

**The Establishment of the Kongo in the Teke Territory of the Pool XVII-XX<sup>th</sup>  
Century**

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### **Abstract**

This article was aimed at assessing the establishment of the Kongo in the Teke territory of the Pool XVII-XX<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the article sought to explore how the Kongo settled on the Teke territory. The Teke space, as we know through the peoples who had occupied and occupied it, is almost the whole of the Republic of the Congo: from the foothills of the Mayombe to the Congolese basin, Alima and the Likouala. In the Congolese territory, hydronyms, toponymy, that is to say, the names of rivers, mountains, villages, and forests ... are enough to get an idea of the countries Teke once. Numerous results of researchers and researchers show that the Teke were the first to occupy the present area of the Republic of Congo in general and the department of the pool in particular. This study tries to trace the history of the occupation of the said territory by the Kongo considered as the new arrivals, and the heritage left by the Teke people in this space.

**Keywords:** establishment; Kongo-Teke; territory of the Pool.

## Introduction

The Teke space, as we know through the peoples who had occupied and occupied it, is almost the whole of the Republic of the Congo: from the foothills of the Mayombe to the Congolese basin, Alima and the Likouala. In the Congolese territory, hydronyms, toponymy, that is to say, the names of rivers, mountains, villages, and forests ... are enough to get an idea of the Teke countries in the past. DRC Teke occupies the area between Lake *Inongo* e t hinterland Kinshasa over 700Km along the river *Olun*. In Gabon, the Teke occupy all the upper ogoowe, the region of Franceville. In the Republic of the Congo, this vast habitat is today to the south the place of expansion Kongo and to the north, the land of preference Ngala.

In spite of this intrusion and occupation, a few islands of Teke habitats remain here and there in the country today Ngala and Kongo. For the most part, the Teke are now blocked in the so-called Teke countries, in the Nkuna region, Bouansa, Likumu, Niari forest in Yaya and Musenie and part of the Congolese basin in The Alima and Biri countries.

## The Kongo Migrations

The discovery of the Congolese coasts by the Portuguese in 1482 exposes the kingdom of Kongo to a series of events: forced Christianization, struggle for power, the slave trade, Battle of Ambuila (1665), etc. At these terrible episodes adds the invasion of M'banza-Kongo (capital of the Kingdom) in 1568 by Jaga described by Filippo Pigafetta and Duarte Lopes like wild, looting and human flesh eaters <sup>1</sup>. All these events are mentioned as The main causes of the decline of the kingdom of Kongo and the migration of the Kongo to the lands they occupy today. And according to a historical literature supported by Bernard Nkaloulou, these Kongo migrations would have started in the sixteenth century under the leadership of the notables, he writes:

*Movements of migrants to distant lands, led by Noblemen and warlords, opponents of the Christian King Affonso, Begun in the early sixteenth century. They probably asserted between*

1506, the year of the inauguration of Affonso and the death of his brother Cadet Mbemba Kuhu a supporter of *kifu kia n'si* or a Kongo faithful to his tradition <sup>2</sup>

But it is difficult to admit any thesis that postulates for a Kongo primary migration between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These migrations occurred in several sequences. The former date from before the arrival of Portuguese, that is to say, before the arrival of the Portuguese in the Kongo at the end of the fifteenth century. They would be motivated by economic reasons, in particular by the dynamics of the exchanges in which the Kongo engaged very early with other ethnic entities on the other side. In any case, several centuries before the colonization which began at the end of the nineteenth century, trade and all that it carries out as socio-cultural opportunities contributed to the encounter, displacement, and settlement of populations of different ecologies on two banks of the Congo River. The economic necessity could, therefore, explain the displacement than the installation of the Kongo to the confines of Ntotila, in the Teke territory of the present Pool. This is implicitly recognized by A.C. Ndinga-Mbo who writes:

*It is, therefore, fairer, as all our Teke, Kongo, and Foreigners, to think that the Kongo occupied the country Teke by infiltrations successive. This movement could go back to the pre-Lusitan period. No major physical obstacle prevented the Nsundi for example in search of better territories to overflow their Regnum and to settle in a Teke country so close, and the slave trade did not then amplify the movement* <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Pigafetta and Duarte Lopes, 1591 *Description of the Kingdom of Congo and surrounding countries*, p.106

<sup>2</sup> B. Nkaloulou, 1984 *Dynamic peasant and rural development in Congo*, p.22

<sup>3</sup> A.C Ndinga-Mbo, 1984 *Introduction to the history of migration in Congo*, p. 64

Thus, the wars of succession to the throne between the Mvimba (16th century), the invasion Jaga (1568), the slave trade that wrapped Kongo society between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Battle of Ambuila (1665) were responsible only for secondary migrations. Besides the traditions collected by JF Yekoka<sup>4</sup>. In 2003 bind Kongo migration of the Niari valley with those of Kongo Pool. They justify them by starvation and clan wars, because of a shortage of land to be cultivated by all the Kongo clans who had erected their habitat in Kongo-dia-Ntotila and, above all, Kongo to build what they call *nzo yongi* is a kind of Tower of Babel. We are between myth and history, and therefore in a very old situation, which must be kept in mind for centuries, as several twentieth-century authors have done on the history of the Kongo of the Republic of Congo.

From Kongo-dia-Ntotila, the Kongo encountered a natural obstacle, the Congo River. In front of this impassable barrier on foot, Ms. Nsundi, who wore many fetishes, cut a sheaf, struck between the thighs and threw it into the water. To the general surprise, a gigantic bridge was formed. He allowed the crossing of the clans<sup>5</sup>. In a lyrical story, but full of historical information on migration and Kongo plant in Pool D. Ngoie-Ngalla stands, too, along a miraculous portrait of crossing the Congo River:

*Nobody around, a frightening silence fell on the terrible roar Waters ... A large vein came to bar the broad forehead of man (Ngom-mbima) His long arm extended to the side of the river fell from impotence. But against the A destiny which was fierce against him, the man immediately returned to the charge. Suddenly, as if it were traversed by a burning wave, its vast body brightened. He had just taken notice of the presence, on the bank of the river where he stood, of a tree with a magnificent trunk which rose to the assault of the sky. In a movement of the great exaltation of the spirit, Ngom-mbima rang the gathering. And when everyone was there, in a voice that did not hesitate, ordered the tree to lie down over the waters of the immense river. Docile O miracle! Before the people of Ngom-mbima astonished, the tree obeys to the command of man. Over the river and its tumult Frightening, he lay down and joined the two banks of the immense river. Then, at the behest of this astonishing man, as in a beautiful dream, the people of Ngom-mbima walked over*

*the raging river feared. And when the last man and the last woman and the Last child had reached the other side, Ngoma-mbima spoke of new. The tree rose from the furious waters and Plumb on its root, while a thick mist rose from the waters, An immense rainbow threw over the banks of the river wonderful gateway* <sup>6</sup>

Wonderful legends or the curiosity of the historian. The lesson to be learned is that which situates Kongo migrations at a very early period.

<sup>4</sup> J.F Yekoka 2003, *ethnohistory test Kongo: Kongo example the district of Boko-Songho, from the seventeenth to the early twenty-first century*, p. 49

<sup>5</sup> J.F Yekoka 2003, ditto. p. 50

<sup>6</sup> D. Ngoie-Ngalla, 2008, *the gesture-mbima Ngom. Monitoring anchor songs*, pp.26-27

According to this account, Ngom-mbima is Lord Kongo at the head of those who decided to leave Kongo-dia-Ntotila, their dream country. How long did it last? Hard to say. Decades, maybe centuries. Everything is possible because people walked in appalling conditions, guided by a common destiny to find the land or had preceded them much earlier, their brothers Kongo. During these marches became frequent halts are many received their burial <sup>7</sup>.

After crossing the river in the present bas-Congo (Luozi region), the Kongo reached Mayanga, then Kingila, Kingoma and Boko, Pool area. On these migrations and the axes borrowed, Mr. Soret asserts in these terms:

*To the east, the Kongo seem to have been the first to cross the River Between Luozi and Mayanga but seem to have remained long downstream of Boko. The Soundi in the strict sense, in a tight mass, move towards the northeast or they occupy gradually the Mindouli region until the Loufoulakary* <sup>8</sup>

According to all probability then, it was from Mayanga that the Kongo stormed the country Teke. Traditions respondents said Kongo peacefully occupied the territory <sup>9</sup> To B. Nkaloulou, Kongo used it several methods of occupancy Teke territory, on their arrival:

alienation, pledge, matrimonial alliances, grabbing, infiltration brutal testimony economic relationship by <sup>10</sup>.A.C. Ndinga Mbo corroborates this thesis as follows:

*It is more just, as all our information Teke, Kongo, Foreigners, to think that the Kongo occupied the country Teke by infiltrations successive. This movement could go back to the pre-Lusitan period: No major physical obstacle prevented the Nsundi for example In search of better terrors to overflow their Regnum and to settle In a country so close, And the slave trade only amplified the Is lying. <sup>11</sup>*

The invasion of the Teke territory by the Kongo was not initially massive. The minor phenomenon was initially minimized by the Tio, who, while respecting and discrediting the first Kongo migrants, tacitly accepted their settlement. And to G. Okouya to say:

*With the alliance relations and exchanges that were forged between natives Tio and Kongo; the peaceful occupation of the Teke terror by the Kongo became inevitable. Also, by the play of precedence, grandchildren from Trinomials became owners of the land. The land of the Teke is before any property of the lineage as is the individual. The cadet who inherits the eldest man eventually becomes a master of the earth. <sup>12</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> D.Ngoïe-Ngalla, 2008, idem. p.22

<sup>8</sup> -M. Soret, 1978 *History of Congo capital, Brazzaville*, p. 72

<sup>9</sup> -EO # 2

<sup>10</sup> -B. Nkaloulou, 1984, p. 25

<sup>11</sup> -AC Ndinga-Mbo, 1984 op. cit. p. 64

<sup>12</sup> - G. Okouya, 1986 *Implementation, and movements of peoples in Congo origins to today*, p.27.

But somewhere it is hard to believe that the Teke have easily abandoned their land to the Kongo. Because,

*Pre-colonial societies, in the aftermath of their first settlements, present themselves as dynamic and expanding societies; they are characterized by very marked struggles, both between themselves and in the face of outdoor unit <sup>13</sup>.*

About this specific case of the Teke, D. Ngoie Ngalla reveals the ambition for the Kongo to reach and bring down Mindouli, copper mining reservoir, dynamic economic home or practice several Teke activities. The stake of Mindouli thus crystallized the contacts between Teke and Kongo who engaged in an epic battle:

*At the first engagement, the Kongo folded: the Anzics had the battle was raging. The horns and horns covered the immense clamor of war and cries. The Anzics were decided to fight until the victory... For the men of Ngom-Mbima, Mindouli must have fallen, the pursuit of their **March** depended on it; And therefore the Fate of the new Kongo that they had sworn to carve out this part of the territory Anziques <sup>14</sup>*

This battle, says Ngoie-Ngalla, ended in an ephemeral victory of the Kongo who gave themselves up to the Teke women. It was through them and thanks to a collective consciousness Teke-Kongo, that all decided to bury the hatchet; which allowed the Kongo to continue their march towards Kinkala North. During the mid-nineteenth century, the situation evolved very rapidly. The Kongo who crossed the boundaries of the kingdom to the north must recognize the suzerainty of the Teke, in the midst of which they set up small chiefdoms. But soon, thanks to their dynamism, the Kongo manage to reverse the situation that now turns to their advantage: the Teke fall back or assimilate. It is important to note that for the quick installation of the Kongo, there is a vacuum call. The area between Mboko and Mfoa (Plateau of cataracts) is not occupied so Kongo migrants find here a territory of predilection.

Finally, the Kongo pressure exerted on the Teke forces them to abandon their land to the benefit of Kongo. Another crucial fact is that the Teke by accepting the arrivals on their land (village) have remained suspicious of them.

13 -Mr. Mavoungou Bouyou, 2004. The land at the heart of the conflict: the case of Gabon (XVII-XX century) p. 7814

<sup>14</sup>-D. Ngoie-Ngalla, 2008, op. cit. pp. 36-37



In the event of the death of a Teke, witchcraft was imputed to the newcomers; the Teke decided to release the places and were spreading towards the North. From then on, the Kongo implantation is now slowly, gradually, at an unsuspected rate. The final occupation of the land took place after the rites of appropriation had been carried out, in order to acquire the official means of an anthropological occupation of the land by the newcomers: the Kongo. At the end of the nineteenth century when Brazza arrived in Teke country, the Kongo had ceased to exist as a kingdom. It is rather Kongo peoples politically unorganized and walking with their Mbanza through the Teke space that he met. Thus, even during the colonization, this occupation continued as Alain Auger remarks:

*The Kongo expansion continued peacefully towards the North; To M'pangala and to the north-east to reach the Djoué in 1939, the Djili in the north of Brazzaville in 1959, and finally the meridian. In 1964, they constitute 50% of the population Dibou <sup>15</sup>*

In fact, colonization, which was superimposed on the slave trade, caused incalculable havoc. It forcibly dumped certain populations without taking into account their ethnic origins, it will be said better that it transplanted the peoples. Finally, for the Kongo group, an outlet, a safety valve to finish in Mfoa (Brazzaville) this long journey begun for more than half a millennium. To explain the installation Kongo and the withdrawal Teke, this observation of Sautter is Eloquent and testifies:

*Villas, buildings, shops, offices occupy the Teke villages ... precipitating the ruin of the monarchy of Mbe, undermining the prestige of the Teke. The European occupation Of Nkuna had the effect of enriching the neighboring groups which Up to now ... The immediate surroundings of Mfoa are becoming A kind of neutral zone, a country of whites or anyone else. To settle without accountability to anyone (we say otherwise to the whites New masters of the country). These circumstances enabled the Kongo and Others which had long been progressing by slow infiltrations by nibbling little by little the Teke territory, a leap forward ... The Teke gar-* The

*material advantages of at least certain inherent prerogatives their quality first occupants and former masters of the country* <sup>16</sup>

These are the oldest and longest contemporary and regional migrations that have already borne fruit in the Kongo project to occupy the Pool area. These contemporary movements have been carried out on reduced scales because, having become the master of a land space, each group will henceforth turn only within its borders. After a series of contemporary migrations, the Kongo installation becomes definitive and is reinforced by the European presence, as A.C. Ndinga Mbo reveals:

*At the arrival of the French, these populations were thus fixed and since almost Nothing has been changed. Colonization certainly contributed to freezing Delimiting for each ethnolinguistic subgroup a geographical area Today all these subgroups still have a clear awareness of going down Kongo dia Ntotela, their supposed center of dispersion, their origin at all their irradiation hearth* <sup>17</sup>

### **Inheritance of *Nga-ntsié* (Teke) in Pool**

The antecedence of the Teke over their most immediate neighbors is established not only by archeology but also by ethno genesis. In this regard, all oral traditions collected in Pahouin or Fang countries, in Ngala countries, in Kongo countries are eloquent and bear witness. Thus the Teke are called *Nga-ntsié* (landowner) by their neighbors. For centuries, the Kongo have gradually swarmed the so-called Teke territory of Pool nowadays. This colonization of the Teke space by the Kongo has followed different trajectories according to the objectives to be attained and the cultural weight of each other. In the face of the Kongo flows, no doubt warlike, large *tekephone* groups choose to retreat to give free rein to migrants. Yet despite this retreat of Teke residual pockets will resist the Kongo assault. They refused to distance themselves from the chthonian and primordial spirits that govern their lands, even their beliefs.

However, on their side, no doubt to find the favors of those spirits whose aggressiveness they feared, or for the purposes of political strategy, social integration; The Kongo chose

to adopt a number of Teke rites, their language and many other ancestral customs. The most cited cases are related to *nkisi* Lehuard quoted by C. Kinata notes, inter alia that: *At the Stanley Pool, the Kongo practice the rituals that ngangá Teke to the point that travelers discovered Teke original statuettes, some confused* <sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> -A. Auger, cited by Bernard Nkaloulou, 1984, op.cit. P 22

<sup>16</sup> -G. Sautter, *from the Atlantic to the Congo River, an underdevelopment of Geography*, p. 63

<sup>17</sup> -AC Ndinga Mbo, 1984, op. cit. P 69

<sup>18</sup> -C. Kinata, 2001, *The ethnochefferies in Bas-Congo French: collaboration and resistance (1896-1960)* p29

This is among other *Nkirampo* and *Mubu* called *nkisi* used by Kongo act in which Balandier <sup>19</sup> detects a form of *tekeisation* conquerors groups. On the ground, throughout the territory of the Pool, there exist important onomastic indices (toponyms, hydronyms, places, zoonyms, etc.) inserted in the Kongo cultural habits. Certainly, the Teke migrated to let the Kongo settle. But no doubt, a significant part of their cultural heritage remained there. This heritage, astonishment, the Kongo who arrived adopted it, even integrated into their own cultural heritage. This is nevertheless an important thesis element to be added to the Teke file to support its pre-eminence in today's Pool.

Some Teke cultural clues anchored in the Kongo cultural repertoire are noteworthy: language. Being a privileged support of a culture reflects the material and historical experience of the group that speaks it. It is through it that the group marks the elements of its culture on the ground. This historical truth remains permanent in the Teke society of the Pool or, for centuries it has been conveyed and communication channel of the Teke culture. Kongo arriving found rich and fertile linguistic grounds they prohibit voluntarily suppress: *batakifukasikunata'indikfu ko* <sup>20</sup> That is to say, finds a habit, but does not bring about a habit. So the Kongo draw in the Teke language, either to enrich their own vocabulary or to decode or untangle the elements belonging to the Teke cultural complex.

With the weight of time that passes quickly, the languages of these two cultural entities in the South Pool, because of their intertwining,

*Has ended up giving an intrinsic character, a nature Idyllic enough to make it think that it was at the beginning spoken by a People who share a common ancestor* <sup>21</sup> , According to JF Yekoka

In cultural practices, there is a strong Teke presence in many areas. The rituals of scarifications, circumcision, twins, interpretations of death, protection of agricultural products, dances ... In the old Teke property, the Kongo migrants of the Pool undergo a certain cultural influence Teke. There are still other survivals which exist here; reference is made to toponyms, anthroponyms, hydronyms, zoonyms, patronyms, and places.

All these indications are sufficient proof that the Teke people have not totally disappeared at Pool. The matrimonial alliances come as if to cement the existing, they are a token of a real cohesion, have given the possibility of decompartmentalizing the ethnic borders, with the mutual will to tend towards the other, to tap into its substrate vivifying elements And secure.

<sup>19</sup> -G. Balendier, 1951 *Messianism of Bas-Kongo, colonial and maritime encyclopedia*, T. I p 216

<sup>20</sup> -EOn 3

<sup>21</sup> -JF Yékoka 2003, *ethno-history test Kongo: Kongo Example district of Boko-Songho, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century, mastery of history memory*, FLSH, UMNG, p.49

### **Conclusion**

At the end of this study, some results can be considered as a historical achievement: the slave trade (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), the invasion of the Jagas (1569) and the Battle of Ambuila (1665) Of Kongo migrations to the Teke territory of the Pool. This occupation of the Teke lands and the Kongo installation on these lands were carried out in various ways: battles, infiltrations, negotiations, pawning, alliances ... But with the powerlessness of the weapons, the Teke who remained in the South Pool opposed Strength of the customs that the Kongo, even several centuries after their installation have never managed to

erase. Onomastic and linguistic clues revive forever the soul and fire of the Teke's action in the South Pool where the Kongo are installed.

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