

The steps of the colonial conquest of the country Alima-Léfini (Congo) XIXth -XXth centuries

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Abstract

The decree of April 27, 1886 appointing Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza General Commissioner of the Government in the French Congo, precisely in the Alima-Léfini gives the latter the power of the French possessions as the acts of the Berlin Conference (November 15, 1884 - February 26, 1885) dedicated to France in the Congo, Niari-Kouilou and Ogooue basins. The results of this conquest were essentially, the discovery of waterways, the discovery of new communication routes, the creation and installation of administrative posts, the creation of stations serving for example as centers for the supply of indigenous food, delimitation missions, the attachment of indigenous populations with the consequence of signing treaties with the conciliatory native chiefs recognizing the French authority, the installation of factories etc. We could cite concrete examples of these results. In this process of territorial occupation, he had Exploration of the Ogooué until the impassable fall of Pouabara, and of its tributary the Mpassa, the discovery of the course of the Alima, right tributary of the Congo river, thus penetrating into the Congo Basin, thus discovering a path of penetration towards the interior of the French Congo; the founding of Francheville (Massuku which would later become Franceville), at the confluence of the Ogooué river and the Mpassa river.

Keywords: steps, colonial conquest, land, alima-lefini, colonization

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I. INTRODUCTION

After the abolition of the slave trade in the XIXth century and the balkanization of Africa by the imperialist powers, the period of colonial occupation and exploitation of previously untapped territories sparked after 1880. After the migrations, a series of political systems appeared and then were developed in the present country: "elastic" or "decentralized" powers, lordships or chiefdoms, kingdoms with state structures. These political systems which, for lack of any other concept of their specificity, are called «kingdoms," lordships / chiefdoms ". Long in decline, some of these kingdoms survived until the advent of colonization, which ended it. More and more exploration is done in teams. It is in this context that certain kingdoms will have known the decline at the end of the XIX^E century. In addition, imperialist rivalries will arise in all the colonies which will later become French Equatorial Africa (AEF). This article is to climb the steps of the colonial conquest of the country of Alima-Léfini (Congo) XIXth -XXth centuries and their benefits.

I. State structures

1.1. The climax of the kingdom Teke early XIXth century

The arrival of the Portuguese in the Congo caused little change. It does not seem that Central Africa has known, before the XIXth -XXth centuries, genuine urbanization, unlike other sets of the African continent that have developed as a result of trade flows. The Congo Basin and its borders not had contact with the outside until the late 15th century, when it opened to trade, it was often through deals which took away its goods and its men without bringing it anything in exchange. Before colonization, the Congo did not have cities. It included three kingdoms: the Kongo kingdom, the Loango kingdom, and the Teke kingdom. Well-structured institutions, the kingdoms disappeared under the pressure of colonization. During the period of the slave trade, on the Congolese coast, the starting point of a track which led to the rich silver mines of the interior was protected since 1576 by Fortaleza de San Miguel, nucleus of the future Luanda which had 2,000 inhabitants in 1621. Towards the middle of the 19th century, along the Atlantic coast, there had been a multiplication of installations

due to various European ambitions: posts, forts and counters (in Loango, Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville) and then inside the territory (Ouessou). The war of 1939 to 1945 meant that the colonial territories found themselves cut off from their metropolises (little investment and stability in the number of expatriates), but the pressure of the war effort in the countryside favored the departure of rural people in city. In fact, until 1945 the growth of the urban population was slow (24% of the total population). It was after the war between 1945 and 1955 that the acceleration of urbanization took place. Among the factors of this phenomenon, one can quote the economic, psycho-sociological and socio-political factors (forced labor in the villages, civil wars...). The Teke Kingdom is considered as the first political structure to take shape. It is known, in the Western literature of the XVIth - XVIIth century under the name of *Anzicana*, or of Anzico [1]. The extension of Anzicana in fact corresponds to the territorial limits of all the cultural communities forming the Teke ethno-linguistic group. The members through biological kinship are linked by blood; the kingdom is based on the cultural ties which link its ethnic components together. The territorial limits of the kingdom stop at the limits of the cultural area. Thus, the cultural area is the geographical space, occupied by communities linked by a relationship of close cultural proximity. The date of the founding of the Teke kingdom remains a subject that is not unanimous for the moment, for lack of documents, and the archaeological research on which the hope of historians is based is still little advanced. This is demonstrated by Ngoïe Ngalla who affirms that: (...) *This explains why the territorial limits of the kingdom stop at the limits of the cultural area* [2]. For some, the date of the founding of the Teke kingdom returns to the XVIth century. In the XVIth century European travelers were talking already as a very old fact.[3] By the 19th century, the Tyo or Teke kingdom had reached its greatest development. Although the kingdom had existed for a long time since it is referred to, under the name of "kingdom of Anzique" in Portuguese writings from the beginning of the 16th century [4]. Its development in the 19th century is linked to the exchanges that this people maintain with its immediate neighbors. Previously, the Teke had engaged, as intermediaries, in the slave trade. Before the weakening of the royal authority, induced by the ravages of the slave trade, Anzicana was an authentic State. Strongly centralized, political power appears complex. Monopolization, politics and detention by the king with his delegates of power. The administrative organization of the kingdom, the capital of which is fixed at Mbe, is of the feudal type. At the top of the social pyramid sits the *Onkoo*[5], the king is worshiped in the manner of a deity. Its powers are extensive. The only limit to his omnipotence is the power of the *nga sye*, the rulers of the earth, but which he gradually subordinates to himself, since it is they who invest him in control of the whole kingdom, of all the Teke territory. The *Onkoo*, associates the *Nga sye* in the management of the kingdom. But there remains the master who has his eye on the material as well as the spiritual. This term is called by *makoko* which is a title that has been translated as king. The appearance of a certain number of social factors, following a series of historical ruptures and the social metamorphoses which they entail, gradually weaken the authority of the *Onkoo* and make unexpected personalities emerge from the shadows. The distance separating the central authority from the *nga sye* and difficult communications increased the authority of the local notables at the expense of that of the *Onkoo*. The enrichment of some of them by the slave trade justifies in the same sense. It benefited those who were best positioned in the slave market. Thus developed local aristocracies that the *Onkoo* had more and more difficulty in controlling. It is such a situation of territorial disintegration of the kingdom and the ruin of the central authority that prevailed in the Teke kingdom, when Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza met the Makoko in Mbe, in 1880. If in the Kongo kingdom, the kings and tribal chiefs developed strategies and tactics of confrontation using either arms, the Makoko (Unkoo Iloo I) adopted the strategy of alliance or cooperation, but not that of collaboration. For this leader, the best way to preserve the sovereignty of the kingdom, even to recover that which he had lost before the arrival of the Europeans, was to ally himself. For Abraham Ndinga Mbo :

It is wrong to believe that Iloo had decided to give up his sovereignty. Rather, he had not understood the deep meaning of the paragraph at the bottom of the page which had been kindly requested of him by De Brazza, who came to his court as the bearer of coastal goods that he and his predecessors had used to receive for the past three centuries. That the slave trade had lasted. Iloo saw no need to change these centuries-old relationships with whites.[6]

The twelve administrative jurisdictions grouped around Mbe, the capital of the kingdom: Inlinon, Muyu, Impaon, Andzion, Ampoh, Lion, Angia Obuh, Mwangaon, Onzala, Anzobo, Mvula. Two provincial governors have remained famous: Ngainlinon and Mwidzuh.

Observers are unanimous in recognizing that at the end of the 19th century, the *Teke* kingdom was no more than the core centralized around its capital. At the same time that these lordships of the highlands crumble, one sees the birth at the mouths of the great tributaries of the Congo River of new chiefdoms essentially based on the profit of this trade of the river with the coast. The power which thus collapsed marked the end of a long process of its conquest. Before the Teke cultural area was organized into a political unit endowed with the essential mechanisms to function as a true State which lacked only writing to be a modern State. As the process of social complexification continued, there appeared a better level of organization of power: royalty and

the State. Probably successively appeared, until the end, the Teke kingdom rested, from the administrative point of view, on twelve provinces administered by representatives of the king whose symbol of power was the *nkobi*.

Among the various king *téké*, figure prominently : Ngantho ; Ndzon Mbaon : before 1874 ; Mboulignaoh Illoh : 1874-1892 ; Mbaindele Illoh II^e : 1892-1894 ; V. Oupfoul - Pfa : 1894-1896 ; Ngayoyoh : 1896-1900 ; Ngantino - Mpea : 1900-1907 ; Moundzouani : 1907-1915 ; Ngmboula : 1915-1925 ; Aandibi : 1925-1937 ; Ngankia : 1937-1943 ; Nkioun (Nkima) : 1943-1948 ; Nsalou : 1948-1964 ; Illoh III^e : 1964-1971 ; 1971-1991 : Suspension of the institution ; Mialani - Wawa : 1991-1998 ; Ngouayoulou : 1998-2004 ; Nguempio : 2004-2021 .

Known in Western literature of the XVIth - XVIIth century under the name of *Anzicana* , or Anzico , deformation, this makes sense, of anziu - nziu Teke subgroup. The capital is fixed in Mbe , is of feudal type. The Teke kingdom was based, from an administrative point of view, on twelve provinces administered by representatives of the king whose symbol of power was the *nkobi* , a small device containing relics of ancestors, samples of totem animals. Of these twelve administrative jurisdictions are : Inlinon , Muyu , Impaon , Andzion , Ampoh , Lion , Angia - Obuh , Mwangaon , Onzala , Anzobo , Mvula , each bearing the name of a *nkobi* in the country. Two provincial governors have remained famous : Ngainlinon and Mwidzuh . Ngainlinon, confined to Nkuo , an immense district of Mbe , extended its authority over the Awum , the Afum , the Ambey - Mbey , the Asise and the Balali . Mwidzuh held Abali and ruled over the Kukuya , Andzindziu , Abum and Angwengwe . However, a true divinity before which everything bends, the *Onkoo* remains the supreme authority.

1.1. The mbosi chiefdoms

The solid establishment of the Ngala "people of water" in the Congolese basin dates from the 16th-17th centuries. In any case, this is what the family tree of Ngobila, the founding hero of the "bobangi nation", suggests. We have chosen 30 years for a dynastic generation and 12 to 15 years for the duration of a reign. Comparatively, Jan Vansina, in 1980, in the General History of Africa published by UNESCO, retained 26 to 32 years to date a dynastic generation. We have relied here, for lack of anything better, on the conclusions of the Seminar held in 1964 at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London and on those of the 1966 Working Meeting of the most important specialists eminent at that time, of African history such as Ogot, Vansina, Person... We are however aware of the uncertain scientific value of this method [7].

Okani or the lordship in *mbosi* country is at the time of Mwene [8] Ndinga , ancestor of eponymous all Mbosi a confederal Mbosi state . Ndinga reigns and governs the society of his system. He has badges that indicate his place in relation to other Ndinga in the area. On the other hand, *Ndinga O Koso* had no badge or symbol. He has broad powers of protection and defense of the village. He protects the earth against the enemy, watches over its integrity. He can be endowed with mystical powers: influence of a traditional order on mentalities, interlocutor between the living and the dead of the clan. *Ndinga* exercises, over his clan, the political, legal and legislative powers vested in the master of *Otwere*. This is one of the big differences between him and *Obiali*. We note that the areas of exercise of the different functions (administrative and political) are also distinct. *Ndinga* is not acquired through ceremonies and it is not a title. It is an ancestral power that is acquired only through blood ties. You don't become *Ndinga*. But, one is born *Ndinga* because the parents or one of the parent (s) (father, grandfather, uncle, great-uncle) are or is member (s) of the Ndinga clan. We do not choose a *Ndinga* or a *Ndinga* chief. One becomes *Ndinga* chief by succession by initiation during the lifetime of the one is called to succeed. There is no *Ondinga* investiture ceremony. The succession is known before the death of the successor. *Ndinga* is a dignitary who holds power called *Ondinga*. He is a simple citizen of the village but influential by his power. His name is composed of his patronymic name followed, sometimes, by the name of the village which constitutes his jurisdiction or by the name of the clan of which he holds the power and the authority: Ngatse O Mbopho or Ndinga O Mbopho that is to say Ngatsé from *Mbopho* village or Ndinga from *Mbopho* village, Ndinga O Koso that is to say Ndinga of the Koso clan. [9] The *kani* is the chief, the moral, political guide (in the broad sense) of the territory over which these rights and powers are extended and exercised, which are in principle hereditary, from maternal uncle (*ngolomi*) to nephew (*mwana bola*), or from father to son. The *kani*, master of the land, is responsible for all calamities that occur on his land, *tsenge* . So he surrounds himself with magical powers. Because of his powers, the Mbosi owed, and still owe the *kani*, respect and submission. They see him as a figure above all humans. The Mbosi (Mbosi , Koyo , Akwa , Mboko , Ngare) were structured into political formations , independent of each other, of the " seignury " or " great chiefdom " type, which is referred to as " *okani* ". (in the plural " *ikani* "). This pyramidal structure of the *mbosi* society could go back to Mwene Ndinga . The *okumu* , political formation of the Tege -Alima, glaxis peoples of the kingdom of *Onkoo* , is so similar to the *okani* that it is not dared to think of the *teke* influence in the genesis of the *okani* . [10] T he Ngala "people of water"

who remained in the “land of confluences, who did not know this contact, do not have a *kani*, would confirm this hypothesis. The *okani* is a delimited geopolitical space (awareness) on which are exercised all the powers of an invested chief, *kani*, namely: agrarian powers (the distribution of land, in the event of conflicts), political powers (decisions of the interests of the village community), administrative powers (the raising of troops, *amani bira*, the defense of the community against enemy forces), mystical powers (the influence of a traditional order on mentalities, the action on the rains, action on the hearts of men by instantly stopping quarrels ...), judicial powers. The land is considered to be in Nginga: *tseng'a kani*. He embodies wisdom. His age, his magnetic presence places him at the center of the political life of the earth. He is the master of the family, *paterfamilias*, the master of justice. He is carved in the image of his totem, the leopard, *ngwe*, the most feared animal among the Mbosi because of its ferocity, its voracity, its temerity. The *kani* thinks he holds his power and *otwere* (wisdom) from *Nzambe*, God, through and under the control of the spirits of the ancestors. When rendering justice, the *kani* holds a kind of broom made of palm ribs, *mwanzo ma okani*, which symbolizes justice and which also holds in hand all those who are vested with the power to dispense justice or to plead, the *twere*. Holding the *mwanzo* is actually said: *ikyena la mwanzo*, "to speak only in the name of truth and justice", that is to say in accordance with the customs of the country represented by the *mwanzo* of the *kani*, guardian himself. Even of these ancestral customs. The *mwanzo* grants immunity to whoever holds it. When two people are fighting, a third person can instantly push them away from each other using the *mwanzo*. It is during a long ceremony that the invested *kani* receives all the attributes of his rank, his insignia of sovereignty (see Photo), at the same time as the “Elders”, *anganga b'otwere* or *imangi m'otwere* (the Mbosi asi Olee say *nga kwephe*) introduced him to the country's deep philosophy, *otwere*, based on social justice. This ceremony takes place in the “sacred wood”, inside a prepared, *kinda* enclosure. The sovereignty badges are distinguished:

Ingamba (crown covered with leopard skin), *ekumbu* (leopard head hairstyle: worn by the *kani koyo*), *lepopo* (headdress decorated with parrot feathers: worn by the Mbosi olee instead of *ingamba*), *osanga* or *mina a ngwe* (leopard tooth necklace), *oporoo* or *lendzoo* (bracelets), *ebula* (raffia fabric decorated with animal skins), *ibaka la letsero* (parade knife), *ikongo la osende* (spear that symbolizes spiritual power), *ikongo the ngandza* (lance which symbolizes political, administrative power), *epumbu* (tufts of horsehair - buffalo tail; elephant hair-attached to a handle), *kongolo* or *pango a kani* (scepter: sign of peace), *penge* or *olondo* (small bag), *okombo* (gong), *ikoro a ngwe* (leopard skins: used as a carpet - sometimes as a costume - during major court events), *kami* (kind of toga, red in color: worn by the *kani mbosi olee*), *dzembe la etusu* (parade ax carried on the shoulder), *lekondza* (siege), *myondo* (particular designs on legs), *ingwembe* (broad black lines on the forehead), *piri o kani* (long black line on the chest), *mondo* (red line on the right arm), *poro o kani* (red line on the left arm). [11] The *kani* class comprises three grades, which correspond to three initiatory stages:

When the *kani* dies, a whole series of specific dances are performed to celebrate his virtues: *olee*, *kongo*, *mondo* (to celebrate his medical art), *koma* and *bira* (to celebrate his warlike virtues), *okya* (to praise his great experience of hunter), *lekwa* (to praise him as a master and great seer), *kyebekyere* (dance of the python snake). The *Ngala* «people of water» installed on rare exposed lands of the Congolese basin, were structured in de veritable city-states. European explorers at the end of the 19th century called the large human concentrations they discovered around the “Likuba Lagoons.” They spoke of “human anthills”, of “veritable Venises” because of the numerous huts built on them pilings.

The Likuba city-state discovered by the French at the end of the 19th century is presented as a very homogeneous territorial community built around a lake. It is precisely an agglomeration of villages separated from each other by strips of virgin or cultivated land. As each village also had its portion of the lake to add to its portion of land, this territorial limit on the waters of the lake was marked by a sort of floating reed forest. The city-state was first of all a foundation of habitat based on lineage relationships and alliances. Within the city-state, the village constituted the basic politico-social unit of society. Each village community constituted an autonomous chiefdom within the city-state which was governed by the council of elders where each of them represented by a social unit, a lineage, because the chiefdom is not reduced here to the single lineage; it is effectively the association of lineages and their affines. [12]

In Mbosi country, power is clan, lineage and family. We can identify, in all areas, a series of leaders who exercise power in this society. The clan or lineage usually occupies a village. The latter is placed under the authority of a chief called *A nga mboa* or *Okondzi ya mboa* (village chief). The chief receives by his coronation, moral and hereditary power to administer the men, to manage the land and other areas of the village heritage. He owes its legitimacy to birth, to his rank. He holds his power from the elders (ancestors of the clan). Power is always transmitted between members of the clan, lineage, and family. The hereditary, clan, sacred role of managing the men and the heritage of the village is vested in the *akola* branch, within which the traditional chief of the village is chosen. The *pande* and the *akola* constitute the sacred council of the village which meets whenever it is necessary to choose the chief of the village or when a serious problem arises in the village or

concerning a national of this one. This set is called " *A nga Tsengue* " that is to say, landowners of the land on which the village is built. The ties between *A nga tsengue* and his land are ties of blood, of lineage. He owns this land but he does not rule it. His power has an ideological character and links him to the patrilineal ancestors of all those under his authority. To ensure the exercise of administrative and moral power in the village, the *A nga tsengue* choose and invest a chief called *A nga mboa* or *Okondzi ya mboa* (village chief). The village chief, *mokondzi o mboka* , had political, judicial and religious attributes, like the *kani* . Each village in the city-state was practically independent and looked after its own affairs; there was no single authority strictly speaking. The explorer Albert Dolisie present at the end of the nineteenth century Bonga , built at the mouth of the Sangha River in the Congo, as a true city-state ruled by a king, Ndombi 1st , but confirms this village autonomy in city-state. He specifies that Bonga was an agglomeration of hamlets made up of several neighborhoods, inhabited by various peoples, including the Bobangi , Bayandzi , Bangala , Mbozi , Sangha. He adds that some chiefs had the ascendancy over others: the descendant of the founder of the first village of the city-state enjoyed considerable influence within the city-state. His village served as the capital where all matters relating to the entire city-state were always discussed. He could give orders to the whole town as a «visionary» and the people followed. This is the secret of the fame of Bolunza Noka , chief of Mbanza , who had faced the explorer Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza in 1878 during his descent from the Alima. But, not all the village chiefs were obliged to follow his advice.

Apart from the palaver opposing the members of the city-state, this chief, mokonzi , had no other particular occupations. There was no public order work to be done. The head of the city-state did not receive any royalties from the inhabitants of the various villages. It is true that often, the small village chiefs and those of the villages of the neighboring city-states came to pay homage to him with gifts. But, he gave more than he received: one of the qualities of leader among the Ngala is that of knowing how to share goods with his men and with his hosts. These riches usually came from the possessions of his own family (in the broad sense) and the labor of his many slaves and wives. [13]

George Mazenot makes it known that: He receives a part of any fishing and hunting product: a basket of fish in the event of large-scale fishing, a leg of the animal slaughtered on its territory or its land. "One of their essential prerogatives was the right to a specific part of the animals killed on their land (a tusk when it was an elephant, a thigh when the slaughtered beast was a buffalo) ". On this question, Pierre Vennetier is much more explicit when he writes "Traditionally, the landlord receives certain royalties in kind - fish, such or such a piece of the slaughtered beast - the importance of which varies with the circumstances. They are higher, for example, when the game has been killed by hunters outside the clan, who have exercised a right of pursuit. On the other hand, the royalty does not seem to exist when it comes to harvested food products ". The relations that the head of the city-state had with the members of the city-state can be summed up more in terms of the regulation of life in common than in terms of power weighing on the group. The power of the family and lineage is the eldest, representing the ancient patriarchs, who exercises power. This elder is responsible for the supervision of the members of the family. He must provide for the establishment of the members of the lineage. The head of the family, of lineage, protects them and helps them to contract marriage. He is said to be *Gniakoumou* (the beneficiary) of his line. He participates with the other line heads in the management of the clan heritage of the village. *Since ancient times, the village has been placed under the authority of a chief called A nga mboa or A nga mpoo or Okondzi ya mboa . [14]* To become a village chief, you must:

- have had a relative who is the village chief;
- be *Okola* (*Akola* , child of the brother and the boys line the sister) or *ndaa* grandson). The title of village chief is conferred on *okola* or *ndaa* by the *pande* (child born to the sister and to any daughter of this sister's lines vis-à-vis the brother's children) who are the biological heads of the family;
- be male: only men are admitted as village chiefs and women are excluded. This exclusion of women from the chieftaincy among the Mbozi Olee is very similar to the Salic law [15] Romans or even Hebrews, where women did not have the right to manage an inheritance left to men;
- be an adult, at least thirty five (35) years old;
- be a member of *Otwere* (political and justice institution);
- be in good physical and mental health;
- have humility and be reasonable, impartial, and wise;

The village chief has broad political, mystical and judicial powers. The village chief has the power to administer the men or all the inhabitants of the village or even all the families and clans of the village, to manage the land (if he is also the head of the family or of the clan) and other areas of village heritage. He manages and protects his village; his house is the *Mbale* (central hut, village community). The heads of families or clans are responsible to him. The *Abiali* or the notables are also under his authority. The village chief also has a "military" function: he must mobilize able-bodied men to defend the village in the event of an attack. The village chief is the guarantor of the moral and spiritual values of the village bequeathed by the ancestors. The traditional village chief does not embody judicial power over his village or over men. But as a member of *Otwere*, the village chief

can exercise the legal function to settle village problems and dispense justice among the men of his village. He can hold a *kwephe y' otwere* (box of *Otwere*), that is to say, holder of secrets *Otwere*, master of *otwere*, the cabinet of *Otwere*. As such, it acquires the legal powers which allow it to govern outside its territory. He then becomes one of the greatest *Twere*, that is to say one of the greatest judges. He does justice in his *Mbale* (case of justice), the *Mwandzi* in his right hand, a symbol of equity and justice. The leader is never a despot. He knows how to listen to his fellow citizens and only takes tough decisions after consulting the village elders who ensure that the chief does not overstep his legitimate powers. Laurent-Roger Ngimbog emerges in these terms:

In traditional society, the chief was invested with a charismatic power, and his main mission was to watch over his people by guaranteeing their safety and settling the disputes that were brought before them. In the exercise of his function of judge, the chief was surrounded by a college of notables, guardians of the tradition and the moral values which constituted the base on which the company was built. It is in this spirit that the traditional palaver tree functioned and in the shadow of which the disputes examined publicly and contradictorily, while the judgments were rendered in first and last resort, to the general satisfaction given that the whole system rested on the confidence that the people had in their leader and their advisers. [16]

The two peoples thus divided into "Water folk" and "Terrans" have retained to this day, in common, an essential feature of civilization, *otwere* (bototele).

In *ngala* country, *otwere* designates the judicature, the country's deep philosophy based on social justice because *otwere* is in reality the union of wisdom and virtue in an individual. *Otwere* dominates the lives of all Mbosi people. For all these populations as for the whole *Ngala* group of Congo, *Otwere* stands out as an ancient superstructure. *Otwere* has an ancient origin that can be traced back to the time of the Mbosi migrations. It was born from the will of the Mbosi populations to resolve social, ethical and cultural problems in a peaceful and legal manner. Thus, the Mbosi in their movement under the leadership of their legendary heroes *Ndinga* and *Kiba*, had moved, carrying with them *Otwere*, their traditions and their beliefs. Bishop Benoît Gassongo said the following:

Otwere is an old institution that dealt with the justice of our fathers. It existed; it seems, in our tribes of the Congo before being supplanted by colonial or modern justice. It also existed among the whites, the Jews (the Jephthahs) [17].

For his part, Jérôme Ollandet writes that:

The rite of initiation into wisdom undoubtedly takes its origin from all the first counsels of the Elders for the settlement of the first disputes. The Mbosi might have had the merit of making it an institution. [18]

Some influential and wealthy clan leaders ended up creating autonomous sections of *Otwere* called *Kwephe*: *Otwere* are characterized by sacred, respectable, consistent, supreme, political, administrative, legislative, cultural, jurisdictional, social, philosophical, constant and rigorous institutions. The Mbosi people are the only ones to have a social system based on *Otwere*, hence its originality. Antoine Ndinga Oba apprehends *Otwere* in these terms:

The Otwere is a body of knowledge, precepts and rules governing life in society. The knowledge taught allows those who are invested with it to better understand the forces which act on the world, in other words, the laws of nature, the visible and invisible things. People advanced in Otwere are said to have four eyes to see day and night. This is what enables them to ward off the forces of evil and to defy sorcerers in the exercise of justice. [19]

Otwere's men include A nga kwephe, Ibani, A ngoo, A nga Isongo, Iphongo, Opombo.

- *A nga kwephe* is a wise guardian of the power of *Otwere*. He was originally the holder of a delegation of power and authority from *Ndinga*. He became the chief and keeper of a section of *Otwere*.

- *Ibani* (pl. *Ebani*, sing) constitute the force body in the Mbosi Olee society. They make up the *Otwere* "police". To each *A nga kwephe* are attached a number of *Ibani* which can only be set in motion by him or, with his authorization by another *A nga kwephe* who requests it. Among the Mbosi Olee, there are three degrees of *Ibani*: *Ibani b'A nga kwephe* or *Ibani b'ignion la kwephe* protect the *A nga kwephe* on the day of the ritual celebration of *Otwere*. *Ibani b'A ngo Otwere*, protect the "shrine" on the day of the celebration of *Otwere*. *Ibani Onguiele*, responsible for carrying out the missions of *A nga kwephe* in the village.

- *A ngoo* (sing. *Ngoo*) are the initiates, that is to say the members of the *Otwere* institution.

- *A nga Isongo* sage member of *Otwere* and is one of the influential members of a clan (*Isiya*) holding a *kwephe*.

- *Iphongo* (or *Ephongo*) postulants who have applied for *Otwere*.

- *Opombo* (pl. *Ipombo*) or *Onguiele* (pl. *Inguiele*) are adult or young men who are not part of *Otwere*. *Otwere* is symbolized by physical instruments that play the role of "arms" of the Mbosi community. These instruments are: *Mwandzi*, *Kwephe y' otwere*, *Pengue y' ebani*. The *Mwandzi* plays the role of flag, emblem. *Kwephe y' Otwere* designates a section of the *Otwere* Institution. It

symbolizes a part of the authority of Ndinga. The *Pengue ebani* is a basket made like the one that men wear when they go fishing, hunting and in the fields. Its sacred character is indicated by its exterior coating.

Until the second initiatory stage, the pupil, because he is not yet initiated into the *otwere*, is not authorized to enter the " *otwere circle* " during the trials. Special cases: among the Likuba, the *twere* (1st level) receives as a symbol a *mwanzo* with a round trunk; from the 5th initiation stage, he is authorized to hold the *Mwanzo* pointy trunk. *Obela* is a function performed by the exceptional *twere*, noted for its eloquence, wisdom, science, and general knowledge. Without the *obela*, genealogist emeritus of the *okani* (seigneurie), neither marriages, nor agreements, nor judgments would be possible in *ngala* country. Despite the fragmentation of the space of the Congolese Cuvette into several ethnic groups and seigneuries, *ikani*, independent of each other since pre-colonial times, the *twere* have always represented a central thought, a tradition, the true spiritual unity of all. The *Ngala*, " Water people " and " Earthlings ". The soul of the *Ngala* country, the foundation of a true " nation ", whatever their ethnic origin, everyone initiated into *Otwere* participates - without necessarily being invited to it - in various customary court trials or ritual enthronement ceremonies. Inheritance and receives his session allowance. Up to this day, the initiates of the *otwere* are organized in *ngala* country in a real council of elders, a ruling caste which animates the whole political system here. They have, in all the villages, the responsibility for moral conduct, for laws and customs, for history. Among the *Mbosi Olee*, we also find other forms of chiefdoms and traditional powers such as *Mara* and *Ondinga*. *Mara* designates a traditional chiefdom which consists in the management of portions of land of which the members of the clans are holders or beneficiaries. *Mara* appears as a competent institution with broad authority administrative, moral and spiritual over clan members in areas of *Asoni* to *Tsongo of Bombo*, of *Ilanga* and *Tse*, of *Olembe*. This chief who exercises the *Mara* and rose to his throne is called *Obiali*. The crowning of an *Obiali* takes place in two public ceremonies, religious and cultural. The time between the coronation (*Ikoueya la Mara* = entry into *Mara* = consecration of the *Mara*) and the investiture (*Ipala la Mara* = exit from the *Mara*) is more or less long and depends on the financial power of the person chosen and sacred by clan. [20] And at the exit constitutes a party. It is reported that human sacrifices are necessary to gain access to some *Mara*. However, human sacrifice is not a condition for accessing all of *Mara*. *Obiali* is a sacred dignitary and invested in the *Mara*. He is then called *Eboro ibaa*, that is to say "the male parent, the eldest par excellence, the great man". Chief *Obiali* is the supreme authority of the *Mara*. It embodies the administrative, spiritual, moral power of the clan village or the clan. To become *Obiali*, you must:

- belong to the clan by the father or by the father of the mother;
- have had an *Obiali* relative as *his heir*;
- be an *Okola* (pl. *Akola*, child born to the brother and boys of the sister line) or an *Ndaa* (grandson). The title of *Obiali* is conferred on *Okola* or *Ndaa* by the *Pande* (child born to the sister and to any daughter of the lines of this sister vis-à-vis the children of the brother) who are the biological heads of the family and the village. It is confirmed at the coronation, *Mara*. But an *Okola* or an *Ndaa* does not always aspire to become *Obiali*. You can remain *Okola* or *Ndaa* all your life;
- be custodian of land (*Tsengue*): as a member of the clan, *Obiali* necessarily has *Tsengue* (land) over which he must reign;
- be male: only men are admitted under *Obiali* and women are excluded. A woman's rights to land are vested in her male children;
- be an adult, at least thirty five (35) years old;
- be a member of *Otwere* (supreme political and justice institution);
- be in good physical and mental health;
- have humility and be instructed in custom, impartial, wise;
- know how to respect and ensure respect for the clan totem.

Obiali is distinguished from the *rest* of society by the following badges of powers:

- 1) - *Caphe*: crown. It is a triangular band of red fabric (in red velvet). *Obiali* receives *caphe* the day of his coronation that the greatest *pande* places on his head. The *Caphe* is placed on the head *obiali*: the base of the triangle to the face and stops when stopping the hair towards the face; the point of the triangle falls towards the nape of the neck.
- 2) - *Moo*: large collar (circular) in roll of red fabric on which one applies (or plants) the hair of elephant tail (*tsiphi*) and long feathers of large birds. The *Moo* is placed as an ornament on the head to support the *cape*. To make it more ornamental, one apply on the *Moo*, cowries, white and shiny shells.
- 3) - *Lepopo*: hairstyle. It is a toga woven in raffia threads and colored. It covers the skull of *Obiali*.
- 4) - *Osanga*: necklace. It is a cylindrical steel necklace rolled into circular rings of more than 4cm in diameter. It can be a simple circular steel rod and housed in a roll of red or blue fabric. Long panther teeth are attached to the necklace, symbolizing the power and wealth of *Obiali*. The number of panther teeth indicates the rank of *Obiali* in the concert of the *Abiali* of a zone.

- 5) - *Ekoro ya Ngwe* : panther skin, serves as a carpet or ornament for the seat on which *Obiali* is installed, seated.
- 6) - *Kami* : red coat: one of the distinctive signs of wealth.
- 7) - *Edzouna* : loincloth, ordinary *Obiali dress* .
- 8) - *Leswa* : loincloth embroidered with blue or red fabric.
- 9) - *Olondo* : exit bag (game bag) . The *Olondo* by *Obiali* is distinctive with its strap in a strip of red and blue fabric on which shells of all colors are applied. It houses the skins of *Olwengue* (*ginette*), *Osiya* (short white-tailed monkey), *Ndzoli* , *Obili* (animals of the fox race) and valuables.
- 10) - *Ekoro y ' Olwengue* : *ginette* skin that *Obiali* has in his hands or placed in *Olondo* .
- 11) - *Apara* : bracelets made of copper blades well stitched and grated to be shiny and shiny to wear on the arms.
- 12) - *Iminga* : foot bracelets in round copper and steel rod.
- 13) - *Epoumbou* : fly fly at the bushy end of a buffalo tail. *Obiali uses it* in the hand as a fan at the time of the ceremony to produce the gentle wind on his face (figure) painted.
- 14) - *Tsiphi* : tuft of elephant tail hair that *Obiali* has in his hand and serves him also wide.
- 15) - *Mbee* : it's the pipe. *Obiali's* pipe ends with a long stem, adorned with more than 40cm.
- 16) - *Ndzwembe l ' Abiali* : it is a parade ax with a wide blade and a curved handle (less than 30cm long). The handle is nicely decorated with tacks and fine copper and steel wires. *Obiali* hangs it on his left shoulder (*etousou y ' ewese*) when he moves. He holds it hoisted in his left hand at the time of the ceremony. All these badges have artistic, ritual and mystical value. They are the vehicles of power and ensure the materialization of power. They give him, moreover, a deep respect from the rest of the population. As for *Ondinga*, it is both a power and traditional mystical clan chiefdom whose origins date back to distant times. In the *Ondinga* zone, the chief is considered as the *Ndinga* of the clan, he administers the village on behalf of *Ndinga* . Some *Ndinga* have succeeded in associating, for their chiefdom, the administrative power devolved to *Obiali* , the political, legal and legislative powers over an area devolved to *Otwere* . The village of the colonial system is administered by a village chief (*Okondzi ya mboa*) appointed by the chief administrator of the colonial mission. The village had ceased to be an independent entity to come under the authority of the land chief and district chief. This chief had his legitimacy from the colonial power embodied by the district chief. The colonial administrative chiefdom is characterized by tribal chiefs and land or village chiefs. European penetration brought about profound changes in the framework of traditional life. Money had become a basic need of the people, not only as a means of paying taxes, but also to satisfy other social needs. It was now necessary to produce for the market in order to obtain money. The new mode of production of the French had thus shattered the myth of the wealth reserved in the pre-colonial period for the *kani* , the *mfumu* and the nobles. It came to strengthen the new social hierarchy born in the 18th-19th century, the masters of " long-distance trade ", a real business aristocracy, *bakonzi* (*mvouama* among the *Laari* ; *kisina* among the *Kunyi* ; *tsisina* among the *Vili*), in place of the Congo in all the seigneuries . To better control the indigenous populations, the colonial administration captured the class of chiefs to serve as a base for maneuver and had chosen to make the *bakonzi* instruments of its policy. It called them «village chiefs", " land chiefs ", " canton chiefs ". To ensure their docility, it sometimes hoisted some above the others with the sounding title of «superior chief", " tribal chief " ... Pressure was put on the workforce to bring in the harvest. And tax, through these chiefs. Economic and political concerns, naturally to the advantage of the colonizer, henceforth presided over the accession to the top of residential units. The seigneurie had thus ceased to be hereditary; it was no longer the property of the village's master lineage. The *kani* or the *mfumu*, traditionally chiefs, lords, owners of the land, now saw themselves prefer by the colonial authorities the new chiefs, *bakonzi* , at the level of which the censuses were carried out and the tax collections were carried out. This new chief was in fact the front man of the administration. Satisfying the interests of the occupier henceforth took precedence over the primitive and mystical mission of the chief, that of ensuring the maintenance and fertility of the earth. When he came out of a lineage other than the master lineage, he lost the prestige conferred on the *kani* or *mfumu* by descending from the first occupants of the country. Obedience to the *mokonzi* was now based on the fear of repression from the administration. The cases of contestation were now numerous and *Mokonzi* who were reminded if necessary that he held his power from the European, saw his authority crumble. He appeared in the eyes of the community as a usurper and an instrument in the service of the occupier. The village or city-state, once ruled by the council of lineage chiefs under the chairmanship of the master lineage chief, had now come under the control of a despot. The new leader imposed by the colonial administration was a heterogeneous element for the village or city-state. This new category of heads of the colonial administration had in reality rendered, without realizing it,

a great service to the old power of the *mfumu* and the *kani*. This capture had indeed positive consequences: the populations, disgusted by the colonial exactions, found in the *mfumu* and the *kani* the only power of salvation. And, everywhere, the idea was reinforced that the «new chiefs» resulting from this class of money which constituted the *b akonzi* were a power of foreigners. In this double conflict for influence, the *mfumu* and the *kani* kept the upper hand. They represented for all the only authentic power born from an intrinsic dynamics of the company. Herse, the Chief of the Likouala- Mossaka region at the end of his investigation across the whole Ngala country on traditional chiefdoms, had reached the following recommendation:

France must retain in all villages Mouene as village chief. Our mistake is to have often appointed as village chief a chief other than the Mouene . There are then in the village two chiefs, one of whom, the official chief, is in charge of works, taxes, production, gatherings, in short everything that depends on the order of the Whites. To obtain results, it is often necessary for the village chief to be helped and assisted by the Mouene , otherwise he could do nothing.[21] .

We can remember that colonization did not make the seigneurie disappear, moreover yesterday as today. The *mfumu* and the *kani* continued to «speak the law », to apply custom and sentences in the event of palaver in the villages. On the other hand, the *Bakonzi* sat in the new colonial jurisdictions. The Kongo and the Ngala therefore lived under a duality of powers during the colonial era, subject to trial depending on the case before the traditional courts of *mfumu* and *kani*, or before the “indigenous justice” of *mokonzi* .

II. THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE COLONIAL CONQUEST

To shed light on the nature of the colonial phenomenon, we must first seek the motives for colonization. They shed light on the nature of the relationships established between the colonizer and the colonized. Even today, the type of relationship established during the colonial period continues to weigh on political behavior. Indeed, at the base of colonial expansion and, in its essence, colonization is domination, not only legal, but also economic, social, cultural, religious, etc. The colonial phenomenon is a global phenomenon of domination in which all aspects are interdependent and complementary. To dissociate the legal aspect and to isolate it, it is to reveal only one aspect of reality, infinitely richer and more complex. Violent or peaceful, annexation is carried out through the occupation of the territory. It is quite remarkable that the rules of classical international law, relating to the acquisition of a territory by occupation, were forged in connection with the colonies. In other words, they are dominated by political considerations. First, we establish the principle that African territories are territories without a master, that is to say not subject to a sovereign political authority, so that the occupation can be considered a valid legal title. This explains why African political societies are presented as anarchies in the vulgar sense of the term, and in any case, as “anestatic” (without a State) or barbarian societies . To illustrate this, Vidrovich states that:

In the Middle Congo, whose key position in the heart of the colony, at the crossroads of trade throughout the Congolese basin, aroused the most lively hopes, the occupation was less late ... On the other hand, the Batéké plateau, populated by the Téké, of Achikuya of Tegué (Alima) and Djikini (on kudu), long remained closed. At the end of 1910, the situation was «most precarious ”. Only the Batéké closest to the river, between Léfini and Nkéni , and the Bobangui of the Congo recognizing a semblance of authority. But the latter, «divided into small villages with no obvious common links ”, passed on the Belgian shore at the slightest alert. [22]

There is a certain mystifying imagery of colonization that needs to be destroyed. Most of the authors have taken great pains to ennoble colonial enterprises and present them as a sort of historical inevitability, no doubt to gain public acceptance. For example, colonization is presented as a natural fact whose origins were lost in the dawn of time, so that colonizing would be an irrepressible human need. In reality, this phenomenon cannot be confused either with the migration, more or less spontaneous of population as it occurred besides in Africa, even during the ages, nor by the increase of a national territory by incorporation surrounding areas. Colonization proper is “the original product of Europe”, which has reached a certain stage in its development, that of capitalism. The European bourgeoisie “under pain of death, forces all nations to adopt the bourgeois mode of production, it forces them to introduce the so-called civilization into their homes, that is to say to become bourgeois. In short, it shapes a world in her image. This is what makes the originality of the colonial phenomenon. From that moment on, the colonial enterprise had another object: to ensure outlets for manufactures and to find sources of raw materials. This is the dominant idea in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the last third of the 19th century, capitalism entered the third phase of its evolution. Technical progress has made a fantastic leap. Big industry has developed. Businesses concentrate by taking the form of corporations. The era of monopolies begins. The alliance of industrial capitalism and financial capitalism is asserting itself. So what to understand by occupation? At the beginning of the colonial era, we were satisfied with the simple geographical discovery. But the rivalry of the first colonial powers risked creating conflicts. Finally at the end of the 19th century, the intensity of the colonial powers was such that the Berlin Act (1885) adopted the principle of effective occupation with regard to future conquests carried out on the coasts of

black Africa. Deprived of international personality, African countries will therefore follow the destiny of the colonial state, be drawn into conflicts and undergo the treaties concluded by it or benefit from them. In Ogooué, the mission had developed an area already known; the problem was reduced to defining the appropriate administrative structures. On the other hand, colonial penetration was negligible beyond Franceville ; before settling, he almost entered a new exploration area. The development of original methods of progression was necessary. Certainly, Brazza had known the Batéké country since 1880, he had crossed the populous Koukuya plateau and descended the Léfini, but the Batéké of the upper river were almost unaware of the traffic of traders. As for the Apfourou de l'Alima, they victoriously barred the river. However, the mission's goal was to open this new path to the Congo. Two major problems therefore arose: the organization of the caravan trail and the opening of the waterway. The French penetration began around 1875 with Brazza, he reached the Congo in 1879, going up Ogooué. In 1880, he signed a treaty of sovereignty with Makoko , the king of Téké in Mbé, and founded the post of Mfoa .

III. THE EXPLORATION MISSIONS OF PIERRE SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA

Brazza's action in the Congo was first focused on the exploration missions 1875 - 1885 which constituted the preparatory stage for the taking of possession of the Congo by France, materialized by the signing of a treaty of cessions to from 1880 and the development of the territories from 1886 and the complete occupation of the French Congo. We note, without doubt, the famous French explorers Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza, Italian by birth, naturalized French; Pietro-Paolo-Francesco-Camile De Brazza (his real name) was born on January 25, 1852 in Rome. Among these trips are: the first trip which allowed the exploration of Ogooué ; the second makes it possible to take possession of a vast territory in equatorial Africa and finally the last, facilitates France to have the French Congo officially recognized.

3.1. The first exploration mission of the Ogooué and the expansion on the Alima 1875-1878

The objective of the mission was to create colonies as a solution to the crisis experienced by industrialized countries, since it offered the possibility of access to sources of raw materials and outlets seems to motivate the first scientific exploration mission and geographical area of Ogooué. As Vidrovich points out:

Brazza's efforts first focused on the Ogooué : this route, the first he had opened up inland, was close to his heart : he dreamed of making it the vital artery of the Congo ; his stubbornness to use to supply Brazzaville explains most of the disorders and setbacks of his government, because the steam navigation, provided by the foreign firms Woermann , John Holt and Hatton & Cookson , only allowed to go up the river from Cape Lopez to Ndjolé ; as a lover, the falls and the rapids required multiple transshipments : only canoes could venture from Ndjolé to Booué ; beyond, a narrow portage path led to the Ivindo ; then the skilful boatmen adouma and okanda resumed their perilous navigation to Franceville, carrying " 80, 100 and 120 kg per man while before they barely carried 40 and 50 kg " ; long and painful, the portage then followed through the Batéké plateaus which separated the upper Ogooué from the upper course of the Alima ; the abusive use of local carriers soon paralyzed the region ; they had " died of so much hunger, fatigue, misery and above all abandonment that I understand them " noted Brazza passing through in 1887[23].

Begun in 1875, Brazza was accompanied by Europeans and Africans. To illustrate this, Etanislav Ngodi , reveals to us that :

During this mission, Brazza was accompanied by three companions, Noel Ballay , medical assistant, Victor Hamon, quartermaster and Alfred Marche, naturalist and seventeen Africans who completed the team, that is to say thirteen Senegalese and four interpreters recruited in Gabon. [24]

From the Gabonese coast, Brazza went up the Ogooué in February 1878 from where, he ventured to reach the Congo, but turned back because of the Apfourou , in fact the Likouba , under the authority of the chief Ndombi - Bolounza , down the river. The Alima is a tributary of the Congo which has offered a much more favorable opportunity to reach central Africa. From now on, fearing other imperialist powers, such as: the English and German presence on the Gabonese coasts, the Belgian daring with Stanley, Portuguese competition etc , that we seize the discoveries, will save the basin as quickly as possible. Congo. Completed on January 5, 1878, this first mission reveals the importance of Ogooué, Alima, and Likouala. So he wrote the following letter on August 30, 1879:

I must point out the commercial and above all political importance that Gabon and Ogooué will take, and the still unoccupied part of the coast which extends to the Portuguese possessions in Angola (...). A great revolution will take place in the trade of interior Africa, and it will no longer be through the eastern coast that its products will flow (...). The European nation which will have been able to take a position on the part of the coast where the natural outlet of this immense communication route will be (the Congo) will have created a huge market. To its commercial activity, while assuring its preponderance in a country which the ease of communications which nature traced there, inevitably calls for an immense future.[25]

This mission on the Ogooue was confused with that of the Congo River, the need for this unoccupied zone, which the other colonial powers coveted, prompted a second trip.

3.2. The second mission of taking possession 1879-1882

During this second mission, explorations apparently intended to advance geographical knowledge were transformed into a fierce competition for the occupation of territory. To illustrate this, an article points out that: *A race for territories will be played out between De Brazza and his competitor Henry Morton Stanley, sent by King Leopold II of Belgium to the other bank of the Congo River. De Brazza finally going ahead by signing Stanley September 10, 1880, to Ndoua, a treaty of alliance with the Makoko Iloo 1st, by which the latter gives up to France 'rights hereditary supremacy'. This agreement, heavy with consequences, was and still is very controversial. Some say that it was built on flaws in interpretation; others on Makoko's too much confidence in the charm and kindness of De Brazza; others still, like Prince Ntsalou, son of Makoko (1948-1964), evoke a happy meeting between two distant peoples augured by the stars*[26].

In the same vein, Etanislav Ngodi, says the following:

The exploration missions soon created the conditions for a new stage in what is called «the crochet race.» [27]

Clearly, the European exploration missions in black Africa have upset the pre-existing traditional structures which in turn have almost ended up crumbling or disappearing.

IV. CONCLUSION

The stages of colonial conquest and territorial occupations had both positive and negative effects. The porting caravan due to the strides made by the processes products were so essential to the development of the metropolitan economy, in this case the product of hunting and gathering, rubber, ivory etc. This caused the spread of diseases and the intensification of forced labor to supply the metropolis with products of all kinds.

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- [5] This term was taken up later under the deformation of *makoko* which is a title which has been translated as king.

- [6] A. N dinga M bo , 2003, *Pour une histoire du Congo Brazzaville. Methodology and reflections*, Paris, l'Harmattan, p.98.
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