Africans position before God, emphasized that, before the Creator all were equal, in His

eyes all races and people had the same value. We also notice that towards the close of the 1880's, the Swedish Protestant mission, reveals a number of features, which were common to both the Capuchin mission, and the French mission which emanated from Paris, i. e. their negative attitude vis à vis banganga, polygyny, drumming, nakedness. None of them had succeeded in taking the Congolese culture seriously, or shown it the same respect as was shown for European or Asian culture. One can ask oneself, if that which was about to happen, was not what Nils Westlind had warned against in 1893; that the christian Congolese grew so familiar with the white man's ways, that they became just as alien to their own people, as were the missionaries. The generation-gap within Congolese families had deepened into a culture-gap, due to the missionary influence.

### Mundele, as ndoki or mukuyu?

This study of culture confrontation in the Lower Congo is concluded here, with a brief analysis of the Congolese conception of mundele, as ndoki or mukuyu. The Congolese reaction to Bula Matadi's violence has previously been accounted for, a reaction which expressed itself in fear and hatred. People frequently abandoned their villages, in order to escape Bula Matadi's expeditions; only on exceptional occasions, as at Kasi and Nganda, 1893—1894, did the Congolese defend their lives and property. Bula Matadi was a term which they applied to the administrators, and soldiers of the Congo Independent State, and also to all white men, before they became personally acquainted with them, and their different professions. What they really meant by giving the white man the designation, Bula Matadi, is difficult to ascertain, even if the literal meaning of the word is familiar. It probably alluded to something beyond the white man's ability to crush stone, and expressed that fear which the Congolese felt for the white man's devastating influence on the entire structure of society.

The most characteristic feature of the Congolese reaction to the white men, was that they scrupulously avoided calling them *bantu*, a term which was used only about themselves. The white men were called *mindele*, singular *mundele*, and thereby a distinct difference was made between the Congolese, and the white man. As we have seen, *mundele* and *mindele* are the old words, which have been used for the white man, since the time of Mvemba Nzinga. The linguistic practice, to so definitely discriminate between *bantu* and *mindele* primarily indicates that the Congolese had difficulty in placing the white man in human categories. This difficulty

can be illustrated by a quotation from Stanley, 1877, when some people along the Congo river, thought that the white men were animals: "Such fools it is hardly to imagine as these. At one place, Ikundu, they set nets to catch us, and one was shot in the act of setting a large game net. They considered us game to be trapped, shot, or bagged at sight".<sup>6</sup> This African idea, can be seen as a parallel to the European idea that the "negro" was macaco, or the missing link between apes and men.

Tito Makundu relates from the early days at Mukimbungu, that the people considered the white men to be "animals, who eat people".<sup>7</sup> This statement is in accordance with what Nils Westlind and K. J. Pettersson reported at the beginning of the 1880's, that mundeles were said to be ndoki, who were in the habit of "eating people", "dia muntu".<sup>8</sup> In 1898, a line of thought from Diadia was related, which connected mundeles, not only with ndoki, but also with mukuyu. "The Congolese believe, that we are very proficient 'man-eaters', and that after having eaten the life out of somebody, we send them to 'Mputu', the white man's land, where they are examined, transformed, and become white, and then they return to this country, as just as proficient 'man-eaters' as we".<sup>9</sup> Buana Kibongi, 1969, has analysed this Congolese idea, and claims that between ndoki and mukuyu there is a close connexion, because after death, ndoki becomes mukuyu and is denied admittance to the Congolese Paradise, "the village of ripe bananas", due to his wicked deeds.<sup>10</sup> In 1902, it was illustrated from Nganda, how mundeles could be directly connected with the evil powers: "The white man they call mundeles Ngobila", writes the missionary Ekström, "that is to say mundeles, who belongs to the most feared of all idols, which chain and kill people".<sup>11</sup> In all these examples, mundeles is described as an evil power, which threatens society through "chaining and eating bantu", and this idea is expressed in the two terms, ndoki and mukuyu, plural bandoki and mikuyu, which must be carefully distinguished from mukulu, bakulu, the good ancestors. Laman, however, writes bankuyu, and translates this by evil spirits, a translation which can also be applied to mikuyu.<sup>12</sup>

All the Congolese authors who have dealt with the relationship between the Congolese and the white man, as they recall it from their childhood, are in complete accordance; that there was serious discussion on whether the white men "eat" people, and thus were a danger to society. In 1926, Tito Makundu relates from Mukimbungu, that the discussion in 1881, in the villages, concerned whether one could, or could not, accept the white men, as they were said to "eat people". Even those Congolese who, at a later date, worked for mundeles, for example as teachers, were

called *ndoki*.<sup>13</sup> Elisa Nkambulu from Kibunzi, and Abeli Kiananwa from Diadia mention this very fear of the white men, who eat people, as the predominant reaction.<sup>14</sup>

Simona Kavuna in *Vildmarkens vår*, 1928, describes how the three chiefs Malemba, Masangi and Ndongi, interrogated Mabula, who had had contact with the white men, in the Mukimbungu region, to where he had been sold as a slave from Nganda:

”They are human’, he assured them.

’Yes, but in which way?’ asked the chiefs.

’They are white and they have soft and flexible bodies.’

’But don’t they eat people?’

’I do not know, but I almost fear that that is the case, as death follows them wherever they go’.

’May they stay where they are’.”<sup>15</sup>

Despite everything the chiefs changed their opinion, and allowed the white men to settle. Luka Diki from Kinkenge described a similar discussion, which took place among the people, concerning whether the white men should be allowed to build or not, and the decisive question was, of course, whether the white men eat people.<sup>16</sup> But the missionaries were allowed to build, even in Kinkenge, but when the first pupils were to be baptized, the missionaries lives were threatened, as the people did not want them, through baptism, to transfer their witchcraft to their own children.

It is Josef Ndibu who expresses himself most clearly, on how *mundele* was regarded at Kingoyi: ”The white men are dead people, who have once lived in our villages, but when they died, they came to the place where the dead are to be found, and there, they shed their skins (just as some snakes), after which they had white bodies”, and if one accepts the white man, ”nothing but death and destruction will follow”.<sup>17</sup> When the missionary Ekstam arrived in Kingoyi, he was considered to be ”exactly like Ndibu’s father”, who had recently died. His face, head, hair, everything pointed to the fact, that it was Ndibu’s own father, who had returned to the village. This they considered to be proof enough that *mundele* was *mukuyu*. The people did not understand the white man’s language: ”It is only a babble, and their voices are similar to the ghosts: we do not understand them”.<sup>18</sup>

When the Swedish mission expanded for example to Madzia and Sundi Lutete, during the twentieth century, the people received them with the same ideas; that they were ghosts or revenants, who eat people.<sup>19</sup> Petolo Ngialu writes from Madzia, that ”no person can learn to read, without

at the same time becoming a witch".<sup>20</sup> This is an expression for the idea, that those who came into touch with *mundele*, who was *ndoki* or *mukuyu*, through either the schools, baptism, or work at the mission, became the same themselves.

The problem, which the Congolese discussed by calling the white man *mundele*, and characterizing him as *ndoki*, or *mukuyu*, was in the final analysis not a biological question, but an ethical problem. If only death and destruction followed the white men, could they then be *bantu*? All Congolese posed such questions in the culture confrontation; questions which expressed profound fear and anxiety.

# Notes

## Preface and Introduction

- 1 W. Sjöholm from Mukimbungu, July 24, 1896, in: MF 1896 p 340; C. N. Börrisson from Nganda, May 18, 1900, Ur dagboken, in: MF 1900 p 235.
- 2 See Fage, in: *The African World* ed. by Lystad, London 1965 p 40 ff; Vansina, Mauny and Thomas, in: *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, London 1961 p 2 ff, 60 ff.
- 3 Vansina: *De la tradition orale, essai de méthode historique*, Tervuren 1961.
- 4 Different view is among others expressed på Robert O. Collins: *Introduction*, in: *Problems of African History*, London 1968 p 1 ff.
- 5 Hakluyt Society. Vol I as No 95, London 1896, and Vol II as No 100, London 1899.
- 6 Hakluyt Society. Second Series No 79, London 1936.
- 7 Hakluyt Society. Second Series No 80, London 1937.
- 8 Barros, Giovanni di.: *L'Asia, Venezia* 1562.
- 9 London 1937; Hakluyt Society. Second Series No 86, London 1942.
- 10 IRCB. Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Mémoires. Série historique. Tome 36, Bruxelles 1954.
- 11 *The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh*, Hakluyt Society. Second Series, Vol VI, London 1901; shortened to Ravenstein 1901.
- 12 Ravenstein 1901 p 89—101.
- 13 Namur 1951. Collection Lavigerie 39.
- 14 Dapper, Olfert: *La description du Royaume du Congo*, Traduit par Chr. Monheim, in: *Bulletin des Etudes et Informations de l'Institut Supérieur de Commerce, St. Ignace, Juin 1932* p 57 ff, Juillet-août 1932 p 157 ff, Dapper, Olfert: *Umbständliche und Eigentliche Beschreibung von Africa Anno 1668*. Eingrichtet, mit einem Nachwort versehen und herausgegeben von Rolf Italiaander, Stuttgart 1964.
- 15 IRCB. Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Mémoires, Série Historique, Tome 30, Bruxelles 1953.
- 16 *Ur vår tids forskning, populära skildringar* utgivna av A. Key, G. Retzius och A. Jäderholm, No 23, Stockholm 1878.
- 17 E. J. Ekman to K. J. Pettersson, from Stockholm, January 26, 1892, in: *Brevkopior* No 2, 1889—aug 1893.
- 18 E. J. Ekman to J. W. Håkansson, from Stockholm, October 30, 1888, and E. J. Ekman to Nils Westlind, from Stockholm, August 17, 1888, in: *Brevkopior*, No 1 1880—1889.
- 19 E. J. Ekman to K. J. Pettersson, from Stockholm, August 31, 1893, in: *Brevkopior*, No 2, 1889—aug 1893; E. J. Ekman to K. J. Pettersson October 2, October 26, November 29, 1893, February 22, June 29, 1894, in: *Brevkopior*, No 3, aug 1893—1898.
- 20 Hallingberg, in: *Kraft och klarhet*, ed. by O. Engström, G. Nicklasson and J.-E. Wikström, Falköping 1970 p 82 ff.

## Chapter 1

### Mvemba Nzinga's Era. 1482—1543.

- 1 Verlinden 1955, Verlinden 1961, Verlinden 1963, Verlinden 1968.
- 2 Rinchon 1929, Rinchon 1956.
- 3 Van Wing 2nd ed. 1959 p 102 ff, Rinchon 1929 p XVf, Cuvelier 1946 p 223f, Verlinden 1955 p 729ff, Balandier 1965 p 177ff.
- 4 Verlinden 1955 p 600.
- 5 op cit p 632.
- 6 Rinchon 1929 p 30.
- 7 Azurara in: Hakluyt 95, 1895 p 32ff.
- 8 op cit p 80f.
- 9 Rinchon 1929 p 32, Cuvelier 1946 p 30.

- 10 Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis in: Hakluyt 2 ser. 79, 1937 p 61ff.
- 11 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 15.
- 12 in: MMA 2 ser, 1, 1958 p 269ff, 277ff; Da Silva Rego 1959 p 16f.
- 13 Blake 1937 p 16ff.
- 14 Grant to Fernão Gomes, 1469. in: Blake 1942 p 67f and Arrendamento do resgate da Guiné. (1469) in: MMA 2 ser, 1, 1958 p 436ff.
- 15 Renewal of grant to Fernão Gomes, 1 June 1473, in: Blake 1942 p 68ff; and Carta régia a Fernão Gomes (1-6-1473), in MMA 2 ser, 1, 1958 p 455f.
- 16 Cuvelier 1946 p 33, Blake 1942 p 13f.
- 17 Jews transported to the Island of São Thomé. 1493, in: Blake 1942 p 86f.
- 18 Cuvelier 1946 p 137.
- 19 Rui de Pina: Fundamento do Castelo e Cidade de São Jorge na Mina, 19 de Janeiro de 1482, in: MMA 1, 1952 p 8ff; Garcia de Resende in: op cit p 15ff; João de Barros in: op cit p 18ff and Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis in: Hakluyt 2 ser, 79, 1937 p 119ff.
- 20 Blake 1937 p 97ff, map in fine; Blake 1942 p 295ff.
- 21 ATT — Livro das Ilhas: Carta Régia de privilégio aos provadores de S. Tomé, Sintra, 24 de Setembro de 1485, in: MMA 1, 1952 p 50f.
- 22 Carta de juridição a Fernão de Melo (15-12-1499), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 180; Carta da Alcaldaria a Fernão de Melo (15-12-1499), op cit p 181f; Privilégios aos moradores de S. Tomé (26-3-1500), op cit p 183 and translated to English in: Blake 1942 p 89ff.
- 23 Ravenstein in: Geographical Journal 1900 p 626ff.
- 24 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 20f, Blake 1937 p 70 f.
- 25 Balandier 1965 p 39.
- 26 Vansina: Anthropologists and the Third Dimension, in: Africa, London, Jan 1969 p 62ff.
- 27 Vansina: Notes sur l'origine du royaume de Kongo, in: Journal of African History, IV, 1, 1963, p 33ff, with a map.
- 28 Le Nsundi tint le premier rang parmi les provinces. Il était regardé en quelque sorte comme le domaine patrimonial des rois. Lopez-Pigafetta (1591) ed. Bal 1965 p 66; cf Cuvelier 1946 p 11. See also André Cordeiro (mai 1622 — juin 1624) in: Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 392, and Bernardo da Gallo (1710) in: Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 467ff.
- 29 Un chanoine du Congo, André Cordeiro au P. Manuel Rodriguez à Loanda (mai 1622 — juin 1624) in: Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 389. André Cordeiro is connected with Bras Correa. Cuvelier 1946 p 15f.
- 30 Weber 1924 p 10f; Van Wing 2nd ed. 1959 p 19ff; Cuvelier 1946 p 16ff; Bouveignes 1948 p 23ff; Cornevin 1963 p 30ff; Blandier 1965 p 12.
- 31 Rui de Pina: Descorberta do Reino do Congo (1482) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 32; Garcia de Resende in: op cit p 36ff; João de Barros in: op cit p 39ff.
- 32 Cuvelier 1946 p 37ff.
- 33 Weber 1924 p 8ff,
- 34 Cuvelier 1946 p 42.
- 35 Weber 1924 p 16.
- 36 Rui de Pina: Chegada dos Pretos ao Congo (1488—1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 56ff; Garcia de Resende in: op cit p 69ff.
- 37 João de Barros: Desorberta do Reino do Congo (1482) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 39ff.
- 38 Cuvelier 1946 p 45.
- 39 Rui de Pina: Chegada dos Pretos ao Congo op cit p 57.
- 40 Garcia de Resende: Chegada dos Pretos ao Congo op cit p 69.
- 41 Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis op cit p 144.
- 42 Rui de Pina: Chegada dos Pretos ao Congo op cit p 61.
- 43 Rui de Pina: Descorberta de Reino do Congo (1482) op cit p 32. Garcia de Resende and João de Barros only repeat the words of Rui de Pina.
- 44 Rui de Pina: Chegada dos Pretos ao Congo (1488—1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 61.
- 45 op cit p 64f; Cuvelier 1946 p 66; Weber 1924 p 19ff.

- 46 Rui de Pina op cit p 66ff.
- 47 Rui de Pina: Chegada da Embaixada Portuguesa à Corte do Congo (29-4-1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 112ff.
- 48 Rui de Pina: Baptismo de Rei do Congo (3-5-1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 121ff.
- 49 Rui de Pina: Construção do primeria igreja do Congo (6/5—1/6 1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 130f.
- 50 Rui de Pina: Baptismo do Rei do Congo op cit p 124; Garcia de Resende: Baptismo do Rei do Congo (3-5-1491) in: op cit p 127ff.
- 51 Sundkler, Bantu Prophets 2nd ed. 1961 p 265ff, Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa, 1960 p 25ff.
- 52 Cuvelier 1946 p 80 ff.
- 53 Rui de Pina: Baptismo da Rainha D. Leonor (4-6 1491) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 133ff; João de Barros: Reinado de D. Alfonso I do Congo in: op cit p 141.
- 54 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 2, note 2.
- 55 Weber 1924 p 38.
- 56 Cuvelier 1946 p 88.
- 57 Rui de Pina: Baptismo da Rainha D. Leonor op cit p 134.
- 58 Cuvelier 1946 p 274, note 26.
- 59 Laman, Dictionnaire Kikongo-Français p 612 "mungwua".
- 60 Cuvelier 1946 p 275, note 29. See Streit 17, p 294; Memoria, 1 Janeiro 1782.
- 61 Cuvelier 1946 p 275, note 29.
- 62 Acts 2, 4; 8, 15ff; 10, 44ff; 15, 8; 19, 5ff; 1. Corinthians 12, 14.
- 63 Balandier 1965 p 29.
- 64 Rui de Pina: Baptismo da Rainha D. Leonor op cit p 135.
- 65 Cuvelier 1946 p 81.
- 66 Balandier 1965 p 34.
- 67 Balandier 1965 p 258.
- 68 Weber 1924 p 36.
- 69 ibid.
- 70 Cuvelier 1946 p 87.
- 71 Balandier 1965 p 34.
- 72 Cuvelier 1946 p 89.
- 73 João de Barros: Reinado do D. Afonso I do Congo in: MMA 1, 1952 p 141ff; cf Cuvelier 1946 p 91ff.
- 74 Carta do rei do Congo aos senhores do reino (1512); Carta do rei do Congo a seus povos (1512); Carta do rei do Congo D. Manuel I (5-10-1514) in: MMA 1, 1552 p 260ff.
- 75 Weber 1924 p 41, Cuvelier 1946 p 98ff, Balandier 1965 p 37f.
- 76 Merolla 1692 in: A Collection of Voyages, London 1732 p 629.
- 77 Cuvelier 1946 p 284.
- 78 op cit p 105, 284.
- 79 Balandier 1965 p 39, 42.
- 80 Carta do rei do Congo (5-10-1514) in: MMA 1, 1952 p 295.
- 81 Weber 1924 p 45ff, Cuvelier 1946 p 108ff.
- 82 "myll e quynhentos manylhas e çento e cynquenta espriuos", Carta do rei do Congo (5-10-1514) op cit p 295.
- 83 Auto de inquirição a Conçalo Roiz (11/12 1511—15/1 1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 215ff.
- 84 Weber 1924 p 46.
- 85 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 298.
- 86 Cuvelier 1946 p 116ff.
- 87 Partida dos primeiros missionários azuis para o Congo (Dez 1508), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 207.
- 88 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 298ff.
- 89 Weber 1924 p 49, Cuvelier-Boon 1941 p 148f and Cuvelier 1946 p 123f.
- 90 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 298ff.
- 91 Brásio, Política do Espírito no Ultramar Português, 1949, p 17,
- 92 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 299ff.
- 93 Carta do Vigário Rui de Aguiar a el-Rei D. Manuel, 25 de Maio de 1516, in: MMA 1, 1952 p 361ff.
- 94 Weber 1924 p 50f; Cuvelier 1946 p 124f; Balandier 1965 p 42f.
- 95 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 322.
- 1 Embaixada de Simão da Silva ao Congo (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 222 ff.
  - 2 Carta de D. Manuel para o rei do Congo (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 226ff.
  - 3 Regimento de D. Manuel a Simão da Silva (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 228—246.
  - 4 Rol de objectos a enviar para o Congo (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 247ff.
  - 5 Weber 1924 p 55.



- 6 Cuvelier 1946 p 135.  
 7 op cit p 136, note.  
 8 op cit p 132.  
 9 Regimento de D. Manuel a Simão da Silva (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 228ff.  
 10 Regimento de D. Manuel a Manuel Pacheco e Baltasar de Castro (16-2-1520), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 431ff.  
 11 Antonio da Silva Rego: Portuguese Colonization in the Sixteenth Century, A Study of the Royal Ordinances (Regimentos), Johannesburg 1959.  
 12 op cit p 46.  
 13 *ibid.*  
 14 Regimento (1512) op cit p 244ff.  
 15 Weber 1924 p 163, note 8.  
 16 Damião de Góis: De Algumas Coisas que Tocam o Rei do Congo (1516), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 373ff.  
 17 op cit p 375.  
 18 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 46.  
 19 Weber 1924 p 54f, Cuvelier 1946 p 180ff.  
 20 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 46.  
 21 Goes: Chronica do felicissimo Rey Dom Manuel da gloriosa memoria, 1619, quoted by Weber 1924 p 163, note 9.  
 22 Cuvelier 1946 p 180f.  
 23 Cuvelier 1946 p 182; see also Cuvelier — Jadin 1954 p 4.  
 24 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 46.  
 25 Cuvelier 1946 p 182.  
 26 The Bull Dum diversas 1452. Cf The problem of the just war, Da Silva Rego 1959 p 25ff.  
 27 Weber 1924 p 60.  
 28 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 47.  
 29 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 310ff.  
 30 Cuvelier 1946 p 228.  
 31 Carta do rei do Congo ao papa (1512), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 272f.  
 32 Cédula Consistorial de D. Henrique Bispo de Utica, 5 de Maio de 1518, in: MMA 1, 1952 p 416.  
 33 Da Silva Rego 1959 p 48.  
 34 Balandier 1965 p 40.  
 35 Breve de Leão X ao Bispo de Utica (22-5-1518), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 419f.  
 36 Leo X writes "ut etiam si defectum Natalium patiaris ex rege soluto vel conjugato et soluta seu conjugata, dicte ecclesia praeesse..." op cit p 419.  
 37 Breve de Leão X a D. Manuel I (3-5-1518), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 421f.  
 38 Bula de Leão X a D. Manuel I (3-5-1518), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 414; cf Cuvelier 1946 p 315, note 55.  
 39 Carta (5-10-1514) op cit p 321f.  
 40 Bernardo Segura a el-Rei (15-3-1517), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 377ff.  
 41 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (31-5-1515), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 335 ff.  
 42 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (4-3-1516), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 355 ff.  
 43 Damião de Góis: De Algumas Coisas que Tocam ao Rei do Congo (1516), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 373ff.  
 44 Carta de Bernardo Segura a el-Rei (15-3-1517) op cit p 377 ff.  
 45 Carta do Vigário Rui de Aguiar a el-Rei D. Manuel (25-5-1516), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 361ff.  
 46 op cit p 362.  
 47 *ibid.*  
 48 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João II (25-5-1517), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 414f.  
 49 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (8-6-1517), in: op cit p 408f.  
 50 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (27-5-1517), in: op cit p 406f.  
 51 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (8-6-1517) and Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (13-6-1517), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 408ff.  
 52 Bula de Leão X a D. Manuel I (3-5-1518), in: op cit p 414f; Cédula Consistorial de D. Henrique Bispo de Utica (8-5-1518), in: op cit p 417f; Breve de Leão X ao Bispo de Utica 22-5-1518), in: op cit p 419f.  
 53 Alvará do Rei do Congo aos Officiais de S. Tomé (27-12-1525), in: op cit p 455.  
 54 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (18-3-1526), in MMA 1, 1952 p 459ff.  
 55 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (18-10-1526), in: op cit p 488ff.  
 56 Weber 1924 p 85.

- 57 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (25-8-1526), in: op cit p 483f.
- 58 "que começamos em hũa muy forte mata, honde antigamente se os Rex enterravam, segundo sua antigã idolatria; a quall toda rompemos e cortamos, que era coussa muy difyçil de fazer". op cit p 479.
- 59 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (6-7-1526), in: op cit p 468ff.
- 60 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (18-10-1526), in: op cit p 488ff.
- 61 Carta de Manuel Pacheco a D. João III (28-3-1536), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 58.
- 62 Weber 1924 p 95.
- 63 Bula de Ereccção de Bispado de S. Tomé (3-11-1534), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 22ff.
- 64 Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo III (21-2-1535), in: op cit p 38ff.
- 65 Breve de Paulo III ao Rei do Congo (17-3-1535), in: op cit p 41ff; Breve de Paulo III ao Rei do Congo (5-5-1535), in: op cit p 44f.
- 66 Carta de Procuraçção do Rei do Congo (12-2-1539), in: op cit p 70ff.
- 67 Carta de Manuel Pacheco a D. João III (28-3-1536), in: op cit p 57ff.
- 68 Cuvelier 1946 p 337, note 65.
- 69 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (4-12-1540), in: op cit p 100 ff.
- 70 Carta de Gonçalo Nunes Coelho a D. João III (20-4-1539), in: op cit p 76ff.
- 71 "todollos homens brancos, que nelle estam, asy eclesiasticos como seculares, e tornallo a reformar de gente nova, e boa; por que se a emveja, avareza e cobiça no mundo reynam . . ." op cit p 78.
- 72 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (17-12-1540), in: op cit p 103ff.
- 73 op cit p 105.
- 74 Carta para el-Rei D. João III (20-3-1541), in: op cit p 107ff.
- 75 Weber 1924 p 98.
- 76 Carta para el-Rei D. João III (20-3-1541), in: op cit p 110.
- 77 Balandier 1965 p 186. Cf Cuvelier 1946 p 223 f.
- 78 Van Wing 2nd ed. 1959 p 102ff, Cuvelier 1946 p 224.
- 79 Balandier 1965 p 181.
- 80 op cit p 186f.
- 81 Van Wing op cit p 103.
- 82 Cuvelier 1946 p 225; Cf Rinchon 1929 p 39; Ihle 1929 p 211; Balandier 1965 p 188f.
- 83 Letter from Nicolaus Cleynaerts de Diest of March 27, 1535 quoted by Cuvelier 1946 p 233.
- 84 Rinchon 1929 p 50.
- 85 Cuvelier 1946 p 232.
- 86 Jean Léon l'Africain: Description de l'Afrique, T I, Fol 483. Lyon 1556.
- 87 Rinchon 1929 p 51f.
- 88 op cit p 53.
- 89 Cuvelier 1946 p 231.
- 90 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 86.
- 91 Bal 1965 p 157, note 37; Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 34ff.
- 92 Carta de D. João III ao Rei do Congo (Fins de 1529), in: MMA 1, 1952 p 521ff; Regimento pera o vigário de Congo op cit p 535ff; cf Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 86f.
- 93 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 233.
- 94 Slade 1962 p 2, 6.
- 95 Lopez-Pigafetta (1591) ed. Bal 1965 p 96ff.
- 96 op cit p 98.
- 97 Colas: Affonso, Roi de Congo de 1507 à 1543, Louvain 1932.
- 98 Cf Buana Kibongi, in: Dickson — Ellingworth 1969 p 49.

## Chapter 2

### From Mvemba Nzinga to Garcia II. 1543—1641.

- 1 Stephen Neill: Christian Missions, ed. Penguin Books 1964 p 139.
- 2 Weber 1924 p 104ff.
- 3 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 186f.
- 4 Extracto de uma carta do padre Cristóvão Ribeiro (31-7-1548), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 177f; Extracto de uma carta do padre Jácome Dias (1-8-1548), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 179ff.
- 5 Weber 1924 p 113.
- 6 Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (25-2-1547), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 155 f; Carta do Rei do Congo a D.

- João III (25-4-1547), in: op cit p 161.
- 7 Inquirição sobre o comércio de S. Tomé com Angola ordenada por D. João III (12-11-1548), in: op cit p 197ff; Inquirição mandada fazer pelo rei do Congo e remetida a D. João III, sobre o danno que resultava ao Congo do comércio que de S. Tomé se fazia com Angola (7 de maio de 1548), in: Paiva Manso 1877 p 84ff; Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III (28-1-1549), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 226f.
- 8 Rinchon 1929 p 56.
- 9 Kilger ZM 11, 1921 p 66f.
- 10 Carta de D. João III ao Rei do Congo (8-8-1547), in: MMA 2, 1953 p 163f; Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 349ff; Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 189; Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 66f; Bouveignes 1948 p 41f; Kilger ZM 11. 1921 p 20ff.
- 11 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 189.
- 12 Kilger op cit p 25.
- 13 Kilger op cit p 66; Rinchon 1929 p 58ff.
- 14 Cuvelier — Jadin 1954 p 67.
- 15 Carta do Padre Garcia Simões ao Padre Luis Perpinhão (7-11 1576), in: MMA 3, 1953 p 145. See also Rinchon op cit p 59.
- 16 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 21.
- 17 Lopex-Pigafetta (1591) ed. Bal 1965 p 103f; Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 21.
- 18 Lopez-Pigafetta op cit p 106ff; the compiler Confalonieri in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 125.
- 19 Lopez-Pigafetta op cit p 107.
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 Balandier 1965 p 59.
- 22 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 65.
- 23 Lopez-Pigafetta op cit p 110, 104.
- 24 *ibid.*, see also page 207, note 296. Bula Matadi=Breaker of Rocks from bula=break, crush, and tadi=stone, rock, pl. matadi.
- 25 Lopez-Pigafetta op cit p 104.
- 26 op cit p 110.
- 27 Documents published from 1536—1591, in: Bal 1963 p 90ff.
- 28 Lopez-Pigafetta op cit p 110.
- 29 Instructions données par le roi de Congo à Duarte Lopez, son ambassadeur. San Salvador le 15 janvier 1583, in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 160f.
- 30 Duarte Lopez à Sixte Quint sur la situation au Congo (Madrid, le 24 février 1588), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 166ff; Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 190.
- 31 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 166, note 2.
- 32 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 189ff.
- 33 Confalonieri in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 145f.
- 34 Bal 1965 p XXIf.
- 35 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 24ff.
- 36 De la situation du royaume du Congo (Lisbonne, le 25 nov. 1595), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 202ff.
- 37 Erection de l'évêché de San Salvador au Consistoire (Rome, le 20 mai 1596), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 212 f; Cédula Consistorial do Bispado do Congo (Roma, 20 de Maio de 1596), in: MMA 3, 1953 p 532.
- 38 Rapport de la visite ad limina de François de Villanova, évêque de S. Tomé. (Lisbonne, le 24 octobre 1597), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 232f.
- 39 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 49ff.
- 40 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 199.
- 41 Procès de nomination de Francisco de Soveral, évêque de San Tomé, proposé comme évêque du Congo et d'Angola (Lisbonne, le ler au 6 juin et 4 septembre 1626), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 484.
- 42 See the documents published by Cuvelier-Jadin 1954.
- 43 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 24ff, 260—299.
- 44 Sommaire des instructions que porta à Rome Dom Antonio Manuel, ambassadeur du roi de Congo, pour les soumettre au pape Clément VIII (San Salvador, le 29 juin 1604), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 260ff.
- 45 Alvare II au pape Clément VIII (San Salvador, le 13 juillet 1604), in: op cit p 269 ff.
- 46 Relation sur l'ambassade (1608), in: op cit p 284 ff.
- 47 Funérailles de l'ambassadeur Antonio Manuel (Rome, janvier 1608), in: op cit p 291ff; Bontinck: Le monument

- funèbre d' " Antonius Nigrita" à Rome, in: RCA 6,2,1951 p 118ff.
- 48 Paul V au roi Alvare II (Rome, le 4 octobre 1610), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 315ff.
- 49 Alvare II au pape Paul V (San Salvador, le 27 février 1613), in: op cit p 333. Cf Plaintes du roi Alvare II contre l'évêque Manuel Baptista (San Salvador, le 20 mars 1613), in: op cit p 335ff, and Consulte du Conseil de Portugal. Demandes d'Alvare II présentées par ses ambassadeurs Dom Garcia Baptista et Dom Antonio Manuel (Madrid, le 31 mars 1607), in: op cit p 520ff.
- 50 Bontinck: Jean-Baptiste Vivès, ambassadeur des Roi de Congo auprès du Saint-Siège, in: RCA 7,4,1952 p 258ff.
- 51 Désignation de Vivès comme ambassadeur, Revendications d'Alvare II (1615), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 344; Requetes du roi Alvare II (Présentées à Rome, le 16 juillet 1615), in: op cit p 345f; Alvare III au pape Paul V (San Salvador, le 25 octobre 1617), in: op cit p 348ff: Instructions pour Vivès (San Salvador, le 25 octobre 1617), in: op cit p 352ff.
- 52 Philip III au cardinal Borja, au sujet du Congo (S. Lorenzo de l'Estorial, le 28 août 1618), in: op cit p 359.
- 53 *ibid.*
- 54 Extraits de quelques lettres d'Alvare III au pape Paul V (San Salvador, le 20 octobre 1619), in: op cit p 376ff.
- 55 Carta do rei do Congo a Monsenhor Vivès (16-10-1619), in: MMA 6, 1955 p 393.
- 56 Bontinck in: RCA 7,4,1952 p 262.
- 57 Lopez-Pigafetta (1591) ed. Bal 1965; Confalonieri: Histoire du Congo. Description du pays, in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 108ff; De Statu Regni Congi (Lisbonne, le 25 novembre 1595), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 194f and in: Mélanges d'Histoire offerts à Charles Moeller, Fasc II, Louvain 1914 p 293ff translated by Simar: Une relation inédite sur le Congo (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).
- 58 Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 202.
- 59 op cit p 122.
- 60 Rapport de la visite ad limina de François de Villnova, évêque de S. Tomé (Lisbonne, le 24 octobre 1597), in: Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 221 ff.
- 61 Rapport de l'évêque Manuel Baptista Soares sur son diocèse de Congo et Angola (Lisbonne, le 16 novembre 1619), in: op cit p 388ff.
- 62 op cit p 395.
- 63 op cit p 403.
- 64 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 200, Jadin BIHBR 38, 1967 p 282, Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 351f.
- 65 Relação do Padre Mateus Cardoso (14-9-1625) in: MMA 7, 1956 p 369ff; Relation du second voyage de P. Mateus Cardoso (le 14 septembre 1625), in: Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 416ff.
- 66 Jadin BIHBR 38, 1967 p 271ff; Jadin: Un grand missionnaire au Congo, le Père Jésuite Pero Tavares. 1629—1634, in: RCA 11,2,1956 p 137ff.
- 67 Jadin BIHBR 38, 1967 p 291, note 2.
- 68 op cit p 416ff.
- 69 op cit p 425.
- 70 Rapport de la visite "ad limina" pour le diocèse de São Salvador, présenté au pape et à la congrégation du concile par l'évêque Francisco de Soveral (Loanda, le 1<sup>er</sup> avril 1631), in: Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 429ff.
- 71 op cit p 433.
- 72 *ibid.*
- 73 op cit p 434.
- 74 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 205.
- 75 Visite ad limina par Francisco de Soveral. (Loanda, le 22 septembre 1640), in Cuvelier-Jadin 1954 p 505 ff.
- 76 Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 343.
- 77 Un chanoine du Congo, André Cordeiro, au P. Manuel Rodrigues à Loanda (Mai 1622—Juin 1624). Vie du Roi Dom Pedro II Afonso, in: Jadin BIHBR 39, 1968 p 389 ff.
- 78 op cit p 391.
- 79 Le P. Mateus Cardoso au P. Nuno Mascarenhas, assistant du Portugal à Rome. Relation de ce qui se passa en Angola en 1623 au sujet de l'em-

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- 81 Jadin BIHBR 38, 1967 p 288f.
- 82 Le P. Pero Tavares S.J. au P. provincial du Portugal (le 29 juin 1635), in: Jadin BIHBR 38, 1967 p 370ff.
- 83 op cit p 371.
- Chapter 3**  
**From Garcia II to Kimpa Vita.**  
**1641—1706.**
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- 2 Op cit p 171.
- 3 Bontinck 1964 p X.
- 4 Cuvelier: Le Père Bonaventure d'Alessano, capuchin, missionnaire au Congo (1645—1651), in: RCA 7, 5, 1952 p 338 ff.
- 5 Bontinck 1964 p 23 ff.
- 6 Hildebrand 1940 p 189.
- 7 Bontinck 1964 p 46; cf Bernårdo da Gallo 1710, in: Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 459.
- 8 Bontinck 1964 p 85.
- 9 Op cit p 115 ff.
- 10 Op cit p 119.
- 11 Op cit p 118.
- 12 Op cit p 120.
- 13 Op cit p 127.
- 14 The names of the Capuchin missionaries are given in: Archives Congolaises 1919 p 14 ff, 78 ff, 212 ff; Bouveignes-Cuvelier 1951 p 206 ff; Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 437 ff.
- 15 Kilger, in: NZM 14, 1, 1958 p 50 ff; Hildebrand 1940.
- 16 Hildebrand 1940 p 100 f.
- 17 Op cit p 240 ff.
- 18 Bibliothèque Congo, Louvain 1928.
- 19 Hyacintho Brusciotto à Vetralla: Regulae quaedam pro difficillimi Congensium, Romae 1659; Grattan H. Guinness: Grammar of the Congo Language as spoken two hundred years ago, London 1882. Cf Grattan H. Guinness: Grammar of the Congo Language as spoken in the Cataract Region below Stanley Pool, London 1882.
- 20 Holman W. Bentley: Dictionary and Grammar of the Congo Languages as spoken at San Salvador, London 1887; Nils Westlind: Grammatikaliska anmärkningar över Congospråket sådant det talas i mellersta delen av nedre Congodalen, Mukimbungu 1888.
- 21 Hildebrand 1940 p 262.
- 22 Op cit p 291.
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- 24 See the study of L. Jadin: L'église de Ngongo MBata, in: ARSC, NS 1, 4, 1955, Bulletin des Séances, Bruxelles 1955 p 1000 ff.
- 25 Hildebrand 1940 p 322.
- 26 The proclamation is quoted in full in: Hildebrand 1940 p 335 ff.
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- 28 Bouveignes 1948 p 119.
- 29 Bibliotheca Missionum, Streit 16, 3829.
- 30 Hildebrand 1940 p 340: Archives Congolaises 1919.
- 31 Hildebrand 1940 p 341.
- 32 Pratique missionnaire (1747) ed. Louvain 1931 p 53.
- 33 Instructions aux missionnaires (1669) ed. Louvain 1928 p 47 ff.
- 34 Bouveignes-Cuvelier: Jérôme de Montesarchio. Apôtre du Vieux Congo, Namur 1951.
- 35 Op cit p 39.
- 36 Op cit p 44 f.
- 37 Op cit p 93 f.
- 38 Op cit p 104 ff.
- 39 Op cit p 115.
- 40 Merolla 1692 ed. A. Collection of Voyages 1732 p 664.
- 41 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 226 ff.
- 42 Bouveignes—Cuvelier 1951 p 122.
- 43 Op cit p 122, note 1.
- 44 Op cit p 167 f.
- 45 Op cit p 157.
- 46 Bouveignes—Cuvelier 1951 p 171 ff; Jadin BIHBR 37, 1966 p 155 ff; Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 229 ff; Bouveignes 1948 p 124 ff.
- 47 Jadin BIHBR 37, 1966 p 159 ff.
- 48 Op cit p 200 ff.
- 49 NZM, 14, 1, 1958 p 50 ff.

- 50 Op cit p 52.  
 51 See Italiaander 1964 p 379 ff.  
 52 Dapper 1668 ed. Amsterdam 1670 p 1.  
 53 Merolla 1692 ed. A Collection of Voyages 1732 p 649.  
 54 Zucchelli 1712 ed. Franckfurt am Main 1715 p 266 f.  
 55 Dapper op cit p 530 ff.  
 56 "Gleichwohl haben sie meistens zwey Pfeile zu ihrem Bogen: nehmlich den Röhmischen Gottesdienst und ihre Abgötterey oder so genenten Fetisen." Op cit p 569.  
 57 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 245 ff.  
 58 Archives Congolaises 1919 p 213; Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 437 ff.  
 59 Napoli 1692 ed. A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Vol 1, London 1732.  
 60 Merolla 1692 op cit p 615.  
 61 Ibid.  
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 63 Zucchelli 1712 ed. Franckfurt am Main 1715 p 244.  
 64 Merolla 1692 op cit p 617.  
 65 Op cit p 625.  
 66 Cf Jadin BIHR 36, 1964 p 246 ff.  
 67 Merolla 1692 op cit p 630.  
 68 Ibid.  
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 75 Op cit p 670.  
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 78 The same in Soyo, see Zucchelli 1712 op cit p 262.  
 79 L. Jadin: Le clergé séculier et les capuchins du Congo et d'Angola aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Conflits de juridiction, 1700—1726, in: BIHBR 36, 1964 p 185—483.  
 80 Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 430, 447.  
 81 Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 243 ff.  
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 83 Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 447.  
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 85 Giuseppe da Modena, in: Jadin BIHBR 36, 1964 p 265 ff, 272 ff, 396 ff.  
 86 Rinchon 1929 p 71 ff.  
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 92 Op cit p 454.  
 93 Op cit p 460.  
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 95 Op cit p 481 f.  
 96 Rapport du Père Bernardo da Gallo (Rome, le 17 décembre 1710), in: Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 491 ff.  
 97 Op cit p 499.  
 98 Op cit p 507.  
 99 Op cit p 525.  
 1 Op cit p 526.  
 2 Relation du P. Lorenzo da Lucca sur les événements de 1706 au Congo (Nkusu, le 3 janvier 1707), in: Jadin BIHBR 33, 1961 p 539 ff.  
 3 Moeller: Les bûchers et les auto-da-fé de l'Inquisition depuis le moyen âge, in: Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain, T XIV 1913 p 720 ff.  
 4 Zucchelli 1712 ed. Franckfurt am Main 1715 p 241.  
 5 Pratique missionnaire 1747 ed. Aucam, Louvain 1931 p 49.  
 6 Ibid. Concerning the question of

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- 7 Instructions aux missionnaires 1669 ed. Aucam, Louvain 1928.
  - 8 A. de Postioma: Méthodologie Missionnaire des Capucins au Congo-Matamba-Angola 1645—1834, in: RCA 19, 4, 1964 p 359 ff; C. Lopinot: Zur Geschichte der Alten Kongommission 1645—1789, in: NZM 16, 2, 1960 p 147 ff.
  - 9 Pratique missionnaire 1747 op cit p 72.
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  - 11 Op cit p 53.
  - 12 Instructions aux missionnaires 1669 op cit p 33 ff, 47 ff.
  - 13 Archives Congolaises 1919 p 17 ff.
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  - 15 Pratique missionnaire 1747 op cit p 73.
  - 16 Op cit p 78 f.
  - 17 Instructions aux missionnaires 1669 op cit p 45.
  - 18 Archives Congolaises 1919 p 12 ff.
  - 19 Zucchelli 1712 op cit p 265.

#### Chapter 4

#### The Struggle between Banganga and Missionaries fades.

- 1 Jadin: Le clergé séculier et les Capucins du Congo et d'Angola aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles, in: BIHBR 36, 1964 p 185 ff.
- 2 Informations sur le royaume du Congo et d'Angola du P. Rosario dal Parco, préfet des Capucins en Angola et Congo. 1760, in: Jadin BIHBR 35, 1963 p 358 ff.
- 3 Jadin: Aperçu de la situation du Congo et rite d'élections des rois en 1775, d'après le P. Cherubino da Savona, missionnaire au Congo de 1759 à 1774, in: BIHBR 35, 1963, p 347 ff. See also Jadin: Les missions du Congo à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, in: Actas of Congresso internacional de historia dos descobrimentos, T.V, Lisbonne 1961, p 207ff.
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- 7 Von Johannes Rommerskirchen: Die Afrikamission um das Jahr 1805, in: Glazik, 50 Jahre katholische Missionswissenschaft, Münster 1961 p 147 ff.
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- 12 Simar: Etude critique sur la formation de la doctrine des races au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle et son expansion au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle. Bruxelles 1922.
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- 14 Vansina: Long-distance trade-routes in Central Africa, in: Journal of African History 3,3, 1962 p 375 ff.
- 15 Relation du voyage de Mrs Belgarde et Astelet de Clais, premiers Missionnaires envoyés par notre Saint Père le Pape, Clément XIII, dans le Royaume de Loango en Guinée en 1766, in: Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 19 ff, map p 133.
- 16 op cit p 21.
- 17 Proyard 1776 p 222.
- 18 "Mais comme les femmes sont ordinairement peu couvertes, les missionnaires n'ont osé jusqu'ici travailler à leur conversion avec une certaine assiduité sans avoir pris des mesures pour les faire habiller plus modestement et les assembler en un lieu où ils puissent les instruire publiquement sans donner à qui que ce soit le plus léger soupçon." Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 57.
- 19 Lettre de M. Descourvières Miss<sup>re</sup> Apostolique à Loango écrite à M. Férís, supérieur du sem<sup>re</sup> de Nantes,

- le 3 février 1769, in: Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 37 ff.
- 20 Lettre de M. Descourvières, Malimbe le 30 oct 1768, in: op cit p 34 ff.
- 21 Letter from Jolly and Descourvières, Malemba, le 1<sup>re</sup> juillet 1769, in: Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 40.
- 22 R.-P. van Bulck: Recherchers linguistiques au Congo Belge, 1948, p 15, 357 f.
- 23 Jolly et Descourvières, 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1769, op cit p 42.
- 24 Relation de la mission des prestres séculiers pour le royaume de Loango et les environs, in: Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 45 ff.
- 25 Op cit p 51 f.
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- 27 Op cit p 54.
- 28 Op cit p 55.
- 29 Mémoire dans lequel on propose les raison qui paraissent autoriser une nouvelle tentatvie dans la mission de Loango, in: op cit p 77 ff.
- 30 Raisons qui ont déterminé les Missionnaires de Loango à quitter le lieu de leur mission, in: op cit p 125 ff.
- 31 Cas de sonscience sur quelques circonstances du commerce des esclaves en Guinée, in: Cuvelier Documents 1953 p 144 f.
- 32 Raison qui ont déterminé les Missionnaires de Loango à quitter le lieu de leur mission, in: op cit p 125 ff.
- 14 Op cit p 221.
- 15 Op cit p 221.
- 16 Op cit p 380.
- 17 Op cit p 379.
- 18 Op cit p 368.
- 19 Op cit p 160.
- 20 Op cit p 161.
21. Op cit p 187.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Op cit p 208.
- 24 Op cit p 337.
- 25 Op cit p 361.
- 26 Op cit p 375.
- 27 Op cit p 363 f, 158.
- 28 Op cit p 369.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Op cit p 373 f.
- 31 Op cit p 186.
- 32 Op cit p 384.
- 33 Op cit p 375.
- 34 Op cit p 375; Cf p 186
- 35 Op cit p 106.
- 36 Op cit p 382.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Op cit p 380.
- 39 Petermann: Magyar László's Reise auf dem Congo-Strom bis zu den Katarakten von Faro-Songo, 1848, in: Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geografischer Anstalt, 1857 p 184 ff.
- 40 Bastian: Ein Besuch in San Salvador, Bremen 1859; and Bastian: Die Deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste, Vol I, Jena 1874, Vol II, Jena 1875.
- 41 Bastian 1859 p 3.
- 42 Op cit p 43.
- 43 Op cit p 98 f.
- 44 Op cit p 113.
- 45 Op cit p 277.
- 46 Op cit p 273.
- 47 Op cit p 34.
- 48 Op cit p 77 f.
- 49 Op cit p 145 f.
- 50 Op cit p 43.
- 51 Op cit p 169, 104 f, 112 f, 264.
- 52 Op cit p 97.
- 53 Bastian 1859 p 97, 100, 108, 190.
- 54 Op cit p 100.
- 55 Op cit p 96.
- 56 Op cit p 101, 103, 162.
- 57 Op cit p 97.
- 58 Op cit p 77.

## Chapter 5

### The Lower Congo as an Object of Research.

- 1 Narrative London 1818.
- 2 Op cit p X.
- 3 Op cit p 71.
- 4 Op cit p 277 f, 79 f.
- 5 Op cit p 80.
- 6 Op cit p 277.
- 7 Op cit p 110.
- 8 Op cit p 159.
- 9 Op cit p 80.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Op cit p 186.
- 12 Op cit p 278.
- 13 Op cit p 187.



- 59 Op cit p 120, 134.  
 60 Op cit p 122.  
 61 Op cit p 162.  
 62 Burton, Vol II 1876 p 317.  
 63 Op cit p 76.  
 64 Op cit p 308—331.  
 65 Op cit p 217.  
 66 Op cit p 114.  
 67 Op cit p 217.  
 68 Op cit p 318.  
 69 Op cit p 311.  
 70 The contract 1852/1853 in extenso, in: op cit p 353 ff.  
 71 Bastian, Vol I 1874 p 25, 36.  
 72 Op cit p 26.  
 73 Op cit p 213.  
 74 Op cit p 39, 46, 50, 70, 77, 95, 175, 223 and 284 f, 287, 161, 192 respectively.  
 75 "Der Neger lässt sich von den Ganga ein Milongo (zum Schutz gegen den Fetissero) verfertigen und trägt dasselbe eingewickelt oder in einem Beutel . . .", op cit p 205. Here milongo means nkissi, and Fetissero means ndoki.  
 76 Op cit p 285.  
 77 Bastian, Vol II 1875 p 158.  
 78 Op cit p 157.  
 79 Op cit p 298 ff.  
 80 Bastian, Vol I 1874 p 224.  
 81 Bastian, Vol II 1875 p 218.  
 82 Op cit p 223.  
 83 Bastian, Vol I 1874 p 282, 101.  
 84 Op cit p 286 f.  
 85 Bastian, Vol I 1874 p 92.

#### Chapter 6

#### Porterage System and Railway Construction the New Milieu in the Lower Congo.

- 1 Jenssen-Tusch 195 p 233.  
 2 Slade 1962 p 38.  
 3 Axelson 1967 p 38 ff.  
 4 Slade 1959 p 24; Cf Slade 1962 p 141.  
 5 Walan 1964 p 493 ff.  
 6 Wauters: Le Congo, Bruxelles 1885; Patzig: Die Afrikanische Konferenz, Berlin 1885; Thomson: Fondation de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo, Brux-

- elles 1933; Axelson: Portugal and the Scramble for Africa 1875—1891. Johannesburg 1967; Bontinck: Aux origines de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo. Documents tirés d'archives américaines, Louvain 1966; Anstey: Britain and the Congo in the nineteenth century, Oxford 1962; Autin: Brazza et la question du Congo, 1875—1905, Paris 1946.  
 7 Bulletin Officiel 1885 p 2.  
 8 Op cit p 7 ff.  
 9 Op cit p 10.  
 10 Chavanne 1887 p 252.  
 11 Bulletin Officiel 1885 p 20.  
 12 Hilaire Nkunku: Den franska kolonialismen i Kongo, in: Kristet forum 1968 p 26 ff.  
 13 Bulletin Officiel 1885 p 26 f.  
 14 Bulletin Officiel 1886 p 90; Cf p 138 f.  
 15 Bulletin Officiel 1887 p 197.  
 16 Bulletin Officiel 1889 p 169 ff.  
 17 "Tous usages et coutumes ayant force de ici et contraire aux dispositions du présent décret sont abrogés." Bulletin Officiel 1889 p 171.  
 18 Bulletin Officiel 1889 p 218.  
 19 Bulletin Officiel 1888 p 270; Cf p 294 ff. See also Code civil § 429.  
 20 Bulletin Officiel 1888 p 251 ff.  
 21 Bulletin Officiel 1891 p 260.  
 22 Bulletin Officiel 1889 p 66 ff.  
 23 Wauters 1899 p 347.  
 24 Slade 1962 p 175 ff.  
 25 Op cit p 176.  
 26 Op cit p 102 ff.  
 27 Ceulemans: La question arabe et le Congo, 1883—1892. Bruxelles 1959 p 290 ff.  
 28 Bulletin Officiel 1889 p 197 ff, 210 ff.  
 29 "L'Acte Général de la Conférence de Berlin fait parti du droit de l'Etat. Il y affecte le caractère d'une obligation internationale." Op cit p 199.  
 30 "L'esclavage, même domestique, ne saurait être reconnu officiellement". Ibid.  
 31 Op cit p 205.  
 32 Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles 1890, Bruxelles 1890.  
 33 Slade 1962 p 178.  
 34 Bulletin Officiel 1891 p 259 ff.

- 35 Bulletin Officiel 1891 p 260; Cf Bulletin Officiel 1893 p 246 concerning the Manyema district.
- 36 Bulletin Officiel 1890 p 145 ff.
- 37 Fox Bourne 1903 p 178.
- 38 Bulletin Officiel 1890 p 129 ff.
- 39 January 14, 1891; Bulletin Officiel 1891 p 73 f.
- 40 Fox Bourne 1903 p 125.
- 41 Bulletin Officiel 1891 p 230 ff.
- 42 Bulletin Officiel 1894 p 5 f.
- 43 Bulletin Officiel 1892 p 20.
- 44 Slade 1962 p 148 ff; Slade 1959 p 168 ff.
- 45 Bulletin Officiel 1890 p 120 ff.
- 46 Bulletin Officiel 1892 p 18 ff.
- 47 Op cit p 241 f.
- 48 Op cit p 188 ff.
- 49 Slade 1962 p 178.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Published in Köbenhavn 1909; Cf Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 469.
- 52 Bulletin Officiel 1894 p 221 ff.
- 53 Op cit p 224.
- 54 Slade 1962 p 180 ff.
- 55 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 705 ff.
- 56 Op cit p 180.
- 57 Tableau des Scandinaves au Congo, in: AE 113, Carton 14, Dossier 4; Archives Africaines. Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles. Cf Stockholms Dagblad, March 20, 1888.
- 58 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 705; Ymer Off-print 1887 p 9; BCB II p 15.
- 59 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 185.
- 60 Op cit p 184.
- 61 The names of all the Swedish missionaries in: Svenska Missionsförbundet, Yttre missionen, ed. T. Andersson 1928 p 206 ff; Report of the Second Conference, Leopoldville 1904 p 3.
- 62 Walan 1964 p 567 f, 493 ff; Walan: Så började vi i Kongo, in: Ansgarius 1960; E. J. Ekman: Missionen i Kongo, in: Minnesskrift vid Svenska Missionsförbundets 25-årsjubileum, 1903, p 69 ff; C. J. Engvall: Svenska Missionsförbundets beslut att sända missionärer till Kongo, in: Dagbräckning i Kongo, 1911, p 8 ff; A. Waldeler: Missionen i Kongo, in: Svenska Missionsförbundet, Yttre missionen, 1928, p 63 ff.
- 63 Girolamo de Montesarchio (1668) ed. Bouveignes—Cuvelier 1951 p 54 ff.
- 64 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 237.
- 65 Ymer Off-print 1887 p 7 f.
- 66 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 202.
- 67 Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten, February 22, 1887.
- 68 Lederer: Histoire de la Navigation au Congo, Tervuren 1965 p 30.
- 69 Jenssen-Tusch 1905 p 185.

## Chapter 7

### The Problem of Racial and Personal Relationships.

- 1 Slade 1962 p 63, 70.
- 2 Burton 1876 p 326; Courboin 1904 p 294; Cureau 1912 p 34; Carroll says e. g. "all scientific investigation of the subject proves the Negro to be an ape", in: The Negro a Beast or in the Image of God, St Louis 1900 p 87.
- 3 Burton op cit p 326.
- 4 A. Fernholm: Werldskärlekens fara, in: Förbundet 1882 p 34.
- 5 Stenfelt 1901 p 13; Cf Arvid Stenström in: Svensk Veckotidning 50/1967.
- 6 Von Düben 1878 p 97; See illustration of "tailed people" in: Thos. Heazle Park: My Personal Experiences in Equatorial Africa, Second ed, London p 397.
- 7 C. P. Thunberg ed. 1951 p 280.
- 8 K. E. Laman from Kibunzi, January 18, 1897, in: MF 1897 p 99.
- 9 Von Schwerin, Efterlämnade papper 2, Lunds Universitetsbibliotek, handskriftsavdelning; von Schwerin 1891, p 73.
- 10 Von Schwerin, Efterlämnade papper 2.
- 11 Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 291.
- 12 Op cit p 292.
- 13 Op cit p 295.
- 14 Op cit p 297.
- 15 Cureau 1912 p 68 ff; Cf Bentley

- 1893 p 49; Courboin 1904 p 294; Ward 1910 p 253; Congo Report 1921 p 5.
- 16 Wilson 1856 p 379 ff; Bentley 1893 p 49 f; Chavanne 1887 p 394: "Die von vielen Reisenden behauptete Inferiorität der Schwarzen Rasse hat für die Bafiotestämme keine Giltigkeit".
- 17 Nils Westlind from Mukimbungu, September 19, 1882, in: MF 1883 p 8.
- 18 MF 1887 p 55 f; MF 1888 p 47; Sydsvenska Weckobladet, February 28, 1895; and Ivar Johansson, Dagbok I, June 7, 1896.
- 19 Laman 1907 p 16; Laman 1924 p 18, 32, 156.
- 20 Chr. Posse, in: Ymer 1885 p XXXVII; C. J. Nilsson from Kibunzi, October 6, 1887, in: MF 1887 p 137; Olof Nordblad from "Edward Bohlen", September 15, 1894, in: MF 1894 p 357: "nu leka männen i solskenet": Wilh. Sjöholm from Mukimbungu 1896, in: MF 1896 p 188; Ivar Johansson, dagbok III, June 17, 1897; cf Jenson-Tusch 1905 p 145 f.
- 21 Wester, in: Ymer 1886 p 260.
- 22 Ymer 1885 p XXXVII; Ymer 1886 p 248; Ymer 1889 p 40; C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 18 f.
- 23 Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 293, 263.
- 24 Op cit p 147.
- 25 Nils Westlind from Mukimbungu 1882, in: MF 1883 p 8.
- 26 K. J. Pettersson: En arbetsdag i Lukunga, in: MF 1883 p 38.
- 27 Ivar Johansson, Dagbok III, July 20, 1897.
- 28 Olof Nordblad, in: Sydsvenska Weckobladet, October 3, 1895.
- 29 Henning Skarp, in: MF 1895 p 102.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Von Schwerin 1891 p 72.
- 32 Von Schwerin, in: Ymer 1887 p XXI
- 33 Laman 1924 p 13.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Von Düben 1878 p 119.
- 36 Pagels, in: Ymer 1886 p 249.
- 37 C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 18.
- 38 K. J. Pettersson from Stanley Pool, April 11, 1883, in: MF 1883 p 129 f.
- 39 Pagels, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol II, 1888 p 28.
- 40 Stenfelt 1889 p 66.
- 41 Abeli Kiananwa from Mbanza Nsanga, January 1, 1892, in: MF 1892 p 89; Cf Jahoda 1961 p 29.
- 42 C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 11. Missions Tidning was the publication of a Lutheran Missionary Society, Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 236, cf p 296.
- 45 Glerup, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol II, 1888 p 199.
- 46 Op cit p 200.
- 47 Wester, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol II, 1888 p 308.
- 48 C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 10 f.
- 49 Missionen i Afrika, III, MF 1883 p 86; the author is probably E. J. Ekman.
- 50 P. A. Westlind: Borta och hemma p 125.
- 51 Guinness: On the Congo, 1890 p 93.
- 52 Posse, in: Ymer 1885; Glerup, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol II, 1888 p 244; Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 293; C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 18.
- 53 C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 18.
- 54 Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 293.
- 55 Pagels, in: Ymer Off-print 1887 p 60.
- 56 Op cit p 61 f.
- 57 Möller, in: Tre år i Kongo, Vol I, 1887 p 294; H. Skarp from Diadia, December 29, 1890, in: MF 1891 p 78; Chavanne 1887 p 397.
- 58 C. R. Håkansson 1888 p 18.
- 59 H. Skarp from Didadia, December 29, 1890, in: MF 1891 p 78.
- 60 W. Sjöholm from Kibunzi, July 6, 1890, in: MS 1890 p 199.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Augusta Waxgren from Kibunzi, January 25, 1890, in: MF 1890 p 99 f; W. Sjöholm from Diadia, December 31, 1889, in: MF 1890 p 101 f; K. E. Laman from Kibunzi, January 3, 1893, in: MF 1893 p 132 ff.
- 63 Laman, in: MF 1893 p 133.

- 64 Pagels, in: Ymer Off-print 1887 p 61; Laman in: Dagbräckning i Kongo, 1911 p 20; Laman 1923 p 74 f.
- 65 Selma Karlsson from Kibunzi, June 28, 1892, in: MF 1892 p 247.
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## Abbreviations

|            |                                                                                                                          |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AA         | African Abstracts — Bulletin Analytique Africaniste                                                                      |
| ABMU       | American Baptist Missionary Union                                                                                        |
| ARB        | Académie Royale de Belgique                                                                                              |
| ARSC       | Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales                                                                                  |
| ATT        | Arquivo da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa                                                                                        |
| BCB        | Biographie Coloniale Belge                                                                                               |
| BIHBR      | Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome                                                                          |
| BMS        | Baptist Missionary Society                                                                                               |
| BO         | Bulletin Officiel (de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo)                                                                       |
| EMSS       | Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm                                                                               |
| EMSSb      | Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm, bildarkivet                                                                  |
| IRCB       | Institut Royal Colonial Belge                                                                                            |
| JAH        | Journal of African History                                                                                               |
| LIM        | Livingstone Inland Mission                                                                                               |
| LUB        | Lunds universitetsbibliotek                                                                                              |
| MARSC      | Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales. Classe des Sciences morales et politiques. Collection in 8:o. NS. |
| MF         | the paper Missionsförbundet                                                                                              |
| MIRCB      | Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge. Section des Sciences morales et politiques. Collection in 8:o. NS.          |
| MLSM       | Museum Lessianum. Section Missiologique                                                                                  |
| MMA        | Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Occidental.                                                                       |
| NS         | New Series. Nouvelle Série. Ny serie.                                                                                    |
| NZM        | Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft                                                                                |
| RCA        | Revue du Clergé Africain                                                                                                 |
| SEU        | Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia                                                                                         |
| SMF        | Svenska Missionsförbundet                                                                                                |
| SMFb       | Svenska Missionsförbundet, Stockholm, bildbyrån                                                                          |
| SMT        | Svensk Missionstidskrift                                                                                                 |
| SMU        | Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia                                                                                           |
| UUB        | Uppsala universitetsbibliotek                                                                                            |
| VA         | Årsbok för Värmlands Ansgariiförening för år /1893/, printed in                                                          |
| för /1893/ | Kristinehamn the following year /1894/                                                                                   |
| ZM         | Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft                                                                                     |
| ZMR        | Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft                                                           |

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| .....                                   |           | Alvaro IV        | 1631—1636 |
| .....                                   |           | Alvaro V         | 1636      |
| Nzinga Nkuvu, João I.                   | ? —1506   | Alvaro VI Afonso | 1636—1641 |
| Mvemba Nzinga, Afonso I.                | 1506—1543 | Garcia II Afonso | 1641—1661 |
| Nkanga Mvemba, Pedro I.                 | 1543—1545 | Antonio I Afonso | 1622—1665 |
| Diogo I                                 | 1545—1561 | Alvaro VII       | 1666      |
| Bernardo I                              | 1561—1567 | Alvaro VIII      | 1666—1669 |
| Henrique I                              | 1567      | Raphaël I        | 1669      |
| Alvaro I                                | 1568—1587 | Alvaro IX        | 1669—1672 |
| Alvaro II                               | 1587—1614 | Raphaël I        | 1672—1674 |
| Bernardo II                             | 1614—1615 | Daniel I         | 1674—1678 |
| Alvaro III                              | 1615—1622 | .....            |           |
| Pedro II Afonso                         | 1622—1624 | .....            |           |
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