

The Gift and the Theft: an Economic-Political Interpretation of Rwandan Missionary Diaries of White Fathers (1900-1910)

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Introduction

To venture into the history of the Christianization of Rwanda means encountering certain difficulties that are due to specific socio-cultural conditions related to the historiographical and ethnographical production in the beginning of the past century. First of all, there is a significant amount of sources which were generated during the «unequal exchanges between the oral and the written» [Chrétien 2000, 20] which are typical of the intercultural power relationships of the «colonial situation» [Balandier 1951]. The historiography and ethnology of this period also played a decisive role in the balances of the modern republic [Vansina 2001; 2004]: they constituted the symbolic capital which was incorporated in missionary schools by the “europeanized” hutu elite that gradually implemented, starting from the decolonization period, the ideological and material devices of genocide [Vidal 1991]. Even today, trying to re-interpret a distant national past seems to play a non-secondary role in attempts at post-genocidal reconciliation: *The challenges of Rwandan historiography* [Byanafashe 2004] is in fact the significant title of the book which was published in Rwanda at the time of the ten-year anniversary of the genocide and which collects contributions from the most important historians of the academies of Butare and Kigali at the convention that was held in 1998 within the recently reborn university life.

[[figure caption="Christianization of Rwanda" width="120px" fancybox="true"]]figures/2012/cristofori_1/cristofori_1_2012_01.jpg[[/figure]]

My limited contribution intends to highlight certain economic-political aspects of the events which occurred in the Rwaza mission, starting from its establishment in the region of Mulera in 1903 to the time of the assassination of its Father Superior, Paulin Loupias, on April 1st of 1910. If one analyzes them from this perspective, these events in fact serve as models to understand the history of the first and decisive steps of Christianity in Rwanda. It is with this intent that I will present, in the following pages, an analysis of selected passages from the missionary Diary (or Journal) of Rwaza, even in light of certain sources which were recently made public by the historian Stefaan Minnaert [2009].^[1] In order to reconstruct, in more detail, the political-social scenario of Rwanda in the first decade of the past century, I will make equal reference to the Journal of Zaza (in the eastern region of Gisaka).^[2] These documents should be analyzed as part of a broader study on the actions of the Society of missionaries of Africa (also known as the White Fathers).^[3] The decision to solely focus upon these two missions was due to the fact that they are located in regions which are quite different but were both in conflict – even before the construction of the missions – with the central Rwandan monarchical power: Gisaka repeatedly attempted, even after the arrival of European priests, to regain autonomy, given that it had been conquered by the Rwandan dynasty of Nyiginya^[4] during the reign of *mwami* (“king”) Mutara Rwoyera (second half of the XIXth century); Mulera was, on the other hand, one of the most turbulent areas and one of the least controlled by the central authorities and where clan powers, given their broad autonomy, attempted to escape the drain of goods towards the court.

The political and economic power of the missions was formed within the complex relations between local and central Rwandan authorities. It was a very complex environment which, in the first years of its presence within the Nyiginya territory, missionary actions contributed to re-defining in a manner

which was more incisive than the colonial German administration managed to do, as will be described in more detail below.

At the court of Zaza: the missionary apprenticeship of logic of the gift

In effect, between 1900 and 1910, the White Father had acquired a decisive advantage in the Rwandan territory with respect to the German army by constructing seven missionary stations[5]. When, in 1900, the missionary Society was already present in Save and Zaza, the German military personnel in Usumbura (modern day Bujumbura) had only had sporadic contacts with the Nyiginya court. The Rwandan kingdom became to be effectively controlled by the colonial administration only after the arrival of the first German Resident, Richard Kandt [1914], in Kigali in 1907. The mission therefore enjoyed a high level of autonomy in this period in relation to the colonial dominion which was still not very consolidated. An autonomy which the missionaries always attempted to maintain by demonstrating a spirit of veiled competition with respect to the German colonizers [Chrétien 1973; Linden 1999].

The motivation underlying this attitude towards the Germans was not only a confessional or national rivalry, since the White Fathers, at that time, were primarily French. It also seemed to correspond to the political-religious plans of the bishops of Algiers, Charles Lavigerie, who had founded the missionary congregation in 1868.[6] In Mgr. Lavigerie's opinion, the evangelizing mission was a mean for the reaffirmation of the moral role and the transnational vocation of the Church. At that time, the temporal power of the Catholic institution in Europe was being radically redefined by the *questione romana*, opened right after the birth of the Italian nation [Linden 1999, 48-49]. In particular, Mgr. Lavigerie saw the opportunity to re-establish a theocratic form of government through the Christianization of the African interlacustrine monarchies; this would have been completed with the creation of Christian kingdoms in the heart of Africa [Chrétien 1973, 140;

Linden 1999, 50-51; Mbonimana 1981]. This ambitious objective was formulated in the new instructions written by Mgr. Lavigerie for missionaries which, in 1879, departed for the Great Lakes region. At this time, he urged his spiritual sons to ensure, according to a Thomistic vision of society, that it would be sustained a strong political authority in order to guarantee the stability of the faith within the converted populations. The evangelization of this African region not only induces one to note parallels with the history of Christianity in the first centuries of its existence but also led to the hope of finding, amongst the leaders of the Great Lakes kingdoms, a Constantine that could be converted [Chrétien 1973; Linden 1999; Mbonimana 1981].

With regard to Rwanda, in particular, the political culture of the nyiginya aristocracy exercised a profound fascination: it appeared to raise up – amongst the first travellers that were received at court – the image of a political system that drew inspiration from the European Middle Ages. Within the initial reports,[7] the feudal paradigm pervaded both descriptions of life at court as well as those which attempted to illustrate a complex social stratification.[8]

The territory, which the Europeans began to conquest at the end of the XIXth century, was effectively similar to a complex chessboard in which the Rwandan political players moved. In some ways, the Diaries (also known as Journals) are a record of the daily apprenticeship of the strategic logic with the various forces played out in the field. By interpreting them, it is possible to indirectly discern how the difficult relations with the local political reality had led the White Fathers to adopt a disillusioned, if not cynical, attitude, which caused them to revise, in light of the actual situation, the teachings of their spiritual father, as well as the instructions of their superiors[9].

The Diaries which were drafted in the missions are also an irreplaceable document, not only for the wealth of information which they contain, but also due to the regional nature of the observations and stories that are contained within them. As the first written documents of this nature in Rwanda, the

Journals allow the reader to cover a significant period of time: they were in fact accurately filled out at least until 1935. These chronicles, however, did not only serve as memorandums. They were also a means for control: the Diary was generally drafted by the Father Superior and each quarter one of his copies was sent to the missionary leaders [Heremans, Ntezimana 1987, 5]. Another characteristic complicates the interpretation of the Journals: their concise daily summaries throw the present-day reader into the heart of intricate events whose the identity of the protagonists is often taken for granted.

The chronicles relative to the first years of missionary presence in Zaza (in the region of Gisaka) are, in this sense, significant: they narrate, in an extremely concise manner, of a complicated and tense situation which risked becoming explosive due to the arrival of the Fathers. Gisaka was, in effect, the location of a separate uprising,[10] when King Yuhi Musinga granted between 100 and 150 hectares of land in the region to European priests in 1900, with the authorization to build a new missionary station.

The old ruling dynasty[11] of Gisaka, defeated by the Nyiginya, attempted to exploit, in its favor, the presence of the White Fathers in order to regain its lost sovereignty. The separatists probably also trusted in the fact that there were suspicions of illegitimacy with respect to the succession of Yuhi Musinga to his father Kigeri Rwabugiri. Musinga was, in fact, enthroned in 1896 after a coup against his brother Mibambwe Rutarindwa who had recently become *mwami* [Des Forges 2011].

As a result, Lukara, who claimed to be the descendant of the *mwami* of Gisaka who was killed by Nyiginya, sought the support of the missionaries by presenting a letter of the German administration to Father Joseph Barthélémy, the Superior of the mission of Zaza:

Lukara, descendant des anciens rois de Kisakka [Gisaka], vient tout à coup

essayer de s'imposer dans cette province. Il a 80 baganda révoltés[12] des batutsi [je aristocrates][13] d'un peu par tout; il vole 1710 bœufs; il s'appuie sur une lettre de M. Bethé [of the German administration] qui le nomme "nyampara wa Kigere" [first servant of the *mwami* Kigeri, father of Musinga], c'est à dire mutwale[14], mais il veut être roi tout à fait; de là le P. Barhtélémy le prie de se retirer au plus vite; déjà une armée de Yuhi [Musinga] était à Kisakka. Lukara s'en va. De là, grande joie de Yuhi, qui nous fait remercier. [15]

The concise description of the event – which allowed the White Fathers to earn the gratitude of Musinga – does not, however, reveal how much the compromising of the mission in Zaza with the separatist aristocracy would have subsequently deepened, causing just one year later a new political crisis. The self-styled king of Gisaka had been able to rely on the support of a majority of the local aristocracy which had never renounced independence from Nduga, the central region where, at the time, Yuhi Musinga resided (in Nyanza).[16] Even more humble environments – which more directly suffered the effects of three years of famine and draught – had adhered to the cause of restoration of the ancient monarchy [Linden 1999, 59].

The Journal of the new mission, since its initial pages, illustrates how the missionaries clearly knew the position of the Zaza region with respect to the central authority. The Diary, in fact, distinguishes the local population, or *banyagisaka* (literally, inhabitants of Gisaka), from the dominating group known as *banyarwanda* (inhabitants of Rwanda), using these terms to designate the political protagonists of the conflicts between part of the notables of the region and the court. In this initial phase, the White Fathers frequently revealed a certain propensity towards the cause of the *banyagisaka*: «les Banyagisaka, qui nous étaient sympathiques», it states, for example, in a subsection of a page of the Journal which illustrates one of the disputes which resulted in the defeat of certain notables of Zaza that were favored by the mission.[17]

However, it is not possible to determine – from this same source – whether the White Fathers discerned any advantages for the missionary project through the potential implementation of the separatist aims. What is clear, on the other hand, is that local nobility was, initially, a political class that was less hostile than the *banyarwanda* one since it considered the mission a potential ally. The priests did not, however, always make it clear – at least in their official reports – that they fully understood the strategies which the leaders of Gisaka had adopted with respect to them for the purposes of acting against the Nyiginya.

It is a fact that the new political crisis which arose in 1902 actively involved the White Fathers who took actions within the local political maneuvering by means of a tactic which did, in this case, not receive the support of Musinga. Despite the political-military success of the previous year, the *mwami* continued to fear a separatist coup in the Eastern region, and with regard to this issue was closely monitoring the position of the European priests:

Il [Musinga] craint toujours qu'un nouveau roi paraisse au Kisakka, et il voudrait que les Pères usassent de toute leur influence pour empêcher

l'usurpateur. [...] Il nous fait cadeau d'une vache avec veau, pour nous faire comprendre ce qu'il désire. Le P Supérieur lui envoie Préstansi [a Rwandan catechist] pour lui faire comprendre qu'il cesse ses inquiétudes au sujet de ce roi imaginaire.[18]

However, Musinga had good reasons to fear a potential alliance between the missionaries of Zaza and the banyagisaka notables: among the mission favourites was Mhumbika, a descendant of the overthrown dynasty, who had also had a non-secondary role in the uprising of Lukara. The White Fathers ensured that the latter was offered the political-administrative role of leader of the hill of Zaza in the place of a notable who had killed a catechumen. This episode initiated a heated conflict with the “banyarwanda” which led to a military intervention on the part of the Germans who, upon the request of the *mwami*, arrested Mhumbika and twenty of his followers in order to bring them to court where they were massacred.[19] Following the arrest, the event ended violently in Gisaka at the end of 1902 with skirmishes between the men of the new leader of Zaza, appointed by the court, and the people of Mhumbika[20] as well as with a punitive expedition led by the Germans which resulted in thirty deaths around the missionary buildings [Linden 1999, 60].

Although the Superior of the missionaries of Zaza noted in his Journal that he had implemented all «efforts pour empêcher la guerre au Kissaka» [November 1902], the appointment offered to Mhumbika caused the conflict with the colonial army quashed, intervening in a decisive and sanguinary manner. The year 1902 was a true baptism for the mission which had recently been created and resulted in tensions and conflicts which in the future would have openly marked the relationship of the White Fathers with not only the local agents of the royal authority but also with the notables that supported the separatism. The Diary in fact closes the year with this bitter statement:

Kanyamiganda [notable of Gisaka] vient nous voir avec un petit cadeau du roi, pour nous dire que le roi dispensait les Batutsi [in other words: the political aristocracy faithful to the king] de se faire instruire [from the missionary catechism]. Il est certain que ces Batutsi ne seront pas les premiers élus.[21]

The events pertaining to the situation of Mhumbika allow one to discern the socio-political implications of the missionary presence, not only within the context of Zaza but more generally in the complex regional equilibriums which characterized the Rwandan kingdom. In practice, the crisis of 1902 involved players which pursued interests that were in conflict with each other. The court, the German army, the mission, the local notables that were faithful to Musinga as well as those hostile to the central authority of Nduga: all the political authorities which were present in the region interact and are in conflict, as had already occurred for the rebellion of Lukara.

Before the situation degenerated to an armed conflict, the interaction between the forces in the field followed the logic of a continual exchange of gifts and messages, and whose implicit meanings the missionaries only learned with time. In the daily life described by the Diary, the mission of Zaza is the center of a goods trade that never stops; the missionaries, similarly to local powerful individuals, constantly received diplomatic visits which further disentangled or entangled diplomatic relations. The Diary illustrates these in detail and, in this sense, describes the missionary apprenticeship in the local politics of gift:

Le roi envoie comme cadeau deux vaches, une à lait. L'autre stérile, six cruches de beurre ou miel, pour dire qu'il est l'ami de Mgr., mais qu'il feranbien de ne pas fonder une autre station [missionary].[22]

The White Fathers, over time, were capable of estimating its value even in political and not only material terms: «Visite de Mugasha, chef de Kisihira. Il

apporte bananes et petite chèvre. On lui a fait remarquer que la chèvre est bien petite pour un si grand chef».[23] And they therefore ponder to what extent it is convenient to accept rather than reject even significant gifts which attempt to extort consent or to remedy incorrect behaviors towards them:

Lukara[24] revient avec des cadeaux plus nombreux encore, mais on lui dit que ni vache ni autre cadeau ne nous feront plaisir. On ne reçoit des cadeaux que des amis, et depuis longtemps il n'est pas gentil.[25]

The Diary of Save, in this sense, serves as a precious source due to the peculiar features distinguishing the original manuscript from those of other missionary Journals: in an undefined time period a second author had in fact added – within the margins or amongst the lines of the cursive writing – brief explanatory notes that re-interpret the illustrated events with hindsight.[26] In some cases, the effect is that of a sharp combination involving an initial rather edifying version of the facts and re-interpretation which proves to be more discerning if not even more cynical. In April of 1900, the Journal of Save, for example, states the following: «Nous avons admis [...] une cinquantaine d'enfants des villages voisins». The anonymous commentator specifies the nature of the interest of these young guests of the mission: «qui viennent guhakwa pour avoir vivre et manger».

The kinyarwanda verb «*guhakwa*» describes – by clarifying its political-economic significance – the network of relations in which the missionaries increasingly were involved. In practice, it specifies a series of social behaviors which regulate relations not only amongst equals but also, and particularly, within a hierarchy of dependency. Knowing how to act in public, in this sense, means being capable of maintaining an attitude which is appropriate for the situation when visiting and receiving guests as well opportunely using words or gifts. The term «*guhakwa*», in other words, denotes an incorporated social grammar. It is composed of the preposition «*kwa*», which can be translated – according to the dictionary of Father

Schumacher [1956] – as «at (the home of someone)» («chez», in French). The complex meaning of the verb is, instead, described by the same dictionary with the expression «courting (someone)». As can be deduced from the Diaries, those who «come *guhakwa*» at the mission of the White Fathers refer to the enclosed space of the missionary station as the court of a local authority. And, as a result, they act in accordance with the patronage habitus.

The missionaries themselves encourage this perception, seeking alliances and providing protection. Although they managed to move in this direction in a more prudent manner, they still maintained a rather self confident attitude towards local leaders: the brief comments reported in the Diary provide an indication of how the White Fathers did not consider any Rwandan authority within Gisaka as superior to them.

When visiting Zaza, the vicar-apostolic monsignor Jean-Joseph Hirth,[27] – perceiving the malcontent which the activities of the mission were arousing amongst Rwandan notables – requested that his men adopt more precautions which, however, did not modify the essence of their activities: «Pour la mission: éviter autant que possible les grandes réunions des dimanches, pour ne pas inutilement froisser les chefs».[28]

The precautions of the priests with respect to the political aristocracy were motivated by the fear that notables of the region with the greatest influence at court could portray them negatively before Musinga and, indirectly, before the German administration:

C'est Kanyamiganda, de son propre aveu, qui a envoyé chez le roi un homme pour nous discréditer. Nous attendons que le roi nous envoie de nouveau, il est certain que tout cela se sont de pures calomnies inventées par ce chef, qui craint que son autorité diminue. Qu'il règne, mais qu'il laisse régner celui qui est au-dessus de lui.[29]

Accusations and denials caused a continual circulation of news and indiscretions to and from the court. Evidently the White Fathers could provide important support for those who were in search of greater political involvement. And the mission effectively represented a potential ally against the central authority, as had occurred for the separatist movement. But, within the balances of power which shaped the political and economic environment of Gisaka, the mission was a competing authority which re-defined patronage networks because many in fact went "to court" at the station in order to curry favors:

Le soir on nous annonce qu'un homme est tué un peu à cause de nous, parce qu'il vient nous voir. Le chef croit que cet homme, par ses visites et ses cadeaux chez nous, veut obtenir nos bonnes grâces pour "manger" son village. Ce serait là le motif de sa mort. Le P. Sup. s'y rend et fait appeler Kanyamiganda pour juger ce procès. Kanyamiganda met le fils du tué comme chef de village et lui donne deux batutsi pour l'installer et chasser Kiberwa [the instigator of the assassination].[30]

By taking advantage of a colonial power which was still weak, each mission gained a significant level of political autonomy [Chrétien 1973, 151-152]. The White Fathers attempted to replace the Rwandan judicial authorities, guaranteeing a sort of immunity to those they protected. Similarly to local leaders, they were "lords" to whom protection was asked: the priests entrusted land and cattle to their favored individuals who, by entering within the sphere of influence of the mission, attempted to escape from the bonds

of subordination and exploitation which otherwise would have bound them to the powerful “natives” [Linden 1999, 49-128]. As a result, each of the seven missions which was built around 1910 acted as a «white African power» [Chrétien 1973, 151]. And it was certainly this aspect, more than the religious teachings, which alarmed both the local leaders as well as the court.

Cet homme [Kanyamiganda] continue à me dire que nous réunissons tout le monde pour le faire prier et qu'ensuite ils refusent de travailler pour leurs chefs; qu'on use quelquefois de violence etc.[31]

This open, let alone mutual, hostility with the political aristocracy was against the instructions of Mgr. Lavigerie. The priests which were present on the territory, in fact, attempted missionary strategies involving penetration within the Rwandan society that were not supported by the leaders of the order [Linden 1999, 75-99]. In a certain sense, this situation occurred without having been actively pursued by the Fathers. In any regional environment, evangelization enterprise was preceded by building activities. The construction of buildings in bricks, which differed from the ones built with plant materials by the Rwandan people, required a significant exploitation of local natural resources. Similarly, a significant amount of labor was needed and taken away from Rwandan leaders. The workers received a salary in exchange, which was unheard of at that time. Although meager it consisted of material goods, often rare goods (pearls, cloths, salt, etc...).

The first Catholic followers therefore included the group of protected individuals which had previously worked in the workyards of the mission. The first catechumens were not only poor individuals but, in particular, outcasts who had been excluded from the network of Rwandan protection and exploitation. By visiting the mission, they not only received food but also the sudden and un hoped-for possibility to improve the social-economic condition through the use of goods such as land and cattle that were granted by the White Fathers. When exercising the rights and duties which linked

them to the new patrons, the protégés of the mission interpreted this relationship in an exclusive manner [Linden 1999; Chrétien 1973; Mbonimana 1981; Vidal 1974a].

This process of creation of loyalty amongst patrons in part of the population was definitively not appreciated by the German military which was worried of its destabilizing effects. The colonial authorities were therefore ready, on several occasions, to intervene forcefully, not only militarily when the situation became explosive but also by means of diplomacy in order to disentangle any disputes in which the priests were involved. In this manner, the Germans continually reminded the missions to abide by their instructions in an attempt to limit the power of priests.

Arrivée de M. von Grawert [leader of the military station in Uzumbura]. Il se fait précéder d'une lettre dans laquelle il dit qu'il y a de la mésintelligence entre la mission et le s indigènes. Quelques chefs se sont plaints à la capitale [Nyanza] que les personnes si déclaraient nos hommes et refusaient de leur obéir. [...]. C'est von Grawert lui-même qui fixes les limites. Pour la propriété, c'est une affaire qui n'est pas encore réglée; il l'a trouvée trop grande et pas en rapport avec le prix. Joie des Batutsis [leaders] qui inventent toutes sortes de mauvais procédés pour effrayer les chrétiens et pour empêcher les autres de se faire instruire. Ici comme ailleurs l'Eglise militante est persécutée. Malheureusement l'autorité, qui ne voit que le côté matériel, ne favorise guère la propagation de la foi. [...] Il [von Grawert] a admis les points suivants: 1) Sur chaque colline, nous pouvons placer un catéchiste, mais on ne peut pas lui acheter une bananeraie. 2) tous le monde est libre de se faire instruire, mais on ne peut faire pression pour cela [...].[32]

The White Fathers, in a certain sense, acted as Rwandan leader to which services had to be provided in exchange for protection and support. But, at the same time, their network of patrons was – in the eyes of the non-converted – composed of poisoners who had drunk the poison of the mission (*ibosome*: the poisoned ones): the first Christians were in fact called *barozi*

(sorcerers/poisoners) and were referred to as *ingome* (traitors) or *inyanga Rwanda* (the ruin of Rwanda). In the Diaries, it is possible to read how the missionaries were suspected of heating the hearts of the catechumens and to drink the blood of children and of adolescents who were attempting to survive by falling under their influence.[33] As a result, the converted – although they had the possibility of improving their economic status – were, on the other hand, marginalized in another manner [Vidal 1974a].

The *basomyi* (ie: the readers, a name for the baptised) were subject to hostilities and even persecution on the part of the Rwandan leaders. The latter prohibited their subjects from sharing social occasions with the Christians, which forged relations between equals, such as drinking from the same *alebasse* or smoking from the same pipe.[34] On more than one occasion, according to the Diary, orders were given to beat or kill them:

Buchéré e Kagabo, fils de Katoké, chef de la colline de Kabaya près de Rubona, ont immolé une vache stérile et promis des vaches à celui qui tuerait 3 chrétiens ou deux filles ou qui lui remettrait deux de mes chapeaux.[35]

Some of the *basomyi* adopted similarly aggressive attitudes towards the initiates of Rwandan possession cults. Although they were a minority,[36] they perceived themselves as being supported by their patrons. For the same reason, the Christians attempted to not only escape from Rwandan judicial but also tributary authority, thereby preventing the flow of their recently acquired material goods to the court. Although these elements may suggest otherwise, the *basomyi* themselves never created a movement against the native order. With regard to vertical power relationships, the White Father did not, in fact, propose an alternative model: the European priests were, similarly to the Rwandan leaders, lords which could offer economic advancement within a strongly subordinate relationship [Vidal 1974a].

The front of Rwaza: cattle theft and rebellions

The Diary of Rwaza is pervaded with two constant preoccupations: the search for labor and wood as well as the constant threat of being attacked by powerful lineages which rebelled both against the authority of Musinga as well as that of the missionaries. The first preoccupation was primarily due to the material needs associated with the works relative to the building and expansion of the missionary buildings and which did not stop for the entire time period in question. With regard to the state of siege, on the other hand, the reports of Father Superior Léon Classe and his successor Paulin Loupias [37] could potentially not be entirely true. As will be described below, certain documents published by Minnaert [2009][38] contradict the Diary of Rwaza in several points, thereby demonstrating a military and aggressive attitude on the part of the priests with respect to part of the population.

These two aspects – the economic and political – were profoundly connected within the often sanguinary events that marked the history of the mission in Rwaza, even if the chronicles of the Diary do not seem to make this connection. Similarly, the Journals typically lack quantitatively specific indications relative to the economy of the missions. It is possible to get an idea of the socio-economic impact on local resources of construction works for religious buildings through the words of Richard Kandt. In fact, on October 3rd, 1906, the Diary of Rwaza had noted how the German administrator had criticized the projects which the White Fathers had for their missions:

[...] Les corvées de bois pour les grandes églises nous feront mal voir et du Roi et du Gouvernement. Isavi [the mission of Save] pourrait bien quelque temps souffrir dans la construction de son église. Les plans du Kisaka [Gisaka], à propos du transport des arbres, in futuro, sont traités de ridicules: “C'est 10.000 hommes, dit le Docteur [Kandt], qu'il faudrait à la corvée pendant huit jours. [...]” Le Roi ne s'y prêtera pas, et les chefs refuseront de

donner leur monde.

As noted by Kandt, the workyards of the mission were a cause of conflict with the local authorities. The Rwandan production system guaranteed that the notables of the kingdom and the small local leaders retained control over labor: given the rudimentary level of technology, in fact, labor was a fundamental form of capital. The constructions, as well as all economic activities of the missions, threatened the patron networks which ensured this monopoly. As can be seen by reading the Diary of Zaza, the White Fathers formed their own patrons and their “court” competed with those which already existed. In addition, the European priests tended to autonomously hire their labor without resorting to the intermediation of local leaders. At the same time, they distributed lands and heads of cattle to their protégés. People contacted the *nyampara* (agents of the mission) to plead on their behalf in order to obtain economic advantages, protection and alliances:

Sebuyange apporte ses cadeaux, quatre vaches: deux pour les nyampara – chez les nègres, quand on veut être introduit chez le maître, il faut graisser la patte au portier – et deux pour nous.[39]

As can be noted in the passage reported above, the missionaries were clearly aware of their role they played and which, in part, they intended to maintain by attempting to expand their influence and power. The case of the gift of cows to the *nyampara*, as well as in many other occasions, reveal an attitude of arrogance or even open contempt towards the habits and principles which regulated ownership rights as well as the exchange and circulation of goods.

La transmission de propriété quand l'objet est un vache est, on pourrait dire,

fictive. Tant que le premier propriétaire vit, il a droit au placenta à la naissance du veau; il n'en peut rien faire, ses chiens le mangeront; mais quand pour une cause ou une autre il n'a pas reçu de cadeau, il y a procès dans le quel le propriétaire actuel perd la vache et le veau; car ce placenta est réputé une vache [...]. Nous sommes loin du droit naturel.[40]

Revenge, compensation, the price of the bride, the resolution of disputes: the missionary chronicles describe these as irrational customs. Nonetheless, in some ways, the Fathers had entered in the local logics and had incorporated them:

Un homme tué, cela vaut ici son homme; ou bien quand on ce décide au rachat, cela revient à la somme de six chevres ou de 8 vaches, selon le cas. En plus, une fille de la famille du meurtrier doit être donnée en mariage gratuitement à la famille du mort. L'attention est délicate, et l'intention aussi. La femme qui convole en justes noces vaut en règle générale 6 à 8 chèvres, soit un taureau et quelques chèvres, pour accompagner; soit encore un veau en expectatives acheté dans la panse de sa mère vache. Inutile de dire que se système-là provoque des procès où Salomon avec toute sa sagesse et ses roueries de juge perdrait son latin.

Et le prix de la vache? Au prix de 12-18 roupies on peut avoir un génisse ou une vache laitière; le prix de Gouvernement de 20 à 25 roupias est de l'enchère; entre eux les indigènes vendent la vache deux taureaux, l'un de la taille de la marchandise, l'autre plus gros [...].[41]

The passage above reports both the monetary as well as exchange value of cattle, as customary amongst the Rwandans. If, in certain ways, the missions were similar – during their initial years – to the courts of local powerful lords, it is also true that their economy introduced new elements [Minnaert 2009]. The latter can be interpreted as embryonic forms of capitalism which, at the time, were applied alongside and interacted with the

patronage system which regulated the Rwandan production system. The licensing of goods (cattle and land) for use in exchange for labor still established a contact between lineages of unequal conditions within a highly hierarchized society. Within this contractual system based on dependency and exploitation, loyalty and protection – on a socio-political level – were also exchanged. Although the missionaries offered all of these advantages to their protégés, they also introduced, at the same time, means for subordination which had not been used beforehand. These include salaries paid with goods such as salt, fabrics and pearls. The White Fathers also printed their own money with which to pay the labor: the *pesas* (small metal plates) and the *byete* (small pieces of paper, each worth a day's work) which the workers could exchange, at the end of the month, for products [Minnaert 2009]. The Diary of Rwaza reports certain episodes in which workers leveraged their contractual power with respect to the Fathers. They probably leveraged the situation of scarcity of labor reported in the missionary chronicles in order to negotiate their conditions, as in the case cited below: «Partout les ouvriers se montrent difficiles; il ne veulent plus cultiver pour de la nourriture autre que pois ou haricots; mêmes les femmes imposent leurs conditions».[42]

The missionaries were certainly not the only agents of these transformations. The presence of Europeans in the entire interlacustrine region had promoted, for eg, the traffic of merchants and European adventurers which, in certain cases, were involved in cattle theft in Mulera. [43] Commercial routes in Rwanda no longer only followed the path towards the royal court but also expanded in the direction of military contingents, missions and administrators.[44]

Within the nyiginya territory, however, and in the beginning of the past century, it was primarily priests which composed the social category of *bazungu*: the whites, Europeans.[45] Their stable presence began to re-design the various balances of power which interacted at the time within Rwandan society, thereby laying the foundation for a radical transformation

which was only completed after the First World War when Rwanda fell under Belgian administration[46]. An interpretation of the first missionary chronicles allows the reader to understand how the colonial domination did not affirm itself through a clear and unified plan but rather by means of a tactic of trial and error and through adaptation to circumstances and the environment. Each individual mission experimented with different forms of mediation between local authorities and the agents of the central monarchy. Each region of the kingdom, in fact, exhibited different native balances of power: in particular, the influence of the nyiginya court – which closely controlled the region of Nduga – decreased as it moved to the edges of the kingdom to the point of becoming quite weak in the region of Mulera. The presence of missionaries in Rwaza presented the *mwami* with the possibility to effectively control the northern region. The representatives of the notables which were entrusted with collecting taxes on behalf of Musinga presented themselves before the Father Superior in order to create political and military allies amongst the missionaries. In Zaza the followers of the mission evaded Rwandan tributary and legal authority and felt themselves protected by their patrons while in Mulera the men in service of the *bazungu* worked alongside the agents of the king during the collection of tributes:

Par contre il [Kakwandi, a representative of Nshozamihingo, agent of the king] nous demande de ne pas cesser de l'aider à lever l'impôt. Sur ce point évidemment, nous ne pouvons qu'exciter le monde à la soumission[47]

The passage cited below illustrates how the availability of the missionaries in Mulera earned them the gratitude of the royal agents:

L'impôt a été donné en quantité considérable. C'est un mututsi [an agent of the king] lui-même qui nous a dit: "Nous avons reçu beaucoup de miel et de vaches; mais sans vous n'aurions pu lever l'impôt".[48]

As is evident even in the passages cited from the Diary of Zaza, it is in relation to these primarily political relationships that the missionary chronicles cite the social category of the tutsi (or batutsi, plural of mututsi). The hutu (or bahutu, plural of muhutu) appear in relation to similar conditions, almost always as a counterparty to the tutsi:

[...] Les Bahutu n'osant refuser de donner l'impôt, imaginé une autre chinoiserie: ils avaient donné le miel mais refusaient de le porter à la capital! De nouveau les Batwale accourent [to the mission]. Il fallut à nouveau parlementer avec les Bahutu: "Comment faites-vous quand vous payez l'impôt au Nduga? Faites de même maintenant".[49]

In the passage cited above, three collective groups interact: the Fathers, the hutu and the *batwale* (plural of *mutwale*). The latter were leaders with territorial competencies whose authority was legitimized by the *mwami*; the term was generally used to specify army leaders (*batwale w'umuheto*).[50] In other circumstances within the Diaries, they are simply described as tutsi. These royal agents presented themselves to the missionaries in order for the taxes to be delivered to the court: evidently the men of the king intend to use the mediation of the *bazungu* (the whites) as a tool for coercion amongst the hutu. The hutu themselves appeared to play the role of the servant in the "*Commedia dell'Arte*" which, through a rather naïve form of cunning, attempted to trick their masters: the tutsi and, through them, the king. The order imparted to them by the missionaries is to act similarly to the hutu counterparts in Nduga, the central region where it is impossible to escape from the will of the Nyiginya and their tributary regime.

In reality, the hutu described in the Diary of Rwaza were powerful lineages which, in the northern regions, enjoyed a degree of political and economic autonomy that was not similar to the rest of Rwanda, at least until the arrival of the *bazungu*. In practice, the Rwandan authorities and local powers constituted a complex network of powers which interacted in different ways at the regional level. First of all, there were leaders which emerged from local societies [Chrétien 2000, 150], confirmed by the king either because they were too powerful or they were loyal. Secondly, certain leaders were assigned a hereditary title that was conferred to them by the reigning monarch or by a predecessor of the latter while others were entrusted with revocable appointments.[51] Hutu and tutsi could hold these various roles although the agents of the monarchy were often tutsi, as in the case of the *batwale* which presented themselves to the mission of Rwaza for the question of tributes. For example, we have noted that the dissident leaders – more directly connected to the regional environment – were part of tutsi lineages in Gisaka while in Mulera they were part of hutu lineages.

Before becoming two ethnic administrative categories under Belgian domination, «hutu» and «tutsi» referred to two socio-economic specializations: to be tutsi meant being primarily a breeder while a hutu implied being a «farmer which did not ignore breeding» [Chrétien 2000, 120-121].[52] In some regional environments, certain lineages of rich farmers retained an economic advantage while in others the large breeders dominated. In Nduga, for example, the tutsi leaders enjoyed particular political and social prestige given that the monarchy was part of this group. However, defining the *mwami* as a tutsi was an offence against his majesty given that, as a sacred king, he was above the categories of lineage-based society, thereby guaranteeing their stability.

The missionaries, due to their regional experience, had been able to understand how the question of the «hutu/tutsi» identity was difficult to fit within a relationship of dominion between two ethnicities: tutsi masters and hutu servants. The priests, in fact, were capable of noting how the two socio-

economic categories engaged in complex relations with the political authorities that varied according to the context and situation. But not only: the marginalized members of society which came under their protection included both hutu as well as tutsi which were excluded from the patronage networks of the Rwandan leaders [Linden 1999, 49-74].

The missionary descriptions provided in the Diaries, however, begin to outline, in more depth, the portraits of two distinct and mirror-like psychologies. The tutsi: scheming, arrogant and proud; the hutu: naive, humble and gentle. For the Fathers, these two stereotyped typologies represented, on the one hand, the minority but dominating group of leaders with close ties to the court and, on the other hand, the rural majority that was under domination.

The missionaries effectively adopted attitudes of strong contempt towards the more humble environments due to interactions with their followers and because they considered the Rwandan socio-cultural practices to be aberrant (polygamy, possession cults...). But these mirror-like portraits were, in particular, stimulated by the hostile attitudes of the White Fathers in those years towards the nyiginya political aristocracy. The latter, in fact, strongly opposed the evangelization process during its initial phase given that they understood the subversive aspect of the political/religious plan of the missionaries with respect to the sacred royalty [Linden 1999, 49-163; Vidal 1974a]. It was not, however, only the harshness of the experience on the ground which determined this polarized and simplistic characterization of the Rwandan environment. The perspective of the priests was also influenced by their Thomistic culture and their strongly hierarchical view of social environments. In addition, they were definitely influenced by a European racial vision of differences and inequalities within the African continent: the reports of the missionaries, as well as those of the first explorers, describe the tutsi and hutu as being, by their very nature, respectively destined for domination and submission.

Belgian colonial domination, after the Great War, was in fact realized by implementing the vision of the White Fathers. In other words, by transforming inequalities in a feudal, and at the same time, ethnicizing manner; these inequalities were based on a restricted aristocracy of tutsi which dominated (on behalf of the *bazungu*) a rural world which was described as homogeneously hutu [Chrétien 1985; Vidal 1985; 1991].

What occurred in Mulera at the beginning of the XIX century was, in certain ways, a laboratory for the radical transformation which began to be implemented two decades later. The missionaries of Rwaza were agents in the extension of the royal tributary regime in those areas where the control of the central authorities had, until that point, been less stringent and had left more room for lineage-based organizations. In this manner, the White Fathers attempted to re-define relations amongst the various powers which, at the time, in the northern region by trying to use the situation to their advantage.

Even in Rwaza, the mission became similar to the court of a powerful Rwandan leader. In practice, the tributary regime at the time worked by starting from the «poles of domination» which were represented by the enclosures of the leaders and within which the goods derived from the patronage labor, as well as the gifts of those who sought protection or alliance, were accumulated [Chrétien 2000, 157]. In the Journal, the White Fathers repeatedly noted that they had found how certain swindlers had collected tributes in the name of the mission. In practice, the Diary of Rwaza reports many episodes of not only fraud but also theft to the detriment of both the mission as well as the population. Some of these cases are connected to the tax collection process: cattle is seized in order to serve as a sort of guarantee of the payment of the tributes.[\[53\]](#) In many cases, the theft of cattle occurred between competing leaders and was a sign of political tensions in the region. On these occasions, the cows of the missionaries were sometimes involved since they were held by a local powerful leader or by a men faithful to Musinga. The missionaries then

supported the punitive expeditions in order to regain the stolen goods. In some cases they noted that in reality their cattle had not been touched but, by alerting the missionaries, the local leaders intended to obtain support or legitimization for their violence.[54]

In the Diaries, the missionaries therefore depict themselves as victims of theft or as judges called upon to request compensation for wrongs that were caused by embezzlement. The missionary chronicles of Mulera seem, in fact, to depict anarchy; the northern region is the site of widespread violence: theft, intentional fires, armed conflicts. These seem to be the primary methods for resolving conflicts between the various native authorities. The mission itself is threatened and lives in a state of constant siege, risking at several times (1904, 1906, 1907) of being assaulted and destroyed. With regard to this point, however, the 1904 chronicles written by the Father Superior in the Diary are disproved by both a letter of 1907 drafted by brother Herménégilde, who was present at the time of these events in the mission of Rwaza, as well as by a report drafted in 1909 by Father Malet. Brother Herménégilde, who had previously already written in vain to his superiors on this issue, reports the following in an uncertain French:[55]

Le 19 mars 1904 sur une alerte mal fondée, le P. Classe[56] et P. Dufays avec les auxiliaires de la mission ont gîtéent le Post pour allé attaqué en mane militari la tribue de Bagavoula [Bagavura, or even Bagarula] sud est du Mulara, sont revenue à 10 heures du soir (à partir entre 1-2 heures après miti) avec un très grand butin en Va... chev... et mout... et laissant des victimes nombres. Ces butin fut distribué aux environs de la mission. La mision fut créer sur de révenus injust. Que votre Grandeur veuille bien demanter au P. Classe et P. Dufays si la chose est autrement. N.B.: nous netions nullement ataqué; qui dit autrement ne dit pas la vérité.[57]

The report of Malet subsequently confirmed this version of the facts by

documenting the theft and the killings that were implemented by the Fathers of Rwaza. What triggered the violence of the White Fathers, according to Malet, seemed to be the mistreatment sustained by a man of the mission who had attempted to collect the labor needed for the transportation of wood for the buildings of Rwaza. As reported by brother Herménégilde, the mission was also the protagonist of fierce violence in the following months:

On est reculté se qui suid: une revolte presque universelle s'est produite, bien y comprise la vengence de la tribue qui fut si mal mené le 19 mars 1904. Donc la tribue de Bagavoula déjà cité plus haut, sud ouest, le tribue de Bagezera [Bagesera] sud, et la tribue de Baioka [Bayoka] sud est de la mission se sont unanimement révolté contre la mission pour nous massacré tous ensemble la nuite del 28 Juillet et la nuite du 29 Juillet 1904, ils devaient venir pour nous massacré et la mission détruire. A remarquer que le 22 Juillet 1904, après midi, nos auxilièrs envoyer comme je le disai plus haut, furent attaqué, une massacré et environ 6 gravement blessé; le P. Dufays qui est à leur secours mane milit... étais également cerné et un très grand danger. Sur ces entrefait on demanta secour aux P.s de Bougoye [the mission of Nyundo], sont vennent le P. Barthelemy[58] et Loupias le 30 Juillet 1904 [in order to conduct acts of retaliation, as confirmed by the report of Malet],[59]

«Created on the basis of unjust acquisitions», how noted by brother Herménégilde, the mission was the subject of numerous acts of hostility. Nevertheless the Fathers did not, in subsequent years, renounce their roles as mediators in conflicts between Rwandan authorities. It is this environment which led to the events that, in 1910, resulted in the killing of Father Loupias by Lukara, a powerful local hutu leader who had changing relations with the nyiginya court.

As noted by Chrétien [1973, 148], the death of the Superior of Rwaza must be interpreted in light of the complex political relations that implicated the missionaries in Mulera. The scene of the murder, in fact, involved Loupias overseeing, upon the request of the *mwami*, the resolution of a conflict

which, having been generated within a lineage of Lukara, involved the enormous power exercised by the latter. In the Diary, he is characterized with those moral and aesthetic qualities that the missionaries generally attributed to the “race” of tutsi lords:

Muhutu d'une trentaine d'années, Lukara est gaillardement taillé, beau, d'un teint clair. Sa démarche et son regard sont impérieux, pleins d'orgueil. Il est riche car il a plus de 1.600 vaches, et commande à une des familles les plus nombreuses, le plus aisées, les plus belliqueuses du pays. Pour lui la vie d'un homme ne compte pas. Il met dans le même sac et couvre du même mépris, Batutsi et Européens, envoyés du Roi et du Fort.[60]

The hostility which he exhibited towards both the Europeans as well as the king was, in part, due to his family history: his grandfather had been killed by order of the *mwami* Kigeri Rwabugiri while his father, who had managed to regain favor with the king, was killed by a bullet shot by a soldier of the independent nation of Congo during a skirmish [Chrétien 1973, 145]. He himself had repeatedly fallen out of favor with the court of Musinga and was even saved, in 1906, from a death sentence by Father Classe and Father Dufays who, while travelling through Nyanza, had pleaded for him.[61] It does not seem that the behavior of the two missionaries changed his opinions on the Europeans.

In practice, Lukara clearly understood the political alliance which, starting effectively from Mulera, was slowly growing between the court and the *bazungu*. An alliance which threatened his power; this is in fact what the Journal reports:

Il appelait sa maison, magnifiquement ornée de perles, son Nyanza, et alors que dans tout le reste du Rwanda on jure par Musinga, ses gens disent: "Bandaga Lukara, badaga Lukara Lwa Bishingwe [full name of Lukara]"[62]

His followers swore loyalty to him as if he was the *mwami*, and he, according to the missionaries, secretly worked on a separatist plan to proclaim his own kingdom in Mulera:

A partir de ce jour [from his liberation in Nyanza], il ne se conduisait plus qu'en révolté, travaillant, semble-t-il, par un réseau d'amitiés habilement tressé à faire du Mulera une province indépendante où il règnerait à sa guise malgré le Roi.[63]

Only between the end of 1909 and the beginning of 1910 did Lukara decide to appeal to the White Fathers; he was forced to do so given that his network of alliances – on which his power thus far had been based – was threatened. Sebuyangi and Kamana, two of his relatives, had broken off relations with him, separating the bovine capital which had united them. In this manner, they claimed part of the political and economic control over the hills of Lukara and requested the White Fathers to intervene on their behalf in court in order to recognize their authority. According to the missionary chronicles, Sebuyangi and Kamana promised a submission to nyiginya authority which Lukara had not allowed until that time. Lukara therefore attempted to restore an alliance with the missionaries by proposing a blood pact with their *nyampara* and by giving large gifts to Father Superior Loupias. The latter decided to appear neutral, and counselled both parties to go to court with some gifts. Evidently, this was a false neutrality: Lukara, given his past, was prohibited from going to Nyanza. The decision of the missionaries probably aimed to promote a fragmentation of the large power centralized by the lineage of Lukara. The Fathers, in fact, knew to what extent the authority of the latter was a threat for them and the nyiginya: «Un ennemi [Lukara]

redoutable, plus fort que le Batutsi, plus à même de le tenir en échec parce que plus près et plus mêlé à ses gens, s'était levé».[64]

Lukara did not surrender before the position of apparent neutrality of Loupias. According to the Diary, he promised the Superior of Rwaza, on January 20th, 1910, that he would provide labor to transport the wood that was necessary for the Church. In exchange, he requested aid to capture Sebuyangi and Kamana. Despite the fact that he had not accepted the exchange of favors, Loupias – obsessed with the need to find adequate wood – went to the forest anyway with some men of Lukara who promised to bring him to a location where the trees would be sufficiently large. In the meantime, Lukara staged an attack on the part of Sebuyangi against himself and then brought an armed force to the camp of Loupias, requesting in vain that he participate in the capture of his enemy. On the following day – following the repeated requests of Lukara and the absence of the promised trees – Loupias attacked his companion, slapping him.[65] These were the relations between them, according to the missionary chronicles, before they met on the day of the murder of the Superior of Rwaza.

On the first of April, in fact, the men of the court came to the mission, entrusted with the task of communicating the will of the king with respect to the dispute within the lineage of Lukara. Musinga requested, and was granted, the presence of Loupias in the meeting: the Father Superior sat amongst the two parties in the center of a field before the residence of Lukara. The decision of the *mwami*, sanctioning the separation of territorial powers within the lineage, was pronounced. However, one of the envoys claims that the message was not delivered corrected. Loupias therefore decides to send them back to court. Luhanga, a tutsi who was holding the cows of the mission amongst his cattle, took advantage of the meeting to point out to the Father Superior that someone from the people of Lukara had stolen his herd. This resulted in a quarrel between Lukara, who refused to have the cows delivered, and Loupias, who in the meantime had shouldered his rifle again. The hutu leader fell to the ground and, feeling threatened,

ordered his men to strike the Superior, who died after being run through by two spears.

The violent death of the Father resulted in a very strong retaliation by the Germans against the men of Lukara for the entire month of April; Lukara's men resisted by hiding in the many caves which dot the countryside of Mulera. Lukara, hailed as an anti-bazungu hero, managed to escape to Congo with part of his cattle and his men.^[66] The colonial army exploits the situation, on the other hand, to begin exercising effective control over the northern region, extending the royal authority which, in this manner, became increasingly a sham throughout all of Rwanda.

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Notes

[1] Stefaan Minnaert is the ex-archivist Father of the general Curia of the Society of Missionaries of Africa with headquarters in Rome. The openness shown by Minnaert through the publication of these documents should be noted; as will later be demonstrated, they contribute to reconstructing a very controversial missionary history. This attitude appears even more worth of

note if one considers the fact that the Order to which he belongs seems instead to have chosen a defensive strategy with respect to the profound implications which linked him to the Rwandan genocidal regime. These implications emerged more clearly, in particular, after the tragedy of 1994.

[2] To a lesser degree, I will refer to the initial years (1899-1905) of the Diary of Save, the first missionary station founded in Rwanda. In 1987, this part of the Diary was published in an edition edited by Roger Heremes and Emmanuel Ntezimana (see bibliography below).

[3] For a more complete reconstruction related to the history of Church in Rwanda, refer to Linden 1977; 1999; Minnaert 2006.

[4] Nyiginya is the name of the dynastic clan of the Rwandan kingdom. The plural term «Abanyiginya», which means “principles of royal blood”, is a term that is also widespread in other kingdoms such as Nkore and Ndorwa of the Great Lakes region of Africa.

[5] Following the construction of the mission of Save, Zaza was also built in 1900; these were followed by Nyundo (1901), Rwaza and Mibirizi (1903), and finally by Kabgaye and Rulindo (1910).

[6] Only in 1894, ie two years after the death of Mgr. Lavigerie, was the official definitive name of “Society of the Missionaries of Africa” adopted in replacement of the original “Congregation of the Missionaries of Algiers”. In general, the priests which belonged to this order were called White Fathers, a name which refers to the color of their clothing and whose shape was conceived as an adaptation of the monks' frocks to the mens's clothing used in Magrhebian and Western Africa, and to ensure that it did not appear extravagant in these settings. For a more complete reconstruction related to the history of White Fathers, refer to Ceillier 2008; Linden 1977; 1999; Minnaert 2006; Oliver 1952; Shorter A. 2006; Prudhomme 1994.

[7] With regard to this point, refer to Chrétien 2000, 173-178.

[8] A large literature discussed the pertinence of the feudal paradigm in the interpretation of monarchical political systems in the Great Lakes area. Among others, see: Chilver 1960; Chrétien 1981; 1986; De Heusch 1966; Goody 1963; Mair 1961; Maquet 1961; 1969; Murindwa-Rutanga 2011; Newbury 1974; Vansina 1962; Vidal 1969; 1974b.

[9] It should also be noted that the order of the White Fathers, before becoming involved in the Rwandan environment, had already seen the hopes of Mgr. Lavigerie shattered in Buganda as well as in the religious conflicts which emerged there as of 1882 [refer to Chrétien 2000, 178-185].

[10] *Diaire de Save*, Mars 1900. The accounts narrated in the Diary of Zaza began to be drafted as of April 1901. As a result, and in the case of events preceding this date, reference is hereby made to the Journal of the mission of Save.

[11] The dynastic drum (emblem of the monarchy within the interlacustrine kingdoms) of Gisaka, the Rukurura, was in the hands of a lineage of the abagesera clan. In the official oral tradition of the nyiginya court, the rivalries with this kingdom were already narrated in the story of *m wami umutambazi* (Savior King) Bwimba [Coupez, Kamanzi 1962; De Heusch 1983].

[12] Natives of Buganda, one of the kingdoms present within the current nation of Uganda. According to Ian Linden, this was a part of the armed Ugandan contingent which had been following the missionaries since 1880 [1999, 59]. The editors of the edition of the Diary of Save, Roger Heremans e Emmanuel Ntezimana, had a different opinion, and in the note to the margin of the passage cited here, they explain that these were warrior bandits which, following the wars in Buganda between 1890 and 1894, ravaged the eastern region of Lake Victoria [1987, 55].

[13] The term batutsi was used by missionaries as a synonym for aristocracy. In general, the Diaries depict the agents of the Nyiginya monarchy as batutsi while in the case of the passage cited here the batutsi

are the local leaders supporting the separatist cause. I will later return to the topic of how the White Fathers used the social categories of batutsi (or tutsi)/bahutu (or hutu).

[14] The term «*Umutwale*» means a local leader whose authority is legitimized by the *mwami*. In general the army head is given this title, ie the *umutwale w'umuheto*.

[15] *Diaire de Save*, Mars 1901.

[16] The royal courts in the interlacustrian area were mobile capitals [Chrétien 2004; Remotti 1989; 1993]. For ritual reasons, kings with the name Yuhi could not leave the central region or pass beyond the Nyabarongo river [de Heusch 1983].

[17] *Diaire de Zaza*, Août-Septembre 1902.

[18] *Diaire de Save*, Mai 1902.

[19] *Diaire de Zaza*, Août-Septembre 1902.

[20] *Diaire de Zaza*, Novembre 1902.

[21] *Diaire de Zaza*, Decembre 1902.

[22] *Diaire de Zaza*, novembre 1904.

[23] *Diaire de Zaza*, 3 decembre 1906.

[24] This is obviously not the same Lukara of the 1900 rebellion.

[25] *Diaire de Zaza*, 5 Fevrier 1908.

[26] These are reported as notes to the 1987 edition of the Diary.

[27] Monsignor Hirth held this position as of 1889 for the Vittoria- Nyanza. This vicarship was then subdivided into two parts in 1900; after this date, Rwanda became part of the vicarship of southern Nyanza which continued to be led by Hirth.

[28] *Diaire de Zaza*, Juillet 1903.

[29] *Diaire de Zaza*, 30 Mars 1903.

[30] *Diaire de Zaza*, 28 Novembre 1901.

[31] *Diaire de Zaza*, Mars 1903.

[32] *Diaire de Zaza*, 5 Mars 1906.

[33] It is probable that these imagined ideas were triggered by certain symbols and ritual aspects of Catholicism such as the Holy Communion or the cult of the sacred heart. The White Fathers themselves provide certain indications in this sense: according to the Diary of Save, for example, the fear that the Fathers practiced cannibalism originated from the images and icons of the sacred heart which were shown by the Catholic priests [*Diaire de Save*, Novembre 1903].

[34] *Diaire de Zaza*, Juin 1907.

[35] *Diare de Zaza*, Juillet 1905.

[36] It is estimated that, in 1914, Christians represented barely 1% of a population totaling 2 million people [Minnaert 2009].

[37] Loupias became the superior in November 1906. Classe, on the other hand, became the vicar general of Rwanda in 1907, with headquarters in Kabgayi.

[38] I am referring to the *Lettre du frère Herménégilde du 25 août 1907 à Mgr Livinhac* n. 070825 and to the *Rapport du Père Malet de 1909* n. 098414-098416.

[39] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 6 avril 1910.

[40] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 20 Novembre 1907.

[41] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 9 septembre 1908.

[42] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 22 avril 1906.

[43] Refer to the *Diaire de Rwaza*, 1905. These episodes were also favored by the fact that the division between German, Belgian and English dominion was only established in detail in 1910.

[44] Refer to the *Diaire de Rwaza*, 27 octobre 1904. With regard to the complex reaction of the Rwandan court to the growth of commerce, refer to Linden 1999, page 158.

[45] This term, which does not refer to the phenotype, is also present in other environments of sub-Saharan Africa. The Rwandans currently reconstruct different etymologies in kinyarwanda for this word. It appears to derive, for example, from the verb «*kuzungura*» which means “inherit” or even “succeed, take over” in the sense of becoming owner of the goods of a deceased or dispossessed individual. It can also be used in an ironical sense to also refer to a very rich Rwandan or a lifestyle which is considered “Western”.

[46] Following the treaty of Orts-Milner of 1919, Rwanda and Burundi were assigned to Belgium.

[47] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 4 septembre 1905.

[48] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 7 septembre 1905.

[49] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 19 septembre 1905.

[50] There were also other titles assigned by the king which had territorial competencies; for information on the latter, refer to Vansina 1962.

[51] See Chrétien 2000, 150. This concise description refers to the historical context for the events that are narrated in the Diaries. In practice, this network of powers was the result of a complex historical process; for a reconstruction of the latter, refer to Chrétien 2000, 30-172 and Vansina 2001.

[52] A person was considered of tutsi or hutu by paternal descent given that marriages between the two social groups was common. However, a change in economic/political status could cause a lineage to become "hutu" or "tutsi". In order to more effectively understand how these two categories do not correspond to definitions of ethnicities, it should be noted that, in a majority of Rwandan clans, both tutsi and hutu lineages were present.

[53] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 26 juin 1907.

[54] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 4 octobre 1908.

[55] As noted by Minnaert [2009, note 165], Herménégilde was not French: before entering the order of the Missionaries of Africa his name was Nicolas Klein.

[56] When this letter was written, Classe was about to become Vicar General of Rwanda.

[57] *Letter of brother Herménégilde dated 25 August 1907 to Mr. Livinhac*, n. 070825.

[58] This is Father Paul Barthélemy and not Joseph Bartélemy, the Superior of Zaza.

[59] *Lettre du frère Herménégilde du 25 août 1907 à Mgr Livinhac*, n. 070825.

[60] *Diarie de Rwaza*, 1 avril 1910.

[61] On this occasion, Lukara had saved himself by offering to provide the Fathers with guides for the expedition of the ethnologist Czekanowski in the Mulera [*Diaire de Rwaza*, 1 avril 1910]. See Czekanowski 1917.

[62] *Diarie de Rwaza*, 1 avril 1910.

[63] *Diarie de Rwaza*, 1 avril 1910.

[64] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 1 avril 1910.

[65] *Diaire de Rwaza*, 1 avril, 1910.

[66] In 1912, Lukara participated in the revolt of Ndungutse, see Chrétien 1972.