Beatrix Heintze
Achim von Oppen (eds)

Angola on the Move
Angola em Movimento

Transport Routes, Communications and History
Vias de Transporte, Comunicação e História

Lembeck

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INTRODUCTION

Beatrix Heintze and Achim von Oppen

Angola and its hinterland is a striking case against the opinion, still widespread in public circles and western media, that Africa is only just coming out of a long history of isolation and localism. The West-Central part of this continent vividly illustrates the extent to which transport links and processes of communication have influenced the history of Africa for centuries. From pre-colonial migration and exchange through the period of Atlantic long-distance trade, the European travels of "exploration", strategies of economic "development" and warfare in the era of colonialism, up to the making of the nation state and of global integration in the twentieth century, transport and communications in and beyond Angola have strongly shaped the whole region. They have shown a remarkable potential for transcending existing barriers as well as constituting new spaces and boundaries. At the same time, this region has an unusual wealth, in terms of both quantity and quality, of written sources dating back to the 15th century AD. They are themselves the result of early travels and communications by European traders, administrators and missionaries, but also include written and orally transmitted testimonies by Africans.

Both features – the importance of transregional connections and a unique wealth in resources, both people and commodities, and in source materials – seem to privilege Angola and its hinterlands vis-à-vis other parts of the continent for historical studies of mobility and communication. Surprisingly, however, the topic has so far been largely neglected in studies on that part of Africa, a region that has generally not benefited fully from the recent growth in African studies, especially in Germany. Still more generally, there are significant lacunae in research on transport and communication as such. So far, this topic has been studied mainly with regard to its economical, technical and political aspects. There is still a dearth of research into the social and cultural impact of these connections in the contexts of regional and transregional histories, especially with regard to the making or transformation of social spaces in the widest sense. This is a particularly interesting subject of study for the non-European world.

This book brings together a range of studies that use the example of Angola and its hinterland to show how existing gaps in research can be filled and how the potential of the topic just outlined can be brought to fruition. It will convince the reader, it is hoped, that the insights gained here are of relevance for other areas of Africa and of the world as well. They also illustrate yet another aspect that privileges this region for a case study. Research on the "Angolan sphere" in West Central Africa can rely on a geographically dispersed

but highly connected network of scholars of very diverse backgrounds, who share a strong commitment to the past as well as to the present of this particular region of Africa, to its languages and to its sources. Scholars from Angola itself are part and parcel of this network. Their voices ensure that African perspectives on one of longest experiences of colonial rule as well as todays' challenges of reconstruction are sufficiently heard, after decades of ravaging war, not least in the field of transport and communication.

The authors of the contributions to the present book are distinguished or emerging members of this Angolan studies network. Despite the very different topics, periods and subregions they concentrate on, these chapters are the result of an intense process of communication among the authors themselves. A good occasion to observe this process of exchange and mutual inspiration was offered by a symposium held in Berlin in 2003.[1] Incidentally, it was this event that launched the discussion which is elaborated in this book. Earlier versions of many of its chapters were presented and discussed at that conference, along with others that, for various reasons, do not appear in this book. The book itself, however, may be seen as a further step in this conversation, one for which earlier drafts have been thoroughly revised. A number of additional chapters have also been included to achieve a more complete range of perspectives. However, the thematic debates and questions that emerged during that symposium provided a useful matrix for this book. Each of the following sections will be introduced through a particular set of issues, along with the individual chapters they contain. Insights gained from other contributions to the original symposium are also mentioned where appropriate.

The Modernization of Transport and its Contradictions

The first of these foci addresses the history of actual movements and means of transport that shaped routes and communications in the region. How did these strategies of mobility develop in and beyond Angola? How have different types of movement and means of transport influenced each other in the given historical contexts, be it through complementarity, competition or contestation? Contrary to linear ideas of modernization of transport, what ruptures, as well as continuities, what disjunctures as well as simultaneities can be observed from a historical perspective? How did these contradictions affect the spatial organization of transport and communication, in both the short and the long run? These

[1] This symposium, convened by the two editors of this book, took place from September 24 to 26, 2003, at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, Germany. Thanks to generous funding by the Volkswagen Foundation, a total of twenty scholars from Africa, Europe and North America were able to take part and to contribute, mostly historians but also representatives of other disciplines. Remarkably, one third of the participants were from Angola itself.

questions require highly specific answers for the different transport systems, as demonstrated by *Emília Madeira Santos*, *Roquinaldo Ferreira* and *David Birmingham* (chapters 1-3). Each case study concentrates on a particular means of transport (horses; footpaths and roads; barges and steamers; ox-wagons and the telegraph), and all link technologies with their political and socio-cultural and spatial contexts through the past centuries.

Writing about land transport between the coast and the hinterland, *Maria Emília Madeira Santos'* contribution (chapter 1) establishes a broad and long-term perspective. She points out that Portuguese expansion into the Angolan hinterland, where African political power was based, was highly intermittent. She characterizes, roughly, four consecutive phases as (1) entering into contact with African rulers, (2) negotiating rights of passage to the remoter interior, (3) the take-over of political control (the so-called "pacification" period), and finally (4) the annihilation and replacement of African political power. For Santos, this eastward movement in search of control was a primary feature of Angola's colonial history from the 15th to the early 20th century. "African" communication networks were used largely in the early phase but were progressively expanded, sometimes even replaced by other routes that seemed more suitable to the Portuguese for their exercise of administrative control, facilitating the transportation of troops as well as of goods. These new roads by-passed existing long-distance trails, along which passage was still largely controlled by African rulers up to the late 19th century. Colonial occupation in the twentieth century, on the other hand, took place on broad roads for bullock carts and trucks, the construction and use of which were beyond the scope of African knowledge and practice. The effect was a progressive bifurcation of transport systems and routes, footpaths and highways. These parallel ways seemed mutually incomprehensible, since to African eyes "modern" roads often led to the middle of nowhere, while the Portuguese perceived the "heathen" paths as running in endless circles.

Portuguese and African roles in the development of new transport systems were not always as mutually exclusive as described here. More interactive aspects of their relations also deserve attention. At the original symposium, for instance, *Rosa Cruz e Silva* presented another long-term but regionally more focused study, in which she examined the continuities and ruptures of shipping between the 16th and 19th centuries on the lower Kwanza River, a crucial gateway to the interior along the northern route from Luanda. According to Silva, the introduction of steamship navigation in the 19th century succeeded eventually only by building on autochthonous knowledge and skills. As the most vital axis of communication between the Atlantic ports and the resources of the remote interior, she argued, the Kwanza corridor should be understood as a complex contact zone between newcomers and residents, between both African and European populations, and coast and hinterland. The result was a

sharing of technical and ecological knowledge that belies ideas of the supremacy of modern European transport and communication technologies.

These findings match to some extent those of *Emmanuel Esteves* on the Benguela Railway. In his chapter (see below, Section 2), he elaborates more strongly than Rosa Cruz e Silva, however, the ambivalence in African experience of new, European-introduced transport technologies. He distinguishes between an earlier, more hostile and later more receptive attitudes.

Other studies show, however, that Africans did *not* always adopt new transport systems, or at least not to the degree that might have been expected, despite their potential for large-scale mobility, both geographically and socially. Political and historical rather than ecological and technological factors seem to have been the critical obstacles. One such example is presented by *Roquinaldo Ferreira* (chapter 2), in an analysis of the uses of horses in southern Angola between 1670 and 1730, notably in warfare. Historians of Angola generally take it for granted that horses were of no consequence in colonial warfare, let alone in civilian forms of transport. They initially had to be imported from abroad, since they could not be bred in West Central Africa and were thus constantly replaced by further imports. One reason why Africans rejected them would thus seem to have been that horses in Angola succumbed easily to disease. The more trenchant reason for a lack of horses in the country, however, was of a political nature. Horse-breeding and the import of mares was forbidden, apparently for fear that Africans might appropriate them as a powerful means of fighting Portuguese advances. Ferreira clarifies that horses were in fact used less in Angola than in Sudanic West Africa but still more often than generally assumed, notably for military purposes in the south, in the hinterland of Benguela. One reason seems to be that Brazilian merchants enjoyed preferential treatment when importing horses as a return load on their slave ships. By the late 17th century, Benguela had become a key slave port after the Luanda government had turned to it to compensate for declines in trade in the north, and the Brazilians seized the opportunity. On the other hand, Ferreira dismisses the belief that Africans were so frightened by horses on the battlefield that they would not go near them. Their tactics and military culture were clearly different, but he finds many examples of African soldiers skilfully fighting Portuguese on horseback. African military tactics may thus have reduced the attractiveness of cavalry in Angola, despite incentives on the supply side.

The use of other animals for *civilian* transport, in contrast, is explored by *David Birmingham* (chapter 3). He examines the case of Héli Chatelain, a Swiss missionary and entrepreneur at the end of the nineteenth century, who tried to introduce modern ox-wagons in the central Angolan highlands to improve supply lines between the coast and the plateau. There, he ran a self-financed mission-station aimed at protecting Africans who were at risk of being captured by slave-hunters. Birmingham's main point is the clash between this missionary's firm belief in modern technologies on the one hand, the ox-wagon of the

time, and the enormous practical, economic and organizational difficulties he encountered, on the other. When his bullock carts turned out to be unprofitable, Chatelain set his hopes on the electric telegraph for a while and, later, on the railway. However, all of the various communication and transport initiatives he used in his struggle against slavery failed before long, simply because they were at odds with the regional and historical context in which he operated. His projects finally came to a halt in 1910 for political reasons. With the "motor revolution of the 1920s", a new age of transportation and communication got underway for the highlands of Angola (and beyond). By that time, however, Chatelain's attempts to revolutionize long-distance transport had already been defeated by the laws of revenues and costs.

These case studies show that systems and routes of transport in Angola went through a long process of technological modernization, complemented by institutional changes since the 17th century. These comprised the gradual construction of a network of more or less fixed long-distance routes for large-scale caravan trade and intensification of communications that served commercial as well as military and political purposes. In the later 19th century, this process was accelerated by more marked technological innovations, especially through the development of steam-powered shipping, railways, and roads, by the emergence of electrical means of communication. On the whole, however, this process appears highly contradictory, which was mainly due to the bifurcated context of colonial rule in which it happened. All contributions cited so far point out the tensions between non-African conquerors, traders, and settlers, and the majority African population. The integration of different routes, types and means of transport was hampered by the slave trade, military occupation, forced labour and wars. Their relationships were marked not just by competition but often enough also by the suppression of indigenous systems.

Yet, despite recurrent conflicts, often exerted in violent ways, the functioning of modern transport and communication technologies also required some exchange of technical and ecological knowledge between Africans and Europeans. As a consequence, Africans developed a significant ambivalence toward the experience of the new transport technologies. Resistance and avoidance, especially in earlier periods and in times of war, happened as well as appropriation and adaptation in more recent history.

Furthermore, Angolan history also displays a number of cases in which new transport systems (e.g. with animals) or different routes (notably in the border areas) were in the end less frequented than might have been expected on the basis of their economic potential alone. There, the political constraints of colonial administration seem to have provided as serious an obstacle for the development of transport and traffic as ecological conditions, the lack of capital, and the volatility of world market demand for products moved along the new routes.

2. Transport Routes and the Transformation of Rural Livelihoods

The second field of debate (and section of this volume) refers to the economic and social impact of transport, movement and communication on the people and areas of Angola. In what sense have regional conditions and histories been affected by the dynamics of given types of transport routes and communications? Or vice versa, what influence did conditions in various parts of the region have on the general history of transport and communication in Angola?

These questions are addressed by *Mariana Candido*, *Jelmer Vos*, *Emmanuel Esteves*, and *Maria da Conceição Neto* (chapters 4-7). They all deal with different forms of transport and traffic along particular transport routes during specific periods of Angolan history and with their specific consequences (economic, political, social, demographic) for the regions and populations concerned.

Mariana P. Candido's chapter (4) addresses the Caconda region on the Central Plateau, an area in which traffic was particularly intense, because it served as a corridor between the coast and the remoter interior along one of the main caravan routes east from Benguela. She focuses on the period from 1830 to the late 1860s, the period of transition from slave trade to 'legitimate' trade, when the illegal but persistent long-distance trade in slaves and growing 'legitimate' trades in ivory, beeswax, rubber, and agricultural produce by means of caravans of porters brought a series of devastating epidemics to the area. Candido is primarily interested in the demographic impact of trade-born diseases on Caconda, which she attempts to trace in censuses from that time. In her inquiry, she distinguishes among such factors as the female-centred slave-trade for export, the male-specific trade in long-distance goods, and the massive exodus of male landowners that turned women into the very basis of agricultural production. Candido thus manages to draw a very nuanced picture of changes in the region's demographic profile and the consequences of them. She concludes that "epidemiological events most certainly affected Caconda" around the middle of the century, which in turn were due to long-distance trade and drought, "though it is difficult to measure their extent". Demographic changes are complex processes that can point to a variety of factors.

Another trade link with substantial effects on regional history, this time during the period of transition to colonial rule at the end of the nineteenth century, is examined by *Jelmer Vos* (chapter 5). His contribution addresses the intense, albeit short-lived rubber trade from across the Kwango River just after it had become the eastern border between Angola's Congo district and the neighbouring Congo Independent State. Certain Kongo groups (notably the Zombo in the Kwango valley) were the protagonists in this trans-border trade. Based on government and missionary documents from both sides of the border, his chapter reconstructs precisely how the trans-Kwango rubber trade was conducted and why it was at odds with the interests of the Congo Free State,

and thus the root of much turmoil – from migrations by the Yaka to Zombo plans to attack the colonial agents of the Congo Free State, the so-called *Bula Matari* (originally the designation of the people of Lower Congo for the "rock breaking" Henry Morton Stanley who was supervising construction of another transformative transport system, the railway crossing Independent State territory from the ocean port on the lower river to the head of inland navigation at Léopoldville, on Malebo Pool), with the help of the Portuguese.

By this time, the main caravan transit route through central Angola and Caconda (see Candido, above) was already experiencing a major transport revolution: the construction of the Benguela Railway line. The contribution (chapter 6) of the Angolan historian *Emmanuel Esteves* discusses the consequences of railway on the Central Plateau between 1889 and 1950, arguing that, although native Africans profited very little from the railway, it became "the basis of globalization, political stability, economic change, mobility and social development in this region." For the Portuguese, the Benguela Railway opened up the far eastern hinterland of the colony for effective military deployment and realization of their plans for commercial development, not to mention the disciplining of the population. Economically, it served to transfer control of the established main trade route to colonial authorities. In several respects, the railway became a symbol of the colonial presence. For Africans, who initially looked at the railway with a combination of fear, curiosity and admiration, it meant, after all, a loss of political and economic freedom. This loss was reflected in their tales of threat and horror and an increase in possession and healing cults.

Maria da Conceição Neto (chapter 7) takes these considerations of the effects of new transport systems on local populations further by focusing on the economic and social consequences of road-building for transport in the Huambo region (again on the Central Plateau) during the first half of the 20th century. Similar to Esteves, she stresses the ambivalent character of the modernization of transport. Initially, roads were clearly seen as an instrument of progress, for the Europeans and for their African collaborators on the one hand, and on the other as a symbol of the massive use of forced labour, for the local African populations. It was not the construction of the railway system but the expansion of motorized transport that dealt the final blow to the local populations' economic autonomy. However, the road network's creation of regional and national spaces with new centres and peripheries also established a new hierarchy of social groups and gave rise to significant cultural changes. In the consciousness of ordinary Angolans, for whom the free movement of individuals and goods was of enormous consequence, it took some time after the traumatic experience of forced labour on the roads to arrive at a more positive assessment of the new transport system. Gradually, the road network promoted their individual and collective freedom of movement and combined with the railway system, is now, at the beginning of the 21st century, a key factor in economic reconstruction

and political integration of the country after thirty years of divisive and destructive war. In the future, it is hoped, the road network could work towards greater economic and social integration of different zones and people and thus help to achieve greater national unity in Angola.

The effects of caravans, railways and other new means of transport on regional and local history, it can be concluded, were highly ambivalent and have been experienced in very different ways by different actors at different times: as means of wealth as well as poverty, as inroads of repression as well as paths to personal liberation, as tools of fragmentation as well as of unification. The case of Angola demonstrates very clearly, and well before the 20th century, this ambivalence of the "modernization" of transport in Africa.

3. Building Spaces of Communication

The third set of questions addresses the ways in which transport and communication have structured spaces. A related aspect is how these structuring processes were affected by competing concepts of space, and whether and in what manner they constituted their own barriers and obstacles. The chapters in this book tackled these questions on a variety of scales, both geographical and historical. The circulation of different kinds of knowledge was in the forefront here, in combination with differing means of transmission.

Africa – From East to West

Jan Vansina (chapter 8) undoubtedly provides the most wide-ranging answers to questions of this nature. He examines changing corridors of communication constituted by the lively traffic in productive knowledge between the east and the west of the Southern African sub-continent from AD 1 to about 1700, i.e., prior to Atlantic long-distance trade and long before Europeans had attempted to "explore" this area. Vansina looks at transmission routes for such innovations as sheep and cattle herding, cereal agriculture, the cultivation of minor crops, and chicken-rearing, all of which had enormous long-run impacts on livelihoods in Angola and its hinterlands Originating from remote shores of the Indian Ocean and carried westward by long-term processes of migration and exchange, these innovations passed along three well-defined routes of entry. Vansina reconstructs the gradual northward shift of these routes from the Okavango in the south to beyond the Lubilash River. He argues that, contrary to established assumptions, the Kalahari Sands around the Upper Zambezi formed an effective barrier to direct communication between the East Africa and Angola, thereby forcing circumvention of this area until about 1700.

Between Coast and Interior

Beatrix Heintze, *Ana Paula Tavares* and *Catarina Madeira Santos* (chapters 9-11), in contrast, concentrate on last connections in the opposite direction, west-east from the Atlantic Ocean to the interior of the continent. Long-distance caravans of the 18th and 19th centuries created a large space of communication that transferred material goods as well as knowledge. This exchange of information happened mostly by means of oral communication, although written correspondence existed also among Africans well east of the coast since at least the 17th century, notably among indigenous rulers. Especially since the 19th century, this form of communication expanded into the remoter hinterlands, mainly through Luso-African traders.

Setting the frame for this focus of reflection, *Beatrix Heintze* (chapter 9) examines the role of long-distance trade caravans in West Central Africa in the 19th century as carriers of information that integrated small-scale ("local") spaces of communication into more encompassing ones. The creation of these information networks was of considerable political and economic significance for the shaping of West Central Africa in the 19th century. The exchanges carried on along trade caravans comprised not only trade goods, skills and knowledge but also information, news and rumours. "News and information regarding what had previously been unknown now travelled much more quickly, were available in more detailed form and were transmitted across cultural boundaries." Both travellers and African authorities adapted quickly to the opportunities and challenges of these developments, elaborating ways of assessing the content of truth in such information and adopting appropriate defensive measures, such as strategically 'planting' false reports, distributing horror stories, and creating real or fictitious political and commercial relationships with foreigners via marriages or oral traditions. Heintze also emphasizes the flexible nature of the information and communication networks created by the caravans. They were not static but rather subject to change, such as when caravan routes were moved elsewhere.

Addressing the same space and time period, Angolan historian and poet *Ana Paula Tavares* (chapter 10) explores highly significant methods of transmitting knowledge along the above-mentioned caravan route network by writing. Addressing the role of writing in fixating knowledge in political and academic discourse – knowledge that would otherwise have been transmitted orally and subject to historical contexts and constant changes – Tavares focuses on the changing ideas about the Lunda Empire in the remote interior that emanated from the Angolan coast, and vice versa. This kind of knowledge largely constituted itself in an essentially oral process of message, expansion, receipt, decoding, and reply over long distances and along paths that were in part identical with the routes of trade, though not entirely so. From time to time, however, these ideas were recorded in writing, not only by Europeans (slave

traders, missionaries, administrative employees, travelling researchers or modern scientists) but also by African kings and chiefs, some of whom were far removed from any sort of European presence. The letters and documents of the latter form an invaluable body of historical sources, some of which date back to the 18th century, that have been recovered only recently.

Catarina Madeira Santos (chapter 11) challenges the usual dichotomy between the written correspondence of the Portuguese and African "traditional" life confined to oral communication with regard to the Angolan Ndembu. She points out instead how direct contacts between Angolan chiefdoms and the Portuguese, as documented in the Luso-African contracts of vassalage existing from the end of the 16th century, led to the development of very complex diplomatic, juridical and later also economical terms in written communication in the Portuguese language. Such documents became ever more current, extending even to relations between the chiefdoms themselves. With the appropriation of this new written technique of communication, which served also as a symbol of power, began a popularisation [*vulgarização*] of the whole juridico-political vocabulary and, inevitably, the introduction of bureaucratic administrative structures. The remarkable originality of this process of innovation, starting from the contracts of vassalage, is found, according to Catarina Madeira Santos, in the possibilities it opened for those Angolan rulers to adapt African oral modes of discourse to the colonial political discourse of the written word. Without shattering the foundations of their internal political organisation, they used lusophone literacy as a means to legitimate African rule in the new conditions they faced.

The South Atlantic

Some other dimensions of the making of Angolan spaces through transport and communication were mentioned at the original conference, although they could not be included in the present volume. One of them is the South Atlantic, that transoceanic space that connects West Central Africa and Latin America, notably Brazil. During the original symposium, *Linda Heywood*, *John Thornton* and *José Curto* examined different aspects of this broader dimension, ultimately centred on the maritime trade in slaves. All three of them addressed less well-known connections across the Atlantic: cultural transfers of memory and religion in the first two cases, and America-to-Africa migrations in the third one.

Linda Heywood's contribution took off from the fact that popular remembrance practices of the famous Angolan Queen Njinga (ca. 1582-1663) can be observed on both the African and Brazilian shores of the Atlantic. Comparing these memories, Heywood looked for the earliest recorded appearance of that memory and for the reasons why Afro-Brazilians preserved it. Contrary to the claims of others, she came to the conclusion that the Mbundu

in Angola maintained local traditions and elements of mythical memory of their queen until recently, probably with her grave as their focus. Today, Njinga is honoured in Angola as a national symbol of resistance against Portuguese domination. It can be assumed that memories of Queen Njinga entered Brazil via the Catholic lay brotherhoods closely associated with slaves from Angola. Thus, they became part of the *congadas*, the 18th century folk celebrations with historical and religious themes, songs of which were later recorded in the 20th century.

John K. Thornton examined the transportation of African Christianity to America in the 18th century. He began with an argument against claims that Christianity in Kongo was superficial, emphasizing the strength of Christian identity in that kingdom during the 16th century and its maintenance long afterward. This Catholic identity was taken to America by slaves from Kongo and used to build a neo-Kongo community there. In subsequent centuries, however, the character of this neo-Kongo identity changed: "While they were still in touch with Kongo through their own living memories, they shaped it to fit the model of their homeland, but as they and their children accepted it as an identity rather than a living cultural memory, they reshaped it increasingly to fit the creole environment of the Americas. As they did so, it gradually lost its distinctively Kongolese nature, and its specific history." At the same time, however, the strength of early African Christianity may have provided a key link between African and European forms of religiosity, meeting in the Americas.

Both these papers demonstrated a continuity of memory that helped to construct a single communicative space across the Atlantic and was, at the same time, politically loaded.

José Curto, like Thornton, focused on the 18th century in his study of the Brazilian community in Benguela, already mentioned in Roquinaldo Ferreira's contribution to this volume. Curto's point, however, was to emphasize a particular group of carriers of transoceanic communication who have hitherto enjoyed little attention. Between 1784 and 1819, 75 percent of all slaves from Benguela were shipped to Rio de Janeiro along sea routes operated largely by Brazilian enterprises. The Brazilian community of Benguela, with an average size of about 80, was quite heterogeneous in itself. According to contemporary census data, by the end of the 18th century, it included not only white and mestiço employees of commercial firms but also roughly a third of the black workers at Brazilian trading and shipping houses. They moved back and forth between Brazil and Africa, and regardless of their status, travelled widely on their own in the African interior, buying slaves and commodities. "The back-to-Africa movement of free and enslaved took place much earlier than presumed", the author emphasized. The descendents of these Brazilians remained in Benguela even after the 1850s, when the legal slave trade had come to an end, and the specific identity of the group was lost.

Nationality, Locality, and the Globe

Another dimension of space-making along the lines of transport and communication that would need more attention than can be devoted to it in this volume is national and global integration – a task which seems to be at the top of the agenda again today, against the backdrop of the modern country's heritage of fragmentation and marginalisation. At the original symposium, three contributions took up this challenge, of which only the one by *Aurora da Fonseca Ferreira* has become a chapter of this book.

Fonseca's contribution (chapter 12) focuses on a micro-region along the lower Kwanza River (Kisama), using it to examine the flows, or rather the obstacles to goods and communication between a particular locality and what gradually became the national territory of Angola and its centres. Kisama is an area that, despite its proximity to Portuguese military power at Luanda, successfully defended itself against direct Portuguese interference for centuries and was able to retain its autonomy until 1918. Nevertheless, Kisama had a privileged position compared to the rest of Angola owing to its remoteness from the large African kingdoms and from the routes feeding the Atlantic slave trade. In addition, in the colonial era the loss in significance of its former salt-mines and its recent gazetting, first as a game reserve and then as a national park, helped to preserve Kisama's unusual autonomy. Although communication and trade, both here and elsewhere, was strongly centred around Luanda, the links were mostly indirect. The passing of information through several intermediate agents and stations resulted in a marked selectivity of communication and, consequently, in limitation of the options available to actors within the region.

At the end of the colonial period, which had thus severed the ties between the Kisama territory and the outside world, electronic media offered new opportunities for direct communication. For technical and other reasons, however, the building of modern communication networks in Angola is still largely limited to the urban centres, and neither is it a priority for national governments to create the conditions for a communications infrastructure in the territory of Kisama National Park. While tarmac roads and energy supply lines are still missing, hopes are now set on integration via satellite transmissions. Functioning communication with the outside world is, at any rate, a precondition for any form of development (schools!) and "modernization".

During the symposium, Ferreira's question on the integration of the local and the national was also addressed from a broader perspective by *Lukonde Luansi*. He asked about the implications of a heritage of regional autonomies and constant mobility in the Angolan past for the current quest for a new, less centrist structure of the Angolan nation-state for Angolan national identity and regional autonomy. The turbulent decades of anti-colonial and civil war, accompanied by major population movements, exacerbated the crisis of the Angolan nation-state, the foundations of which rested in the colonial past. Luansi there-

fore explored Angola's pre-colonial history for socio-cultural and political forms of cohesion. Regionalization models in the given context of multiple connections between the regions, he argued, would help to overcome today's crisis.

At yet a larger scale of analysis, Angola's integration into the emerging global economy and society needs to be assessed. One example is the country's position "on the margin of global media society", which was studied by *Manfred Schmitz* in still another contribution to the symposium not included here. He posits that information flows at the intra-national and trans-national levels are far from being equal and balanced. This he based on an analysis of the mechanisms of hegemony by western media agencies operating on a global scale. Adopting the theory of "peripheral communication" developed in political science, Schmitz argued that the "corridors of communication" between Angola and the world, as established by the western media business, represent "paths of power" through which these enterprises spread and impose western ways and views on media-dependent countries such as Angola.

It can thus be said that transport and communication in the history of West Central Africa – just as in other parts of the world – have shaped new spaces and boundaries of economic and social as well as political and cultural kinds. The case studies presented here demonstrate clearly that not just people and goods but also memories and identities, innovations and rumours, oral and written knowledge have circulated in the region and beyond in significant amounts. In different ways, these circulations have connected spaces of very different types and scales. The contributions point out, in particular, how strongly the development of "local", smaller-scale spaces of communication, on the one hand, and of the very wide trans-African and trans-Atlantic, national and global contexts of which Angola has been a part for centuries, on the other, were interconnected. The relationship between different spaces and scales can by no means be seen as a sequential one (as a shift of emphasis from one space or scale to the other), but has to be described in many cases as a complementary or even as a mutually constitutive one. The histories of local areas such as Kisama or Caconda were very much parts of the global economy and national society. It is part of the dialectics of transport and communication, however, that the connections and spaces they shape are often highly hierarchical. Transport and communication are shaping not just processes of mobility but also barriers and boundaries.

4. Concepts of Space on the Move

Understanding how spaces are (re-)"made" by mobility – the question addressed in the preceding section – requires knowledge of how particular kinds of goods and information were transported along specific routes. However,

there is also a need to understand the making of knowledge as such, namely about mobility, space and the mobile spaces of communication. Quite diverse producers and types of knowledge are to be considered here. On the one hand, mobile actors themselves (as well as resident actors with whom they interact) have constantly made up their mind on how to view and name spaces that are characterized by shifting connections rather than fixed boundaries (see chapter 13, by *Inge Brinkman*). The same question, on the other hand, constantly has to be grappled with by those intimate outsiders who call themselves scholars (see chapter 14, by *Wyatt MacGaffey*). Both perspectives were and are more often in a hidden (and sometimes open) dialogue than is usually assumed, for instance when researchers try to translate contesting memories of migration into their own interpretations, which then sometimes trickle back to the local arenas with unexpected meanings and effects. Also among "local" actors themselves, views of the landscape of communication are by no means uniform. Not only do their perspectives tend to change over time but, as the chapters by Maria Emília Madeira Santos and Tavares have shown, perceptions of "paths" and "roads", of "hinterland" and "coast", etc., have often developed in direct opposition to each other.

The first of the chapters in this section draws the attention back to a smaller, more "anthropological" scale of inquiry. It illustrates how particularly instructive, for an understanding of spatial concepts, situations are in which different ideas of space more or less violently clash with each other. In this chapter (13), *Inge Brinkman* refers to the recent era of the wars of liberation, especially in northern Angola, in the 1970s and 1980s. She also concentrates on popular philosophies and interpretations of spatial mobility as such, in which routes play a crucial role. Her concern is the study of "routes not only as realities but also as ideas", and "to draw attention to the various ways in which war and mobility interrelate." War – a major topic throughout Angolan history – was also a key motive for changes in transport and communication technologies. At the same time, wars had an impact on how paths, roads and the landscapes they crossed were interpreted by their users. Topics such as the connection between roads and the colonial army; the struggles over these roads and the secret paths set up by rebel troops; the roles of intelligence and of guides; and movement control and forced resettlements, escapes and exile, and the existence of a highly differentiated 'route vocabulary' are all used by Brinkman to illustrate her multifaceted approach to understanding mobility and violence. Her contribution makes it clear, however, that even under extremely threatening physical conditions and forced removals, cultural constructions of space structure movements and communication. This connection holds true also in the reverse: Transport and communication have not only shaped real spaces "out there" but have also inscribed themselves in the "mental geographies" of the actors themselves.

Another, earlier period of clashes between different concepts of space was the transition to formal European rule, with its concomitant imposition of a

territorial order by the colonial state. In the symposium that has inspired this volume, *Achim von Oppen* has explored changes in popular ways of conceptualizing space along the upper reaches of the Zambezi river, now divided by the international border between Angola and Zambia, and one of the last areas of Central Africa to be territorialized in this way, between the 1880s and 1915. This area has always been remote from the economic and political centres in any direction, and yet trade and migration have intensely connected it to them for a very long time. Consequently, movements across the modern boundaries have to structures the inhabitants' everyday geographies. According to their "mental maps", settlements and communications, social ties and political relations were, and to some extent still are, structured in linear, partly concentric ways, but hardly ever in terms of bounded two-dimensional territory. Watercourses represented the most important axes of orientation, defining proximity and distance, both spatially and socio-politically (see also the chapter by MacGaffey, below). Achim von Oppen, mainly using evidence from the eastern part of this area which ended up under British colonial rule, explored the clashes and interactions of these older, local conceptualizations of space with the heavy-handed but often illusionary attempts of the colonial state to impose its own territorial order of things. He describes the process as a multilayered one, which was gradually scaled down from "international" to very local boundaries, without ever displacing the earlier order completely. He also shows how quick local inhabitants were to pick up and reinterpret the idea of bounded territory for themselves.

In chapter 14, *Wyatt MacGaffey* directs our attention to the mental constructions of academic scholars themselves. Taking the example of oral traditions of origin of Central African states, with their stereotype of immigrant dynasties from somewhere "across the river", he questions the ways in which these metaphors have often been translated literally into scholarly histories of the continent. He starts off from the well-known theory of a "Hamitic" origin of whatever Europeans thought "civilized" in Africa, which fanned the fires of ethnic violence in the Interlacustine Region (Rwanda, Burundi). Similarly wide-ranging conclusions have been drawn also from Central African traditions asserting that kingdoms in the region were founded by civilizing immigrants, stories also taken by academic historians at face-value. For instance, scholars have assumed that these events signalled a change from matrilineal to patrilineal descent, a structural distinction that has often been seen as central for the characterization of African societies. Taking accounts of the origin of the Kongo kingdom, often deemed as evidence for actual migrations, as an example, MacGaffey suggests another more historical way of reading them. A myth is "surely a product of its time and place. If we drop the assumption that the historical Kingdom of Kongo, with its capital Mbanza Kongo, is the necessary point of reference; cease to read Kongo migration stories as a kind of bungled history of events; and situate them in the places from which they are

reported, a different sense of their import emerges." These stories, among other things, typically "describe transitions, often across a river, leading to the settlement of a new country". "The stories," MacGaffey continues, were by intention "not historical but sociological, sketching an ideally ordered society." "In that sense, the land across the river provides a space in which to inscribe social theory." It can be concluded that West Central Africa is a particularly conspicuous example of the way that myths of origin have to be seen as repositories or arguments in the political process. As such, they have to be taken seriously, even as a source for historians, but not in the conventional sense of factual memory and often for much later eras than the ones they purport to speak about.

MacGaffey's analysis raises very interesting methodological questions , as the debates of the Berlin symposium showed. There, it was wondered, for instance, why these "dragons" in academic thought, such as these positivist understandings of migration myths, are recognized (and duly slain) only by subsequent generations and not in the periods in which they arise. If, however, it is true that the construction of certain "myths" in research reflects their particular cultural contexts, then the same must be true for their critiques. In more practical terms, it was asked why a constructivist approach to myth, which is now finding considerable resonance in western academic circles, might be less appealing for students and teachers in Africa itself, for whom certain oral traditions, for instance, have become essential elements of their views of history. Another concern was that too much insistence on the critique of myth in Africa might perpetuate the stereotype that "African history is all myth". Finally, other sites of production of "myths", in MacGaffey's sense, have to be considered as well, as *Jean-Luc Vellut* argued in the discussion. Ethnographic museums outside of Africa, in Europe, for instance, have been highly influential in shaping our views of place, movement and communication (or its absence) in the Central African past.

Angola in the World

No amount of critique on a historiography and anthropology of movement and communication in Africa can free us from the need to develop better narratives of that history. Fresh debates on world history and globalization have provided strong incentives for new ways of contextualizing local and regional history within a broader "transnational" or "global" framework. An impressive and invigorating attempt in this direction is presented by *Joseph C. Miller* in the concluding chapter (15) of this book. According to his broad vista of western Central African history, the underlying cultural frameworks rested on a communal ethos of collective mobility, though not the simplistic sort of tribal mass "migrations" depicted in oral traditions and once favoured also by

historians. The variability of the climate on these far northern fringes of the Kalahari Desert favoured strategies – with major exceptions in the floodplains of the large rivers – of built-in mobility of residence and flexibility of technology to preserve the integrity of the collectivity. Contact with the Atlantic commercial economy after the sixteenth century brought unprecedented opportunities for individual enterprise to entrepreneurs willing to set out on their own through personal movements beyond their home communities. These personal movements have increased steadily through the present. The terms of this contrast between collective mobility and movements of individuals reversed during the colonial era in a struggle between Portuguese determined to limit and collectivize African movement at every level – relocating villages near the modern roads, "tribalizing" identities, and excluding all but a select few from the cities – while moving African labour, colonial personnel, commercial transport, and the military capabilities of the state along modern roads and railways.

Conclusion

The case studies presented in this book illustrate very well how fertile a ground Angola and its hinterland is for understanding the roles of transport and communication in African history. The rich detail these studies provide, within the framework of the five areas of debate delineated here, leads to significant conclusions at a more general level. Taking up the key points presented so far in this introduction, these conclusions can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, the means and routes of transport in the region underwent a long-term process of change. Changes occurred at a slower pace from the 17th to the 19th century, mainly through the gradual establishment of a network of more or less fixed long-distance routes, large-scale caravan traffic, and intensified oral and even written communication for both commercial and political purposes, including the development of concomitant economic and social institutions. From the late 19th century onwards, these processes of change accelerated considerably through adoption of technical innovations, notably steamship navigation, railway and road construction, roads and a variety of new means of land transport, and the deployment of electric and eventually electronic forms of communication. This modernization of transport and communication in Angola was, however, also a highly contradictory process, particularly due to the colonial context in which it occurred:

As the process advanced, older and newer, African and European routes, types and means of transport existed side by side in an uneasy relationship, which was marked not only by competition but often enough also by repression of indigenous systems, in practice and in perception, despite their continuing importance for local populations. One example is the division of labour that was

tantamount to a bifurcation between networks of "roads" and "paths", respectively controlled by Europeans and Africans. The actual functioning of modern technologies of transport and communication, however, relied on a sharing of technical and ecological knowledge in practice, despite claims of European dominance, frequently underpinned by violence. The upshot was a considerable ambivalence in the African experience of the new transport technologies. There is a notable contrast between local resistance and avoidance in earlier periods and at times of war and more receptive attitudes in more recent times. Also, Angolan history shows a number of cases in which new transport systems (such as animal power) or certain routes (notably border areas) were ultimately *not* as widely used as might have been expected, considering their economic potential. The political constraint of colonial rule seem to have been at least as serious an obstacle to the development of transport as ecological conditions, lack of capital, and the dependence on the volatile world market demand.

Secondly, transport and communication networks affected rural livelihoods profoundly in the areas through which they operated. The increase of traffic along important caravan routes, for instance, produced enormous fluctuations of population and enabled a more rapid spread of pandemics. Areas off the main routes, in contrast, became more marginal than before, causing new population movements and struggles for attention. The establishment of new transport routes for caravans, railways or other vehicles often had quite ambivalent effects on regional and local histories and was seen with very different eyes at different times: as a means of wealth or impoverishment, as avenues of repression or liberation, as tools of fragmentation or unification. The case of Angola clearly illustrates these ambivalences of modernization well before the 20th century.

Thirdly, throughout the history of the region, transport and communication have shaped economic and social as well as political and cultural spaces and boundaries. One especially noteworthy aspect is the significance of the circulation of various kinds of knowledge. However important were the people and goods transferred within West Central Africa and beyond, memories and identities, information and rumour, and oral and written knowledge were no less so. Another insight regards the relatedness between spaces of different kinds and scales, especially between small-scale ("local") areas of communication, on the one hand, and the very wide-ranging spheres in which Angola has been involved for a long time, on the other: from ancient trans-African to trans-Atlantic in the early modern era to the contemporary national and global world. The relatedness among different spaces and scales of space can occasionally be described as change over time (as when spatial emphases shifted from one area to another) and sometimes as simultaneous complementarity (when the history of the local cannot be understood without the dynamics of the global, and vice versa). It is part of the dialectic of transport and communication, however, that connections and relations were and still are frequently hierarchical in nature.

They are intimately connected to the existence of boundaries and limitations, either as the cause or the consequence.

Fourthly, transport and communication have shaped space not just abstractly or objectively but also subjectively through the "mental geographies" of various actors involved. On the one hand, routes and connections rather than boundaries and territories have structured everyday concepts of space among many inhabitants of Central Africa. These perceptions have given particular momentum to clashes with the quest for territorial control among colonial powers and post-colonial governments. The routes and roads themselves were prominent subjects of dispute, both in practice and in the meanings attached to them. Even under conditions of extreme duress, cultural constructions play a significant role in structuring communication and space. On the other hand, the cultural constructions or concepts developed by researchers themselves also need to be reflected on critically. Studies of West Central Africa have been a fertile ground, in both local traditions and academic inquiry, for the development of narratives of connectedness and locality, of communication and boundary-making. Such contradictory statements should not be taken simply as (correct or incorrect) descriptions of fact but rather as the perspectives of different observers at different times; they are at least as instructive about the historical context of those narratives as they are about the history (or anthropology, sociology etc.) they claim to represent. Methodologically, any deeper understanding of "Angola on the Move" requires a plurality of perspectives, approaches and disciplines such as the one that makes up this volume.

Finally, however, the history of transport and communication networks in (West Central) Africa must also be seen in the wider context of world history, indeed as an integrally constituent part of it. The increase and accelerating rates of change in transport, movements and communication that are generally called globalization began to affect this part of Africa at a very early time, materialized through the interlocking of a multitude of more or less local histories. These histories were shaped by attempts to seize new opportunities, avoid marginality and come to terms with unsettling changes and new contacts, drawing on the cultural heritage of the region and developing in the process.

EM BUSCA DOS SÍTIOS DO PODER NA ÁFRICA CENTRO OCIDENTAL

Homens e Caminhos, Exércitos e Estradas (1483-1915)

Maria Emília Madeira Santos

As iniciativas de estabelecer relações regulares, a partir do litoral, com chefes africanos sedeados no interior, pode dizer-se que se iniciaram no século XV e terminaram no início do século XX. As comunicações entre espaços políticos, económicos e culturais diferentes implicava a relação directa com os poderes africanos, quer com os mais fortes e quase sempre resguardados a grandes distâncias quer com pequenos potentados cujos territórios condicionavam o acesso aos primeiros.

Quando os portugueses chegaram a Angola (1483), a primeira iniciativa que tomaram foi a de contactar directamente Mbanza Congo, a corte do potentado mais forte de que tiveram notícia na costa. Ali foram conduzidos por delegados do Soio que mantinham comunicação regular com o suserano.

Na segunda viagem (1485) os próprios navios de Diogo Cão subiram o Zaire conduzidos por pilotos locais treinados, cedidos necessariamente pelo chefe da foz do rio, o que sucedia frequentemente em outros rios da África Ocidental.

De qualquer modo foi um enorme risco, só justificável pelo objectivo primordial de contactar, directamente, na sua corte, o poder político da área.

As tentativas de contactar os detentores do poder, nos próprios sítios desse poder, apresentam várias tipologias, conforme as áreas geográficas, os meios utilizados e os principais objectivos, evoluindo num processo histórico descontínuo, mas em que a memória serviu de argamassa, recuperando acordos seguidos de afastamentos, diálogos interrompidos por silêncios.

Como solução experimental podemos distinguir três ou quatro fases nesta longa duração, sem contudo significar que elas se sucedem sincronicamente em todo o espaço angolano. No entanto, tomando de per si cada área, as fases seguem habitualmente esta ordem.

Primeiro vai-se para contactar e se estabelecer junto ou, de preferência, nas proximidades do sítio do poder africano.

Em seguida para pedir passagem: autorização para ultrapassar o espaço dominado pelo chefe e abrir caminhos até outro potentado político mais longínquo.

Na terceira fase, e na linguagem da época, vai-se para "pacificar" (entenda-se conquistar) instalando o poder colonial e deixando permanecer a autoridade africana submetida.

Na última fase anula-se e substitui-se o poder político africano pelo poder militar e civil colonial.

Estas duas fases mais recentes sobrepõem-se frequentemente, consoante a rapidez com que se instala o poder colonial.

As ligações episódicas podem estabelecer relações regulares ou produzir resistências prolongadas, mas com ambos os resultados se cria mutuamente a imagem do outro poder.

Por vezes, embora raramente, alternam-se as posições, são os poderes do *hinterland* que pretendem relacionar-se, não tanto com as autoridades coloniais, mas com o poder do rei ultramarino que consideram corresponder-lhes na hierarquia.

Na África Central não se conhecia o nome do governador de Luanda, nem de Quelimane, mas antes o do Mueneputo, como título, e a dada altura, o de Dona Maria II (rainha de Portugal entre 1826 e 1853), como nome próprio.

Aos sítios do poder africano os europeus ou europeizados chegaram como delegados de um poder exterior, como missionários de uma religião exógena, como comerciantes de mercadorias desconhecidas, mas sempre reconhecendo a superioridade hierárquica do chefe africano.

Todas as relações acabam por atingir os aspectos políticos dos potentado africanos. Ao exigir ser frequentado na sua própria residência, e determinar o momento do acesso á sua presença, o chefe materializa a representação do seu poder sobre o espaço e o tempo. Dentro da corte o tempo é marcado pelo próprio chefe e a espera imposta ao visitante por intermédio da hierarquia cortesã simboliza a posição subalterna do visitante e também o grau de interesse por parte do chefe africano no estabelecimento ou no relaxamento da relação. É também ele, que fazendo funcionar a rede do seu poder político até ao mais distante vassalo, abre os caminhos, quando quer dar acesso ao estranho.

A organização do espaço nas povoações dos chefes, a presença de árvores seculares, a existência de água potável assegurada, a proximidade da área sagrada, os túmulos, o bosque sagrado, a praça das audiências, onde, mais cedo ou mais tarde, era recebido o estrangeiro foram aspectos fundamentais nos relatórios que atravessaram todas as épocas.

Não raras vezes a visão da corte, marcada pela estrutura hierarquizada da sociedade transmite ao visitante a imagem nebulosa do poder que se oculta para lá dos muros, das paliçadas, das habitações dos cortesãos, que circulam trazendo e levando mensagens, numa encenação de inacessibilidade. A estrutura da povoação permite entender que existe uma hierarquia, tanto mais complexa, quanto mais forte é o poder do chefe e a intermediação do aparelho que o rodeia.

O primeiro cientista a compreender, no final do século XVIII, que deve pedir auxílio ao poder africano dirigindo-se ao sítio onde ele está sedeado, é Lacerda e Almeida. Uma vez chegado a Moçambique, abandona todos os projectos

científicos que levava de Lisboa para atravessar a África, e vai desviar a sua rota, centenas de quilómetros para Norte em direcção ao Muata Cazembe.

Os cientistas, já no século XIX, tomariam uma postura diversa, influenciada pelos estudos etnológicos e filosóficos da época. A ciência e a tecnologia europeias não recorriam ao saber africano. A participação de africanos nas expedições científicas limitava-se ao recrutamento de carregadores, guias e fornecimento de parte da alimentação.

O militar, no final do século XIX, iniciará uma outra relação de força pela conquista que atingirá, no final do período, a própria destruição do sítio do poder.

O caminho para a sede do poder africano era o "caminho gentílico", aberto por decisão local, sob solicitação do viajante com condições de acesso, impostas ou negociadas.

A via para o estabelecimento do poder colonial e até já para a conquista militar era a estrada carreteira, aberta pelos carros de bois e posteriormente percorrida pelos camiões.

Era este período final que me propunha tratar inicialmente com o título: *Caminhos Gentílicos e Estradas Carreteiras. Duas Lógicas, dois Poderes*. Pareceu-me no entanto útil e possível expandir a abordagem para um nível de análise mais vasto.[1]

Dado que, por razões de ordem profissional, precisei seguir orientações que me conduziram ao estudo da África Atlântica desde o século XV ao XX – embora possam ter saído prejudicadas algumas particularidades específicas, – torna-se agora possível acompanhar este processo histórico na longa duração em que progressos e recuos, acordos e confrontos se tornam visíveis através da comparação de narrativas já feitas, mas ainda não analisadas em conjunto.

As contrariedades dos primeiros contactos com a costa da Guiné, e o facto de se descobrir a existência de um arquipélago desabitado a pouca distância do cabo Verde, levaram os portugueses a optar por uma instalação na ilha de Santiago, criando ali uma verdadeira "feitoria insular" da costa da Guiné. Entreposto onde se recebiam escravos da Guiné e se reenviavam para a Europa e para a América. A estratégia estava em não se estabelecerem oficialmente na costa, sujeitos a ataques, e não se intrometerem nas estruturas políticas e económicas locais que conduziam os escravos até ao litoral, onde os navios de Cabo Verde os compravam. Os únicos intermediários oficiosos e "fora da lei" eram os lançados que, embora prestando serviços de intermediários, agiam por conta própria, sem qualquer representatividade oficial.[2]

[1] Esta opção foi-me sugerida pelo texto de Joseph Miller (1997: 21-40), em que o autor se propõe "revelar as dimensões cronológicas de um processo integralmente histórico de desenvolvimento por etapas distintas [...] um processo lento, pouco conhecido [...]" (p. 21).

[2] Santos e Baleno 1998: 147-152.

O mesmo sucederia no golfo da Guiné, em que a fortaleza de S. Jorge da Mina, fechada sobre si própria, recebia o ouro do hinterland, mas se apoiava na "feitoria insular" que era a ilha de S. Tomé.

A partir daí, avançando para o sul, o expediente de criar um litoral alternativo insular deixava de poder repetir-se. Tornava-se necessário outro tipo de relacionamento com o poder africano. É que aquela terra não era penetrável sem a intermediação dos poderes políticos africanos. Não era sequer interessante contactar o seu litoral, sem se dar a conhecer previamente aos potentados do hinterland.

E os riscos eram tantos para estabelecer relações completamente novas que para tal os pioneiros e até os posteriores viajantes ficaram durante séculos dependentes dos estados africanos mais ou menos poderosos.[3]

E a dependência fazia-se sentir a vários níveis.

Autorização para se instalar, utilização das estruturas africanas para captura e condução dos escravos até às feiras, utilização dos caminhos abertos e controlados pelos africanos, uso dos equipamentos e serviços para a travessia dos rios, protecção das redes políticas através de ordens para os chefes subordinados, no sentido de lhes darem passagem, venderem alimentos, prestarem auxílio na condução e segurança contra ladrões.

Existem várias narrativas e monografias, escritas em épocas diferentes, acerca da busca dos sítios do poder sedeados na África Central Ocidental. Proponho-me seleccionar alguns casos que ilustrem as mudanças verificadas neste processo, desenvolvido ao longo de mais de 400 anos, e que termina com a submissão ou eliminação do objecto buscado por vários meios, muitas vezes desconexos, mas evidenciando, no seu conjunto uma continuidade.

As ligações políticas, administrativas e religiosas entre os reis de Portugal e os do Congo são o ex-libris desta busca recíproca de poderes e culturas que se exigiam mutuamente a visita, a recepção, a permanência, o reconhecimento nas respectivas cortes, a educação e até laços familiares. Os poderes sedeados a tão grande distância como a que decorre entre S. Salvador do Congo e Lisboa precisam de se tornar mutuamente visíveis pela arquitectura, pelas marcas simbólicas do seu poder e da sua riqueza, pelo registo escrito que legitima o poder e transmite a imagem desejada, pela religião que integra o rei africano noutro sistema de poderes mais vasto, a Igreja, que pode também confirmar e legitimar.

Esse terá sido um modelo nunca repetido que de perto ou de longe enformou muitas das tentativas para estabelecer relações.

Situemo-nos então, em meados do século XVIII, quando os contactos mais ou menos directos entre delegados do governo português e os potentados africanos já tinham lugar a grandes distâncias do litoral. Mas também quando estes poderes detinham ainda intacta a sua esfera de exercício de poder e a

[3] Jourdin 1994: 238-244.

capacidade de opção sobre conceder ou proibir o acesso de estranhos a áreas exclusivas com significado económico ou simbólico.

Á época, o chefe político mais poderoso e simultaneamente mais longínquo, contactado indirectamente pelos representantes das autoridades de Luanda era o chamado Jaga de Cassange.[4]

Neste caso o acesso directo ao sítio do poder era dificultado pelo próprio chefe político, empenhado em exercer o papel de Estado tampão, entre o hinterland a leste do seu território e as ultimas ramificações do comércio de longa distância da colónia de Angola, que atingia a feira de Cassange, dominada pelo próprio Jaga, como intermediário, e codirigida por um representante do governo de Luanda. Todo este mecanismo era accionado pelo tráfico de escravos para exportação, factor que determinava o jogo de forças dos poderes políticos africanos, antes mesmo de condicionar o mercado externo.

Medidas drásticas eram tomadas para que o comércio colonial não contactasse a corte e o curso de Cuango, e principalmente não conhecesse o que estava para lá do rio, isto é, o potentado fornecedor de escravos.

Neste caso o interesse do governo de Angola em contactar directamente a corte do Cassange, não era tanto obter livre transito até àquele sítio do poder, mas investigar como ultrapassa-lo.

As regras de jogo, que regulamentavam as relações comerciais na feira do Cassange, estavam estabelecidas embora frequentemente violadas. Mas pretendia-se agora a visita, a entrevista, a recepção, enquanto o potentado evitava a embaixada, intramuros. Interessava-lhe manter a distância para não ocasionar o conhecimento da passagem para além dos seus domínios e se manter como único intermediário.

Trata-se de um caso raro em que o chefe africano procura impedir a visita do delegado da autoridade colonial, dada a proximidade da sua corte relativamente ao território do seu maior abastecedor de escravos. Pretendia, a todo o custo impedir o contacto entre os compradores do litoral e os fornecedores do hinterland.

Correia Leitão, o primeiro visitante oficial, acabaria por ser recebido por intermédio de dignitários da corte. Todas as negociações decorreram entre estes e o representante de Sua Majestade Fidelíssima não fazendo qualquer das partes referência ao governador de Angola que era apenas uma autoridade intermédia. Correia Leitão joga com factores de consumo e produção, mas também equilíbrios políticos, entre o Jaga de Cassange e o seu maior fornecedor de escravos, o Muatiânvua da Lunda.

Apresentou reivindicações para um funcionamento da feira do Cassange, mais vantajoso e seguro para os pombeiros (responsáveis por caravanas comerciais) de Angola e lembrou-lhe que era através desse comércio que recebia as armas de fogo e a pólvora. Quando se apercebeu do significado

[4] Thornton 1988.

africano da proibição de fornecimento de armas aplicou-a como argumento para fazer depender do comércio português, o equilíbrio político entre o Cassange e o Muatiânvua. Potentado este cujo poder acabava de lhe ser dado a conhecer por informadores de segunda mão.

O hipotético papel de um parceiro mais distante e poderoso surge como forte argumento. A preponderância dele, Cassange estava na posse e boa utilização das armas e da pólvora fornecidas pelos portugueses. Sem este fornecimento teria já sido destruído pelos Lundas, visto que o equilíbrio de forças entre o Cassange e o Muatiânvua era extremamente instável e frequentemente quebrado pelo segundo.

A notícia sobre um outro poder político, mais forte, mais distante e mais interessante para o governo da colónia, trazida por Correia Leitão, é talvez aquela que mais resultados vai apresentar no futuro.

Efectivamente a informação de maior interesse para os planos geo-estratégicos do Império colonial era a de que, para além de o Muatiânvua da Lunda, "o Senhor dos Senhores", deter um poder muito superior ao jaga de Cassange, era também o seu maior inimigo e mostrava interesse em eliminar o tampão que o separava do comércio com os brancos do Ocidente.

Correia Leitão ocupa-se particularmente em descrever o poder e a grandeza do potentado mais distante, ainda não contactado, que se afigura poder vir a ser um aliado valioso.

Colhe a ideia de que o Muatiânvua, embora pretenda contactar os brancos do Ocidente e do Oriente, se apercebera do perigo de poder vir a sofrer pressões conjugadas dos dois lados.[5] Efectivamente esse viria a ser o futuro da África Central já no final do século XIX, quando os meios de comunicação atingiam uma eficácia inimaginável no século anterior.

No final do século XVIII, o primeiro cientista explorador da África Austral, Lacerda e Almeida recebeu o encargo de atravessar o continente, tendo chegado a Tete, em Moçambique, sem quinino e sem um plano definido. Aí encontra já estabelecido o comércio sertanejo regular com o Muata Cazembe e tem oportunidade de ouvir a História da África Central contada pelo próprio príncipe herdeiro do Cazembe. O cientista compreende que precisa de se apoiar no poder africano.

As suas razões expô-las em poucas linhas: "[...] dizem que do Cazembe se pode ir a Morope (Lunda) em 60 dias, outros dizem 3 meses [...] e que ao Reino Morope vêm caravanas de Angola, ou de suas vizinhanças comprar escravos [...]".[6]

Mas o que nos ocupa aqui é a decisão do cientista. Para além das facilidades de trânsito que antevia, atraía-o a ideia de ver surgir no interior de África uma

[5] Leitão 1938: 3-31.
[6] Almeida 1889: 292.

civilização que se assemelhasse à dos Incas e Astecas os quais considerava mais civilizados e polidos do que os Espanhóis que os tinham contactado.[7]

O astrónomo deixou-se tentar pela opção africana, refez os planos, mudou os itinerários ampliou os objectivos da pesquisa hidrográfica e fez-se ao caminho em direcção à Mussumba, corte do Muata Cazembe.

Sem quinino, Lacerda e Almeida atingiu as margens do lago Moero já muito doente, iniciou os contactos com o rei que tudo fez para salvar o seu "irmão Geral de Tete", mas ali morreu duas semanas depois. A sua memória foi guardada e venerada na corte e ecoou pelo caminho que pretendia percorrer. Quando dez anos após a sua morte, os pombeiros de Angola saíram do Cassange para percorrer o caminho no sentido contrário, fizeram correr a notícia de que iam recolher os bens do Geral de Tete falecido no Cazembe e foram acreditados e protegidos no imenso espaço dominado pelos poderes africanos: Muatiânvua e Muata Cazembe.

Os objectivos coloniais eram declaradamente os de concluir uma travessia de costa a costa. A tentativa falhada de Lacerda e Almeida a partir de Moçambique não concluira a travessia, mas dera a conhecer, por informação, aquilo que faltava percorrer. Do lado ocidental, o Muatiânvua continuava isolado pela entreposição do Cassange. No entanto havia agora conhecimentos sobre a existência do Muata Cazembe do lado Oriental e sobre as relações de vassalagem frouxa existentes entre os dois impérios, ligados por um itinerário.

Ao contrário de Correia Leitão os dois pombeiros do Cassange encarregados de executar a travessia contornaram os potentados isoladores e procuraram estabelecer contacto directo com a Mussumba. Era aí que estavam as "portas do caminho" que ligava o Império da Lunda ao Império do Cazembe. Dependia do Muatiânvua abri-las ou fecha-las aos delegados negros dos brancos do Ocidente.

No início de 1806 Pedro João Baptista e Amaro José atingiram a corte do Muatiânvua de onde partiram a 22 de Maio com autorização para se dirigirem ao Muata Cazembe. Durante este período parece terem estado hospedados na Mussamba (sítio Grande do Murope) em casa do seu filho Capenda hianvo.

O seu diário não se ocupa sequer das negociações com o Muatiânvua. Aliás uma espera de quatro meses pode considerar-se muito curta, numa corte que retém indefinidamente os seus visitantes e hóspedes.

É preciso fazer notar que o caminho que lhes foi franqueado era o cordão umbilical que ligava o senhor da Lunda ao seu vassalo, senhor do Cazembe, mas não era percorrido regularmente. Eram os portadores de tributos de sal gema para o Muatiânvua e de pedras verdes do Catanga (malaquite, minério de cobre) para Cazembe, que mantinham as relações do suzerano com o vassalo através de regiões quase desabitadas. Junto do rio Lubudi um *quilolo* recebia os que vinham da Lunda para o Cazembe e vice-versa.

[7] *Idem*, *Ibidem*: 290.

O Muatiânvua toma os viajantes à sua guarda, confia-os a um guia, remete-os ao seu vassalo como delegados do Rei de Portugal e recomenda uma boa recepção .

Na corte do Cazembe, após uma pequena espera protocular, o guia apresenta os companheiros como vindos de Angola, mandados ao rei do Cazembe, pelo Rei seu amigo, a que eles chamam Mueneputo, Rei de Portugal, tendo sido despachados pelo Murope (Muatiânvua) com ordem para o seu vassalo os tratar "sem malícias".

Mais ainda "manda recomendar bastante o seu Murope [ao Cazembe] fazer todo o necessário para despachar os ditos viajantes onde desejam e lhos tornar a mandar, para o dito Murope os entregar de donde vieram". No final da entrevista, para que fique registado, entregam uma carta do rei Mueneputo, para que o Muata Cazembe a "mande ler e ouvir o pedido que lhe faz de abrir os caminhos aos seus emissários até Moçambique (Sena)".[8]

Para além de se pressupor que há na corte alguém que lê português, perpassam aqui uma série de jurisdições que se comunicam e se reforçam para que estes dois homens africanos atravessem a África de Costa a Costa sob a protecção dos dois grandes impérios de África Central com as credenciais de um rei não africano que está para lá do mar, e exerce o seu poder simultaneamente na costa Ocidental e na costa Oriental. Estes poderes viam-se assim confrontados com a estranheza de um poder descontínuo, que fazia do mar o seu meio enquanto o poder deles estava na terra, e na mobilidade dos homens nela.

Os contactos oficiais ou oficiosos das colónias portuguesas das duas costas com os grandes potentados da África Central intensificam-se com objectivos e actores diversos, tomando várias feições e daí resultando vários tipos de recepção.

O comerciante Rodrigues Graça enviado à Lunda ao serviço do governo colonial, em 1843, joga com factores económicos, problemas de oferta e de procura, tal como Correia Leitão, mas pretende intervir na produção e particularmente na estrutura política, através dos poderes secundários. Antes de atingir a sede do Muatiânvua, o sertanejo contactou os súbditos deste potentado acordando com eles a protecção das caravanas sertanejas de Angola e a substituição do comércio de escravos pela produção agrícola e a caça ao elefante.

Rodrigues Graça desconhecia a organização férrea do império Lunda e a eficiência dos seus *cacoatas* na vigilância da actuação de todos os súbditos. A argumentação de que o Muene Puto podia cortar-lhes o fornecimento de armas de fogo e da pólvora parecia-lhe suficiente para poder alcançar o preito de homenagem e obediência, observado pelo lado da política colonial.

[8] "Explorações dos Portugueses ..." 1843: 189, 439.

Na Mussumba, em Setembro de 1847, foi recebido com as honras do primeiro embaixador do Muene Puto. Mas este emissário não vinha em nome de um poder parceiro, propunha a subordinação ao Rei de Portugal concretizada pelo pagamento de um imposto e ameaçava com o corte das relações comerciais.

Não era ainda a hora de transformar ligações comerciais, em subordinações políticas. O embaixador permaneceu na Mussumba cerca de um ano e acabou desacreditado e despedido. A proposta da produção de uma outra mercadoria, o marfim, para superar o desequilíbrio trazido pela proibição da exportação de escravos, também não podia ser correspondida pelo Matiânvua cuja economia continuou baseada na razia e no tráfico de escravos.

Embora não tendo obtido êxito ou talvez compreendendo a razão do fracasso, o emissário apercebeu-se de que as ricas regiões da Lunda e do Cassange poderiam vir a desempenhar importante papel no conjunto de África Central e ficou impressionado ao encontrar uma civilização que se lhe impunha.

É sua a primeira descrição da Mussumba, o mítico sítio do poder da África Central. "Julga-se o viajante transportado a um país civilizado, a polícia que encontra, a limpeza das ruas em linha recta, praças espaçosas [...] a beleza, a ordem e o asseio [...]".[9]

Surpresa semelhante fora a dos pombeiros recebidos na corte do Cazembe em 1806 perante o aparato da recepção na praça pública das audiências, reforçado pela presença dos dignitários e conselheiros ostentando vestuário exótico importado de Zanzibar.[10]

Mas, em 1831 um emissário de Moçambique, misto de militar e comerciante, Pedroso Gamito, chegara também ao Cazembe e para além da descrição das ruas regulares e limpas desenhava uma planta legendada da cidade.

Referiremos aqui apenas duas notas: a habitação do Muata Cazembe é designada por Mussumba tal como a da Lunda, e a alguma distância da cidade, está representado o "Bosque dos Gangas" que terá sido visitado, visto que a legenda explica: "bosque horrível onde habitam os Gangas". É a única reprodução cartográfica de um bosque sagrado que conheço e ainda por cima com a descrição do ambiente e dos seus habitantes, os feiticeiros.[11]

Nessa época Gamito reconhece estar diante de um potentado que "não tem hoje potência alguma que possa temer [...] a uma força respeitável, reúne a cega obediência dos seus vassalos".[12]

Rodrigues Graça a ocidente, Gamito a oriente encontraram a mesma indiferença ao estabelecimento de relações mais estreitas do que as produzidas

9 Graça 1890: 419-420.
10 "Explorações dos Portugueses..." 1843: 189.
11 Gamito 1854, I: 349.
12 *Idem*, *Ibidem*, II: 20.

pelo comércio e até a mesma estratégia de se manter separado do domínio dos brancos com um cordão de povos independentes que não impediam as comunicações comerciais, mas os isolavam dos únicos rivais políticos que à época podiam antever.

Por enquanto o comércio de longa distância beneficia da protecção desses Estados e é ele próprio um factor de alargamento do seu poder político. Mas, apesar das posições defensivas dos chefes, não deixa de levantar problemas de produção, de consumo, de comunicações e de desorganização social, vindo mais tarde a atingir as estruturas políticas.

Os trilhos abertos ao comércio de longa distância eram pontuados por chefes locais que davam apoios vários às caravanas. Os cientistas exploradores geógraficos, que chegaram no terceiro quartel do século XIX não menos-prezaram a comodidade dessas vias que lhes garantiram abastecimento e segurança.

A primeira grande expedição científica que partiu de Angola em 1876, levava, como não podia deixar de ser, a incumbência de fazer um estudo hidrográfico. Serpa Pinto seguiu o caminho do comércio sertanejo para o Barotze, mas Capelo e Ivens arriscaram um novo tipo de itinerário, indepedentemente dos caminhos comerciais e dos chefes africanos. Sem trilhos, nem guias percorreram terras despovoadas e desertas, rasgando itinerários que convinham ao seu objectivo de cartografar a hidrografia cuja utilização dependia de técnicas modernas e estava fora do alcance dos chefes africanos.

A navegação fluvial a vapor não recrutava localmente o pessoal, nem precisava que lhes franqueassem o caminho, percorria vias que estavam lá, mas não eram praticadas pelos africanos. A canhoneira era irresistível porque chegava ao interior sem ter passado pelas resistências intermédias. Relativamente à penetração europeia, através das vias terrestres, as civilizações africanas tinham montado as suas defesas, criando capacidades de reacção, impondo um ritmo que, se não as defendiam do tráfico de escravos, lhes permitiam ganhar tempo para preservar valores.[13]

Capelo e Ivens voltariam a Angola em 1884 com o objectivo de concretizarem a travessia do continente. O caminho era percorrido havia décadas pelo comércio sertanejo de longa distância de ambas as costas. Os exploradores seguiram um figurino de cientistas e abdicando de qualquer comodidade e segurança que os caminhos e os chefes africanos lhes podiam conferir para, em liberdade total, traçarem o itinerário mais espectacular do ponto de vista da geografia e da hidrografia.

O que nos interessa aqui é observar a sua estratégia para evitar a submissão ás regras que o chefe do Barotze (Lobossi) e do chefe do Catanga (Muchire), à época os dois grandes centros comerciais da África Central, impunham ao comércio de longa distância que, a partir de leste e de oeste ali se cruzava. Em

[13] Santos 1985.

contrapartida desenharam o itinerário mais inovador, porque desligado de todos os caminhos abertos pelo poder político africano e percorridos pelo comércio sertanejo.[14]

Em qualquer dos casos acamparam, contra todas as regras, a uma distância conveniente da corte. Fizeram uma visita rápida, de cortesia, quase simbólica, para cumprir o mínimo de regras, pediram pouco ou nenhum apoio e seguiram em direcções praticamente intransitadas.

Para além da política colonial europeia, era já perceptível, para os africanistas atentos, da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, a fragmentação do poder na África Central em que surgiam chefes guerreiros, sem base social, mas arrastando exércitos improvisados que enfraqueciam ou anulavam as sedes do poder das grandes oligarquias. Os sertanejos e as suas caravanas já não encontravam a segurança que as cortes da Lunda, do Barotze, do Cazembe lhes concediam. Bunkeia, corte de Muchire, era já o exemplo desse novo poder dos chefes guerreiros que reanimam a exportação de escravos e não conhecem regras de jogo.

Henrique de Carvalho foi o último grande explorador científico que partiu para a África Central em busca do mítico sítio do poder, a Mussumba, que, em 1884, os africanistas ainda consideravam a sede do mais poderoso Império, o Muatiânvua. Contrariamente aos expedicionários "heróicos", Henrique de Carvalho firma bases administrativas e serve pretensões políticas. Procurava-se "a porta por onde podem penetrar na África Central a civilização e o comércio".[15] Para tal deveria persuadir o Muatiânvua a assinar um tratado de amizade e comércio e aceitar no seu território um "residente político". Reatavam-se velhas aspirações de soberania política e pretendia-se dar aos trilhos sertanejos a estabilidade de vias comerciais abastecedoras do caminho de ferro de Ambaca.

Da parte do Muatiânvua houve uma iniciativa oficial enviando uma embaixada ao governador de Angola manifestando o desejo de que lhe fossem enviados filhos do Mueneputo. A função de Henrique de Carvalho era aproveitar esta preferência dos Lundas pelos Europeus que sempre tinham sido os seus interlocutores políticos. Mas as convulsões internas do Império Lunda tinham colocado a Mussumba numa situação que lhe retirava toda a capacidade de negociar fosse com quem fosse. Henrique de Carvalho avança por entre Lundas e Quiocos (Chokwe)em guerra, informa-se, estuda, conversa e negoceia.

Chega à Mussumba com bem pouco para apresentar ao Muatiânvua interino e aos quilolos, mas os seus anfitriões estavam em situação semelhante "era bastante a insignificância destes presentes para ajuizar da miséria a que tinham chegado os mais ricos estados do Muatiânvua".[16]

[14] *Idem* 1987.
[15] Chagas 1884.
[16] Carvalho 1894, IV: 258.

Ainda assinou um tratado com o Muatiânvua a 18 de Janeiro de 1887 em que este reconhecia a soberania de Portugal e se comprometia a não admitir nas suas terras outra bandeira colonial.

Mas Quiocos e Lundas, em guerra, eram povos com quem precisava assinar pazes. Tudo se precipitou. Chegavam à Mussumba milhares de Lundas fugidos aos invasores, grassava uma epidemia, um grande fogo devorou a Mussumba.

Assistiu ao esvaziamento do sítio e à anulação do poder que o habitava. "Retiraram dois Muatiânvuas: um eleito, outro interino, diante de mim! Que culpa tinha disso? Vim assistir à queda do estado do Muatiâvua? Já o previa [...]."[17]

Henrique de Carvalho foi sem dúvida o último homem de uma longa cadeia, que desde Diogo Cão, no Congo (1485), buscou o sítio do poder africano mais forte, para negociar a penetração europeia na África.

Não haverá mais negociações de parceria na área do poder político africano e colonial. Chegam as campanhas de pacificação que não são mais do que campanhas militares de conquista.

Muitas embalas (cortes dos chefes africanos**)** foram conquistadas e destruídas, os sobas afastados ou mortos, as hierarquias secundárias mantidas como intermediários administrativos entre o poder colonial e as populações, muitos postos militares foram construídos próximo do sítio das antigas embalas. O ritmo da conquista acelera-se extraordinariamente.

Se vou agora referir o caso do Bié é porque, para além do significado militar, traz consigo a mudança de toda uma série de estruturas económicas, de serviços e de comunicações, que correspondiam ao comércio de longa distância partilhado por sertanejos brancos e negros, pombeiros e carregadores , que a curto prazo serão substituídas pela administração colonial, as companhias comerciais, as estradas carreteiras, os carros boers e por último os camiões.

Na madrugada de 31 de Março de 1890, incapaz de chamar à razão os militares portugueses (Paiva Couceiro e Teixeira Pinto) comandantes do exército colonial e desautorizado pelo soba do Bié, na própria corte de Ecovongo, Silva Porto suicidou-se.

Em fins de Outubro chegava ao Bié uma força expedicionária, para vingar a morte do sertanejo, comandada pelo capitão Artur de Paiva e composta para além da infantaria e cavalaria, por 50 carros boers puxados por 800 bois.

A própria coluna expedicionária destacou uma força de 100 homens para desbravar caminho. O comboio em marcha ocupava quatro quilómetros e à sua passagem os rodados dos carros deixavam aberta uma estrada carreteira.

A 4 de Novembro era tomada Ecovongo, a embala do Bié.[18]

[17] Carvalho 1894, IV: 793.
[18] Paiva 1938, I: 209-210.

Quatro dias depois procedia-se à eleição do novo soba que prestou vassalagem e foi investido no poder por Artur de Paiva. De imediato iniciou a reedificação da antiga embala, onde estavam sepultados os seus antepassados.

Uma semana mais tarde dava-se início ao restauro da libata de Silva Porto preparando-a para servir de forte, quartel e residência do futuro capitão-mor. Era o forte militar de Belmonte que passava a representar a ocupação colonial do Bié.

No Sul de Angola, a sólida resistência dos Cuanhamas e alguns revezes do exército colonial na região, conduziram a um outro tipo de ocupação militar sistemática.

É na campanha de 1915 contra os Cuanhamas na sua capital N'giva, que se inicia o uso dos camiões automóveis. Os serviços excelentes prestados pelos carros boers no Bié, no Bailundo e no Moxico, entre outros, dependiam do alimento e da água para os animais. No sul, a obtenção da água era um problema que colocava o exército na mão das populações locais.

No final das operações, ficou completa a estrada de automóveis desde a linha do caminho de ferro até ao interior do distrito da Huila. O trajecto entre Moçâmedes e a N'giva, que anteriormente se fazia em 60 a 80 dias, passou a poder fazer-se em 36 horas.[19]

A rapidez do avanço do exército sobre a N'giva, ficou a dever-se aos camiões, embora os carros boers seguissem na retaguarda. As populações não conheciam a velocidade nem o rendimento do motor das novas máquinas de transporte.

A embala foi encontrada no dia 4 de Setembro ainda fumegante, pois o chefe Mandume, surpreendido pela aproximação inesperadamente rápida da coluna militar, ordenara que a incendiassem. O próprio Mandume refugiou-se na Damaralandia, o que não deu oportunidade às forças invasoras de promover a sua substituição.

De imediato a 5 de Setembro foi criado o comando territorial militar do Baixo Cunene, tendo a sede na N'giva, mais propriamente no lugar da antiga embala do soba Mandume.[20]Aqui não haveria nem dois sítios de poder, nem duas autoridades em presença.

Quando no Bié, Artur de Paiva perguntara ao novo soba eleito, onde iria construir a nova embala, ele respondera de imediato que iria reconstruir Ecovongo. O núcleo da administração colonial seria obviamente em Belmonte, na libata do sertanejo imolado. Os dois pólos do poder destruídos e reconstruídos haviam de permanecer lá até aos nossos dias.

Na N'giva, o forte militar foi construído sobre as ruínas da embala e as estradas carreteiras confluíram com os caminhos gentílicos no único sítio do poder existente. Entre a visita de Diogo Cão à Mbanza Congo e a campanha

[19] Eça 1928: 44, 185.
[20] *Idem*: 681-682.

militar à N'giva um longo e lento processo histórico tem de ser percorrido para que se possa compreender as várias etapas no seu conjunto de *Angola on the move*.

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THE SUPPLY AND DEPLOYMENT OF HORSES IN ANGOLAN WARFARE (17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES)

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Introduction

Historians have widely disagreed on the influence of cavalry warfare in pre-colonial West Africa. James Webb's claim that "the political geography of the western savanna" was transformed by the use of cavalry has been disputed by Ivana Elbl.[1] While Humphrey Fisher has limited the impact of cavalry to withdrawal strategies, Robin Law has related its efficacy to the quality of horses and equipment used by cavalrymen.[2] By the same token, the importance of the transoceanic supply of horses has also been controversial. For example, as opposed to Law's emphasis on horses imported into Senegambia through Portuguese merchants from the late fifteenth century onward, Webb and Elbl state the superiority of horse imports from desert merchants.[3] Likewise, there exists no consensus about the use of horses in military operations in Angola. While John Thornton argues that the cavalry was not a factor in Angolan warfare, Luiz Felipe de Alencastro's work suggests that Portuguese troops relied on horses to wage wars against Africans.[4]

This chapter begins by investigating the supply of horses to Angola from the sixteenth century to the 1730s. It does so by analyzing the different mechanisms through which horses were imported into Angola. Linked to the slave trade from Angola to Brazil, the first mechanism was based on preferential licenses issued by the Luanda administration to ships that carried horses to Angola. These licenses allowed ships to sail back to Brazil once they had loaded slaves, avoiding an increase in the already high mortality among slaves that lengthy stays in Luanda would entail. The second mechanism was based on state-sponsored expeditions sent to Brazil to procure horses. It derived from the need to strengthen colonial forces in the occasions when the Luanda government engaged in wars with African polities. By drawing extensively on accounts of battles throughout Angolan warfare history, the chapter seeks to demonstrate that mounted troops were an integral component of colonial military strategy. Cavalrymen were used to prevent soldiers from defecting as well as to patrol

1 Webb 1984: 88-91; 1993: 226; Elbl 1991: 85-110.
2 Fisher 1972a: 367-388; 1973b: 355-379; Law 1975: 1-14; 1976: 117-119; 1980: 11, 49, 53, 121-122, 125, 178.
3 Law 1976: 118; 1980: 11, 49, 53, 125, 178; Webb 1984: 88-91; 1993: 223, 226; Elbl 1991: 99.
4 Alencastro 2000: 248; Thornton 1988: 367, 375; 2000b: 99.

missions. However, their primary use was in carrying out coordinated offensive strikes together with locally recruited and highly mobile soldiers.

The Supply of Horses

Early on during the Portuguese presence in Angola, requests for horses to use in military operations became commonplace. In 1584, for example, Paulo Dias de Novais urged Lisbon to send him 200 mares from Spain and 200 stallions from Italy.[5] In 1617, Governor Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos said he could defeat the Ndongo Kingdom provided the Crown sent him 200 horses.[6] Early imports of horses were in tandem with attempts to breed horses locally. The first governor of Angola, Paulo Dias de Novais, was required to "ship out six horses from which to breed twenty cavalry horses within three years".[7] But despite reports that horses were being bred on the Ilha de Luanda in the 1620s, plans to create a locally born horse population were phased out as the military advantage of horses became clear.[8] A sharply contrasting policy was then established that prohibited imports of mares altogether. The goal was to prevent the creation of a locally born horse population that could make access to these animals easier and permit Africans to have their own cavalry. Despite several calls to drop it by high officials – including several Lisbon-appointed governors of Angola – a law that prohibited imports of mares was in place until the nineteenth century.[9]

In order to provide horses for military forces fighting in Angola, the Portuguese crown created two mechanisms. The first mechanism was largely dependent on ships operating in the slave trade from Angola to Brazil, allowing those that carried horses into Luanda to return to Brazil prior to ships that did not bring horses. A law that made all ships sailing into Luanda eligible for preferential licenses as long as they brought horses was passed in the mid-

5 "Carta de Paulo Dias de Novais" on January 2, 1584, in Brásio 1952-1988, IV: 421. See also "Memoriais de Diogo de Ferreira" in 1588, in *ibid.*: 485-493; "Memoriais de Jerônimo Castanho" on September 5, 1599, in *ibid.*: 605.

6 Heintze 1984: 15; Thornton 1998: 424.

7 Birmingham 1966: 46. See also "Carta de Doação de Paulo Dias Novais" on September 6, 1571, *Arquivos de Angola* II (13), 1936: 460.

8 "Relação de Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco" in 1620, in Brásio 1952-1988,VI: 453-465. See also Cadornega 1940, I: 395-396; "Relação de Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco" in 1620, in Brásio 1952-1988, VI: 453-465. "Relatório do Governador Fernão de Sousa", undated but written between 1625 and 1630, in Heintze 1985: 271.

9 "Regimento do Governador Tristão da Cunha" on April 10, 1666, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa (hereafter AHU), Angola, box 9; AHU, cód. 544, fl. 18; Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino (hereafter "CCU") on July 8, 1670, AHU, cód. 16, fls. 376-376v.; "Ofício de Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho" on October 26, Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, Luanda (hereafter AHNA), cód. 254, fls. 1-4; "Carta para o Governador de Angola" on August 9, 1805, AHNA, cód. 255, fls. 133-133v. See also Torres 1825: 303; Rebelo 1970: 133.

seventeenth century. The mechanism was based on the correct assumption that ships would attempt to return to Brazil as soon as possible after loading slaves in Luanda in order to avoid increasing the already high levels of mortality among slaves. Thus, by taking advantage of fears about financial ruin after lengthy stays in Luanda, the crown hoped to create a permanent flow of horses into Luanda. In order to become eligible for such licenses, ships had to transport at least two horses into Luanda.[10]

By the early 1670s, however, the declining number of horses in Luanda proved royal plans had failed.[11] Ship captains would often complain about not receiving licenses, despite taking horses into Luanda. At the heart of the problem was the damaging role that Governors of Angola played in regulating the Angolan slave trade. In order to give their ships an edge over other ships seeking to leave Luanda, thus maximizing investments in slaving, the latter would refuse to grant preferential licenses for ships that had complied with the legislation by carrying horses into Luanda.[12] Alternative ways were then established. Some of them, such as an attempt to offer nobility titles to wealthy individuals who carried horses into Angola, were largely ineffectual.[13] But the crown also gave the Luanda government authority to send ships to procure horses in Brazil, a decision that significantly changed the dynamic of horse imports. By and large, the local government would pursue this option in the run-up to military operations.[14] In fact, the frequency with which the government sought to strengthen the cavalry made state-sponsored expeditions far more important than the preferential license mechanism.[15] The system was far from flawless, however, as demonstrated by Luanda merchants' refusal to lend their ships to a state-sponsored expedition in the run-up to a war on the Mbwila ruler in 1691.[16]

Despite the fact that the Luanda government could send ships to procure horses in Brazil on their own, the legislation that allowed slave ships to receive

[10] "Papel de Bartolomeu Bulhão" on January 14, 1655, AHU, Angola, box 6, doc. 29; "CCU" on March 3, 1655, AHU, cód. 15, fls. 150-151.

[11] "CCU" on October 11, 1664, AHU, Angola, box 9, doc. 49; "Provisão do Conselho Ultramarino" on November 6, 1664, AHU, cód. 92, fl. 375v.

[12] "Carta do Governador de Pernambuco" on May, 1667, AHU, Pernambuco, box 9, doc. 818; AHU, Angola, box 9, doc. 99; "Carta Régia" on December 9, 1682, AHU, cód. 545, fls. 25v.-26.

[13] "CCU" on August 25, 1674, AHU, cód. 47, fls. 356-357; "Requerimento de Thomé de Souza Correia" on March 9, 1675, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, CA, no. 1326; "CCU" on March 17, 1677, AHU, Angola, box 11, doc. 81.

[14] "Carta do Provedor da Fazenda Real de Pernambuco" on May 31, 1671, AHU, Pernambuco, box 10, doc. 916; "CCU" on June 26, 1671, AHU, Pernambuco, box 10, doc. 939; "CCU" on February 12, 1672, AHU, cód. 17, fls. 28v.-29; "Carta Régia" on February 26, 1672, AHNA, cód. 285, fl. 20v.

[15] "Informação" on November 9, 1690, AHU, Angola, box 14, doc. 40.

[16] "CGA" November 28, 1691, AHU, Angola, box 14, doc. 71.

preferential licenses if they brought horses to Luanda was still in place in the early eighteenth century. But the mechanism was clearly plagued with problems. Oftentimes, for example, captains would apply for preferential licenses after carrying only half of the required number of horses.[17] To crack down on abuses, Lisbon established that ships with a holding capacity of between 200 and 300 slaves had to carry one horse and that ships with a larger holding capacity would have to carry two horses.[18] But the change failed to address problems deriving from the overall business environment in Luanda where governors of Angola relied on aggressive commercial strategies and did not shy away from using institutional power to protect their investments in the slave trade. In essence, they were almost always able to maintain a competitive edge over other traders.[19]

Transportation of horses by private ships became mandatory in 1706.[20] As suggested by the results of one state-sponsored expedition organized in 1712, the new law seems to have yielded few, if any, results.[21] By the mid-1710s, despite Lisbon repeatedly requesting that Brazilian governors prevent ships from leaving for Angola without horses, it was still ineffective.[22] In 1720, for example, reports by the governor of Angola mentioned only four horses offloaded in Luanda and they were all from Bahia.[23] In 1721, the governor of Rio de Janeiro went to great lengths to enforce the law, but only one horse was taken from Rio to Luanda.[24] In 1723, frequent violations of the regulation led Lisbon to further tighten controls by instructing the Luanda government to retain ships that did not carry horses.[25] Still, Lisbon policymakers estimated that only two horses were taken to Luanda between 1722 and 1726.[26] Not

17 "Carta Régia" on September 2, 1696, AHU, cód. 545, fl. 99; "CGA" on March 2, 1699, AHU, Angola, box 15, doc. 113.

18 "CCU" on September 2, 1699, AHU, Angola, box 15, doc. 113; "Carta Régia" on September 17, 1699, AHU, cód. 545, fl. 118v.; "Informação do Governo Interino" on December 24, 1751, AHNA, cód. 2, fls. 67-69v.

19 "CCU" on February 22, 1703, AHU, Angola, box 17, doc. 80; "CCU" on August 27, 1704, AHU, cód. 554, fls. 113v.; "Carta Régia" on February 26, 1705, AHU, cód. 545, fl. 150.

20 Ribeiro 1805: 95.

21 "Ordem Régia" on December 2, 1712, AHU, Pernambuco, box 25, doc. 2310.

22 "Carta Régia" on December 2, 1712, AHU, Pernambuco, box 25, doc. 2310; "Carta Régia" on January, 28, 1715, AHU, cód. 545, fl. 180; "Carta do Governador" do Rio de Janeiro" on June 20, 1719, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, box 10, doc. 1099.

23 "Carta do Governador de Angola on August 18, 1720, AHU, Angola, box 21, doc. 19.

24 "Carta do Governador do Rio de Janeiro" on November 15, 1722, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, box 12, doc. 1371.

25 "CCU" on January 30, 1723, AHU, Angola, box 21, doc. 107; BNRJ, cód. I-12, 3, 31, fls. 105-105v.

26 "Carta Régia" on August 3, 1726, AHU, cód. 546, fl. 8v.

surprisingly, the number of horses in the Luanda cavalry was reduced from 18 to five at the time.[27]

In the early 1720s, the near collapse of imports of horses seriously affected colonial forces battling Africans in southern Angola at Benguela. In 1721, for example, when Mundombe fighters entered Benguela and attacked the crew of a slave ship from Rio de Janeiro, local commanders urged the Luanda government to send a cavalry to Benguela to no avail.[28] It was to properly support forces operating in Benguela that the Luanda administration decided to organize several state-sponsored expeditions to procure horses in Brazil.[29] Between 1726 and 1730, the Luanda administration engaged in a concerted effort that increased the number of horses from 40 to 120.[30] Significantly, many of the horses then brought to Angola were deployed as reinforcement for troops fighting battles in Benguela.[31] State-sponsored expeditions would only come to an end when major military operations ended in 1731.[32] By then, the city had developed into a fully-fledged slave port, with ships carrying off slaves directly to Brazil without calling at the port of Luanda prior to crossing the Atlantic.

Horses and Battles

The vast amount of legislation emanating from Lisbon provides ample evidence of the close link between horses, warfare, and the slave trade.

In 1726, Lisbon policymakers reported that the Portuguese had not fought a single war in Angola without the support of horses.[33] Although the claim seems to be an exaggeration, there is plenty of evidence that horses were systematically used already in the first military campaigns that allowed the Portuguese

27 "Carta do Governador do Rio de Janeiro" on June 20, 1719, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, box 10, doc. 1099; "CGA" on June 10, 1726, AHNA, cód. 1, fl. 4; "CGA" on April 23, 1727, AHNA, cód. 1, fls. 18v.-19.

28 "Representação dos Moradores, Militares e Eclesiásticos" in 1721, AHU, Angola, box 21, doc. 64; "Carta enviada de Benguela para o Senado da Câmara de Luanda" on November 25, 1721, Bibilioteca Municpal de Luanda (hereafter BML), cód. 12, fls. 319-319v. See also Delgado 1945: 25.

29 "CCU" on April 10, 1723, AHU, cód. 908. For the link between the lack of horses and wars in Kakonda, see "Carta Régia" on April 13, 1723, AHU, cód. 545, fls. 248v.-249; "Provisão Régia" on April 13, 1723, BNRJ, doc. I-12, 3, 31, fls. 105-105v.

30 "CGA" on June 21, 1726, AHU, Angola, box 24, doc. 42; "Carta do Governado de Angola" on February 26, 1728, AHNA, cód. 1, fls. 40v.-41v.; "CGA" on March 12, 1729, AHNA, cód. 1, fl. 58v.; "Carta do Conselho Ultramarino" on May 27, 1729, AHNA, cód. 1, fls. 87v.-88; "CGA" in 1729, AHNA, cód. 1, fl. 65; "Carta do Governador" on April 13, 1730, AHU, Angola, box 25, doc. 18.

31 "CGA" on April 30, 1728, AHNA, cód. 1, fls. 110v.-111v.

32 "Carta Régia" on May 17, 1731, AHU, Angola, box 27, doc. 92.

33 "CCU" on March 8, 1726, AHU, Angola, box 23, doc. 35 and AHU, cód. 22, fls. 195-195v. See also Delgado 1968: 195.

to stake out control over Luanda in the late sixteenth century.[34] During the seventeenth century, they continued being systematically deployed in Angolan wars – both in the Luanda hinterland and in southern Angola in Benguela. In the wars that pitted Portuguese forces against Queen Njinga Mbandi's army, for example, the Portuguese routinely relied on horses.[35] Even during the Dutch takeover of Angola, between 1641 and 1648, horses were used by both Dutch and Portuguese forces.[36] In the second half of the seventeenth century, although their use was by no means a guarantee of military success, cavalrymen seem to have taken part in virtually every other significant military campaign conducted in the Luanda hinterland.[37] In Benguela, as previously pointed out, they played an important role in warfare operations that preceded the growth of slaving in the early eighteenth century.[38]

Even in the eighteenth century, when military conflicts in the Luanda hinterland were not on the same scale as in the previous century, there were plenty of occasions when Portuguese forces relied on horses to fight Africans. In the 1730s and 1740s, for example, Luanda forces were assisted by horsemen in several wars over the control over sources of slaves to the east of the Kwango River.[39] Later, cavalrymen were particularly useful when the Luanda government established military outposts in Mbwila and Novo Redondo to crack down on slave "smuggling". At the time, a 40-horse force accompanied 110 soldiers that set up the *presídio*, and later a permanent cavalry troop stationed in the region was deployed several times against nearby rulers who engaged in commerce with foreigners, such as French and British ships operating in the region.[40] In the 1770s, horsemen were also part of the troops that engaged in large-scale military operations against the Mbailundu ruler.[41]

[34] "Carta do Padre Baltazar Barreira" on November 20, 1583, in Dias 1933: 43-45; Brito 1931: 41; Corrêa 1937, I: 210, 212, 220; Birmingham 1966: 55, 59; Alencastro 2000: 83.

[35] "Relatório do Governador Fernão de Sousa", undated but written between 1625 and 1630, in Heintze 1985: 255, 258, 260, 272, 325, 332. See also Cadornega 1940, I: 94, 130-133, 524-525.

[36] "CGA" on March 9, 1943, in Brásio 1952-1988, IX: 28-30; "CCU" on July 7, 1644, AHU, cód. 13, fls. 92v.-94. See also Cadornega 1940, I: 245-246; 261, 271, 273, 302.

[37] "CCU" on July 13, 1655, AHU, cód. 15, fls. 187-188v.; "Carta de Manoel Cerveira Pereira" on March 11, 1612, in Brásio 1952-1988, VI: 77-81. See also Cadornega 1940, II: 141, 505.

[38] "CCU" on February 7, 1688, AHU, Angola, box 13, doc. 51; "Regimento" on September 4, 1701, AHU, Angola, box 16, doc. 27; "Registro de Bando do Navio de Manoel Simoes Colaço" on February 9, 1709, BML, cód. 12, fls. 157v.-158. See also Delgado 1968, IV: 230.

[39] Carta do Governador de Angola (hereafter "CGA") on July 15, 1744, AHU, Angola, box 34, doc. 26; "CCU" on February 15, 1757, AHU, Angola, box 41, doc. 12. See also Corrêa 1937, I: 363.

[40] "CGA" on May 6, 1760, ANTT, Ministério do Reino, bundle 605, box 708; "CCU" on February 7, 1770, ANTT, Ministério do Reino, bundle 319, box 427; "Portaria do Governador de Angola" on August 17, 1765, AHNA, cód. 270, fls. 78v.-79; "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on July 4, 1766, AHNA, cód. 3, fls. 162-164; "CGA" on August 20, 1770, BNL,

By most accounts, the primary military value of horses derived from Africans' alleged fear of mounted troops. In the late 1620s, for example, Governor Fernão de Sousa stated that the frightening effect was so intense that it made it unnecessary for cavalrymen to use arcabuzes.[42] In 1655, it was argued that "Africans were more fearful of 20 cavalrymen than of two entire infantry companies."[43] Similar assessments were made several other times. "One cavalryman is as respected as 25 infantrymen", argued a Portuguese official.[44] According to another account, horses were said to "inflict terror on the most powerful rulers of Angola."[45] Because of the fear they caused to Africans, authorities went as far as to say that the cavalry accounted for whatever military edge colonial forces still had over Africans.[46] As late as 1802, when artillery had already become a key component of the colonial army strategies, cavalry were still regarded as pivotal to the military because of the alleged fear factor.[47]

James Webb has suggested that the ability to project fear was a factor in choosing to use horses in Senegambia.[48] In Angola, since the first horses were brought from overseas by the Portuguese and did not exist as part of the local fauna, Ndongo people might have been initially afraid of these animals.[49] However, any fear that civilians might have felt towards horses was not necessarily felt among soldiers. In the 1590s, for example, Ndongo soldiers reportedly specifically targeted cavalrymen in battles.[50] By doing so, they showed early awareness that the use of horses seemed to provide a military edge to Portuguese forces.[51]

Already in the 1630s, Governor Fernão de Sousa pointed out that one of the main advantages of horses was that they allowed colonial forces to chase enemy African soldiers after they ran away, something that infantrymen were not able

cód. 8744, fls. 8v.-9v.; "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on August 20, 1770, BNL, cód. 8744, fl. 9. See also Corrêa 1937, II: 17.

41 "Petição de Alexandre José Botelho" in 1787, AHU, Angola, box 74, doc. 6.

42 "Relatório do Governador Fernão de Sousa", undated but written between 1625 and 1630, in Heintze 1985: 271.

43 "Relatório de Francisco Vasconcellos da Cunha" on February 11, 1655, AHU, Angola, box 6, doc. 29.

44 "CCU" on October 11, 1664, AHU, Angola, box 9, doc. 49; "Provisão do Conselho Ultramarino" on November 6, 1664, AHU, cód. 92, fl. 375v.; "CCU" on August 25, 1674, AHU, cód. 47, fls. 356-357.

45 "CCU" on May 22, 1683, AHU, Angola, box 12, doc. 106.

46 "CCU" on February 22, 1703, AHU, Angola, box 17, doc. 80; "CCU" on June 8, 1703, AHU, Angola, box 17, doc. 18.

47 "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on September 11, 1802, AHNA, cód. 9, fls. 2-4.

48 Webb 1993: 222.

49 Cavazzi 1965, II: 141.

50 "História da Residência dos Padres da Companhia de Jesus em Angola e coisas tocantes ao Reino e Conquista" on May 1, 1594, in Brásio 1952-1988, IV: 576.

51 Cadornega 1940, I: 387-388, 399; II: 157-159.

to do because of their heavy military gear.[52] Utility of horses in terms of neutralizing the way Africans waged warfare was later acknowledged when Portuguese authorities stated that "the reason why indigenous people were afraid of the cavalry [is] because they understand that no one can escape cavalrymen".[53] According to another account, Africans "know well what horses are like […] and are afraid of horses only when they are ridden by white men because they know they cannot run away".[54] In another testimony, a Governor stated that "no African dared to mount a head-on attack" on mounted troops because they knew they were not as rapid as horsemen.[55]

Cavalrymen sometimes numbered in the hundreds, if not thousands, in West Africa and Senegambia.[56] In Angola, however, their numbers were much less significant. Historian Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa wrote that up to two hundred horses might have been deployed in the early campaigns in Angola, but his account seems to be an exaggeration.[57] As Robin Law has indicated, even when horses were not numerous, they were still valued in West Africa.[58] In fact, Angolan cavalry was almost always made up of between 20 and 25 horses, if not fewer animals, as demonstrated by several examples. In the 1590s, Portuguese troops seeking to establish control over Luanda were assisted by only three horses.[59] In mid-1650, a colonial force that unsuccessfully fought in Kissama was assisted by 14 horses.[60] During the campaign against the Matamba ruler in 1744, the number of soldiers on horseback was 22.[61] In 1748, 1,200 *guerra preta* soldiers and only eight cavalrymen performed most of the strikes that defeated an ally of the Matamba ruler.[62] In 1790, the army that set out to attack Mussulo soldiers was assisted by only ten cavalrymen.[63]

Tasks performed by horsemen ranged from facilitating communication between commanders and Luanda authorities to patrolling and reconnaissance

52 "Relatório do Governador Fernão de Sousa", undated but written between 1625 and 1630, in Heintze 1985: 271. For earlier accounts praising the mobility afforded by horses and relating it to attacks against runaway Africans, see "Memoriais de Jerônimo Castanho" on September 5, 1599, in Brásio 1952-1988, IV: 605; "Relação de Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco" in 1620, in *ibid.*, VI: 453-465. The mobility afforded by the horse force was also greatly appreciated in Senegambia. See Elbl 1991: 97.

53 "Carta do Governador" on January 26, 1759, AHU, Angola, box 42, doc. 22.

54 "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on July 13, 1766, AHNA, cód. 3, fl. 183v.-184v. and AHU, Angola, box 50, doc. 23.

55 "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on August 21, 1770, BNL, cód. 8744, fl. 12.

56 Law 1980: 8-22, 137; Elbl 1991: 101; Webb 1993: 231, 234, 240; Thornton 2000a: 132-133.

57 Corrêa 1937, II: 57.

58 Law 1980: 138.

59 "Desbarato dos Reis da Etiópia e Descobrimento da Ilha de Luanda" in 1591, in Brásio 1952-1988, IV: 533-545.

60 "CCU" on July 13, 1655, AHU, cód. 15, fls. 187-188v.

61 "CGA" on July 15, 1744, AHU, Angola, box 34, doc. 26.

62 "CCU" on February 15, 1757, AHU, Angola, box 41, doc. 12.

63 "Certidão" on August 8, 1790, AHU, Angola, box 76.

missions.[64] In addition, and perhaps more importantly, they also included preventing *guerra preta* soldiers from defecting from the colonial army.[65] *Guerra preta* soldiers, who comprised the bulk of the army, would desert either at the beginning or following military defeats, a direct threat to the safety of infantrymen. The latter were in general limited in number and were unable to properly defend themselves because of the heavy military gear they wore. Field commanders would often position cavalrymen at the front and back of the army, thus maximizing visibility and the possibility of catching soldiers trying to escape from the colonial ranks.[66] In the words of a Portuguese official, "the experience of previous wars had shown that having a few horses was more important than deploying many infantrymen, because *guerra preta* soldiers were prone to defect during fierce battles, exposing the infantrymen to danger".[67]

But the cavalry was also sometimes deployed in ways that did not significantly differ from the ways it was used elsewhere in Africa. In West Africa, it "might employ shock tactics, charging straight at the enemy and fighting at close quarters with spears or swords".[68] The same type of deployment occurred in a battle in southern Angola in Kakonda, when a commander was said to have staged a head-on attack that led African soldiers to disband and allowed colonial forces to move away from the battlefield.[69] However, the decisive aspect of cavalry lay in its deployment along with *guerra preta* soldiers in raid and attack operations. The advantages of joint operations seem to have become evident relatively soon in Angolan warfare.[70] Due to their mobility, the cavalry and *guerra preta* troops were the first forces dispatched to Mbaka when African rulers revolted against colonial authority in the 1620s.[71] Subsequently, they were deployed together in several battles against Queen Njinga's troops and later against Dutch forces.[72] In 1766, a dozen cavalrymen and a much larger number of *guerra preta* soldiers were credited with killing three hundred Africans during battles in Mbwila.[73] Thus, it is not surprising that the cavalry commander was sometimes also in charge of leading *guerra preta* soldiers.[74]

64 Cadornega 1940, I: 134-136, 350, 390, 402; II: 93-94; Corrêa 1937, II: 57.
65 Cadornega 1940, II: 279-285.
66 Cadornega 1940, I: 395-396, 402.
67 "CCU" on February 12, 1672, AHU, cód. 17, fls. 28v.-29 and AHU, Angola, box 10, doc. 60; "Carta Régia para o Governador de Angola" on February 26, 1672, AHNA, cód. 285, fl. 20v.
68 Law 1975: 7.
69 "Carta do Desembargador Sindicante" on June 16, 1691, AHU, Angola, box 14, doc. 66.
70 Cadornega 1940, I: 59.
71 Cadornega 1940, I: 89.
72 Cadornega 1940, I: 130-133, 292, 408-409.
73 "Ofício do Governador de Angola" on December 30, 1770, AHNA, cód. 3, fls. 84-84v.
74 "CCU" on December 12, 1698, AHU, cód. 19, fls. 103v.-104.

Conclusion

The supply of horses to Luanda was closely intertwined with the Luanda slave trade. The transportation of horses was contingent on the technical characteristics of ships used in the slave trade and it was seriously hampered by the governors' hegemony over the Luanda trade until the early 1720s. Even in the late 1720s when the governors' control of the trade declined, there were state-sponsored expeditions to procure horses in Brazil, thus strengthening military forces fighting on behalf of the Portuguese**.** The cavalry served several purposes. It was deployed as a police force in Luanda and environs, helping the colonial administration to enforce laws and strengthen the colonial status quo. More importantly, horses were systematically deployed during wars. They were so valued that the colonial administration restricted the importation of mares until the early nineteenth century so Africans could not create their own cavalry. Horses performed several tasks during military campaigns, including scouting and patrolling missions. Joint operations with *guerra preta* soldiers were by far their most important task. Indeed, the use of cavalrymen might have altered the way warfare was conducted in Angola, as the cavalry provided the colonial army with a degree of mobility on the battlefield that Africans were unable to match.

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WAGON TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPORT AND LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION IN ANGOLA 1885-1908

David Birmingham

In her life-long search for documentary records relating to the historical ethnography of Angola's people Beatrix Heintze, whose second home was in Switzerland, always hoped to find the writings of the great Swiss polymath Héli Chatelain. His papers eventually turned up in a well-scrubbed oil-barrel in a laundry basement in Winterthur and have since been the basis of serious academic work by Didier Péclard in Lausanne as well as of a less serious paper by the present author presented in Lisbon and cannibalised below. Chatelain was born in the old Prussian-owned principality of Neuchâtel some three years after it had become recognised as a republican Swiss 'canton', but a recession in the watch-making industry caused him to emigrate first to America, where he became a citizen, and then to Angola where he spent much of his adult life. He arrived in Africa as a mere twenty-six-year-old in 1885 and left for the last time in 1907 shortly before his early death in Lausanne.[1]

Héli Chatelain was a great traveller. Childhood illness, however, had left him very lame and although he did do much of his travelling on foot he was affectionately known in Angola as 'Long-leg and Short-leg'. Although he was a quintessentially humane man, and was remarkably free of the exploitative racial prejudices which were normal in both America and Africa during his life-time, he did avail himself of a travelling hammock for his long journeys into the Kimbundu-speaking hinterland of Luanda. Hammocks required stout porters and on his travels he was commonly frustrated at the difficulty in getting his caravan crew underway on cold, dew-laden mornings as he travelled through the high forest and tall grass towards Malanje. The country was sometimes steep and he did ease the burden on his bearers by undertaking the most testing stretches on foot. Etiquette among fellow travellers, however, was a mystery to him and white men, lounging back on their pillows *en route* to the coast, scarcely raised a hand to greet the eccentric Swiss when their paths crossed. When Chatelain reached his destination near Malanje he recruited the services

[1] The Chatelain archives are now held by the Schweizer Allianz Mission in Winterthur. A biography, *Héli Chatelain l'Ami de l'Angola*, was published by his sister, Alida Chatelain, in Lausanne in 1918. Péclard's work appeared both in a Lausanne MA thesis of 1993 and in a 2005 Paris doctorate.

of a cobbler's son, Jeremiah, to be his linguistic informant, and over the next dozen years they produced grammars and dictionaries of the Kimbundu language which were used not only in Christian missions but also in the Portuguese colonial administration.[2]

Water transport has, historically, usually been easier and cheaper than land transport and Chatelain, a man from the great Alpine lakes, tried to avail himself of boats where possible. In Africa, however, small-scale shipping along the rivers met with great frustration. The Kwanza River, between Luanda and Malanje, had coastal sand-bars which were as dangerous to negotiate as those which claimed so many wrecked lives across the entrance to the great Portuguese harbour at Lisbon. Once boats did enter the Kwanza River they found winds to be light and currents strong so that progress was slow and the night shelters were primitive. Most traders, and notably those responsible for exporting coffee, found that head-loading their sacks to the coast was safer, faster and more reliable. Attempts to use small, steam-driven boats on the river met with poor results as the ever-ambitious Chatelain discovered on a frustrating, mosquito-infested trip to visit a slave-worked sugar plantation owned by one of his bourgeois city friends. The late-Victorian belief in technological modernity was not checked by handicaps on the river, however, and colonial visionaries had dreams of building a steam railway (the pretentiously named and farcically inefficient Royal Trans-Africa Railway Company) which would run from Luanda into the deep interior beyond Malanje.

As transport officer for the so-called 'Methodist' mission, which arrived at Luanda in 1885 with dozens of tons of supplies and equipment Chatelain became familiar with all the lighter-men who ferried cargoes from ships anchored in the bay to the city beaches. Persuading the crews of these small boats to hurry when the great steamers were getting ready to depart was a fine art laced with financial inducements. Being stranded, or risking the loss of one's cabin trunks, was a frightening prospect for white-men who had reached the furthest ends of Western Africa and boatmen learned how to drive their bargains and to frustrate Chatelain's Swiss financial prudence. During his service with Bishop Taylor's 'self-reliant' mission the transport manager got to know many officers on the various steamships which served the coast and when he was taken seriously ill a ship's captain embarked him for a rest cruise down to the healthier port of Benguela. The trip held premonition and during the second half of his African career Chatelain worked with the Umbundu people on the Benguela plateau rather than with the Kimbundu of the Luanda hinterland. Good relations with steamship companies did not last, however, and in later years the Union Castle Line refused to recognise Chatelain as a

[2] See for instance *Gramática elementar do kimbundu ou lingua de Angola*, 1888 (reprinted by Gregg Press, Ridgewood, 1964).

missionary or to accord him a normal missionary discount on ocean passages despite his insistence that he was the Angola agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

If transport was a problem in the Kwanza valley, it was an even greater problem on the southern highlands. The coastal rivers tumbled down into the sea and the inland ones created unpredictable flood plains across which ferry services were jealously guarded by boatmen licensed and taxed by an embryonic colonial state based at the old eighteenth-century trading fortress of Caconda. Rather than use the expensive and somewhat dehumanising services of hammock-bearers, Chatelain travelled around the highlands on a donkey. He presented a bizarre appearance, a short-sighted, bespectacled figure wearing a three-piece suit decorated with a gold watch-chain and shod in long, elasticated boots which almost dragged along the ground beneath him. The donkey, however, had its limitations as a pack animal and in 1881 a revolution in highland transport had occurred with the arrival of several dozen extended families of South African Boers. They reached Angola, after crossing the Namibian 'thirstlands', thanks to the novel technology of the ox-wagon. These wagons were not dissimilar to the ox-wagons used on the plateau farms of Switzerland, wagons which at least one ambitious expedition had used to cross the breadth of Europe and settle a Swiss colony on the shores of the Black Sea under the patronage of Tsar Alexander. Wagons, however, had three major requirements: large-scale financial credit for the capital outlay, veterinary knowledge to keep the teams of twenty oxen alive and healthy, and carpenters or blacksmiths to repair the wagon beds or to refit the great metal hoops which rimmed the wooden wheels. None of these services could be adequately supplied by African merchants, stockmen and artisans nor indeed by Portuguese-speaking settlers moving up from the Benguela coast. Chatelain therefore aspired to create a Christian community and slave refuge in the highland which would be financed by a wagon workshop which served the 'high-tech' requirements of late nineteenth-century transport-riders in the modern Angolan economy.

Setting up an ox-wagon business in early colonial Angola was not easy. Chatelain's 'self-financing' mission-station was called Lincoln (now Kalukembe) and had been sponsored by an American 'league of friends' which aimed to protect Africans who were at risk of being captured – or re-captured – by slave-hunters. An anti-slaving crusade was not, however, the most obvious way to build good relations with potential customers in the wagon business. One deeply indebted customer, a Belgian whose wife had so severely beaten her child-slave with a hippo whip that he fled to the mission, acidly reminded Chatelain that the vaunted Lincoln had been murdered for interfering with slave-owning. Virtually all Boers in the highlands were slave-owners and in another damaging *contretemps* with a customer Chatelain tried to protect a Luba woman who had been captured by rebel soldiers in Leopold's Congo, sold to a

black Bihé dealer, captured again as a war trophy by a Portuguese soldier in Huambo, bought for cash by an elderly Boer who then gave her to his son before she escaped to seek asylum in the Lincoln compound. Young Vermaak tried to recover his property by kidnapping her and when that failed he threatened to call up his father's Boer commandos to assassinate the interfering Swiss wagon dealer.

The economics of transport riding were even more problematic than the fraught relations with slave-owning clients. The steep, ever-shifting and deeply rutted tracks leading up from the coast to the highland were far from ideally suited to establishing a transport system which could rival, or even replace, the footpaths used by runners and bearers. Even in good weather an ox wagon might take twice as long to reach the plateau as a caravan of experienced porters, but the weather was not always good and oxen could either be left gasping with thirst or waylaid by raging torrents. Calculating the relative cost per ton/league of wagon haulage versus porter carriage could change rapidly depending on the availability of either oxen or men. Broken wagons and the scarcity of head-porters could hold traffic up for weeks. When his own wagons were not available Chatelain advised intending American visitors that they could expect to pay three thousand *reis* per thirty kilogramme head-load for porters to bring their luggage up to his station from Benguela. The key to the wagon trade, however, lay partly in the quality of the wagons.

Before the advent of the motor car, one of the most prestigious manufacturers of carriages and wagons in the United States of America was the firm of Studebaker in South Bend, Indiana. It was therefore to Indiana that Héli Chatelain wrote, on 11 April 1906, in order to try to establish his success as a dealer in transport equipment in southern Angola. His letter was very specific about the needs of the local transport industry and was addressed to the manufacturers rather than to their sales agent in New York. He wanted an estimate for a wagon similar to the one he had ordered in 1904. Two-and-a-half inch concord steel axles were the key specification. On the Angolan trails axles regularly hit tree stumps, rocks and termite hills and when broken it could take months to obtain a replacement. The wagon which Chatelain had bought from California had only one-and-a-half inch axles which were not strong enough. The Portuguese-made wagons available in Angola were not as sturdy as the ones developed in America for the transcontinental wagon-trails, and although Lisbon carts were competitively priced, they did not endure the rigours of Angola's long-distance merchant tracks. The Indiana Studebaker had wheels five inches thick and massive rear-screw brakes. For the African trade the bed of each wagon was to be sixteen feet long and the sideboards were to be two-and-a-half inches thick. Chatelain wanted his wagons equipped with side boxes – the order was very emphatic – but not with a front box. The most important distinction between African wagons and those supplied for the transamerican trade was that in Africa each wagon had to be equipped with twenty yokes and

twenty sets of ox chains, this instead of the more usual ten yokes supplied for the American plains.

Chatelain had not been entirely satisfied with the first Studebaker which he had imported on behalf of a long-distance Boer trader. That wagon had broken down only three days out of Benguela, its sideboards had cracked under the strain of heavy loads on rough steep trails to the far interior, and its paint was peeling after the first trip. Chatelain, who had sold the wagon on credit, was forced to grant his customer a discount for poor workmanship and the invoice had still not been settled by 1906. Despite his diminished profit margin on the first order, Chatelain hoped that if he placed regular orders he might obtain more favourable prices from the Studebaker manufacturers. Growing competition in the wagon supply trade was, however, causing him anxiety. Freight rates from Cape Town to Lobito were very cheap compared to those from the port of New York and Cape firms of wagon builders had established an agency in Benguela which had successfully poached two of Chatelain's wagon customers. Equally worrying was the rumour being spread around the interior by the firm of Marques Pires and Company that it had acquired exclusive rights for the sale of any Studebaker wagon landed at Benguela. Chatelain pointed out to his Indiana correspondent that a rival contract of exclusive sales would cause his mission trading station some difficulty; and since Marques Pires and Co. did not have a reputation for veracity he hoped that Studebaker Bros. would be able to assure him of a continued supply of high-class wagons.

The speed and reliability of transport on the wagon trails of Angola in 1906 left much to de desired. Bringing goods up to the plateau from Benguela by porter was both faster and cheaper than bringing them up by wagon even when twenty oxen had been spanned in. But porters were very hard to recruit, and were sometimes less than trustworthy, so wagons were used as the next best option. On a good trip Chatelain could take his wagon down to Benguela from Kalukembe in ten days. Returning up hill was likely to take thirty days to cover the hundred-odd miles at three miles per day. The journey was not possible when there was no grass for the oxen to eat along the way or when the holes in the river beds had so far dried up that water could not be found for the animals even in the deepest diggings. When the rains began, travel was equally difficult. Although some streams had small bridges for porters to walk across, the wagons had to go to the bottom of each ravine and then find a suitable ford before being hauled up on the other side. Usually it was necessary to unload the ton-and-a-half of boxes, sacks and bales of merchandise before each river crossing lest the vehicle sink so deep into the mud that even extra oxen could not pull it out. When travelling inland from Kalukembe across the highland plateau the journey could be equally slow not so much because of drought or flood as because of the constant need to cut trees down in order to open a new trail. Chatelain's Swiss assistant, Ali Pieren, took the mission wagon from Kalukembe to Bihé in

search of profitable transport business but the journey took him 33 days to cover 150 miles. Five miles a day was probably only half the speed of a column of porters but when carrying a full pay-load a wagon could carry as much as fifty men.

Constant repairs and modifications to the wagons made them expensive to maintain. Chatelain preferred wooden wheels to steel ones but thought steel ones might be usable if they were equipped with double-thickness rubber tyres. To negotiate the very deep ruts in the tracks the front wheels of the wagons had to be at least three-and-a-half feet in diameter. The mission workshop and its carpenter spent a lot of time modifying wagons, strengthening their loading capacity and replacing the wholly inadequate brakes supplied by some manufacturers. One imported American cart had cost as much to adapt for African conditions as the ex-factory price paid in Chicago but still it could only handle two-thirds of a normal freight load. Even the heavy California-type farm wagons needed to be modified in Chatelain's workshop before they were fit for service in Angola. Chatelain was able, however, to offer Hans van der Merwe a strong American chassis on which to build himself a wagon for a reasonable 450 *milreis* as compared to 490 *milreis* that he would have had to pay for an Afrikaaner chassis. Hendrix Pretorius also ordered two such wagon chassis through Chatelain's mission station.

Some of the larger sums in Chatelain's accounts concern the trade in oxen for the wagons. The mission station sometimes had sixty or more bullocks and oxen as well as its ten cows and an assortment of goats, sheep, ducks, hens, and pigeons. On 5 February 1906 Chatelain wrote in Afrikaans to Susanna Behan, a widowed neighbour, about payments she owed him on six oxen which he had supplied to her in April 1905 and which were worth 210 *milreis*. Such a sum he said was too large to be entrusted to 'an ordinary Kaffir' so he suggested that she make the payment to the Benguela Railway Company and ask the company office to issue her with a money order which she could safely send by messenger. Still the debt was not paid and Chatelain had constant cause to grumble about the large sums which the local Boers owed him. He hoped that the newly arrived Benguela railway builders might prove better customers for his wagon-building and ox-rearing enterprise.[3]

Chatelain not only serviced the wagons of his settler neighbours but he also used wagons of his own to provide a transport service. One innovative form of communication which arrived on the plateau while he was there and which required heavy-duty carrying was the electric telegraph. Years before, when living in Luanda, Chatelain had derided telegrams as being less reliable or rapid than a fast black scout with a message in a cleft stick, but now he hoped that he might obtain a contract for carting the miles of copper wire needed to link the

[3] For further details see David Birmingham, *Empire in Africa: Angola and its Neighbours* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press 2006).

Moçâmedes to Lubango telegraph service with Caconda. The telegraph company, however, proved to be a sour disappointment and far from providing lucrative custom it sowed materialist aspiration and moral discord among residents in the mission compound. Instead of obtaining a long-distance copper haulage contract Chatelain equipped his wagon as a travelling bazaar.

He thus entered into competition with the rather disgruntled Portuguese who owned road-side canteens. Their mainstay, however, was firewater made of local sugar brandy together with tobacco and snuff and a rather limited range of consumer goods. The mission wagon, by contrast, stocked everything which a village – whether Swiss or African – might need from sewing-needles and dress buttons to gun-flints and door-locks. The wagon was also used for the long-distance haulage of maize and beans. When villages were afflicted by drought Chatelain could haul in staple supplies which he sold in exchange for livestock. He also stepped in with relief efforts after each of the small but frequent wars which colonisation brought to the plateau. Although the mission could trade with war victims it could not risk interfering when a village was burnt down after being accused of harbouring escapees running away from the slave columns heading for the coast and the cocoa islands. A grim-faced Chatelain had to watch helplessly as defeated villagers, roped together in columns, were marched past his gate along the road to Caconda. Subsequently, however, he was able to bring succour to widows and children who crept out of the forest once the firestorm unleashed by Portugal's black auxiliary troops had abated.

One question that Chatelain's transport business faced was whether wagons could serve the needs of the long-distance trade in rubber which, for a few short years, was Angola's major commodity export. Cutting trails through the orchard savanna and removing tree-stumps was laborious work but wagons did nevertheless lumber inland as far as the lands of the Chokwe and the Lunda. Wagons, however, were slow and even ordinary mail took weeks to come down from the central plateau. So slow was correspondence that Chatelain wondered whether the new telegraph might become a viable means of ordering religious tracts from the American mission presses at the royal Ovimbundu towns of Huambo, Bihé or Bailundu. Being ever prudent, however, he feared that the cost per word of a telegram might be prohibitive. When the frontier on which fresh supplies of rubber could be harvested became too remote for Chatelain to contemplate sending in wagons he became momentarily very excited at the discovery of a new source of root rubber near his home along the western rim of the plateau. His careful laboratory tests on the new root only brought fresh disillusionment. Rubber never did become the source of new mission wealth with which Chatelain could fulfil his dream and open a chain of slave refuge camps deep into dark Congolese heart of Africa. The explosive demand for rubber to insulate electric wires and cushion vehicle wheels so far outstripped the supplies available in Africa that the industrial world turned to plantation-

grown rubber from Malasia, a competition which killed off the long-distance commodity trade in Angola.

Farming and stock-raising were not profitable on the self-supporting Swiss mission but small-scale banking did became an important service to the community and even the local government agent used Chatelain to exchange bank notes for bags of coin. The mission savings bank gave extensive credit to workshop customers but the practice sometimes threatened to endanger the whole Christian enterprise. Towards the end of his life Chatelain became quite neurotic at the thought that one or other of the Portuguese or Boers who owed him large sums of money might find it advantageous to burn down the mission house and thereby obliterate any record of their obligation. In practice, however, cattle disease was a more immediate threat and in 1906 no less than twenty of the mission cows died, thereby further undermining the economic viability of a station burdened with bad customer debts.

The next opportunistic venture which attracted Chatelain was the arrival of British mineral prospectors seeking copper deposits all the way from the Angolan coast to the great mine reserves of Katanga. The local camps of prospectors, who probably hoped that their search for copper might actually yield gold, became modest customers at the mission shop. Chatelain developed their photographs, diagnosed their diseases and supplied their pharmaceutical requirements. He even hired out his Swiss artisans to build wooden barracks for their geological encampments. More surprisingly Chatelain offered to help the geologists to hire unskilled black labour. He presumably assumed that British employers would be more caring of their workers' needs and rights than the cocoa planters on São Tomé. Before embarking on labour recruiting, however, Chatelain ascertained that Messrs Griffith & Co. of Benguela would pay him a fee of 2,500 *reis* per contracted worker and would guarantee adequate food rations to all recruits. The relationship between mines and mission did not run smoothly, however, and Chatelain was dismayed to find that the British appetite for local concubines was no less voracious than that of the Portuguese telegraph engineers who had previously tarnished the territory.

The difficulties of wagon-trail transport in southern Angola, like the problems of river transport in northern Angola, opened the way for a consideration of the railway alternative. Once more Chatelain found himself dealing uncomfortably with the British whom he had previously thought of as morally superior colonisers. Building a railway in Africa initially required huge numbers of shovel-wielding labourers who could be made to work long hours on short rations and for minimal pay. The south of Angola through which the British wished to run their Benguela railway was scantily populated and so competition for workers was fierce. Long-distance merchants wanted hundreds of bearers for their rubber caravans and brandy distillers wanted cheap labour to work the sugar-cane plantations. The domestic shortage was made more acute by the speculators who sold thousands of indentured workers for life-long

servitude on the cocoa islands from which they never returned. Under these circumstances it was virtually impossible for British engineers to recruit navvies to meet their needs and the railway company therefore sent for 'coolie' workers from Bengal where famine and poverty made Indian labour even cheaper than African labour. When finally the line-of-rail rose up the escarpment Chatelain was able to extend his business clientele to include the railway personnel. He was, however, to face yet further disappointment.

The original purpose of Chatelain's worker-missionaries had been to combat slavery and the near-slave conditions which afflicted migrants sent to the cocoa islands. The key improvement which he and William Cadbury, a businessman turned humanitarian lobbyist, sought to obtain was the right of Angolans to return home from the cocoa plantations at the end of one, or at most two, five years periods of indentured service.[4] There was much dismay in the Lincoln station, therefore, when it was realised that Indian indentured workers arriving in Africa – like Angolans arriving in the islands – were not being issued with return tickets to their homeland. When their years of service were completed the Indians were to be dumped on a South African beach. Such a practice provided Portugal with the ideal weapon to accuse the British of hypocrisy and suggest that their campaign against the Portuguese trade in indentured *serviçaes* was a hollow mockery. The situation particularly disappointed Chatelain who had privately assumed that Britain might take over the colony, introduce the rule of law to Angola, and instil civilised labour practices. When, however, the campaigning Swiss tried to approach a representative of the British government who visited the railhead near his mission he was discourteously brushed aside. Chatelain was even more alarmed when South Africans mounted a campaign of their own to discredit the Portuguese as acceptable colonial rulers. The critics hinted that the peoples of southern Angola would be better protected from slavery if the region were to be annexed to the Transvaal then newly emerging from the ashes of the Anglo-Boer war.

One aspect of transport-riding in which Chatelain did not engage was the carrying of supplies for the Portuguese army. He had an ambivalent attitude to the Kwanyama wars which periodically broke out between the plains kingdom of the south and the Portuguese colonial state. As a modern man he liked to assume that the *pax lusitania* would provide stability and security for his mission enterprise even though he was fully aware of the destruction which undisciplined colonial armies spread in their wake. As a non-denominational Christian Chatelain was on reasonably good terms with the Catholic Church claiming on one occasion that the padres were the only honest men in Angola and hoping that his wagon drovers might get a transport contract from Father Lecomte's mission at Caconda. For war purposes, however, the Portuguese

[4] For a recent study of Cadbury and the cocoa trade see Lowell J. Satre, *Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics and the Ethics of Business* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005).

hired Boer wagons to carry their equipment down to the Cunene basin. They also hired a few Afrikaner mercenaries. A Boer cavalryman could earn three thousand *reis* a day, ten times the daily wage of an experienced porter. Commandos could also make good profits by rounding up sheep, goats and above all cows to swell their booty. Chatelain himself did not own a horse, pointing out that horses cost ten as much as the saddle oxen that long-distance explorers such as David Livingstone had used for their lumbering journeys through Angola.[5] The best horses, moreover, were not in colonial service but were those of the admired and feared Kwanyama royal cavalry. In his most confidential memoranda Chatelain let it be known in England that he believed the Kwanyama king might be prepared to accept British over-rule in place of the awkward presence of the Portuguese on his territory. Such subversive sentiments did not pass unnoticed at colonial headquarters in Caconda, however, and had Chatelain not left the colony for health reasons he would probably have been expelled – like some of his American fellow missionaries – for creating anti-colonial disaffection.[6]

By 1910 virtually all the transport initiatives mentioned in this paper had come to a stop. The ambitious Luanda railway to the Kimbundu heartland was only built on the basis that the Portuguese government would guarantee its profits. As a result of this assurance the company saw no benefit in expending money on supplying rolling stock or recruiting operating staff. Strident critics claimed that the railway would bankrupt the whole Portuguese empire. The line, the wags said, was merely a short-cut used by coffee porters who head-loaded their sixty-pound sacks from plantation to port. The almost disused track revived with the motor revolution of the 1920s after which small lorries used feeder trails cleared by chained gangs of labour conscripts to bring crops to the goods stations. The Benguela railway also came to a stop for several years since it was not in the interests of the newly-unified Union of South Africa to allow a railway across Angola to compete with its own railways which served the copper mines from Durban and Cape Town.

After Chatelain left Angola the shortage of bearers to run kegs of brandy up from Benguela to the grog shops of the highlands was alleviated by the success of a humanitarian campaign to curtail Angolan shipments of labour to the cocoa islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. The resulting cocoa slump caused a collapse in the wealth of the Portuguese aristocracy. At the same time the Portuguese monarchy, around which this aristocracy had revolved, was felled in two blows with the assassination of the king in 1908 and the expulsion of his son by republican revolutionaries two years later. Back in Angola the demand for

[5] For more background, and the odd reference to Livingstone, see David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 1999).

[6] The Portuguese view of Chatelain can be documented from the Caconda records of the 1910s now housed in the Angolan National Archives at Luanda.

rubber carriers, or rubber-carrying wagons, also vanished overnight when prices for wild rubber fell so low that it was not worth harvesting it. The old Boer communities of farmers and transport-riders held on for another eighteen years but eventually they returned to South Africa after their fifty-year sojourn on Angolan soil. By then Chatelain was dead. The Portuguese had sought to have him expelled from the colony but his health deteriorated so badly that he had to leave for Europe of his own free will in 1907. He died soon after arriving home in Switzerland. His mission, however, lived on and the small pharmacy which he once maintained became, and remains (at Kalukembe), the largest hospital in provincial Angola. Ox-wagons, however, did not make a comeback though oxen continued to be used as draught animals and ploughing continued to be practised in southern Angola when elsewhere peasants used hoes. In southern Angola, as in the north, it was the small lorries of bush traders which brought about a transport revolution in the 1920s. Meanwhile back in Europe it is likely, but not certain, that Chatelain may have ridden in a horseless carriage before his death. It would probably not have been an American Studebaker of the type for which his old wagon suppliers became famous.

Sources material

This paper is based on the letter-books which Chatelain kept as a record of his daily life and business activities. At some point these books were recopied, possibly within Chatelain's life-time, but with what additions and omissions is not clear. They were extensively but very selectively used, with much omission of delicate material, by Alida Chatelain who wrote a hagiographical biography of her brother ten years after his death. Collections of Chatelain's newspaper articles are apparently available on the internet and some books of cuttings, together with the copy-books, are in the archives of the Alliance Missionnaire Evangélique/Schweizer Allianz Mission in Winterthur. There will probably be more material in the various Portuguese local and national archives, those for Caconda being the only ones which the present writer has so far been able to consult. Although Chatelain was for a time the honorary United States consul in Luanda, the Washington archive was not immediately able to throw up data about his functions when consulted on a flying visit to DC.

TRADE, SLAVERY, AND MIGRATION IN THE INTERIOR OF BENGUELA

The Case of Caconda, 1830-1870

Mariana P. Candido

The period from 1830 to 1870 was a time of turbulence in Caconda. It represented the shift from slave trade to a "legitimated trade." Caconda was founded during the early 1680s by the Portuguese administration as a *presídio* (military-administrative area centred around a fortress) inland from Benguela, in West Central Africa. Its raison d'être was to foster trade from the plateau by providing safe passage through foreign territory and to provide a base from which *sertanejos*[1] and *pombeiros*[2], backed financially from Benguela, could further draw from the densely populated interior for slaves. Caconda was a relay station for the caravans crossing the interior of Benguela that inevitably needed to stock up with food, water and porters.[3] This attempt at controlling trade between the coast and the interior was, from the very beginning, based upon the commercialisation of human beings required in Benguela to supply the ever-increasing demand for slaves in the Atlantic world.[4]

By 1830, however, the relationship between Caconda and the Atlantic world had begun to change. Under British pressure, the Brazilian government had committed itself on November 23, 1826, to outlaw slave imports from Africa as of March 1830.[5] Caconda was dependent upon the slave trade and the Brazilian ban represented economic ruin.[6] In the 1830s, both slave exporters in Benguela and their *sertanejos* and *pombeiros* partners in Caconda slowly moved their formerly legal commercial operations into an illegal context. They also began to diversify into more "legitimate" commodities to supply the expanding industries in the North Atlantic region.

1 *Sertanejos* were the agents of coastal merchants in the interior, who transported imported goods inland from the coast and brought slaves, wax and ivory from the interior. See Miller 1988, 392; and Henriques 1997: 767.

2 *Pombeiros* were itinerant merchants, especially in the hinterland, connecting the interior markets with the coast. See Bal 1965: 123-161; Henriques 1997: 765.

3 For travelers' reports on Caconda see Pinto 1881, 1: 81-92; Oliveira 1887: 417-453; Santos 1986: 64-65. See also Miller 1988: 93; Alexandre and Dias 1998: 366; and Henriques 1997: 110.

4 It is has been estimated that between 1695 and 1850, a total of 483,850 slaves were exported from the port town of Benguela. See Candido 2006: 18-39.

5 Florentino 1997: 43; Rodrigues 2000: 100.

6 Delgado 1940: 101.

Over the last few decades, the transition from slave trading to "legitimate" commerce has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention.[7] This clearly evidences the historical significance of the shift, which unfolded during different periods of the 19th century in several parts of western Africa. Not every aspect of the transition has, however, received the same attention. Its demographic impact, for example, has almost completely escaped analysis. The reasons may well lie in the difficult, sometimes impossible, task of locating appropriate demographic data relating to the period before the late 1800s. Nevertheless, this is not a uniform problem across all of Atlantic Africa.

Sources required to carry out pre-1900 demographic analysis are far from scarce in the case of Angola. For the period between the late 1700s and 1844, for example, over 350 of the censuses that were produced on an almost annual basis on each of the major port-towns and nearly every interior region under effective or nominal Portuguese control are still extant.[8] The production of censuses continued at a slower pace well into the late 1800s, resulting in proportionately fewer of these post-1844 sources. Nonetheless, what has survived turns Angola into a particularly propitious landscape where the demographic impact of the transition from slaving to legitimate commerce can be investigated in considerable detail, whether on a territory-wide level or in each of the major port-towns and the areas in their respective hinterlands.[9] This study follows the lead of Linda Heywood, Isabel de Castro Henriques, Joseph Miller and William Gervase Clarence-Smith, among others, in understanding how the shift from transatlantic slave trade to legitimated trade affected West Central Africa.[10] Focusing on a specific region of the continent, I intend to explore the changes that took place in Caconda from 1830 until the end of the 1860s. During these four decades, this region experienced a profound economic transformation. The combination of the post-1830 illegal slave trade and the growing legitimate commerce significantly expanded trade routes from Caconda, which opened the area to a series of intense epidemics. If some of the changes were predictable such as the end of the slave trade, famines and diseases were unexpected. Demography, epidemics, and trade were all in motion during this transitory period. My objective is to explore how they interface with one another.

7 Klein 1971: 5-28. For a collection of more recent studies, listing much of the scholarly literature, see Law 1995.

8 Curto 1994: 319-338.

9 See, for example, the case study in Curto 1999: 381-405.

10 The studies that deal with the topic in part or at length are, among others, Hauenstein 1964: 926-932; Miller 1970: 175-201; Pössinger 1973: 32-52; Soremekun 1977: 82-96; Vellut 1979: 93-112; Clarence-Smith 1979; Clarence-Smith 1986: 2, 163-199; Heywood 1984; Henriques 1997; Santos 1998; Santos 1994: 221-244; and Herlin 2004.

The Caconda Censuses

Some decades ago, Douglas L. Wheeler stated "statistics are scarce for population before the coming of the 20th century."[11] The Portuguese administration actually produced an abundance of records, population data included, documenting their contacts and presence in West Central Africa before the late nineteenth century. In the case of Caconda, there are eleven extant censuses relating to the period under consideration: 1830, 1831, 1832[12] and 1836[13]; 1844[14]; 1850 and 1859[15]; and 1860, 1861, 1866 and 1869[16]. Providing information on the size of the local population, as well as its composition by gender, broad age-groups, place of birth, colour, legal condition and occupation, these sources offer a rich body of documentation. They constitute the primary evidence around which this chapter is based.

The decree of July 10, 1772 required a census of the population under the jurisdiction of the *presídio*, or the fortress, of Caconda.[17] The administration of Caconda was almost exclusively in the hands of the military, which was always understaffed.[18] In the face of this shortage of qualified personnel, Luso-Africans often filled positions of rank, including captain, as regents of these *presídios*. Those in charge of military activities were responsible for controlling the

11 Wheeler 1964: 351.

12 I would like to thank José C. Curto, who kindly made part of his research available to me. These early 1830s censuses are found in Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (hereafter AHU), Angola: box 165, doc. 58; box 174, doc. 21; box 177, doc. 11.

13 "Mapa do Presídio de Caconda relativo ao estado do ano próximo pasado de 1836," AHU, Angola, Correspondencia dos Governadores, 1ª Secção, pasta 1 1835.

14 Lima 1846, Vol. 3, Part I, p. 4-a. This census, which exists now only in published form, has been usually attributed to 1845. However, when its first publication date is considered along with what is known about the pre-1850 production of censuses in Angola, there is little doubt that it relates to the end of 1844. See Curto and Gervais 2001: 1-59.

15 See, respectively: "Mappa Statistico da população aproximada da Cidade de S. Filippe de Benguela e suas juridições ... referido ao anno de 1850 a 1851," *Almanak statistico [...]* 1851: 9; and Balsemão 1862: 48, with the summary by Bernardo Diogo de Brito, Commander of Caconda, of the census refering to 1859.

16 "Mapa Statístico do distrito de Benguela segundo os dados fornecidos pela Camara e Chefes dos Concelhos," Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola (hereafter AHNA), box 5568; *Boletim Oficial de Angola* (hereafter BOGPA) 1863, n. 7; and AHU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, 2ª secção, pasta 2.

17 Couto 1972: 110.

18 AHU, Angola, box 54, doc. 72, August 18, 1770; box 70, doc. 12, May 4, 1785; box 85, doc. 1; box 89, doc. 21, October 20, 1798; AHU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, pasta 10 A, doc. "Estabelecimento de Moçâmedes, Huila e Caconda, 1846"; cod. 1629, fl. 199v., August 9, 1793; AHU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, pasta 16, doc. February 20, 1850, "Relatório do Governador Geral referido à época decorrida de 17 de janeiro de 1848 a 31 de dezembro de 1849"; AHNA, cod. 441, fl. 77, October 20, 1798; cod. 445, fl. 113v., December 1, 1811; cod. 507, fl. 9, September 26, 1812; cod. 447, fl. 210-213v., August 21, 1821; cod. 448, fl. 15v., March 30, 1822; cod. 457, fl 1, September 13, 1844; cod. 458, fl. 10, February 7, 1846. Also see Delgado 1944, 1: 609.

population in the surrounding areas, and also for generating the information required by Lisbon on the population. One feature of the Angolan censuses is that authorities restricted their coverage to the population under Portuguese "control," i.e., African populations living within the limits of the Portuguese *presídio*. Caconda was no exception. Those living close by but not considered vassals of the Portuguese crown were not counted.[19] Due to the small number of Europeans in Caconda, much of this census data was actually generated by African enumerators.

Like any other sources, censuses present their particular problems. They responded to specific political purposes, in order to understand people under control and dominate them.[20] From the late 1700s onwards, when census-taking was implemented throughout the territory under Portuguese control in Angola, the process of counting people involved two major objectives: for Portuguese administrators to know how many individuals were available in any given landscape for its defence and so that they could be duly taxed. In mid-nineteenth century Angola, these objectives meant that not everyone was necessarily enumerated in any given year.[21] Coverage in the annual population figures should thus not be viewed as all-inclusive. However, this by itself does not invalidate the censuses as appropriate sources of information.[22] A time-series as relatively significant as the mid-1800s Caconda censuses can yield important insights on population structures especially when we fall back upon trend analysis. The goal is to examine historical events, such as the shift to legitimate trade, through the analysis of population variations.[23]

The format of the censuses used in Angola is a rich source to understand Portuguese perceptions and conceptions of the societies which they ruled – or thought they were ruling. The social classification in categories, such as white, mulatto and black were based on subjective ascriptions such as economic activity, place of residence, ascendancy, language affiliation, social behaviour,

19 Heintze 1980a: 57-78; and Heintze 1980b: 112-127. For difficulties in collecting tribute, see AHNA, cod. 509, fl. 218, September 15, 1837. For vassal treaties see AHU, Angola, box 111, doc. 1, September 4, 1804. Heywood stresses that the Portuguese did not establish direct political control over the local population in the Benguela plateau until the 1890s; see Heywood 1988: 419.

20 Anderson 1983.

21 Dealing with a posterior time period, Heywood and Thornton stress that Africans were the ones involved in counting people in the interior of Benguela. The local political rulers were supposed to count everyone located in their areas, and send this information to the Portuguese authorities. See Heywood and Thornton 1987: 241-254.

22 Highlighting that some *sobas*, in Angola, refused to allow census-takers to enumerate the population inhabiting areas under their control, John K. Thornton has stressed that "we should therefore be extremely wary of using census to make estimates of the total population of the area, although this does not mean that the value of the document is lessened with regard to the structure of the population". See Thornton 1980: 418.

23 See Cordell and Gregory 1980: 389-416.

form of land tenure and external appearance of features such as hair style, outfit style, and body language.[24] Racial categories, in the end, are assigned identities associated with a legal status. As Jackson has pointed out in the context of Latin America "identity creation occurred in a variety of documents including parish registers, censuses, and tribute records."[25] We can say the same for Angola.

Another caveat that needs to be kept in mind is that the censuses of the mid-1800s relating to Caconda are far from uniform. Indeed, this was a period in which census-taking within this region, as indeed throughout all of Angola, was in a state of flux. In sharp contrast to the period from the late 1790s to 1836, subsequent census-takers neither followed the same guidelines from one year to the next, nor were censuses necessarily undertaken at the beginning of any given year to represent the population at the end of the previous year.[26] For example, while the 1830s censuses includes data on gender, colour, marital status, birthplace, broad age-groups, legal status, and occupation, that of 1844 covers only categories of colour, legal status, and gender. Similarly, while the censuses of 1850 and 1859 provide information on gender, colour, broad-age groups, and legal status, that of 1860 offers only data on gender, colour and legal status. The censuses for 1861, 1866 and 1869, in turn, were quite different from those of previous years. All provided information on gender, broad age-groups, and legal status, amongst other things. Nevertheless, while the traditional colour classification was replaced by that of "country of birth," the last census in the series offered no data at all on enslaved individuals. Such varying classifications make it impossible to draw upon all of the data from one census year to the next. Consequently, we will focus upon the categories that lend themselves to analysis during the whole period under consideration: total population size, gender, colour, and legal status.

Beyond the censuses, other sources were analyzed for the proposal of this paper. Travellers' accounts, medical reports and official correspondence contributed to put the censuses into perspective. They offer qualitative information valuable in the process of understanding demographic variations.

Caconda and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The *presídio* of Caconda was founded in the lands between the rivers Sucula and Cabala, both tributary streams of the river Catape.[27] In 1684 Portuguese forces formerly established a fortress in the lands of the ruler Bango. However, the ruler of Kakonda attacked the *presídio* and destroyed it. The Portuguese

[24] For more on the census colour concepts as social construct see Posel 2001: 87-113; Jackson 1999.
[25] Jackson 1999: 4.
[26] See Curto 1994.
[27] Delgado 1944, 1: 230-231; and Keiling 1934: 9.

then launched another expedition, re-established the fortress and expelled Bango into the interior.[28] Initially located in the lands of the Hanya, its location was "in the worst place in the world," according to Governor Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho. Hence he transferred the *presídio* further west to an area previously known as Catala,[29]

> a few days away from its previous place. […] the artillery, ammunition, and troops were transferred to the new location between the months of January and July, by the end of which the *presídio* already had a fence of pole and mud, a church, and a treasury.

He hoped that "the quality of the air and lands, and the abundance of cattle would transform it into a populous village."[30]

By the end of the 18th century, Caconda had become an important commercial entrepôt on the fringes of the densely populated central highlands. The *presídio* comprised then an extensive territory centred on the fort, 139 kilometres wide and 100 kilometres long.[31] The extent of the territory made centralization difficult, although Luso-Africans were established in satellite villages in the *presídio*. During the Portuguese expeditions into Mbailundu (1773-1774), the fortress was a key military point.[32] By the mid-19th century, according to Balsemão, the size of the *presídio* was estimated to comprise an area of 44.4 kilometres by 28 kilometres.[33]

Caconda functioned as a relay station. Caravans from Benguela passed through Caconda on their way to the slave markets controlled by interior polities on the plateau, as did the *libambos* or slave coffles descending from the highlands to the coast. The majority of slaves descending from the plateau to Benguela passed through the *presídio* of Caconda, as did the trade goods sent from the coast inland.[34] The activities of traders with links to other areas of West Central Africa maintained the flow of slaves from the highland to the coast. Yet, any disturbance in the *presídio*, such as the occasional raids organized by neighbouring *sobas*, interrupted the supply of captives from the highlands.[35] By 1830 the relationship between Caconda and the Atlantic world had begun to change. Bowing to British pressure, the Brazilian government had

[28] Miller 1997: 23; and Delgado 1944, 1: 230-231.
[29] Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (hereafter BNL), cód. 8553, fl. 92-92v, August 14, 1768.
[30] AHU, Angola, box 53, doc. 71, October 18, 1769.
[31] Vasconcellos 1844: 47-152.
[32] Delgado 1944, 1: 239.
[33] Balsemão 1862: 47; and Delgado 1944, 1: 241.
[34] AHU, Angola, box 53, doc. 71, October, 18, 1769; also box 70, doc. 5, February 24, 1785; Angola, cod. 551, fl. 45-53, January 30, 1810; and Birmingham 1966: 138.
[35] The *sobas* of Huambo, Kitete and Kipeio staged two raids in 1809 and seized a large number of free people and slaves and devastated cultivated fields of the *presídio*; see AHNA, cod. 445, fls. 34- 34v., January 27, 1809; and AHNA, cod. 445, fls. 41, September 6, 1809.

committed itself, to outlaw slave imports from Africa.[36] Given that Brazil represented the single most important market for slaves exported from Angola, particularly Benguela, whose slave exports were almost exclusively destined for Rio de Janeiro, such a ban spelled economic ruin for the territory in general and specifically commercial entrepôts like Caconda that were totally dependent upon the trade.[37] Then, six years later the Portuguese government decreed the abolition of the slave exports from its African possessions.[38] During the first half of the 1830s, slave exports from Benguela stopped momentarily. However, they did not end, since an illegal trade in slaves soon emerged. Several local dealers told Gustav Tams, a German doctor who visited the port town in 1841, that nearly 20,000 captives had been exported from there in 1838.[39] Although this figure seems exaggerated in the light of what is known of the illegal slave trade from Benguela, most of these captives would still have been acquired by *sertanejos* and *pombeiros* based in or transiting through the corridor of Caconda. It was only after 1850, when the Brazilian government began to seriously tackle the problem of slave imports, that the slave trade from Benguela came to an end, with the role of Caconda as the commercial entrepôt for many of the captives descending the plateau for export to the Atlantic dissipating in the process.

Almost every internal or external event affected trade. However the impact of abolition of the slave exports was felt differently in each centre since its implementation came slowly. Shifts in the slave trade deeply affected Caconda. Population data on Caconda includes the region around the *presídio* as well as the small town at the fortress itself. Therefore an examination of the population of Caconda allows some insights into demographic change in the interior.

The Shift to Legitimate Commerce

In the 1830s, while both slave exporters in Benguela and their *sertanejo* and *pombeiro* partners in Caconda slowly moved their formerly legal commercial operations into an illegal context, they also began to diversify into more "legitimate" commodities. In 1836, the Portuguese government withdrew the crown monopoly over ivory exported from Angola, offering an impulse on exports.[40] Along with this commodity, others like beeswax, gum-copal, orchill

[36] This agreement, signed between the British and Brazilian governments on 23 November 1826, was to take effect at the end March 1830.

[37] Delgado 1940: 101.

[38] "Decreto de 10 de dezembro de 1836", *A Abolição do tráfico e da escravatura em Angola* (Luanda: Ministério da Cultura 1997), 9-14 .

[39] Tams 1969, 1: 97.

[40] Tito Omboni passed by Benguela in February 1835, but published his travelogue only eleven years later, allowing him to add further information in between. He states that this free ivory

weed, and later rubber came to be subsequently shipped in increasingly large volumes through Benguela to supply the expanding industries in the North Atlantic world. To obtain these "legitimate" goods from deep in the interior of West Central Africa, the traders in this port town continued to rely heavily upon their *sertanejos* and *pombeiros* based in Caconda well into the 1850s. In 1852, the most famous of the *sertanejos,* Silva Porto, opened a more direct trade route from the kingdom of Mbailundu on the plateau through Kisanje and Kivula to the coast.[41] The traditional role of Caconda as the only springboard into the central highlands and beyond thereafter began to wane. Nevertheless, it remained an important corridor in the trade between the coast and the southern areas of the plateau.[42]

The simultaneous transitions to illegal slaving and legitimate commerce had profound effects upon Benguela and throughout its hinterland. Although operating much like its predecessor, the illegal trade was quite different in at least one aspect. While legal slaving involved predominantly male captives, female slaves predominated during the post-1830 period.[43] Slaves could, of course, be made to walk on their own two feet. This was not the case with ivory, beeswax, gum-copal, orchill-weed, or rubber. Lacking animal transport, traders throughout central Angola first drew upon a traditional method: forcing the slaves descending from the plateau to carry the legitimate goods. As the appetite of the expanding industries of the North Atlantic grew, however, they then began to mount long-distance caravans with ever increasing numbers of porters to seek these commodities from continuously retreating sources further and further inland. Both the specific gender requirement of the illegal slave trade and the different needs arising from long-distance trade transformed the population of Caconda.

Graph 1 (Total Population of Caconda, 1830-1869) and Table 1 show that the population of Caconda underwent significant shifts during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Between 1830 and 1844, the total population remained relatively stable.[44] In the 1831 census, 22,186 people were listed. After one decade, census-takers identified 22,100 people. During the second

trade was the second most profitable commercial activity after illegal slaving. See Omboni 1846: 75.

41 See Santos 1986: 70-71.

42 Commander Brito in Balsemão (1862: 48) informs that in the mid-1820s Caconda remained an important corridor for the movement of beeswax from Ngalenge to Benguela. On the other hand, Dias (1998: 459) points out that in the late 1870s Caconda continued to serve a significant market for slaves descending from the plateau.

43 Eltis 1987: 174.

44 Indeed, this stability was a carry over from the second half of the 1820s. The Caconda censuses of 1825 and 1827 both list the total population in the range of 22,000. See, AHU, Angola, 1ª secção, box 150 doc. 17, and box 159 doc. 55.

half of the 1840s, on the other hand, Caconda's numbers increased significantly, reaching its largest population during this period in 1850.

Table 1: Population of Caconda, 1830-1870

Year	Total Population of Caconda
1831	22,186
1832	22,140
1836	23,604
1844	22,100
1850	60,229
1859	31,037
1860	28,500
1861	15,000
1866	12,300
1869	28,239

Source: The censuses are located, in chronological order, at AHU, Angola, cx. 165, doc. 58; AHU, Angola, cx. 174, doc. 21; cx. 175, doc. 71; Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, pasta 1, S/N; pasta 2; pasta 10 A; Lima 1846, 4 A; and *Almanak Statistico*, 9; *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino, Parte não oficial*, serie III, june 1862: 48; AHNA, cx. 5568; *Boletim Oficial de Angola* 1863, n. 7.

The remainder of the 1840s saw the population of Caconda multiply almost three times. During the 1840s Caconda faced some environmental problems, which must have affected the population size. In 1844, for example, Lieutenant João Francisco de Garcia found the population of Caconda facing hunger and depending on imports from the region of Ngalangi for its supply of food.[45] However the censuses do not indicate population losses. Between 1844 and 1850, the population of Caconda appears to have experienced dramatic growth. The estimate of population in Caconda in 1850 is much higher than previous tabulations, showing 60,229 people, or almost three times as many people as there were in 1844. Such a change could not have been the result of natural increase. It only could have resulted from immigration, an enlarged area of enumeration, a serious undercounting in previous years, or a combination of these factors. The continued incidence of epidemic and drought indicates that mortality rates remained high, which would have limited this expansion and therefore appears to confirm that immigration was the principal reason for population growth.[46]

The population increase was particularly prominent among slaves, with the approximate number of female captives rising from 1,800 to 10,300 and

[45] Garcia 1844: 252.
[46] AHNA, cod. 221, fl. 65-65v, February 22, 1841; and cod. 452, fl. 11v, March 15, 1841.

enslaved males from 1,600 to 10,100, as shown in Graph 4 (Population of Caconda by Legal Status, 1830-1869).[47] In 1850, when the slave trade was abolished in Brazil, apparently large numbers of slaves who would otherwise have been shipped were retained in Caconda. This forced traders to find strategies to sell the excess, which meant selling captives in the highlands, where the indigenous elite augmented the number of their dependants through the incorporation of slaves.[48] With the end of the transatlantic slave trade, the Portuguese administration encouraged the diversification of the economy, favouring the exploitation of local staples, particularly gum-copal, beeswax, and ivory, which traders acquired in the interior. Slaves who had been amassed previously for export through Benguela were now used locally to produce and transport these commodities.[49]

Shortly after 1850, Caconda began to experience a dramatic population decrease. In 1859, the census-takers identified 31,037 people living in and around the fortress. Part of this decline might well have been the result of disease through the expanding long distance trade. In 1851, for example, the governor of Angola, Adriano Acácio da Silveira Pinto reported that the *reinos* (kingdoms) of Benguela and Angola were facing several outbreaks of smallpox.[50] He did not, however, specify whether Caconda was affected by these epidemiological events. Similarly, in 1857, José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral informed that Luanda was facing an intense period of drought, with the usual consequences of starvation and death.[51] This may well have affected Caconda too. A second factor was probably the rise of new economic activities closer to the coast: the collection of orchill-weed and, especially, the cotton plantations that came from inland from Benguela to Moçâmedes.[52] Extensively based upon enslaved labour, both of these new activities may well have led to the relocation of a significant proportion of the unusually large slave population in Caconda during the late 1840s and early 1850s. Then in 1852, a new trade route opened from the western edges of the plateau through Kivula and Kisanje to the coast. Much shorter than the Caconda route, it was based upon an alliance that Silva Porto had brokered with the *soba* of Mbailundu, who offered better security and lower toll taxes for long distance trading within his realm. This led numerous *sertanejos* and *pombeiros* to relocate in Mbailundu on the plateau itself, closer to the sources of the legitimate commodities.[53] Along with these *sertanejos* and *pombeiros* moved not only their free dependants but also their slaves, both male and female. Examples of this kind of movement come from

47 Lima,1844, 4 A; and *Almanak Statistico* 1851: 9.
48 Miller 1983: 153-154.
49 Lopes de Lima 1844: 50-52; Miranda 1864: 55-57; and Henriques 1997: 532-553.
50 AHU, Angola, Correspondencia dos Governadores, 1ª Secção, pasta 17-A.
51 Biblioteca da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (hereafter BSGL), Res 2, mç 6, doc. 8-8.
52 As detailed in Monteiro 1875, II: 181-185.
53 See Alexandre and Dias 1998: 398-402.

Silva Porto himself, as well as the Hungarian Laszlo Magyar who settled in Mbailundu in 1849.[54]

By the end of the 1850s, although a significant proportion of the population had been lost and a new, shorter caravan route had emerged to the north, Caconda nevertheless persisted as an important base for long distance trade operations. With thousands of porters continuing to pass through to the coast from deeper and deeper in West Central Africa, the diseases they carried seem to have become more important in their impact upon the demography of Caconda. Between 1860 and 1866, population losses amounted to more than 50 per cent. In 1860, census-takers identified 28,500 people. In 1861, the population was reduced to 15,000 souls. The population decrease continued. In 1866, enumerators listed 12,300 individuals in Caconda. While a yellow fever epidemic struck Angola in 1860[55], Benguela also experienced outbreaks of smallpox between 1861 and 1866.[56] These epidemiological events most certainly affected Caconda, though it is difficult to measure their extent.

Monseigneur Keiling, for example, relates hearing a tradition among the Sambo that waves of Mbailundu were on the move in the mid-19th century to the region between the Cului and Cunene rivers, escaping epidemics. He specifically highlights the existence of someone called Sambo, which meant "contagious" in relation to the Mbailundu.[57] Once again, other factors were probably also at play. One was the expansion of slave-based cotton plantations south of Benguela, particularly pronounced until the late 1860s, which could account for much of the disappearance of slaves from Caconda by 1866.[58] The 1860s was also the decade during which beeswax became a dominant item amongst the legitimate trade goods exported through Benguela, requiring not

54 See Heywood 1985: 248.

55 Letter by Faustino José de Cabral (Physician-Major of Angola), 03 December, 1860, AHU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, 1ª secção, pasta 27.

56 Cabral (1861: 27-28) reports cases of yellow fever in Benguela also. On smallpox, see: Delgado 1940: 221; and Oliveira 1866.

57 Keiling 1934: 100-103.

58 By 1866, enslaved people accounted for only 0.87% of the total population. Part of this decrease can be explained by the fact that the institution of slavery in Angola had by then begun a "slow death": in December of 1854, Sá da Bandeira, the Liberal Minister of the Colonies, ordered all government-owned slaves freed; in 1855-1856, failure to register slaves with the colonial state subsequently turned every non-registered captive into a freed person; in February of 1869, Lisbon decreed all remaining slaves *libertos* (emancipated persons), but with the proviso that they keep on working for their masters and mistresses for another 10 years; then, in the spring of 1876, the status of *liberto* was abolished, with full emancipation scheduled for mid-1878. This official attack upon slavery did result in declining numbers of slaves after the mid-1850s. But in the case of Caconda, not one freed person was registered in its 1861 and 1866 censuses. According to Luiz Jose Mendes Affonso, *presidente do conselho do governo*, slave owners refused to obey the law and continued to hang on to their slaves (*Boletim Oficial de Angola*, n. 39, September 29th, 1866). This suggests that they were being relocated elsewhere.

only more porters, free, freed, and enslaved, but also employing a slew of other individuals, including women and children, who endured their long treks into the interior.[59]

If it was indeed the case, that diseases took their toll on the population, how then can we explain the rapid demographic recovery that took place in Caconda between 1866 and 1869, with the number of its residents increasing more than 130 per cent in just three years? After almost a decade of population losses, 28,239 people were counted in the 1869 census. Due to the changing classifications, the censuses provide no clue as to which population groups recuperated so fast. All that we can say for sure is that such an increase could not have taken place through natural reproduction. Were these primarily captives coming in from the interior of Central Africa? Was this wave of in-migration composed of free people who, following the diseases of 1860-1866, moved back into Caconda? Was it a combination of both of these types of individuals? Or were there some other factors, as yet unidentified, also at play?

This was a population made up almost exclusively by black Africans, as Graph 2 (Population of Caconda by Colour, 1830-1869) shows. *Pardos* (mulattos) always represented a small minority within Caconda. White individuals were few and far between. Consequently, it was the black population that was most affected by demographic change. As Graph 5 (Slave Population of Caconda by Colour, 1830-1869) clearly shows, the slave population of Caconda was colour specific. Few mulattos ever found themselves enslaved, as was indeed the case throughout Angola, with the exception of 1859, when a surprising number of 1,566 *pardo* men and 1,659 *pardo* women were listed as slaves. In the other censuses, slavery is almost restricted to blacks. It seems that the mulattos' pedigree protected them from enslavement, although colour perception was very subtle in the south Atlantic world.[60] Portuguese agents tended to protect mulattos against enslavement. Yet, African authorities did not necessarily follow these guidelines, as is indicated by the occasional enslavement of mulattos.[61] Still, these cases were the exception rather than the norm.

Few whites lived in Caconda, fewer than in Benguela. From 1830 to 1870, whites represented less than 1 per cent of Caconda's population, totalling 29 in 1830 and 15 in 1860. The racial categories were subjective and socially constructed rather than a simple reflection of phenotype characteristics.[62] According to Silva Porto, whites could be anyone who wore pants, regardless of

59 Azevedo 1958: 220-369; and Margarido 1978: 390-393.

60 Miller 1988: 192; Russell-Wood 1978: 16-42; Venâncio 1996: 46-48; Cooper and Stoler 1989: 615-623; and Heywood 2002: 91-113.

61 For the enslavement of mulattos, see AHNA, cod. 323, fl 28-29, August 19, 1811; cod. 323, fl. 30-31, August 20, 1811; and cod. 442, fl. 223 –223v., May 10, 1803.

62 Cooper and Stoler 1989: 134-145, 609-621; Mark 2002: 14-16*;* Bourdieu 1979: 543-585; Miller 1988: 192; Posel 2001: 93.

skin colour and social condition.[63] David Livingston made similar observations in the interior, noting that traders were classified as "white," regardless of their physical appearance.[64] The white population was predominantly male.

With respect to legal condition, as Graph 4 (Population of Caconda by Legal Status, 1830-1869) illustrates, the majority of Caconda's population was free by 1830, although the proportion of slave and free in the population of Caconda varied over time. Free individuals experienced demographic changes similar to those of the total population over the period under consideration. Over time, their proportional weight within the population of Caconda also decreased. This process was already in motion by 1859, culminating with only free persons enumerated in 1869. The enslaved population experienced a radically different pattern. Although comprising a significant proportion of the total population from 1830 to 1836[65], the number of slaves had fallen appreciably by 1844. A period of temporary demographic growth took place in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Thereafter, however, the number of enslaved persons again tumbled, especially in the late 1850s and early 1860s, until this classification completely disappeared from the censuses.

In terms of gender, both males and females saw their respective groups undergo significant demographic transformations, as Graph 3 (Population of Caconda by Gender, 1830-1869) evidences. Between 1836 and 1844, women, who had previously constituted the bulk of Caconda's inhabitants, seem to have simply disappeared. The number of women in the *presídio* declined from 16,381 women in 1836 to 4,312 in 1844. The decline appears to have been part of a migration with the end of legal slave exports from Benguela. According to Balsemão, "the population has been slowly decreasing since 1830, when many slave traders left [Caconda] to settle somewhere else."[66] Local landowners without many captives descended from the plateau, relocated their agricultural operations elsewhere, mainly north toward the Kwanza or along the coast.[67] Women, both free and enslaved, who were the primary source of agricultural production, also moved, perhaps accounting for the losses of the late 1830s and 1840s.[68] Between 1836 and 1844, an influx of free males took place. The factors leading to this significant influx of males remain obscure. Caravans comprised

63 BSGL, 2-C-6, Silva Porto, "Apontamentos de um Portuense em Africa," vol. 1, March 7, 1847.

64 Livingstone 1857, 230 and 375; Bogumil Jewsiewicki, in reference to contemporary Congo, has pointed out the same phenomenon, in which classifying someone as white refers more to an economic status than to skin colour or physical appearance; see Jewsiewicki 1996.

65 The number of slaves within the total population seems to have been on the rise during the second half of the 1820s: between 1825 and 1827, their proportion jumped from one-quarter to slightly over one-third. See, AHU, Angola, 1ª secção, box 150, doc. 17, and box 159, doc. 55.

66 Balsemão 1862: 46.

67 Balsemão 1862: 48; BOGPA, 8, November 11 1845; and BOGPA, October 8 1846.

68 For the economic role of women in the highland, see Heywood 1984: 42-46.

male porters, and with the increase in "legitimate" commodities such as beeswax and ivory, the demographic shift may reflect the growth in the labour market for porters to work in the caravan trade. Caconda remained as the only base through which the central plateau could be reached. In 1850, with the influx of population, the gender ratio of the population became more balanced, but was still heavily male. Enumerators calculated 31,501 males and 28,719 females in Caconda. The population drop during the 1850s was reflected in the gender ratio of the *presídio*. In 1859, 15,868 males and 15,146 females were identified. The figures remained about the same for 1861. In 1861, there were 14,301 men and 14,227 women in Caconda. In 1861, however, population suffered a dramatic decline, particularly among men, which inverted the gender make up of the population. In the 1861 census, enumerators identified 6,985 males and 8,000 females living in the *presídio*. By the end of the decade, the gender ratio of the population was balanced again. The population increased from the beginning of the decade. By 1869, 14,011 men and 14,011 women lived in Caconda. While it has been argued that the preponderance of women retained by African societies allowed these societies to recuperate the population lost to the continuous export of young males, the data from Caconda seem to suggest a more complex pattern.[69] The free women included poor peasants and economically powerful *donas* who controlled a large number of dependants, not just slave women.

The relative proportion of males and females was particularly significant for the slave population, since variations involved the reorganization of labour. Although traders exported male slaves, larger numbers of male captives were kept locally during the 1830s[70], as shown in Graph 6 (Slave Population of Caconda by Gender, 1830-1869). In 1831, there were 2,262 female slaves and 6,125 male slaves in Caconda. The male preponderance was maintained through the decade. In the 1836 census, enumerators listed 2,378 female slaves and 6,156 male slaves. This pattern of retention and selection was associated with the transatlantic slave trade. During the 1830s, females commanded better prices in the transatlantic trade than males, so that increasingly males were retained.[71] Only after the 1840s, the gender ratio was balanced. In 1844, 1,600 males and 1,802 female slaves were identified. In the 1850 census, apparently reflecting a decline in transatlantic shipments, the number of slaves in Caconda increased dramatically to 10,154 male slaves and 10,317 female slaves. After1850 the number of slaves diminished gradually. In 1859, enumerators listed 4,096 males and 4,066 females; and in 1861 the number continued to decrease. In 1861, the number of slaves had reduced to 240 males and 260

69 Miller 1988: 130, 160-164; Thornton 1983: 39-46.
70 Thornton 1983: 39-46; Thornton 1980: 417-427; Eltis and Engerman 1993: 308-323.
71 Eltis and Engerman 1993: 308-323; Thornton 1983: 39-46; and Heywood 1984: 42-46.

females. Following 1866, the institution seems to have evaporated from official records.[72]

The shifts in the gender composition of the slave population in Caconda reflected changes taking place in the transatlantic slave trade and in Benguela. As a slave entrepôt, which supplied Benguela, Caconda's population reflected changes in the transatlantic market. The shifts in the gender distribution during the decades of the 1830s and 1840s relate to the constant demands of the Brazilian market. This reflection of changes in the south Atlantic slave trade demonstrates how the impact of abolition and the fear of its consequences reverberated into the interior. Merchants had to reorganize their business in response to British pressure to suppress the shipping of slaves and the attempts of the Portuguese government to control the trade. Compared to previous decades, the male slave population of Caconda increased abruptly during the 1830s, indicating that the market was incapable of absorbing the number of male captives who were available. The slaves had to be retained in Caconda.[73] A sudden increase in the population was felt during the 1850s again, with the closure of the Brazilian market. Slavery and trade were intertwined in the case of Caconda.

Conclusion

Caconda helps us to problematize the question of trade, slavery and migration in West Central Africa. The Caconda population was linked intimately to the transatlantic slave trade, despite the location of the *presídio* 300 kilometres inland. Any moments of crisis or instability in the transatlantic slave trade affected populations established along the routes into the interior. The south Atlantic economy directly influenced the dynamics of the internal trade, which frequently forced population relocation. Gender variations within the Caconda population exemplified this.

The transatlantic trade had a strong impact on population structure, social organization and economic activities. Periodic drought and its consequent famine and the outbreak of disease had an impact on a population already undergoing constant pressure because of the insecurity associated with enslavement. The arrival of caravans from the interior, as well as the immigration of people escaping raids and warfare, resulted in contact between people of different backgrounds. The nature of society at Caconda reveals that the needs of the slave trade shaped this *presídio*. Since its foundation, Caconda attracted individuals who profited from the slave trade, and consequently, a Luso-African community was established within and around the *presídio*. The

[72] The 1855 *Livro de Registro de Escravos* of Caconda, AHNA, cód. 3159, shows 278 male and 309 female slaves.

[73] Florentino 1997: 72; Thornton 1980: 417-427; Eltis and Engerman 1993: 308-323.

transformation of the slave trade into an illegal activity after 1830 had little impact on the operation of the slave traders, who continued to ensnare people close to the coast as well as inland. The region continued to supply transatlantic demand, and as a result many people were deported to meet the requirements of slave traders. Unprotected people were seized, prompting waves of migration. The population of Caconda was repeatedly reconfigured through flight, the sale of slaves to the coast, and immigration.

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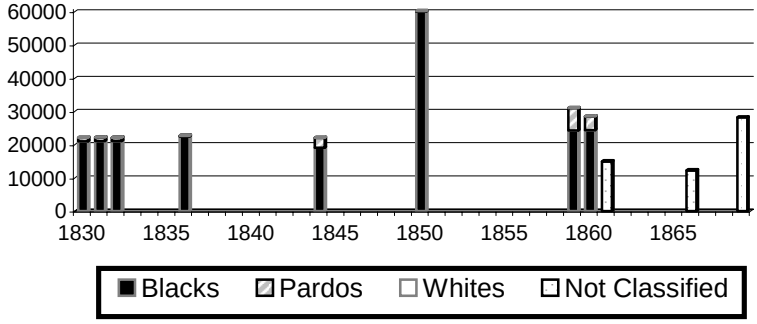
Graph I. Total Population of Caconda and Illegal Slave Exports from Benguela, 1830-1869

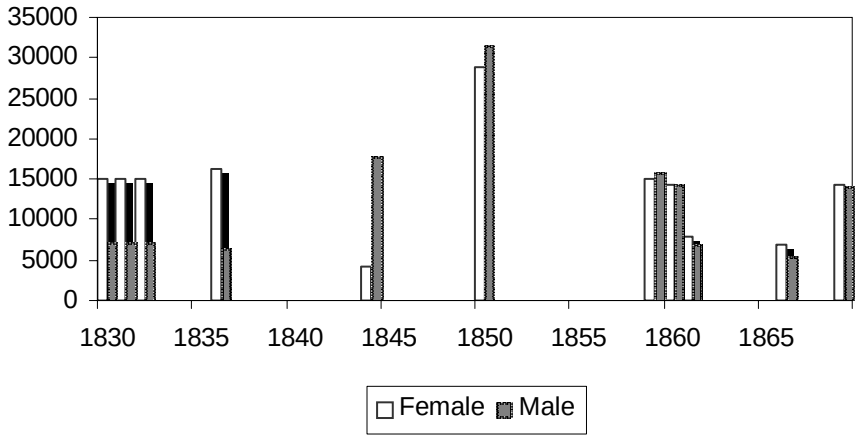
Sources: For the 1830, 1831 and 1832 Caconda censuses see AHU, Angola, 1ª secção, box 165, doc. 58; box 174, doc. 21; and box 177, doc. 11 respectively. The 1836 census is available in "Mapa do presídio de Caconda relativo ao estado do ano próximo pasado de 1836," AHU, Angola, Correspondencia dos Governadores, 1ª Secção, Pasta 1, 1835. For the 1844 census see Lima 1846, vol. 3, part 1, p. 4-a. For the 1850 and 1859 censuses see, respectively: "Mappa Statistico da população aproximada da Cidade de S. Filippe de Benguela e suas juridições [...] referido ao anno de 1850 a 1851," *Almanak statistico [...]* 1851: 9; and Balsemão 1862: 48. For the 1860 census see "Mapa Statístico do distrito de Benguela segundo os dados fornecidos pela Camara e Chefes dos Concelhos," AHNA, cx. 5568. The 1861 census is published in *Boletim Oficial de Angola* 1863, n. 7. For the 1866 and 1869 censuses see, respectively, AHU, Angola, Correspondencia dos Governadores, 2ª secção, pasta 2 and pasta 40 (old numeration). For the information on illegal slave exportation see Eltis, Behrendt, Richardson and Klein, 1999.

Graph II. Population of Caconda by Colour, 1830-1869



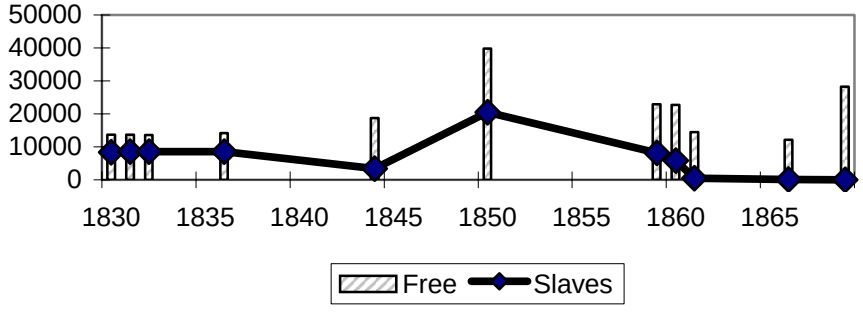
Sources: See the censuses supporting graph I.

Graph III. Population of Caconda by Gender, 1830-1869



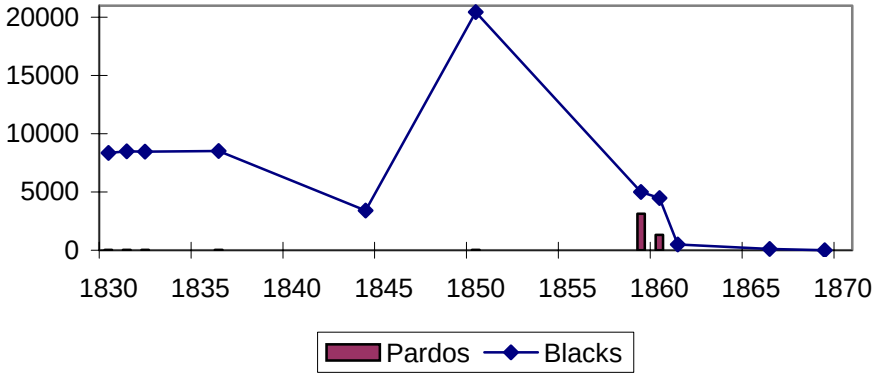
Source: See the censuses supporting graph I.

Graph IV. Population of Caconda by Legal Status, 1830-1869



Source: See the censuses supporting graph I.

Graph V. Slave Population of Caconda by Color, 1830-1869



Source: See the censuses supporting graph I.

Graph VI. Slave Population of Caconda by Gender, 1830-1869

Sources: See the censuses supporting graph I.

THE ECONOMICS OF THE KWANGO RUBBER TRADE, c. 1900*

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In 1902, at a frontier passage in the far north-eastern corner of Angola's Congo district, near the Kwilu River's estuary in the Kwango, soldiers of the Congo Free State arrested two African men for alleged smuggling. As they happened to be resident on Angolan territory and were therefore subjects of the Portuguese crown the two men soon made their way into diplomatic correspondence between Portugal and representatives of Belgian King Leopold's Free State.[1] One of the men, Kitumbu, was identified as a native from Zombo, a region well-known for its extensive commercial networks. His companion, Kalumba-tungu, came from a riverside village named Kimbinda. Chief Kimbinda, a tributary of the Yaka chief Kianvo Kia N'Zadi, had not too long before the arrest moved his village across the Kwango River from the Free State into Angola; the Kwango formed a natural frontier between the two colonial domains. The people of the village, however, still crossed the river for their crops and their trade. Several other Yaka populations strategically who nested along the caravan routes crossing the Kwango between Kasongo-Lunda and Popokabaka had also partly or completely moved to Portuguese territory. These settlements played a dual role in the long-distance trade, particularly that in rubber, which passed through the Kwango region. They lived off the trade by taxing Zombo caravans for passage and lodging; but they also acted as middle-men and as such were traders themselves. During the Free State's repression of the free rubber trade, they caused what one State official called an "exodus of our riverside villages towards the Portuguese Congo."[2] After their migration to Angola they continued to have a crucial position in the cross-border trade and often came into violent conflict with soldiers of the State. This chapter is meant to explain why the rubber trade in the decades around 1900 was at the root of so much of the commotion one finds described in government and missionary papers from both sides of the frontier, from the mentioned Yaka migrations to

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1 This case is documented in the Archives africaines (Brussels), Affaires Etrangères (henceforth AA), 260/294, Rapport fait par le Substitut Pattarino au sujet de l'incident de frontière du Kwango-Kwilu.

2 AA, 260/294, Commissaire de district to Gouverneur Général, no. 60/G, Popokabaka 10-9-1901.

Zombo plans to attack the *Bula Matari* with the help of the Portuguese.[3] It attempts to lay bare the logic and dynamic of the Kwango rubber trade, specifically by showing how this trade was conducted and in which ways it conflicted with the interests of the Congo Free State.

I

Between 1880 and 1910 many African economies experienced a boom in the production of wild rubber, caused by a growing demand in the industrial societies of Europe and the United States for African rubber. By 1900 West-Central Africa had become the world's second largest supply zone (after Brazil), while on the African continent the Congo Free State and Angola were the two leading producers (other prominent producers were the Gold Coast and French Guinea). But the boom came to an end with the worldwide price crash of 1913, caused by the arrival on the world market of cheaper and high-quality plantation rubber from Southeast Asia.[4]

Export of rubber from modern-day Angola started in 1867 through the ports of the Kongo coast. By 1896 rubber had become by far the most important export product in Angola. At that time the chief outlets for the rubber trade were Luanda, Benguela and the ensemble of smaller ports in the Congo district. Export levels reached a peak of almost 4,000 tons in 1899, fell sharply to about 1,500 tons in 1902 and then recovered until 1913, when cultivated rubber from Southeast Asia strongly devalued African rubber. In the Congo district, rubber exports were at their highest in 1893, when a total of almost 800 tons was taxed by colonial customs officers. The district entered a period of structural decline in 1900, as export levels fell to about 400 tons, while after 1906 exports further sank to a level of about 300 tons. The rubber exported from the Congo district came for the larger part from the savannah regions near the Kwango River, which formed the district's eastern frontier with the Congo Free State. Initially the rubber from this region was transported to the European factories established on the Atlantic coast, most notably in Ambrizete. But in the 1890's, as larger steam vessels managed to navigate up the Zaire, Noki became the district's main port for the export of rubber.[5]

The late nineteenth-century rubber and ivory trade in the triangular region between Kinshasa, the Kwango River and the lower Zaire was predominantly in

[3] Bula Matari is, allegedly, the name the people of the Lower Congo gave to the "rock breaking" Congo explorer Stanley and which they subsequently used to identify the Congo Free State.

[4] Dumett 1971: 79-81, 91, 100; Osborn 2004: 445-448; Harms 1975: 73-74.

[5] Mesquita 1918: 16-17, 28-29, 40.

the hands of Zombo merchants.[6] In the early 1890s Zombo trade caravans began serving the European houses that had settled in the market town of Makela do Zombo to collect and store rubber. Earlier than the Portuguese colonial government, which arrived in Makela in 1896, these trade houses understood the town's central location in the rubber trade. From that point on Makela was transformed from a regional market into one of the district's main commercial centres. From Makela rubber was easily transported to Noki and then shipped off to various ports in Europe.

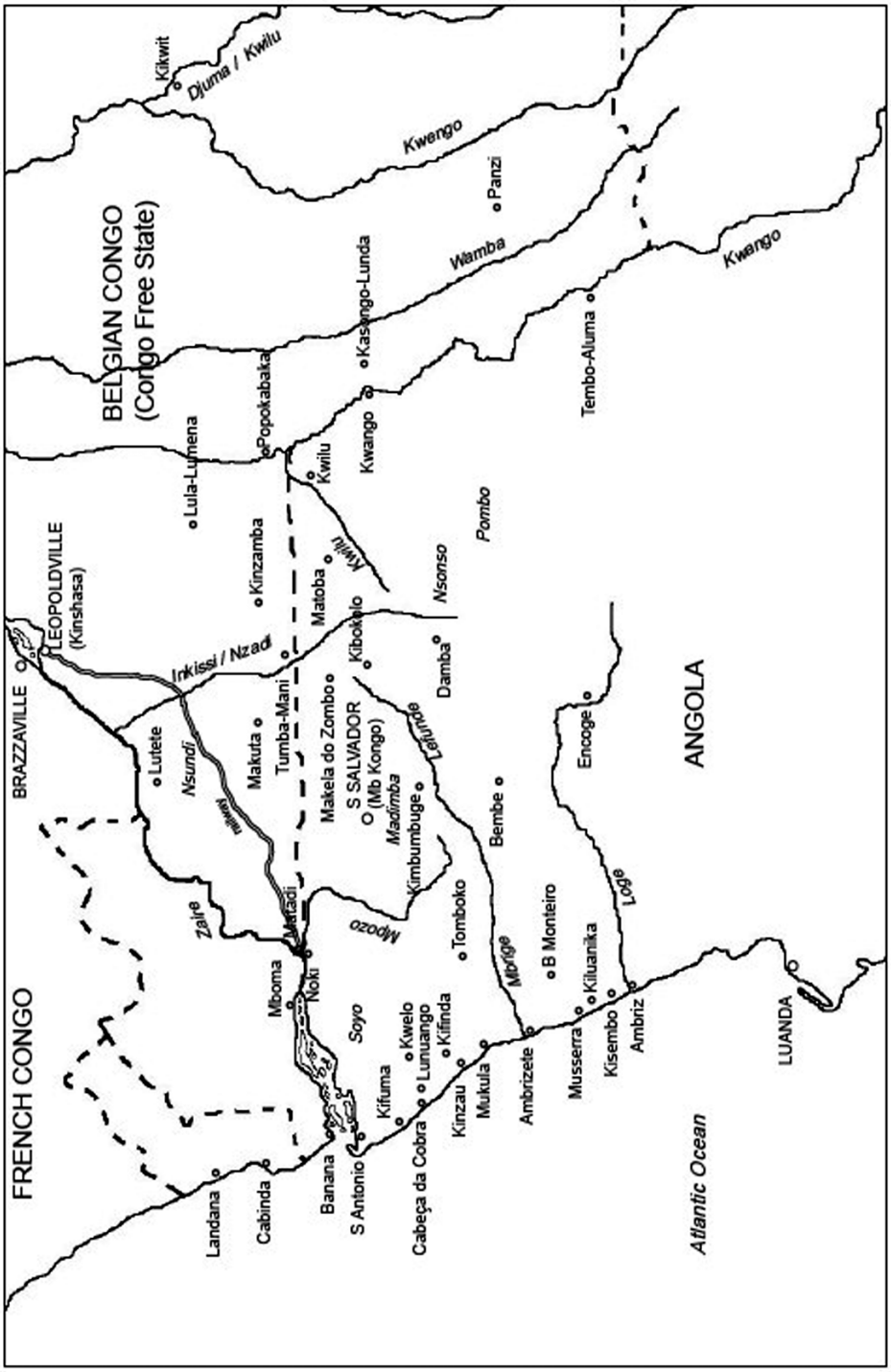
Under the conditions of free trade nominally existent in the Congo region, fluctuations in the countrywide production and export of rubber generally followed similar movements of world market prices for rubber.[7] But there were also a number of local factors affecting the ups and downs of the rubber economy in northern Angola.[8] As a result of the exhaustion of rubber supplies, the rubber production zones gradually moved deeper into the Congo interior.[9] This meant that an increasing quantity of rubber exported through the ports of the Portuguese Congo district was tapped across the Kwango, that is, in Free State territory. As long as the Congo Free State left the frontier unoccupied, rubber was easily transported to the factories in Makela. However, through a series of military explorations in the Kwango region between 1889 and 1894 the frontier zone was dotted with military posts set up to impede the flow of rubber into Angola. By this time the Free State had embarked on a project to monopolise the trade of rubber and ivory in many parts of its territory. To many contemporary observers the methods of appropriation seemed illegitimate and illegal, even though in the case of the Kwango the Free State had a right, which was internationally recognised, to impose export duties on the trade. Nevertheless, because government control was always limited and prices paid in northern Angola were generally higher than those offered in the Free State, the Makela-based merchants still managed to attract a significant amount of rubber from across the border. Evidence below shows, indeed, that a veritably large quantity of the rubber exported from the Congo district originated from the Free State's Kwango district.

6 This was noticed, for example, in July 1885 by Richard Büttner, one of a number of German scientists exploring the Congo in the 1880s. See Heintze 1999: 188-189; also Birmingham 1981: 67.

7 Harms 1975: 76.

8 Here I exclude the impact of the Léopoldville-Matadi Railway and the encroachment of European trade houses on trade networks in the Congo interior. For these influences see Vos 2005, ch. 5.

9 AA, 224/158, Confidentiel. Note sur le commerce de la Province d'Angola. Lisbonne, novembre 1900.



Northern Angola, c. 1910

II

Following the Berlin Conference of 1885, the Congo Free State, like the Angolan Congo district, formed part of the Congo Free Trade Zone. Within this zone free trade with Africans was guaranteed for merchants of all nations while the affected colonial governments, including King Leopold of Belgium, were prohibited from creating trade monopolies or granting other commercial privileges.

During a phase known as the "liberal period", which lasted from 1885 to 1891, the Free State generally played by the rules laid out in Berlin, making little effort to impede the free trade carried on between Africans and Europeans (although occasional concessions were granted). In this period private enterprise largely determined the form and pace of economic development in the Congo.[10] From 1891 onward, however, the Free State government embarked on a policy that was to replace private enterprise by a system of state monopoly. King Leopold's strategy to turn the Congo Free State into a state-owned economic domain was embodied in the régime domanial, the logic of which has been aptly described by Jean Stengers:

> The state had been declared proprietor of all vacant land, which would henceforth constitute its domain. Vacant land, it was decreed, consisted of all the land which was neither occupied nor being exploited by the natives. It happened that almost everywhere in the country the two most remunerative wild products, ivory and wild rubber, came from lands decreed vacant and so might be regarded as products of the state's domain, to be collected by the state alone. As a consequence of this system, a trader might not buy ivory or wild rubber from the Africans without becoming receiver of stolen goods – stolen, in effect, from the state.[11]

Although this regime only fully developed after 1891, the basis was already laid in the early years of the Congo Free State.[12] In 1885 all "vacant land" was declared state property, while by two decrees in 1889 both elephant hunting and the production of rubber that was not in African hands were put under government authority. A first attempt by the government to actively get hold of rubber was made in 1890, when Leopold ordered the creation of military posts throughout the Congo State. They had to pressure Africans into rubber production and force collectors to sell their rubber at these posts for 50 cents per kg. Subsequent legislation centred predominantly on the exploitation of Upper Congo, where the presence of trade factories had so far been limited and most of the land could thus be declared unexploited. In these parts of the Free State Leopold's government first forbid all trade in produce without government concession. By a secret decree of 1891, moreover, Leopold sealed off the whole

[10] Waltz 1917, I: 5-6, 13-9.
[11] Stengers 1969, I: 265. See also Morel 1904: 78-85.
[12] Jean-Luc Vellut (1984: 3-4, 675) has even traced its roots back to the days of the International African Association.

Upper Congo for private enterprise. The ensuing exploitation of the forest regions of the Upper Congo by two major concession companies (Anversoise and ABIR) and Leopold's own crown domain is a relatively well known story.[13]

The history of rubber production in the southern parts of the Congo State is not so well known. In response to complaints of independent trade houses (most notably the Société Anonyme Belge and the Nieuwe Afrikaanse Handels-vennootschap) about the government's monopolising tendencies, Leopold was twice compelled, in 1892 and 1896, to decree certain parts of the Congo State open to free trade. On the first occasion the Kwango region, like the district of Lower Congo, was given the status of free trade zone, as it was recognised as an area where Africans had been extracting rubber before the creation of the Congo State. The second time, however, the regions bordering the Portuguese Congo district in the east and the north-east fell outside the newly demarcated free trade zone, which was at any rate significantly smaller than in 1892.[14]

The reasons for this modification must have lain in the fact that the state came to consider the Kwango region as a manageable source of wealth and a concession company was simultaneously created in that area. The Kwango district was more or less pacified with the occupation of Kasongo-Lunda in 1893. Shortly thereafter, a government delegation noticed that the district was rich in rubber and claimed that on one market every four days thirty tons were for sale. The rubber originating from this savannah region was predominantly of the bush type (*Landolphia Lunda*, or *caoutchouc des herbes*), which due to its particular production process was labelled as being of "secondary quality".[15] Bush rubber was slightly less valued than first-quality rubber of the creeper type (*caoutchouc des lianes*), although traders from Angola bought it at a relatively high price because of its rarity there.[16] At the time European trade houses bought the rubber for 0.86 francs per kilo, while it was sold in Europe for 4.5 francs. The costs of transport by caravan from the Kwango to Matadi were estimated at eight francs per thirty-five kilos (0.23 F/kg).[17]

It seems that until 1896 rubber from the Kwango region was only sold to traders from Angola, because in that year the Lunda type appeared for the first time on the Antwerp market.[18] In that same year a concessionary company had arrived in the Kwango district. In 1895 the Antwerp banker Alexis Mols had obtained a number of small land concessions from the Free State government,

13 See Waltz 1917: 12-6, 20-29, 39-48; Cattier 1906: 67-8; Harms 1975.
14 Waltz 1917: 30, 34-37, 48-50.
15 See Cardoso 1914: 148; Arquivo Histórico Militar (Lisbon), box 85, no. 17, Relatório, Cabinda 11-12-1914.
16 See Pedreira 1918a: 84; 1918b: 125.
17 AA, 260/294, Controleur des impôts sup. to Gouverneur Général, suite à no. 27, Boma 8-11-1904; *Portugal em Africa* 1896, 32: 346; Morel 1904: 95-96; Pimentel 1899: 439-442; Waltz 1917: 55-56, 210; Harms 1975: 75-76.
18 Plancquaert 1932: 146.

which he transferred to a stock corporation named the Comptoir Commercial Congolais (CCC). Although at first the concessions were projected in the Upper Congo, in 1896 they were assigned to the valley of the Wamba River. Here the company started with a small stretch of land and a promise on the part of the government that it would set up five military posts in the region to provide security. Soon the company complained, however, that government agents dispatched soldiers into its concession to force people to sell rubber at the state posts. The CCC received a new and enlarged concession in 1898, for which it was to pay the state 30% of the rubber it collected. In 1905 the company significantly extended its operations by leasing eight military posts in the southern part of Kwango district, that is, right next to the Portuguese Congo district. Although the company only had a right to trade in this area and was not allowed to form a monopoly, the Free State government promised it would not allow other traders to buy rubber in the area. In addition, from the Société Bruxelloise the company sub-leased the government posts of Kinzamba and Mwene-Dinga as well as another post on the Kwango River's east bank (at Mwene-Sita). By that time, in short, the CCC was in control of basically all rubber producing areas adjacent to the Portuguese Congo district.

Morel, the great anti-Leopold campaigner, once referred to the CCC as monopolising the rubber trade in the Kwango region. The people from this region used to sell their produce to traders from Angola, he argued, but that was,

> before the Congo State was paramount in the land; the days when the native could *sell* his produce on legitimate commercial lines; the days when the native either bartered his rubber with other native traders from Portuguese territory […] or direct with European merchants established in Portuguese territory […] the rubber which used to *belong* to the native, and which the native *sold* is now the *property* of the Kwango Trust, for which the native is expected to collect it […][19]

We must remember that the operations of the corporation did not cover the full Kwango district until 1905. At places where the CCC was not active, however, the Free State government usually tried to monopolise rubber production. The legal basis for this policy lay in the regime of compulsory production and labour that was imposed on all Congo populations in 1891. Under this regime every village was forced to generate certain amounts of specified produce and to supply the government with porters and soldiers.[20] Thus, in the whole Kwango area that surrounded the Portuguese Congo district, Africans were finally prohibited to sell rubber to agents other than those licensed by the Free State. Either their rubber was claimed by the CCC, or they were forced to produce to boost government revenue. Parallels of these developments could be seen in the Lower Congo districts, which covered the

[19] Morel 1904: 95-96.
[20] Waltz 1917: 52-54; Slade 1962: 177-178; Morel 1904: 189.

part of the Congo State south-west of Stanley-Pool, or the area right above the Angolan Congo district. Although bush rubber was growing in this region, the produce of which was called "Bas-Congo", no rubber tax was imposed until 1903.[21] In certain parts, however, the State subjected the people to a regime of compulsory groundnut production. After 1903 free trade in this region was further undermined when "tax-collectors" were sent out to obtain rubber by force.[22]

It should be stressed that the Free State was not only, or had not always been, preoccupied with the exploitation of rubber in the Kwango and Lower Congo districts. Along its frontier with Angola it had the right, according to the Berlin Conference, to levy duties on produce leaving the country. In fact, until 1896, when neither the CCC nor the government had started collecting rubber in the frontier zone, the Congo administration focussed first of all on taxing the trade flowing across the Angolan border. Only in this context can we understand why the governor-general told the commissioner of the Kwango district that "it is in our interest to favour and even to stimulate these transactions."[23] More trade meant higher tax revenues. But this view was soon replaced by the idea of a state monopoly.

III

Despite the Congo State's ferocious attempt to control the production and trade of rubber in its territory, a significant amount continued to be sold to traders from northern Angola. Rubber kept appearing freely on African markets in the south-western part of Congo, from where it made its way along established caravan routes to Makela do Zombo. The main reason why African traders preferred to sell rubber in the Portuguese Congo was that Free State agents always paid below the market price. As one Portuguese observer put it, "selling here for the price he agrees on, this he prefers to committing himself, in the Free State, to hand over [the rubber] for the price officially established."[24] In 1904, in Angola, 600 *reis* was paid for a kilo of bush rubber and 700 for a kilo of the creeper type. These prices corresponded to respectively 3.33 and 3.89 Congo francs. At the time the Free State only paid 0.70 francs for a kilo of *caoutchouc des herbes*.[25]

21 Goffart 1908: 320-321.
22 Morel 1904: 229-234.
23 AA, 259/293 VIII, Gouverneur Général to Commissaire de district, Boma 24-4-1896.
24 Castro 1903: 84.
25 AA, 260/294, Controleur des impôts sup. to Gouverneur Général, suite à no. 27, Boma 8-11-1904.

"Fraud is in favour," a government report from 1904 said, "and is practised in nearly the whole Kwango district."[26] The Wamba River roughly separated the trade flowing from the Kwango district to Makela do Zombo from that pouring through the Lunda frontier into the eastern part of northern Angola. Within the region west of the Wamba, most of the commercial movement took place in the area north of the town of Panzi. The sparsely populated area south of Panzi was allegedly less exploited by traders from Angola, even though an important trade route between Luanda and the Kasai was crossing this region near Tembo Aluma.[27]

Both the 1904 report and a number of official statements from 1907 and 1908 show that the goods most in demand on the Congolese rubber markets were different types of cloth, cotton blankets, rifles and flintlocks, gunpowder, salt and beads of various shapes and colours.[28] This list roughly corresponds to the list of goods that a Portuguese official recorded as the most procured by rubber traders.[29] Beads were called *nzimbu-a-mbudi*, which later became a term for European money, too. They should be distinguished from the *nzime-mbuli*, sea shells that were also imported from Angola and, like beads, served as currency.[30] Around 1907 rifles possibly became the most valued import commodity. A number of reports from that year mentioned Zombo merchants from Angola travelling up to Popokabaka where they were able to buy rubber with nothing but guns.[31] This extraordinary demand for guns and ammunition was probably caused by an earlier ban on these imports in the Congo Free State. Since the trade in these commodities continued as usual in Angola, this prohibition could only have given a new impulse to the cross-border rubber traffic.[32]

The most detailed information provided by Free State sources was related to the trade in the regions surrounding Kiloango and Popokabaka, roughly corresponding to the area northeast of Makela. To penetrate this region the factories in Makela usually employed African caravan leaders (*capitas de négoce* in the local vernacular), who set out with European merchandise to specific regional markets to purchase rubber. The 1904 report mentioned two important markets near Lula-Lumena, another one close to the frontier in

[26] AA, 260/294, Controleur des impôts sup. to Gouverneur Général, no. 27, Report on the Kwango district, Kinzamba 10-10-1904. The following description of the Kwango-Makela trade is largely based on this report.

[27] AA, 259/293, VIII, various documents. On the demography below the Panzi line, see also the remarks of Capello and Ivens cited in Plancquaert 1932: 165.

[28] AA, 260/294, various documents.

[29] Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, box 3408, Residência to Secretaria do Governo do Districto, no. 308, S Salvador 4-7-1900; Leal 1914-1915: 71.

[30] Dartevelle 1953: 160-173.

[31] AA, 209/65.

[32] In the Portuguese Congo district the sale of arms became illegal in August 1910. The sale of both alcohol and gunpowder became illegal in June and July 1913. See Cardoso 1914: 28.

Kinzamba (Pangala-Lele), and a fourth in Pangala-Matoba in the northeast corner of Portuguese Congo district. Many caravans from Makela passed the Free State frontier between Kiloango and Tumba-Mani.[33] East of Makela, but still on the Portuguese side of the Kwango, traders furthermore concentrated in places such as Kimbuku and Kitzanzi, the village of the Yaka chief Kianvo Kia Nzadi.[34] Alternatively, the Makela factories entrusted their merchandise to chiefs in the frontier zone, who in turn sent out their men to local rubber markets or received Zombo traders in their villages. Many Yaka villages along the Kwango were involved in such transactions. Some of the European factories also established collection posts in the Free State. In 1903, for example, an African agent of a Makela house was seen setting up a trade post in Kindongo, in the Kinzamba area.[35] In 1899 small stations were established west of Popokabaka, which had, in the words of the local district governor, "no other reason for existing than that of trading with the fraudeurs that exploit part of our territory."[36] Elsewhere *capitas* went directly to the production areas, thus bypassing the rubber markets and buying straight from the collectors. Finally, the country was also full of individual merchants operating on behalf of a boss or trading on their own account.

The 1904 report estimated that from the Kwango region an annual total of 900 tons of rubber was "illegally" transported to Angola: 650 tons to Noki (via Makela or Saõ Salvador) and 250 to Luanda. According to the manager of a Portuguese firm in Kiloango, the twenty-two factories established in Makela at the time each collected on average two tons of bush rubber per month, which equals a total of 528 tons per year. In 1905, on the other hand, it was estimated that annually about 600 tons of rubber passed the Kwango frontier.[37] On the basis of the 1904 calculation, this would amount to roughly 430 tons for Noki and 170 for Luanda. Considering that from 1900 to 1906 rubber exports from the Congo district were fluctuating between about 400 and 500 tons per year, with Ambrizete on average taking a share of 10%, this seems to be a reasonable estimate. According to another Portuguese source, at around 1903 ten-thousand rubber cargoes of 35 kg were dispatched each year from Makela, which amounts to a total of 350,000 kg. In addition, a small amount of rubber still reached Noki via independent African traders.[38] Thus we can say that in this period Noki received on average about 400 tons of rubber per year and the

33 AA, 260/294, Extrait d'un rapport du contrôleur suppléant des impôts, 7-12-1907, annexé à la lettre du Gouverneur Général, no. 38, 28-12-1907.

34 AA, 260/294, Résumé de la lettre du Gouverneur Général, 2-10-1908; ibid., Gouverneur Général to Secrétaire d'État, nr. 890, Boma 12-11-1907.

35 AA, 260/294, Vice-Gouverneur Général to Secrétaire d'État, no. 607, Boma 9-5-1904.

36 AA, 259/293, VIII, Commissaire de district to Gouverneur Général, no. 267/G, Popokabaka 22-11-1899.

37 AA, 260/294, Gouverneur Général to Secrétaire d'État, no. 296, Boma 14-7-05.

38 Castro 1903: 92-93.

coastal ports about 50 tons. The Free State report furthermore stated that a single porter made up to four journeys per year and carried at most 20 kg of rubber at a time (which is plausible, but then porters probably carried another 15 kg of trade ware on their own account).[39] This would mean that every year more than 5,000 porters were active in the rubber trade between the Free State and the Portuguese Congo.

IV

The root of the "illicit" Kwango trade lay in the Free State's creation of a trading monopoly and the concomitant low rewards it offered for collecting rubber. As a strategy to push the Angolan *capitas* out of the market, the 1904 report recommended that the government purchase rubber in the production zones for goods that in terms of both quality and quantity would compete with those offered by the traders from Makela. Whether the Free State was actually going to pay equal prices for rubber is doubtful. Another question is whether the State succeeded in driving the Zombo traders out of the Kwango district at all. At first glance, it seems they did. In 1907 rubber exports from the Portuguese Congo district had dropped to 200 tons from 500 in the previous year. They would fluctuate around 300 tons annually until 1913. However, as indicated earlier, the export of rubber was already in structural decline since 1900. It is moreover hard to assess the significance of these export numbers in relation to the Free State without precise figures of rubber production in the Kwango district. But if the declining rubber trade in the Portuguese Congo district was caused by measures taken by the Free State government, these measures were almost certainly related to stricter border control and not to fair competition.[40]

Border patrol had been the Congo State's regular policy to curtail the Angolan trade. Military expeditions carried out along the Kwango River between 1889 and 1894 had left the frontier dotted with military posts (most notably in Popokabaka, Kasongo-Lunda and the François-Joseph Falls) that were used to control the flow of rubber into Portuguese Congo.[41] In April 1900 the Angolan governor-general informed his Belgian colleague in Boma that "complaints have been formed by the frontier villages to the military commander of Makela do Zombo against the humiliations and deprivations […] by the soldiers of [the Congo Free State]; these attack the caravans going to or coming from the Kwango; they take the goods and arrest the porters."[42] A

[39] See Rouvre 1880: 310; Margarido 1978: 240, 389-390.

[40] In 1915, however, rubber was traded from the Portuguese Congo to Belgian Congo for fabrics and salt. See Pedreira, 1918a: 91.

[41] Plancquaert 1932: 127-144; Cornevin 1966: 139; Flament *et al.* 1952: 155-164.

[42] AA, 259/293, VIII, GG, no. 289, Luanda 27-4-1900; ibid., Gouverneur Général, Boma 4-6-1900.

month earlier the people of Mbanza Mbuzu had blockaded Makela to protest against the obstruction of their trade by Free State soldiers stationed in Tumba-Mani. Located southeast of Makela, Mbuzu was, like many other Zombo districts, densely populated. It was composed of thirty-six towns with a total population of about 5,000, of which the male element was for a large part employed in the caravan trade.[43] Already in 1885 a German explorer had remembered Mbuzu for its important market.[44] On the road between Makela and Lula-Lumena Congolese soldiers had killed seven men from Mbuzu and another five from the Matoba region. Blame was put on the chief of Makela and the local Portuguese authority, who seemed incapable of safeguarding the trade routes to the Kwango. An alliance of several Zombo populations, including Matoba and Kibokolo, therefore cut off all connections between Makela and the Kwango. The protesters demanded from the Zombo capital not only a guarantee it would secure free trade to the Kwango but also military support for an assault on Tumba-Mani. Until the situation with the Bula Matari was resolved, all trade and porter services for the Makela factories were prohibited. This embargo was effectively enforced by the power of "witchcraft". Thus eighty cargoes of the house of Lemos & Irmão destined to the Kwango got stranded in Makela, as the recruited porters refused to leave fearing the malign influence of Mbuzu witchdoctors. The conflict was resolved without a fight, but the Portuguese authorities realised they had to extend their presence in the eastern part of the Congo district to avoid future embarrassment.[45] A year later, the government of Angola established a military post near the Kwango River.

Conclusion

In the 1880s rubber became the most important export commodity from northern Angola. The larger part of the rubber then exported from the Portuguese Congo district originated from markets east of the Kwango River. Zombo communities dominated the trade between these rubber markets and the export outlets in northern Angola, although their business was critically dependent on the support of Yaka intermediaries. The Free State was, since its inception, a key factor in the development of the rubber trade in this region. Its government apparatus penetrated this part of the African interior earlier and

43 *Missionary Herald of the Baptist Missionary Society* 1899: 317; Lewis 1930: 176-177.

44 See Heintze 1999: 188.

45 Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, box 1755, 11.2.13; Arquivo Histórico Diplomático (Lisbon), 3º Piso, M25, A9, Governador-geral de Angola to Ministério e Secretário d'Estado dos Negócios da Marinha e Ultrmar, Luanda 27-4-1900; Baptist Missionary Society archives (Angus Library, Oxford), A/64, Letter book (1899-1911), Kibokolo 23-4-1900; Logbook "Comber Memorial Station", Kibokolo 11-3-1900; A/99, Leitão to Lewis, Zombo 30-3-1900; Annual Report 1901, 90.

more effectively than the Portuguese administration. As part of its attempt to monopolise the production and trade of rubber within its domain, the State vehemently tried to curtail the export of rubber to markets in northern Angola. This naturally affected the Zombo merchants and their Yaka allies who had thus far controlled most of the trade. But since prices for rubber were significantly higher in Angola than in the Congo Free State, Zombo and Yaka traders continued their business according to pre-colonial patterns as much and as long as they could.

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AS VIAS DE COMUNICAÇÃO E MEIOS DE TRANSPORTE COMO FACTORES DE GLOBALIZAÇÃO, DE ESTABILIDADE POLÍTICA E DE TRANSFORMAÇÃO ECONÓMICA E SOCIAL

O caso do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela (Benguela) (1889-1950)

Emmanuel Esteves

I. As Vias de Comunicação e Meios de Transporte como Factores de Globalização, de Estabilidade Política e de Transformação Económica e Social

Introdução

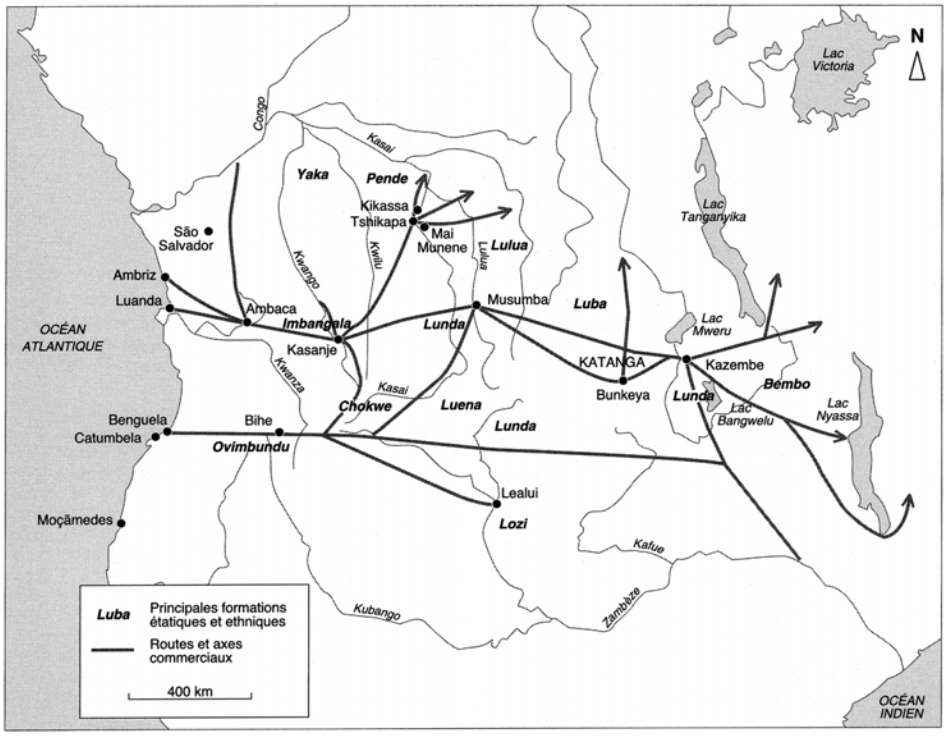
O nosso estudo é consagrado a uma região conhecida por Zona de Influência do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela[1] (CFB). O trabalho divide-se em duas partes: o CFB como factor da globalização, da estabilidade política e da transformação económica e social; na segunda parte, as vias de comunicação e meios de transporte vistos pelo nativo.

A região à qual consagramos este estudo cobre as actuais províncias de Bengela, Wambu, Viye, Moxiku e Kwandu Kuvangu.[2] Estimava-se, na época, que estas províncias tinham uma superfície aproximadamente de 123750 km2.

Desde os tempos remotos, esta região foi sempre caracterizada por uma ramificação da rede das vias de comunicação em direcção às regiões da África Central, pela diversidade de meios de transporte, pela convergência de pessoas e pela intensa actividade comercial. Negros, oriundos de outras regiões de Angola (Mbaka-Ambaca-Pungu a Ndongo, Kakonda, Luanda, Bengela, etc.), Europeus (de Portugal continental e ilhas dos Açores, Ingleses),pessoas vindas do Brasil, Estados Unidos da América, etc. encontraram um terreno favorável para o negócio, situação favorecida pelo próprio nativo por ser um verdadeiro negociante nato, integrando, nas actividades comerciais, outros sertanejos ou negociantes.

[1] Bengela (Benguela): os nomes ou palavras africanos contidos neste texto estão escritos como o locutor autóctone fala e segundo os alfabetos das línguas nacionais de Angola. Um nome ou uma palavra é uma realidade linguística e etnológica. Como realidade linguística, contém uma mensagem verbal cujos signos são os da língua quotidiana. Como realidade etnológica, é uma expressão cultural, é um depósito de informações sobre as actividades económicas e socio-culturais e sobre o meio ambiente e físico. Sendo assim, o nome deve ser bem escrito segundo as regras fonológicas da linguística africana e segundo as regras da língua na qual se insere (Vatomene Kukanda).

[2] A chegada do caminho-de-ferro do Namibe ao Menonge (Serpa Pinto) subtraiu ao CFB uma grande parte da sua zona de influência.



A rede luso-africana (in M’Bokolo 1992)

I.1. As Vias de Comunicação e Meios de Transporte como Factores de Globalização

Nesta região de Angola, como nas outras regiões da África Central e Austral, existiam várias vias de comunicação e meios de transporte que se foram multiplicando e melhorando à medida que as actividades comerciais foram crescendo e alargando e à medida que a conjuntura político-estratégica o permitia. Podemos identificar seis tipos de vias de comunicação – rios, trilhos, estradas carreteiras, telegrafia sem fio ou linhas telegráficas, vias férreas e estradas.

Por natureza correm, nesta região, numerosos cursos de águas, como o Mbalombo, Katombela, Koporolo, Kavaku, Kuvale, Keve, Kuvangu, Kwanza, Kunene, Kwandu, Zambeze, Kasayi, etc. No entanto, poucos deles são navegáveis ao longo de todo o seu curso.

Os trilhos eram as vias de comunicação tradicionais que se cruzavam entre si e ligavam as aglomerações populacionais e mercados/ou sítios de permuta. No período em estudo, a rede de trilhos vinda das costas atlântica (Ambriz, Luanda, Bengela) e índica (Tete, Zanzibar, etc.) que penetrava nas extensas regiões da África Central e Meridional (Madeira Santos 1998: 333; 1988: 225 e sg.; Capelo e Ivens 1998, I: 212 e sg.; Nowell 1982), pondo em contacto entre si os diferentes povos da Lunda, Bandundu, Kasayi, Katanga, Barotze, etc. era já bem conhecida. Entre as várias vias de acesso para o interior, a de Bengela para o Viye era a mais importante, por ser a via de penetração mais extensa, dispersa e activa (Madeira Santos 1998: 442), por onde as caravanas do Viye atingiam o Alto Zambeze nas terras do Lovale, na actual província do Moxiku.

Durante muitos anos, os trilhos mantiveram o monopólio de serem as únicas vias de transacções, ligando o interior à costa atlântica. Na conjuntura económica e política da África Austral – a guerra dos Bóeres com os Ingleses – surgiram as estradas carreteiras com os carros bóeres.

A entrada dos Bóeres da África do Sul em Angola, marcou uma nova era na história do transporte. Os bóeres introduziram um elemento mais evoluído tanto na via de comunicação como no transporte: a estrada carreteira e o carro de tracção animal. Começaram a explorar com os seus carros a indústria do transporte para o litoral, tentado eliminar o carregador "indígena" (Hauenstein 1967: 14). No período compreendido entre 1872 e 1896, a sede do distrito de Bengela ficou ligada por estradas carreteiras às regiões do interior (Ndombe Grande da Kizamba, Katombela, Kakonda e Moxiku) cujo preço da travessia de alguns rios era de 50 reis por carga e pessoa. Recordemos que as estradas carreteiras desempenham um papel determinante tanto no domínio económico como no domínio militar. São as campanhas de ocupação estrangeira que aceleram a sua abertura.

Nas duas vias de comunicação acima referenciadas, trilho e estrada carreteira, circulavam o carregador e o carro bóer. Do litoral para o interior e

vice versa, caravanas de carregadores, negociantes e carros bóeres em filas indianas subiam as montanhas, entravam nas matas, atravessavam os rios e ribeiros até às regiões afastadas do interior. Eram os únicos meios de transporte que existiam. Em todas as actividades, o meio de transporte mais vulgar era o transporte a ombro. Este, que todos porfiavam em obter, foi convertido e instituído em meio de transporte público; persistira e competira ainda durante muito tempo. Em muitas regiões, os autóctones mochileiros treinados trotavam como se fossem cavalos. Durante séculos, o homem foi o grande veículo de tráfego de mercadorias e de passageiros. O homem era o verdadeiro técnico de transporte; era o único meio de comunicação regular entre a costa ocidental e o sertão.

Se o trilho se adaptava ao carregador, a estrada carreteira adaptava-se ao carro de tracção conhecido por carro de tipo bóer. Este foi considerado como o meio de transporte mais evoluído e económico sobrepondo-se ao do carregador. Era um carro de 4 rodas, puxado por numerosas juntas de bois, a que davam o nome de "spanas" (Lopes Galvão 1950: 15). Os bóeres deslocavam-se em comboios de carros puxados por bois, sistema que, graças ao clima e à configuração do terreno, facilitou as suas deslocações até aos confins de Angola (Madeira Santos 1988: 144). No início, foram os únicos a explorar a indústria do transporte para o litoral (*ibid.*). Foram durante muito tempo as suas únicas indústrias, mas os excessos que cometeram, em matéria de preços, levaram muitos colonos a aprender ou a industriar autóctones na sua construção e manejo, acabando por se generalizar o sistema (Henrique Galvão, 1929: 100) e se aperfeiçoar.

O tipo de vias de comunicação e os meios de transporte, atrás referenciados, apresentavam inconvenientes e punham em risco todos que se aventuravam nas regiões do interior. As dificuldades eram tantas que tornavam o trabalho penoso e perigoso. As plantas e arbustos de espécies com espinhos e folhas cortantes, as doenças e fome que flagelavam homens e animais, os animais ferozes, a falta de água (nos primeiros 80 ou 100 km a partir do litoral), os ataques e roubo às comitivas do comércio, o peso da carga, o calor, o acidentado dos terrenos, etc. foram os maiores obstáculos que os sertanejos e empregados em serviços de transporte de cargas deviam enfrentar nas longas caminhadas aos confins das regiões do interior (Parreira 1990: 81).

O trilho e a estrada carreteira e os meios de transporte neles aplicados eram morosos e menos económicos; assim, foram considerados incapazes de assegurar o escoamento do volume de mercadorias (borracha cada vez mais em crescimento entre Bengela e Katombela). No porto de Bengela, todas as mercadorias transaccionadas pelo Katombela eram sujeitas a inúmeras baldeações. Essa situação exigia cada vez mais um outro tipo de via de comunicação mais económico, moderno e rápido. Foi nesta óptica que nasceu a ideia de ligar as duas povoações por uma via férrea. O Centro de Angola entrava na era da máquina a vapor com a construção do caminho-de-ferro de

Katombela (1889-1893), com a projecção do caminho-de-ferro do Kakonda (1894) e, por fim, com a construção e exploração do CFB (1903-1928).

É de recordar que as informações dos sertanejos portugueses que percorreram as regiões de Leste e Sul de África permitiram a Portugal ter ideias mais ou menos exactas sobre as possibilidades económicas das mesmas regiões e facilitaram as directrizes das linhas férreas. Assim, o Governo português concebeu um caminho-de-ferro que partiria do Olupito para Kakonda e completar-se-ia com três ramais: o primeiro ramal partiria de Kakonda para atingir o Kuvangu e daí prosseguiria até à fronteira de Barotze (Coelho 1899: 313); o segundo ramal partiria de Kakonda ao Viye e prosseguiria até Garanganze (Serão 1900: 220) seguindo os trilhos das caravanas e o terceiro ramal seria o troço de Kakonda a Moçâmedes. A directriz do caminho-de-ferro de Kakonda tendia a aproximar-se, o mais possível, tanto das ricas regiões em minérios e produtos naturais como das rotas com intensas actividades comerciais. Esta directriz foi também a resposta encontrada pela então permanente preocupação dos Portugueses nos Séculos XVII e XVIII de encontrar uma óptima via de acesso às regiões mais ricas da além fronteira leste de Angola, como Garanganze, Monomotapa, Chicova, Butwa (Madeira Santos 1988: 140-141 e 153).

Através da construção do caminho-de-ferro de Kakonda, o Governo português pretendia pôr à disposição dessa região uma via que seria uma potente alavanca para o desenvolvimento da região (Madeira Santos, *ibid*.). Tratava-se de conquistar os mercados das regiões mais ricas e, comercialmente, mais importantes não só de Angola mas também do Garanganze e Barotze. Estas eram as regiões de onde provinha a maior quantidade de borracha que abastecia os mercados de Bengela e Katombela, como era daí também, que derivava para o Estado Independente do Congo a quantidade do produto, que levou à sua exportação pelos portos do Estado Livre do Congo. Os concessionários, Henrique de Lima e Cunha e Braz Faustino da Motta recusaram as condições impostas pelo Estado português e este, por sua vez, não conseguiu arrecadar os fundos calculados com base numa sobretaxa sobre a borracha, o álcool, o algodão, etc. para concretizar o projecto de construção do caminho-de-ferro de Kakonda.

No entanto, a descoberta das minas de cobre no Katanga (1901) e o seu escoamento pelo porto do Olupito deram lugar à assinatura do contrato, a 28 de Novembro de 1902, entre o Governo português e a Tanganyika Concessions Company Limited. Os trabalhos de construção, iniciados em 1903, só foram concluídos em 1928 com financiamento totalmente inglês e com mão-de-obra recrutada em vários países de África (Angola, Libéria, Serra Leoa, Senegal, etc.), da Europa (Portugal, Itália, Inglaterra, etc.) e da Ásia (Índia: coolies). Concluída a construção do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela, o Planalto Central e Sul de Angola entraram num verdadeiro movimento (Relatórios do CFB, 1904-1929).

É de realçar que, além dos trilhos, estradas carreteiras e linhas-férreas, atrás referidos, existiam outros meios de comunicação, tais como a telegrafia sem fio, as linhas telegráficas e os cabos submarinos[3] que não teriam o mesmo impacto que as vias terrestres na vida económica e social dos autóctones. Contudo tiveram uma importância capital na comunicação, por um lado, entre África e a Europa e por outro lado, entre as diferentes regiões da África central e austral.

Recordemos que os primeiros cabos de comunicação submarinos foram cabos destinados ao telégrafo, um século depois apareceram os cabos destinados às linhas telefónicas e finalmente existem nos nossos dias os cabos permitindo transportar os dados numéricos.[4]

Em Angola, o cabo submarino teria aparecido no último quartel do século XIX, a partir da África do Sul. Foi em 1889 que a CS Scotia lançou os cabos telegráficos pela costa atlântica africana. Com os cabos telegráficos da West Africana Telegraph Company na cidade do Cabo, esta cidade ficou ligada a Moçâmedes (Namíbe). A IRGP estendeu o cabo de Moçâmedes a Bengela e a Luanda.[5] Para a intensificação da comunicação entre as duas colónias vizinhas, foi lançado, um cabo telefónico submarino entre as duas margens do rio Zaire/Congo cujo estudo de reconhecimento hidrográfico tinha sido feito em 1887.[6]

Durante muitos anos, a comunicação entre o Estado Independente do Congo e Bélgica e outros países africanos (Serra Leoa, Senegal, Ilhas de Canárias, etc. estava assegurada pelo cabo submarino de Luanda. Publicamos um extracto da carta do governador geral do Estado independente do Congo, não para julgar as falhas que se verificaram, mas apenas para mostrar a importância do cabo submarino de Luanda na comunicação.

> […] le capitaine du vapeur "Hirondelle", envoyé spécialement à Saint Paul de Loanda pour y faire la remise d'un courrier urgent, remit le lundi, 2 avril courant, à 11 heures du matin, à M. Seregado, chef de la douane qui se présenta à bord du bateau, un pli contenant notamment quatre télégrammes, avec la mention "Très urgent", à transmettre respectivement aux Messieurs les Gouverneurs Généraux de Sierra Leone, du Sénégal, des Iles Canaries et à Son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères d'Espagne, à Madrid.

[3] Wikipédia, enciclopédie libre, no artigo "*Câble de comunication sous-marin*" define o cabo submarino: "Um câble de communication sous-marin est un câble de communication qui est posé sur les fonds marins pour permettre à des pays séparés par la mer de communiquer". (fr.wikipedia.org/wikiC%C3%A2ble de communication sous-marin.

[4] fr.wikipedia.org/wikiC%C3%A2ble de communication sous-marin.

[5] cpires.com/Benguela.escola.

[6] Ofício nº 34 de 18 de Fevereiro de 1902 de Capitania dos Portos de Angola para Secretário geral do governo de Angola. In cx. 4804, Processo nº 64/38, Estabelecimento do telegrafo entre Ponta Padrão e o Território do Estado Independente, A.H.A.

> J'ai reçu récemment une communication télégraphique de M. le Gouverneur Général du Sénégal, me faisant connaître que le télégramme qui lui était adressé ne lui était arrivé que le 5 avril.
>
> Il résulte de renseignement provenant de la même source que ce télégramme très urgent n'aurait été remis au bureau télégraphique que le 5 avril, jour de sa réception à Dakar et que, par conséquent, trois jours se seraient écoulés entre sa remise à M. le chef de la douane précité et son dépôt au bureau télégraphique. […]
>
> Votre excellence apréciera d'autant plus le dommage causé par le retard apporté dans la transmission des communications télégraphiques en question qu'elles avaient pour objet une demande d'arrestation provisoire, en attendant l'accomplissement des formalités régulières de l'extradition, d'une personne qui se trouvait sous le coup de poursuites judiciaires et qui était parvenue à s'embarquer sur le navire belge "Anversville", parti de Boma en destination d'Anvers.
>
> Je serais très obligé à votre Excellence de bien vouloir rechercher à qui incombe la responsabilité de ce retard qui aura peut-être pour conséquence fâcheuse de soustraire un prévenu à l'action de la justice. (Assinatura ilisível, Gouverneur Général, Boma, 19 de Avril 1906).[7]

Recordemos também que Luanda não era o único ponto de comunicação entre Angola e o Estado independente do Congo. Havia outras estações de comunicações telegráficas como Ponta do Padrão, Lumango (S. António do Zaire), etc.

Em Angola, vários trabalhos de construção das linhas telegráficas foram realizados para ligar as capitais provinciais e os postos administrativos do interior. Angola estava também ligada ao vizinho Congo pela telegrafia sem fio. Paul de Bremaecker, chefe da Missão no Congo, enviou o seguinte telegrama: "Succès complet. La communication est donc établie entre les deux postes de télégraphie sans fil, installés par notre compagnie à Banana et à Ambrizette."[8]

O *Mouvement Géographique*, retomando a notícia publicada pelo *Essor Economique* de 11 Dezembro de 1902, escreveu o seguinte:

> Une importante nouvelle nous arrive télégraphiquement du Congo. Banana et Ambrizette sont liés par télégraphie sans fil Marconi. Ambrizette étant relié par fil télégraphique à St. Paul, il en résultait que l'établissement de la ligne projetée équivalait à la possibilité de rattacher télégraphiquement Banana à Bruxelles. C'est aujourd'hui un fait accompli. La nouvelle est intéressante pour tous ceux qui sont en relations avec le Congo. Alors que précédemment les dépêches ne pouvaient être envoyées utilement que deux fois par mois, lors du passage du bateau allant de Banana à St. Paul ou San Thomé, aujourd'hui, grâce à la jonction nouvelle, on

[7] Lettre du Cabinet du Gouverneur Général de l'E.I.C. nº 2105 de 19 de avril de 1906. In cx. 4804 Governo Geral da Província de Angola, Secretaria Geral do Governo, 3ª secção, Processo nº 309/39. Estado Independente do Congo. Queixa sobre a demora na expedição de telegrammas, A.H.A.

[8] Dossier B. nº 363/7 Compagnie de Télégraphie sans Fil, sé Directeur Ravaille, administrateur sé Thys, Bruxelles, 6 déc.1902.

> pourra échanger journellement des télégrammes entre la Belgique et l'embouchure du Congo […].[9]

Entende-se por comunicação, tudo o que possa permitir ligar duas coisas, dois sítios e fazê-los comunicar. Neste caso, todas as vias de comunicação e meios de transporte atrás referidos são, por excelência, meios de comunicação que, a certo nível, aproximam os indivíduos de diferentes origens e os interesses das multinacionais.

Se aceitarmos a definição da globalização tal como Giddens (citado por Sousa Santos 2001: 31) a define como "a intensificação de relações sociais mundiais que unem localidades distantes de tal modo que os acontecimentos locais são condicionados por eventos que acontecem a muitas milhas de distância e vice-versa", neste caso a globalização não é um fenómeno novo. Ele tinha começado há séculos atrás em Angola, em geral, e no Planalto Central em particular, tendo-se intensificado com telegrafia sem fios, as linhas telegráficas e a construção do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela, transferindo os capitais para os "novos mundos". E se concordarmos com as ideias de Fröbel, Heinrichs e Kreye (citados por Sousa Santos 2001: 31) de que os traços principais da globalização são a economia dominada pelo sistema financeiro e pelo investimento à escala global; os processos de produção flexíveis e multilocais; os baixos custos de transporte, revolução nas tecnologias de informação e de comunicação; a desregulação das economias nacionais; a proeminência das agências financeiras multilaterais; etc, então o Planalto Central foi entrando lentamente, mas de uma maneira segura, no processo de globalização.

I.2. O Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela como Factor de Estabilidade Política

Através de um olhar interrogativo sobre as directrizes dos traçados das linhas férreas do Planalto Central e Sul de Angola, vêm-se as pretensões económicas, políticas e estratégicas de Portugal sobre a África Central. Percebe-se que a concepção do caminho-de-ferro de Kakonda e o contrato assinado entre o Governo português e a Tanganyika Concessions Company Limited, em Novembro de 1902, tinham sido ditados pela conjuntura económica, política e estratégica da África Central e Austral.

O Governo português teria tomado conhecimento dos conselhos do explorador Stanley que escreveu que "o futuro em África pertencerá à nação que primeiro aí construir linhas férreas de penetração"; e compreendido que, sendo o caminho-de-ferro o meio mais seguro, poderoso para penetrar, ocupar e proteger as suas possessões ultramarinas, era necessário conceber projectos para a sua construção. Assim, assinara um contrato com uma das mais importantes

[9] In *Essor Economique* de 11.12.1902.

companhias britânicas na África Central e Austral (a Tanganyika Concessions Company Limited) para a construção e exploração do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela no Planalto Central.

As regiões do Planalto Central e do Sul de Angola, quer no plano interno quer no plano externo, eram consideradas como regiões de instabilidade política. No plano internacional, as fricções políticas entre as potências coloniais eram permanentes (1898-1920). A questão das colónias constituía, na Europa, um dos mais importantes assuntos da política externa (Ramos 1994: 135) e os projectos de uma nova partilha da África central fizeram-se sentir periodicamente na diplomacia das duas potências coloniais (Alemanha e Inglaterra) na década de 90 do século XIX e antes da Primeira Guerra Mundial (1914-1918). Porque estas potências consideravam que Portugal não era capaz de desenvolver as suas possessões ultramarinas, assinaram um acordo secreto para dividir, entre si, Angola.

No plano interno, as populações autóctones revoltavam-se (Alamada 1951: 20) contra o açambarcamento do comércio e o controlo das rotas comerciais pelas autoridades militares portuguesas. A situação política nas regiões do Viye, Ombalundu, Wambu, Ngalangi, Moxiku e Lucazi passou de mal a pior, no período de 1890 a 1918. As autoridades militares portuguesas açambarcaram o comércio e pretendiam atacar também Ombalundu e Wambu para terem igualmente não só o controlo do comércio, mas também das rotas comerciais. Os Ovimbundu, senhores das rotas de acesso entre as terras da borracha no leste e na costa atlântica, viram-se ameaçados de serem afastados do comércio. O enriquecimento dos capitães-mores, o recrutamento de carregadores no Wambu para o serviço do governo, a espoliação das populações locais e as constantes ameaças dos soldados portugueses foram as principais causas que agitaram a vida económica que teve reflexo na vida política no Wambu, Ombalundu e Ngalangi de Julho de 1896 até 1904 (Alamada 1951: 77, 78 e 82). Entre 1911 e 1912, desenhava-se uma revolta generalizada contra a administração colonial e contra os comerciantes nos concelhos do Wambu, Ombalundu, Sambu, Viye e Moxiku. Os caminhos entre Viye e Moxiku eram cortados e reinava a insegurança e criminalidade, provocadas por colonos (Luiz de Sousa Lopes, a firma Mello Lopes & Companhia).

Entre 1915 e 1916, as ameaças de revolta persistiram no Wambu e no Katundu (entre os Cokwe). O soba Xipala do Ngalangi visitava constantemente o rei Mandume dos Oxikwanyama, a quem fornecia grande quantidade de pólvora e armas, ameaçava atacar o posto administrativo do Sambu e obrigava as populações a não obedecer à autoridade portuguesa. Os Cokwe atacaram as forças militares em Katundu em 1916. Entre os Lucazi, a criação do posto militar do Kapwi em 1919 obrigara as populações locais a abandonar as aldeias. A tentativa das autoridades militares de travar a fuga das populações originou fortes combates (Distrito Militar do Moxico, Relatório, 1919).

As fricções políticas internacionais e as revoltas das populações locais foram-se debelando à medida que os carris foram penetrando nas regiões do interior. A garantia dos interesses dos Britânicos no Planalto Central através da construção e exploração do caminho-de-ferro de Bengela pela Tanganyika Concessions Company Limited e a ocupação efectiva e a organização administrativa facilitada pela penetração dos carris nos confins de Angola, tornaram o Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela como símbolo de estabilidade política, pois o governo colonial português conseguiu opor as duas potências protagonistas envolvidas e contrariar toda a intenção da Alemanha e da Inglaterra sobre o Centro e Sul de Angola. Este contrato foi a melhor resposta portuguesa aos acordos secretos assinados entre Alemanha e a Inglaterra. A linha férrea de Bengela, sendo uma linha de penetração, permitiu a Portugal a realização dos projectos coloniais (a ocupação efectiva, a organização administrativa, a colonização, etc.). Com o caminho-de-ferro e com a presença das autoridades coloniais (forças militares e policiais), instalou-se a segurança e acabou-se com os ataques à rede comercial, com a fuga às autoridades, com uma anarquia de liderança no sertão e com as revoltas.

I.3. O CFB como Factor de Transformação Económica e Social

A construção das infra-estruturas ferroviárias e rodoviárias e a nova orientação política provocaram grandes transformações em alguns ramos económicos e criaram uma certa mobilidade na sociedade angolana.

I.3.1. As Transformações Económicas

As transformações começaram pela integração das populações na economia colonial cujo processo de integração consistia em transformar as populações autóctones em "trabalhadores assalariados", incutindo-lhes o espírito do trabalho com vista a contribuir para o desenvolvimento da economia colonial.

Vários sectores económicos – agro-pecuários, indústrias de transformação, comércio, etc. – foram encorajados e estimulados, por um lado, por serem fonte de matéria-prima para a indústria europeia e americana, de financiamento do aparelho do Estado português e dos investimentos de infra-estruturas e apoio às empresas, e, por outro lado, para garantir o abastecimento dos trabalhadores e o aumento do tráfego ferroviário. As antigas culturas cerealíferas, leguminosas e oleaginosas tinham sido reanimadas e novas culturas hortícolas e de cereal foram também introduzidas, espalhando-se à medida que os colonos se foram fixando nas regiões do interior, por constituírem parte integrante da alimentação dos Europeus (arroz, batata, cebola, cevada, grão-de-bico, ervilha, trigo, etc.). Ainda outros tipos de plantas foram introduzidas e encorajadas por serem culturas ricas (café, sisal, rícino, etc.). Algumas culturas (milho, feijão) tiveram

o maior incremento; as outras, por razões climatéricas, técnicas e por relutância dos agricultores autóctones, não tiveram o resultado esperado (café, trigo, etc.) (Esteves 2000: 267 e sg.).

Para melhorar a qualidade das culturas e da produção, introduziram-se novas técnicas (a irrigação, alfaias agrícolas europeias, o uso de adubos e a selecção de sementes). Apesar dessas novas técnicas, apenas as culturas de alimentação de base (milho, feijão e batata doce) da população nativa tiveram mais incremento do que outras culturas consideradas ricas (algodão, gergelim, café, rícino, etc). Entre essa diversificada cultura, destacou-se o milho que adquiriu uma grande importância, desempenhando uma função *sui generis* de verdadeira moeda em curso, para o comércio interno e externo; constituía a fonte das receitas do tráfego local de mercadorias da linha férrea e fornecia os recursos pecuniários ao pagamento do imposto indígena (Esteves 2000: 321 e sg.).

No domínio pecuário, os autóctones e diversas empresas (Zambesia Exploring Company Limited, Empresa Oásis, Sociedade Agrícola da Ganda, Benguela Estates Limite, Sociedade Agrícola de Angola) dedicaram-se à criação de gado bovino, caprino, ovino e suíno. Mas, estas empresas acabaram por abandonar essa actividade nos anos 50, excepto a Companhia Agrícola-Pecuária de Angola (Thomas Santos 1945: 125 e sg.).

No ramo industrial, a produção artesanal autóctone cedeu o lugar a pequenas indústrias transformadoras, entre as quais 74% representavam a indústria moageira, nos anos 50. A maior parte destas indústrias eram pequenas iniciativas deficientemente instaladas e apetrechadas, sem peso na balança económica no Planalto Central. As únicas indústrias dignas de menção eram as indústrias açucareiras da Companhia do Açúcar de Angola no Ndombe Grande e a Sociedade Agrícola do Kasekele no Katombela, a indústria piscatória e a Sociedade Fabril de Angola no Kwitu (Esteves 2000: 322).

O comércio espalhou-se por toda a região e, sendo a principal actividade dos colonos, os autóctones tinham sido afastados desta actividade. Para disciplinar e fiscalizar o comércio, as casas comerciais estavam concentradas nas povoações ferroviárias (estações e apeadeiros) e administrativas. A Companhia do CFB introduziu o uso da moeda nas transacções comerciais; mas, a prática de permuta persistiria durante muitos anos. As exportações eram dominadas pelos produtos agrícolas, milho, feijão, sisal, e rícino, com a primazia do milho. As importações eram constituídas pelo carvão, petróleo e seus derivados, cimento, etc., com a primazia do carvão. Para as exportações e importações e para a movimentação das pessoas, a via férrea tornou-se a espinha dorsal de todo o sistema de transporte. No entanto, os meios de transporte tradicionais permaneceram, devido à fiscalização de trânsito dos passageiros negros nos comboios e caminhetas e devido à carência dos meios de transporte rodoviários.

I.3.2. As Transformações Sociais

Um dos méritos do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela era a criação dos postos de trabalho. Desde o desembarque do material, passando pela construção até à exploração da linha férrea, surgia uma variedade de postos de trabalho. E, dada a fraca densidade demográfica do litoral e a situação política do interior (as feridas da guerra de 1902 ainda não tinham cicatrizado), a firma construtora Griffiths & Company recrutava (1904-1907) os primeiros contingentes de trabalhadores nos países de África Ocidental, Central e Austral (Libéria, Gana, Serra Leoa, Cabo Verde, República Democrática do Congo, Natal) da Europa (Portugal, Reino Unido, Itália, Espanha, etc.) e da Ásia (Índia). Os trabalhadores tinham sido iniciados às novas técnicas, aprendendo várias profissões (mecânico, serralheiro, electricista, maquinista, condutor, guarda-freios, assentador de via, agulheiro, fogueiro, contabilista, guarda de passagem nível etc.). Se na primeira fase da construção da via o recrutamento de trabalhadores locais era difícil, na segunda fase da exploração, a Companhia do CFB era a única companhia no Planalto Central que conseguia atrair jovens nativos e estrangeiros que procuravam melhorar a sua vida (Companhia do CFB, *Relatórios de exploração*, 1905-1953, *Relatórios de Fiscalização*, 1903-1928). Após a conclusão do ensino primário nas escolas das missões, para entrarem no mercado de trabalho, os jovens nativos acorriam primeiramente à Companhia do CFB, solicitando o primeiro emprego onde tinham sido admitidos, aprendendo uma profissão segundo as suas capacidades intelectuais e habilidade, até se tornarem verdadeiros ferroviários. Desta forma, indivíduos de famílias humildes foram-se promovendo e ocupando posições sociais na sociedade colonial.

Com as tentativas falhadas da colonização oficial do Governo português por falta de meios financeiros, a Companhia, além de ter colocado trabalhadores propriamente ditos para a construção e funcionamento de serviços, conseguiu fixar na Xenga famílias de agricultores portugueses que se tornaram proprietários das suas fazendas e que viviam em condições económicas muito favoráveis. A linha férrea atraiu também europeus de diferentes nacionalidades que se foram fixando e exercendo diferentes profissões nas diferentes localidades do Planalto Central (Companhia do CFB, *Relatório final*, 1952).

O Caminho-de-ferro foi elemento integrador de diferentes grupos humanos, tornando assim a região do Planalto Central uma região de convergência de culturas, um terreno onde homens partilhavam as experiências profissionais, as convivências interculturais e foram constituindo uma classe operária ferroviária. Fora do ambiente profissional, foram vivendo com os outros grupos sociais (nativos, industriais, comerciantes, agricultores, etc.) de onde nasceram novos elementos sociais e culturais.

Um dos marcos também mais profundos da travessia do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela foi o aparecimento de aglomerações ferroviárias. O CFB foi um

activo criador de cidades. De Olupito ao Lwawu, criaram-se cerca de 78 estacões e apeadeiros. Dada a importância de muitas destas estacões, algumas viriam a ter a função administrativa, comercial e industrial e atraíram uma grande parte da população (Olupito, Wambu, Kuvale, Lwena, etc.).

Se o CFB permitiu a Portugal a concretização dos projectos coloniais e impediu que o Planalto Central escorregasse na esfera de influência de outras potências coloniais, se o CFB era uma fonte de receitas para a administração portuguesa (10% de acções da Companhia + 5% das receitas liquidas da exploração), se o CFB foi um grande impulsionador de todas as transformações geográficas, económicas e sociais no Planalto Central, como é que o nativo viu todas essas mudanças?

II. As Vias de Comunicação e Meios de Transporte Vistos pelo Nativo

A construção do Caminho-de-ferro de Bengela e toda a tecnologia nela implicada não teriam causado medo e trauma, sobretudo na sua fase da construção? Teriam possivelmente causado várias reacções. As primeiras reacções, sem dúvida seriam de medo, de curiosidade e de admiração com respeito a benefícios da tecnologia europeia. Foi com respeito que viram a tecnologia europeia, e viram nela a superioridade do homem branco. Apesar do medo, o nativo não tinha escolha; inserido na economia do mercado capitalista, estava obrigado a aprender essa nova técnica que o punha permanentemente em perigo.

O medo e trauma eram permanentes nos locais de trabalho. Os métodos utilizados para o recrutamento dos trabalhadores, o tratamento sofrido no *chantier* dos trabalhos, os acidentes de trabalho, as doenças, o número de mutilados e a taxa de mortalidade deixavam o trabalhador perplexo e em estado de choque. Tanto os primitivos meios de transporte, como os novos continuavam a pôr em perigo as vidas humanas. Em geral, na mente de todos os Angolanos, em todos os sectores – económico, agrícola e industrial – o trabalho forçado era praticamente o denominador comum. Todas as transformações políticas, económicas e sociais constituíam um perigo para as populações locais que consideravam o homem branco, que introduziu todas essas transformações, como um elemento mau, perigoso. O branco, era tão mau, que mesmo as suas mercadorias e as suas novas técnicas introduzidas, tinham uma certa potencialidade patológica: se um homem comprasse as mercadorias europeias estava potencialmente em perigo, e estas podiam arrastar o homem para a perturbação do espírito.

As antigas e as novas vias de comunicação, as técnicas modernas, os sectores produtivos e os produtos europeus eram considerados como doenças. Assim, os autóctones procuravam meios para se protegerem. Assim, encontram

no cesto de adivinhação os objectos manufacturados, como a canoa evocando os espíritos de Kwanza, designada como *hamba kwanza* (a doença da canoa). Isto significa todas as doenças que vieram de longe e que atravessaram a água, em particular as que os Europeus tivessem trazido (Areia 1985: 236). Esses pormenores verificam-se nas informações de Hambly e Tucker sobre os Ovimbundu. Entre os Ovimbundu, a canoa anunciaria a vinda de desgraça, enquanto para Tucker a desgraça já estava aí. Mesquitela Lima, também lhe deu o mesmo significado. Quando kwanza aparece em cima do cesto, isto significa que alguém teria vindo com um branco ou com o espírito do Branco Cimbali. White (citado por Henriques 1997: 482-483), em 1940, registou as *hamba sitima* (caminho-de-ferro) e as *hamba ndeke*. Como se vê, os meios modernos de transporte não eram benéficos para as populações; eram apenas doenças que se vinham juntando a outras doenças trazidas pelo branco.

Além das vias de penetração (o rio Kwanza, linhas férreas, estradas) os sectores económicos traumatizaram as populações. O trauma era tal que os Angolanos criaram um mito à volta de um homem forte, alto e valente, ao serviço dos colonos, que andava com o saco às costas e com uma faca na mão para cortar as cabeças dos negros e as massas (cérebro) eram extraídas para mover ou lubrificar as máquinas. Esse homem mítico existe em muitas línguas nacionais de Angola: em kikoongo, *kifumba* (sing.; *yifumba*, pl.); em kimbundu *kifumbe*, em umbundu, *katokhõla* (sing.); em cokwe, *thalyanga* (sing.). Entre os meses de Abril e Julho, quando o capim estava muito alto e antes das queimadas, aconselhava-se as pessoas a não andarem sós, pois era o período mais propício para raptar as pessoas (eram sobretudo os meses de recrutamento dos trabalhadores).

Se entre os Cokwe, por exemplo, os negros eram apanhados e cortavam-lhes as cabeças cujas massas (cérebro) eram extraídas para moverem as potentes máquinas de extracção dos diamantes, entre os Ovimbundu, os Kimbundu e os Bakoongo, o cérebro extraído fazia funcionar as locomotivas ou os engenhos que se encontravam nas fazendas dos colonos. O *kifumba* ou *katokhola* simbolizava a opressão colonial, o aparelho administrativo e seus representantes (europeus ou negros).

Conclusão

Apesar do caminho-de-ferro ter beneficiado poucos negros, ele esteve na base da globalização, da estabilidade política, das mudanças económicas e da mobilidade e promoção social da região.

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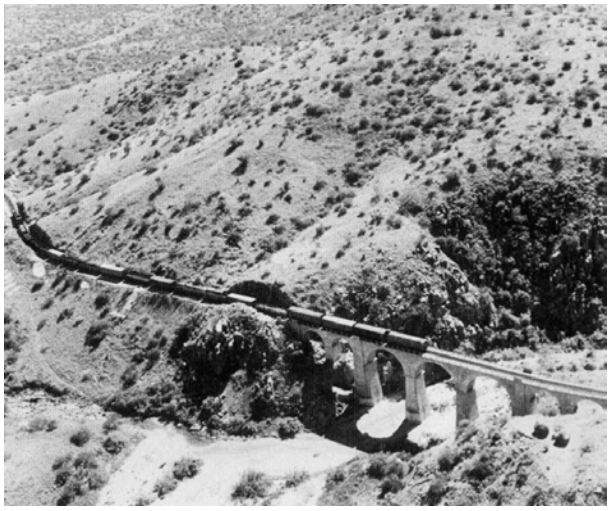


Carregador de borracha
(reprodução do postal P-2-195 do AHA Luanda)

Assentamento da linha de Bengela
(fotografia do Arquivo do CFB no Lobito)

Comboio de mercadorias (in *O Caminho de ferro de Benguela e o Desenvolvimento da África Austral*, 1988)

O Caminho-de-ferro de Benguela (reprodução de uma fotografia do Sr. Amílcar Lopes)

NAS MALHAS DA REDE

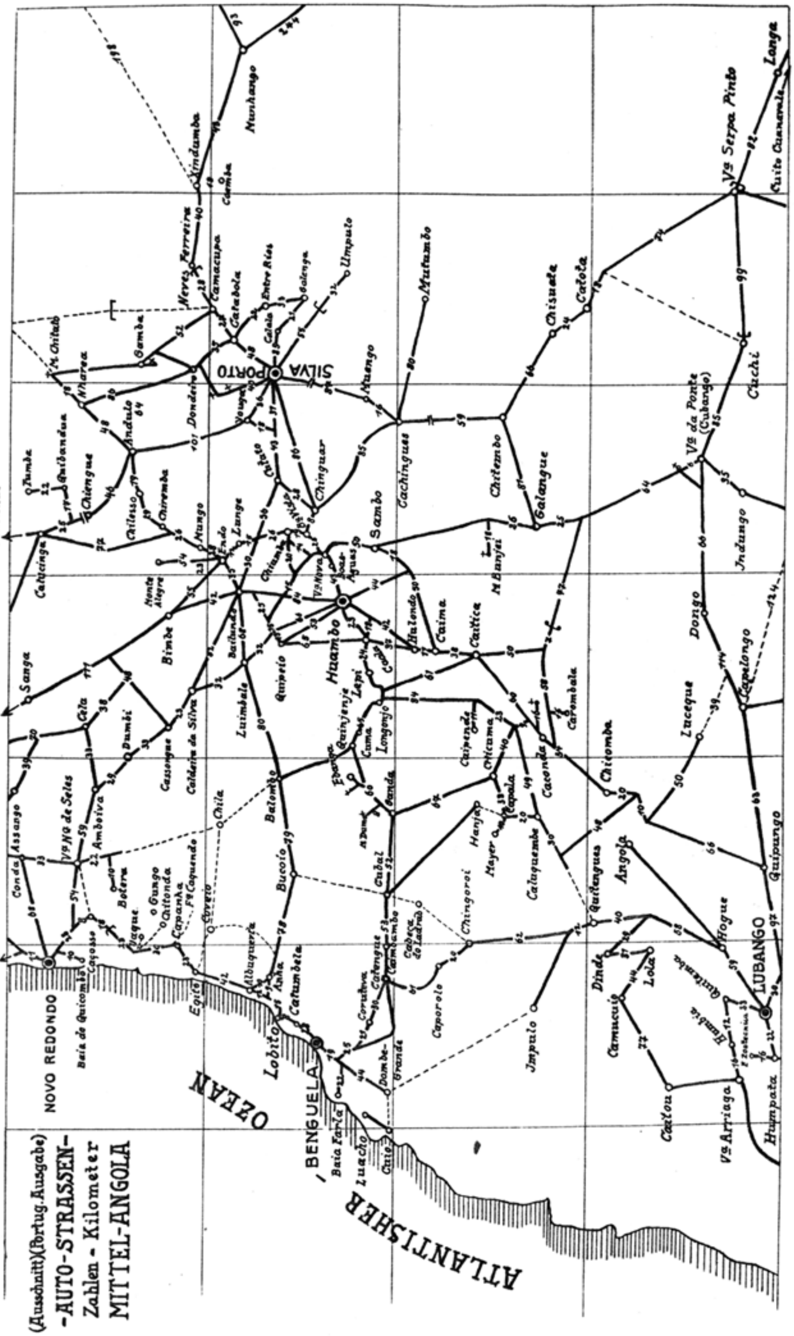
Aspectos do Impacto Económico e Social do Transporte Rodoviário na Região do Huambo c. 1920 - c. 1960

Maria da Conceição Neto

As estradas são um elemento banal das paisagens actuais e por isso dificilmente as imaginamos como um excitante objecto de pesquisa. Mas para nós, Angolanos, a simples palavra "estrada" tem ressonâncias tão fortes que não posso deixar de colocar aqui algumas delas, como introdução ao tema.

Em Angola, "circular" ou "não poder circular" nas estradas tornou-se um precioso indicativo da situação política e militar e, portanto, assunto dos mais relevantes em qualquer conversa que se lhe referisse: os primeiros sinais de guerra sentiram-se sempre nas estradas, nas pontes destruídas, nas emboscadas, no "fechar os caminhos", como desde tempos remotos acontece. Os primeiros sinais de paz também só se tomam a sério quando "já se pode circular nas estradas", apesar dos buracos, das jangadas e pontes improvisadas, das taxas ocasionais cobradas abusivamente por qualquer um que se aproveite de momentânea autoridade. "Circular" é uma palavra quase mágica e talvez o direito mais universalmente reivindicado em Angola. Aliás, os entraves à liberdade de deslocação de cada um (fossem eles burocráticos ou violentos) foram causa de ressentimento contra os poderes estabelecidos, *de jure* ou *de facto*, antes e depois da Independência, os quais tentaram de várias formas e por diversas razões contrariar o que convencionalmente se chama "livre circulação de pessoas e bens".

A importância das estradas na vida do país fica evidente em declarações frequentes de camponeses angolanos, quando questionados sobre as suas prioridades: "Queremos as estradas em condições – e o resto vai aparecer" (entenda-se, a reactivação da produção, a comercialização agrícola, os fornecedores de diversos serviços…). A palavra "estrada" evoca uma certa ideia de "progresso" e, simultaneamente, a saudade das facilidades rodoviárias dos anos 70, no final da era colonial, quando o asfalto cobria milhares de quilómetros, muitas estradas não asfaltadas eram regularmente cuidadas e carreiras regulares de passageiros e carga ligavam entre si diferentes regiões do país. O crescimento económico e as exigências do controlo militar (após o início da guerra em 1961) tinham provocado um investimento importante nas vias de comunicação rodoviária desta colónia portuguesa, colocando-a finalmente numa posição "honrosa" quando comparada a outros países ou colónias de África (ver adiante).



Mapa esquemático da rede de estradas no planalto e zonas vizinhas c. 1930 (Schatteburg [1933])

Mas falar das estradas do passado não traz só lembranças positivas, muito pelo contrário. Na memória dos mais velhos não se apagou ainda o sofrimento causado pelo recrutamento forçado de mão-de-obra "indígena", incluindo mulheres e crianças, para abrir quilómetros e quilómetros de estradas de terra batida, em poucas dezenas de anos, muito antes das modernas obras de terraplanagem e asfaltagem dos anos 60 e 70.

Os testemunhos desse passado podem surgir da forma mais imprevista. Em Novembro de 2002, um programa da televisão angolana sobre a nossa diáspora no Zimbabwe, mostrou entrevistas feitas a angolanos naturalizados zimbabweanos. Entre os mais idosos estava um grupo de originários do Huambo, do Bié e do Kwando Kubango que, na década de 1940, tinham decidido fugir do trabalho da construção da estrada entre o Huambo e o Lubango, para escapar – como disseram – "aos maus-tratos e salários ínfimos". Viajaram a pé, durante quatro meses, trabalhando ocasionalmente pelo caminho, até chegar à dita "Rodésia" – e por lá ficaram. Não é caso inédito mas é um testemunho em primeira mão, sessenta anos depois, sobre os custos sociais do "progresso" rodoviário na colónia de Angola.

Esta comunicação procurará evidenciar o papel contraditório das estradas no contexto colonial, quando vistas pelo lado dos interesses dos colonizados. Como acontece com outros mecanismos e instrumentos da dominação colonial, errado seria imaginar os africanos num papel de simples vítimas, sem qualquer margem de manobra nem iniciativa.

As novas estradas do século vinte, que vieram impor-se (muitas vezes literalmente sobrepor-se) aos tradicionais trilhos e às estradas carreteiras (em Angola, usadas por carroças e carros boers puxados a bois) começaram por ser ostensivamente instrumento de dominação e controlo colonial. Como tal, foram temidas e odiadas, ficando para sempre associadas às deslocações forçadas de aldeias, à cobrança de impostos e às violentas condições de trabalho a que eram obrigadas as populações rurais, cada vez mais presas nas malhas da rede administrativa. Mas, com o passar do tempo, as estradas acabaram por ser positivamente valorizadas pelos colonizados e postas ao serviço das suas estratégias de promoção social e inserção no mercado (como também de escape e fuga).

Nos limites do presente texto, no entanto, apenas serão levantados alguns dos aspectos relacionados com a expansão da rede rodoviária, entre cerca de 1920 e cerca de 1960, numa região específica: o planalto central angolano. Como noutras partes do mundo, a influência das vias de comunicação foi multiforme e pode ser vista na economia mas também nas mudanças culturais, numa nova hierarquização de grupos sociais, no modo de ver o mundo e na própria construção de espaços regionais e nacionais e das correspondentes manifestações identitárias. Também aqui os transportes rodoviários e ferroviários vieram transformar as distâncias que, bem o sabemos, têm mais a ver com o

tempo gasto e as dificuldades experimentadas pelos viajantes ao longo do percurso do que com qualquer medição "objectiva" dos quilómetros percorridos.

Tudo isto, porém, deve começar por ser colocado no contexto dessa fase da colonização portuguesa, com algumas particularidades na região em análise.[1]

A anterior presença europeia no planalto central, essencialmente comercial e bastante dispersa mesmo depois da sujeição militar concluída entre 1902 e 1904, não retirara totalmente aos africanos (ali maioritariamente Ovimbundu) certa autonomia e o poder de impor regras de convivência e de funcionamento dos circuitos económicos dependentes da actividade local. De há muito se intensificara na região a circulação de mercadorias, cujo transporte se fazia à cabeça e aos ombros de carregadores.[2] No virar da primeira década do século vinte o comboio chegou ao planalto: o Caminho de Ferro de Benguela, que viria a ligar o porto do Lobito às colónias da Bélgica e da Grã-Bretanha na África Central. O avanço da linha férrea, paralelamente à crise irreversível do negócio da borracha, pela perda de valor do produto angolano no mercado internacional, veio desfazer a hegemonia das caravanas de longo curso no comércio entre o interior e o litoral. Mas funcionou também como estímulo à produção agrícola no planalto, nomeadamente do milho, do feijão, do rícino, da batata e outras culturas de menor valor.[3] Por mais alguns anos, continuou a ser dominante o transporte por carregadores (voluntários ou forçados) ou pelos próprios produtores, seguindo velhos ou novos caminhos.[4]

Foi do aumento da circulação rodoviária e não do comboio que veio o golpe de misericórdia na hegemonia comercial dos Ovimbundu, já bastante abalada. No Huambo, os produtores rurais tornaram-se muito mais dependentes dos comerciantes europeus, cujos estabelecimentos se multiplicavam e, com, eles, as picadas de acesso às estradas para fazer passar carrinhas ou camiões. Aqueles comerciantes, por seu lado, ficaram finalmente livres dos constrangimentos do

[1] Para uma breve caracterização do "planalto central" e dos avanços da colonização portuguesa na região até 1930, vide Neto 2000 e bibliografia aí citada.

[2] Para as redes comerciais na região no século XIX, ver Santos 1998, que inclui importantes trabalhos anteriores.

[3] Até ao início da década de 1940 o produto agrícola de maior rendimento para Angola (e o segundo em valor nas exportações, a seguir aos diamantes) continuou a ser o milho (128 744 ton. em 1938), à frente do açúcar, do café e do algodão. Só em 1942 o café ultrapassou o milho em valor nas exportações: café (18 966 ton. = 72 698 contos); milho (124 155 ton. = 72 577 contos); açúcar (44 655 ton. = 54 821 contos); algodão (5 291 ton. = 51 978 contos). Para mais dados sobre a economia, cf. Clarence-Smith 1991, Dilolwa 1978 e Marques 1965. Os Relatórios anuais do Banco de Angola são matéria-prima para qualquer análise da economia angolana no século vinte.

[4] "Quando o comboio chegou à Kahala não íamos mais funar [fazer comércio] a Benguela, levávamos o milho e o feijão ao comboio lá na Kahala" (Testemunho do mais-velho Muteka, actualmente perto dos 90 anos – entrevista em Luanda, Fevereiro de 1991). O comércio de Ngalange, cerca de 100 quilómetros a sul da linha férrea, seguia anteriormente para Benguela passando pela área de Caconda. A Kahala (ou Caála) aparece crismada em mapas anteriores a 1975 como Vila Robert Williams.

recrutamento de carregadores para fazer chegar os produtos à linha férrea ou às cidades e daí trazer as mercadorias para o negócio local.

Estradas e picadas não modificaram apenas os parâmetros da vida comercial. Tanto o pessoal administrativo como o pessoal missionário mudaram também o modo de actuação, com o encurtar das distâncias e do tempo necessário para percorrer a sua área de jurisdição.[5] Pode argumentar-se que a rapidez e a possibilidade de percorrer grandes extensões em menos tempo ajudaram a melhorar as estruturas da administração civil, mas isso significou para a população rural africana sobretudo maior eficácia na extracção de impostos e de força de trabalho ao serviço da economia colonial. Quanto às Missões cristãs, é certo que viram facilitados o proselitismo e a expansão da sua rede de serviços religiosos, escolares e de saúde. Mas também para os missionários uma maior rapidez significou contactos mais superficiais e um menor conhecimento directo das realidades locais, salvo excepções resultantes de um grande empenho pessoal. O que alguém pode escutar e observar passando dias numa região, caminhando apenas uma parte do dia e descansando pelo caminho, ultrapassa de longe o que se aprende quando se percorrem dezenas ou centenas de quilómetros num só dia, não se desviando da estrada… Quanto aos elementos de ligação entre o topo e a base – no caso das Missões, os catequistas ou outros líderes das comunidades cristãs locais – certamente não perderam importância, antes pelo contrário, mas estavam mais controlados pelos missionários estrangeiros e eram menos autónomos do que anteriormente.

Pode afirmar-se que a estrada e o transporte motorizado estão definitivamente associados à consolidação do domínio europeu no século vinte. Os Europeus passaram a impor as regras do jogo em todos os campos, inclusivamente para definir quando e por quem seria utilizado tal transporte e quem poderia "ser dono" dele. Lembremos que em Angola, até à supressão do "Estatuto dos Indígenas" em fins de 1961, a propriedade automóvel e a própria carta de condução eram interditas por lei aos ditos "indígenas" (com algumas excepções quando a necessidade de motoristas obrigava). Portanto apenas uma ínfima minoria de negros poderia ser vista a conduzir qualquer tipo de viatura, mesmo como motorista assalariado.

Nem o comboio revelava tão duramente como o automóvel a degradação da posição económica e o estatuto de inferioridade social dos colonizados em relação aos colonizadores. Apesar das suas distinções bem marcadas nas condições da viagem (na diferença das carruagens e na interdição de mistura entre "indígenas" e "civilizados") o comboio era acessível a toda a gente que pagasse o bilhete.

[5] O artigo de Jan-Bart Gewald "Missionaries, Hereros and Motorcars […]", referente à Namíbia, só me chegou às mãos muito depois de ter apresentado esta comunicação, mas não quero deixar de o referir aqui, pelo seu interesse e pela convergência de algumas das nossas observações. Ver Gewald 2002.

Inúmeras pequenas histórias mostram como esta distinção social, associada às formas de discriminação próprias dos regimes coloniais em África, transformou o carro (a camioneta, o camião) num símbolo da distância hierárquica colonizador-colonizado e do poder de uns sobre outros… Um episódio do final dos anos 50 narrado por Avelino Sayango[6] ilustra bem a afirmação anterior, ao lembrar como o pai, António Ventura, foi levado para o Posto Administrativo donde regressou com as mãos inchadas de palmatoadas, por "desrespeito à autoridade". O caso foi o seguinte: António Ventura caminhava pela poeirenta estrada Caimbambo-Catengue, "via muito movimentada" que ligava Lobito ao Huambo, quando ouviu atrás dele um jipe aproximar-se. Afastou-se para um dos lados da estrada, sem olhar. Inesperadamente, o carro parou mais à frente: era afinal o Chefe de Posto de Caimbambo e um grupo de cipaios, que o levaram preso e lhe aplicaram o violento "correctivo". O motivo alegado foi que ele devia ter tirado o capacete à aproximação e passagem do jipe (mesmo sem poder ver quem ia dentro) e ficar "na posição de respeito para com a Autoridade", ou seja, voltado para a estrada, parado com o chapéu à altura do peito, esperando até o carro passar. "Postura de humilhação", considerava o pai de Sayango, que depois disso continuou a fazer o seu caminho do mesmo modo apesar do castigo...

A exigência da "posição de respeito", de facto, não era muito diferente do que podia ocorrer entre grandes senhores e camponeses de zonas rurais europeias, mas em Angola tais situações tornavam-se mais odiosas por "a autoridade" representar o domínio colonial e por só aos negros ser exigida tal "humilhação". Quanto à ilegalidade e brutalidade do "castigo", era moeda corrente nas relações entre as autoridades coloniais e os "indígenas" antes da viragem na política colonial que se seguiu às revoltas de 1961.

Antes de prosseguir com outras considerações, será útil assinalar alguns dados básicos sobre a rede rodoviária angolana. Os diversos mapas de estradas de Angola são fontes importantes para o tema em estudo mas podem ser enganadores, como bem advertia Walter Marques num estudo do início dos anos 60 sobre a economia angolana. A classificação oficial (da época) em estradas de 1ª, 2ª e 3ª referia-se à suposta importância das vias e não às suas características físicas ou à sua funcionalidade.[7] Mais importante, refere ele na esteira de outros autores, é a sua distinção segundo a morfologia do solo:

[6] Sayango 1997: 78-85. Este pequeno livro é precioso em informações e impressões que a memória do autor guardou, dos tempos da infância. Avelino Sayango propunha-se dar continuidade a este tipo de trabalho, mas um trágico acidente de automóvel tirou-lhe a vida, em Setembro de 2003.

[7] Marques 1965, II: 456: Na terminologia oficial, "São de 1ª classe as estradas que formam as malhas principais da rede, ligando a portos, capitais de distrito, ou fronteiras. – São de 2ª classe as que ligam centros de cada região e que ligam estes às estradas de 1ª classe. – São de 3ª classe as que constituem ligação entre as anteriores e que permitem servir o desenvolvimento económico das regiões e ligar os centros de produção aos de consumo."

estradas do litoral, argilosas, transitáveis na estação seca, difíceis ou inutilizáveis com a chuva; estradas da zona subplanáltica, em terrenos relativamente mais sólidos; e as estradas de zonas planálticas, em terrenos de formação ainda melhor, utilizáveis durante todo o ano e praticamente por toda a espécie de veículos.

Como este autor faz questão de lembrar, se em Angola excluirmos as zonas de influência dos caminhos-de-ferro, que não são convergentes, há zonas muito vastas onde a estrada reina absolutamente como via de comunicação e transporte. "E, aliás, mesmo nas zonas de influência referidas [do caminho-de-ferro] é a estrada que conduz da via férrea à povoação quem sustenta a influência desta via" (Marques 1965, II: 457).

Os dados de 1960 permitem comparar a situação de Angola à de outras colónias em África. Usando a relação entre quilómetros de estrada e superfície (Km/100 Km2), os 35 500 Km de vias rodoviárias davam a Angola uma média de 2,85 Km/100 Km2, deixando-a numa fraca posição face a Moçambique, que em 1958 já tinha 3,18 Km/100 Km2, à Nigéria (em 1955) com 4,85 Km/100 Km2, ou ao Tanganhica (1955) com 3,51 Km/100 Km2. Mas considerando a densidade populacional, numa relação Km/100 habitantes, Angola tinha 0,735 Km/100 habitantes, o dobro do Tanganhica e bastante mais que os outros (Marques 1965, II: 455). Porém, enquanto as estradas da Nigéria pareciam ser totalmente transitáveis, as de Angola andavam em estado crítico e muitas eram intransitáveis em certas épocas e para determinados meios de transporte.

Contudo, o mais interessante para o tema deste texto é a constatação de que, em Angola, os concelhos com mais quilómetros de estrada por cada 100 Km2 eram Luanda (15 Km/100 Km2), a Caála (12), Novo Redondo (11), o Huambo (10,5), Bié (9,5), Andulo (8,8) Porto Amboim (8) e Bailundo (7,9). Todo o resto do país se situava abaixo destes valores, confirmando mais uma vez a posição privilegiada do planalto central.

A partir de 1961, como se sabe, as estradas de Angola conheceram um incremento notável em quantidade e qualidade, devido às necessidades militares e ao crescimento económico, reduzindo certas disparidades regionais.[8] Mas antes dessa importante viragem, a simples observação dos mapas rodoviários dos anos 40 e dos anos 50 facilmente destaca o Huambo como a zona de maior densidade de estradas, que convergiam para o Bailundo e para a própria Cidade

[8] Cf. entre outros Bender (1976: 253, n. 55) sobre o papel das estradas nos planos da "contra-subversão". Dos 400 km de estradas asfaltadas em 1960, ter-se-á passado a cerca de 7 000 em fins de 1972, grande parte em zonas de maior acção militar anti-guerrilha. No biénio 1965-1967 os gastos no melhoramento de transportes e vias de comunicação terão sido quase seis vezes superiores aos relativos à saúde e à educação.

do Huambo (Nova Lisboa), além de inúmeras vias directamente ligadas às vilas por onde passava a linha férrea do CFB.[9]

Vários factores concorreram para que assim acontecesse. A demografia (uma relativa abundância de mão-de-obra africana e a imigração europeia) e a economia, nomeadamente a expansão da actividade comercial reforçada com o avanço do caminho-de-ferro nas primeiras décadas do século vinte, em parte explicam a densidade da rede de estradas no planalto central. Na verdade, porém, a topografia e a estrutura dos solos influiram bastante, sobretudo nos tempos das estradas de terra batida. Nos solos planálticos, em geral, essas vias eram de manutenção relativamente fácil e, ao contrário de outras áreas do país, mantinham-se ali aceitavelmente transitáveis todo o ano, apesar de algumas dificuldades no cacimbo com as estradas mais arenosas. A conservação das estradas asfaltadas trouxe outras exigências, mas mesmo aí o planalto apresenta condições geológicas mais favoráveis do que a orla litoral, as matas do norte ou as chanas alagáveis do leste angolano. Com uma altitude média de 1700 m e não inferior a 1500 m, predominando a floresta aberta e savana, tanto o relevo como a vegetação e o tipo de solos (onde facilmente afloram as laterites) favoreceram as estradas no planalto central. A maior dificuldade técnica esteve na necessidade de pontes para cruzar os abundantes cursos de água.

Circunstância de peso foi também, sem dúvida, a política de Norton de Matos, enquanto Governador (1912-14) e Alto-Comissário (1921-23). Defensor convicto da relação entre estradas, progresso económico e imposição da soberania portuguesa, Norton imprimiu à construção de estradas um ritmo por muitos considerado despropositado e irrealista. O planalto estava no centro dos seus projectos megalómanos de povoamento por colonos portugueses (de que é prova a fundação da Cidade do Huambo em 1912) e, naturalmente, as obras públicas foram impulsionadas. O paradoxo disso tudo foi que o governador que mais se empenhou em suprimir as formas de semi-escravatura e contratos fictícios que caracterizavam o uso da mão-de-obra indígena por parte dos colonos, foi exactamente quem provocou enormes abusos no recurso à força de trabalho aldeã pelas administrações locais, em autênticas corveias para o Estado, para satisfazer a febre de construção de estradas. Uma vez que muitos homens eram levados para trabalhar noutros locais, a utilização de mão-de-obra feminina e infantil era generalizada, como documentam relatos e fotografias da época.

Por detrás da exaltação do "progresso rasgando os sertões" e o entusiasmo de chefes administrativos e fazendeiros-comerciantes abrindo estradas e fazendo pontes, existia uma realidade de milhares de adultos e crianças das aldeias vizinhas forçados a um trabalho violento e sem retribuição, com meios técnicos primitivos.

[9] Ver por exemplo os detalhados mapas rodoviários in Granado 1948 e 1959. O mapa anexo, mais simples, tem a particularidade de pertencer a uma edição alemã (Schatteburg 1933).

A situação dos anos 20 está amplamente testemunhada em livros e jornais, pois nenhuma outra governação de Angola deu origem a tanta literatura, de apoio ou de rejeição, como a de Norton de Matos. Mas podemos também recorrer a um famoso documento, apresentado à Comissão de Escravatura da Sociedade das Nações em 1925, que expôs internacionalmente o escândalo da utilização do trabalho dos nativos nas colónias portuguesas. Edward Ross e Melville Cramer visitaram Angola no cacimbo de 1924. A motivação partira de "alguns *gentlemen* americanos interessados no bem-estar dos nativos africanos" (Ross 1925: 5), um modo discreto de referir pessoas ligadas à actividade missionária protestante em Angola.

No chamado "Relatório Ross" são com frequência referidas mulheres e meninas trabalhando na estrada, inclusivamente com crianças nas costas, assim como casos de abuso no angariamento dos trabalhadores. Fala-se em centenas de nativos (poderiam ter dito milhares sem receio de exagerar) retirados das suas tarefas produtivas, provocando fome e miséria. E insiste-se no absurdo da ideia de fazer estradas e mais estradas, às vezes para chegar a lugar nenhum. Diz-se que as estradas planálticas ao sul do Kwanza não passam de excesso e extravagância, no seu traçado rectilíneo por montes e vales sem preocupação com a topografia, nos seus sete metros de largura etc. Era óbvio o penoso trabalho dos "indígenas" para limpar tal extensão de árvores, mato, morros de salalé etc., usando picaretas, catanas, enxadas, pás e aros de barril. E tudo isso para um tráfego quase inexistente à data da sua construção.

De facto em 1930 a própria cidade do Huambo tinha apenas cerca de cinco mil habitantes, dos quais apenas dois mil ditos "brancos". Mas era uma cidade em crescimento e, sobretudo, essencialmente virada para o comércio e dependente da rede de transportes. No Censo de 1940, foram registados 16.288 habitantes (11.326 "não civilizados", sendo os ditos "civilizados" 3.214 brancos, 1.220 mestiços e 301 negros).[10] Em 1938 carreiras de camionagem da empresa de Venâncio Guimarães começaram a ligar o Lubango à cidade do Huambo. Pela mesma época, havia um serviço de transporte semanal para o norte em direcção ao Caminho de Ferro de Luanda.[11]

São interessantes os comentários e o testemunho de Júlio Ferreira Pinto, um defensor da colonização portuguesa e simultaneamente um feroz crítico de Norton de Matos noutros aspectos da sua governação. As estradas actuais, diz ele, terão começado com o primeiro governo de Norton, as primeiras na circunscrição do Huambo, devendo muito à acção do então administrador Ernesto Castro Soromenho e ao antigo director do CFB Mariano José Machado.

[10] No último Censo colonial, em 1970, a cidade tinha 61.885 habitantes (43.795 negros, 3.382 mestiços, 14.694 brancos e 14 "outros")

[11] O jornal *Voz do Planalto* (Ano VII, nº 322, 21 de Janeiro de 1939) anunciava "carreiras de automóveis entre Luanda e Nova Lisboa", serviço de "correio, carga e passageiros", com ligação ao Caminho de Ferro de Luanda em Cassoalala.

Mais tarde, outro governador definiu por portaria que um automóvel seria fornecido pelo Estado às circunscrições que tivessem construído uns tantos quilómetros de estradas. As estradas ficaram "muito baratas ao Estado", na medida em que a "mão-de-obra indígena que muitas vezes inclui ferramentas, é económica" e os salários dos técnicos saíam das verbas das circunscrições. Em contrapartida, as pontes precisavam de mais gastos e por isso eram dificilmente construídas. A referência positiva feita aos carros boers e aos seus condutores, que vão abrindo estradas carreteiras, confirma o que sabemos sobre vários sistemas de transporte coexistindo por muito tempo. Os aspectos críticos residem sobretudo na ausência de pontes em certos rios, o que continua a obrigar ao uso dos carregadores… (Pinto 1926: 301-307).

Alberto de Lemos, um admirador do regime de Altos-comissários bem conhecido no panorama angolano refere com entusiasmo que entre 1920 e 1930 a rede de estradas passou de 15.000 km para mais de 30.000 km (Lemos 1947: 7).

Num registo diferente, os comentários do alemão Otto Jessen[12] confirmam a persistência do "tradicional" no "moderno", a propósito da nova figura do cantoneiro (o responsável por uma determinada secção da estrada). Jessen descreve um cantoneiro, um nativo aparentemente abastado, cujo conjunto residencial "amplo, bem concebido" incluía habitação para as suas quatro mulheres, que trabalhavam a terra. Ele tinha a tarefa de "vigiar num certo trecho da estrada os trabalhos dos indígenas, participar eventuais estragos da estrada ao Chefe do Posto e ajudar os europeus em viagem". Curiosamente, "[…] para se entender com as aldeias espalhadas na floresta servia-lhe um tambor de fenda que sabia utilizar com grande habilidade". As mulheres do cantoneiro ofertaram aos viajantes uma galinha, alguns ovos e um cesto de farinha de milho, e Jessen correspondeu "com sal, fósforos e tabaco europeu, três produtos muito apreciados" (in Heintze 1999: 247-248).

As vias rodoviárias na região planáltica terão pois precedido, em muitos casos, o incremento da circulação automóvel, que só parece ter tomado maior impulso a partir dos anos quarenta, para conhecer a sua maior expansão nas décadas de 1960 e 1970.[13] Mas nem só para automóveis e camiões, ou para carros de bois, servem as estradas. Pouco a pouco, elas tornaram-se uma forma mais prática e segura de viajar mesmo para quem seguia a pé.

Como em tantos outros países, a rede de estradas alterou a hierarquia dos lugares, criando outros centros e periferias, mas no caso do planalto era visível,

[12] Jessen viajou por Angola, com a esposa, entre Junho e Dezembro de 1931, partindo do Lobito, percorrendo milhares de quilómetros por estrada e fazendo mais de mil fotografias. As suas observações sobre a população, além de preconceituosas, parecem bastante superficiais, mas o seu trabalho foi importante na caracterização geomorfológica da região central de Angola. Devo a tradução do texto alemão à minha amiga Lotte Pflüger.

[13] Segundo Espanha (c. 1930: 21) em 1930 existiam em Angola 2.325 automóveis, sendo 1.015 de turismo e os restantes de carga. Em 1973 as estatísticas oficiais angolanas mencionavam 183.031 veículos em circulação, dos quais 26.221 "pesados".

nas primeiras décadas aqui analisadas, a sobreposição com os principais eixos das rotas antigas. Antes das estradas asfaltadas dos anos 60, o Bailundo continuava a ser o ponto onde se cruzavam as principais vias de norte, sul, oeste e leste, embora a capital económica e administrativa fosse a Cidade do Huambo, mais a sul, por onde passava a linha férrea. As novas estradas principais no eixo Huambo-Luanda e Huambo-Lobito vieram tornar desnecessária a passagem pelo Bailundo, reforçando a posição da cidade de "Nova Lisboa" no centro da rede de transportes.

Os circuitos da camionagem de e para o planalto cerca de 1960 indicam claramente a importância das deslocações para as terras do café (Kwanza-Sul, Kwanza-Norte), para a Huíla (de onde se seguia para o Namibe por via férrea) mas também directamente para sul, para o Cunene e a fronteira com a Namíbia (Sudoeste Africano).[14]

Na maior parte dos casos, pelo menos de início, não terão sido movimentações espontâneas, mas antes resultantes da imposição do trabalho forçado "contratado" e de outras pressões sofridas pelas sociedades rurais do planalto. Mas quando os dados se referem às viagens nas "carreiras" regulares de camionagem mista (carga e passageiros)[15], parece legítimo afirmar, com base em inúmeros testemunhos, que se tratava sobretudo de deslocações voluntárias em busca de melhores condições de vida, ou viagens motivadas por pequenos negócios ou por razões de saúde, ou ainda visitas a parentes e outros compromissos familiares. Os "contratados" seguiam as mesmas rotas, mas geralmente viajavam amontoados em camiões das empresas ou dos agentes recrutadores.

Um comentário final sobre as estradas – e as comunicações em geral – e o seu impacto na consolidação de uma identidade nacional angolana. Neste início do século XXI, as estradas de todo o tipo, no caso angolano as vias de transporte mais básicas e com maior penetração em zonas remotas, continuarão a ter um papel decisivo na reconstrução e na economia do país. A relação entre a rede de comunicações, a integração económica e política e a afirmação de identidades nacionais não é, obviamente, uma novidade na análise histórica. Como foi mencionado no início deste texto, as vias de comunicação são elementos essenciais para a (re)definição do "próximo" e do "distante", do "exterior" e do "interior", sendo portanto também "construtores" dos espaços regionais e nacionais e das concomitantes identidades.

No caso em estudo, poderia dizer-se que no século vinte as facilidades do transporte ferroviário e rodoviário favoreceram, numa parte importante da faixa central de Angola, de Benguela até ao Bié e mesmo além destes limites, a

[14] A existência de importantes núcleos de originários do Huambo em todas essas regiões, facilmente verificável nos nossos dias, não data do pós-independência, embora estas últimas décadas as tenham ampliado para números muito superiores aos de então.

[15] Marques 1965, II, Anexo 8, p. 741.

afirmação de uma identidade comum, num processo que pode ser chamado de consolidação étnica dos Ovimbundu, onde (pelo menos aparentemente) se diluíram grupos com diversas trajectórias históricas anteriores. Tal facto tem sido referido ou sugerido também a partir da análise de outros factores, como os efeitos da implantação das missões cristãs (ou mais especificamente, das missões protestantes) na região.[16] O que tem sido menos destacado é que a rede de comunicações proporcionou a circulação e a fixação de comunidades e indivíduos originários do planalto central em muito variadas regiões do espaço angolano e também além-fronteiras, não se cingindo à "faixa central" de Angola. Este factor, a par de outros quase omitidos na bibliografia existente (como, por exemplo, a convivência resultante da incorporação no exército colonial, paradoxalmente favorecendo a "angolanidade") contribuiu decisivamente para que, em 1974, os Ovimbundu, de um modo geral, estivessem entre os Angolanos que melhor noção tinham do espaço nacional angolano e mais interessados estavam na construção de um Estado-Nação forte e indivisível. Em que medida as guerras subsequentes, de que o Huambo foi tantas vezes o epicentro, alteraram ou não essa visão, é assunto de interesse inegável, mas não é matéria para esta comunicação.

Anexos

Esquema da Cidade do Huambo (Nova Lisboa) e zonas vizinhas, com base no Levantamento Aerofotogramétrico de 1953 (Ministério do Ultramar, Junta das Missões Geográficas e de Investigações do Ultramar).

Mapa in *Angola – Westafrika von Heute! Gesichtspunkte afrikanisch-kolonialen Aufbaues*, von H. Fr. Schatteburg, Kommissionsverlag: Dr. F. P. Datterer & Cie., Freising-München [1933].

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[16] Cf. especialmente diversos textos de Gladwyn M. Childs, Linda M. Heywood, Didier Péclard e Lawrence Henderson. Na Bibliografia mencionam-se apenas alguns.

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COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ANGOLA AND EAST CENTRAL AFRICA BEFORE c. 1700

Jan Vansina

The Issue

It is well known that many of the history of Angola has been profoundly affected by the introduction of many innovations from East Central Africa.[1] These include cereal crops and the techniques to grow them, the herding of sheep and bovid cattle, and later on a series of crops which ultimately stemmed from tropical Asia as well as some other less known features.[2] Angolan Bantu languages have also been strongly influenced by their East Central African counterparts especially in the reduction of a seven vowel to a five vowel system, by the spirantisation of consonants which accompanied it, but also by the adoption of some grammatical features.[3] All this borrowing, however, was not just one way. East Central Africa did also borrow some features from Angola as well.

While no one doubts that such diffusions occurred, no one seems to have given much thought about how and when all of this happened. As to the when, some of the introductions are very old. That is the case for the adoption of sheep or bovid cattle which are dated directly by their remains respectively to the beginning and the middle of the first millenium. Others however such as for instance the diffusion from west to east of American crops like maize, manioc, or tobacco date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We are therefore dealing with a traffic between west and east which lasted for the best part of the last two millenia.[4]

As to how, its seems to have been tacitly understood that most and perhaps all of these items diffused by being passed on between inhabitants of adjacent villages as part of their ordinary relationships with each other whether these concerned marriage alliances, the exchange of goods and services, co-operative activities, the sharing of experts, or even the resolution of intercommunal

1 Angola constitutes the core of West Central Africa although the region extends somewhat all around the borders of this modern country. East Central Africa lies east of a line running from the Okavango swamps northwards to the Lubilash and lower Lulua valley, north of the middle Zambezi and south of the equatorial forests.

2 For the older literature see Baumann 1975-1979, I: 513-683. For a recent study and many individual distributions see Vansina 2004.

3 All well known but not studied in detail. See for instance, Y. Bastin 1979: 17-37.

4 For the oldest transfers see Vansina 2004, Part 1.

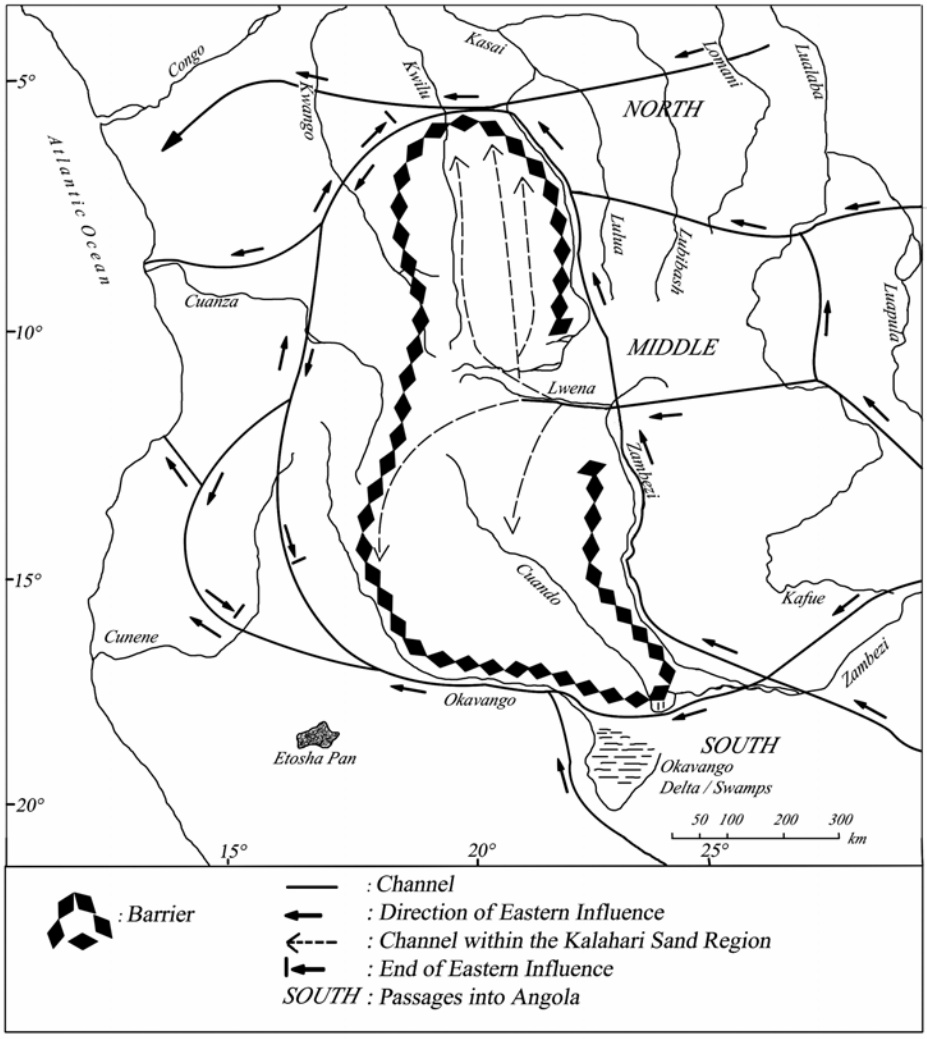
disputes.[5] This assertion certainly holds true for any area in which people share a common language since they cannot continue to do so without sufficiently frequent intercommunication. Whether this holds true beyond a single language area is less certain. If it does, innovations should have slowly diffused along a broad front, rather like water running over a floor, all along the borders between east and west between the rainforests in the north and the Okavango Delta swamps in the south.

Yet empirical evidence shows that this did not happen. An examination of traceable individual borrowing indicates that nearly all the transfers occurred either around the southern end of the common border, that is around the Okavango Delta swamps (parallels 18º-20º S) or around the northern end between the parallels 5º-8º S. It looks as if a barrier prevented interchange everywhere else, although this barrier was dented but not wholly broached west of the headwaters of the Zambezi River (between parallel 11º-14º S). Some of the evidence at hand is archaeological, some is biological (plants and animals), but most of it lies embedded in the vocabularies of different languages or different blocks of closely related languages all across the area. A comparison of words permits us to trace transfers from language to language and in favorable cases allows us to discover fairly precise paths by which they passed from language to language between east and west. In particular one can use words for items whose ultimate origin, age, and direction of borrowing are known – usually but not only in the case of plants and animals – as indicators which reveal where the channels of communication ran at the time of their diffusion. For example words for chicken, a bird of Asiatic origin, shows us that one word for it (*nsúswá* 9/10, *nsúsú* 9/10) crossed from east to west by the southern passage around the barrier probably between c. 700-900 AD and then moved northwards across the whole of Angola and the southern Congo. Yet at the same time another word (*kasumbi* 12/13) moved directly from central Zambia into eastern Angola via the headwaters of the Zambezi River, but did not affect any region west of the Okavango and Kwango Rivers.[6] In addition to these cases there are the distributions of a large number of other words which refer to items of known origin which help us to determine what channels of communication did exist at one time even if they cannot be well dated.[7]

[5] There is no evidence for early scholarly speculations about substantial or influential migrations from east to west which are now wholly discarded.

[6] For a rough general distribution of synonyms meaning “chicken” see Guthrie 1967, I: 137, topogram 24.

[7] As it is not feasible to list here complete distributions of the linguistic forms of the items, we are discussing nor the sources where they are cited we only cite the form under consideration. The interested reader will find both the distributions of most of the forms discussed below in Vansina 2004, and the sources in *Appendix* 2: *Lexical Sources*.



Angola and the East: Main channels of communication before 1700

The Kalahari Sands as a Barrier

All these distributions confirm that there really was a barrier preventing a direct transfer between east and west. The same barrier also clearly appears on linguistic maps which show the degree of similarity in the basic vocabulary of adjacent languages, and therefore measure the degree of communication between them.[8] Such data show that the barrier consists in the expanse of infertile Kalahari Sands and that it stretched all across eastern Angola into adjacent parts of Congo, between the Okavango River, the *planalto* and the Kwango River to the west and the upper Zambezi floodplain, the eastern reaches of the headwaters of the Zambezi River, and the middle Kasai River to the east. In these lands people can practically only cultivate on the "red" soils of the river valleys where these have pierced the mantle of overlying sands. Hence settlements are strung in lines along these valleys and so are the vicinages which were the fundamental territorial units of their societies. The orientation of the rivers dictated the settlement pattern.

Furthermore the sands quickly absorb any standing surface water with the result that thirst is often a problem for travelers, especially in the south where rainfall is much lower and the rainy season much shorter. Those reasons explain why southeastern Angola south of the middle Kwando River was almost completely inhabited by nomadic foragers and, except in part for the Kwando and Kwilu Valleys, shunned by sedentary farmers. This created nearly an absolute barrier between the Kwando and the Okavango Rivers since there was no chain of sedentary villages from east to west. Indeed during their crossing from the Okavango to the Kwando Rivers from west to east Capello and Ivens found out that the lack of water added to the lack of villages constituted a nearly insurmountable barrier.[9]

North of the Zambezi floodplain the river begins to receive a fan of tributaries which stem from the northwest such as the Lungwebungu River and then further upstream others which come from the west such as the Lwena River. The upper Kasai River also flows from west to east until it suddenly turns north near Dilolo. The settlements there were primarily oriented east to west and therefore favored communication in that direction, but actually not as far west as the Kwanza and Kwango Valleys. Indeed a stretch of empty or nearly empty rough, hilly, and heavily forested land divided the headwaters of the affluents of the Zambezi and the Kasai Rivers from these river valleys. Magyar gave an impressive description of these "Olo-wihenda" forests in 1850 as a "sea of trees" separating several people who "rarely communicate with each other".[10]

[8] Bastin, Coupez, and Mann 1999: 89, 91, 93 (Heterograms at 55, 50, and 45 % similarity).
[9] Capello and Ivens 1886, I: 265-309, 331-381.
[10] Magyar 1860: 227-228. He gives geographic details in the text and in two notes.

Further north all the rivers and their strings of settlements again run parallel to each other in deep valleys from south to north. While a lack of standing water was usually not a major problem there, the denser forests and especially the many steep valleys one had to cross made west to east travel rather difficult. Hence this landscape also constituted a barrier to east-west movements even though communication north to south within it was fairly easy. Although all foreign observers from the late seventeenth century onwards have blamed the very existence of a barrier east of the upper Kwango River to a deliberate policy decision of the Kasanji rulers, yet a closer look at the sources indicates that it resulted to a large extent from natural conditions and very low population densities.[11]

Passages of Communication

1. *The southern passage.* Given the barrier to east-west communication we can now discuss the various passages which allowed for some east-west contact beginning with the one at the southern end of the barrier. There were actually two passages here, one from Zimbabwe along various pans and rivers to the southern end of the Okavango Delta swamp and then along its western edge to the lower Okavango River, and one from the middle Zambezi River, more or less along in or just north of what is now the Caprivi strip also to the lower Okavango River. From there the river was the corridor which led to southern Angola. The first evidence we have for the use of this passage stems from around 1 AD or a little earlier. Sheepherding, ceramics, and metallurgy were introduced from western Zimbabwe to northern Namibia and southern Angola by the southernmost route around a greatly enlarged Okavango Delta through an environment that was far wetter than it is today. Possibly these technologies were not just passed on from band to band but their spread may have involved some actual migration by the sheepherders. Later on some sheep at least were passed on from hand to hand further and further northwards from southern Angola to finally arrive as far northwards as the rainforests of the southern Congo.

About half a millenium later sorghum and millet and the techniques needed to cultivate them, as well as bovid cattle followed from the east by way of the southern passages into Angola and then again diffused northwards from there as far as the Kwanza Basin. These inputs have been crucial for the whole later history of all of Angola. For the new agriculture not only led to a sedentary

[11] For the 1750s see Vansina 2000: 45-58, especially 56-58 (text of doc. 301, f. 1 of the A. Álvares da Cunha papers at the university of Coimbra) especially for the northern passage and in general Sebestyén and Vansina 1999: 299-364; For later effects as shown by itineraries from the 1850s to the 1890s see M.-L. Bastin 1961, I, map 1, p. 22.

lifestyle nearly everywhere in the area but also it fused its southern and northern parts into the single cultural area now known as West Central Africa. These innovations which came from Zambia or Zimbabwe may have been passed on along a route either north or south of the Okavango Delta, although the evidence from Tsodilo (Botswana) rather suggests a direct diffusion from the Zambezi River north of the Delta to the lower Okavango River. A century or two later, however, large herds of cattle and other goods from southeast Africa began to arrive by the southernmost route. Nqoma in the Tsodilo hills now came to be linked by what looks like a regular trading route south of the delta to Matlapaneng and then eastwards along the Botletle river to Bosutswe from where the route continued to Toutswe, to the Shashi-Limpopo confluence and ultimately to the Indian Ocean. Between c. 900 and 1100 AD, glass beads and conus shells from the East Coast reached Nqoma over the Mapungubwe region while some of its copper stemmed from Phalaborwa in Transvaal and traveled mostly along the same route.[12] One is tempted to add the domestic fowl to the list of imports by this route because the animal was actually raised at Bosutswe in the 700s. But the spread of *nsúswá* 9/10 for "chicken" shows that people in southern Angola and northern Namibia actually acquired the bird from people living in or near the floodplain of the upper Zambezi Valley who invented this word and that it was then passed along the Caprivi variant of the southern passage presumably in the eight or early ninth centuries. The notion of matrilineage (*onkhova* 9/10 in Nyaneka), which had developed among agropastoralists in southern Angola probably during the ninth century, used the same passage to move in the other direction towards the middle Zambezi River and then into most of Zambia where it gave rise to the well known *mukowa* 3/4 matriclan organisation.

The trading route between Tsodilo and Mapungubwe was abandoned around 1100 and so far no later evidence for the use of the northern Caprivi passage has been found before c. 1750 with the possible exception of the word *mulónga* 3/4 "river" carried across the Caprivi passage by fishermen no doubt.[13] Still after 1750 there has always been some communication and most likely some trade along the lower Okavango River and the Caprivi passage.[14]

2. *The middle passage*. The middle passage gave access to the west from the headwaters of the Zambezi River and the bend of the upper Kasai River. This

[12] The archaeological data and most of the interpretation stem from Denbow and Wilmsen 1986. See Vansina 2004, Chapters one and two.

[13] This word is in use on either side of the Kavango language group, but not in those languages themselves. They probably replaced it at a later date by another one which is of northern origin.

[14] In 1852 Magyar mentions that King Haimbiri of the Kwanyama wore a belt inlaid with shells from the Zambezi. See Magyar 1857: 1003.

region was inhabited by peoples who spoke closely related languages belonging to the Moxico group which includes Cokwe, Lwena, the Ngangela cluster, Lwimbi, and Nyemba. Within this group communication was excellent and population mobility was high. To a lesser extent this also holds for the valley of the upper Kasai River and the nearby river valleys in which the Chiumbe, the Chicapa, or even the Kwilu Rivers flowed north. Speakers of the Lunda group of languages which is the nearest linguistic relative to the Moxico languages occupied the neighboring part of the headwaters of the Zambezi River and the valleys of the Lulua and Kasai Rivers further north. Hence innovations adopted in the lands of the Zambezi River's headwaters easily spread both upstream westwards and downstream northwards along Kasai and Lulua. Indeed some innovations also found another way northwards along the valleys between the Kwilu and the Kasai Rivers.

The spread of the earliest dated import from the east, the domestic fowl, called *kasumbi* 12/13 here, yields a typical pattern. The first chickens apparently came from the copperbelt area (Lamba/Lala languages) during the 800s and their care diffused among the Ndembu speakers first and then also among all the Moxico speakers but not further.[15] Plantain banana, variant *dikonde* 5/6, of about the same date, fits the same pattern of diffusion and came in either from the copperbelt area or from the northeast.[16] Sugarcane, *musaci* 3/4, perhaps a century or even two later (c. 900/1000 AD), also shows a similar pattern although it diffused from the lower Zambezi valley to southern Zambia, then to the Zambezi floodplain, and then northwards to the lands inhabited by speakers of the Lunda and Moxico language groups.

Perhaps just as early but more complex is the case of *muzukulu* 1/2 and variants. This word means grandchild and is of old eastern Bantu origin. It was practically universal in central and southern Zambian languages and was acquired first by Ndembu speakers from Nkoya speakers to their southeast from where it then spread to the Moxico group but not further west. Meanwhile another variant followed the eastern limit of the Kalahari Sands northwards from Ndembu to Rund speakers. Later a Cokwe variant spread northwards along the valleys between the Kwilu and Chikapa Rivers to be finally adopted by Pende speakers to the northwest. Given the ease of communication and the high mobility of all the people who lived on the Kalahari Sands from Pende speakers in the north to Mbwela speakers in the far south this last pattern of diffusion is not surprising at all. Among other traces the spread of a nearly identical terminology relating to initiations in this whole zone also shows this.

[15] Further north the other Lunda languages may have obtained their first chickens from Luba speakers who coined a new word *nzoólo* 1n/2 to designate it.

[16] Gerda Rossel 1998: 114-117, 210-212. The maps include the variant names *-*kondo* 5/6 and *-*kondi* 5/6. But here we only consider the distribution of *-*konde* itself.

Yet another pattern is similar to the previous one mainly by its complexity. This concerns cotton. This plant and its substance, designated by another term, came from the lower Zambezi Valley to reach southern Zambia around 1200.[17] In that region it acquired a new name *wandu* 14, and *ndandu* 9/10 which then spread northwards along the Zambezi River's floodplain to its headwaters perhaps by 1300 or so. There one term went westwards to reach the very edge of the *planalto* near the uppermost Okavango River. But another word continued northwards along the Kasai and the Lulua rivers into what are now the Kasai provinces, turned then around the northern edge of the Kalahari sand region westwards into Kwilu as far as the Kwango River and then south-westwards among the northern Ambundu. Elsewhere west of the Kwango River two new terms derived from words designating thread or cloth were invented to designate the plant and its product. Among the Ambundu of central Angola cotton began to be woven perhaps only as late as the 1400s on the same loom that was used for raffia which by then was quite old both in the Kasai and Kwilu areas. This loom and the weaving technique seems to have been propagated from north to south, probably first by Kimbundu speakers who also wove raffia cloth, and used it later for cotton, then by the people of the *planalto* who only used cotton and finally to Nyemba speakers.

Most eastern inputs did not manage to penetrate further west than the western tributaries of the Zambezi River but a few did. Thus *mwipwa* 1/2 for "sister's son" a term which also came to Angola from Zambia was adopted by the Kimbundu languages in the lower Kwanza valley. So was *kilamba* 7/8 a form derived from *kalamba* 12/13 "a chief entitled to gifts", a word that was itself coined among Ndembu or Lwena speakers from the older word *mulambu* 3/4 "political gift, tribute" which ultimately originated in Luba Katanga, perhaps in the well known chiefdoms (after 800) of the Lualaba depression. Much later, perhaps by 1800, *mulambu* 3/4 itself was to reach the Umbundu speakers of the *planalto* directly from the east.

Diffusions from East Central Africa to the headwaters of the Zambezi River are known only from the last centuries of the first millenium AD onwards. At that time exports from the copperbelt were becoming well organised. Thus the gradual development of the difficult guilloche design both on elite ceramics at the coppermine of Kansanshi around 800-900 as well as on undated rocks on sites in the Zambezi headwaters may well point to a direct connection.[18] The presence of extensive saltpans at Kecila near present day Kolwezi along the

[17] The earliest evidence for cotton weaving in the east from Mapungubwe (a little before 1100) and the Bulawayo region (a little before 1100). The earliest spindle whorls in Zambia were found at Ingombe Ilede and Sebanzi (second level) and date to about 1200 or a little earlier. See Phillipson 1993: 230-231, Vogel 1997: 444, and Fagan and Phillipson 1965: 261 (C 14 date corrected to c. 1200).

[18] For guilloche see Robertson 1989: 59-64, and Ervedosa 1980: 244-253.

road to the coppermines probably also played a role. It is therefore possible that a regular trading route between Lwena or Ndembu speakers and Lamba or Lala speakers in the copperbelt developed from that time onwards and served as a conveyor belt for the transfer of various sorts of objects, ideas, and techniques in both directions. This would include items such as copper crosses, *mwambo* 3/4 or a particular type of smelting furnace *lilungu* 5/6 from east to west and notions about ghosts *mukishi* 1/2, 3/4 or even a designation for matriclan *mukoka* 3/4 from west to east. Alas so far none of these features have been firmly dated and some may never be so that while one may well believe that these contacts continued from the 900s into the 1700s without interruption, all proof of this is lacking so far.[19]

3. *The northern passage*. The earliest known items known to have diffused from east to west between c. 800-1000 AD or so by the northern passage around the Kalahari Sands are crops from the Indian Ocean such as sugarcane, *mwenge* 3/4. Before that time the rainforests to the north had been the main source of imports in northern West Central Africa. All the early revolutionary technologies such as ceramics, the cultivation of rootcrops, and metallurgy arrived from there. So did the earliest forms of sedentary village life and even the earliest Bantu languages. At that time the east does not seem to have directly contributed anything at all. It is noteworthy that even the domestic fowl (800s?) did not cross from east to west by this route. Indeed chickens did not come to Pende speakers in Kwilu from the east at all but from the southwest after a long detour around the whole Kalahari Sands barrier rather than directly from the east!

The word *mwenge* 3/4 for sugarcane is typical for the direction followed by many other loans which came through the northern passage apparently during the same period. *Mwenge* 3/4's distribution tells us that the word came to West Central Africa from the Luba languages in Katanga. From there it spread northwestwards to the middle Kasai River then westwards along the northern passage to the Kwango and then southwards through central Angola all the way to the limit of its cultivation in the Inner Cunene Basin. Something similar happened with the plantain-banana variant *dikondi* 5/6 at the same or perhaps a slightly earlier date. This originated among Songye speakers near the Lualaba River far to the northeast and spread then westwards south of the fringes of the rainforests to the Luba Kasai, the Lulua, the northern Lunda languages, the Lweta languages to reach Holo speakers in the Loange Valley but not further. It also spread upstream of the Kasai and Lulua Rivers as far as the Ndembu. As to

[19] In contrast the contemporary polities in the Lualaba depression of Katanga do not seem to have been in direct contact with the headwaters of the Zambezi River at all. The floodplain of the upper Zambezi obviously was in contact with those headwater and a few imports there such as sugarcane, *musati*, *musaci* 3/4 came from there even though the floodplain apparently remained a backwater until the late 1600s.

the variant *dikondo* 5/6 "plantain" this came from the north perhaps by the Congo River trade route which is attested from 900 onwards. After it reached the Kongo and Kwilu area it, like *mwenge* 3/4, then diffused southwards all the way to the limits of its cultivation in the Inner Cunene Basin. Important linguistic innovations also seem to have spread by this route.

From about 1000 AD a whole set of mutual transfers of words between east and west is attested along this route. A rough list of inputs from the east affecting the west and dating to before 1600 includes cowries or *mabele* 6 far to the north on the very fringes of the rainforests, eggplant, *lujilo* 11/10 and water yam, *kidingu*, 7/8, both Asiatic crops which probably arrived during the same period as sugarcane, cotton, *wanda*, 14 *ndanda*, 9/10 which arrived among the Ambundu perhaps as late as 1400, and finger millet, *luko* 11/10, which reached Lower Congo well into the 1400s. Undated inputs from the east also included the xylophone *madimba*, 5/6 which was adopted by the Ambundu but not the Kongo, and the profession of specialized hunter, *cibinda* 7/8. Transfers in the other direction are not well documented. Two of the words related to initiation, *mukanda* 3/4 "any initiation, boy's initiation" and *mukishi* 1/2 or 3/4 (*likishi*) 5/6 in the Ngangela cluster), "spirit, masked dancer" diffused eastwards through the headwaters of the Zambezi River as far as central Katanga. So did the hunting cult *buyanga* at an unknown time while the flangeless bell, especially the double bell, was transferred west to east well before 1200.[20]

Transfers from east to west seems to have been more numerous than transfers in the other direction which may well imply that eastern people enjoyed considerably more prestige in the eyes of westerners than the reverse. Exceptional eastern prestige is also implied in the undated process of diffusion of major linguistic changes, namely the gradual shift from a seven vowel to a five vowel system accompanied and followed by the spirantisation process of consonants. This originated in East Central Africa diffused by the northern passage and affected all the languages of coastal, central, and southern Angola.[21] But we have no idea as to why East Central Africa enjoyed this high esteem. In particular it is not likely that prestige of the rich chiefdoms in the Lualaba Depression of Katanga was so powerful that it could be a source of it during so many centuries, simply because these chiefdoms were so far away from the northern passage.

Although quite a number of features traveled along the northern passage there is no evidence so far that they were carried along any well established

[20] Vansina 1969: 187-197. Note, however, that western words for such bells do not occur beyond the middle Kasai. The evidence adduced for their diffusion eastwards relates to the intricacy of the technology of producing sheet metal and flange welding and the way in which the two bells are welded together.

[21] These linguistic features also diffused by the middle passage to affect all the Moxico languages.

trading routes. There were no obvious points of commercial attraction either east or west of this passage. The closest by was Malebo Pool at Kinshasa which was the terminus of the riverine long distance trade route on the Congo River and its tributaries from about 900 onwards. But in so far as is known the Pool area did not even communicate with the middle Kwilu area and certainly not with points further to the east. From the late 1300s onwards the kingdom of Kongo became the next pole of attraction in the northwest. Indeed well before 1500 raffia cloth from Kwilu was exported to Kongo while various economic, social, and political features coming from Kongo began to diffuse eastwards from then onwards. Such features ranged from a system of markets, *nzimbu* shells used as money, some crops of American origin, ideas about charms of power and even the word *mbanza* 9/10 to designate a capital. Yet, these influences do not seem to have crossed the Kwilu River before 1700. As to the eastern end of the northern passage there is no trace at all of any major trading centre before the seventeenth century between say the Lubilash and the Kwilu Rivers.

A Reconfiguration in the 1700s

The basic geographic configuration of east-west communications, imposed by the Kalahari Sand barrier, underwent a fundamental reorientation during the 1700s as the result of the activities of the Portuguese in Angola from c. 1500 onwards and the independent rise of kingdoms in the east from c. 1600 onwards. The insertion of Angola in an Atlantic trading system soon was felt very far from the coast. Thus glass beads, most probably from the Benguela coast, already reached Vungu Vungu on the lower Okavango River by the early to middle 1600s.[22] While the Portuguese were building their colony of Angola, the political situation in Kasai and Katanga was undergoing radical changes as well. A set of kingdoms, which were in constant communication with each other as is shown by mutual linguistic transfers, developed there from c. 1600 onwards. The main ones were the great Luba kingdom of Katanga and the Rund kingdom west of the Lubilash River. The latter began to spawn a Lunda commonwealth from the 1650s onwards. During the same century in what are now the provinces of Kasai in Congo Tshiluba speakers began to migrate westwards from the Mbujimayi River, while north of them the Kuba kingdom emerged on the fringes of the rainforests. Before 1680 Rund agents had already established contact with the Atlantic trade zone at the market of Cassange and were arriving in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Zambezi River.

By 1750 their commonwealth stretched from Kazembe on the Luapula River in the east to beyond the Kwilu River in the west. This expansion was obviously

[22] Sandelowsky 1979: 55, 60 dated to 1630 +/-45.

oriented towards places with major commercial resources, namely the copperbelt in the east and the outlets of the Angolan slave trade in the west. By then Lunda leaders had occupied nearly the whole northern passage between the Kwango and the Rund capital west of the Lubilash River. By then also, caravans of Ambundu were traveling along this whole route from their bases in central Angola as far as the Rund capital, buying slaves and ivory in return for European imports. The traffic along this passage soon became intensive and led somewhat later to the rise of Ambaquista (Ambundu) settlements all along this road as far as the Kasai River. Meanwhile, however, small Rund caravans were also arriving at Cassange. They had pioneered a way across the Kalahari Sand barrier between the Kasai and Kwango Rivers. This route may well have run nearly straight from the east to the west via Cambango and Quimbundo where by then the Lunda chiefs Kambangu and Kimbundu were already settling. Four decades later commercial agents for slave-traders from both Cassange and Bié did manage to contact the inhabitants of the Lwena Valley directly and began to set up a direct caravan route along the Zambezi River's western affluents between their markets of origin and the headwaters of that river. The middle passage was now completely open and soon became the most heavily traveled of all. The result was the transfer of many western goods, ideas, and institutions eastwards while some Lunda and Moxico features found their way westwards as well.[23]

Streams of Communication and General History

An attempt was made in this paper to give a more concrete content to the general knowledge that in the distant past East Central African influences diffused into Angola. It was shown that contacts between what is now Angola and the east began about two thousand years ago and have never since lapsed. Until the late 1700s the region covered by Kalahari Sands formed an effective barrier between east and west. Communications had to turn around it either by the south or by the north. True a middle passage westwards from the headwaters of the Zambezi River did give access to the inhabitants of the Kalahari Sand region themselves, but not to any population further to the west. During the first millenium the main transfers from the east into Angola occurred by the southern passage. But this road seems to have been almost completely abandoned c. 1100. Meanwhile the northern and middle passages became active from perhaps 800 onwards, and most of the later transfers traveled by the northern passage,

[23] The notion of *mulambu* 3/4 "tribute" was probably one of these westwards transfers. It is unlikely to have diffused westwards from the Moxico region before the opening of the trading route c. 1790. Yet it was already in use in Bié by 1850 and was soon adopted by all the chiefdoms on the *planalto*.

even when they involved features which ultimately stemmed from the lower Zambezi River so that they were channeled along a route which turned almost completely around the barrier. While the middle passage to Moxico became also active from about 800 onwards, the overall barrier was not breached. This overall orientation of the channels of communication remained in place until the 1700s when the combined dynamics of the slave trade and Lunda expansion greatly increased the frequency and the intensity of communication along the northern passage, and more importantly managed to broach the Kalahari Sands barrier itself, by opening the middle passage right through it.

One might well wonder whether this exercise of replacing the general notions of diffusion of yore by more precise temporal and spatial evidence for particular items or streams of communication has been worth the effort. Is it worthwhile to pursue this line of research further? The answer is a resounding yes. First obviously any approach that favors concrete particulars over generalities is fruitful as it encourages a search for new and better evidence to test and expand hypotheses about supposed diffusions. Second this approach underlines the fact that diffusion is not an automatic phenomenon, triggered by almost any innovation, but that it results from the repetition of a series of local choices and decisions to innovate, *i.e.* of local attempts to alter an existing way of life for the better. The repetition of such decisions and choices in communities one after the other eventually affected life styles over very large areas and led to their convergence over time. Third these dynamics remind us that streams of communication always are streams of cultural inspiration also, which carry novel ideas and values along that leave no obvious trace unlike the features which we notice because they do.

As it happens, however, the most important contribution of this approach is that this kind of study turns out to be a key to unlock the complex histories of small scale societies at local level. One soon discovers that while looking for large-scale patterns, one uncovers paradoxically a better knowledge and understanding of *Alltagsgeschichte*, *i.e.* the local history of everyday life in the various societies, large or small, that are affected by these innovations. Hence the better our chronological and temporal resolution of transfers becomes, the fuller these local histories that are affected by them also become. Even now and in sharp contrast to the still current cliché that nothing ever has changed in these villages since time immemorial, one has already learned that local ways of life changed quite often and sometimes quite substantially. The evidence at hand makes this point most obviously when one considers the history of foodproducing activities in sedentary villages. The villagers seem to have been almost constantly (*i.e.* perhaps once per century, *i.e.* every three or four generations) introducing new domestic animals or plants, new agricultural practices, new divisions of labor, with effects that ranged from changes in patterns of nutrition and demography, to changes in patterns of social organisation. As this example shows the approach developed here seems to have

the potential to unlock very rich local and regional histories. Hence prolonged further research along the same lines that are pursued here promises to establish a fairly detailed account of what happened in the past to ordinary as well as to exceptional people.

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LONG-DISTANCE CARAVANS AND COMMUNICATION BEYOND THE KWANGO (c. 1850-1890)*

Beatrix Heintze

Much like other forms of travel the long journeys undertaken by caravans into the African interior served not just the immediate purpose to which they owed the legitimacy of their existence: to carry on trade and to explore strange lands and their peoples. Rather, such journeys involved a more or less intended mutual exchange, not just of goods, but of many other things, skills and knowledge as well. These acted as catalysts for manifold processes of appropriation and cultural innovation.

Beyond the Kwango this exchange of cultural "extras" included primarily language (particularly Kimbundu and Portuguese), cultivated plants (such as rice, tomatoes, onions), crafts and other skills (for instance tailoring, reading and writing), profane as well as religious objects, or rather the spread of their basic forms (such as jackets, shoes, armchairs, crucifixes, drums and magic remedies). However, it also included less pleasant extras such as disease (smallpox), parasites (sand fleas), possession spirits and much more. Such local and translocal exchange networks that both directly and indirectly catalysed cultural and other forms of change have existed since time immemorial, as archaeological finds in Central Africa have shown. However, in the 19th century the increased intensity of such caravan trade accelerated and intensified such processes over ever greater distances.

Less tangible are the other types of exchange goods: information, news and rumours, the importance of which up until now has been greatly underestimated. News and information regarding what had previously been unknown now travelled much more quickly, were available in more detailed form and were transmitted across cultural boundaries. Along with the local and translocal "traditional" means of communication (via messenger, emissary, markets, visits to relatives, etc.), the increased density and reach of these new modes of intercourse enabled a swifter and more reliable evaluation of information previously received and facilitated the gathering of further details or even the unmasking of a particular report as false. This in turn allowed the recipients to adjust effectively and flexibly to changed or changing conditions far away, giving them an advantage over others. Particularly when it came to matters of trade or foreign policy, reacting in the right way at the right time was a matter

* I would like to thank Katja Rieck for translating this text into English. On this article see also Heintze 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006b, 2008 in preparation.

of survival, or at least offered the opportunity to implement "damage control" measures.

Nevertheless differentiating between news and rumour continued to be difficult. Even information that was initially accurate and reliable was often exaggerated or distorted in the course of its long journey via lengthy chains of transmission over great distances and ultimately arrived as little more than a rumour.[1] This is why specific strategies and techniques designed to evaluate such reports became so important.

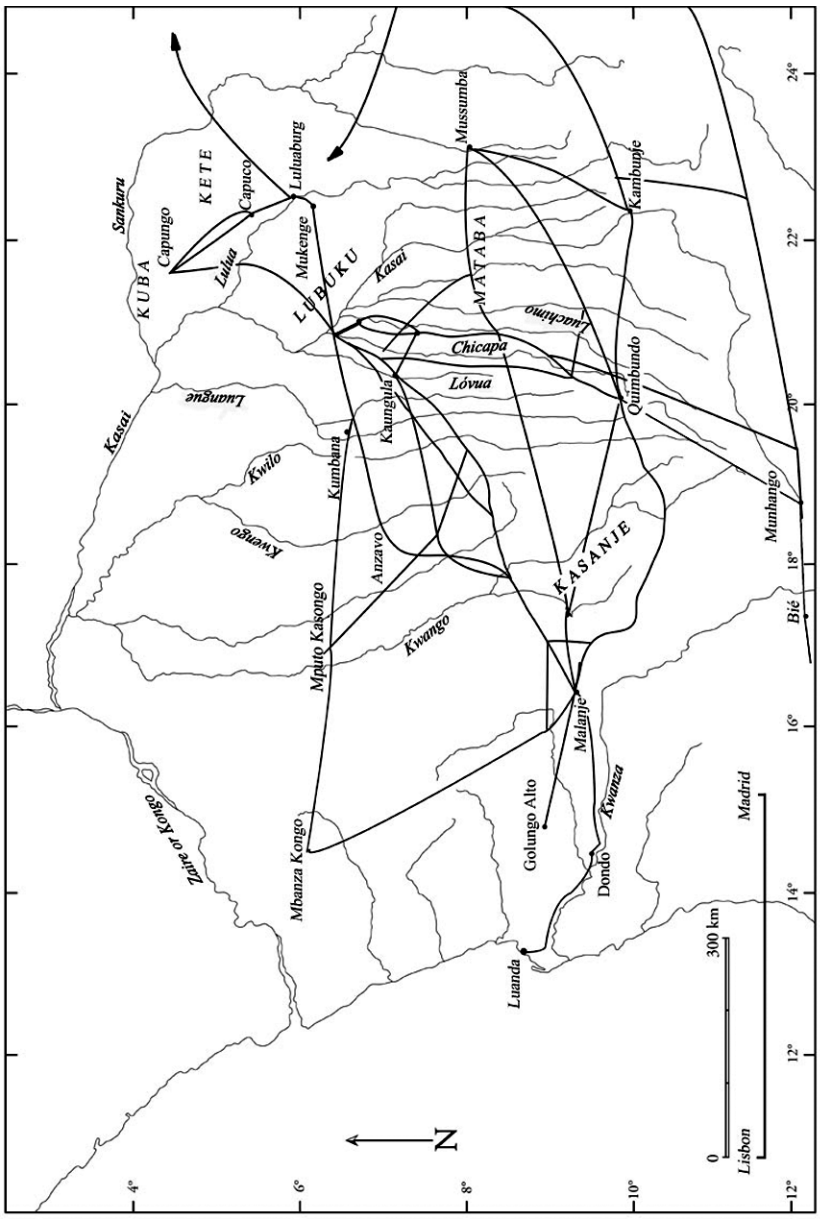
The sudden and drastic expansion in informational reach, which resulted from developments in long-distance caravan trade, increased the awareness that defensive strategies, such as the selective transmission of information, the spread of rumours or the strategic "planting" of false reports, were urgently needed. Political power centres such as Mussumba *(musumb)*, the Lunda courts of Kaungula on the Lóvua, of the designated *mwant yav* Kibuinza Yanvo and of the Mwata Kumbana, or the important courts of Imbangala and Cokwe chiefs, which also became loci of information gathering and centres of informational politics, played a key role in the struggle to secure their own interests. However, the caravans passing through these political centres regarded them with a certain amount of ambivalence. As a centre for the exchange of all sorts of news and for the establishment of important long-term trade relations these places were well-liked. Yet caravans also avoided these places. There were particularly high tributes[2] and a stay at such centres of information and power entailed an unpredictable amount of time that. It was not uncommon that caravans were "held hostage" until they agreed to comply with the demands of their hosts. Circumventing them, however, was not always possible, since those in power made every effort to prevent this.

The primary actors in this ever more tightly woven communication network were the trade caravans of the so-called Ambaquistas, the Imbangala and the Cokwe, with the political and commercial missions of the Lunda periodically entering the scene as well. A greater awareness of these processes only came about in the second half of the 19th century, once letters and publications written by European explorers, pushing ever further into the continent's interior, reached Portuguese Angola and the European mainland.[3]

1 On inner African rumours in a completely different context see White 2000, especially Part I.

2 See for example Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 558. Basically this involved a form of exchange in which caravans gave gifts in the form of goods in return for adequate and secure accommodation. On this see Heywood 1984: 91: "All these exchanges of gifts were as much a recognition of status as simply market type exchange, the most valuable gift that a *soba* would offer would be his good will. He would insure that the traveller would not be robbed, that he could obtain porters or render other assistance." However, in exceptional cases there were instances of rather crass one-sidedness.

3 See Heintze 1999a, 2002 and 2004, 2007a.



Principal long-distance caravan routes in West Central Africa (1850-c.1890)

Content and Reach

The information and experiences of returning trade caravans were the basis on which was decided whether a new enterprise should be launched, and if so, when and to where. En route, caravans were particularly interested in the conditions along the way: the easiest passage, obstacles best avoided (such as impassable rivers due to political tensions or other unfavourable conditions), alternative routes, costs (tolls and other forms of tribute), security issues, food supply and political conditions, but also signs indicative of potentially attractive markets and commercial opportunities. Furthermore, the information gathered provided constant reassurance that the chosen destination was indeed appropriate. At each village passed, these caravans updated their data, which were refined even further by details and fresh reports passed along by caravans met travelling in the opposite direction. The caravan leaders exchanged news, geographical information and travel experience with each other and with the headmen and chiefs of the villages they visited. In the same manner, European explorers tentatively made their way into the interior. Local power elites benefited from these long-distance travellers, listening to reports of distant lands, that enabled them to shape their policies accordingly, perhaps even send off caravans of their own.

So, in this fashion, news and a plethora of information spread across hundreds of kilometres. Particularly striking examples of the extent of the spread of information are the trade caravans of Saturnino de Sousa Machado and António Lopes de Carvalho[4], as well as Hermann von Wissmann's expedition to the Lulua.[5] Their activities and their effects were related in surprisingly frequent and detailed reports collected on the way to Lunda by Henrique Dias de Carvalho, primarily from Imbangala caravans he encountered as they were returning home, as well as from the chiefs who had sheltered them. Thus, from reports that reached him over great distances he learned that Saturnino and António had gone their separate ways. He even had learnt of their respective destinations, and that the Njinga porters had left Saturnino and were now working for the *inguereses* (the "English", referring here to the Germans and the Belgians) at the station in Luebo. Dias de Carvalho also heard that Saturnino had already sold all his goods to the Germans and was now merely waiting for porters from Malanje so that he could have the large quantities of ivory he purchased transported back to Angola. Later, it was also reported that Saturnino's dealings had gone so poorly that he had been forced to sell the rubber he was storing for the Imbangala in order to cover his living expenses, and that he was now only waiting for fresh porters from Malanje so that he could break up camp and head back home. He also heard about the small and large boats docked at Luebo Station, the vessels travelling down the Lulua and

[4] See Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 412; II: 192, 260-261, 281, 626, 646; III: 498-499; IV: 508, 529.
[5] See Heintze 1999a: Ch. Wissmann.

other rivers, in addition to the ship "that ran by fire", which had opened a new trade network across the Zaïre to the ocean. He even heard that the woodcutters, who had provided the aforementioned ship with firewood, were paid in pearls.[6]

Above all, Carvalho heard that Mukenge had, with German assistance, risen to become the most powerful of the Luluwa chiefs. According to these reports, more and more chiefdoms were being forced to pay tribute to Mukenge or were opting to submit to him "voluntarily" out of fear of the Germans. The foreigners were supposedly clearing large fields, on which they planted manioc, rice and maize, as well as seeds brought from the land of the white man. The latter ostensibly owned large herds of cattle, small livestock, chickens, ducks and pigeons, and they were arming Mukenge's people, teaching them how to use firearms. This was allowing them to begin raiding villages and selling the inhabitants as slaves either to the North, where they received ivory in return, or to the Malanje porters or giving them as gifts at the Lulua to provide the whites with free passage. Mukenge's settlement was said to have come to resemble Malanje, only better, with long, wide streets, beautiful houses and flourishing trading ventures. In Mukenge's area of rule, Ambaquistas had come to settle, working as tailors and instructing the children of the elite in the Portuguese language. The reports, however, also related that the flood of pearls and cloth from the north ruined business for the Ambaquistas, Imbangala and Cokwe, whose goods coming from Portuguese Angola could compete neither in price nor in quality. Ivory had already become rare and had to be brought to Mukenge from great distances, making it so expensive that only the rubber trade continued to be worthwhile for the Imbangala and Cokwe. A Bié caravan was reported to have been impelled to move on into "Bateque territory" (i.e. the region of the Kete), if it was to get any business at all. However, new opportunities were said to await the Imbangala as a result of the import of salt and cattle from Angola into Lubuku, although a proposal to pay for these with British cloth was from their point of view entirely out of the question.[7]

Long-distance trading caravans thus created new communicative spaces and expanded those already in existence by linking local with translocal ones. However, this system of transmission was not stable, since it continued to rely on specific routes and caravans, meaning that every change affected the reach and structure of the communication network. Furthermore, the caravans were only partially successful in establishing one large communicative space that encompassed all the adjoining areas. In fact, this space tended to become fragmented, forming numerous autonomous spaces that pursued their own interests and were organised according to their own hierarchies, a situation

6 See Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 412; II: 192, 260-261, 281, 297; III: 498-499; IV: 508, 529.

7 See Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 192, 260-261, 277, 281-282, 297; III: 498-499, 830; IV: 507, 529.

leading to the formation of insurmountable impenetrable barriers to communication along the borders of these areas.

And so it was that the Imbangala, for example, came for decades to enjoy something close to a monopoly over the flow of information along the main trading routes and succeeded at making their homeland, Kasanje, the most important centre of news pertaining to both east-west and west-east travel. The Imbangala came to occupy this privileged position by virtue of their strategic location on the Kwango, between Portuguese Angola and the African interior, as well as their strong position in the caravan trade at first with Mussumba, the capital and residence of the Lunda kings, the *mwant yav*, and then on the routes to Lubuku and the Mwata Kumbana. It was entirely up to them what portion of the in-coming information and news would be allowed to pass on and in what form or with what ideological tilt it would do so. Hence, the Imbangala, like the Ambaquistas, acted as a kind of news filter that was effective in all directions. It was here on the Kwango that some enterprises were ended prematurely or were subjected to frustrating and rather costly delays.[8] The Kwango, firmly under Imbangala control, thus time and again constituted an effective barrier between east and west, that affected not only trade relations[9], but also impacted the flow of news. Although we still know very little about such cases, similar barriers did exist further in the interior – a case in point being the successful isolation of the Kaniok region by Lunda rulers that kept at bay all caravans travelling from the west.[10]

The Evaluation of In-coming Information and News

The increased inflow of all sorts of reports made the need to find effective means of dealing with and evaluating them all the more important. At the most prominent courts in the interior the political position of the recipient was particularly decisive in determining the extent and the quality of the information to which he would be granted access. The dispersion of such information in public audiences generally tended to be a cleverly staged production with vague allusions, selected fragments or even fabrications specifically designed for the general public. It was either before or after these public productions that serious matters of *realpolitik* were dealt with, in secret, and on the basis of detailed reports that had been evaluated for their reliability. In public, the people were told what they were supposed to believe, while the exchange of information that

[8] See, for example, Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 222-224; Gierow 1881-1883: 102. On the Imbangala in their capacity as transmitters of news and information see also 1890-1894, II: 652, 784; III: 88; IV: 528-529, 558.

[9] See Heintze 2002 and 2004 *passim*, esp. Ch. II.1, II.6, II.7 and III.5; Gierow 1881-1883: 102. Cf. also Heintze 1999a: Ch. Schütt and Gierow; Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 272-273.

[10] See Buchner in Heintze 1999b: 357; Carvalho 1890-1894; IV: 219.

corresponded to what was actually known took place behind closed doors. However, since general opinion and expectations were either intentionally or coincidentally shaped by these public announcements, the public arena and the confidential sphere of serious power politics often influenced each other. Along these lines, Carvalho fittingly remarked that those in power deemed it appropriate to deceive their people even in the most important matters. In this respect, however, it is they who deceived themselves and who were deceived by those who surrounded them. Since the general populace on occasion managed to catch some snippet or other not publicly announced, rumours abounded. Yet this was part of the plan: a certain amount of fear and apprehension, spawned by the circulation of rumours, helped keep the subjects obedient, just as the aura of "really being in the know" bolstered the image of those in power. Furthermore, the latter's competitive advantage with respect to knowledge enabled them to act to their advantage and secure their own interests. Their well-founded knowledge was also the source of the equanimity and composure with which they made their decisions. This ruthlessness was one of the prerequisites for attaining the highest office in the state or the chiefdom and stood in stark contrast, as it was intended to do, to the excitement and apprehension with which the countless rumours that whirred about were received and discussed by the general populace.[11]

It was particularly difficult to determine whether or not those reports were actually true. They were tinged with fear, since they were circulating after having been transmitted over great distances. Thus, reports regarding violent disputes, maraudery or slave raids were often highly exaggerated or were distorted in the course of transmission. And so it was that a half-dozen marauding Cokwe were sometimes reported to be a menacing, hostile Cokwe advance.[12] Particularly when it came to gauging the secret intentions of large and somehow anomalous caravans, rumours spread like wildfire. These commonly corresponded to the people's own fears stemming from negative past experiences or to their own sense of guilt.

The few caravans headed by whites were understandably a particular source of interest. For this reason when Carvalho was in Malanje making preparations for his expedition, news spread quickly and his activities soon became a "hot" topic, especially amongst the Imbangala. Their experiences with the Portuguese, namely their war against the Jaga Ambumba, led them to fear the worst. The soldiers in particular were regarded with suspicion. Rumours, intentionally disseminated, gave the impression that the Imbangala would try to hinder them by force and kill any porter who so much as breathed the wrong way. They were so effective in discouraging anyone from entering into Carvalho's service

[11] On this section see, for example, Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 361, 719, 797; 1890a: 88 Fn. 1, 678; see also 1890b: 116; Buchner in Heintze 1999b: 411, 440-441; cf. also 139.

[12] Carvalho 1890b: 116.

that no one in fact did so. For a long time the Imbangala suspected that the latter intended to ally himself with the *mwant yav* and the Lunda in order to drive them from their territory. It was only thanks to the more prudent elders that no attempts were made to block the expedition, a plan that may have ended in a good deal of bloodshed. As the expedition turned north, it was suspected for a time that "the Kongo" might be the final destination. It was only once reports were spread that Carvalho and his people were in fact treating the population quite well, that public opinion shifted. Now, the Imbangala came to see in him a man who would open up new trading opportunities, a view that spread as quickly as the previous one.[13]

Defensive Strategies

Intimidation served not only to heighten the fears amongst one's own populace, but also served to keep others in check via the strategic dispersion of rumours. In this particular defensive strategy the Imbangala were experts. Their geographic position as guardians of the most important Kwango passages and their predominance in the northern slave and rubber trades put them in a key position to do so. Irrespective of their own concerns regarding the "real" destination of the Carvalho expedition, they were far more preoccupied with preserving their effective trade monopoly. To do so they used to their own advantage the general fear of those holding the *mwant yav* title. This was initially directed against the holders of the *mwant yav* title in Mussumba on the Kalanyi. Rumours followed one another in quick succession and were then aimed against the elected *mwant yav* Kibuinza Yanvo in exile. This served to rouse apprehensions among the general population as well as the chiefs vis-à-vis the expedition so that, for example, none would volunteer to serve as porters. Such attempts were successful thanks to the dispersion of a rumour that Carvalho was planning to sell to the Lunda as a slave any man he had happened to hire as a porter in Malanje and en route or any woman he might encounter in the villages through which he passed. The plan worked, and the local population opted to hide in the bush from the Portuguese or chose to submit themselves to the "protection" of the Imbangala, who despite their penchant for raiding caravans, were judged to be far less a threat than the *mwant yav*. Yet another rumour, spread by the Imbangala, claimed that Carvalho intended to conquer the Lunda region and make the *mwant yav* a puppet king under Portuguese control.[14]

In a similar fashion the Imbangala tried to instrumentalise the Cokwe for their own purposes: they spread the rumour that Carvalho was planning to attack the Cokwe. This, so the Imbangala hoped, would goad the Cokwe into

[13] Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 332, 435; II: 286, 316; IV: 597.
[14] Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 365; II: 75, 390, 429, 459, 517, 782; III: 290.

doing some of the dirty work for them and impede the Portuguese in their journey, preventing them from becoming a dangerous trade rival.[15]

For their part, the Imbangala prevented Lunda caravans from crossing the Kwango whenever possible in an effort to prevent the latter from establishing direct trade relations with the Portuguese. The reason for doing so cited by the Imbangala was "sincere concern" that once they reached the coast the Lunda would be sold into slavery. As for their fear of the Lunda, this stemmed from the concern that the caravans and diplomatic emissaries sent by the *mwant yav* were on orders to obtain soldiers from the Portuguese with which they would be able to drive the Imbangala from their home – a suspicion that was a direct inversion of the supposed aims of Portuguese enterprises.[16]

However rumours helped not just the Imbangala protect their own comercial interests. Kaungula hindered Max Buchner on his way north by citing an argument originally put forth by the Imbangala that Portuguese rule in Malanje had come to an end. Prior to this, a similar attempt on the part of Buchner was foiled when the Tukongo on the Kasai managed to turn their population on him, forcing him to head back, by propagating accusations that he had been sent by the *mwant yav* in order to conquer them and extort slaves and ivory for the Lunda ruler. Rumours were also spread that Otto Schütt intended to erect a fort on the other side of the Kwango River and that he was planning to secretly supply the Mai Munene with weapons in order to arm him against the *mwant yav*. Others spread rumours of the mortal dangers posed by the local population that awaited the travellers or dropped hints regarding the enormous distances and great stretches of uninhabited territory that promised nothing but hunger and starvation.[17]

Fear and curiosity shaped the manner in which Africans came to regard whites. The Atlantic slave trade and the various military campaigns launched by whites were ever-present, so Africans tended to expect the worst from Europeans. The Portuguese for their part did their best to cultivate this image amongst Africans by deploying threats that ranged from the realistic to the "supernatural" (such as punishment through Zambi), a strategy that reified the African inferiority complex, which found its expression in numerous stories.

However, Portuguese trading companies, whose employees and agents operating in the interior were often Ambaquistas and were visited, among others, by all of the more prominent Imbangala chiefs, exerted considerable power of attraction. Yet here too, the order of the day was to keep bothersome competitors at bay. Thus, wherever they went – which in the mid-19th century was all the way to the Kololo on the Zambezi – the Ambaquistas propagated the

15 Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 317, 339.
16 Carvalho 1890-1894, III: 168, 512.
17 Buchner in Heintze 1999b: 152, 362, 368; Lux 1880: 129; Gierow 1881-1883: 102, 118; Wissmann *et al.* 1891: 283-284.

rumour that the Portuguese lived in the water and that they produced their goods on the ocean floor. They themselves ostensibly dared only engage in silent trade with them on the coast. With this they implied that only they had sufficient experience in order to deal successfully with these strange creatures and that the most prudent course was to leave to them any further commercial activities with the Portuguese. They claimed to deposit the ivory on the beach in the evening and in turn found there the next morning a number of goods that the white water men had placed there for them. "'Now', added they to my men, 'how can you Makololo trade with these 'Mermen?' Can you enter into the sea, and tell them to come ashore?'"[18]

The most effective defence against unwanted competition was the dissemination of horror stories,[19] a strategy which was deployed particularly when it came to European explorers, whose motives were not understood and whose intentions were regarded with suspicion.

Interests also collided when long-distance trading caravans, attempting to gain access to cheaper or better markets beyond their customary routes, encountered local power holders, who did not wish to relinquish their competitive advantage in production or intermediary trade. Monopolies were thus fiercely defended. Without walls, a standing army or an extensive road network this was best accomplished through intimidation. Horror stories relating all manner of atrocities thus proved to be an extraordinarily well-tried and effective remedy. Accordingly, in the mid-18th century the Jaga of Kasanje used to threaten the Portuguese "that he would eat them cooked and having people carry pots, wood, and water in front of them to bully them even faster".[20]

For many peoples of the interior, particularly for the Lunda whose rulers laid claim to a monopoly in the ivory trade, cannibalism represented the greatest horror. So did it not make sense to stir this general fear of cannibalism and use it to one's own advantage?[21]

Since the caravan leaders were not to be dissuaded from their plans with mere arguments, and since violence entailed unpredictable consequences that made it an option best avoided, the most effective way of preventing them from continuing on was to influence their porters. A combination of well-known legends, a pre-existing fear of unknown lands and the very real dangers of long-

[18] Livingstone 1858: 293, 311, 416; 1963, I: 32. See also Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 435; Schütt 1881: 68; Wolff 1889: 215. On "silent trade" generally see Farias 1974. On African notions and attitudes vis-à-vis whites, see, for example, Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 448; II: 97-98, 339, 390; III: 48; Monteiro 1875, I: 89-90; Pechuël-Loesche 1879: 276; Schütt 1881: 68; Wissmann *et al.* 1891: 96, 150.

[19] On the relationship between trade and horror stories generally see Vajda 1999.

[20] In Sebestyén and Vansina 1999: 338; see also 314, 315, 319, 325, 336, 342, 343, 349. Although in this case the Jaga's threats were "merely" intended to extort alcoholic beverages and cloth from the traders, it basically fits the wider context addressed here.

[21] On this see also Heintze 2002 and 2004: Ch. III.5; 2003, 2006a.

distance travel within Africa, as well as the scare-tactics on the part of the local population and its political leaders was quite effective in fulfilling this purpose. The fact that Portuguese long-distance traders like Saturnino de Sousa Machado also spread these tales of cannibalism[22] made such stories all the more credible. Yet contrary to what is commonly assumed, explorers were generally non-plussed by such scare tactics. They saw through these strategies and poked fun at the cowardice of their employees.

The African strategy proved to be highly effective. Max Buchner failed in his plans to proceed northwards and was forced to turn back. A similar fate awaited Paul Güßfeldt in Loango, Alexander von Mechow on the Kwango, Hans Müller amongst the Pende, as well as others. Güßfeldt realised that the Vili had a vested interest in making the expedition impossible:

> […] we were for them a formidable force, which did not engage in trade; when we made our way into the interior, it could only be to the detriment of the natives. They thus had nothing more urgent to do than use false pretences to induce people to flight, wherever they happened upon them, or to give them such a fright with their atrocious tales of man-eaters living just beyond the woods that I may be quite certain should a real departure come to pass, I would find myself abandoned by all my people.[23]

Mputo Kasongo, the head of the Yaka on the Kwango, desired to keep Alexander von Mechow under his influence for as long as possible to ensure continued access to his tempting selection of goods. He therefore requested:

> I should [...] remain with him, at least for a while, or to leave a white man with him until I return. Below on his *Zaidi Kuango* there reportedly is no other Muata Jamvo, and my continued journey downriver would supposedly be hindered by a waterfall that is higher than his house; below these falls up to the sea allegedly live cannibals, who would beat us to death, yet we would also die of hunger before ever getting there, since the Majakalla fear me and will not sell us any provisions, but would instead flee from us.[24]

[22] Lux 1880: 102-103.

[23] Güßfeldt 1875: 216: "[...] wir waren für sie eine respectable Macht, die keinen Handel trieb; wenn wir ins Innere gingen, so konnte es nur zum Schaden der Eingeborenen sein. Sie hatten daher nichts Eiligeres zu thun, als die Leute, wo sie ihrer habhaft werden konnten, durch falsche Vorspiegelungen zur Flucht zu verleiten, oder ihnen durch die grauenhaften Schilderungen der hinter dem Walde wohnenden Menschenfresser eine solche Furcht einzujagen, dass ich sicher sein durfte, bei einem wirklich erfolgenden Aufbruch mich von allen meinen Leuten verlassen zu sehen."

[24] von Mechow 1882: 484: "[…] ich möchte [...] bei ihm bleiben, wenigstens einige Zeit, oder bis zu meiner Rückkehr einen Weißen bei ihm lassen. Unterhalb an seinem Zaidi Kuango gäbe es keinen Muata Jamvo mehr, auch würde meine weitere Stromfahrt ein Wasserfall hindern, der höher als sein Haus sei; unterhalb dieses Falles bis zum Meere hin wohnen Menschenfresser, die uns todt schlagen würden, auch würden wir, ehe wir dort hinkämen, Hungers sterben, da die Majakalla aus Furcht vor mir keine Lebensmittel an uns verkaufen, sondern vor uns fliehen würden." See also Büttner 1890: 176.

The Lunda chief in the Pende region, Mwata Kumbana, told Hans Müller that the Kete

> would in order to eat them fish out all the corpses of those he had executed and thrown into the Lushiko. Likewise, strangers who visit them are killed and eaten without further ado; that is why he supposedly cannot provide me with men and canoes to visit the Tukette, since if something should happen to me, no white man would ever come visit him again.[25]

Other explorers too had to struggle against such attempts to influence their people and, like Paul Pogge and Hermann von Wissmann, could only continue on their planned route with the greatest of difficulty.[26] Willy Wolff was faced with similar challenges on his arduous journey to Mputo Kasongo on the Kwango.[27]

These stories and rumours had such a considerable impact on the porters, because they corresponded with their expectations. Everyone had already heard them back home and thus considered their worst fears confirmed when stories like these were re-told – in the appropriate amount of detail – by those they encountered on their journey.[28] In such accounts the mortal dangers that a journey into the African interior entailed became manifest to the porters. In the caravans led by European explorers fear took on incredible proportions, because here porters, unlike those working for African trade ventures, were often forced to commit for an undetermined period of time and only had a vague idea as to what the final destination would be. This was the primary reason that explorers were initially confronted time and again with an intractable wall of opposition that made it difficult for them to find porters willing to work for them.[29]

The instrumentalisation of pre-existing hostilities and their cultivation via strategically dispersed rumours played an important part in strategies of self-defence. However, where such tactics proved insufficient or failed altogether, the only option that remained was the total blockade of any and all public dissemination of information. Thus, the Kwango in particular not only presented an insurmountable barrier to the expansion of trade relations, but also appears to have been just as important as a barrier to communication, across which news regarding the interior reached the Portuguese either only rarely or

[25] In Wissmann *et al.* 1891: 98: "[…] alle Leichen der von ihm Hingerichteten, die in den Luschiko geworfen würden, auffischten, um sie zu essen. Ebenso würden Fremde, die sie besuchten, ohne weiteres getödtet und verzehrt; deshalb könne er mir auch nicht Leute und Kanoes geben, um die Tukette zu besuchen, da sonst, wenn mir etwas zustieße, niemals ein Weißer ihn wieder besuchen würde."

[26] Pogge 1883-1885: 56; Wissmann 1892: 124-125; see also 128, 132.

[27] Wolff 1889: 165.

[28] See for instance Carvalho 1890-1894, I: 87; Wolff 1889: 159. See also Büttner 1890: 159, 162, 170; Capello and Ivens 1881, I: 5, 180, 225-226; Wissmann *et al.* 1891: 28, 111, cf. also. 215; 1892: 84, 109, 128.

[29] On this see Heintze 1999a: Einführung: Ch. 7.

only after an extended delay or only in the form of highly distorted tales of terror, if at all. And so the commonly held notion that the Portuguese knew little of the world beyond the borders of their district held some grain of truth.[30] For example, it is quite remarkable how late Carvalho learned of the existence of Kibuinza Yanvo, who was living in exile and had recently been elected legitimate pretender to the title of *mwant yav*. Carvalho heard of him only once he had travelled a considerable distance beyond the Wamba.[31]

Creating a Sense of Trust

Parallel to the rapid expansion and consolidation of the communication network in the second half of the 19th century, a general sense of anxiety gripped the population across large parts of Central Africa. This anxiety was caused in part by the Cokwe migrations, the increase in slave raids, the various far-reaching economic shifts and the political erosion of the Lunda "Commonwealth". The rapid increase in the speed and reach of transmission as well as the expansion of the information network brought the "big wide world" into closer contact with the daily lives of individuals, often making it seem more threatening than previously. However at the same time, these developments gave them greater agency.

The increased contacts across ethnic boundaries and over great distances exacerbated the credibility problem. However, the endless succession of caravans, particularly during the rubber boom, repeatedly brought the same leaders to the same places. People knew each other, had heard of each other, and thus learned how better to assess those they encountered. This made it much easier to evaluate and gauge reports, a matter which became especially important when vital personal interests were at stake. Stable relations of trust were the key to candour.[32] Since such relations also served as a basis for longer term political and economic strategies and tended to last longer if they corresponded to kinship ties, the marriage strategies of political leaders took on a new importance.

Although the desire of many chiefs in the interior to have Ambaquistas settle amongst them might seem to have stemmed primarily from commercial considerations and to have served to increase their own prestige, their role was much more extensive. They enjoyed a high level of trust, which was useful in their function as transcultural "interpreters", amongst other things. They helped clear up misunderstandings, and through their interethnic competence were able to contribute to the well-being of both sides. Unlike in Europe, where kings

30 Soyaux 1879, II: 12.
31 Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 58.
32 Cf. on this problem of trust, treated in a different context, the important study of von Oppen 1993, esp. Ch. D4 and D5.

married their daughters off to other states in the interests of alliance politics, men from other ethnic groups and states were brought to the court so that they could marry a daughter or other close female relative. In addition, or alternatively, these highly welcomed strangers were placed in politically prominent positions in government. And so it was that Mukenge's most powerful minister and son-in-law was an Imbangala, and of the twenty counsellors at the court of Mwata Kumbana one was Imbangala and another a Cokwe.[33] Since Europeans neither understood such actions, nor were they willing to go along with them,[34] they were shut out from these networks of relations. Europeans were thus regarded as useful inasmuch as they were important factors when it came to economic matters or prestige and insofar as they might serve the respective African ruler as a protective political authority or as a feared military power. But since they communicated with Africans on a completely different wavelength, in other words in a completely different socio-political idiom, they were not only unable to "understand", but were also largely unable to participate in the intra- African news and communication networks at all.

The category of kinship, so important to all the peoples of Central Africa, determined not only social relationships, but was also relevant at the political level.[35] This found expression in the forms of address used amongst power holders of equal rank, who called each other "brother" (as the Kongo King or the *mwant yav* called the King of Portugal and the King of Kongo and the *mwant yav* called the Imbangala chief Kinguri)[36] and in the classification of persons unequal in rank as "father" and "son", or more precisely, the practice of addressing the political leader as "father" and his subjects as "children".[37] However, the importance of kinship is particularly apparent in the cases of perpetual kinship and positional succession. This involved linking political offices to each other via appropriate kinship categories, which supposedly reflected and perpetuated the position of the first holder of that particular office and was not at all affected by the actual kinship relations of the current office holder, which were often non-existent.[38]

33 Wissmann *et al.* 1891: 91, 150; 1892: 84.

34 See, for example, the advances to which Pogge and Buchner were subject in Musumba.

35 On this see especially the works of Miller; regarding the slaves integrated into Imbangala society see Miller 1977. Generally with respect to Africa and particularly with regards to politics see Kopytoff 1987: 36-48; cf. also Pritchett 2001: 11: "Kin, even if they are fictive, can be more easily controlled. […] The conversion of strangers into kin, even across ethnic boundaries, is thus a dominant feature of the Central African ecumene." Cf. Heintze 2006b, 2008 in preparation.

36 Numerous examples regarding the Kongo king can be found in the documents published by António Brásio *et al.* On the Mwant Yav see, for example, Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 295, 638, 723; III: 220, 383.

37 See, for example, Carvalho 1890-1894, II: 625; III: 44, 217, 569, 783, 907; IV: 254.

38 Details in Heintze 2006b and 2008 in preparation.

In a society, in which categories of kinship are so central, it is not surprising that kinship was instrumentalised in yet another respect: as a historical relationship between different and sometimes even conflicting ethnic groups. Many oral traditions in this region (such as those of the Lunda, Imbangala, Songo and Cokwe) make reference to siblings or close relations who long ago went their separate ways or emigrated and founded their own states or ethnic groups. For a long time the migrations related in these narratives were taken more or less literally. Recently, however, it has been suggested that these were either mostly or entirely the product of long-distance trade, or trade in general.[39] This hypothesis is, in my opinion, quite convincing, particularly when one takes into account that the early Mbundu traditions recorded by Cavazzi did not as yet make any mention of such extensive "founding" migrations.[40]

The dissemination of these "oral traditions" was achieved via the common practice that visitors, such as caravan leaders, emissaries and messengers, first related an extensive historical narrative, before finally getting down to the business that had occasioned their visit. According to Carvalho the Mbundu, Imbangala and Shinje called this lengthy account, which could take more than an hour to recite, *maézu*, while the Lunda called it *lussango*.[41] It was by these means that information and various histories spread across great distances, whereby it was not uncommon for them to be embellished or changed along the way.[42] A common past, even if it was a distant one, carried an extraordinary amount of political weight. For one, it allowed one to partake of the prestige of the more renowned states.[43] For another, these claims of kinship could prove quite useful in the context of increasing contact through trade (as was the case

[39] Vansina 1998a also in particular "Oral Tradition and Ethnicity: The case of the Pende" (manuscript, 1998b); MacGaffey 2000: 11, Ch. 4, esp. pp. 69, 72-77, 205. On this see also Pritchett 2001: 24-26. Decades ago Vajda (1973/74) already pointed out the tropes in stories relating population movements. Currently Vansina is continuing his convincing attempts – backed by Robertson und Bradley (2000) – to ban the long-standing trope of a "Bantu migration" to the realm of fairy tales (see for example 1995).

[40] Heintze 1987 and 1996: Ch. 1, elaborated more recently in Heintze 2006b,2007b and 2008 in preparation.

[41] Carvalho 1890a: 390. On *maézu* cf. Matta (1893: 88), Kimbundu: "*maèzu*", see pl. *"parabens. conclusão. Os ambakistas costumam concluir as suas palestras com a seguinte locução: maêz'omo! Ao que os circunstantes respondem: 'Ma Nzambi!'."* Assis Júnior (1941-1947: 271), Kimbundu: *mahézu, "Cumprimentos, saudações. Palavra com que se finaliza um discurso, palestra, conto, notícia"*. On *lussango*: Matta (1893: 69), Kimbundu: *"kusànga, achar, encontrar"*; Maia (1964: 443), Kikongo: *"Notícia, nsangu, lusangu"*; According to Hoover (1978) the Rund term *rusá:ngw* supposedly means "news story" and *musá:ngw* means "proclamation". I thank Jan Vansina for pointing this out (our UMI copy of Hoover's work is in part utterly illegible).

[42] Carvalho 1890a: 390. See also 1890-1894, II: 580, 766-767; IV: 55, 81, 564.

[43] See the case of the ancient King of Ndongo, the *ngola a kilunaje*, whom the southerly kingdom of Wambu (amongst others) claimed as its founder, citing the "migration trope" to make its case. See Heintze 1987: 276 and 1996: 23.

with Imbangala and Lunda) or violent conflict (the clash between the Cokwe and the Lunda). While they could not prevent violence, they could help to patch things up in the context of a *rapprochement*. So it was that in the 1880s, when the Lunda capital Musumba and many Lunda chiefdoms either were threatened or felt threatened by the Cokwe, it became particularly important for the Lunda that they emphasised the shared genealogical origins of their respective rulers.[44] The appeal to genealogical ties with the visitors that extended back to former times was thus deployed as a strategy to quell the conflict. By means of frequent repetition as the caravan networks became increasingly close-knit, certain versions, told at public audiences held in the power centres, spread over great distances, finally becoming common knowledge.[45]

Conclusion

Trade, exploration and communication are the most important factors that shaped western Central Africa in the 19th century. The caravans with their African, Luso-African and European leaders played a prominent role in these processes that went far beyond the economic and commercial aspects. They created a tightly woven communication network that brought into contact distant regions, at least insofar as they lay along the caravan routes. In order to access the growing volume of news and information, as well as to be able to assess these, there were certain criteria that needed to be fulfilled, which were dependent on such factors as geographic location, status, respecting existing conventions and sharing a common basis of trust. Those who did not fulfil (recall Max Buchner and other German explorers), were debarred and had to reckon with serious drawbacks or even injury. With the abandonment of certain routes, the corresponding branches of the communication network either broke off entirely or were weakened, so that one cannot say that in the second half of the 19th century an information and communication network continually and consistently spanned the entire stretch of space crossed by the caravans, despite the significant increase in the possibilities by which one could communicate across great distances. The constitution of these new transregional communicative spaces was nonetheless of great political and economic significance.

[44] See examples in Carvalho 1890b: 123; 1890-1894, II: 723; cf. also, Capello and Ivens 1881, I: 173; Wissmann *et al*. 1891: 101.

[45] For more details on this section see Heintze 2006b, 2008 in preparation.

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A ESCRITA EM ANGOLA

Comunicação e Ruído entre as Diferentes Sociedades em Presença

Ana Paula Tavares*

> Somos filhos próprios desta terra. Esta terra é a nossa terra – Ngand Yetu a terra de Lweji an Kond [...]
> Tem que haver uma casa que possa ter o Livro Ngand Yetu – A nossa terra, onde os nossos filhos possam saber quem são.[1]
>
> A verdadeira natureza do poder é masculina e feminina.[2]

Um sistema de comunicação, circulação, transporte, recepção e descodificação da informação implica o controlo de um número considerável de pessoas, estar de posse de um conjunto de códigos pertencentes a diferentes sistemas do simbólico e representantes de particulares hierarquias políticas e sociais.

A relação informação – descodificação – resposta acrescenta ao movimento constante entre a costa e o interior, operativo ao longo de séculos, um conhecimento que o protocolo da escrita fixou. Os interesses de todos os intervenientes ficaram salvaguardados na informação escrita que deixa assim em larga margem de se configurar à moldura rígida da correspondência formal entre hierarquias políticas, para deixar passar informação que interessava a todas as partes envolvidas neste longo processo de trocas – mercadorias e palavras – entre a costa e o interior de um território.

No século XIX os portadores da palavra, oral e escrita, não cessam de espantar os viajantes europeus que anotam tais fenómenos nos seus diários. Capello e Ivens referem:

> – Que vem estes homens fazer ao interior, se não querem negociar?
> – Para que andam eles com esses instrumentos, fazendo feitiços em todos os sentidos aos rios, aos montes e aos vales?
> – Só querem *ocu-soneca* (escrever), só querem observar [...][3]

Dando conta e sublinhando a importância da escrita, Capello e Ivens, nos relatos das suas viajens reagem à circulação da informação, contando e transcrevendo as formas como a visão do outro circula no interior. Um intérprete traduz a forma como um velho "tudo n'elle denotava avançada idade"

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1 Depoimento de Kazi Kate "filha" de Lweji an Konde, Lunda-Norte, 31 de Agosto de 2003.

2 Depoimento de Ritenda Kakesse, "filho do Mwant Yaav", Kamatundo, Lunda-Norte, 24 de Novembro de 2002

3 Capello e Ivens 1881, I: 121.

conta a "historia dos brancos" tal como a soube "n'outro tempo pelos bièn̂es, quando íam á costa."[4]

Uma ideia de interior relativamente fácil de ser alcançado para cumprir o almejado sonho de unir as duas costas, atravessou os séculos XVII, XVIII e alguns centros de produção do saber, para se tornar mais complexa a partir de meados do século XIX. Esta ideia tem correspondência nas tradições de alguns dos povos do interior que integraram Kalunga e as coisas do mar no seu imaginário.

Um extremo e cuidado controlo sobre o território e o exercício da autoridade aliam-se e estão estreitamente ligados para criar uma posterior teoria da inacessibilidade cara aos chefes africanos e seus intermediários.

A cada época corresponde assim um corpus de informação disponibilizado para fazer conter a costa, encarecer os produtos e divulgar os sinais das complexas hierarquias de compósitas nações e seus territórios.

As rotas da escrita, como as da oralidade, que, nem sempre são coincidentes com as rotas do comércio, fornecem assim informação sobre as sociedades do interior de Angola, sua complexidade, história e cerimoniais, relações de poder, comércio e transmissão do saber.

Encontrar e seguir essas rotas implica ter em conta as premissas da tradição oral[5] – o território da memória –, servido pelos seus agentes e as diferentes línguas em movimento do interior para a costa, tantas vezes atravessadas (em sentido literal) pelo movimento contrário e não esquecer o papel da escrita. Não se trata de afirmar que os dois movimentos, oralidade e escrita têm aqui o mesmo peso e a mesma medida, muito menos de admitir que assistimos num momento dado à transformação de uma sociedade ágrafa em sociedade da escrita, mas sim de sublinhar que para o conhecimento de determinadas sociedades há que ter em conta a importância da escrita, a forma e os motivos do seu uso e da sua generalização às esferas do público e do privado.[6]

[4] *Ibid.:* 153.

[5] No sentido em que Tonkin (1998: 1) a desenvolve, e tendo em atenção as propostas de discussão apresentadas por Vansina (1996: 127, 147).

[6] Sobre este assunto ver Tavares e Santos 2002, especialmente a *Introdução* e *Os Estudos*. A experiência "de campo" das autoras em 2002 em Sassa-Caxito com os actuais portadores dos títulos Ndembu permitiu consolidar essa constatação. Modernidade e tradição convivem na singular estratégia de sobrevivência destas sociedades. "Os novos meios da produção da memória" (Jacques le Goff) estão inscritos num quadro do exercício do tradicional. Não menos singular e com um outro feixe de significados, faz sentido sublinhar o facto da questão da legitimidade de demarcação de fronteiras levantado por Simão Candido Sarmento (ligado à Lunda desde 1890 e encarregue pelo governo português de estabelecer relações com os poderes africanos da Mussumba (Musumb**)** antes dos representantes do Estado Independente do Congo), ter como base um documento escrito, posto em causa: "o tratado é de chapa e idêntico aos que o tenente Danis e Spachow assinaram" – Governo-geral da Província de Angola, série de 1892, Expedição portuguesa à Lunda, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa (AHU), 434 DGCO M136, Processo 553.

Para muitas das sociedades a escrita começou por ser estrategicamente adoptada, antecedendo em alguns casos a presença próxima de europeus (movimento da costa para o interior), para responder a exigências protocolares de emissão e recepção de informação, e rapidamente tomar conta de um largo conjunto de conhecimentos que dessa forma mais facilmente se disponibiliza e põe ao serviço das sociedades em presença. O domínio das fontes, sua manipulação e difusão corresponde ao controlo da informação pelos africanos, o encontro da escrita e da oralidade nas suas funções de "armazenamento de informação" (Jack Goody), para seu aproveitamento útil e total.

Uma releitura dos relatos dos viajantes europeus do século XIX permite dar conta, não sem alguma surpresa desse "corrupio de bilhetinhos" de que fala Livingstone[7] e atentar no facto dos "insuspeitos" Capello e Ivens terem introduzido, no seu *De Benguella ás terras de Iácca*, num desenho genericamente intitulado "Artigos indigenas" uma "*mu-canda* (carta)", emparelhada com uma série de insígnias, instrumentos musicais e outros objectos das sociedades que descrevem.[8]

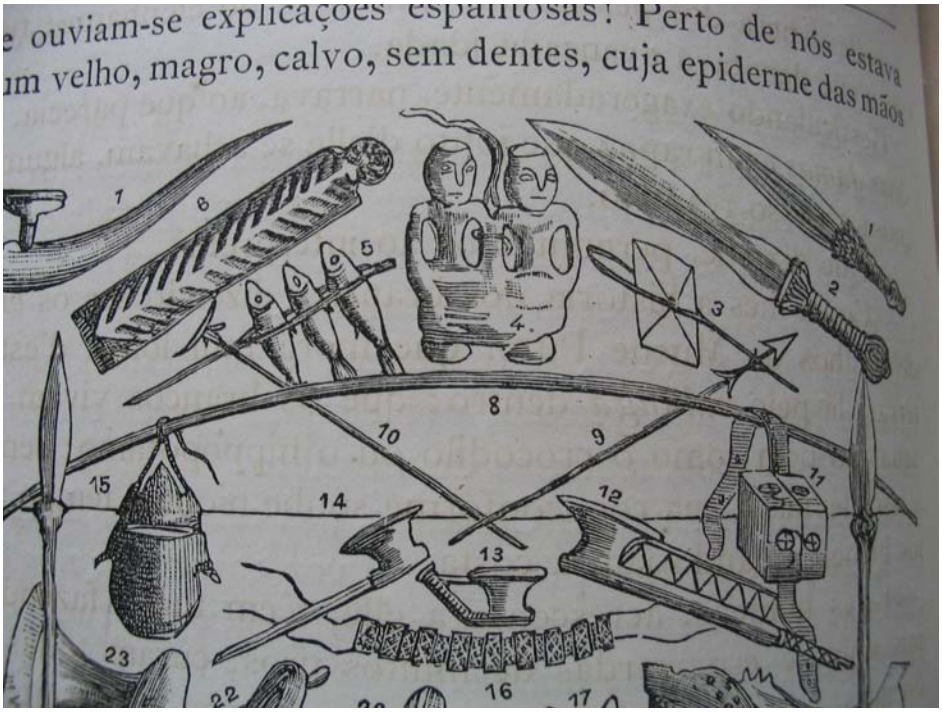

Fig. 1: "Artigos indigenas" in Capello e Ivens 1881, I: 152, nº 3: "*mu-canda* (carta)".

[7] Ver Livingstone 1857: 375.
[8] Cf. Capello e Ivens 1881, I: 152. Reprodução na Fig. 1.

A História das sociedades africanas estrutura-se sobre fontes da mais variada natureza e a construção da memória terá que socorrer-se daquilo que a oralidade nos preserva, mas também do que a escrita fixou. Os processos da memória sofrem actualizações permanentes e socorrem-se de todas as técnicas adquiridas que permitam a apropriação do sentido da História nos seus mais latos significados. Os sujeitos da História de hoje socorrem-se de todos os meios para a legitimação do seu comportamento enquanto herdeiros de um passado histórico.

A "Construção" da Lunda (Muzuas, Moluas, Lundas)

> Se a 'emigração das ideias', como diz Marx raramente se faz sem dano, é porque ela separa as produções culturais do sistema de referências teóricas em relação às quais as ideias se definiram, consciente ou inconscientemente [...]
>
> Por isso, as situações de 'imigração' impõem uma força especial que torne visível o horizonte de referência o qual, nas situações correntes, pode permanecer em estado implícito.[9]

Uma primeira ideia da "questão da Lunda" assenta na facilidade de travessia do território para o alcance da "outra costa" e começa a ser formulada em Lisboa (centro) e irradia daí para Luanda e seu hinterland (margens) invadindo o discurso e a escrita dos "regimentos" de quem é superiormente encarregue de partir para o terreno e aí encontrar as rotas certas que liguem o conhecido ao desconhecido. A construção do discurso da História faz-se nos centros de produção do conhecimento, rasurando as questões que na ordem do discurso contrariam a ideia da "facilidade" da "relativa distância" que as exigências e necessidades da época propiciaram. A ideia da travessia de Angola à Contra-Costa está formulada (nem sempre com este enunciado) desde 1521, quando o rei português D. Manuel encarregou Gregório de Quadra de investigar "o caminho do Congo à Abissínia".[10] A ideia da existência de regiões africanas, que constituíam espaços políticos que urgia contactar obedece a uma fórmula que engorda das informações trazidas para a costa angolana por agentes africanos, vai mudando ao longo dos séculos XVII e XVIII. Uma gramática do território à luz da geografia comanda a ordenação do conhecimento que antecede em muitos anos a ocupação e a conquista.[11] O discurso é o da descrição e o verosímil é criado pelo estabelecimento do número de léguas (normalmente

9 Bourdieu 2001: 7.
10 E. Santos 1966: 44.
11 Ver sobre estas viagens Almeida 1948.

poucas) que separavam as duas costas.[12] O conhecimento destina-se aqui a servir os interesses de Lisboa e todas estas memórias dão uma imagem do que se discutia na Academia e nas chancelarias portuguesas, bem como das necessidades do mapeamento das minas. A História da África Central e os seus principais actores estava longe de ser a personagem e a preocupação fundamental do processo que a escrita (com todas as suas fórmulas) perpetuava na Europa. É ainda difícil de estabelecer com precisão o momento em que a informação vinda do interior se encontra definitivamente com a que se construía a partir do litoral.

Os espaços económicos e simbólicos (para trabalhar conceitos operativos propostos por Jean-Luc-Vellut[13]) têm ainda uma importância e uma significação radicalmente diferente para os africanos e os portugueses e seus agentes.

O autor da *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, António de Oliveira Cadornega, que viveu em Angola, viajando pelo seu interior, entre e largamente tributário de uma plêiade de informadores das mais variadas origens diz:

> Os Jagas que sahem á conquista [...] dão noticia em como do seu quilombo a hum mez de caminho está hum rio muito caudalozo, e de muita largura a que chamão Casabi [...]; e os gentios vêm da outra banda a buscar sal, a troco de sua pannaria [...]; ao qual gentio chamão Muzuas e dizem são vassallos de um senhor mui poderoso [...].[14]

A ideia permanece embora mudem os contornos e se valorize uma ou outra informação. Cerca de cem anos mais tarde Elias Alexandre da Silva Correia afirma:

> A mania que ainda modernamente se tem visto inquietar a mente de alguns governadores para fazer comunicável o comércio e haveres que labram nos Rios de Sena, através do Sertão foi inspirada do plano formulado por Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos que governou de 1616 a 1620 para fazer a conquista do Monomotapa por Angola evitando as doenças que passavam nos rios de Cuama.[15]

Esta aparente descoincidência entre proclamação e discurso anuncia a posterior aceitação da ideia de dificuldades de acesso, povos hostis, cortina de Kasanje, interesses comerciais, que contraria a ideia da facilidade formulada nas suas bases principais (resumindo anteriores pressupostos) na *Memória* de 1773 de D. Francisco de Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho:

> Que tudo o referido é facilissimo e utilissimo bastará fazer duas reflexões, a primeira lançando os olhos sobre uma carta se vê que dos nossos últimos estabelecimentos

12 Domingos Abreu de Brito enviado a Angola em 1590, apresenta em 1592 em Lisboa o seu relato com indicações precisas sobre distâncias e rotas a percorrer (Brito 1931).
13 Vellut 1972.
14 Cadornega 1940-1942, III: 219.
15 Correia 1937, I: 221.

ocidentais por Caconda aos orientais por Chicova e Tete apenas haverá cem léguas a descobrir.[16]

As datas para que nos remetem os trabalhos referidos são também posteriores à chegada a Luanda dos primeiros chefes Lunda[17] e ao início de um processo de refazer identidades e reconstrução de estados e suas poderosas hierarquias políticas notificado pela escrita e registado pela tradição oral, a partir do século XVII.

O conhecimento e as suas novas formulações é aqui comandado pelos dados fornecidos pelos integrantes das diferentes correntes migratórias que participaram e deram notícia da formação de estados fortemente centralizados no interior de África.

Está assim fora de questão considerar que as informações de Correia Leitão e de António Grizante "Viagem que eu o sargento mór dos moradores do destrito do Dande, fiz as remotas partes de Cassange e Olos, no anno de 1755 tê ao seguinte de 1756"[18], sejam as primeiras a conter informação sobre o forte estado centralizado, organizado em torno de *mwant yav* e das estruturas políticas e institucionais dele dependentes.

Autoridades linhageiras de subordinação Kinguri fizeram chegar à costa informação sobre algumas das complexas estruturas políticas de origem lunda, bem como, torneando os canais hostis, informaram a Lunda da diversidade de mercadorias estrangeiras disponíveis na costa. O facto do tráfico de escravos ser, durante muitos anos, alimentado pelo fornecimento enviado directamente

[16] Referido por Lacerda e Almeida (1926). Ver também "carta enviando a cópia do relatório do Governador dos rios de Sena, Dr. Francisco José de Almeida, datada de 14 de Março de 1800, publicada nos *Arquivos de Angola* III (16 a 18, Jan. a Mar.), 1937: 31, 32.

[17] Luanda significa metaforicamente como espaço de informação e dominação portuguesas. A mitologia em torno da migração para oeste de "Kinguri" permite sobretudo analizar informação presente e mais tarde esquecida nos centros de difusão do conhecimento sobre o interior africano. Henrique Dias de Carvalho narra assim essa progressão para oeste de chefias Lunda: "Já em Massangano havia o presidio portuguez, e Quingúri, passando com os seus o Cuanza a vau acima de Cambambe, mandou participar ao capitão-mór que elle e os seus eram amigos que vinham de longe e se dirigiam a Muene Puto. Mandou o capitão chamá-los, e por Quingúri soube terem elles abandonado as suas terras para lá do Rurúa (Lulúa) e que guiando-se sempre pelo sol ali chegaram [...]"(Carvalho 1890: 77). Numa nota de rodapé na página 78, Henrique de Carvalho ensaia depois a partir da informação de que dispõe uma cronologia para a "estadia em Luanda" de Kinguri. Estabelece como possibilidade as datas de 1606-1609 – Governador Manuel Pereira Forjaz, ou 1630-1635 – Governador Manuel Pereira Coutinho. Para lá da viabilidade ou inviabilidade histórica destes pressupostos. (Sabemos que muitas vezes Luanda podia ao nível da informação ser o local dos domínios de Muene Putu, interessa-nos reter o que o explorador diz adiante na mesma nota:) "No primeiro caso**,** para que mais me inclino, ha a tentativa da descoberta de communicação entre Angola e Moçambique, certamente baseada nos esclarecimentos prestados por Quingúri e seus companheiros sobre a viagem do seu paiz a Loanda."

[18] Editado por Gastão de Sousa Dias em 1938; traduzido e anotado (edição de texto) por Evá Sebestyén e Jan Vansina 1999: 299-364.

das regiões sob controlo da Mussumba (Musumb) – capital e centro de exercício do poder lunda) juntou interlocutores das mais diversas origens e criou canais de comunicação alternativos.[19] As rotas do comércio que nem sempre se organizavam em Luanda, passaram a emparelhar com as rotas da informação (geográfica, política, social, religiosa). Do controlo desta informação e da mobilidade dos seus agentes dependeram, durante muitos anos, as relações da colónia com a Lunda como é possível constatar-se através da análise das fontes escritas. De realçar que as fontes escritas, até agora, postas em evidência sublinham e dedicam-se quase inteiramente, à descoberta das minas[20] e ao tráfico de escravos. A tradição oral tem permitido estudar as unidades sociais mais antigas e as novas entretanto surgidas e de certa maneira situá-las no tempo e no espaço.[21] As novas fontes escritas ainda por inventariar (e quiçá por descobrir) tratarão certamente de fazer luz sobre outros aspectos destas sociedades, dos elementos da sua transformação e dos materiais envolvidos na construção da memória.

A historiografia conta com trabalhos importantes sobre as viagens que se fizeram no século XIX[22], quando os interesses da coroa portuguesa mudam e também os poderes dos estados do interior se consolidam.

Resulta assim do cruzamento de vários tipos de informação a ideia de um vasto império organizado em torno de uma capital a um tempo política e simbólica – a Musumb – que estabelecia laços com todos os proprietários de terra dispersos pelo território Lunda, laços esses estreitados pelas profundas ligações entre portadores de títulos políticos.

Constitui portanto matéria da nossa análise (ainda em estado de reflexão e levantamento de questões) o que terá sido o resultado da estadia em Luanda das embaixadas Lunda, enviadas pelo *mwant yav* e pela mulher do *mwant yav*[23],

19 Ver sobre este assunto Heintze 1985: 168.

20 A partir da missão de Bango Aquitamba – Golungo Alto, fundada por carmelitas descalços, irradiou a escrita, mas também missões de demanda do ouro e centro de compra de ferro e aluguer da tecnologia local para produção de artefactos e fundição de ferro. Ver Arquivo do Museu de Coimbra, Diamang, Lunda e diversos, P.E.M.A., cx. 2, Relatórios diversos "acerca do ouro do Lombige".

21 O trabalho de Miller (1995) é disso paradigma.

22 São clássicos os trabalhos de Avelino Teixeira da Mota (1964) e de Maria Emília Madeira Santos (1988). Constitui contribuição importante o trabalho de Ilídio do Amaral e Ana Amaral (1984). Síntese importante que contempla as viagens e também os movimentos migratórios que estiveram na origem da formação da "Constelação de Estados" entre os então territórios Lunda e a Costa da Colónia de Angola é o trabalho de Jill Dias (1998), especialmente pp. 335 a 339. Ver também Beatrix Heintze (1999a, 1999b e 2002/2004).

23 Uma correspondência regular estabelece-se entre o governador António Saldanha da Gama e Francisco Honorato da Costa (comerciante em Luanda desde 1792 e ligado à feira de Cassange desde essa altura. Cf. *Arquivos de Angola*, Iª série, vol. I, n. 6, doc. 7, tratando especialmente das "relações com a nação Molua". Os embaixadores da Lunda chegaram a Ambaca e dali foram conduzidos a Luanda em Dezembro de 1807. Ver *Arquivos de Angola*, 2º série, vol. II (nºs 9 e 10, Janeiro-Abril), 1945.

bem como da chegada à Lunda das cartas do governador com novas propostas de relacionamento e cooperação.

Nos *Arquivos de Angola*, no número 9 e 10[24], totalmente dedicado à questão da Lunda, mormente à viagem de Henrique de Carvalho, efectuada entre 1884 e 1887, publicam-se alguns documentos relativos à correspondência entre Saldanha da Gama e Honorato da Costa e entre o governador em questão e o *mwant yav*. Tal correspondência pertencente ao acervo do Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola integra um surpreendente núcleo reunido no códice 240, cota c-8-3 (nova numeração) genericamente intitulado "Ofícios para Angola" e com um subtítulo a lápis em página posterior "Correspondência do Governador com os potentados negros da Colónia".

Escapou à redacção dos Arquivos (embora em nota se faça uma referência a outra correspondência) a carta que Saldanha da Gama envia à "Locoquêxa**,** May do Potentado Muata Yanvo", datada de Luanda de 5 de Dezembro de 1808. A carta pelo seu teor parece ter lugar importante neste núcleo documental pois ultrapassa a formalidade de um protocolo hierárquico para tocar de forma sensível uma posição titular com o poder de influenciar o Muata.

> Carta para a May do Potentado Muata Yanvo – Não posso deixar de louvar vos muito, muito que imiteis os bons sentimentos do vosso filho o Excellente Muáta Yanvo = a quem espero façais por firmar a constante amizade que parece prometer este estado e da qui vem que fazendo uzo devido do vosso proposta que me entregaram os vossos Embaixadores por eles mandei oferecervos algumas drogas que espero do vosso agrado, me deixaraõ em tudo plenamente satisfeito. Deus Guarde – Palácio de Loanda 5 de Dezembro de 1808 António Saldanha da Gama.
>
> Para Locoquêxa May do Potentado Muata Yanvo.[25]

A carta de Saldanha da Gama anterior no tempo aos trabalhos sobre parentesco que a antropologia consagrou no século XX[26], só pode ser resultado

[24] *Arquivos de Angola*, 2ª série, vol. II (n^{os} 9 e 10, Janeiro-Abril), 1945.

[25] Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, Códice 240, C-8-3, Secção Governo, Ofícios para Angola, Datas 1798-1854, Fl 69, Dezembro, 5 de 1808.

[26] "O *lukonkexa* acabou por representar a 'mãe' do título *mwata yamvo* assim como o *swana mulunda* permaneceu como 'mãe' simbólica do povo Lunda. As duas **'**mães**',** *swana mulunda* e *lukonkexa*, substituiram Lueji e Cibinda Ilunga como encarnações metafóricas do par de princípios fundamentais do estado Lunda posterior [...] O *lukonkexa*, embora originariamente masculino, tornou-se feminino para contrastar com a posição masculina do *mwata yamvo* [...]" (Miller 1995: 131). "A oferta feita por *lukonkexa*, da cauda de elefante, significa a adopção pelo *lueji* das instituições políticas Luba em oposição ao *kinguri*, dentro do quadro do sistema estatal Lunda então existente, uma vez que os Lunda acreditam que os pêlos da cauda de elefante possuem potentes forças mágicas [...]" (*ibid.*: 132).
"A história implica, nitidamente, que o *kinguri* só partiu [da Lunda] depois da superioridade das instituições Luba se ter tornado demasiado óbvia para ser ignorada. A magia da *lukonkexa* corresponde ao que nos sugerem as tradições Lunda e Cokwe sobre o facto de Cibinda Ilunga ter introduzido novas armas, apetrechos mágicos e técnicas organizativas superiores ao equi-

de um conhecimento posto a circular na costa pelos representantes de antigas posições que durante anos se constituíram intermediários entre Luanda e o interior profundo, acompanhando o movimento de estruturas políticas em permanente transformação, mas cuja memória se construiu e perpetuou sobre uma base muito antiga de aliança e adopção.

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pamento rudimentar das linhagens segmentares Lunda [...]. Mas, o *kinguri*, de acordo com os Imbangala, não partiu antes de apreender alguns dos segredos da *lukonkexa* [...]" (*ibid.*).

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ESCREVER O PODER

Os Autos de Vassalagem e a Vulgarização da Escrita entre as Elites Africanas Ndembu[*]

Catarina Madeira Santos

Para a historiografia é ponto assente que as sociedades africanas ditas tradicionais, e distanciadas da influência do islamismo, se definem como sociedades da oralidade, uma vez que nunca usaram a escrita e se organizaram à margem das implicações da cultura escrita. A ausência de fontes escritas africanas remeteria, assim para uma eficiente articulação entre a documentação de origem colonial e a recolha, no terreno, da tradição oral, todo o trabalho de investigação sobre estas sociedades, sem deixar de recorrer aos contributos concertados da arqueologia e da antropologia.

O objectivo geral deste texto é precisamente o de questionar a dicotomia estabelecida, e aceite, entre sociedades com escrita e sociedades sem escrita, a que costumam andar ligados dois outros conceitos dicotómicos, já muito explorados e discutidos por várias escolas de historiadores e antropólogos – o de sociedades com Estado e sociedades sem Estado. Para isso, partirei da análise do caso específico de um conjunto de formações políticas africanas de pequena dimensão, os Ndembu ou Dembos, que se encontravam localizadas no Norte de Angola, ao longo da linha do rio Kwanza, provavelmente desde antes do século XVII. Sem abandonarem a sua estrutura política e social original, mantiveram um contacto secular com estados que dispunham de estruturas políticas e burocráticas estabelecidas sobre a escrita: as autoridades coloniais portuguesas (sedeadas em Luanda) e, por imitação destas, o Reino do Congo, com quem os Ndembu mantinham uma antiga dependência política. A sua história está documentada desde o século XVII até ao século XX, permitindo-nos acompanhar as etapas em que se estruturou o processo que conduziu à apropriação da escrita, assim como a forma como viria a resultar, numa fase mais adiantada, a configuração de um fenómeno singular: a utilização da escrita em contextos puramente africanos a par de uma certa "aprendizagem do Estado burocrático", visível num desenvolvimento original de um aparelho político, em que ao lado do tradicional conselho dos macotas e de instituições não políticas,

[*] Este texto corresponde à comunicação que apresentei em Maio de 2000, ao Annual meeting of the society for spanish and portuguese historical studies (SSPHS), University of New York, 28 a 30 de Abril de 2000 com o título "Escrever o Poder. Os autos de vassalagem e a vulgarização das escrita entre os africanos (Angola, séculos XVII-XX)". Como nunca chegou a ser publicado, foi agora retomado e alterado, tendo em consideração os objectivos deste simpósio.

como as linhagens, se impuseram estruturas directamente decalcadas da administração colonial (os secretários e os Arquivos de Estado).

O que tem interesse fazer ressaltar neste estudo de caso é a possibilidade de reconstituir o processo pelo qual os Ndembu entraram em contacto com a cultura escrita para, a partir daí, perceber uma contiguidade histórica entre oralidade e escrita, atestando assim que uma análise a partir de esquemas excessivamente bipolares e, portanto, claramente empobrecedores, (*maxime* sociedades com escrita/sociedades sem escrita, ou ainda a ideia de que a escrita é uma técnica neutral cujos efeitos nas várias sociedades serão sempre os mesmos[1]) nem sempre dá cobertura à "realidade" que está diante dos olhos do historiador. Talvez por isso mesmo, porque as rotinas historiográficas acabam por conduzir, mais ou menos inconscientemente, para direcções conhecidas e sancionadas pela "autoridade das academias", o caso específico dos Ndembu, e da sua relação com a escrita, tenha sido sucessivamente escamoteado, eu diria até, "tornado invisível", por aqueles que, ao compulsaram códices e documentação avulsa, onde o uso da escrita pelos africanos estava presente, e bem à vista, não reconheceram aí um objecto de estudo de corpo inteiro, autónomo daqueles que eram, e de alguma maneira continuam a ser, os grandes temas canónicos.

O fenómeno colonial nesta África sub-sahariana e sobretudo para períodos em que a colonização formal não está em curso, dificilmente pode ser vinculado a um só padrão de relação. Os níveis de interferência entre sociedades africanas e sociedade colonial são extremamente espartilhados e múltiplos, desde logo porque a própria colonização, discreta e assente nas franjas litorais, só episodicamente se constituiu como força hegemónica e homogeneizadora. A possibilidade da produção de re-arranjos, e formas de bricolage ideológico-cultural, que não devem ser confundidos com mestiçagens e crioulidades, afinal a possibilidade da ocorrência de múltiplas e mutuas apropriações foi condição para a construção da relação colonial.

Quanto aos Ndembu, de facto, eles procederam a uma recepção/utilização do sistema alfabético europeu, o que lhes permitiu organizar "Arquivos de Estado" (e a designação é dada pelos próprios) onde foram guardados, ao longo de quatro séculos, documentos escritos resultado da troca de correspondência entre os chefes africanos e as autoridades portuguesas coloniais e também entre as próprias elites políticas africanas. Trata-se portanto de um corpus documental composto por alguns dos arquivos dos Estados Ndembu, cujos autores são indivíduos identificados, detentores de autoridade, com objectivos de acção política datada. Isso permite, do ponto de vista da pesquisa, ultrapassar o carácter altamente normativo e idealizado das tradições orais que costuma estar na base dos estudos sobre estas sociedades. O processo a que me refiro é de uma enorme complexidade e foi objecto de um projecto de investigação a que me

[1] Sobre este último aspecto *vide* tudo o que se tem escrito na área dos New Literacy Studies.

entreguei com a minha colega Ana Paula Tavares durante alguns anos.[2] Irei, aqui, procurar descrever alguns aspectos desse processo, e tentar, ao mesmo tempo, fundamentar a ideia de que é pela via do poder que a escrita se vulgariza entre os africanos, pelo que será ao nível da própria organização política africana que a escrita revela implicações mais originais. A investigação que entretanto desenvolvi sobre a política de inspiração iluminista em Angola – com um amplo investimento nos arquivos de Lisboa e Luanda – enriqueceu estas problemáticas. Revelou a ampla presença da escrita dos Ndembu, e outros (como os sobas do planalto de Benguela), nas chancelarias coloniais e a maneira como esta aprendizagem da escrita pelos africanos permitiu a circulação eficaz de informação politica e administrativa, entre burocracias africanas e coloniais (nos seus vários níveis, do periférico, ao mais central), e como se estabeleceram rotas burocráticas com recurso a uma retórica conhecida e reconhecida pelos dois lados, para assim garantir a comunicação e estabelecer relações de poder através da escrita. Neste artigo desenvolverei três ideias fundamentais:

1 - O primeiro contacto africano com a escrita apreende-a como expressão do poder do outro, isto é, dos portugueses. A escrita subjaz ao próprio auto de vassalagem, visto como objecto formal e simbólico de poder que institui uma relação de subordinação do estado africano vassalo perante o governo estabelecido em Luanda.

2 - Uma segunda fase tem a ver com a própria prática da vassalidade e permite que a escrita/símbolo se revele aos africanos como instrumento ou tecnologia intelectual, ideologicamente manipulável em função dos interesses dos sujeitos que estão habilitados a usá-la. É aqui que se situa a integração intelectual da escrita e, com ela, se localiza uma certa aprendizagem da organização burocrática do poder político, em articulação com as instituições africanas. O uso deliberado da escrita, pelo lado africano, como instrumento de comunicação com o poder colonial, e entre elites africanas, produz-se através da apreensão de fórmulas e da lenta sedimentação de rotas burocráticas, com vista a produzir efeitos na sociedade colonial e no interior das sociedades locais.

3 - Numa terceira etapa a que este processo conduz, a escrita é de novo convertida ao estatuto de insígnia de poder, mas agora dentro da lógica do sistema político africano, cujas estruturas se encontram definitivamente vinculadas à escrita. De símbolo do poder do outro (poder colonial), a escrita converte-se em símbolo do poder dos Ndembu (do poder africano).

1 - A primeira forma da escrita com que os estados Ndembu tomaram contacto foi a do poder. Poder é escrita e escrita é poder. Desde o final do século XVI (o primeiro exemplo data de 1582), a afirmação da soberania portuguesa, a partir do governo central de Luanda e perante os potentados africanos estabelecidos, socorreu-se do instrumento jurídico, já amplamente

[2] Santos e Tavares 2002.

experimentado nas relações com os Estados asiáticos, que são os tratados de vassalagem.[3]

Os chefes africanos, que se tornavam vassalos do rei de Portugal, submetiam-se a um acto solene e público que tinha a sua expressão mais formal na produção de um documento escrito. A fixação deste acto legal era indispensável. A conclusão de um tratado de vassalagem assumia uma dupla forma: um acto oral e um acto escrito. O acordo celebrava-se na presença de duas pessoas com poderes de soberania próprios ou delegados: o rei de Portugal, representado pelo seu governador em Angola ou outra autoridade portuguesa com poderes competentes (caso dos capitães mores dos presídios, ou os chefes dos concelhos ou distritos, divisões administrativas de carácter mais amplo), e o rei ou chefe africano. No momento das negociações e fixação das condições do tratado, a autoridade africana podia ser representada por uma embaixada, mas o tratado em si mesmo só ganhava força legal com a assinatura aposta pelo próprio rei africano e a execução por este dos actos simbólicos inerentes. Nesta cerimónia o documento escrito, previamente preparado – o auto de vassalagem propriamente dito – era lido em voz alta. Por outro lado, os actos ou gestos simbólicos de legitimação ligados à celebração do contrato, "a encomenda e a investidura" (cuja origem radicava na Europa medieval, se bem que neste contexto o seu sentido primeiro sofresse uma necessária reelaboração) eram articulados com cerimónias gestuais de origem africana. Assim, no ritual da encomenda o cerimonial europeu passou a ser substituído por um conjunto de atitudes procedentes dos costumes locais. A genuflexão do rei vassalo, no momento em que pronunciava o juramento, foi substituída por uma expressão local de sujeição e agradecimento – os sobas batiam as palmas, pondo as mãos na terra e depois no peito, enquanto juravam ser leais vassalos ao rei de Portugal. À encomenda seguia-se a investidura do vassalo, que se designou em Angola desde o século XVII por undamento, a qual, por seu turno, se subdividia em dois actos: a cerimónia do peso, directamente extraída da tradição africana e durante a qual o vassalo era coberto de pemba, simbolizando com isso a instalação legítima no seu território tradicional; e por fim a chamada cerimónia do vestir.

O contrato de vassalagem, documento escrito, continha, por sua vez, um catálogo de direitos e obrigações a cumprir por ambas as partes. Em troca de paz e protecção, os Ndembu juravam fidelidade ao rei de Portugal, o que pressupunha cumprir e respeitar as leis do governo; pagar os impostos (o dízimo); auxiliar o governo na guerra com forças militares; abrir os caminhos e permitir o livre-trânsito ao comércio; receber os empregados públicos, civis, eclesiásticos, judiciais e militares; não acoitar foragidos e viver em paz com os seus povos.

[3] Para Angola, *vide* Heintze 1980, *passim*; para o Estado Português da Índia, *vide* Saldanha 1997.

A escrita começou, portanto, por ser o meio utilizado pela Coroa portuguesa para os contactos oficiais com os chefes africanos. Os sobas ou ndembu avassalados encontravam no registo escrito a legitimação do seu poder pelas autoridades coloniais e ganhavam consciência da necessidade de guardar essa documentação como símbolo da relação estabelecida. O registo em papel salvaguardava assim para o exterior aquilo que era válido oralmente nas relações puramente africanas. Desta forma, os africanos, mesmo antes de saberem ler e escrever e de reconhecerem à escrita a função de instrumento de comunicação, foram compelidos a considerar o carácter vinculativo, fixo e perene do que é gravado sobre o papel. Antes de ser instrumento de comunicação, a escrita foi utilizada e apreendida como um símbolo do poder político europeu.

A escrita é apreendida como símbolo antes de ser entendida como instrumento intelectual. O seu aparecimento é instantâneo, não resulta de uma aprendizagem laboriosa, quer dizer de um processo intelectual. Há um momento em que o processo de incorporação da escrita está em suspensão, permanece inacabado, para só depois ser finalizado, quando a escrita/símbolo abre lugar à escrita/como processo intelectual. E o primeiro passo não conduz necessariamente ao segundo. O processo pode permanecer inacabado, preso à função simbólica, que é também sociológica, dispensando a função intelectual. Essa hipótese de "suspensão", ou de cristalização da "importação da escrita já constituída" não será exclusiva dos Ndembu, e a prova-lo está a narrativa que Lévi-Strauss faz em Tristes Tropiques[4], depois retomada por Jacques Derrida, do chefe Índio dos Nambikwara que, observando como o antropólogo usa o papel para nele gravar as aranhas da escrita, não hesita em imitá-lo, garatujando no papel branco mensagens indecifráveis, mas que, simbolicamente, lhe permitiam um distanciamento em relação ao seu povo e uma equiparação a quem chegava de fora: "il a immédiatement compris son rôle de signe, et la supériorité sociale qu'elle confère".[5]

A modalidade do estabelecimento de tratados de vassalagem como forma de domínio, pelo menos nominal sobre os poderes africanos do interior angolano teve lugar desde o século XVII até à década de 20 do século XX. O mesmo aconteceu com as fórmulas contidas nesses autos de vassalagem. Elas são entre si muito iguais, extremamente repetitivas e regulares ao longo do tempo. Esta continuidade textual e institucional exigiu um exercício intenso da cultura da vassalidade e contribuiu de forma decisiva para uma vulgarização de todo o vocabulário jurídico-político de raiz feudo-vassálica e da própria escrita como forma de exercício do poder. É o próprio estatuto político-jurídico de vassalo que exige aos Ndembu a introdução de uma estrutura burocrática que lhes permita sustentar esse mesmo estatuto.

[4] Lévi-Strauss 1990: 189.
[5] Derrida 2002: 185.

2 - Assim, o segundo ponto desta comunicação tem a ver com a prática da vassalidade, em si. A escrita passa a estar associada à cultura política que os próprios tratados trazem consigo e assim se explica que a documentação dos arquivos de Estado dos Ndembu, trocada entre estes e o Governador de Angola ou os poderes administrativos intermédios trate, na sua grande maioria, questões relativas às relações de vassalagem.[6] A correspondência serve para garantir o cumprimento dos termos do contrato. Trata-se afinal de uma prática da vassalidade a exigir o recurso à escrita por forma a resolver assuntos com ela relacionados, assegurar a harmonia dos poderes e garantir uma certa paz diplomática, conduzida pelas regras da amizade política, com base nessa mesma vassalidade. Exemplo disso é a renovação dos autos e respectivos juramentos de fidelidade, no momento de eleição de novos Ndembu; a confirmação e repetição das cerimónias de homenagem e undamento; o pagamento dos dízimos, ou ainda o provimento regrado dos canais diplomáticos através da troca de embaixadas, e embaixadores, presentes ou simples cartas de etiqueta.

Na sequência dos tratados estabelecidos e em cumprimento dos termos implícitos aos contratos, começa então a circular outro tipo de documentos escritos, abrindo assim novos campos à intervenção da escrita, cuja produção decorre directamente da relação de vassalagem accionada: é o caso dos recibos, livranças ou cartas de dívida que visam o pagamento do imposto (dízimo), exigido aos sobas vassalos; ou ainda cartas que definem estratégias de aliança com o fim fazer a guerra aos inimigos comuns dos Ndembu e dos portugueses.

O estatuto de vassalo implica ainda nova produção escrita na medida em que supõe o enquadramento dos Ndembu dentro da malha administrativa e jurisdicional portuguesa, de que os presídios eram a sede. Os Ndembu integravam-se em divisões jurisdicionais onde se fazia justiça, e se procedia aos registos de propriedade de terras, à redacção de testamentos etc. Verifica-se o recurso à justiça portuguesa para resolver questões que se geravam entre os próprios Ndembu e que tradicionalmente eram julgados sob a forma de mucanos, isto é, como decisões judiciais oralmente pronunciadas pelas autoridades africanas.[7] A recepção do direito português no quadro das instituições nativas, a aprendizagem secular de procedimentos burocráticos, ainda que muitas vezes restringida a fórmulas articuladas com as práticas implícitas às instituições do parentesco, são condição necessária para que uma retórica da colonização, assente em rotas burocráticas, se vá estabelecendo e

[6] As práticas da escrita começam por andar ligadas às relações de poder e têm, portanto, um carácter oficial e público. As questões privadas aparecem sobretudo ao longo do século XIX.

[7] Sobre as múltiplas interferências entre direito colonial e direitos "africanos/consuetudinários", em Angola, e os processos de mútua apropriação e recriação (quer dizer, a maneira como o mundo jurídico africano importa e usa o vocabulário feudo-vassálico, e a maneira como o mundo jurídico colonial apropria e usa o vocabulário jurídico consuetudinário dos Ndembu ou outros, e não esqueçamos que o Governador de Angola era, também, juiz de mucanos, isto é, julgava as causa "indígenas" segundo o direito local...) *vide* Santos 2005a e 2005b.

revelando num uso continuado, para estar a funcionar em pleno na primeira década do século XIX, de tal forma que pode ser invocada pelo governo de Luanda, como uma dado adquirido, na gramática das relações. Sem querer sobrecarregar o texto com exemplos documentais, não posso deixar de propor uma carta em que se dá conta dessa aprendizagem antiga:

Em 1811 um requerimento do Dembo Caboco Cabilo merece do Governador de Angola, em exercício uma chamada de atenção para os trâmites do protocolo e as regras da escrita:

"[...] falta de atenção com que escrevetes [*sic*] ao capitao-mor como se mostra da sobre carta que lhe dirigistes faltando com aquele tratamento civilidade e subordinação com que todos os Dembos e Souvas tem escrito aos seus capitães mores chamando-os de vossa merce mostrando-lhes o maior respeito, parece que sendo esse estilo muito antigo e louvável devia ser por vós praticado em prova da vossa obediência e bondade de animo […]".[8]

3 - A apreensão africana de uma relação entre escrita e Estado garantida pelos tratados de vassalagem parece não ter desencadeado de imediato, situações de conflito entre o sistema das linhagens e as concepções de burocracia e de organização política implícitas ao sistema colonial. Estas relações de vassalagem não chegavam de facto a perturbar os fundamentos da organização política interna dos Ndembu, e ao mesmo tempo, funcionavam como instâncias de legitimação dinâmica do poder africano. O próprio vocabulário político-jurídico de raiz feudo-vassálica passou a ser utilizado na definição das relações entre os Estados africanos, enquanto o estatuto de vassalo veio a revestir-se, paradoxalmente, de uma ambiguidade que se revelava igualmente conveniente aos portugueses e aos africanos e, em algumas circunstancias, altamente interessante para os próprios Ndembu. Os enunciados (a forma que assume a ideia) diferem em relação à enunciação (a ideia ou compromisso político que o enunciado refere), mas o reconhecimento mútuo da sua (do enunciado) validade garante a hipótese de negociação. A verdade é que, durante décadas de colonização, há uma retórica comum que se vai estabelecendo de parte a parte, e quando ela é quebrada ou desrespeitada, a comunicação deixa de se estabelecer.

Ao invocarem o seu estatuto de vassalos, os sobas conservam no entanto uma autonomia política capaz de manter-se na sombra, desde que não faça intervir os poderes tutelares. Pode assim entender-se que no final do século XIX, e numa conjuntura latente de conflito, os Ndembu façam recurso a uma dupla vassalidade, invocando uma antiga ligação de tipo vassálico ao reino do Congo, para se oporem a certas pretensões de Luanda. Mais interessante ainda é verificar de que forma as hierarquias da vassalagem vêm acrescentar-se às

[8] Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, cod. 240, f. 82v, Luanda, 5 de Outubro de 1811.

hierarquias endógenas. O uso repetitivo da cultura da vassalagem origina a sua validação e revitalização fora do contexto original, isto é, fora das relações com o poder colonial, e acaba por lhe conferir novos significados e efeitos, desta vez no contexto africano endógeno onde, como já referiu Joseph Miller, uma qualquer definição de estruturas de tipo estatal exige a consideração de aspectos de sociedade ditos "não políticos".[9] É assim que o tema da vassalidade aparece, na documentação interna, em perfeita articulação com um discurso da oralidade onde sobressaem as hierarquias tradicionais: a hierarquia determinada pela senioridade; ou a indicação das relações de parentesco como metáforas das relações políticas etc.

Ora é esta estratégia das vassalidades que vai permitir aos africanos articular o vocabulário político africano da oralidade e o vocabulário político colonial da palavra escrita. Ela é também o reflexo da interferência entre duas formas de entender e exercer o poder. A grande originalidade da história das instituições políticas Ndembu, na construção dos seus estados e nas relações entre estados africanos, consistirá, assim, no facto de lhe introduzirem estruturas burocráticas baseadas em registos e em instruções escritas. E será desta forma que, no aparelho de estado tradicional – identificado com o ndembu ou soba e seus macotas – passa a impor-se, desde o século XVII, a figura exemplar e reveladora do secretário. A ele se reconhece uma posição hierárquica equivalente à das dignidades tradicionais e cabem-lhe os contornos de figura chave no desenvolvimento das relações diplomáticas com as autoridades portuguesas. Configura-se assim, nas estruturas Ndembu, um quadro que admite e exige até a emergência de novos estatutos. Remeto para uma hipótese levantada num trabalho anterior onde se aventa a hipótese de em certas alturas o posto de secretário poder constituir um forma de estatuto de poder à margem das estruturas do parentesco.[10] O secretário passa, de facto, a estar representado em momentos politicamente prestigiados (assinatura de tratados de paz, embaixadas dirigidas ao Governador em Luanda) ao lado dos macotas.

Foi na sequência de tudo isto que cada uma destas chefias Ndembu veio a criar chancelarias que passaram a funcionar como repositórios da memória política e onde encontramos, ao lado dos tratados e outros documentos ligados à presença colonial, correspondência vária produzida a propósito da própria política interna das chefias dos Ndembu.

Através da escrita, assim, os africanos apreendem a organização do Estado, identificado com o Arquivo e com os próprios materiais da escrita (secretaria, e respectivo aparato). Não só existe, portanto, uma escrita de Estado, como a escrita acaba por ser o próprio Estado. Não é por acaso que nos documentos gravados pelos secretários, em nome dos Ndembu, nos topamos com a palavra

[9] Miller 1995: 55 e ss.
[10] Santos e Tavare, 2002: 440.

"trastesalio".[11] "Trastesalio" não tem significado no português ou no kimbundu, corresponde a um neologismo e equivale a uma forma usada pelos Ndembu para definir as coisas do Estado. Os arquivos dos Ndembu ganham de tal forma o estatuto de insígnias de poder que, em períodos de guerra, os arquivos figuram entre os primeiros objectos de confisco.

Ao longo de todo o século XIX e já no período de confronto com uma política colonial de campanhas militares, depois da Conferência de Berlim (1884/85), os próprios temas de política africana aparecem tratados nas cartas inter-Ndembu, em questões, por exemplo, de eleição de novos Ndembu; renovação das cerimónias da vassalagem; processos de sucessão entre Ndembu ligadas a disputas entre linhagens; informações acerca da origem de títulos políticos e respectiva legitimidade; discussões sobre insígnias de estado; envio de embaixadas etc.

A escrita constitui-se, definitivamente, como um elemento de inovação política que actua ao nível das estruturas estatais Ndembu, sabendo acrescentar-se às formas de organização e legitimação já existentes, aprendendo a coexistir com elas e (apreendendo) sofrendo até as mesmas formas de transformação.

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[11] Referência em documentação a publicar futuramente no volume II dos *Africae Monumenta*.

DO PASSADO AO PRESENTE

Tráfego Comercial e Redes de Comunicação, Factores Privilegiados de "Modernidade"

Aurora da Fonseca Ferreira

Introdução

As novas tecnologias de comunicação possibilitam um intercâmbio de informações, de ideias e conhecimentos, nos mais diversos domínios ou campos, a todos quantos podem aceder-lhes, pelo que podem contribuir como vias mais rápidas do desenvolvimento e da *modernidade*. São reconhecidas as possibilidades e vantagens da utilização das novas tecnologias da comunicação – em particular da Internet, enquanto meio de intercomunicação rápida – no incremento dessa modernidade que se pretende para Angola, país destruído e quase paralisado, devido a uma longa guerra. Porém, outros problemas merecem a nossa consideração. O período de paz que se começa a viver permite afirmar que estão a surgir condições para as populações, de um modo geral, poderem restabelecer as suas vidas tanto individual como colectivamente; nos centros urbanos ou nas comunidades rurais, por toda a parte, a vida parece ganhar um novo alento. As populações procuram retomar as suas dinâmicas e formas próprias de estar no mundo.

As novas tecnologias apresentam meios e suportes de comunicação extremamente rápidos e acessíveis, porém, pensamos ser de ponderar até que ponto podem ser utilizadas com vantagens nos diferentes pontos do país, centros urbanos e zonas rurais, em particular a Internet que ocupa o lugar cimeiro na interligação entre os diferentes países do mundo. Por outro lado, parecendo chegar às zonas rurais apenas as incidências das informações transmitidas pelos actuais meios de comunicação, procura-se então entender por que meios e formas se veicula a informação ou qual e como se concretiza a informação produzida pela *inter-comunicação* em zonas rurais.

Estas questões merecem quanto a nós uma análise, tendo em conta as condições em que esta intercomunicação se vai actualmente desenrolando; questões que são fruto da observação e, por sua vez, comparação com situações vividas em momentos históricos precedentes. O que nos leva ainda a questionar acerca dos tipos de mudanças que parecem surgir ou se tais mudanças assumem novos tipos ou outros contornos. Dito de outro modo: o que indicam alguns resultados da observação e abordagem da "modernização" no processo de mudança, resultante da evolução das formas e dos meios de intercomunicação? O que pode mudar? É o que se oferece? São as formas (redes e vias) de comunicação? Ou ambos, produtos – ideias, outros – e formas de comunicação?

Procuraremos responder a estas questões, começando por apresentar o que entendemos por "modernidade" enquanto noção relacionada com a "comunicação"; quanto à comunicação, a partir de diferentes abordagens, tentaremos mostrar como a entendemos e aprofundar essa concepção ao longo do trabalho, interligando as vias e redes de comunicação para a sua consecução na situação específica de Angola. Em seguida, diremos como percepcionamos a implantação das novas tecnologias e sua expansão**,** tanto nos centros urbanos, dos quais salientamos Luanda como centro principal, como nas zonas rurais. Sendo que a situação destas últimas nos interessa particularmente, passaremos então a desenvolver um estudo de caso, a saber – a região da Kisama – no sentido de perceber as possibilidades de modernização através dos novos meios de comunicação. A escolha recaiu sobre a região da Kisama por vários motivos: primeiro, por razões pessoais, de interesse em continuar a analisar e acompanhar o processo de evolução da região que constituiu o nosso trabalho de tese; segundo, pela sua história de longa resistência à presença e ocupação portuguesa; terceiro, por se situar próximo de Luanda, cerca de 60 a 70 km, sujeita ou não ao seu raio de acção; e, por último, por ser um Parque Nacional, constituindo só por si uma situação particular em termos de perspectiva de modernização e desenvolvimento global do país.

Finalmente, à guisa de conclusão e sem fazer futurologia, procuraremos reflectir acerca dos tipos e possibilidades de mudanças, apresentando algumas considerações a partir de elementos recolhidos que nos possibilitam ponderar perspectivas que parecem vislumbrar-se na região da Kisama, tendo em conta o contexto sócio-económico e político actual que Angola atravessa.

Modernidade e Intercomunicação

Entendida, por vezes, como o que vem de "fora", a *modernidade* é, não poucas vezes, conotada com "ocidentalização". Embora considerando que as forças exteriores a um dado corpo possam funcionar como impulsionadoras de movimento desse corpo e, portanto, de mudanças de um estado para outro, no caso das sociedades humanas, essas mudanças (do estado de "inércia" para o de movimento) podem inflectir em diferentes e diversas direcções. Sendo assim, põe-se a questão de saber quais delas poderão conduzir à "modernidade", no sentido de "progresso" ou como ela pode proporcionar satisfação e melhores condições de vida às populações. A ideia de *modernidade* pressupõe, pois, *mudança* e progresso.

Considerando-se, de entre os factores de mudança, os resultantes da *comunicação* entre Africanos e Europeus, estes últimos, trazendo de "fora" o "novo", contribuíram com a sua presença para as mudanças que – em parte – se foram verificando nas sociedades africanas. Porém, entendemos por *comunicação* um intercâmbio de "informações, ideias, emoções, habilidades"

transmitidas "por meio do uso de símbolos – palavras, imagens, figuras, gráficos, etc."[1]. Constituindo uma forma de interligação entre os homens, a comunicação tem, no entanto, um duplo sentido: por um lado, pressupõe uma inter-acção entre um emissor e um receptor de mensagem[2], resultando por conseguinte numa inter-comunicação; por outro, pressupõe também o sentido de "possibilidade de passagem e de transporte entre dois pontos (fala-se então de vias de comunicação)"[3]: *transmissão* e *vias de transmissão* são pois duas dimensões a considerar relativamente à comunicação.

A noção de comunicação, enquanto "*transmissão* supõe pelo menos troca recíproca de mensagens e de suas significações"[4], traz consigo a ideia de inter-influência entre as partes em contacto ou seja entre "comunicadores", isto é entre "emissor e receptor" compreendidos numa comunicação, em que as mensagens geram respostas e podem por isso permitir certo tipo de relações que variam consoante os *estímulos* – aceitação ou indiferença entre grupos ou sociedades humanas, em presença. A comunicação entre uns e outros resulta pois, geralmente, de uma *interacção* motivadora no/do interesse de ambos os interlocutores, como afirmam certos autores[5], para quem a comunicação, implica uma troca de mensagens, isto é, uma receptividade de ambas as partes e não simplesmente a transmissão de uma informação ou emissão de uma mensagem a um receptor, como se a comunicação se processasse num só sentido. As relações entre Portugueses e Africanos foram exemplo disso.

Angola, considerado um país marcadamente influenciado pela cultura ocidental, devido à presença portuguesa, apresenta contudo aspectos culturais diversificados resultantes também dos contactos da cultura portuguesa com culturas locais, ao longo de vários séculos.

A comunicação entre esses interlocutores existiu em algumas regiões, sobretudo desde os séculos XV-XVI, primeiro directamente, depois através de intermediários africanos, que se foram estendendo por espaços cada vez mais

1 Segundo B. Berelson e G. Steiner, para os quais comunicação compreende "Transmissão de informações, ideias, emoções, habilidades, etc., por meio do uso de símbolos – palavras, imagens, figuras, gráficos etc. É o acto ou processo de transmissão que geralmente recebe o nome de comunicação" (in Rabaça e Barbosa 1987: 152).

2 Rabaça e Barbosa 1987: 151: "A palavra comunicação deriva do latim *communicare*, cujo significado seria 'tornar comum', 'partilhar', 'repartir', 'associar', 'trocar opiniões', 'conferenciar'. Comunicar implica participação (*comunicatio* tem sentido de 'participação'), em interacção, em troca de mensagens, em emissão ou recebimento de informações novas." (realces do autor); Pagès 1993: 196, coluna 1: "Em francês como em inglês, tende a constituir-se uma oposição entre dois sentidos da palavra 'comunicação': o de possibilidade de passagem ou de transporte entre dois pontos (fala-se então de vias de comunicação); o de transmissão suposta pelo menos recíproca das mensagens e das suas significações." (tradução pessoal).

3 Pagès 1993: 196, coluna 1.

4 *Ibid.*; realce feito por Aurora F. Ferreira.

5 Pagès 1993 (ver nota 2).

longínquos, entrecruzando-se na sua marcha em diversos sentidos e estabelecendo ligações entre várias regiões através de uma *rede de comunicação* intensa, de norte a sul e do litoral ao interior. Porém, foram particularmente as relações que se desenrolaram nos meados do séc. XIX que vislumbramos como as melhores condições de uma intercomunicação reciprocamente aceite. Essas relações coincidem com uma época cuja percepção é de progresso ou que acredita na via da "modernidade" para as sociedades africanas, numa extensão alargada a uma boa parte do território, compreendendo a Angola actual, como veremos mais adiante no caso da Kisama.

O estímulo ao qual responderam as sociedades africanas de Angola, após a abolição do tráfico de escravos e a implantação do tráfico "lícito", assentava fundamentalmente no *comércio* local e de longa distância; mas, enquanto o comércio de escravos, devido à exportação da mão-de-obra, empobrecia as próprias regiões, o comércio de diversos produtos ou bens beneficiava de uma procura mais diversificada (no entanto, a mão-de-obra utilizada na recolha e produção das mercadorias a serem exportadas continuava a ser escrava). Este comércio trazia não só maior riqueza às regiões, com novas formas de produção, como também acarretava, por sua vez, readaptações a vários domínios da actividade social. O estímulo levava a encontrar novas respostas nessa intercomunicação, num período em que a caça ao homem para exportação diminuía. Embora não desaparecendo, a utilização de escravos em diferentes actividades, contribuía igualmente para as mudanças internas que se verificavam nessas sociedades em que eram mantidos no comércio interno de complementaridades entre sociedades africanas.[6]

Esse comércio desenvolvia-se através de largas *redes de comunicação* que ligavam as vias de acesso aos diferentes mercados existentes pelo interior do território, funcionando no entanto por meio de *agentes* ou *intermediários* que proliferavam, sendo eles uma das causas ou motivadores desse estímulo. Para estes, o estímulo proveniente do emissor principal, correspondia à partida aos centros de exportação instalados no litoral.[7]

Nesta rede, *as vias de comunicação*, compreendendo "estradas" ou rotas eram, na sua maioria, bem antigas e há muito frequentadas e continuavam a ser utilizadas, na sua maioria, por Africanos enviados ou representantes dos Europeus. Eram eles os conhecedores do "interior" e os melhores interlocutores junto dos outros Africanos de quem conheciam os costumes ou estavam culturalmente mais próximos. Assim, esses intermediários, embora transmissores eram, de forma indirecta, emissores secundários em função de uma

[6] Exemplos de diferentes situações e das mudanças internas em algumas delas são apresentadas por Henriques (1997), relativamente às sociedades Imbangala e Cokwe.

[7] Estes centros constituíam, em parte, as referências do início e fim de redes de transmissão de mensagens, passando assim por uma série de intermediários que podiam, cada um deles, estabelecer ou introduzir interferência na mensagem precedente por razões de vária ordem.

ideia inicial, mas que se foi transformando na mensagem de um novo emissor**.** Como tal a mensagem inicial sofreu alterações. A comunicação, enquanto mensagem, foi assim comportando a interferência dos vários intervenientes ao longo da cadeia de transmissão de mensagens; em termos de comércio, a mensagem acabou – em certa medida – por estar nas mãos desses intermediários, tornando desse modo os resultados ou efeitos pretendidos pelo primeiro emissor bastante limitados. No entanto, os meios de transmissão foram-se aperfeiçoando, trazendo novas possibilidades de comunicação

Comunicação, Novas Tecnologias e Possibilidades da sua Implantação em Angola: Centros Urbanos e Zonas Rurais

Hoje, as vias e meios de comunicação são mais rápidos, graças às novas tecnologias das telecomunicações e dos meios electrónicos, permitindo uma comunicação rápida e directa**.** Tais meios de comunicação tornam possível a transmissão directa da mensagem, mesmo que a longa distância. Desse modo, o objectivo é atingido com um escasso número de intermediários. A intercomunicação**,** ao processar-se por via de *transmissão directa*, pondo emissor e receptor em intercomunicação (por exemplo, nos casos de uma reunião ou encontro em grupo, de leitura de um texto de livro ou consulta à Internet), é diferente daquela que se efectua ou se processa por via de *transmissão indirecta*, em que a "transmissão" é realizada numa cadeia e rede de transmissores, em intercomunicação. A transmissão de uma mensagem por via directa permite ao receptor a sua própria selecção da informação, enquanto que por via indirecta ou através de uma cadeia de intermediários é uma transmissão seleccionada e filtrada tanto pelo(s) emissor(es) como pelos transmissor(es), o que significa interferência de vários agentes ao longo da cadeia, com tudo o que ela comporta de entendimento e recepção da mensagem. É pois o que se passa com vários procedimentos na comunicação indirecta.

As vias mais recentes de comunicação – transportes aéreos, telefone, Internet, e outras – permitem levar a mensagem ao receptor mais rapidamente ou quase imediatamente, pelo que ganham cada vez mais vantagem sobre os meios de comunicação anteriores à utilização do transporte mecânico ou terrestre. Extremamente rápidas e de fácil acesso, essas novas tecnologias permitem hoje *antecipação e concertação* de ideias, de resoluções de problemas e soluções, nos mais diversos domínios, influenciando e desempenhando um papel preponderante nas transformações necessárias ao desenvolvimento de um país como Angola. Nos nossos dias, de entre as novas tecnologias da comunicação, a preponderância parece caber à Internet devido ao acesso mais rápido à informação e à mais longa distância, num momento em que antecipação e rapidez são determinantes na prioridade de obtenção do que se pretende ou pode ser oferecido.

Ao longo de um processo histórico de aproximadamente um século, Angola apresenta-se em posição interessante no sentido de se procurar avaliar até que ponto os novos meios de comunicação estão ou não a influir em tais transformações. Quase sem contacto com o exterior (europeu), bloqueado o campo de poder e de comércio aos Africanos, igualmente condicionada a instrução aos seus naturais, Angola viveu durante o período colonial um período não africano de gestão dos seus interesses. Recuperadas as condições de autonomia para escolher, dirigir e gerir os seus próprios interesses, Angola encontra-se perante um desenvolvimento tecnológico que é ainda muito incipiente porquanto marginalizado desse processo; tentando todavia integrar-se neste processo, Angola procura acompanhar essa nova dinâmica na via da modernização, que pode contribuir para o seu progresso.

Essas transformações, devendo reflectir-se em todo país, dependem do centro de decisão que, no quadro do sistema de poder centralizado, irradia da capital do país onde se encontra instalado. Nessa conformidade, a direcção e gestão de implantação e extensão das vias ou meios de comunicação parecem seguir o mesmo exemplo, centralizado. Por conseguinte, existem níveis de implantação diferentes conforme a categoria da região ou local, no quadro da hierarquia político-administrativa do país.

As condições de acessibilidade às novas tecnologias de comunicação (vias e/ou suportes, meios)[8] verificam-se por enquanto nos locais onde existe o acesso à energia eléctrica; muito provavelmente, dentro de poucos anos, assistiremos à sua extensão a todo o país bem como à possibilidade de acesso, por parte das populações, às novas tecnologias via satélite, como já se processa para a comunicação da telefonia sem fios ou do telefone.

Enquanto isso, as possibilidades de acesso às novas tecnologias da informação são viáveis sobretudo nos *centros urbanos* e, mesmo nestes, com bastantes reservas ou condicionalismos. Poucos devem ser os centros urbanos preparados para receber a instalação dessas tecnologias, embora seja difícil saber exactamente quais os centros que estão em condições de recorrer a elas ou que as utilizam, por ausência de dados estatísticos publicados sobre o assunto. De qualquer modo, em Angola, pode afirmar-se, com relativa certeza**,** que a sua utilização, particularmente da Internet, é ainda bastante restrita, até nos centros urbanos; e, mesmo nestes, é provavelmente Luanda o centro com maior número de utilizadores, sobre o qual podemos falar e que, para o caso, mais importa. Pode observar-se a procura de acesso a esses meios em casas comerciais, de aluguer de utilização de tempo a preços elevados, tendo em conta os baixos

[8] Os dados são fruto da observação, sem confirmação por estudos e conhecimentos exactos sobre a situação da sua implantação e expansão pelo país; procurou-se pelo menos obter dados a propósito dos meios computorizados e utilização de Internet nos Serviços de Estatística, tendo-nos sido dito não os possuírem e enviando-nos ao Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia; procurando contactar directamente um trabalhador ligado à Instituição**,** falharam as possibilidades com os meios à disposição e isso na capital, Luanda.

salários em relação ao elevado custo de vida. A limitada utilização destas novas tecnologias é pois extremamente condicionada às necessidades de contacto urgentes (o e-mail). Fora isso, são os devotados (cibernautas) cuja utilização se põe em termos outros, que não somente os de necessidade.

O *centro urbano de Luanda* é o principal aglutinador das diferentes actividades do país, desde a política ao sector cultural, passando pelo económico-social. Dinamizador das demais, este é na realidade o que detém no presente – como deteve no passado – a liderança.

Desde as primeiras relações estabelecidas entre Africanos e Europeus, neste caso Portugueses, essa capital assumiu a liderança dos interesses destes últimos, após o breve período de Mbanza Kongo enquanto centro de poder político que se estendia aos outros territórios africanos sob seu controlo. Essa assumpção de Luanda como centro de decisão acentuou-se mais particularmente a partir da colonização efectiva ou dita "moderna".

Em meados do século XIX, o território sob administração política e administrativa de Luanda, pouco ultrapassando os trezentos quilómetros da costa ao interior, delimitava a área sob influência quase directa do poder colonial português e, consequentemente, condicionava a comunicação "directa com o mundo". Apenas os habitantes da colónia e os que trabalhavam directamente com Portugueses podiam sofrer a sua influência em diferentes domínios, contudo variando as formas de contacto e de relação. No seu *hinterland*, ou nas fronteiras desse território sob poder europeu, o tipo de relações nos diferentes domínios eram estabelecidos e condicionados pelos poderes locais, de acordo com as suas conveniências**,** como vários autores[9] demonstraram e diferentes exploradores e comerciantes[10] referiram.

Nesses contactos, os centros urbanos, dos quais sobressaiu Luanda, registaram uma absorção maior da cultura proveniente do exterior do que as zonas rurais, pelo facto de se verificar neles uma inter-comunicação mais directa e intensa. A capital, Luanda**,** funcionava como centro polarizador de mudanças, isto é, influenciando não só enquanto director e gestor**,** como também enquanto representação do "modelo" de sociedade e de estilo de vida. Porém, houve sempre sociedades que procuraram manter-se afastadas desse modelo, aproveitando contudo certas propostas desse centro.

Fora desses centros, mais especificamente nas *zonas rurais*, que contrapomos aos centros urbanos, tudo nos leva a admitir não se poder mesmo falar de conhecimento de novas tecnologias, nem mesmo para as periferias mais próximas dos centros urbanos, que deles dependem e com eles estão directamente interligados.

[9] Dias 1985, 1989, 1994; Santos 1986; Henriques 1997; Ferreira 2000, I; entre outros.

[10] Livingstone 1857; Silva Porto, in Santos 1986; Henrique de Carvalho, in Henriques 1997; Batalha 1928; entre outros.

A região da Kisama, zona rural e simultaneamente periférica em relação a Luanda tem, por essa dupla razão, particular importância; importância reforçada tanto pela sua história passada como pela situação no presente. Com elementos retidos e acompanhando, de certo modo, a situação da mesma até muito recentemente (2002), pretendemos descortinar a dinâmica dessas sociedades (passado – presente), procurando realçar os factores que têm contribuído para as mudanças, como estas se processaram, de modo a ponderar sobre as possibilidades de transformações rápidas no futuro; além disso, procurando reflectir acerca das possibilidades da utilização das novas vias e tecnologias da comunicação em zonas rurais, acrescendo aqui o facto singular desta região também ser um Parque Nacional.

Evolução e Mudanças nas Zonas Rurais, em Tempo das Modernas Tecnologias: o Caso da Kisama

A proximidade da região da Kisama em relação a Luanda, cidade capital, é já de si significativa para que outras questões se levantem quanto à sua situação sócio-económica e perspectivas de desenvolvimento.

Enquanto território, estendendo-se pela margem sul do rio Kwanza até ao rio Longa e do litoral até ao Dondo, no interior, Kisama dista da cidade capital cerca de 60-70 km e a ela esteve quase sempre ligada, desde os seus primórdios até aos anos 80 do século XX, altura em que, pela nova divisão administrativa, passou a integrar a província do Bengo, nome de um rio ao norte de Luanda, constituindo um dos seus municípios.

Região de populações com perturbações constantes, com uma longa história de resistência à ocupação portuguesa, importa-nos destacar a sua evolução, comparando dois momentos de mudanças na sua história e sem perder de vista a sua relativa proximidade de Luanda. O primeiro momento antecedeu os conflitos que duraram do último quartel do século XIX até à ocupação militar efectiva em 1918, altura em que a região passou a estar sob administração colonial portuguesa e, desde então, no âmbito da área de jurisdição de Luanda, com excepção dos períodos de ajustamentos de partes do território que eram integradas ora numa ora noutra área administrativa das regiões limítrofes, a do Kwanza-Norte ou a do Kwanza-Sul.

O segundo momento, já no pós-independência e recente, corresponde à década de 90 até aos primeiros anos do novo milénio.

O primeiro período de mudanças, constatadas por nós, coincidiu com uma época militarmente calma, de aproximadamente 40[11] anos, isto é, de 1844 aos

[11] De aproximadamente meio século, segundo Dias 1985: 290, nota 15.

anos 80 de 1800.[12] Foi também este o período das relações mais longas de aproximação entre os poderes político-administrativos e os poderes políticos coloniais. É igualmente uma época em que o comércio parece ter sido mais frutuoso e diversificado.

Favorecida por uma conjuntura não só de paz militar como também económico-social e política, a actividade de troca ou comércio de produtos com as populações vizinhas ganhou novo ímpeto e crescimento. Embora muitos dos produtos fossem comercializados anteriormente, a procura cresceu nessa época, como no caso dos produtos provenientes da caça e da colecta: a cera, a urzela, a goma copal e o marfim.[13] Outros produtos tropicais de exportação foram também ganhando importância nos mercados internacionais, e, por isso, a procura desses produtos constituiu igualmente factor de incentivo à sua produção e comercialização como foi o caso do óleo de palma, do rícino, da jinguba, do café e do tabaco, de entre os mais procurados. O comércio desses produtos efectuava-se principalmente nas casas de comércio dos centros coloniais, nos mercados e feiras ao longo do Kwanza; enquanto que ao Sul (junto ao rio Longa) e à Este o comércio era inter-regional, fundamentalmente de complementaridade de produtos de consumo com populações limítrofes. São ainda de realçar no comércio dessa época, os artigos ou produtos artesanais, e que até então eram pouco referidos pelas fontes escritas, parecendo indicar não terem feito parte dos produtos de comércio. O material de fabrico provinha de várias matérias locais, tais como do marfim de diferentes animais, das matérias vegetais, das madeiras de certas árvores (até mesmo para construção de canoas; outras árvores serviam para múltiplos aproveitamentos, como era o caso do imbondeiro ou baobab). Os artigos artesanais devem ter tido uma grande importância pois perduraram ainda durante algum tempo ao longo do período colonial, mas terá perdido muito do seu interesse e quase desaparecido no pós-independência.

Essa dinâmica comercial que a região conheceu repercutiu-se pois sobre outros domínios da actividade das populações, resultando daí algumas mudanças sócio-culturais, mas também políticas[14]: em certas sociedades – umas mais do que outras – e destas, principalmente, as mais próximas dos núcleos coloniais, o respeito pelas hierarquias e certos usos e costumes então vigentes foram-se modificando.

Embora o comércio tenha sido o estímulo fundamental dessa dinâmica, a comunicação processou-se através de *redes* onde intervieram vários agentes que influíram na concretização desse comércio, para além de exercerem influência

[12] A data de 1844 é referida por Menezes 1848: 140, entre outras fontes; quanto aos conflitos que tiveram lugar após os anos de 1880, ver Ferreira 2000, II.

[13] Produtos comercializados desde o séc. XVII: cera, goma copal e marfim (Ferreira 2000, I).

[14] Havendo por vezes conflitos com os poderes coloniais, sem contudo chegarem a situações de confronto armado (ver Ferreira 2000, II).

noutros domínios. Uma vez que, na comunicação, a receptividade da mensagem depende da transmissão da mensagem ao receptor visado, a saber – a sua adequação ao objectivo pretendido –, o papel dos agentes ou *intermediários* reveste-se de particular relevância. Desse modo, consideramos ser importante identificar o perfil de alguns dos participantes ou intermediários na rede de comunicação das relações de comércio na época.

Os intermediários/mensageiros da informação/solicitação nas trocas comerciais, são Africanos que vivem na sua maioria entre duas culturas e dois mundos, conhecendo, relativamente, tanto um como outro. Estão neste caso os designados "moradores", negros ou mestiços que haviam enriquecido com a prática do comércio de escravos[15]; outros intermediários eram antigos escravos, enviados a mando dos comerciantes dos centros comerciais, principalmente de Luanda e de outros centros (ou núcleos) ao longo do Kwanza, corredor mais antigo de penetração colonial.

O comércio era exercido quer nas vizinhanças da região, principalmente nos núcleos coloniais, quer na própria região; no caso da Muxima, núcleo colonial situado na própria região, existiam Africanos que eram os próprios interessados, porque comerciantes, e não intermediários. No caso, a sua mensagem era pois directa, uma vez que eram emissores. Havia também outros interessados que provinham do governo central, dependente da metrópole – emissor inicial da comunicação – de onde partia a solicitação dos produtos de interesse para o comércio ou a ele ligado. Ora, a rede que partia do governo central da colónia, em Luanda, ao local de recepção da mensagem era relativamente curta e rápida comparativamente a outras zonas rurais do *hinterland* e mais para o interior, tendo em conta as condições de transporte (os homens eram os próprios carregadores); essas situações não deixaram certamente de jogar um papel importante na cadeia de relações comerciais com as populações da Kisama.

A resposta imediata à solicitação directa, de Luanda nem sempre provinha do receptor directo; na maioria dos casos, os chefes principais não eram os receptores directos na medida em que tinham, por vezes, restrições relativamente às deslocações para fora do seu território; tinham pois, igualmente, os seus intermediários, no sentido de salvaguardar os interesses da Kisama. Estes intermediários, representantes dos chefes, eram naturais da região, que deixavam o território e se deslocavam aos locais de troca ou comércio sem, no entanto, se afastarem muito dele.[16]

É na época desse comércio de produtos (de tráfico "lícito"), e de alguma forma a ele ligado, que se assiste à existência de uma relação mais próxima

[15] Dias 1994: 50; e o governador Ferreira do Amaral, especificava em 1882, época de grande actividade comercial, que os "moradores" eram indígenas "com um grau de civilização já bastante avançado e afastados da selvajaria dos gentios", constituindo quase os únicos sertanejos que se internavam pelos territórios ao sul de Benguela e do interior de Angola (in Oliveira 1968: 657).

[16] Ferreira 2000, I.

entre as partes interessadas. É também por essa altura que se assiste a um maior afluxo de "moradores" ao interior da região, cujas consequências se farão sentir posteriormente. Além destes, designados na segunda metade do século XIX como "filhos do país", alguns raros brancos aí tiveram acesso.[17]

Luanda teve então uma relação relativamente próxima com a região, com a qual existia uma interacção num período em que as populações da região gozavam ainda de liberdade e de autonomia para as suas escolhas e respostas às propostas que se lhes apresentavam e que correspondiam às suas conveniências e interesses. A época de ocupação e colonização alterou em grande parte esse tempo; contudo, este processo só seria concretizado depois de 1918, devido à resistência – resistência que constituiu, frequentemente, uma referência quanto ao posicionamento político e sócio-cultural das suas populações.

Efectuada a ocupação, uma boa parte da região passou a constituir uma Reserva de Caça (1938), mais tarde Parque Nacional (1957), cujas razões do seu surgimento não foram ainda devidamente estudadas. O facto de se ter criado na região um Parque influenciou, provavelmente, a dinâmica da mesma. Convêm salientar que o período da colonização portuguesa "moderna" condicionou em muito as iniciativas e a governação autónoma das populações locais sem que, no entanto, estas deixassem de conduzir e gerir os seus interesses mesmo nos limites de um sistema que lhes era imposto. Durante esse período de administração colonial, embora pouco estudado, sabemos que a resistência continuou em moldes diferentes, isto é não armada.[18]

As relações decorrentes da conjuntura favorável dos anos de 1844 aos 80 de 1800, não deixaram certamente de contribuir para modificar o modo de vida anterior, porém de forma menos acentuada no que diz respeito às populações rurais do interior, mais afastadas dos poderes administrativos locais

No início dos anos de 1990 havia ainda situações de extrema carência a que não deve ter sido alheia a situação de guerra. Porém, por ocasião de deslocações mais recentemente realizadas a certas zonas – antes não visitadas devido à situação de guerra[19] – observamos um certo dinamismo das populações da região relativamente aos anos precedentes. Constatámos que várias actividades produtivas tinham lugar em certas zonas sem que isso parecesse desequilibrar grandemente o eco-sistema do Parque.

De entre as actividades que se praticam na região, sobressaem a agricultura e a comercialização dos produtos locais, praticadas em quase todas as zonas e por quase todas as famílias; verifica-se também o cultivo de produtos cuja

[17] Entre eles um inglês, Hamilton, referido por Price (1871-72), um alemão, Mattenklodt, que faz uma das ricas e importantes etnografias sobre a região (1944) e um português, Batalha, narrador da sua estadia (1928).

[18] Ver Ferreira 2000, I, e algumas referências a situações específicas em 1992: 57.

[19] No entanto, as populações aí continuavam e resistiam às operações militares levadas a cabo nas suas zonas.

diversidade é variável consoante as zonas. É assim que os citrinos constituem um dos produtos comercializados numa determinada zona da região; a farinha *musêke*[20] é produto de outras determinadas zonas, e assim por diante. Estes produtos são alguns dos mais comercializados pois têm condições de aceitação nos mercados. Quanto a outros, embora pudessem ser comercializados, como o mel, por exemplo, implicam já outras exigências: recipientes ou acondicionamentos preparados para transportação; esta última condicionada pelas dificuldades encontradas pelo mau estado das estradas devido à pouca manutenção. Esta situação constitui uma das limitações ao tráfego comercial; porém, são as estradas possíveis, e como tal o comércio realiza-se no quadro de uma rede de camionistas que respondem às solicitações do mercado de Luanda; estes parecem informados, à partida, sobre os produtos de comercialização ou porque vão mantendo contacto com naturais ou então com familiares de originários da Kisama, residentes em Luanda. A produção não deixa de ser fundamentalmente de carácter complementar, limitada a alguns produtos e, mesmo para responder ao comércio, essa acaba também por ser de certo modo reduzida.

Este relativo dinamismo, constatado em certas zonas da região e comparado então ao que se verificou dos anos de 1840 aos de 1880, levou-nos a admitir que razões de ordem económica foram fundamentais para um novo dinamismo, influenciando as mudanças daí advindas, coincidindo, porém, com uma certa estabilidade política e militar.

Provisoriamente, pudemos reter os seguintes elementos: o motor das mudanças, nessas diferentes épocas, esteve ligado a factores de ordem económica, mas foi complementado pelo tráfego e pelas redes de comunicação onde o papel dos interlocutores próximos em interesses e relações foi de significativa importância.

Considerações Finais: "Novas" Vias e Redes de Comunicação ou "Novas" Oportunidades e Perspectivas

O dinamismo das populações da região continua a verificar-se e a diversificar-se nos tempos ainda mais recentes, denotando o retomar do início de uma nova época de mudanças, indiciada desde alguns anos por um retorno a uma relativa autonomia económico-social.

Outras actividades vão surgindo, embora ainda de complementaridade à economia doméstica, todavia com uma rentabilidade financeiramente mais vantajosa: casas de comércio, ou lojas de comércio, e restaurantes ou afins, vão surgindo. As primeiras podem contribuir para tornar a vida das populações mais fácil uma vez que encontram nelas o comércio local, sem terem de aguardar os

[20] Significa "Chácara, quinta, casa de campo, descampado", em Matta 1893.

transportadores de Luanda.[21] As outras, locais de comes e bebes de estrada, não deixam de ser também de grande utilidade, sobretudo, para os motoristas que circulam por uma estrada de tráfego intenso e com raros pontos de refrescamento.

O surgimento destas actividades mais recentes parecem apontar para novas e efectivas mudanças, no âmbito do estímulo comercial, nomeadamente, com a particularidade das iniciativas partirem dos naturais – cujo espírito de autonomia e dedicação à terra foram bastante realçados na historiografia colonial; além disso, é de sublinhar o vínculo de alguns naturais tanto aos poderes políticos "tradicionais" como aos poderes políticos "modernos". São exemplos dessa situação membros da chefatura de Kavunje Kaluhinda ou Ngarinda, em Cabo Ledo, na comuna do mesmo nome, num caso, e membros de Kasembe, na zona dos Loandos, no outro caso.

Trata-se, em ambos os casos, da geração mais jovem, um do sexo feminino e outro do sexo masculino, de localidades diferentes (Cabo Ledo e Loandos – Kasembe) que parecem visionar objectivos mais amplos, na realidade mais "modernos" para a região. No segundo caso, um técnico, mecânico de profissão, residente em Luanda, é o "promotor" da abertura das casas de comércio que poderão servir a várias chefaturas, nos Loandos, e de outra (em vias de recuperação) no Mumbondo, sede da comuna.[22]

Este último jovem, com adequada percepção do comércio (local, produtos, transportação, entre outros), teve também a iniciativa de proporcionar aos familiares e naturais da sua localidade, horas de lazer ao levar-lhes o cinema móvel, visualizado em espaço aberto. Nessa larga zona, designada por Loandos, situada na parte sudeste da região, existem outras iniciativas igualmente impulsionadas pelos seus naturais. De alcance muito para além do imediato, estas iniciativas dizem respeito à instrução, cujo empenhamento nos foi dado a perceber.

As dificuldades com o funcionamento de uma escola do 3º nível (compreendendo o 7º e o 8º ano) foram suplantadas, durante algum tempo, pelo interesse e empenho dos seus naturais. Estes procuraram recorrer a todos os apoios necessários.

É assim que uma organização filantrópica, constituída por naturais ou nativos da área, CNAL – Clube dos Naturais e Amigos dos Loandos, conseguiu contribuições**,** para custear a estadia dos professores, difícil de manter, dada a inexistência de condições aliciantes (baixos salários) aos quais se junta a falta de transportes. Parte do apetrechamento em material à escola é também

[21] Esta satisfação das suas necessidades deve ser ainda mais reconhecida na estação das chuvas, período de isolamento.

[22] Os nomes são omissos**,** em virtude de não termos consultado alguns dos nossos colaboradores (termo mais consentâneo com as relações de trabalho de pesquisa e que se utiliza na História Oral) nesse sentido, isto é, um deles.

proveniente dos apoios recolhidos pela organização – CNAL. Esta tem inclusivamente uma biblioteca, resultado igualmente do empenho dos seus naturais. Mas actualmente, as aulas do 3º nível correm riscos de paralisar novamente pelo facto do próprio CNAL estar a atravessar dificuldades na obtenção de apoios. Para resolver tal problema, os naturais têm em vista propor ao Ministério da Educação, (re)assumir as suas responsabilidades para o funcionamento deste mesmo nível, além dos já existentes. O 1º nível (do 1º ao 4º ano) foi instalado sob responsabilidade do governo, após a independência, com algumas interrupções durante a última guerra; é importante recordar o seu espírito de resistência, que contribuiu para a sua permanência nas suas zonas de origem. Com efeito, durante o período de guerra**,** as populações refugiavam-se nas matas quando atacadas e regressavam às suas zonas de residência quando a situação voltava a uma certa normalidade, numa espécie de vai e vem.

O empenho na manutenção da escola e, mais ainda, o de poder levar a instrução mais longe, como nos foi dado observar *in loco*, na zona dos Loandos, por ocasião de uma deslocação em trabalho de campo[23], merece reflexão da nossa parte. Será que o facto de os naturais procurarem prolongar os estudos nos locais de origem, não implica uma preocupação em salvaguardar a força de trabalho local, por um lado; e, por outro lado, não implicará uma preocupação com a perspectiva de aproveitamento local de gente instruída, abrindo assim novas possibilidades de desenvolvimento local? Podemos mesmo admitir que as preocupações com o Parque se enquadram nas duas interrogações.

O conhecimento para a preservação e rentabilização dos recursos do seu próprio meio torna a formação uma necessidade. Porém, aí, os apoios e investimentos tornam-se necessários; o Estado dificilmente pode oferecer condições a jovens professores para se estabelecerem no interior de um território – um Parque na sua maior superfície –, sem qualquer outro atractivo que o magro salário estipulado oficialmente. Não querendo apresentar aqui as dificuldades de qualquer professor em viver longe do seu local de origem[24], o que está fora dos objectivos que nos propusemos nesta comunicação, queremos no entanto alertar para o facto de que a escola pode contribuir para evitar a deslocação dos alunos para o grande centro de Luanda, como acontece geralmente em várias zonas próximas de centros urbanos. Realçando o interesse presente pela instrução e educação, instrumentos de modernidade, o que se poderá dizer das possibilidades que podem advir da relação escola/conhecimento e uso dos meios de comunicação modernos?

As novas tecnologias não podem (e em muito) contribuir para impulsionar a criatividade e acelerar as mudanças em vários domínios e aspectos da vida na região? A Internet tem, quanto a nós, a posição primordial; contudo, se por um

[23] Efectuado em Setembro de 2002, na continuidade dos trabalhos de estudo ligados à Kisama.

[24] Principalmente perder oportunidades de trabalho com o mínimo para sobreviver (e é mesmo sobreviver que se deve dizer).

lado, factores de inter-relação centralizada e suas redes secundárias devem ser tidas em conta, por outro, também se deve ponderar em função de factores de possibilidades ou conveniências de instalações que mais facilitem a comunicação por meio de outras tecnologias modernas.

A Kisama é uma zona de difícil acesso, quer por falta de estradas macadamizadas ou alcatroadas**,** quer por dificuldades de instalação de rede eléctrica, o que pede, provavelmente, a instalação de sistemas computorizados de telecomunicações. Sendo, aliás, um Parque Nacional, a Kisama deve exigir outros meios e suportes de comunicação perspectivados em termos desta situação. As populações sabem como contornar as dificuldades; os mais recentes telefones, os celulares, por satélite sem fio parecem adequados, mas convém não esquecer que esses meios só se tornam eficazes quando utilizados por agentes – cuja comunicação pode ter melhor receptividade – integrados numa mesma estrutura de afinidades, ou seja, inscritos numa rede e inseridos em objectivos idênticos. Embora, se possa considerar o papel que as novas tecnologias possam assumir na comunicação, elas perdem em funcionalidade se não servirem os objectivos das mensagens transmitidas. São estas que, em nosso entender, podem influenciar, em termos de mudanças**,** a via da modernidade e o bom aproveitamento dessas novas tecnologias passa pelo entendimento da mensagem ou mensagens que toda a transmissão "transporta", respondendo aos interesses e vontades**,** tanto do emissor como do receptor, de modo a obter uma comunicação "sem ruído".

Nesse sentido, deixando a reflexão correr, é com preocupação no futuro que nos interrogamos se essas populações com iniciativas próprias, um vínculo forte à terra, devem ou não ser apoiadas e acompanhadas nas novas perspectivas e objectivos de um desenvolvimento sustentável.

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REFUGEES ON ROUTES
Congo/Zaire and the War in Northern Angola (1961-1974)*

Inge Brinkman

Introduction

One of the reasons that 1961 forms a watershed in Angolan history is the uprising in North-Angola, which started in March of that year. Within a few weeks, thousands of people had died, both at the hands of the insurgents, mainly operating in the name of UPA, and by Portuguese vigilant groups. Reinforcements of the Portuguese army entered the area in May and counter-insurgency started. Hundreds of thousands fled to the bush, mostly heading for the newly independent Congo. By late 1961 the Portuguese army had regained control over the most crucial parts of Northern Angola, but guerrilla actions continued. Only after the Portuguese army staged a coup in Lisbon in 1974 a cease-fire was signed and in 1975 Angola became an independent country.

In 1961 Angola, especially the Northern parts, entered war. When discussing war, the aspect of mobility is often overlooked. The aim of this article is to show that the relations between warfare and movement merit more attention then hitherto allotted. The second aim is to extend the discussion on mobility by referring to the history of ideas: by studying routes not only as realities, but also as ideas, we may arrive at a fuller interpretation of mobility and transport.

In classical European military history, the history of ideas has been ignored for a very long time and it is only with the work of people like Hannah Arendt, Paul Fussell and others, that philosophy, cultural aspects and literature have started to enter the debates.[1] Works on African military history are so scant that hardly any debate is going on.[2] The ways in which intellectual and cultural history relate to warfare in Africa have only cursorily been discussed. There are some works in which issues of post-colonial violence, culture and religion are

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1 For example, Arendt 1976, Fussell 2000.

2 Thornton 1999: 2.

addressed[3], but in these works the aspect of mobility is not included. In this article the focus is on various realms in which war and mobility may interact.

Changes in the realm of mobility do not only have practical consequences. They also impinge on the perceptions of and the ideas surrounding mobility and landscape. War alters the way in which routes and landscape are interpreted. A classical military approach will thus not suffice to understand this theme in full. An important contribution in this respect is an article by Kurt Lewin, written shortly after the First World War. Lewin explains that a peace landscape is endless, round, it knows no front. In wartime, however, direction comes into play: Lewin calls this: "die gerichtete Landschaft" (the orientated landscape). The landscape becomes divided into an area that is "ours", and an area that is "theirs", that is conceived of as a "nothing". These two areas are focussed towards one another: this area that separated "ours" and "theirs" is called "the front", where the fighting takes place. This orientated landscape is also evoked by young men who fought during World War I. Thus Siegfried Sassoon wrote: "The landscape was in front of us; similar in character to the one behind us, but mysterious with its unknown quality of being 'behind the Boche line.'"[4]

Apart from these changes in landscape, things also attain a new meaning. The villages, the houses, walls, and streets, the woods, hills and fields do not remain the same during a war; they become militarised. During the war, they are evaluated in terms of cover, strategy, and conquest. Thus they cease to be "peace things". Their function – to live in, to provide food for a family, etc. – cedes to be important and they become "fighting things".[5]

In his article Kurt Lewin referred to a conventional warfare, namely the First World War. While in a conventional war, the front is a relatively fixed line, in a guerrilla war, the front is everywhere; it remains unfixed. Yet also during a guerrilla war, the meaning of landscape elements changes, the phenomenological nature of things is altered during the war. In order to fully appreciate the role of routes in wartime it is fruitful to take this more philosophical, interpretative aspect of mobility into account, whether it concerns a conventional war between two states or an anti-colonial guerrilla war.

Roads and the Colonial Army

Militarily speaking, routes are crucial in times of war. Victory or loss often depends on the possibilities of transport. This renders the limited attention for transport in military history all the more surprising. State armies try to achieve a maximum of transport capacity by expanding the road network, constructing airstrips, renewing bridges, etc. This is as much true in a conventional war as in

[3] Ellis 1999, Behrend 1999, Ferme 2001.
[4] Fussell 2000: 105. (Boche being a French derogatory term for "German".)
[5] Lewin 1917: 440-447. With thanks to Heike Behrend for the reference.

an anti-colonial guerrilla war. As soon as the war started in 1961, the Portuguese took to building roads, landing strips for aircraft, bridges, railways and other transport elements.[6] While in a conventional war usually both fighting sides engage in this process, in an anti-colonial guerrilla war, only the state army is involved in this sort of transport construction.

In any war, such constructions have an immediate military importance, in that they facilitate the rapid movement of troops, and the army supplies of war material, food, medicines, and other items necessary to sustain the troops. Yet, apart from the direct military importance, there are also indirect advantages in improving transport facilities.

In the case of Angola it concerns a vast country with only a limited amount of places from which export can be organised. In such a context, transport facilities form a relatively important factor in trade and commerce. In such a context, building roads and other means of transport forms an incentive to trade, thus reducing the effects of war and providing the state with finances that can be spent on the war. Furthermore, the Portuguese started an intensive heart-and-minds campaign during the war. Their aim was to win over the Angolan civilian population by providing services in the realm of education and health. Such initiatives necessarily involved providing the means to get to these services. Together with the building of schools and hospitals, roads thus formed an integral part of the Portuguese hearts and mind campaign.

These roads not only functioned as means for transport. In themselves, they opposed the guerrillas; the mere existence of roads hampered guerrilla warfare. "Revolution starts where the road ends", a Portuguese official said.[7] The Portuguese knew the opposite to be equally true: revolution is difficult where the road starts. The roads formed an impediment for the guerrillas and for the fleeing population; they became greatly feared by civilians and guerrillas alike. People crossed only with the "greatest caution", always choosing a stony part so as not to leave traces.[8] Sometimes enormous detours were made to avoid the Portuguese roads.[9] So not only did the roads serve as transport for the colonial troops, they also hindered transport and activities of the enemy. Colonial roads in the context of the war surpassed their function in terms of transport and became a weapon in themselves. Building a road meant victory over bandit and bush. The roads had become "fighting things". They, more than ever, had become a sign of Progress and Civilisation.

Yet, the bush kept on creeping back in. In order to keep the bush out, the roads had to be maintained. This was sometimes done through forced labour.

6 Pélissier 1979: 88-89; *Facts and Reports*, 8 (15 April 1972) n°. 444, p. 17: "Road programme" (from *Provincia*, 5 March 1972); Hanu 1965: 64, 78.

7 Reuver-Cohen and Jerman 1974.

8 IANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", pp. 192-198: Cabinda, 18 December 1967, summary of statements made by Pedro Augusto.

9 Rossi 1969: 157 and *passim*.

Despite the laws that forbade forced labour, in many areas it continued for lack of a labour force and the financial means to compensate them. Especially in areas where much of the population had fled, this could lead to appalling situations. Women and the elderly may be forced to work, sometimes having to walk as far as 20 km to their work place, sometimes not even being provided with food.[10] This flip side of the hearts and minds campaign is not often mentioned; somebody has to build and maintain the hospitals, schools and roads.

Stopping the Army

In a guerrilla war, many guerrilla activities are aimed exactly at hindering transport of the military. Mining roads and blowing up bridges are classic examples of guerrilla action. In Northern Angola, the blocking of roads was a central aim of the rebels The insurgents took to felling trees, digging trenches, and throwing nails on the road surface, so as to impede all means of transport. The Baptist missionary David Grenfell stated that between Bungu and 31 Janeiro, a stretch of some 30 km, 800 trees were lying on the road and 200 trenches had been dug.[11] It is no coincidence that initially crushing the revolt was largely done by air bombardments, transport by road was in the first months after 15 March 1961 next to impossible. The railway, as such a strategic target, could, however, not become a "fighting thing". For fear of endangering the relations with land-locked Zambia, that had high economic interests in the railway transport through Angola, the railway could not be sabotaged by the guerrilla movements.

Even without direct guerrilla actions, the guerrilla presence in itself formed a hindrance to transport. Large areas remained outside Portuguese control for a considerable length of time, despite statements in the Portuguese propaganda machine to the contrary. The UPA, by now renamed FNLA, had after 1962 no extensive "liberated zones" and its organisation was entirely located in neighbouring Congo/Zaire.[12] All the same, "the bush" was feared by the Portuguese and especially in the first year of the revolt, they hardly dared enter it. The notion of a dangerous, disease-ridden bush, full of wild animals had also been part of the colonial discourse before the war started. In the colonial discourse the bush functioned as the opposite of "civilisation", as a central

[10] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.48.E/1, "Autoridades administrativas do distrito do Zaire", pp. 114: Bessa Monteiro, 10 March 1963; *Ibidem,* 122-123: São António do Zaire, 26 November and 10 December 1962.

[11] BMS archives (Oxford), XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, "Angola crisis – correspondence with missionaries A-G", W. D. Grenfell to Clifford Parsons, Maquela do Zombo, 29 May 61.

[12] Marcum 1978: 44.

metaphor for primitiveness.[13] During the war, the bush also came to be associated with violence. In the "impenetrable bush" an "invisible enemy" was dwelling.[14] The dangers of the bush thus became more extensive. This sort of enemy-thinking always plays a role in war, as Fussell writes: "We are visible; he is invisible. We are normal; he is grotesque."[15] In a guerrilla war, however, the invisibility and grotesque character of the enemy may be more readily invoked by the standing army than in a war between two standing armies.

"The bush" constantly threatened "the road". Between March and May 1961 the guerrillas attacked settlements as well, but later they concentrated on isolated *fazendas* and cars on the road.[16] Human and natural "wildness" both threatened Portuguese "civilisation". Soldiers were terrified with the slightest movement at the roadside and longed for the life in town: "the World of the 'balls at the club on carnival's night', the World of neon-lights, of cars that are not turned green, of large buildings, of asphalted roads, the World outside the green of grass and of the bush."[17] The bush was "hostile and treacherous".[18] Not only violent action posed a threat: the roads also had to kept clean, otherwise the "bush" would creep back in. Significantly, a landing strip on which grass grew, was referred to with inverted commas: *"pista"*, to indicate that it was not a "real" way of transport.[19] One is reminded here of an article by Albert Wirz, in which he discusses the colonial fear of and fascination with the bush. Wirz's article related to the beginning of colonialism discovery travels, but also during the war for independence in Angola the notions of impenetrability, monotony, disease, and danger were important.[20]

The impenetrability of an area did not depend on whether there were paths or not. The criterion was whether or not cars could pass.[21] The footpaths through the bush posed, for the Portuguese troops, a threat rather than a means to transport people and goods. When Portuguese troops were sent out to locate people that were known to live hidden in the bush, they were forced to return without having accomplished anything, "due to the extension of the area, with closed bush that forms genuine labyrinths, in a swampy terrain."[22]

13 For example, Felgas 1958: 195.
14 Cardoso 2000: 126, 161, 212.
15 Fussell 2000: 75.
16 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, "UPA", p. 92: translation of letter Ferreira Muanga, entitled: "Important recommendations to all brothers", 9 August 1961.
17 For example, Cobanco 1970: 14-15, 63 (quote), 118.
18 *Ibid.*: 86.
19 Cardoso 2000: 216.
20 Wirz 1994: 15-36.
21 For example, IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B, "UPA", p. 336: Luanda, 21 April 1961; *ibid.*, P.Inf. 13.16.A/1, "Missão Evangélica de São Salvador", p. 92: PIDE note to letter from Miguel Difwene Lusidika to teacher BMS, Lukala, 30 September 1959.
22 *Ibid.*: 308: Luanda, 25 April 1961.

The "bush" fell outside Portuguese control. A report on the Zaire district of 1973 related the division of the landscape to the issue of security: "Only in the *concelho* [part of a district] of São António de Zaire life runs with relative normality. In the rest of the district, the people live quartered in 'islands' under military protection, with their economic activities practically limited to farming the lands in the immediate surroundings, within a range of two or three kilometre; the dislocation of people is only possible by way of air or under escort, that is always delayed and not always available."[23]

This situation had far-reaching consequences for colonial society. It impeded military movement: especially during the rainy season, the Portuguese troops were often confined to their barracks and dared not move out on the roads.[24] It also had consequences in terms of trade, in the social sphere (family visits), and religion. Thus in its year report of 1965, the Roman Catholic church of Ambrizete complained that evangelisation had become very difficult since 1961. The region had been cut into four parts, the first of which, Ambrizete, was surrounded with barbed wire and had five check points. The second part, Tomboco, was the area of the mission, where the population lived in concentrated settlements and the missionaries were only allowed to travel under military escort. The third, Quinzau, was difficult to reach and "infested with terrorists". To the final part, Nóqui, there was no direct road; it could only be reached through São António de Zaire.[25]

Secret Routes

The colonial army focused on limiting the dangers emanating from the bush. Their method to achieve this was to use armoured transport (tanks and heavy weaponry. The guerrillas tried to use the bush, seeking to find ways of transport without being detected. Their method was secrecy. Based in Congo/Zaire, they depended on cross-border routes unknown to their enemy: to enter and leave the war zone, to smuggle in arms, ammunition, medicines and other supplies into the guerrilla bases in the war zone.

The method of secrecy goes back a long time. In the 1930s colonial measures forcibly moved people in Northern Angola to the roadside.[26] This was meant to integrate the population into the colonial system, to force them into the colonial grid. Yet, many people retained a second home in their old fields,

[23] Estado Português de Angola 1973: 14.

[24] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, SC-CI (2) 2126/SR 59, UI 2943, "UPA", vol. 2, p. 480: Press conference by Pierre-Pascal Rossi in Kinshasa, 3 September 1968.

[25] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 13.10.B/5: "Missão Católica de Ambrizete", pp. 4-5: "Relatório da Missão Católica do Ambrizete, Tomboco 1965". In the thesis of Frederick James Grenfell on the history of the Baptist Church in the North, one chapter is called: "Roads: cars: evangelisation": Grenfell 1998: 16-21.

[26] Grenfell 1998: 15.

where they often grew coffee. Many of these homes were connected through footpaths that ran parallel to the colonial road network. People would only occasionally stay over night near these fields. Even before war broke out in March 1961, many people sought refuge in these second homes in order to avoid the Portuguese police, which became more active as of the end of the 1950s. When the war started, the number of people retreating to these former homes increased: especially during the earlier stages of the war, the Portuguese did not yet know these areas.[27]

For the Portuguese troops, these forests appeared an impenetrable bush, in which an invisible enemy was hiding. For the population of the North the forests constituted a possibility to flee and to contact people, even over international boundaries. Initially there was great confidence in the tradition of strategies of secrecy and evasion. Álvaro Sengui Minutos wrote to Manuel Dinis: "You know the way to use and I advise you not to have fear because as yet not one Portuguese soldier has come to know this way."[28]

The Portuguese view of "the bush" (*mato*) was unspecified. It was seen as an undifferentiated whole. For the people who stayed in these forests, this was not so. Within the bush, types of paths were differentiated: there were paths for people and animal tracks. The latter were not suitable for mankind: on such paths people would lose their sense of direction and get bitten by insects.[29] There are hints that the paths used by incoming guerrillas were not the same as the paths used by the fleeing refugees: "No army likes a lot of refugees on its lines of communication."[30] So the bush is subdivided in parts through which people went and parts in which only animals dwelt, paths used by guerrillas and paths used by refugees, paths used by people who lived in a particular stretch of forest and paths that led over the border.

The clearing and maintenance of these routes through the forest was a labour intensive affair. Not only the Portuguese used forced labour for road works. There is evidence of UPA using similar methods. Thus Domingos Manuel da Silva – born in Southern Angola, but resident in the North – was captured by a group of UPA guerrillas. He was led before a council of elders and after finding out that he had no UPA membership card, he was tied up and beaten. After

[27] Interview with Mr. Francisco Tunga Alberto, Luanda, 9 August 2002; see also IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 232: translation of letter by Emmanuel Lufuakatinua to his father Nicolau Mazito, Moerbeck, 14 May 1961.

[28] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, "Documentos apreendidos pelas autoridades militares", p. 48: 11 January 1964; see also: *ibid*., 11.12.C, p. 222-223: translation of letter from João Barros to Domingos Diviluka, Cidade (Luvaca), 2 May 1961.

[29] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, "Congo-ex-Belga", pp. 302-322: Ambrizete, 14 December 1963, summary of statement made by Manuel Sungo and Pedro Uncuto.

[30] BMS, XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, "Angola – miscellaneous", David Grenfell, letter April 1964.

some days, they took him to weed the path between Quibengue and Banza Pango, under guard.[31]

Stopping the Guerrilla

Just as guerrilla actions may be aimed at sabotaging the army's transport, counter-insurgency is often aimed at cutting the routes of supply used by the guerrillas. This strategy was also used during the war for independence in Northern Angola. The Portuguese army took to bombing guerrillas on the paths they were using[32], mining the paths[33] and, as of 1966, creating settlements along the guerrilla supply routes.[34] This shows the logistical importance of routes and transport. Each fighting party tries to maximise its own possibilities for transport and to limit as much as possible the enemy's transport capacity. In the earlier stages of the war, the Portuguese did not enter the forests and restricted their action to bombing. Soon however, they started to cut off areas from each other and encircling the areas where people were still hiding. Pedro Quiala wrote that he escaped death by retreating to "nearly inaccessible" old villages. Fleeing from place to place, he knew the Portuguese were trying to locate them.[35] Pedro Lopes wrote: "We are here encircled by whites and we do not know how we can escape from their wrath. They must know that we are here in the forest, but at the same time they do not as yet dare to enter it".[36]

By the end of 1961, many routes had been discovered by the Portuguese troops. Of course, new paths were constantly in the making, but it became very risky to travel through the forest. People feared crossing from Angola into Congo and travelling within Angola. Many deemed it outright impossible.[37] The

31 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PC12/62: "José Manuel Peterson", pp. 30v, 31: Summary of statement by Domingos Manuel da Silva, São Salvador, 13 January 1962.
32 Cardoso 2000: 290-291.
33 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 558-560: Maquela do Zombo, 25 August 1961.
34 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.26.F "Contra-subversão – Zaire e S. Salvador", p. 89: Minutes of meeting 17 February 1972.
35 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, "Documentos apreendidos pelas autoridades militares", pp. 366-367: translation of letter from Pedro Quiala da Costa to Álvaro Moniz, s.d., s.l.
36 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 76: translation of letter to his son, Garcia Lopes, sl, 18 March 1964.
37 *Ibid.*, p. 155: translation of letter from Maria Vanga to brother Kiala Kianzoavaika, Sanza 20 April 1963.

travel routes were known to be "infested with whites"[38] and to be full with mines.[39]

As with the guerrilla threat to the road, the colonial threat to the bush had far-reaching consequences. Thus the trader André Zinga complained to his brother that his commerce had come to a stand-still because he could not move.[40] People were dying in the forest, because emissaries to Congo could not return with the necessary medicines as the Portuguese controlled the paths that were used.[41] In case of a Portuguese ambush, the UPA guerrillas would never use this path again and a new path would have to be opened.[42] Some people got trapped: they felt being hunted down like animals.[43] João da Silva wrote to his "dear and beloved son in Christ": "I am here like a bird in a cage, but I am sure that the Good Lord will have mercy on us."[44]

The Portuguese military actions into the bush were a shock to the people of the North. The Portuguese could be expected in town or on the road: these belonged to the colonial grid. In the moral geography of the area, the Portuguese were expected to avoid the bush, and to detest it, while the local people, although aware of the dangers of the forests, regarded it as part of their sphere of influence. When the Portuguese entered the bush, the hierarchical divisions of the land were altered: "These Portuguese who persecute us until in our unassailable forests, forests that were left to us by our forebears."[45] The guerrillas tried to re-appropriate the routes they used and to reverse the hunter-prey relation that had evolved. Thus when in 1971 FNLA guerrillas wounded three men, captured two others and killed the militia Manuel Tungo, they said: "It is you who usually follow the track of where we pass, but now it is our turn."[46]

Because of the Portuguese military actions, time and movement became intimately related. Thus UPA guerrillas only went at night, without using any

[38] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 181: translation of letter from "dirigentes de Quingingi" to Paulo Quindoqui, 26 March 1962; see also *ibid.*, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 360: translation of "Guia de transit" from Domingos Monteiro to Miguel Vicente, Baixa de Bongui, 16 August 1962.

[39] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B p. 363: translation of letter from Ferreira to his cousin, David, Quimbumba, 17 September 1962.

[40] *Ibid*., p. 287: translation of letter to António, Coma, 1 June 1963.

[41] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 302-322.

[42] IANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", pp. 192-198.

[43] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P.Inf. 14.15.B, p. 229: translation of letter from João Alfredo Monteiro to his uncle Afonso Mpatu, Quizele, 1 September 1963.

[44] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf 14.15.A, pp. 323-324: translation of letter, Ngundo, 18 September 1961.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213: translation of letter from Tussamba kwa Nzambi Garcia, "Aviso", 7 September 1961.

[46] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. no code, UI 9083, "Base de Kinshasa", p. 178: Carmona, 2 December 1971; *ibid.*, 11.12.C p. 206: translation of letter from Monteiro Diamba and Fernandes Pereira to "Senhores Conseleiro do povo Tange", Quibinga 10 June 1961.

light. If by necessity they had to go during day day-time, they would move during quiet hours: between 5.00-7.00 hours, or at lunch time (12.00-14.00 hours), when the soldiers were not undertaking action.[47] Economic activities, normally carried out during day-time, now were done during the night.[48] Coming from and going to Congo/Zaire was restricted to the wet season: it was widely known that during the dry season the Portuguese controls increased. Thus Maria Tola wrote to her mother: "If you come, you must come during the rainy season, I repeat, because in the dry season the enemies go about with ease and can easily see you pass, whether you are alone or in caravan".[49]

An oddity it is that while at many times people could not move between Angola and Congo/Zaire, letters could still be delivered by messengers. People sometimes informed each other in this manner about possible escape routes.[50] Messengers and guides were indispensable during the war.

Intelligence, Knowledge and Guides

Because of their military importance, routes are also crucial in terms of intelligence in wartime. Each party tries to assemble as much information as possible about the enemy's means of transport. The war in Northern Angola forms no exception. Spies were sent out to try to find out the routes used by the enemy. During interrogations prisoners were often pressed to give the details of the routes used. On the basis of this information maps were drawn. Sometimes prisoners were used as guides to lead the troops to the guerrilla bases.[51]

Routes are always a local aspect of knowledge. A stranger has to ask the way and the local person will be able to give the directions. There has been much discussion about guerrilla movements and their relationship with the local populace, in which the emphasis was put on ideological support and food supply. But I argue here, that in this relationship knowledge is at least as crucial. Eno Belinga and Jane Guyer in an article pointed to the importance of expertise as a form of wealth. According to them, the gathering of dependants as a way toward prosperity has all too often been confined to discussing the labour aspect. They stress that knowledge as a form of wealth deserves more attention.[52] Belinga and Guyer state that with colonialism this notion of wealth in knowledge has largely disappeared, but I would argue that to some extent this

47 IANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", 192-198.
48 *Ibid.*, p. 403: Luanda, 11 January 1973.
49 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, pp. 44-45: translation of letter to Maria Quengue, Ntima Kuzola, s.d.
50 *Ibid.*, p. 290; translation of letter by Álvaro Raúl Domingos to Isabel Ernestina Pinto, Vamba, 30-5-1963.
51 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 302-322; *ibid.*, PC 12/62, pp. 130-131: Luanda, 12 March 1964; Davezies 1965: 140-141.
52 Guyer and Belinga 1995: 91-120.

principle was operative during Africa's wars for independence. It was operative in the South East of Angola, where the MPLA entered as of 1966 and it seems that also in Kenya's Mau Mau labour and ideology were not the only criteria for support.[53] The control over people with local geographical knowledge was very important for both the UPA guerrillas and for the Portuguese army. Knowledge of the terrain was essential for the operations of the Portuguese army. The Portuguese army depended on local guides and they were very keen on turning prisoners into this service. Because of their superior knowledge of the region, local militias were more feared by the UPA guerrillas than the army: the militias knew all the footpaths in the area.[54]

Many of the guerrilla leaders neither knew how to live in the bush nor how to find their way. Especially people from the elite had ideas about the bush that were similar to the Portuguese stereotypes. Manuel Peterson, later to become head of Internal Security, lamented in a letter how he had to flee on foot through "the plain bush".[55] Yet, also those who did not belong to the UPA leadership certainly did not idealise the forest. Fleeing to Congo/Zaire was difficult: apart from the risk of being hunted down by Portuguese patrols, attacks by wild animals posed a real danger[56], and quite a number of refugees drowned while attempting to cross a river.[57] Staying in Angola in the forest was also becoming ever more dangerous: "You do not have pity on us who are staying in this crazy Angola in improper places."[58]

In order to survive in "this crazy Angola", the guerrillas needed people with knowledge of the routes through the bush and of the ways to survive in the bush. They also needed people to carry goods. The UPA leaders depended on local chiefs to furnish them with porters and guides. This dependence reinforced local patterns of leadership, as the UPA could not pass by the chiefs when asking for assistance. Yet, the dependency on guides also brought changes. For example, the expertise of hunters, who knew their way in the forests, acquired a new status during the war.

It was not easy to find reliable porters and guides: sometimes goods and people did not move because no trustworthy porters and guides were

53 Brinkman 2005; Lonsdale 1991: 335 and *passim*.

54 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 31, pasta 1, "GRAE", pp. 198-199: Information from Quiala Selele, Maquela do Zombo, 26 June 1971.

55 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PR 12/369, "José Manuel Peterson", pp. 341, 344-345: transcription and translation of letter to Manuel da Silva and Norberto Vasco, Léopoldville, 28 December 1960.

56 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 176: translation of letter from Manuel to his uncle Monteiro, 14 May 1963.

57 Interview with Mrs. Madalena Mana Tete, Luanda, 8 August 2002.

58 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 96: translation of letter from João Talazuakulula to Maleca Malubonzo, Quinzala (Damba), 18 June 1963.

available.[59] This problem not only faced civilians, for example those who wanted to communicate between Congo and Angola, but also posed problems for the UPA in Angola. Attempts were made to force people into carrying letters and other goods for the UPA soldiers.[60] As good guides were not easy to get, and local knowledge was indispensable to the guerrillas, people with knowledge of the local geography had a certain leverage and at least to some extent they could count on protection. The leaders of Calumbo asked Laurindo Socoloca to release a man taken prison, as "he was in the past a good element, knowing all the local ways (*caminhos gentílicos*) and above all an active person."[61]

Diversifying Flight

The above sections have dealt with aspects of mobility that are predominantly military: logistics, strategies, and intelligence. However, also where it concerns the non-fighting population, war and mobility are intimately related. People may have to flee when war comes: either abroad or to more peaceful areas within their own country. Sometimes the fighting parties take to moving people. In terms of civilian mobility, the war for independence in Angola may be an extreme case in point. In the areas where the war was fought, namely the North of Angola and the South-East, virtually everybody moved or was moved. A large amount of people left their villages and fled over the international border. In the South-East they went mostly to Zambia, in the North into the newly independent Congo (later Zaire); some of the border areas became near to depopulated.[62] Some people moved from their villages into the bush. In the South-East, they mostly went to live with the MPLA, in the North people moved to stay with the UPA guerrillas. Of those people who remained under Portuguese control, the vast majority was moved from their villages to newly created settlements. So, hardly anybody, except in some of the larger settlements, stayed where s/he was before the war.

Just how many people fled to Congo/Zaire during the war is unclear. It is not so easy to estimate, as for example, the Portuguese brought in people from Southern Angola to live in the newly created settlements. Also, before the war there were already many Angolans in Belgian Congo. By June 1961 there were

59 For example, *ibid.*, p. 222: translation of letter João Alfredo Monteiro to João Macumbi, Quizele, 1 September 1963.

60 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B, p. 42-43: UPA, Serviço do Comité Popular, Inga (Nova Caipemba), 3 July 1961.

61 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 105: translation of letter from Vitor Binga e.a. to Laurindo Socoloca, Calumbo, s.d. (1961).

62 Pélissier 1979: 45-46.

at least 100.000 Angolan refugees in Congo, by 1972 their number was over half a million.[63]

Refugees are stereotypically represented as anonymous "waves" of people. Likewise, the movement to Congo-Zaire is presented as one event, as anonymous, massive and unspecified.[64] Whereas of course, the experience of going through the bush to live in Congo/Zaire were extremely varied. As already indicated, by some *assimilados* this journey was seen as an enormous odyssey. There is the example of an anonymous man from Luanda, who travelled in a caravan of seven in February 1961, at night with a car through Ambriz, Toto, Bembe, Lucunga. From there they had to enter the bush on foot, every now and then, seeing "huge men armed to the teeth". In a village, the *soba* at first classified them as *mindele* (Europeans), because some of the party were *mestiço*, but after having been offered some money, he assigned them two guides. They continued their journey still greatly alarmed, because of the stories about cannibalism in this region.[65] Other people, especially those living close to the border, knew the way. Pedro Vida Garcia, a BMS catechist, fled to Congo, but crossed back into Angola several times to deliver Bibles and schoolbooks to people living in the bush near Nova Caipemba.[66]

For one of the laundresses of Kibokolo mission, the journey to Congo was different again. She knew nothing about the plans for attack and had never heard of UPA, when they learnt that "suffering had entered the country". They fled on foot through the night, as they feared Portuguese patrols and "only because of God's help" the group did not suffer casualties when crossing the rivers or from wild animals.[67] Maria and her family took one month to reach Congo. In her account she stresses the loss of property, the lack of food, salt and drinking water, the dangerous route through the forest, over thin rope bridges.[68] These people clearly saw their flight in different ways. Their knowledge and their perception of the terrain and the risks they were taking were distinct. Such variation renders it impossible to essentialise "flight", as if it were one sort of experience.

The tendency, in refugee studies and studies on migration, to portray the movement of one country to another as singular is countered by many examples. In many cases, there were multiple moves. Thus Pedro Augusto stated to the Portuguese secret police that, after becoming an UPA member in March 1961, he was ordered to move to Congo, where he received training in

63 *Ibid.*: 54; Wheeler and Pélissier 1971: 187.
64 Cf. Malkki 1995.
65 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.32.I, pp. 138-146: "Relatório", Luanda, 31 January 1964.
66 Stanley 1992: 458; Jim Grenfell, 'Notes. 3/70', (Lukala, 11 March 1970), consulted in NIZA (Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa), Box 1, "Angola Comité: Historisch Archief Angola 1961-1976".
67 Interview with Mrs. Madalena Mana Tete, Luanda, 8 August 2002.
68 Davezies 1965: 13-14.

Léopoldville. After this, he was a guerrilla in the Serra da Canda until the end of 1962, when, for failure of ammunition, the group moved back to Léopoldville. In August 1963 he went to Damba, by the end of 1963 he went to the FNLA training base in Kinkuzu. In August 1964 he went to Caxito, between March and June 1965 he was in Kinkuzu again. Then he was in Songololo to recruit UPA soldiers among Angolan refugees. In September 1965 he went to the FNLA base in Kamuna. In January 1967 he was in Kinkuzu again. This example concerns a guerrilla, but many civilians also moved from one place to the other.[69]

Exile, Nostalgia and Integration

Contact between Northern Angola and Congo/Zaire had been intensive all along. Men sought to avoid forced labour and were attracted by the higher wages in the Congo. For the people in Northern Angola, Leopoldville, not Luanda, was the nearest urban centre. There were lively trade relations, people living close to the border often had relatives on the other side. Despite the Portuguese language laws, the BMS schools in the Belgian Congo continued to attract Angolan pupils. Events such as the Buta affair of 1913-1914 and the land appropriation by Portuguese *fazenda*-holders in the 1950s led to an increased emigration.[70] While Mbailundu people from the South were brought in to work on the coffee plantations in Northern Angola, many Northerners worked in the sugar companies in Lower and Central Congo.

In a number of ways these earlier migrations differed from the flight during the war. The differences manifest themselves in various areas. Firstly, of course, the enforced character of the move during the war rendered it a different experience. People had to flee in secrecy, only travelling during the night, moving through the bush instead of taking the roads. Before the war, many Angolans working in the Congo had sent money to their relatives in Angola. Before the war money and people moved in opposite direction. The nationalist movement, however, reversed the flow of money. By the end of the 1950s, money was sent from Angola to ABAKO and UPA in the Congo. One official referred "without exaggeration" to it as "migratory current of money".[71]

Some Angolans, who went to work in Belgian Congo, stayed there. Most people, however, returned after having finished their contract. Many of the refugees who came in 1961, however, lived in Congo/Zaire from 1961 to 1975. Within these fourteen years, many people, and their children, became at least partly, Zairian. They spoke Lingala rather than Kikongo, and French rather than

69 IANTT, SCCIA, 248, "UPA – actividades geral", pp. 192-198.
70 Sabakinu Kivilu 1976: 201-218; Kouale-Yaboro 1974: 32-33; Grenfell 1998: 13, 43, 60.
71 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 17.04.O/1, "Administração do concelho do Pombo – Sanza Pombo", pp. 42-43: Sanza Pombo, 17 May 1960; Grenfell 1998: 20.

Portuguese.[72] Also in a political sense, "Zairianisation" undoubtedly took place. While before the war, the border had been so porous as to non-existent in the eyes of many, during the war it became increasingly difficult to cross from one country into the other.

The Angolan refugees were divided by many lines. There were religious differences, mainly between Baptists and Catholics. There were political differences: many refugees were not member of the UPA or, later, the FNLA. Within the FNLA there were ethnic differences, mainly between Southerners and Northerners, and there were conflicts between two Kongo subgroups, the Zombo and the Sansala. Despite these internal differences and despite the integration into Zairian society, the Angolan refugees as a group remained socially and politically separate from the Congolese. Among the refugees, a strong wish to return to an independent Angola remained alive. Especially as the refugees were often looked down upon by the host population, Angola came to be caught in the metaphor of the Promised Land. The refugees thus tended to oscillate between integration and nostalgia.

Controlling Movement

Even if people had wanted to, they were not allowed to return to Angola. The Congolese authorities, in co-operation with the FNLA/GRAE, would not let them. Furthermore, at a certain stage, the Portuguese authorities closed the border. Of course, people still moved between Angola and Congo/Zaire, but these crossings were illegal and far less in numbers than before.

While forced mobility and flight often receive much attention in refugee studies, such aspects of forced immobility are often ignored. Warfare often involves measures to confine and control people; to limit their movements. In the case of Angola, the Portuguese used pass laws, barbed wire, watchtowers and check-points to see to it that movement only occurred as they deemed fit, while the guerrillas used threats, pass-words, and written permissions (*guias*) to achieve the same.

Initially quite some UPA members felt that leaving for the Congo amounted to desertion. Thus João Barros wrote to Domingos Diviluka that those who want to withdraw to Congo would be sorry and that there were enough hiding places within Angola itself. He ordered no passes were to be given to people who said they wanted to go to the market, as this was only a pretext for creating an opportunity for fleeing to the Congo.[73] In a similar vein, Milandu, the guard of the Dange River, stated that Lumumba had given him orders not to let any

[72] Cf. Birmingham 1995: 91-95, Schubert 1997: 90.
[73] IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 222-223.

people cross the river, only out of pity he allowed people to cross "in the name of God".[74]

Soon, however, people were encouraged to take flight into the Congo and join the UPA in exile. If all stayed in the bush, women, children and the elderly had to be assisted in case of an attack, and brought into safety by the guerrillas. Furthermore, civilians were more likely to give themselves in to the Portuguese authorities. For these reasons, it was soon decided that civilians had better leave for Congo and stay there. People who did try to present themselves to the Portuguese, could be followed by the guerrillas and put to death. Thus even in 1972, in *mata* (bush) Cassuanga, two women were killed, while their children hid between the bushes.[75] People were only allowed to travel when in possession of the proper pass, signed by an UPA leader.

Writing, as has long been noted, is often aimed to control people.[76] In the colonial context, documents, passes, stamps, and records were crucial tools to subject and rule the colonial subject, but also in post-colonial states, record and enumeration were used to control people.[77] During the war in Angola, the possession of passes, documents and papers became a matter of life and death. Thus in Congo/Zaire, only those with a GRAE pass one could count on refugee assistance. It was not always easy for people to have the forms required for the documents filled out properly. They were entitled to only one, fixed name (whereas most people used several names), out of sheer nervousness, people might give the wrong answers to questions asked during the application.[78] Travelling without any document was dangerous: "If you want to travel out of Angola, carry your document well. Once indocumented, you will be arrested and mercilessly thrown onto a truck where after you will be driven to death."[79] It was not for nothing that circulars had to go around, in which it was explained that people without a pass ought to be arrested by UPA and not to be beaten or killed.[80] UPA circulars clearly stated that travel was only allowed with a letter signed by the leadership, and women were not allowed to pass at all.[81]

The UPA not only controlled movement through passes, it was also used as a form of punishment. People found not to be in line with UPA rules, were often tied or imprisoned. There were prisons in Leopoldville, Kinkuzu and also in

74 Davezies 1965: 59.
75 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.12.A/1, pp. 512-514: Salazar, 6 May 1972.
76 Cf. Marshall 1993: 3.
77 Ferme 1998: 555-580.
78 BMS, XI Africa, Shelf Set VIII, Shelf 6, Box A 79, "Angola – miscellaneous", Notes for the record, Vera Harrison (Moerbeke, March 1964).
79 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 264: translation of letter by Mama Viano, Leopoldville, s.d.
80 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.B. 146-147: "Instrucões do conselheiro geral da área", Domingos Francisco da Silva Cauanga, 4 June 1961.
81 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, p. 201: translation (Luanda, 3 Oct 1961) of UPA pamphlet.

most of the UPA centres in the bush. Because orders came not to kill people, tying prisoners became an important aspect of the war: from the bush, requests for cord were sent to Kinshasa.[82]

The Portuguese police also took to detaining people and carried through this method much more stringently than the guerrillas. Even before the war started in 1961, anybody with some education or anybody showing leadership qualities in the religious or cultural sphere without being authorised by the colonial government (of course, no one would be so foolish so as to display leadership qualities in the political sphere in Angola) ran the risk of being arrested and confined for an unknown period. Many of those taken prisoner never returned, some only returned under severe restrictions and yet others were only released after the war. This politics of confinement had severe consequences for the nationalist movements. They were forced to rely on organisation in exile and contact between the exile leadership and the internal bases was often difficult.

As we saw, people might be shot at by the guerrillas when trying to flee. The number of people killed for this reason, was however, probably much lower than the amount of people killed by the Portuguese when trying to flee to Congo/Zaire.[83] The Portuguese tried to combine methods of violence and terror, with a hearts and minds campaign to persuade people to hand themselves over to the authorities. They spread pamphlets over the forest, promising welfare and peace. One pamphlet shows the picture of a bicycle: an item that due to the colonial measures of confinement could hardly be used![84]

Initially, the Portuguese tried to win back as many people as they could and in their propaganda stressed how successful they were in this respect. Prominent Kongo leaders, such as the Queen Regent Isabel, but also Simão Toko, heading a religious movement, called on people to return to Angola.[85] Yet, in the 1970s, although traditional authorities were still trying to make people come back, there was a secret guide line not to encourage return, but merely to receive people well if they presented themselves.[86] This may be explained by the conscious Portuguese policy to create a rift between the Angolans living in Zaire and those continuing to stay in Angola.[87]

In the Portuguese settlements, movement was strictly limited. Only in the 1970s, there were hesitant steps toward a somewhat less restrictive policy and

82 For example, Batista, Banza Kumuana, 1 July 1961.

83 There is no way in which anyone can ever establish the exact number of those killed by the Portuguese during the war: estimates range from 8.000 to 80.000. All serious studies into the matter cite numbers well over 20.000: Pélissier 1979: 148; *Facts and Reports*, 3, 18 (1973) n° 1148 (*The Tribune*, 27 August 1973): Statement by former army Major José Ervedosa; Marcum 1969: 144; For example: IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.B, p. 465: Adelino Eduardo to uncle Pedro Miala, s.l., s.d.

84 Odink 1974: 64.

85 Marcum 1969: 279, 342.

86 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.26.F, p. 219: Minutes of meeting 30 March 1971.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

even then, these measures confined people to the colonial grid of town and road. Thus people from Banza Puto were allowed to go twelve km from the settlement on the road to Madimba, five km on each side of the road, and this only for purposes of hunting and fishing.[88] During the same meeting proposals were launched to remove the barbed wire surrounding São Salvador, as it "had never been efficient", "created a psychological state of enclosure in many people that could only serve the enemy's propaganda" and gave a false idea of security to others.[89] Military policy and the hearts and minds campaign of the Portuguese were often at variance. Development and progress, the way forward, was in both colonisers and colonised minds associated with movement, roads, cars, transport and not with confinement. The Zaire District Council for Contra-Subversion stated in 1969 that "the population badly understood the limits imposed on their liberty."[90]

The confinement imposed on people at times led to bitter cases, such as that of Pedro Calandula, who was first forced to stay with the guerrillas and after he had come out of the bush, was not allowed to return to the South of Angola, where he came from. Against his wish, he was forced to live in the North, as there was a shortage of workers in the North.[91]

Route Vocabulary

In this article it was shown that the relationship between transport and the colonial army, routes and the guerrillas, flight and the control of movement all have fairly material aspects as well as more philosophical ones. Yet, Lewin's discussion of the philosophy of landscape and the interpretative aspects of mobility in relation with war can be extended into the realm of words. A discussion of mobility and warfare may also include far less tangible aspects. In all wars, propaganda plays an important role. In nationalist wars, where the aim is to change an entire political system, this is especially so. All the same, few studies have hitherto dealt with the role of propaganda in African nationalist wars.

The abundance of references to mobility in nationalist propaganda is striking. Wordings are used such as: "on the road to freedom", leaders are often portrayed as guides, these are nationalist "movements". The UPA and FNLA propaganda is certainly no exception to this. In the pamphlets and speeches there is constant reference to concepts related to mobility. Also in this case, leaders are compared to guides, and the war is presented as a necessary step on

88 *Ibid.*, p. 79: Minutes of meeting 19 April 1972.
89 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
90 *Ibid.* p. 571: Minutes of meeting 20 August 1969.
91 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 195-199: Carmona 19 Sept 1961, summary of statements made by Paulino Calandula.

the road to freedom: "independence is not a cake delivered on a platter, but a tortuous road, on which we are venturing".[92] Furthermore people are advised not to let themselves be led astray, they are admonished not to follow the middle course[93], but to follow the right road[94], people criticising the FNLA are compared with dogs barking at a passing caravan, (but pass it will).[95]

The biblical overtones of many of the references are no coincidence. Often, the Angolan people are likened to the people of Israel, wandering through the desert after the persecution by the Egyptian pharaos, now on their way to the promised land.[96] A PDA pamphlet of 1962 put it thus: "Our prayer must be one and one only: Lord God Creator, defend us and help us to reach the promised land, because presently we are wandering lost in the deserts and forests, night and day. Even if all of us do not manage to enter the promised land, make, Lord, that at least our children enter it safe and sound."[97]

Final Remarks

This article sought to draw attention to the various ways in which war and mobility interrelate. Identifying these areas opens up the possibility of studying this theme on a comparative level. While the focus of this article is on a specific area and a particular period of time, namely the war for independence in Northern Angola as of 1961, the aim of the article was to offer some directions for future research into this theme.

A first conclusion must be that the patterns of movement described have a long history, they were not invented out of the blue in 1961 and for example the contacts between the Congo/Zaire and Northern Angola are very old. Yet history implies change. The conditions of the war of 1961 changed the manners of moving, and altered the patterns of interaction, now between refugees and host population. While related to older patterns of movement, the new context made mobility different from what it was like before. This seems an obvious

92 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, PR 12/369, pp. 306-309: Léopoldville, 23 July 1962, Report John Eduardo Pinnock, "O ministro do Interior, o secretário e o seus imediatos visitaram os refugiados do Congo"; *ibid.*, P. Inf. 14.15.A, p. 41: translation of UPA pamphlet: "Aviso Único", s.d., s.l., found near Lambo, 29 June 1962.

93 IANTT, PIDE, SC, PR 1641/60, pp. 183-185: translation of pamphlet, Kinshasa, 16 May 1967, entitled: "Em que posição te encontras situado na guerra pela libertação da tua terra?".

94 IANTT, PIDE, P. Inf. 11.12.A, "UPA", p. 386: João Eduardo Pinnock to "meu muito querido amigo", s.l. (Matadi), s.d. (probably May 1960).

95 IANTT, PIDE, P. Inf. 11.23.A, "GRAE", p. 817: Press conference Emmanuel Kunzika, Léopoldville, 12 April 1962.

96 For example, IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 14.15.A, pp. 212-213; *ibid.*, P. Inf. 11.12.C, pp. 96-99: UPA pamphlet, February 1961; Interview with Mr. Augusto José Farias (FNLA), Luanda, 12 August 2002.

97 IANTT, PIDE, Del. A, P. Inf. 11.17.B, "ALIAZO (Aliança dos Originários do Zombo)", pp. 242-244: Translation of PDA pamphlet, Léopoldville, 12 Nov 1962.

statement, but it has implications. For example in the Zimbabwean case, Norma Kriger has proposed to view the nationalist war in the light of already existing local power struggles. Against this interpretation, JoAnn McGregor pointed out that the war context altered relations to such an extent that the conflicts ought to be seen as specific to the war, as new, and not as merely a continuation of already existing tensions.[98] This critique reveals the dilemma of the importance of the historical dimensions of mobility, while at the same time focusing on change due to new contexts and altered relationships.

Apart from change, this article also stressed diversity. Often transport is stated as a given, it is the result of transport that counts. The process by which goods and people reach their destiny is in many works disregarded. The examples showed that routes must be diversified. The variety of terms by which routes are denoted already testifies to this. Routes are not just routes: they stand in hierarchical relationship to each other. This article argues that routes and places not only relate to each other in spatial terms, but also in terms of power. Colonial notions of a monotonous, monolithic bush starkly contrast with the ways in which the local populace attempted to create secret routes through the bush to evade the colonial system.

The issue of mobility in wartime is intimately related to coercion and consent. During the war many people were forced to move, or they were forced to stay put. This is another indication of the importance of power relations when studying movement. Not only are routes standing to each other in hierarchical relations, also the possibility or impossibility to use these routes also depends on power relations.

For Northern Angola, the paradox was that what for one party constituted a possibility and an asset, formed a hindrance to the opposing party. Thus the Portuguese roads served the colonial army, but they were a hindrance, an obstacle for civilians and guerrillas. For the Portuguese, the bush implied danger, violence, while local people sought to use the forests; the footpaths through it provided a means to escape from the war for many civilians, while for the guerrillas, supplies and messages could pass on these tracks.

Finally this article tried to underline the importance of a history of ideas when studying routes, transport, and mobility. I gave examples of colonial images of impenetrability of the bush and roads as sign of progress and civilisation, the immensely strong imagery of flight and return in refugee discourse, and of the crucial role that mobility vocabulary played in nationalist discourse and propaganda. The importance of a history of ideas also showed in the different meanings that bush, roads and routes were given in the war context. Just like the young soldier, T. E. Hulme, writing home from a trench in

[98] Kriger 1992, McGregor 1999: 131-159.

Flanders in 1915: "It is curious how the mere fact that in a certain direction there are German lines, seems to alter the feeling of a landscape."[99]

Abbreviations

IANTT – Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo
BMS – Baptist Missionary Society
Del. A – Delegação de Angola
DGS – Direcção Geral de Segurança
ELNA – Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola
FNLA – Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
GRAE – Governo Revolucionário de Angola no Exílio
LGTA – Liga Geral dos Trabalhadores de Angola
MENA – Missão Evangélica do Norte de Angola
MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
PDA – Partido Democrático de Angola
PIDE – (in the notes stands for PIDE/DGS) Polícia Internacional e Defesa do Estado
SC – Serviços Centrais
UPA – União das Populações de Angola

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CROSSING THE RIVER
Myth and Movement in Central Africa*

Wyatt MacGaffey

All history as reconstruction of the past is of course myth.
Jan Vansina

The historian or anthropologist pursuing empirical data can hardly be aware of contemporary collective representations that shape both the analysis and the reception of it, that confer apparent significance on some facts rather than others, and assure some stories of ready acceptance. (It was once thought valuable to measure the shape of people's heads.) They help scholars to identify reasonably stable objects to work with; even changing and uncertain situations must be pinned down somehow. Those who study other people, other continents, are obliged, whether they are aware of it or not, to answer at least implicitly the question, is the order we claim to have observed like what we think of as our own or very different from it; are we describing the alien or the universal? The delights of exoticism compete with the impulse to remake others in our own image, or at least to assume the universality of our current concepts. Africa, for Europe and its offshoots, has long been the proving ground for solutions to these problems, which are not so much epistemological as political. The quotation from Vansina that serves as epigraph to this paper encapsulates the ambiguity by suggesting that we, too, might be 'natives,' that our current concepts are in some way strange. The passage of time makes it easier to see, with benefit of hindsight, that this might be so.

Once upon a time (ca.1880-1957), the diversity of African cultures was explained by the effect on an indigenous Negro population of successive waves of Hamitic invaders from the northeast. This story is now dismissed as a myth, although remnants of it – the ideological jetsam of imperialism – are still to be found in encyclopedias and the World Wide Web. Scholars who thought of the Hamites as a real factor in history were never able to say exactly who they were or how they could be recognized. Unanimously admitting that the situation was vague, contradictory and in need of further research, they relied on a combination of linguistic and physical features, their arguments slipping conveniently from one to the other criterion (MacGaffey 1966).

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To explain the hold of this myth on the imagination of scholars fully equipped with academic credentials we should look at what myth is. Myths have special properties, as Claude Lévi-Strauss showed in a famous essay; mythical thought, as he puts it, "works from the awareness of oppositions towards their progressive mediation." The mediating term between the polar opposites retains something of their duality, giving it "an ambiguous and equivocal character" (Lévi-Strauss 1963). The polar opposites that underlie the Hamitic myth are the Civilized Caucasian and the Primitive Negro; the mediators are many, depending on which version of the myth we are reading, but the principal ones are "the Bantu" and "the Nilo-Hamite." The trickster in the whole structure is the Hamite, neither black nor quite white, uncivilized yet a civilizer, an African who comes to the continent from elsewhere.

A myth's explanatory value consists in the story's reduction to a simple, orderly form of a situation that is not only uncertain as to the facts but politically charged. It acquires operative value in a given context because the pattern it locates in the past is deemed to explain and legitimate the present. In its day, the Hamitic myth served these purposes admirably. It implied that the European conquest of Africa merely continued an ancient and progressive history, but it ceased to satisfy us when the political context of its telling changed in the late 1950's. Yet the underlying political problem remained, that of not only discerning but explaining and legitimating social order.

The Fall of Empires

In the European imagination, political order is understood as a function of an administrative hierarchy, a monarchy. This image lends itself to historiographic shorthand, because we think we understand what a monarchy is; it is difficult to understand what the absence of monarchy might be, if not anarchy. That was the ground of Hugh Trevor-Roper's notorious remark to the effect that Africa had no history because unrewarding gyrations do not lend themselves to historiography. Post-Hamitic myths, still preoccupied with order, included the idea that, in Sudanic Africa at least, "the idea of ruling," as one scholar put it, was introduced, in the form of divine kingship, by migrants who brought with them an Egyptian, or perhaps Meroitic or Ethiopian ideology to the Sudanic populations among whom they settled; *ex oriente rex*. For a while, historical maps of Africa were embroidered with migratory arrows leading in all directions. The assumption that kingship was the hereditary endowment of a racial group was discarded, but notions of ethnic essentialism lingered; nowadays they are still to be found on the outer fringes of art history. Bantu civilization was accounted for by one great migration, or perhaps two, western and eastern. Roland Oliver noted that early concepts of the Bantu expansion relied on migration and conquest; he preferred the idea that expansion was

facilitated by agricultural and metallurgical skills, but even he continued to speak of "an unending sequence of migration, conquest and absorption"; the story was still one of heroes on the move (Oliver 1970: 153).

All this is now suspect, but for a while, as historians short of archival data turned to oral history, it seemed to be supported by Africans' own histories of migration and conquest. Thus, writing on the origin of the Kongo kingdom in perhaps the thirteenth century, Jean Cuvelier, in his *L'Ancien royaume du Congo*, based himself on a story reported by Cavazzi in the 17th century and on indigenous materials that he collected himself, to which he added colorful and heroic details of his own invention (Cuvelier 1946). He told how Ntinu Wene, otherwise known as Lukeni a Nimi, killed his aunt in the course of a dispute and fled south across the Congo River, where he made himself king by force. Lukeni then convened a grand celebration, at which he commissioned his clan chiefs to go out and govern the provinces of his new kingdom. He was not consecrated as king, however, until he made peace with the local earth-priest, Na Vunda, who cured him of a possession fit. A succession of historians has repeated this story without much questioning Cuvelier's anachronistic synthesis of heterogeneous sources. Migration and conquest sounded reasonable, and everyone assumed that matrilineal clans, a "primitive" form of social organization, had existed since early times, in Kongo as elsewhere. Relegating the politically inept, conquered population to a religious role seemed "natural".

John Thornton has re-examined Cuvelier's procedure and his sources, in the process radically, albeit speculatively, re-writing the story of the origin of the kingdom (Thornton 2001). Gone are the domestic dispute and the crossing of the river; Lukeni a Nimi now figures as a military entrepreneur and the kingdom as a loose federation, the product of a mix of conquest, alliance and voluntary affiliation, a rickety arrangement much less rational-legal than Thornton's earlier book suggested (Thornton 1983). Cuvelier's source for the picture of primitive Kongo as an organization of clans was a Catholic convert in Vungu named Petelo Boka, writing in 1912, who was trying to make history out of the clan traditions of his day. Thornton believes that traditions in which clans are supposed to be the basic units of social organization date only from the mid-19th century, when the kingdom was in decline.[1] His new story is based on the older traditions in the historical record, which are dynastic, implying a different political structure not based on clans.

Recent studies elsewhere in Central Africa present a number of kingdoms as similarly messy political constructions, made up of elements of migration, assimilation, imitation, commercial competition and local ambition. Vansina now prefers the term "commonwealth" to describe the former Lunda "empire,"

[1] Broadhead argues, however, that the decline of the kingdom has been greatly exaggerated, mostly because its organization, based largely on ritual and magic, no longer seemed to correspond to the expected rational-legal model (Broadhead 1979).

because its unity was no more than the acceptance of the Mwaant Yaav as a ruler superior to others. He dismisses the heroic story of its founder as a nineteenth century invention related to the development of the trade network between Luanda (on the coast) and the Lunda heartland. The expansion of the Lunda entity in northeastern Angola in the 17th century was as much a matter of influence as conquest.[2]

Responding to new thinking in anthropology as well as history, Igor Kopytoff wrote a masterly new myth, synthesizing pre-colonial history into a story of ceaseless flux on a turbulent internal frontier (Kopytoff 1987). The official histories of African polities, he notes, are "remarkably repetitive" in attributing the foundation to migration and conquest, but local histories more modestly tell of small groups splitting, drifting, reforming in various ways. In Kopytoff's synthesis there are still migrations, conquests and kingdoms, but the central story is about the unfolding of a tradition. Frontiersmen, he says, do not arrive empty handed or empty headed; they bring with them pre-existing conceptions of social order, and the society that they construct cannot be explained without reference to this model. The principal traits of the tradition include the right of the first settler; the despotic cast of rulership; the assumption of hierarchy in all relationships; the use of kinship as a metaphor for political relations; and the importance of the corporate kin group.

The idea of an evolving tradition now seems inescapable, but we might ask, concerning the allegedly Pan-African or at least Sub-Saharan tradition that Kopytoff outlines, and which he derives from a single source in ancient times, whether it is convincing as an historical object. The traits he dwells on are all political; there is little reference to cosmology, religion, technology or environments, and the story has neither beginning nor end. Jan Vansina likewise employs the idea of a tradition, but puts more flesh on the bones, confines it more or less to the Congo basin, and locates events in space and time (Vansina 1990).

The King and the Priest

Kopytoff discusses at length the problem of legitimating authority on the frontier. One ideological solution, that of beginning history anew, explains the frequency of stories in which migrants enter a supposedly empty land. Alternatively, if the presence of predecessors is acknowledged, the newcomers can incorporate the indigenous inhabitants in a variety of ways and co-opt their mystical powers in relation to the land. The story of Lukeni a Nimi and Na Vunda, in which Lukeni becomes king and Na Vunda becomes an earth priest

[2] The Kanyok kingdom was never more than a work in progress, and intrinsically so (Ceyssens 2003: 183).

responsible for consecrating the king, is an example of the second type. The frequency with which this arrangement is said to have occurred in Central Africa is suspect, because history is rarely so neat.[3] The pairing of priest and king occurs widely, but often without reference to conquest. Consider some examples:

1. In modern Kongo foundation narratives, the hero and his followers, displaced by some incident of violence, leave the capital, Mbanza Kongo (or, if the story is told on the north side of the Congo River, Mwembe Nsundi), and arrive at the river (not necessarily the Congo). There they are obliged to separate into groups because they cannot all fit in one canoe, or for some other reason; that is why we are now divided into nine clans in our new country, which we occupied peacefully because it was empty.[4] Nevertheless, the inauguration of a chief, like that of Lukeni, requires the participation of the priest of an *nkisi nsi*, a "nature spirit" such as Bunzi or Mbenza. The priest clan may provide the new chief with his ritual wife, the *mpemba nkazi*; there is no suggestion of ethnic difference. In eastern Kongo, the priestly function is performed by the smith, also associated with nature spirits.
2. In the land of Kazembe, in the lower Luapula valley on the border between Zambia and Congo, the same relationship is enacted in somewhat subtler form, with many linguistic and other resemblances to the Kongo ritual. At the foundation of a new village, a magician, with the headman and his wife, make a charm called *nshipa* which they bury and which is never seen again unless the village moves, when it is destroyed. This charm is similar in its composition and function to an *nkisi nsi*, and distinct from the calabash which is the headman's personal ritual object and dies when he does (Cunnison 1956).
3. The rituals of the northern Yaka are somewhat more complex. The chief's installation celebrates the creation of the state by Lunda immigrants who subordinated Kongo and Yaka groups as well as others regarded as autochthonous. The principal ritual officer, the Tsakala, is "linked to the autochthonous landowners," although he is not one of them but a matrilateral relative of the chief (chiefship is inherited patrilineally). Towards the end of the ritual, the representative of the landowners gives to the chief the symbolic anvils that are part of his regalia. Although the chief's personal life is said to display strong Kongo traditions, his chiefly insignia are said to be Lunda (Devisch 1988). In fact, however, all of the

[3] As Kopytoff notes, it occurs widely elsewhere, but the foundational narratives and the associated rituals of Central Africa are not at all like those one finds in, say, northern Ghana or Burkina Faso (Izard 1985).

[4] Such stories are often compilations in which there is more than one incident of violence followed by migration (MacGaffey 2000: 65).

insignia can be found all the way to the Atlantic, well beyond the reach of any Lunda migration. Whatever migrations occurred, they are not the origin of the opposition between chief and priest.

4. The Mbundu tell two stories, simultaneously, about their origins. One says that the hero Ngola Inene arrived from the northeast, married, and left descendants as founders of various subdivisions. The other, that the ancestors emerged from a body of water called Kalunga; their descendants keep wooden figures called *malunga*, which are associated with bodies of water, govern the use of land, and are responsible for rainfall and agricultural success. J.C. Miller argued that because the personae in both myths are human beings with no remarkable attributes, the myths must be in some way "historical." Seeking to write the beginnings of Mbundu political history by "identifying and placing in the proper chronological order the most important innovative techniques of social organization," Miller then solved the problem of the simultaneity of the stories by making the *malunga* an innovation adopted by the earlier, lineage-based Mbundu society. "The *lunga* brought a form of territorially based authority into the lives of the Mbundu," and thus made possible a first step towards greater organizational flexibility and, eventually, state-like formations (Miller 1981, Lovejoy 1981). In this instance, the chief came first, the priest second.
5. In Luc de Heusch's version of early Kongo history, the autochthons are already earth-priests but conquest does not generate a cult of its own. Whereas Thornton dismisses the story of Lukeni a Nimi as recent and doubts that there was a priest of the earth (*kitomi*), called Mani Kabunga, later Na Vunda, who represented the conquered inhabitants and took on the role of sacralizer of the kings, De Heusch needs both of them. Lukeni no doubt belongs to the Central African corpus of myths about founding kings from elsewhere, but the story nevertheless tells De Heusch that the original Kongo kings, unlike their counterparts in Loango, Kakongo and Ngoyo, were mere political leaders with no magical powers. Taking up a suggestion by Anne Hilton, De Heusch then explains the sudden conversion to Christianity of King Nzinga Nkuwu in 1491: the king, being dependent for his moral authority on the ritual action of the Mani Vunda, seized the opportunity provided by the newly-arrived Portuguese to equip himself with a cult of his own (De Heusch 2000: 75-76).[5]

If the Kongo king were ever deficient in magical powers, he would, I believe, be unique in Central Africa, where the distinction between political and

[5] De Heusch synthesizes ethnography from different periods into one body of data, and relies without critique on derivative writers, including Balandier, K. Ekholm and A. Custodio Gonçalves.

ritual roles, so important to those for whom the separation of church and state seems obvious, cannot be made (Ehret 1998: 147; De Heusch 2000: 33).[6]

De Heusch dwells, quite rightly, on the ubiquity of what he calls "dual systems," but evidently the pairing of earth-related and dynastic rituals is independent of the narratives that purport to account for them (De Heusch 1987). That is the conclusion of J. Ceyssens, writing on the peoples of Mbuji-Mayi. He notes a complex of oppositions between "invaders," thought of as superior, "above," and associated with fire, who are believed to have introduced cannibalism; and the "autochthons," who are of the below and associated with water. Though local conquests and subsequent colonial policies may have given political substance to these oppositions, they are more fundamentally "intellectual," a way of defining oneself vis-à-vis an Other. "Dyadic opposition must therefore correspond to a need that goes beyond historical contingencies".[7]

The pairing can be understood sociologically, in that every community exists both in space and time, which are the necessary dimensions of production and social reproduction and will be ritualized to some extent in every agricultural society. Space is the earth itself and the forces of nature on which all depend in common. Time, on the other hand, is the source of authority and the measure of social differentiation; reference to the past purports to distinguish older from younger, first-comer from late-comer, aristocrat from commoner. These two dimensions are what Victor Turner called *communitas* and *societas*, although he thought of *communitas* as occurring only in marginal situations outside the reach of *societas* (Turner 1975). As Michael Jackson put it, "The complementary principles of social organization which are variously called lineage/locality, kinship/residence. ancestors/Earth, descent/territoriality, can be abstractly and heuristically polarized as a distinction between temporal and spatial modes of structuring" (Jackson 1975: 24). Not the origin of this polarity but how it works out in practice is a contingent, historical question.

The Myth of Real Kinship

Underlying both Miller's reconstruction of Mbundu social development and Kopytoff's synthesis are the remains of an older myth that I will call the myth of real kinship. The myth is that originally, or fundamentally, kinship terms denote what Europeans think of as family, but that they can be extended to cover other relations. Kopytoff is well aware that kinship terms can be

[6] In another example of this ethnocentrism, Ehret questions Vansina's gloss of **-kúmù* as "big man," because the etymology of the term connotes "social influence and ritual importance rather than material authority" and this is therefore "a ritual, rather than a political role" (Ehret 1998: 147).

[7] "La structuration dyadique doit donc répondre à un besoin qui va au-delà des contingences historiques" (Ceyssens 1984: 72).

manipulated, but nevertheless uses a contrast between the early stages of a frontier polity, when communities were organized by kinship, and later stages, when kinship terms were used "metaphorically" to express relations of dependence between the founding, dominant group and its client groups: "In a growing frontier settlement, the kinship metaphor […] provided an almost imperceptible transition and a bridge between two systems; the earlier one, in which real kin and quasi-kin relations held together the founding group and its close adherents, and the later system in which political relations between rulers and subjects (though still often expressed in kinship metaphor) were more contractual, more formal, more distant and more instrumental" (Kopytoff 1987: 59). Although both Kopytoff and Miller disavow any idea of a necessary evolutionary sequence, the echoes of the movement "from status to contract" and from "kinship to territory" in Henry Maine's *Ancient Law* are strong (Maine 1861).[8] Of course, children have parents and grandparents, but as Kopytoff says elsewhere, "to modern Westerners the kinship metaphor suggests nurture and closeness; in Africa, and elsewhere, it conveys authority and subordination." Moreover, "the kin group may have the right to sell or kill its 'free' members" (Kopytoff 1982). That being so, the distinction between "real" and "metaphorical" kinship is misleading and unnecessary, except as a concession to Western habits of mind.

Miller wrote his own myth of the making of Central African political structures. As he put it, the gaps in the historical record can be filled in from "the theoretical literature on lineages, ideology and slavery" (Miller 1981: 42). Basing himself on anthropological speculations about the conditions in which descent groups arise, he believed that lineage structures were basic to western Central African societies from the first millenium A.D., when land was abundant. Segmentary lineage systems arose as groups increased in size and then divided. Matrilineal descent prevailed in the savanna because "it happened" that the people chose to aggregate mother's rather than father's relatives. Later, increased production for exchange created a demand for labor. Slavery was introduced as a means of acquiring additional labor, although it violated the fundamental precept of the lineage because slaves were not kin. The ideology of the lineage persisted, however, long after the disappearance of "relatively pure descent-based societies," because both the old men, "clinging to the reins of social control into their dotage," and their cadets, "coveting with ill-concealed impatience their uncles' wives" and eager to be elders themselves, both found it useful. The soap-opera prose here distracts attention from the lack of any historical foundation for the story.

[8] The parallel movement "from religion to politics", whose ideological legacy I discussed in the previous section, is asserted by foundational thinkers such as Auguste Comte and James George Frazer.

Much of the theoretical literature on which Miller based this reconstruction is itself now recognized as ideology, ours rather than theirs. It includes the naturalistic fallacy that kin groups, descent groups in particular, arise because communities notice what they have been in the habit of doing and give it a name. The functions usually imagined are co-residence and inheritance: people usually live with their mothers, or inherit from a mother's brother, hence matrilineal descent. When the group grows too large for its terrain it "segments," but retains some sense of its original unity. In the 1950's this sort of assumption was common in the materialist anthropology of, for example, Julian Steward. "Lineage ideology" is therefore supposed to be an "idealized version" of a reality, though the reality may be somewhat different in practice. With respect to matrilineal systems in particular, later discussion concerning their alleged fragility in "modern" times confused political issues with those of family, gender, and patriarchy. The corporate character of descent groups cannot be attributed to such diffuse factors.

Lineage Theory as Myth

As an alternative I want to argue that there is not and never was any such thing in Africa as a matrilineal society.[9] There are societies with matrilineal descent groups, but such groups are not what they are usually thought to be; in any case they are only one of several bases for social organization in a given society, and relatively superficial.[10] Matrilineal descent groups are units in political competition, and slavery is what they are about. To pursue this theme, we have to review some aspects of "lineage theory."

Lineage theory, in its British version, arose from the same intellectual milieu as the Hamitic myth. In the nineteenth century, anthropologists were fascinated by matrilineal descent, which they confounded with matriarchy as a supposedly earlier stage of social evolution than patriarchy. Matriliny thus became a discrete object of exaggerated importance. In 1935, rejecting "conjectural history," A.R. Radcliffe-Brown argued that to maintain order a primitive society was necessarily patrilineal or matrilineal because some corporate body had to be responsible for children; it was apparently a matter of happenstance whether mother's or father's group were chosen (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 32-48). Elaborating on this theme, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard declared that most areas of Africa lacking monarchs maintained order by segmentary lineage systems (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940). These two models, respectively hierarchical and egalitarian, reiterated an opposition with roots in British political thought

9 "Patrilineal society" is equally mythical (Southall 1986).

10 In highly intermarried communities, everyone is linked to others in multiple ways, of which one will take precedence only in a particular situation. "There is no such thing as general primacy with regard to any form" (Peters 1967: 261-82).

that reach back to Hobbes and Locke. Both models were construed primarily as administrative orders; that is, they left out the politics, too suggestive of anarchy. This bias is clear in Meyer Fortes' account of matrilineal descent in Ashanti and subsequent critiques by McCaskie and others (Fortes 1969; Klein 1981; McCaskie 1995). When Fortes noticed challenges to official genealogies he dismissed them as "without justification." In fact, to this day, arguments about pedigree are central to Ashanti politics.

The classification into centralized states and descent-based systems broke down not long after it was put forward. Critics pointed to states with lineages at their core and to societies that did not fit either model. If segmentation was supposed to be a demographic process, how did it manage to generate structures of similar scope and form, all providing the balanced opposition that supposedly guaranteed order? In fact, segmentary opposition is characteristic of all political systems, and does not guarantee anything. As African countries became independent, anthropologists discovered that Africans were political after all; they lost interest in descent groups and the question of order.[11] As a result, historians were left with a radically flawed model of a kind of organization they thought they needed to write about.

With benefit of hindsight, Adam Kuper declared, "My view is that the lineage model, its predecessors and its analogs, have no value for anthropological analysis. Two reasons above all support this conclusion. First, the model does not represent folk models which actors anywhere have of their own societies. Secondly, there do not appear to be any societies in which vital political or economic activities are organized by a repetitive series of descent groups" (Kuper 1982). Depending on just what he means by "the lineage model," Kuper is almost certainly wrong. BaKongo, for example, have a clear idea of a corporate matrilineal clan subdivided into matrilineages, and think of their society as organized by a repetitive series of them. This model is not, however, a true description of what exists in real life now or at any time in the past. Nor is it an idealized or approximate description, except perhaps in the sense that if, in the view of any given elder, there were any justice in the world, then society *would* be so ordered, and to his advantage. In short, the model is an agreed formula for making political claims; such claims may be temporarily successful, at the expense of similar claims advanced by others, and to that extent a set of supposedly perpetual descent groups may be said to exist, albeit temporarily.

[11] "Matriliny as a topic in anthropology is as dead as a dodo, one would think" (Peters 1997: 125).

Matrilineal Descent as Political Process

Claims to what? A matrilineal descent group need not be genealogically organized, but it must claim as its estate the reproductive capacities of its female members from generation to generation; hence the need for a presumptively perpetual corporate identity (Fortes 1969: 184).[12] Both inheritance practices and residence patterns can change without affecting the collective interests of such a corporation, but if marriage contracts transfer children, the exchanging groups become patrilineal.[13] In practice, there are many examples of communities that switch contracts depending on what seems advantageous, and most supposedly "unilineal" descent groups are in fact cognatic, meaning that many members can trace their descent through both father and mother (Kopytoff 1987: 44-45). The historical question must be, in what circumstances can groups hope to expand by retaining reproductive capacity rather than by exchanging it? As a reproductive strategy, matrilineal descent only makes sense when a supplementary source of wives for the male members of the group is available. The economics and demographics of the slave trade since the 17th century made it possible for groups in both West and Central Africa to acquire women without giving women in exchange (MacGaffey 1983: 184-85).[14] As Kinkela Ngoma wrote from Vungu in 1915, "Great chiefs stood out as buyers and sellers of slaves, so that their villages should prosper and increase […] but though a chief may have had wealth and followers and been invested, if his followers and his women die off, then he has no more power and respect" (MacGaffey 1986: 86). In the societies of the "matrilineal belt," from the Atlantic at least as far as Zambia, descent groups include lineages deemed to be descended from strangers, "slaves" whose women are available to the "free" members as wives, with the result that the group can recruit the offspring of both its male and its female members, and ambitious individuals can hope to advance their fortunes more rapidly than the simple reproductive activity of their sisters would allow.[15]

[12] A group's estate may include other long-term interests. Vansina relates corporate matrilineal groups of southwestern Angola to the adoption of cattle-herding. On the other hand, he clings to the idea that matrilineal descent, once developed, might spread elsewhere without any such motive (Vansina 2004: 88-97).

[13] Residence is only critical in the case of the Lele, where "matrilineal" clan sections are residential groups whose members are not related genealogically. This arrangement occurs amid chronic shortage of male labor (Douglas 1963).

[14] There may well be countervailing considerations, of course; for example, that in given circumstances men are relatively more useful as laborers or warriors. Note that giving bridewealth for a wife is only one step away from purchase on the continuum of property rights (Kopytoff 1982; MacGaffey 1977: 242-43).

[15] J. Van Velsen gives a detailed example of such a tethered matrilineage among the Lakeside Tonga, notes the relationship between slave status and non-payment of bridewealth, and rightly complains that not enough students have inquired into the actual practice of cross-cousin marriage, as opposed to local statements of preference (Van Velsen 1964: 133-37).

This is only the beginning of the possible complexities. The politics of it all center on the eminently disputable question, who is free, who is the slave? The outcome of the politics is often that losers, whatever their actual ancestry, can become slaves, and that an entire group can lose its corporate integrity, its claim to autonomous control over an estate in women (MacGaffey 2000: 71-2). This internal generation of slaves modifies both Meillassoux's assumption that slaves always become such by violence and Kopytoff's assumption that they are strangers who have been to some degree assimilated.[16]

In her survey of changes in Kongo social structure from the 16th to the 19th century, Anne Hilton made the mistake of reading too much modern ethnography into the 16th century data. On the other hand, she recognized the flexibility of a bilateral system in which corporate forms, patrilineal as well as matrilineal, could emerge to serve new long-term interests. She believed that the "original" system of matrilineal descent was weakened during the seventeenth century by the accumulation of slaves, and that BaKongo "reverted" to it in the 18th century (precisely the period in which slaving was at its height!). If we drop the widely accepted but unsupported assumption of original matrilineality, the rest of Hilton's account is persuasive (Hilton 1983: 189-206). Matrilineal descent emerged in the 18th century in response to new opportunities for competitive accumulation of women. Thornton agrees that clan traditions (and, presumably, the clans) were related to trade routes but dates them to no earlier than "the trade revolution," ca.1850, when the commerce in peanuts and wild rubber required large numbers of porters (Thornton 2001: 97). Traditions recorded in the 20th century do not permit historical inferences any older than 1850, but the trade routes are much older and were busy long before that. Persistent dynastic traditions related to the politics of the declining kingdom co-existed for some time with emergent clan traditions.

I am arguing that matrilineal descent is an unstable and relatively superficial phenomenon whose supposed importance is mostly a product of certain European preoccupations. The implications for ancient history are disturbing. Most reconstructions assume a relatively definite and stable object, an orderly system of social organization whose units give "meaning" to the words that denote them. A cluster of such assumptions underlies parts of Christopher Ehret's reconstruction of proto-Savanna Bantu (Ehret 1998: 150-51). Discussion centers on the term **-gàndá*, whose denotations are deemed to have drifted from descent groups to residential units and back again. Its derivatives in easterly Bantu areas mostly refer to a residential unit, but today, according to Ehret, it appears in a relict distribution among a block of matrilineal peoples in the Lower Congo, in the form *kanda*, which he says is "a kin term" denoting "clan." He concludes, "it seems probable that in the proto-Savannah-Bantu

[16] One source of this difference is that whereas Meillassoux's field experience was in Mali, Kopytoff's was primarily in Congo (Kopytoff 1982).

period, society was composed of matriclans divided into lineages." However, in KiKongo at least, *kanda* means "group or category," as in *makanda ma nza*, "the peoples of the earth," or *minkisi myena makanda matatu*, "there are three kinds of *minkisi*." It is not a kinship term, though it does also denote "clan." The assumption that clan is what matters leads to an overemphasis on one particular significance of a word.[17]

The same preconception led anthropologists to misrepresent kinship terms. Most of the anthropological literature on kinship suffers from the ethnocentric assumptions that each relative gets one label, and that on a genealogical diagram the labels form a pattern that corresponds to the social structure; at about the time anthropologists began to notice that role labels were situational and therefore multiple, they lost interest in the whole subject. The BaKongo are supposed to have a Crow type of terminology, which is generally associated with matrilineal descent. In fact, their terminology is much less determinate. In given situations, Kongo usage, when projected on to an anthropologist's diagram, generates Crow terminology, but in other situations it generates Hawaiian terminology. The BaKongo can therefore be said to have two systems, an anthropological paradox.[18] The difference between the two is most apparent in the alternative names that can be given to cross-cousins; ambivalence of this kind is a common feature of kinship terminologies from the Congo basin to southern Africa, but has not moved anthropologists to much rethinking. There is more. In KiKongo, the term *mpangi*, which according to the dictionary means "sibling," in fact applies reciprocally to any two people who stand in the same relationship to a third person or group. Among the results of this application, the term *ngudi a nkazi*, "mother's brother," can refer to a man who is not a member of the speaker's matrilineal clan and may have, in the narrow sense of the term, no genealogical relationship to the speaker at all.[19]

This consideration and others too detailed for this context undermine Vansina's reconstruction of "the invention of matrilinearity" in southwestern Congo (Vansina 1990: 152-55). On the other hand, they support his idea of the House, a cluster of kin, clients and others around a dynastic core, as the basic social unit of Central Africa. A nineteenth century Kongo village was such a

[17] The range of meanings of important KiKongo words is a constant problem for the translator. Words for technical objects and processes are much more definite, and less open to ethnocentric interpretation, than words for social units and processes (MacGaffey 2000: 59).

[18] The Plateau Tonga in Zambia have, from this point of view, "three systems," which "people can play with" (Elizabeth Colson in a letter to me, 13 December 1995). In Luapula usage: "Some kinsmen are given two kinship terms depending upon whether one discusses matters of descent or kinship" (Poewe 1978: 353-67).

[19] When Ego's mother's father belongs to a given matriclan, mother herself is *mpangi* to any man whose father also belongs to that clan, no matter how vague the relationship between these fathers; Ego may therefore properly call that man *ngudi a nkazi* because he is Ego's "mother's brother." This usage is not metaphorical (MacGaffey 1970: ch. 5).

House (MacGaffey 2000: 119). The structure of Kongo society is a network of patrilateral links between matrilineal nodes, all subject to constant political negotiation, with no definite boundary and no center. In the nineteenth century, it generated oligarchical districts (*nsi*, pl. *zi-*) in which linked lineages of the free helped to keep each other's "slave" lineages in precarious subordination (MacGaffey 2000: 71-71, 154-55; Vansina 1990: 73-82).

Trade, Myth and Magic

The energy for all this politics came, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, partly from local agricultural production but mostly from the Atlantic trade, in which the Kongo served as mediators between the coast and the point on the Congo, the Pool, at which it became navigable into the heart of Africa. The theory, the model, one might say the anthropology of this activity is recorded in Kongo stories that have been regarded at times as history, sometimes as myth. Can we not ask of myths, as of history, since they are so close, who is thinking and to what purpose? Though a myth may not carry the signature of its author, it is surely a product of its time and place. If we drop the assumption that the historical kingdom of Kongo with its capital, Mbanza Kongo, is the necessary point of reference; cease to read Kongo migration stories as a kind of bungled history of events; and situate them in the places from which they are reported, a different sense of their import emerges.

Kongo traditions of the past (*kinkulu*) tell two kinds of story, one on a grand scale and the other more modest. The modest ones tell of local migrations between named places, but the routes of the supposed migrations are the principal directions of nineteenth century trade and point to the sources of chiefly titles. Titles were often also the names of places – powerful charms (*minkisi*), chiefs, clans and settlements all being aspects of the same complex. In the event of the death and replacement of a chief, ritual retraced the route to an earlier settlement, now a cemetery, where investiture took place or insignia were obtained; or, we could say, the story provided a road-map for the ritual. Many stories, old and new, of a quest for spiritual power of a hero, whether magician or prophet, take the same form, that of a journey to the land of the dead (MacGaffey 2000: 72-75; 1986: 107-16). North of the Congo River the cemeteries went by a number of recurrent names, including Mwembe Nsundi, corresponding to the diversity of trade routes through the mountains. South of the river, where the trade between Mpumbu (the Pool) and the coast was to some extent controlled until the 1870's by the Kongo king, clans added the suffix Ne Kongo to their names; their chiefs were often taken to Mbanza Kongo for burial.[20] Those that participated in the Nsundi network, most of it north of

[20] This practice was unknown before the late 18th century (Hilton 1983: 204).

the river, used Nsundi as suffix; modern ethnographers have assumed that Nsundi was a "tribe." Vungu, in modern Mayombe, was a point of convergence between routes oriented towards Kongo, Nsundi and Loango, respectively.[21]

Stories on the grand scale describe transitions, often across a river, leading to the settlement of a new country. These stories are not historical but sociological, sketching an ideally ordered society. In eastern Kongo they list the food crops carried on the journey, assign a skilled craft to each clan, and list the insignia of the chiefs. One tells that the clans were led by a dog who said nothing, "even when spoken to"; wherever the dog stopped, they camped for the night, and one of the clans settled there. *Kabila*, "to divide, distribute," is a verb that recurs in these stories to mark the creation of social order. The river that is crossed may be called Nzadi, "large river," and may be identified with an actual stream, but it is a cosmological boundary. The marvels accomplished by the chief to effect the crossing, often full of erotic imagery, announce that this is no ordinary river and promise multiplication and prosperity through right marriage, right eating and right government.[22] In that sense, the land across the river provides a space in which to inscribe social theory (MacGaffey 2000: 207).

All this closely resembles, though not on an epic scale, the stories among Luba-related peoples in eastern Congo of heroes who come from across the river to introduce civilization as right marriage, right eating and right government (De Heusch 1972). In both east and west, the elsewhere from which the king comes is a land of spirits (Bupemba, Mpemba, Upemba), although it may be identified with a geographical location. It is a place visible to diviners in the reflecting surface of the water; in the form of a cemetery, a cave, a grove or a pool, it is a place of testing and investiture for chiefs and other persons whose special powers are signified by white kaolin clay, *mpemba*. The initiation rituals of chiefs retrace and recapitulate the migration stories of the myths. In much more detail than it is possible to recount here, Kongo chiefship rituals read like a reduced or provincial version of those found among Luba (Petit 1996; MacGaffey 2000).

Given these similarities across the Congo basin, we may explore the nature of the linkages that integrate commonwealths and their neighbors. The positivist bent of Africanist historians inclined them to write what McCaskie calls "barebones political history" and to pay no attention to culture, belief and religion – in short, to turn their backs on the typical concerns of anthropology (McCaskie 1992: 469). "States" and "empires" emerged, endowed with more or less rational-legal means of imperative control and bearing a strong resemblance

[21] J. Janzen describes the Nsundi network, giving more credence than I would to "conquest" stories. Central control of the northern network from the original Mbanza Nsundi must have disintegrated by the mid-18th century at latest (Janzen 1982: 61-70).

[22] The inverse forms of precisely these categories – promiscuity, cannibalism and anarchy – were used in European writing about Africa to characterize the absence of civilization there. (Hammond and Jablow 1977).

to early modern European kingdoms. Recent writers, however, have described these entities as not only less structured but as constituted by imaginary powers that for lack of a better word I will call "magical". According to M. Roberts and A. Roberts, for example, what came to be known in colonial times as the "Luba empire" in eastern Congo should rather be thought of as "a constellation of chieftaincies, officeholders, and sodalities that validated claims to power in relation to […] a largely mythical center" (Roberts and Roberts 1996: 28). The highly secret staffs of Luba chiefs are mnemonics for migration stories that might as well be Kongo, telling of the journey from the royal center to the owner's village, by way of unelaborated sections of the shaft, representing uninhabited savanna, and lozenge-shaped sections, representing settlements (*dibulu;* Kikongo, *mbanza*) along the way. Such insignia are prestige items, but neither "prestige" nor "insignia" is adequate to capture the potency of these magical composites: "Memory, medicines, prayers, and prohibitions are implanted in a staff, rendering it a powerful device for curing and protection" (Roberts and Roberts 1996: 164). The owners of staffs and other potent devices, which were not just signs of the presence of power but active components of it, were themselves magical objects. The "tribute" the owners gave to superior chiefs from time to time had economic value but was primarily significant as bringing into being the relationship that empowered both parties.

In Kongo, the migration stories may correspond to actual migrations of small groups, but they are really about the linkages that made trade possible. Over short distances, individual security was provided by kinship ties, themselves created by marriage. Chiefs and big traders also formed marriage alliances, a practice followed by the Luso-Africans in Luanda. Large continental caravans were armed for their protection, and monarchs, where they existed, could provide security by administrative means backed up by force. In parts of northern Kongo where there were no monarchs, market cycles controlled by committees of chiefs functioned as governments, as did the Lemba association. All these authorities relied on magical devices (*minkis*i). An English trader reported in the 1880's, "These fetishes play a most important part in regulating conduct of individuals or families – nay, intertribal feuds are settled by the same means, decisions enforced, disturbances quelled" (Phillips 1887). So successful were *minkisi* in regulating commercial contracts on the Atlantic coast that the French and Portuguese governments found it necessary to confiscate them; the Belgian trader Delcommune had one carried around the markets to denounce some of his employees who had decamped with stolen property.[23]

A story told in Mbanza Manteke, which is south of the river, gives an impression of how linkages were created:

[23] This *nkisi* was expensive to rent from the chief who owned it (Delcommune 1922: 97); it is now a distinguished work of African art in the Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren (No. 7943).

> At a time when there was no invested chief in Mbanza Manteke, and they were not under the Ntotila at Mbanza Kongo, Na Bikadyo decided to go to Mbanza Nkazi to buy the chiefship from the Mbenza chief there, who already belonged to the kingdom of Kongo. She brought gifts of goats, chickens, money, leopard's teeth, a leopardskin, bracelets, anklets, and a buffalo-tail whisk. At Mbanza Nkazi she was to hide with all these things under a blanket until everything was ready. As she was about to emerge she began to menstruate, and was forbidden to show herself. She said, "I have already paid for the title, so let it be given to my sister's son Na Mpyoso Nsakala Nangudi."[24]

In other words, to belong to the kingdom, one acquired a title in exchange for tribute, and equipped oneself with appropriate power objects. The center of this kingdom was a real but at the same time an imaginary place, a "mythical center". Investiture with a title, as this very minor example shows, resembled the constitution of an *nkisi*, with seclusion in a special enclosure (or merely under a blanket). The ritual composition of an important *nkisi* retraced its origin through a succession of *banganga* (owner-operators of the *nkisi*) to a founder who emerged from the water. The composition also served to consecrate the *nganga* himself as part of the apparatus necessary to mobilize the *nkisi*. Just as the *nkisi* acquired aspects of personhood, so its *nganga* became in some respects an object, both of them figuring in a chain of agency extending from the dead to the here and now (MacGaffey 2000:80). Invested chiefs across Central Africa have the same dual nature, both person and object, mediating between the permanent and the transient.

Powerful Objects

In the nineteenth century, scholars called all such institutions, devices and processes "magical" and "superstitious"; in the twentieth century, the vocabulary of religion was applied to them. De Heusch is only one of those who have tried to capture the magical aspect of kingship with the term "divine." Part of the difficulty with "divine kingship" is that the traits that allegedly constitute it are independently variable. Substituting "sacral" for "divine" is no great improvement, because the vocabulary of (modern) religion, including "holy," "spiritual," "worship" and "supernatural," is inappropriate to Central African thought, as missionaries discovered when they tried to find equivalent terms in Bantu languages. De Heusch's concept of the king as *corps-fétiche* conforms better to Central African practice than Frazer's "divine king" (De Heusch 2000: 24; Augé 1988; Bazin 1986). Central African religion is technically oriented, expected to produce practical results. Twentieth century anthropology, reluctant

[24] Tradition of the clan Nanga Ne Kongo, as told to Ruth Engwall in the 1930's. I heard a briefer version in 1965. The story of the would-be chief who menstruates at the wrong moment is a folkloric cliché in Central Africa that explains why women are not chiefs.

to endorse the association of "magic" with irrationality, declared that such rituals were in fact "expressive" rather than instrumental, thus ignoring their manifest intention.

Kopytoff remarks on the "puzzle" presented by the "despotic" character of even small-scale chieftaincies, in which, despite the rhetoric of absolute, "sacred" powers, the chief's "real" powers may be not much more than those of a successful arbiter; in extreme cases, he is a figurehead, a manipulated object. Many scholars have in effect reified their own difficulties with what Kopytoff calls "the strangeness of the idiom" by making "divine kingship" a discrete, diffusable object. Kopytoff's own solution to the puzzle is to introduce a space in time between "a cultural inventory of symbols and practices that were brought from a metropole" and a reconstruction of the model in the particular circumstances of a frontier situation that tempered and limited its "despotic" character on, as it were, this side of the river (Kopytoff 1987: 34, 64). In fact, the discrepancy between the imaginary absolutism of magical power and the constrained reality of secular authority is a problem of our own thinking – or at least of our thought in the self-consciously rational-scientific mode of scholarship. The only way out of the resulting embarrassments is to admit that our own societies also understand power at least partly in "magical" terms.

Thousands of pieces of African magical equipment are now recognized as "art"; their original uses are best understood in the framework of recent advances in art theory related to the power of images. David Freedberg shows how the need to deny that images were seen as agents, and therefore could be and *were* agents, exercised Christian theologians from the beginning. Inheriting the problem, art theory from the eighteenth century onwards constructed a set of ideological devices to deny the power of artworks and neutralize their effect (Freedberg 1989). Denying their agential quality became a marker of rationality and even a criterion for distinguishing civilization from barbarism; the classical norm in art 'cast the primitive as the dark image of itself' (Connelly 1995: 9). In a highly technical theoretical breakthrough, Alfred Gell shows how ("art") objects are implicated in chains of agency (Gell 1998; MacGaffey 2001). These related approaches explicitly do away with 'magic' and the invidious distinction it implies between the "primitive" and the "advanced".

The agency of artworks fits them for political functions; acknowledging that objects become powerful when power is attributed to them helps us to bridge the gap between the vocabularies of religion and political science. Political power in traditional Kongo operated through a diverse but unified system that included chiefs and *minkisi*, which were not only mutually supportive but to some extent interchangeable. Objects derive their potency from their participation in social relations; mediating between persons, they become person-like. In a modern context, those relations are often easily set aside as "symbolic"; in a foreign environment, as "ritual" (Arens and Karp 1989; Fraser and Cole 1972).

Conclusion

Is it possible to write history after acknowledging the messiness of the frontier? Lévi-Strauss tells us repeatedly that mythical thought works with diminished totalities, discrete entities that can be arranged in an orderly and thus "scientific" account of the world. We have noted several such discretionary moves: reducing the flux of history to a static set of tribes; reducing African regulatory systems to two types, and reducing both to administrative rules by excluding political and ritual factors; reducing social structures to a rule of unilineality. All these reductions are achieved by focusing on what look like rational-legal elements to the exclusion of others, at the same time implicitly reducing the human actor to a cipher. In West Africa, where the volume of ethnographic and historical studies is larger and richer than in Central Africa, more attention has been paid to the political and economic roles of rituals, priestly associations, shrines and oracles.

The Hamitic myth was enabled by the imposition on Africa's multiplicity of a simple grid of discrete categories, the black and white races, distinguished by physical appearance and by knowledge of the idea of ruling, or lack thereof. This grid was superseded by a more complex one that divided the continent into eternal tribes, but the earlier dichotomy survived in benign form as a distinction between states and stateless societies. Our search for usable myths has introduced other reductions. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard thought that it would be scientific to describe political systems as mechanisms, in abstraction from their cultural idiom. This view is characteristic of our modern, reduced sense of the political; we restrict it to the use of material resources and secular or "real" powers by leaders, officials, pressure groups and armed forces. Such agents may, we admit, dress up or enhance their powers and claims with ritual, myth, and references to the supernatural, but these effects are add-ons borrowed from religion rather than essential to politics. Our disciplines have developed separate vocabularies and conceptual traditions for discussing two kinds of power, the real and the imaginary. In dealing with Kongo ideas about power I have found this dichotomy intolerable. Power in Central Africa, as Fabian remarks, is understood as a personal property, "tied to concrete embodiments, persons and symbols, rather than to abstract structures such as offices, organizations or territories" (Fabian 1990: 25).

We have abandoned races, tribes, empires, and segmentary lineage systems, imagined objects that made good myths for a while. I have critiqued matrilineal descent, divine kingship, the naturalistic fallacy concerning the origins of descent groups, and the myth of real kinship. On the other hand, much has been done since 1960 to fill in the void that was Africa, defined once upon a time by the *absence* of history, government, art and philosophy. Even the social sciences are making an appearance, as affinities reveal themselves between myth on the one hand and history and sociology on the other. The last great mythical entity,

"Africa," is being demolished, or at least questioned, by studies focusing on the Indian Ocean and the "Black" Atlantic (Lewis and Wigen 1997). Meanwhile, the fantasies of Cuvelier, disseminated in KiKongo in the mission bulletin *Ku Kiele,* are now regarded by Kongo intellectuals as traditional knowledge handed down from ancient times; the used clothes of social science and indirect rule provide uniforms for revivals of the Kongo Kingdom and the Luba Empire.

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FROM GROUP MOBILITY TO INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT
The Colonial Effort to Turn Back History*

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People in Angola have always been "On The Move", as the insightful and creative, even "moving", contributions to this volume demonstrate. The following remarks have developed from my reflections as the concluding speaker at the original conference in 2003. My premise is that people in the area of western Central Africa that became "Angola" had always been "on the move", though in ways that differed from the sense of individual "movements" and movements of material goods through geographical space that prevail in most modern concepts of "transportation". I want to suggest additional senses of positioning in spaces defined in other dimensions that I will distinguish as "mobility" and that I think formed the African contexts of Europeans' rather more limited – and, as it turned out, limiting – concept of "movement" into and around the region from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. This essayistic reflection thus frames some of the other contributions to this volume culturally, and in the *longue durée*, in their African contexts. I will conclude by suggesting how the region's integration into the growing Atlantic commercial economy during those years enabled African individuals to move about with growing independence of home communities within which they had previously sought mobility, and how the violence attending these spatial movements process increasingly limited these communities' mobility as groups. Their resulting dependence on spatial agency in this modern sense gave Portuguese military and colonial authorities the opportunity to control their colonial subjects by suppressing the personal and collective movements they had come to need to compensate for the decreasing viability of the homelands left to them.

I thus want to add meanings that mobility had for Africans in Angola to my colleagues' consideration of technological means of movement, from caravan porterage to ox-wagons to steamships to railways to tarmac roads. These remarks draw on the rich works of the distinguished careers assembled at the 2003 conference in Wannsee – including the once-young radicals, now-retired, bearing names like Vansina, MacGaffey, Birmingham, and – far from least – Heintze, who created the African side of Angolan history thirty years ago and who inaugurated the "cultural" or "historicized" understanding of western Central Africa that I develop here. That is, beyond the approach to the region that preceded their work, which had focused almost entirely on Portuguese military probes, Catholic missionary proselytization, and mercantile profits,

* I make no effort here to cite the numerous authorities whose carefully researched insights I have absorbed, over many years, in the synthetic interpretation that follows.

they contextualized these stories in the histories of the African inhabitants with whom the Europeans fought, traded, and collaborated. Historians have since made significant progress toward the ultimate goal of mutually contextualizing both sides of a long, intense, and mostly balanced range of engagements, each in the other. They have even taken steps toward reducing the exaggerated "European-African" dichotomy of a history that, in fact, was motivated at least as much by tensions within either of the communities constituting these two conventional "sides" as it was by interactions between them. The components contrasted as "African" and "European" in what was in fact a multi-, or even infinitely, faceted historical context often resembled one another more than they belonged with the other parties within either of the two artificially polarized and racialized terms of the field.

"African" Concepts of Time and Space, and Mobility through Both

I nonetheless construct these remarks around conceptual distinctions that parallel – though only in these limited ways – that well-worn "European-African" dichotomization of personnel. Inevitably, in the limited format of this essay, my focus on this broad contrast forces into the background the specifics of the narrative history and the cast of historical characters in the region that blur these distinctions in practice. However, I will proceed with confidence that the reader understands that the differences that I foreground between collective "mobility" among Africans and European "movements" of individuals and materials does not imply a lack of appreciation of other more subtle dimensions of the story – or specific historical realizations of differing premises and strategies – that transcended them. My focus on a single contrastive theme for present purposes thus does not imply globalized contrasts in *mentalités*, natures, or cultures. The historical voice I evoke humanizes through its emphasis on contexts, complexities, and contingencies; it is racialized stereotyping that reifies.

With these strong qualifications in mind, one may begin by generalizing that the people in sixteenth-century western Central Africa, however diverse in their specific cultural modes of doing so, emphasized relationships with one another over personal possession of material "property", and thus the integrity of their many, highly particular communities, to degrees that greatly exceeded the more individualistic ethos of Christian monotheism, monarchical polities, and growing mercantilist commerce with which the Portuguese arrived on the coasts, even then. The cereal farmers of western Central Africa, probably the great majority of the people in the region, realized their myriad versions of this shared "communal ethos" in ways antecedent to the specific strategies that twentieth-century ethnographers described as the "lineages" and marriage alliances of their ideologies of unilateral descent. These diverse unilineal

strategies of claiming and controlling reproductive women and their children prevailed generally – though often in intricate combinations – wherever people concentrated themselves in the savanna woodlands north of the latitude of the upper Kasai, as well among denser populations in more moist riverine valleys to the dry plains to the south.

In those drier lands, and extending on into the Kalahari, other communities maintained themselves principally by grazing cattle and muted the challenges to collective solidarity that ambitious men could mount through success in multiplying their personal herds by elaborating collaborative boys' initiation rites. To the forested north, along the large streams flowing through the central basin of the Congo River system, elaborately internally ranked "secret societies" of wealthy and entrepreneurial "big men" similarly channeled the assets that individuals might accumulate back out into circuits of ostensible benefit to their communities. Personal authority everywhere was at least ideologically, and often considerably so in practice, limited to delegated "chiefs" representing these communities externally, as wholes, to neighboring communities represented similarly. Internally such communities preserved the integrity of the whole, even – if need be – at the expense of recalcitrant individuals in them, by assembling councils of elders, or of advisers to "chiefs" of this quite specific and limited personal authority. Members of these communities who appeared to violate this deep commitment to collective social health were scape-goated, condemned, expelled, or otherwise eliminated as what modern ethnographers have termed "witches".

These communities engaged one another primarily through reciprocal exchanges of women and products of their own artisanry with close neighbors. To the generally limited extents to which any of them had by then found it opportune to develop relationships beyond these very local scales, they did so in ways that protected their local, face-to-face communities, usually by formalizing links among the "chiefs" who represented them in networks of more remote partnerships built around the circulation of material tokens and their own distinguishing artisanry. The historiography generally has leapt to the inappropriate conclusion that the more geographically extensive composites formed through these flexible and personalized relationships might be adequately described by metaphors with loose European notions of abstract and integrated "kingdoms" or "states". Seeing places like "Kongo" (or in the remote east, also "Luba") as "networks" – or better "composites" – more properly captures Africans' focus on their local communities than literalistic application of the language in which the Portuguese (mis)characterized them for legal and technical purposes of their own. The personal power that the Portuguese witnessed among other Africans in the second half of the sixteenth century, such as what they helped the chiefs in Kongo whom they designated "kings" to create, or the *ngola a kiluanje* (in the Mbundu-speaking area east of Luanda), or heard rumored but never saw for themselves, such as legacies of shadowy

figures claimed in the Umbundu-speaking central highlands, were individual warlords, to whom farmers troubled by drought-provoked violence had turned, always very personalistically, for protection, but only momentarily. These *de facto* rulers were the harbingers of the individuation and consequent individual movements that became much more permanent as movements of people became more common in subsequent centuries.

Previously, the external aspects of African communities had become prominent only with their engagements with these larger networks, which intensified their members' awareness of themselves as political (externally) as well as social (internally) communities. The various larger composites they thus constructed accented notions of mobility inherent in everyone's primary identification with their local communities, preserved as spaces where their members sought "mobility" in terms of the relationships they constructed within them. Physical space, as we regard it, mattered less to them than their positions in these communities' ongoing flows of reproduction – constructed around generations of people, producers or reproducers with strong connotations of male and female, depth of local ancestry (slaves had the least, or were the "most recently arrived"), and the ability to move through them through creating progeny as yet unborn or contacting honored ancestors. Maximizing the range of accessible relationships in this universe of possible connections was the goal, including – and perhaps especially – presences inaccessible, and hence what we would call invisible, to others. Individuals moved through various rites of passage, or transitions, from one relationally constructed place within their communities to others.

Conceptually coherent and stable groups like these moved as wholes through physical space, but only within domains defined as theirs. Hence they were conceptually stable. The highly variable rainfall in this dry south-western corner of Central Africa, effectively a sahel-like sandy, northern extension of the Kalahari Desert – except for the higher elevations of the Angolan central plateau region and the valleys of the rivers flowing down from it – rewarded those who maximized their use of the irregularly available moisture, seasonal rains, and subsequent pooling and riverine floods in these transhumant ways. Rewards they viewed primarily in terms of the numbers of people they could assemble and support. Each community ideally claimed a territorial domain with varying natural resources for gathering and hunting, higher and drier soils as well as lower and moister ones for cultivation, and – toward the south – also access to grazing lands, one or another of which could be counted on to produce adequate yields in moist years as well as in others when the rains failed. They moved these types of fields from one suitable site to another through cycles of a generation or so in duration, with younger members of the group opening new fields in relatively fertile bush to supplement the declining yields of other fields that their fathers and mothers had opened a generation earlier. These agri-cultural strategies have sometimes been described as "shifting cultivation", thus

in timeless abstractions focused on material output rather than on the human experiences of them, and thus implying mobility through time. But for their inventors, they need not have carried that connotation of physical movement as much as they seemed an incidental aspect of mobility experienced as the flow of generations through the community.

South of the latitude of the lower Kwanza River farmers integrated cattle into their agricultural endeavors in increasing degrees. The more they relied for their food on livestock, the more they organized themselves around transhumant strategies of grazing – that is, highly mobile on annual (rather than generational) cycles. These separated the boys and men, who took the herds seasonally to remote locations where the animals could find fresh and abundant grass and water even in the dry months, from the women and children, who tended to remain in the river valleys cultivating the relatively moist soils there. These agro-pastoral communities accordingly added broad regional levels of community to the conceptual "places" in which they thought of themselves as remaining, to allow boys and men managing herds far from their relatively stable, female-centered home villages, to settle inevitable disputes over scarce grazing lands, no matter where they found themselves. The spatial mobility on which they depended they thus embedded in multiple senses of stability within communities, within which they defined mobility.

These African perception of the world in terms of enduring and conceptually positioned communities of relationships, rather than the transient individuals in them who are familiar to most modern observers, collapsed space and time, and hence mobility in either dimension, into a contingently faceted broad contrast between the *here/now* – in an experiential sense of a palpable and responsive presence, whether or not evident to, or experienced by, others in what we would regard as the same moment/place – and a contrastive *there/then* – whether distant in abstracted space, as we construe it, or in linear time, again as construed by modern westerners, or in dimensionality as we distinguish mental/cognitive/spiritual and physical/empirical/relational. Africans thus focused on what I am calling the "mobility" necessary to preserve the integrity of a stable community throughout infinitely dimensioned spaces of contingent proximities. Movements in our foregrounded sense of positioning individuals or material possessions on an abstract geographical grid, or in relation to material wealth – for Europeans in Angola, illusory silver, real ivory, and eventually overwhelmingly human beings themselves objectified as commodities – were incidental. The question was not "where" one was, but rather whom one was with, and in what sort(s) of relationship(s) with them. In this relational sense a recognized representative of a physically remote community resident in a central political compound established a palpable presence of the group.

The metaphor of mobility within communities like these has been highlighted in other parts of Africa as what strikes us as "flow" among the physical components of a body, social or individual – flows of the bodily fluids that

connote health, of the rains that lubricate the soils of one's ancestors' domains to yield abundant harvests, as semen and breast milk that create and nurture ongoing generations, as circulating material tokens of the relationships that bind the living, through the generations that we would call "time". That is, what we see as "relationships" among individuals, they saw as integrative aspects of holistic organic communities of members like the parts of a healthy, living human body. To understand "Angola" in the experience of its African residents, we thus need to appreciate these dimensions of "mobility" beyond the limited physical and geographical – both material – modern senses of "movement". Angolan communities emphasized mobility in terms of changing positionality in intense and intricate networks of human and personified relationships – present and absent, former and yet to be formed.

Physical Movements of Material Wealth and People in Geographical Space

Outside of the relatively commercialized central basin of the Congo River system, Africans moved material wealth – or, more properly, tokens of the human relationships that were the ultimate form of value in their ethos of community – through the personal links they created as they circulated. Rare or locally unobtainable objects (for example the Indian Ocean shells recovered from archaeological digs in these Atlantic regions) or durable and distinctively worked artisanry (bells and knives or cross-shaped copper ingots) distinguished their possessors and enabled them to establish and maintain prominent connections as patrons circulated them to clients. These material tokens passed from hand to hand without specialized merchants moving around to convey them, beyond the personal appearances of representatives of client groups at the compounds of commanding figures, or the personnel – often women, as wives – offered in return for patronage. Though these distinguishing products of others' efforts and skills and knowledge circulated widely, even in considerable volumes, they never escaped their connections with their creators. They were not seen as things "moving" but rather as objects integrating people in stable places across space.

From the perspective of people accustomed to obtaining what they desired, but that could not produce for themselves, only from familiar, recognized partners and patrons, the unknown outsider who moved in space, the lone individual without relationships in the local community, was either a cannibalistic savage, a slave, or a savior. In the oral traditions of the region, the last were thus often represented as mysterious masters of powerful and transformative fire (in some areas, such as Kongo, the ironsmith) or as lords of the wild (the hunter remembered elsewhere, as in Lunda) or in some other guise that rendered strangers powerful personally by freeing them from the bonds of

obligation that drew others, of ordinary local origin, back into their communities of kin. Otherwise, goods flowed – along with the other vital integrative fluids – through networks of relationships at many levels within and among communities thought of as permanently resident in the domains of their ancestors, and within which people distributed these tokens of relationships to manage mobility.

In contrast, in the sixteenth century the Portuguese arrived with the European Christian focus on individual salvation and the resulting (and to many Christians also troubling) separations between mind and body, the physical and the spiritual, and present, past, and future. The existential isolation (except for a compensatory, but pragmatically challenging, potential, but always individual intimacy with God) and stability of the eternal Christian soul differed radically from the kind of experiential mobility that Africans cultivated in their seamless integrated worlds of the visible and the invisible, the here/now and the then/there. Unlike them, Europeans found themselves trapped in observable presents, temporally and spatially, the qualities of which others in the same physical location were expected to be able to share (or risk accusations of individuated madness not entirely unlike the "witches" Africans believed to stand secretly apart from their quite different visions of consensus). From the perspective that Europeans presumed to be objective, material products of artisanry or husbandry could be imagined separately from the artisans or cultivators or cooks who had created them, and thus "moved" physically through space without human connotations or connections. Individuals could thereby also move independently of their personal relationships.

Money, which in circulating severed rather than creating relationships, greatly facilitated this profound individuation of Christian monotheism. In fifteenth-century Europe, the modern commercial ethos, theoretically bloodless competition enshrined individualism as virtue without victims, abstractly and mysteriously benevolent "markets", globally-scaled communication through modern media among anonymous strangers, and universalistic humanism had not yet developed, and so the largely resident strangers developing business affairs along these lines in sixteenth-century western Central Africa were not entirely above suspicion as witches among the communally oriented Africans who met them. Within the contemporary Christian ethos in Europe, communities still regarded their Jewish neighbors with hardly less suspicion.

Portuguese – and others – who roamed so far from home as to arrive in western Central Africa had by definition moved well beyond the confines of the European communities' remaining overtones of their earlier equivalents to the Africans' "communal ethos". In Africa, and not least in the trading and military posts around which these moving wheels of commerce turned in Angola, they found ample opportunities to cultivate their inclinations toward individualism independently of their erstwhile companions or significant loyalties to any collectivity. Young men, and a few women, arrived essentially alone, as merchant

venturers out to profit personally from trade in goods, not through connections to people, turned to African partners who for them came to constitute consummate strangers, increasingly differentiated from themselves as heathen, then uncivilized savages, and ultimately as "black". Others arrived expelled as convicts, prostitutes, Jews, gypsies, and otherwise entirely isolated from respectable – that is, connected – European society. The guardians of Christian communalism – under the doctrine known as "charity" – lamented the cut-throat rivalries that these often-desperate people cultivated in Angola, and more than marginally because they found supportive allies among Africans who felt no less constrained or betrayed by the commitments of their own "communal ethos".

With some exceptions, of course, these outcastes in western Central Africa engaged their partners among the Africans through exchanges of women as wives of the sort that underwrote the communal ethos. However, they could not reciprocate with women of their own and so turned instead to material wealth – imports – that they obtained through commercial arrangements with suppliers from beyond the Atlantic. They thus introduced movements of personnel and of goods from conceptual spaces unimaginably remote and strange that Africans imagined accordingly as dangerously empowered. Their widespread images of the places beyond the Great Waters of the Atlantic Ocean as a "land of death", and of the people who came from there as "cannibals", were sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rendering of the broader western Central African concept of dangerous impulsive, predatory outsiders unrestrained by the bonds of community and equivalent to the "witches" feared as having secretly betrayed their own communities from within.

Nearly every specific mode of these strangers' ensuing geographical movements throughout western Central Africa may be contrasted with its residents' own concepts of dimensional mobility. Europeans moved through the region in multiple ways, of course, in every era of the centuries that followed, but we may also discern broad distinctions among a succession of increasingly complex and geographically more extensive strategies of moving materials and individuals, and cumulatively more enveloping. For present purposes, I schematize this additive series of innovations as military movements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, commercial movements of goods in the eighteenth, in the nineteenth century human movements in caravans or by human porterage, and in the twentieth as movements by mechanized means. The other chapters in this volume focus primarily on the last of these, and particularly in their colonial expressions in the first half of the twentieth century; fewer reach back to the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries. This essay has begun by stepping back still further to bring Africans' defenses against these new European styles of movements that Africans perceived as a debilitating breakdown in the integrity of their communities brought by the individuals and goods moving through geographical space.

A Familiar Tale of "Conquest" Retold as "Commerce"

Viewed through this volume's provocative optic of movement, the familiar story of the Portuguese attempted military "conquests" of regions near the Atlantic coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries becomes a narrative of the Europeans' initial basic strategy of moving men and military materiel into and around the region. Paulo Dias de Novais landed at Luanda Bay in 1575 with troops and firearms and attempted to use the opportunity that the lower Kwanza River presented to move men who primarily moved by sea inland to assault African communities in the region. African military strategies may be thought of contrastingly as based in place rather than in movements of soldiers and their weaponry. In an accordion-like (or in a more humanistic and thus more African metaphor, like a deep breath and subsequent exhalation) they mobilized latent levels of the multiple contingent relationships that they maintained for defensive (or offensive) purposes; they evoked expansive capabilities from the multiple dimensions of immobile local resources. Such forces were more like Europeans' citizen militias than the mobile expeditionary forces of professionals that the Portuguese introduced in the 1580s and 1590s and then found themselves unable to maintain them logistically. Like small mobile African hunting or raiding parties that lived off the lands through which they moved, the Portuguese essentially sustained themselves by plundering the local resources of the people they assaulted, though their large size and lumbering baggage trains made them all the more cumbersome, expensive, and destructive.

These Portuguese expeditionary forces, burdened additionally by the physical vulnerabilities created by transporting troops from temperate climes to the tropical disease environment of western Central Africa, tended to dissipate through desertions, deaths, and general debilitation. Royal officers, also dispatched from faraway Portugal to Luanda eventually achieved a kind of limited success by the 1610s by hiring mercenaries from among African bandit gangs then roaming the region. These allegedly cannibalistic "Jaga", subsequently demythologized as historical Imbangala, had capitalized on a probably unprecedented breakdown in the integrity of the relational communities in the region during an extended drought coinciding with the depredations of the Portuguese.

The relatively immobile agriculturalists of western Central Africa had retained access to older strategies of personal and group mobility by staying in touch with the transhumant herders and with bands of foragers in the dry outer edges of the Kalahari Desert. Settled communities even in wetter savannas and forests in the more equatorial latitudes remembered and respected the agile earlier foraging inhabitants of their lands. To survive failures of the rains, on which they depended, they drew on these hunters' and gatherers' survival strategies by dispersing, even though such individual mobility forced temporary abandonment of the communal ethos. The roving bands of young Imbangala

warriors consolidated this kind of crisis mobility by moving in on communities that had managed to remain settled and plundering their crops. They presented themselves as "cannibals" to exploit the mysteriously powerful "witch"-like associations of such individuated movements. Thus in the minds of African farmers thinking of mobility in terms of positionality within communities fixed in space the roaming Imbangala resembled the no-less-destructively mobile expeditionary military forces of the Portuguese. Together they were a concert of cannibals.

They accordingly consumed many of the scattered and wandering refugees from the resulting violence, who found themselves captives of the Imbangala and then sold to Portuguese slavers all too eager to salvage them and move them off beyond the Atlantic Ocean. The cast-offs and refugees who escaped these violent removals clustered together for self-defense under the leadership of militarily commanding figures in relatively secure redoubts, often in the more mountainous regions atop rocky promontories, sometimes on islands in the larger rivers, and elsewhere in heavily fortified enclosures. In these highly restricted spaces – for example, in the Ndembu wilderness on the watershed between the Kikongo- and Kimbundu-speaking regions, and also throughout the central highlands – they thus formed new collectivities, stabilized by the violence all around them. Some of these warlords justified the authority they claimed over the utter strangers in their domains by adapting the Imbangala rituals of mobilizing and coordinating otherwise unrelated fugitives. Others drew on other local precedents and cultural idioms of personalistic leadership, largely unrestrained by the communal obligations.

Their successors, to the degree that they maintained the legacies of these warlord rulers by force, not through relations of reciprocity, renewed their retinues by taking enslaved captives from the growing steams of coffles passing through regions they dominated. Within the range of the Portuguese military forces along and above either bank of the lower Kwanza River, even resident "chiefs" enlisted as similarly militarized "vassals" of the king in Lisbon assembled standing armies of slaves on the ready to move out with their European sponsors to raid more remote areas. From there they removed captives they could seize – often women and children – to repopulate their own domains, and also those of Luso-African planters and traders nearer Luanda, with captives. Others they moved, sooner or later, to Luanda or Atlantic ports to the north, where they sold them to Brazilians and other merchants. These movements meant isolation to those removed, and isolation left these individuals vulnerable to depredations by the powerful.

Other – perhaps a significant number of – Africans moved into small Christian communities that missionaries inspired in the region from the early sixteenth century, particularly in Kongo. Christianity promised mobility in both the African and the European senses, depending on the viability of the communal ethos in the groups who added Christianity. By the prevailing

African strategy of changing additively among multiple dimensions, that is, as moving through the generations (what Europeans call "time") by incorporating relevant new connections into – without abandoning – existing relationships, Africans embraced Christianity not by the modern and monolithic standard of abandoning the old through radical "conversion" to the new but rather by including connections with Christian patrons among their other options. They thus shifted situationally among the growing arrays of possibilities, including the Christian congregations of the missionaries, who were none too sophisticated in the Africans' relational means of mobility and who had earnest reasons of their own to believe in the absolutist efficacy of their proselytizing efforts. They might thus experience "warm welcomes" and avid African professions of Christian fellowship without recognizing the multiplicity of alternatives their adepts also maintained. Their reports of tendencies in villages to convert *en masse* were readily congruent with the communal ethos emphasized in this essay.

Elsewhere individuals stripped of their relationships by capture or flight or betrayal and sale, and increasingly with the growing disruptions of the seventeenth century, found new, desperately needed, and more comprehending senses of community in the missionaries Christian congregations, or in their own versions of community derived from Catholic metaphors of communion. The famous claimed "conversion" of the Queen Njinga would thus have represented continuity from her previous uses of the Imbangala ideology to build a viable political community out of the disrupted communities in the Matamba region in the mid-1600s. Christianity thus offered a route into new spaces of community – or communion – for people dislodged from their former places.

Though military movements remained the primary strategies of displacing Africans from their home communities through the 1600s, growing commercial interests in Portugal, and then in Brazil, dependent on employing the persons displaced from Angola as slaves on American plantations, increasingly set more and more Africans in motion, voluntarily and involuntarily, by offering greater and greater quantities of goods, on credit, to Africans willing to replace the connections within their home communities with relationships of debt to outsiders. The traveling salesmen of the era – known in the literature as *pombeiros* – moved throughout the region to transport these new material means of building the relationships that produced social mobility within their communities. These goods, introduced by European "cannibals" enabled ambitious men to turn seemingly innocuous external relationships of clientage to passing strangers into patronage, prestige, and power within their communities. Mobile foreigners, moving goods of unprecedented exoticism, and – at first – also great rarity, thus opened a new road to distinction of an individualistic sort, not unlike the witches long suspected of endangering the communal ethos of mutuality.

This early trade, in which small quantities of imported European trade goods generated large numbers of people or significant quantities of ivory useless at home, or other commodities extracted at low opportunity costs to anyone's responsibilities to their own communities, could be supported by roving individuals, symbolized by the lone *pombeiro*, accompanied by no more than a small party of companions or kin. But in the eighteenth century, growing European commercial credit financed new and expanding networks of people and goods in intense motion. The personal contacts through which tokens of relationships had moved among spatially rooted communities in smaller quantities in earlier centuries, in Kongo and elsewhere, yielded to much larger parties of men and women moving over longer distances, as needs to move imported goods extended to greater and greater portions of the interior. The infrastructure needed to transport quantities of merchandise through the region and to drive coffles of captive men and women toward the coast grew correspondingly in scale and intensity. One of the better-known of these new and relatively commercialized networks by the late seventeenth century was that of the so-called Mbire (or Vili), working southeastward into the Angolan region from a coastal center at Loango, well to the north of the mouth of the Zaire River. Another was the so-called "Lunda" network that extended toward the coast from a center located to the east of the middle Kasai River. The former operated on the commercial capital of European slavers – mostly Dutch and English, and the latter consolidated around the profits of militarized predation on the dense populations in along the southern fringes of the equatorial forests in the center of the continent. Military mobility thus again, and ever farther from the coast, preceded the mobilization of people through commercial strategies of debt.

During the 1700s, entrepreneurs, enslaved porters, bandits kidnapping strangers for sale to passing caravans, and others committed themselves to movements of these modern sorts and invested their gains from doing so in moving captives and putting dependents on the move along the lengthening paths between the coast and ever more remote areas of violence to the east. The Europeans were paying higher prices for the people whom they bought as slaves, and in African terms these translated into larger volumes of imported merchandise, much of it bulky textiles. These changing terms of trade required even more porters to carry imports inland than the numbers of people who walked themselves back to the coast. The captives who were marched westward but not sold to secure imported goods presumably balanced the flows of porters moving east to repopulate regions nearer the coast.

Behind the relatively familiar eighteenth-century military struggles of the Portuguese in western Central Africa, sometimes still full-scale expeditions but more and more commercially structured but heavily armed caravans of porters, new African communities gradually formed around these evidently highly profitable strategies of moving commodities and captives. The Imbangala-descended regime at Kasanje in the valley of the middle Kwango River (the so-

called Baixa de Cassange), close collaborators of the Portuguese since the beginning of the seventeenth century, had been among the first of the new communities to consolidate around movements of these kinds. However, they did not seem to have developed long-range caravanning techniques at that time, since merchant princes financed by the violence of the Lunda regime beyond the Kasai moved well to the west, even as far as the lower valley of the Kwango. Even the western area between Kasanje and Luanda seems to have been broken into two networks moving goods and captives, one financed from Luanda and extending to highlands above the middle Kwanza known as Ambaca, and the other operated by Luso-African families resident in the Ambaca area and linked through marriages in the old African style of networking with the array of African traders in the Kwango River valley, from Matamba and Holo through Kasanje itself.

By the end of the eighteenth century, with the numbers of slaves and others mobilized to support commercialized movements in western Central Africa growing and traders moving these large quantities of goods and people over longer and longer distances, the Lunda were making overtures about the possibility of direct contact with the Portuguese in Luanda, bypassing Kasanje. Kasanje itself was coming under direct pressures from Luanda-based traders at the coast, bypassing the Ambaquistas, to pay up on the commercial debts that had financed its commercial growth in preceding decades. Buyers of Angolan slaves in Brazil no longer depended to the same degree on Luanda, and by extension on Kasanje, as they had developed largely independent trading contacts with warlords in the central highlands through the smaller southerly port at Benguela. These latter, in turn, used their profits from these exchanges to assemble the populations needed to mount the very large, heavily armed, very wide-ranging caravans that became the hallmarks of commercial movement in nineteenth-century Angola. Porters from these highland regions – eventually known as “Ovimbundu”, primarily in their diasporic movements and united at home by little more than their broad linguistic tendencies – began appearing in large numbers at the coast, at the same time that other caravans from the central highlands began showing up as far east as the upper Zambezi River and also well to the northeast, where they made direct (and destabilizing) contact with the nodes of the Lunda-derived network that had facilitated movements of products and personnel in the preceding century between the Kwango and Kasai Rivers. The new, direct remote contacts of the movements of personnel of this era thus generated “ethnic” identities ancestral to those that the Portuguese rigidified in the colonial era, and that were politicized and militarized after Angolan independence.

These enormous eighteenth-century African investments in transportation infrastructure, in the characteristically African human forms of clients, slaves, and other dependents obtained through distributions of the imports obtained from the coast, thus all but overwhelmed the older senses of community in the

regions most affected, from Kongo in the north all the way to Huila in the southernmost reaches of the central highlands. New assemblages of captives, eminently moveable in response to geographical shifting opportunities, were strongly positioned to respond to the extraction of commodity exports that gradually replaced slaves from Benguela and Luanda in the nineteenth century – first an expansion of the longstanding trade in ivory, then beeswax, together with small Portuguese commercial plantations growing coffee and other commodities (e.g. sugar cane), and eventually wild rubber – and are amply described in other contributions to this volume.

The numerous Ovimbundu of the central highlands, the leading nineteenth-century "movers and shakers" in western Central Africa, moved and accumulated people in numbers that supported and defined these specialized roles in the ongoing mobilization, often characterized as ethnic communities. The caravaneers of the region *par excellence*, they sent trading parties numbering more than a thousand well-armed bearers a thousand miles eastward to the very center of the continent. The Imbangala of Kasanje similarly moved in on the Lunda network east of the Kwango River. There, the formerly small communities of hunters living in the wooded dry headwaters of the Kasai, Kwango, and Lungwebungu Rivers also entered the picture in the 1830s and 1840s by converting their historic techniques of ranging widely through the forests of the region in pursuit of game into a profitable position as hunters of elephants for ivory to export. They sold their tusks for the girls and women whom Ovimbundu and Imbangala caravans they had captured or purchased from Lunda warlords in the east and brought through the region as they returned toward the west. The Ovimbundu retained the men to staff these caravans, leaving the coffles that finally reached Benguela consisting mostly of adolescent boys. These hunters beyond the Kwango turned the sons of the women they acquired in the 1830s and 1840s into highly mobile teams of ivory hunters by the 1850s, when they became known collectively as Cokwe (*Quiôcos* in Portuguese). Coordinated by a network of loosely related chiefs, by the 1870s these men had become so skilled at moving through these regions that they allied with ambitious western "Lunda" rulers controlling the river valleys and ferry points for the caravans crossing the region to defeat the two-century-old warrior *mwant yav* of the central Lunda court. These vastly expanded African movements of personnel and bulky commodities along the footpaths in this era set the stage for viable twentieth century Portuguese investments in mechanized transport and in the enormously costly infrastructure of roads and rails along which steam and petroleum-derived fuels could propel wheels.

The Colonial Move to Mechanized Transport

As generally throughout late-nineteenth-century Africa, the first phases of colonial integration in Angola centered on constructing these modern means of commercial transport. The heavy demands for adult males as porters to carry both imports and the bulky export commodities of those decades to and from the coast, largely managed by the Imbangala of Kasanje, the Ovimbundu, and the Cokwe, created significant shortages of labor for Portuguese seeking workers for commercial plantations nearer the coast, and particularly for porters – *carregadores*, as they termed them, or bearers – to staff the other transport infrastructure of the region. Planners in Portugal were starting to consider Angola as a space for European investment. The reconnoitering expeditions in the era of African "exploration" – from David Livingstone in the 1850s through numerous German and Portuguese "explorers" in the 1880s and 1890s – all followed the paths developed by the African transporters of commodities and people, and they supported themselves from the commercial services along these routes that local African communities had developed, including tolls imposed at river crossings and "fines" levied on strangers for alleged offenses against sacred ground and against the numerous women whom the local communities had assembled, not least for the specific purposes of offering domestic hospitality to honored guests and of tempting their followers.

By the 1870s, steamers on the lower Kwanza, forced conscriptions of the men held by African allies of the Portuguese in the vicinity of Luanda to carry the supplies of growing colonial infrastructure, and continuing (though officially denied) purchases of people from the African slavers to the east to work European coffee and sugar plantations there all increased the pace of movements of personnel and property in the expanding regions under Luanda's control. A railroad eventually climbed eastward from Luanda to the plateau beyond Ambaca toward Kasanje. More widely, systematic military conquest of the central highlands and the eastern woodlands began in the 1890s and the 1900s and ended as part of the military mobilization that accompanied the First World War in south-western Africa. By the 1920s another rail line was being built across the Ovimbundu plateau and the woodlands of the Cokwe to evacuate copper ore mined in the Belgian Congo (Katanga) to a new and modern Atlantic harbor at Lobito Bay north of Benguela.

Mobilization and Immobilization of Portuguese Colonial Rule

With colonial control thus extended to the boundaries of the modern nation, struggles increasingly centered on limiting the opportunities that African individuals might derive from moving to the urbanized nodes of the rudimentary modern infrastructure of ports, roads, and rails. The Portuguese excluded the great majority of the Africans in the colony from the personal opportunities

that movement along these routes might have brought them by requiring residents in the rural areas to remain wherever they happened to have ended up at the moment of conquest or, as the Portuguese military characterized it, "pacification". Wayward Africans apprehended en route to unauthorized remote locations were, with injustice of poetic proportions, often condemned to build the roads and other infrastructure of mobility from which they were thus excluded. European agricultural production, on the other hand, depended on conscripting and removing men and women far from the "house arrest" imposed on their home communities to plantations where they could be compelled to toil for little more than bare sustenance, with no significant compensation in the colonial currency beyond what government officials required from every householder as taxes. The Portuguese thus effectively governed in Angola by enabling movements of the colonial military and police, messengers, and European-produced commodities while denying access to modern means of transportation to the African entrepreneurs whose parents and grandparents had built the bases of this colonial infrastructure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and who – in the twentieth – yielded to compulsion to modernize it.

In Africans' terms of the fluidity that marked a healthy society, their marginalization from the growing the colonial commercial economy was a social malaise of the highest order. It accordingly provoked concealed resentment throughout the long decades of severe police repression under the Salazar regime in Portugal (1926-1950s). Pent-up popular anger broke out in violence in the early 1960s, inspired by the successes of nationalist politicians in other African colonies then claiming political independence and – more likely, a significant element at the grass-roots level – relief from the pass and other limits on personal mobility that had immobilized most colonial Africans in places – physical as well as social and cultural – where Europeans wanted them. Isolated popular uprisings in the Kongo region, in Luanda, and in the Baixa de Cassange in 1960-61 were crushed but left Portuguese authorities with a determination to consolidate their control of the colony, starting with a decade of construction, with relatively mechanized technology, of the most comprehensive system of modern tarmac (asphalt) roads in the continent. This war the Portuguese committed themselves to winning on wheels. They therefore removed significant portions of the African population of the colony to locations easily accessible by the new roads, however inaccessible these rights of way might have been to the water or fields or other vital components of local infrastructure that these communities needed to support themselves in the places in which they were otherwise immobilized.

The nationalists countered this Portuguese fixation on fixity by organizing highly mobile bands of armed guerrillas, at least theoretically able to flow invisibly (to the Portuguese, at least) through whatever remained of the personal networks of the colony's rural African communities. The outcome of a struggle conducted through these parallel, but never intersecting, strategies of emplace-

ment and maneuverability was a decade-long stand-off from the early 1960s to the early 1970s, in which the Portuguese continued to attempt to immobilize the African residents of the colony in the disadvantageous places allotted to them while increasing the mobility of troops and administrative personnel through the introduction of electrical and electronic communications and transport by air, to Lisbon and to the capital towns of the districts in the colony. Even rooted in place, the Africans utilized their local networks to pass arms and supplies to the fighters on foot in the bush, though never in quantities sufficient to enable them to mount more than sporadic hit-and-run attacks against isolated nodes of the modern transportation infrastructure. For the guerrillas, mobility was both their best offense and their readiest defense. The Portuguese, for all their modern vehicles, could not move men and guns fast enough to pursue the furtive fighters, who simply faded into the local populations in a classic African strategy of mobility through multiple identities. The frustrated Portuguese military, built up to pursue similar dreams of colonial domination in all of Portugal's African colonies, and stymied by similarly elusive guerrilla "movements" in Moçambique and Guiné, eventually rebelled in Lisbon in 1974, established a military regime, and withdrew their new government's forces from them all, including Angola. Africans' mobility – in both their own and Europeans' senses – had defeated Portugal's efforts to exclude them from the modern means of movement.

Independence

The thirty-year war among three competing nationalist movements that followed Angola's independence in 1975 again turned on efforts to impede movements of people and military personnel. In terms of the theme of this volume, the national government (under the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* or MPLA) consolidated its hold in Luanda by dispatching by-then-conventional modern mobile military forces along the network of roads that they had inherited from the Portuguese. In an initial phase of the struggle, a highly mobile expeditionary force from South Africa, still under white minority domination in the 1970s, attempted to reach and besiege the capital along the same routes. Both sides blocked the mobility of the other by destroying bridges and laying landmines along the highways. With the resulting military stalemate, opposition forces under the leadership of Jonas Savimbi (represented politically as the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*, or UNITA) withdrew to the remote south-eastern part of the country, all but inaccessible to government wheeled transport, and destroyed the rail line running through the region. Direct battles flared around the railway towns of Malanje inland from Luanda and Huambo (formerly Nova Lisboa) on the central plateau.

The ensuing battle for the bush turned on immobilizing the guerrilla forces and the rural populations on whom they depended by laying landmines everywhere along footpaths and in fields. Angola by the 1990s was the most heavily mined territory in the world. Villagers sought refuge by moving into the cities, particularly around the government's relatively well protected seat in Luanda, and in a generation after independence the city's population grew tenfold. Continuing war in the countryside greatly intensified this huge displacement of refugees, but the movement to the urbanized areas also represented a response to the disappearance of the restrictions on personal mobility of the colonial era. Savimbi focused his military capabilities on a battle for the diamond-bearing sands of far north-eastern Angola's Lunda province and financed his continuing opposition by controlling distribution of their yield across nearby borders with Zaire (eventually the Democratic Republic of Congo). UNITA gradually ceased to threaten the government in Luanda, which built up its strength on revenues from sales of petroleum produced inaccessibly, and thus safely, offshore.

Government forces, with a growing air arm and other modern means of military transport, reached the main UNITA encampment in 2002 and killed Savimbi. With peace has come an intense investment in restoring the country's modern transportation infrastructure, now viewed as a means of integrating the large country's several regions, recently so deeply immobilized, and hence divided and disabled. As new tarmac roads and bridges radiate out from Luanda toward the north, south, and east, along lines laid out a half century earlier by the Portuguese, the government in Luanda has the opportunity to enable citizens throughout the country to move to share in the wealth generated by localized oil, diamonds, and other economic opportunities, and to distributing the benefits accessibly throughout the national territory.

The first phases of this investment of the nation's "peace dividend", through 2007, have been concentrated in and around Luanda. So far, to a casual observer at least, the tall buildings are rising there faster than the urban infrastructure needed to convey prospective workers in them from homes in the shanty-towns that sprawl farther and farther out from the city's center in every direction. A fleet of blue-and-white mini-busses swarms everywhere around paving, curbing, and other construction obstructing the streets. People are on the move everywhere, often proceeding faster on foot than the Land Rovers and luxury cars clogging the roadways. Only government ministers and foreign dignitaries advance rapidly through the congestion, following police officers on motorcycles with blue lights flashing and sirens wailing. As twenty-first-century Angola lurches toward its era of modern vehicular transport, inflated by the vast wealth gained from the nation's rich natural resources, it has not yet recovered from a century of struggles over personal mobility within it to distribute its benefits widely throughout the nation.

Angola on the Move toward a Promising Future?

Surely many of Angola's citizens now have new hopes of sharing in the gains accessible through modern mobility, in a nation moving out toward an integrated, prosperous future. Such hopes translate the African notion of mobility in relational terms into the idiom of personal economic opportunity that propels mobility in social terms in a modern world of material wealth. The contrast between the historical "communal ethos" and modern commercial, or capitalistic, individualism fades when one recognizes that the "nation" represents the equivalent modern "community" of wealth and welfare shared. What I have termed an "ethos" in historical African communities has its modern counterpart in national ideologies of personal identities as citizens, of government-underwritten personal security, and of complementing demands for individual commitment to and sacrifice for the nation. Africans still characterize suspected disloyalty and evident personal greed as witchcraft in many – if not all – parts of the continent. Formerly, small, relatively autonomous face-to-face communities depended on their functional integrity and so expelled anyone who violated their communal ethos. Today, a global economy makes it possible for greedy politicians and entrepreneurs to achieve protective levels of anonymity, and electronic and digital flows of funds move their private wealth quietly and safely abroad. Other, similarly global means of airborne transportation and digital communications allow the less fortunate to send relatives abroad, to economic environments at least allegedly more promising, where they earn funds that flow back to families immobilized in poverty at home.

"Movement" in these multiple senses thus proves a provocative theme around which to think about the ironies of history in western Central Africa and in its modern incarnations as the divided colony and only incipiently integrated nation of Angola. This essay has attempted to suggest some of the many meanings of positionality that have motivated for the people living there through the centuries. Social position, or what I have called relationality in the form that Africans have historically given this vital aspect of human life, was challenged by the individualism of the European commercial ethos, in Angola often pursued in its most extreme forms. The implicit contrast between the communal and the commercial ethos was thus particularly exaggerated along the interface of the two, as the Portuguese stimulated movements of individuals and of materials throughout western Central Africa. At the end of the nineteenth century, when many Africans had reinvented their communities as modern ethnic aggregations by moving people in, as captives, and then moving them out in collective commercial expeditions, the Portuguese then trumped these African strategies of mobility on foot with mechanized means of mobility on wheels.

Immobilization of the African population of the large territory in quasi-"tribal" collectivities thus created an exclusion from the modern means of

mobility that lay at the heart of Portuguese colonial strategies of control. But the modern infrastructure required other movements of migrant workers and forced laborers to build the roads and to produce the commodities moved to ports on the Atlantic coast along them. These pressures both provoked resentment at home and also propelled men able to leave the colony to pursue elsewhere the modern educations denied to nearly all who remained in place. Their flights abroad allowed them to build the leadership and eventual international support that enabled them to forced Portuguese mobilization of resources and effort to intensify to the breaking point in 1974. Angola is now in recovery from these movements of modernity, as it confronts the challenge of defining its identity as a coherent national community in the swirl of movements of petroleum, diamonds, currencies, and people on the global scales of the twenty-first century.

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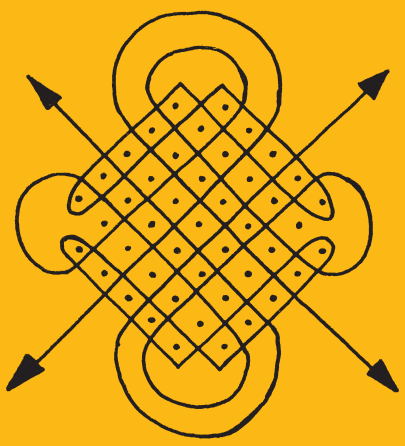
This book aims to provide a better understanding of the significance and dynamics of communication and transport routes in Angola and its hinterland. This region is an excellent example of how such connections have fundamentally shaped an area that in many respects represents a microcosm of African history in its entirety. West Central Africa has a record of continuous modernization in transport and communication. For centuries, this has had a strong impact on histories and livelihoods, both on a large-scale and very locally. Under the specific conditions of early world-market integration, colonial rule and postcolonial conflicts, however, this process produced a number of profound contradictions. The same means and routes of transport have been associated with very different uses and with highly segregated perspectives. They have contributed to integration as well as fragmentation of the region. This book pays special attention to the question of how routes and connections created a landscape 'on the move', albeit with its limitations and blockages, and how they were perceived and coped with by the actors concerned. Including a variety of disciplinary approaches and thematic perspectives, *Angola on the Move* thus presents a remarkable facet of African history that, at the same time, was a constituent part of world history.



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