RWANDA AND BURUNDI, 1889-1930: CHRONOLOGY OF A SLOW ASSASSINATION

Part 1

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In Rwanda and in Burundi the nineteenth century ended in distress and affliction: epizootics, epidemics, famines, and colonial conquest. These two countries were spared no pains.[1]

The following chronology, itemizing the calamities that struck between 1889 and 1930, is based on oral tradition, missionary diaries, and German and Belgian published and unpublished sources. Why 1889-1930? Because in this period of time a society agonizes, an agony that began, according to informants, on 22 December 1889 with "the second night" (*ubwira kabiri*) - the solar eclipse.[2]

It was a fatal event if ever there was one. As soon as the immediate reactions subsided - "people said they had just seen something their ancestors had not seen and their descendents would not see"[3] - historical narratives would identify the eclipse as a harbinger of "the inexorability of history and of its pre-destination."[4] It was used as *a posteriori* explanation for the death of two "kings" - two contenders to the throne: Biregeya in Rwanda and Gihanamusango in Burundi.[5] In this respect, it became proof of the disorder that opened the doors to misery, according to the reconstruction of history in oral tradition. "People were astonished by the eclipse; they did not believe that the end of the world had come since the missionaries had not yet arrived and no one knew that such a thing

[1]In the same perspective, see Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika, 1850-1950* (London, 1977), 126-160.

[2]Sources: Richard Gray, "Annular Eclipse Maps," *Journal of African History*, IX, 1 (1968), 147-157; and my informants (Mpitabakana, Mugomero, Ntahondi) who speak about the month of Kigarama (December) or about "the period for sowing sorghum and during which we ate the corn that had just been harvested." For these informants - all originate from the Kayanza region (Ngozi) - the eclipse took place in the early afternoon, toward the east, near Mugongo.

[3]Oral data: 231 interviews conducted between 1969 and 1970 with 169 informants spread over 70 hills in the provinces of Muyinga and Ngozi (Burundi).

[4]Jan Vansina, *La Légende du passé. Traditions orales du Burundi* (Tervuren, 1972), 10.

[5]Biregeya, son of Kigeri Rwabugiri and Muserekande; Gihanamusango, son of Ntare Rugamba and Nyamvura. In Rwanda (on the day of the eclipse) Mibambwe Rutarindwa's enthronement as co-ruler led to a war of competition for the throne. Biregeya, considered by some as Rwabugiri's legitimate successor, was the principal protagonist, and following his still mysterious death, Ndungutse (see chronology, 1911-1912) took over the "legitimist" torch. In Burundi, the struggle for power was triggered by Ntare Rugamba's succession to the throne. Gihanamusango was one of the contenders and, according to some of my informants, the eclipse coincided with his death.

could exist. Later, people said that a decimating plague would result from the eclipse, and this plague has come."[6]

Indeed it came, as far back as 1890, in the form of a bovine epizootic (*muryamo*) of an unprecedented nature and virulence.[7] Decimating the herds, overthrowing established structures, the plague - like an apocalyptic scourge - swept down upon pastoral economies, ruining them for a long time to come. It was transmitted to man and was followed by smallpox, famine, Europeans, and a whole series of calamities detailed in the chronology. In short, the decade had hardly begun and the eclipse had already been inscribed in the history of East African societies as the forerunner of disaster.[8]

Forty years later, the socio-political and economic upheavals brought about by colonial rule were to liquidate whatever subsisted of precolonial society: Ryckmans referred to this period as the "Belgian peace."[9]

How can this precolonial society be defined in terms of the topic at hand? According to Karl Sudhoff,[10] the German medical historian, each great period of the Western world is characterized by a specific disease: leprosy in Antiquity, the plague in the Middle Ages (notably in the fourteenth century), syphilis in the sixteenth century, tuberculosis in the nineteenth century, and cancer in our own. If we can speak of a disease that represents nineteenth century precolonial society in Rwanda and Burundi, surely it would be yaws; Ntare II of Burundi died of yaws (ca. 1852) and the

[6]Oral data.

[7]The name given to the pest is written with numerous phonetic variations: *akaryama, karyama, ndyama, ryama, muryamo,* and so on. All of these variants are based on the rood *-ryam,* "to lie down," because cows struck by this disease lied down and never rose again. The informants - and, as we can see, the lexicon - render an account of the final phase of the illness, characterized by diarrhea. Physical prostation is pronounced, appetite is lost, emaciation is rapid; the victim weakens increasingly, remains lying down, refuses all nourishment, and finally dies of hyperthermia. In their accounts the informants also emphasize the suddenness of the disease. It thus seems that the epizooty was present in its peracute form which means a very rapid evolution of the illness: the animal succumbed at the end of two or three days instead of the usual eight or twelve with the ordinary or acute form. Because of this, the scourge was even more spectacular and tragically felt. The epizooty, better known under its German designation Rinderpest, was studied particularly by R.W.M. Mettam, "A Short History of Rinderpest with Special Reference to Africa," *Uganda Journal,* V, 1 (1937), 22-26; and C. van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa, 1896-1897," *Journal of African History,* XIII, 3 (1972), 473-488. For information on livestock epizooties in the interlacustrine region before 1890, consult J.B. Webster, ed., *Chronology, Migration and Drought in Interlacustrine Africa* (London, 1979).

[8]This is what numerous studies demonstrate. See especially for Karagwe, J. Ford, and R. de Z. Hall, "The History of Karagwe (Bukoba District)," *Tanganyika Notes and Records,* 24 (1947), 3-27; for Ankole, Bunyoro, and Toro, Edward I. Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration: The Kingdoms of Western Uganda, 1890-1907* (Princeton, 1977), 133-140; for the Kikuyu and the Masai, Marc H. Dawson, "Disease and Population Decline of the Kikuyu of Kenya, 1890-1925," in *African Historical Demography* (Edinburgh, 1981), 121-138; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 124-125.

[9]In fact, the territorial and political reorganization - begun as of 1925 - takes place particularly between 1929 and 1933. I highlight 1930 because this is when Vice-Governor General Voisin elaborated his twelve-point program defining the policies to be followed in Rwanda-Burundi.

[10]Karl Sudhoff, "Die Mittlere Zeit vom Tode des Galenos bis zu Bacon von Verulam," in T. Meyer-Steineg and K. Sudhoff, *Geschichte der Medizin im Überblick* (Jena, 1928), 145-303.

local vocabulary draws up an impressive clinical picture of it: secondary and tertiary outbreaks, wounds with several openings, subsequent and mortal recurrences.

The devastation caused by precolonial diseases - as serious as it might have been - remained circumscribed within precise geographical zones (sleeping sickness, relapsing fever, malaria) or else it never reached the threshold beyond which it could have caused the downfall of society (yaws, intestinal parasitosis, flu). For contagion does not operate in a vacuum. Certain socio-historical conditions must coincide for it to exercise and produce its full effects (epidemics, endemics, pandemics) and only colonial conquest was to unite these factors.

To be sure, these conditions were grafted onto an already long-standing tissue of disease, war, and famine in societies where, in addition, class differences and unequal access to resources resulted in a particular type of morbidity and mortality rate.[11] But colonial order - that is to say, disorder - radically upset the effects of these calamities because it had corrupted the economic, political and social structures. As in the days of Christopher Columbus, the great legacy of colonialism to these countries was the magnitude of the contagion - a direct consequence of the European intrusion. And by contagion I mean not only the long-distance dissemination of new germs or the propagation of pre-existing diseases outside their zones, but also the after-effects of European-style war which were without comparison whatsoever with the turbulence and damage of the past.

Colonial conquest not only ruined these societies, it also ate away at their bodies. It is thus, in this precise context, that a pathology proper to the beginnings of the colonial era bloomed; it associated "traditional" illnesses (most often in aggravated forms) and imported diseases (such as smallpox, jiggers, cerebrospinal meningitis, and influenza).

Pestilence: Late Nineteenth Century

Besides provoking death by inanition, periodic shortages and famines had a considerable influence on the general morbidity and mortality rates: the undernourished suffered from intercurrent diseases, the most inoffensive of which became exceptionally serious in such circumstances.

This was the case for diverse feverous illnesses (such as colds, bronchitis) indiscriminately identified as *inkorora*, the "cough." Some were innocuous, others deadly, and they mostly erupted as seasonal epidemics during the transition period between the dry and rainy seasons (May, September-October). Influenza, for example, generally appeared in a benign form, but when it attacked a population whose resistance was low, it would develop dangerously and rage

[11] For a Marxist analysis of these societies, see Roger Botte, "Processus de formation d'une classe sociale dans une société africaine précapitaliste," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, XIV, 4, 56 (1974), 605-626; and "Agriculteurs/éleveurs et domination du groupe pastoral," in *Pastoral Production and Society* (Cambridge, 1979), 399-418; and "La guerre interne au Burundi," in Jean Bazin and Emmanuel Terray, eds., *Guerres de lignages et guerres d'états en Afrique* (Paris, 1982), 269-317.

cruelly as a pulmonary disease (*umusonga*) with death caused by complications in the respiratory system.[12]

This was also true of the numerous types of intestinal parasitoses (helmintiasis, non-specific enteritis, ankylostomiasis); two, three, or four varieties were frequently present in one individual. Spotted sporadically throughout the year, they habitually reached epidemic proportions at the beginning of the rainy season. In 1929, Mattlet estimated that intestinal parasites were responsible for 7 to 8 percent of the mortality rate;[13] the chronology (see especially 1909) also attests to this fact (10 percent). In general, digestive tract diseases, extremely debilitating in and of themselves, took their heaviest toll from among the starving.[14] Digestive tract deficiencies were frequent among victims of famines and of the shortages at the end of the dry season when the population, awaiting new harvests, consumed different types of food substitutes. Specific dysenteriform ailments (*amacinya, amatebura*) then broke out - a perfect example of how a contagious element grafted itself onto an individual's already lamentable state.

The different forms of dysentery (amoebic and bacillar) disappeared, more often than not, when food intake returned to normal, but in certain cases the pathogenic agents reached such a high degree of virulence that they even struck healthy subjects; these forms of dysentery then became epidemic. Finally, given their contagious character, when a famine ceased, these diseases would persist here and there and could subsequently rekindle and trigger epidemics throughout an entire chiefdom or hill.

As far as physiological disorders were concerned,[15] yaws (*ibinyoro*), phagedenic ulcers (*ibironda, inyangarupfuko*) and diverse forms of dermatosis (*isi*) were the most widespread. The wounds and

[12]Steinhart, (*Conflict and Collaboration*, 133) reports Ntare V of Ankole's death as a result of pneumonia in July 1895; this leads us to believe that the disease was quite widespread on the high plateaux of East Africa. As far as other diseases are concerned, we know that in Rwanda Yuhi Mazimpaka became mad (ca. 1720), that his successor (who died around 1744) contracted secondary yaws disabilities, and that Kigeri Ndabarasa, who suffered from a "nervous disorder" (probably from a neurological complication of syphilis, a neuropathy) was operated on and died (ca. 1792) as a result. Finally, Mutara Rwogera succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis (*igituntu*) (ca. 1860). Rwabugiri, his successor, had the Abagereka family executed because they were accused of having malevolently communicated the illness to Mutara. Mibambwe Sentyabo's case - he seemingly died of smallpox - will be analyzed later in this study.

Sources: Alexis Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire du Rwanda* (Butare, 1972), 129, 134, 159, 208, 210; Albert Pagès, *Au Rwanda sur les bords du lac Kivu (Congo belge). Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique* (Bruxelles, 1933), 151.

[13]G. Mattlet, "Note sur le parasitisme intestinal au Ruanda-Urundi," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, XII, 1 (1932), 55.

[14]J.B. Jadin, "La dysenterie bacillaire," *Servir*, 1 (1944), 18-22. He demonstrated that "dysentery epidemics develop easily among starvelings, either because of the organic decay, or the state of their digestive tube - the systematic attacks lead to persistent diarrhea, which easily opens the door to the nefarious effect of specific bacillae." He estimates that anywhere from 15 to 40 percent of the victims may die.

[15]The general data (which has many gaps) may be found in Chambre des Représentants (CR), *Rapport sur l'administration belge du Ruanda-Urundi* (Bruxelles, from 1921 to 1930); G. Mattlet, "Service médical de l'Urundi. Rapport sur l'exercise février-décembre 1921," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, II, 3 (1922), 155-159; J. Olivier, "L'organisation de l'hygiène publique et maladies principales aux Territoires occupés (Ruanda et Urundi)," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, III, 3 (1923), 353-358; and "Service médical du Ruanda-Urundi. Rapport annuel pour 1924," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, VI, 2 (1926), 115-144.

ulcers took on grave proportions mainly because of mediocre hygienic conditions and the generally unhealthy state of the population. In addition, different pathogenic agents would combine in the wounds and mutually reinforce one another. Yaws, for example, caused "large ulcers on all parts of the body, sometimes so large that one wonders how an individual can survive in this state."[16]

Yaws was prevalent in all its forms:[17] primary, secondary, and tertiary (*ingaruka*) - the latter caused lesions that altered the skin, deformed the long bones, anottylosed the joints, ate away mucous membranes, and destroyed facial bones. A question that remains unsolved is whether the diffusion of this disease was, in part, due to the fact that primary yaws was not cared for, since it was believed that only thus could a graver recurrence (*amabi*) be prevented. This question is further complicated by the existence in Burundi and more particularly in Rwanda at the end of the nineteenth century of a tertiary yaws and syphilis complex - frequently difficult to separate from an etiological point of view - the pathological effects of which grew exponentially.

Be that as it may, the most important thrusts of yaws always seem to have coincided with prolonged periods of famine (see chronology: 1892-1897, 1924-1926). This correlation probably explains the disease's regional variations and distribution. In the Gitega region (Burundi), generally less affected by famine than others, and at a period when health care was already widespread, Walker and Mathieu noted approximately 21 percent carriers of latent yaws (yaws index) among the apparently healthy and unscathed adult population, although only 2 to 8 percent were clinically declared cases;[18] in other words, a total of 23-29 percent yaws infestation. On the other hand, in the Kanyinya region (Burundi), particularly exposed to famines, the yaws index in 1921 was 90 percent (according to missionaries).[19] We can conclude from these findings that the undernourished provided fertile terrain for this ailment's evolution. Since yaws is a chronic illness, unaccompanied by visceral lesions, we know little about the number of deaths caused directly by it. Nevertheless, since it is highly debilitating, it exposed the patient to intercurrent diseases: one did not really die from yaws but from the complications it produced.

Often deadly, these illnesses also had serious consequences on the social value of the individual. Besides being forbidden to marry (or have sexual relations if already married), victims of certain illnesses were excluded from all political services or functions at

[16]Mattlet, "Service médical de l'Urundi," 156.

[17]Yaws' pathogenic agent is *Treponema pertenue*, discovered by Castellani in 1905. It usually spreads by direct contact but also by intermediary agents (flies and other insects).

[18]J. Walker and V. Mathieu, "Contribution à la question du pian et des rhumatismes pianiques en particulier dans le Ruanda-Urundi," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, XV, 1 (1935), 121-122.

[19]Mattlet, "Service médical de l'Urundi," 157.

the court.[20] Thus milkers, responsible for one of the most honorific tasks, had to be without physical blemish; those afflicted with yaws, for example, even if they had only one button, were rigorously cast out.[21] Moreover, a physical blemish (*akaronda*), even if it had affected a distant ancestor, always had repercussions on the living community of a given lineage; this notion of presumed generational solidarity in affliction was so ingrained that any candidate for political office was required to search the depths of his genealogical memory in order to prove his purity.

Designating the origins of an illness usually involved exposing a culpability. This was the case in 1890-1892, when the bovine epizooty was rampant. In Burundi, it was blamed on Bihinda, a rebel angered by his failure to accede to the throne.[22] In Rwanda, meanwhile, the court high-priest for the Ryangombe cult mastered the plague by magically taking possession of the evil spirit that reigned in the country and drowning it in the Nyabarongo river.[23]

However, seeking the causality of, or the responsibility for, a disease was not such an easy task, particularly if it was not attributable to a precursory phenomenon. Certain illnesses, such as malaria (*inyonko*), were known to have natural causes and others were known to be transmitted by heredity or contagion (*ubwandu*); even so, the natural character of the contagion was not always identified.[24] But when the symptoms were indecipherable, beyond empirical knowledge (or in the case of chronic, pugnacious, and rebel diseases, when the profile was difficult to reconstruct), the observable outbreaks could only be attributed to the disquieting domain of vengeance or malevolence. They could originate with the living, but more frequently they stemmed from the malignity (as is often said of diseases) of a deceased kin. The most characteristic of these ills from the "beyond" was certainly the casting of a spell (*uburozi*) which was viewed as a full disease. For the specialist

[20]According to J. Gorju, *Face au royaume hamite du Ruanda. Le royaume frère de l'Urundi* (Bruxelles, 1938), 129, these are: syphilis, pulmonary tuberculosis, madness, yaws, ozaena (*isundwe*), leprosy. Tertiary yaws, because of its cutaneous localizations and its impact on the bones, deeply diminished the social value of the victim: the arms and legs or the trunk were completely ulcerated, obliging the victim to remain immobile for months or even years, and terminating in ankylosis or serious mutilations. In addition, all types of arthritis, osseus necroses, dactylitis, perforations in the roof of the mouth, were no less painful and often led to unsuspected infirmities. For clinical data on the sickness, see R. van Nitsen, *Le pian* (Bruxelles, 1944).

Leprosy (*ibibembe*), which took on diverse forms, was sometimes confused with certain skin diseases. In fact, in order to mitigate the aversion of others - and thus lessen the possibility of social ostracism - and so as not to provoke or exacerbate the illness (by pronouncing its name), the leper would say he was attacked by a skin disease (*amahumane*) caused by transgressing an alimentary interdiction. In its so-called *akazu* form, leprosy was considered hereditary. See A. Lestrade, *La médecine indigène au Rwanda et lexique des termes médicaux français-urunyarwanda* (Bruxelles, 1955), 97-100; and Pierre Smith, "L'efficacité des interdits," *L'Homme*, XIX, 1 (1979), 5-47.

[21]Gorju, *Face au royaume hamite*, 77-78.

[22]Oral data.

[23]R. Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi* (Bruxelles, 1956), III, 93.

[24]Thus yaws could appear to be hereditary (in its so-called *ibinyoro by-ibivukano* form) whereas this was not the case; the same holds true for *ifumbi*, an undetermined illness that provoked agalactia and miscarriages. Certain illness were even attributed a sexual nature: female when they exhibited violent and serious symptoms, male when they caused anemia and weakness. See Lestrade, *La médecine indigène*, 263.

(the diviner-healer or whatever other name he may be given), the diagnosis still remained relatively easy: he could unravel the correspondences or establish the ties between appearances and realities, and healing was then possible, whether it involved treating a specific form of rhumatism (*igikange*) attributed to the nefarious influence of the spirits or a certain illness (*akaroge*) stemming from the evil eye.

But what happened when the ailments could no longer be said to manifest the designs of hidden powers, when clinical observation and curative expedients no longer aided in conjuring evil, in short, when the only recourse left was magic, in the face of the most stubborn and tenacious forms of affliction?

Pestilence: The Colonial Situation

Colonial conquest - the condition necessary to the spread of economic and social imperialist ties - was equally disorder. Rwanda and Burundi did not escape this: sleeping sickness, paludism (malaria), relapsing fever, smallpox, cerebrospinal meningitis, influenza - as much pestilence as the colonial vector could spread or transport in its baggage. Suret-Canale, precursor in this domain, clearly demonstrated how the direct or indirect effects of colonial rule in western and central Africa favored the extension of existing illnesses or facilitated the introduction of new ones.[25]

In Burundi, trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness (*itiro, uruhiga*) had been rife on the Lake Tanganyika plain for a long time,[26] but (at least at the end of the nineteenth century) its presence seems to have been discreet, isolated cases alternating with localized and periodic paroxisms. Farther reaching epidemic thrusts may have grafted themselves onto this endemo-sporadic base, the contamination probably facilitated by the long-standing existence of marketplaces in this region.

Nevertheless, until European penetration, the disease remained within the immediate vicinity of Lake Tanganyika, its elected seat. In 1896, it was precisely in this infected zone (Kajaga and later Bujumbura) that the first German military outpost (and the only permanent one until 1912) was established. Bridgehead and local center of colonial politics, arrival and departure point for the *Schutztruppe* and couriers, and obligatory passage site for all caravans (missionaries, "explorers," and adventurers of every hue, Arab and Indian merchants), this outpost was to play an essential role in the propagation of the illness. In fact, the military columns, the caravans with their escorts, their aides, their porters, their "boys," became redoutable and efficacious agents disseminating the seeds of death: either by transporting the tsetse fly itself far from its original territory, or by the long-distance migration of

[25]Jean Suret-Canale, *Afrique noire* (Paris, 1964), II, 490-516.

[26]As is shown by the text collected by Vansina (*La légende du passé*, 104) on the origin of Kiranga and how the latter cared for Ntare I of Burundi (1700-1725) and his subjects who were victims of sleeping sickness. I will add that the kings of Burundi may have been protected from the illness because of an interdiction forbidding them to look at the waters of Lake Tanganyika.

trypanosomes carriers.[27] Referring to the Tanganyika plain, a missionary from Mibirizi (Rwanda) wrote: "No one goes into it unscathed; we therefore have untold difficulties in dispatching someone to the Usumbura military outpost; he is sure to return with the fever, a fever that will keep him bedridden for months. Last year (1905), for example, when I visited Usumbura, only one of our 15 porters did not catch the fever."[28]

In 1909 the first measures taken by German authorities officially confirmed the magnitude of the contagion: "Because of sleeping sickness, all communication with Usumbura and the Rusizi valley are forbidden by governmental decree, except by the Ishangi-Usumbura highway. On this road caravans cannot take native porters for the Rusizi river valley. They are entreated to pass as quickly as possible[!] This decree holds for Europeans and Natives alike."[29] Yet these steps remained provisional; moreover, they were not observed and consequently proved to be inefficacious. In May 1911 it was again judged necessary to cordon off the plain north of Bujumbura.[30] In any case, all these measures came too late: the ill was already at work throughout Rwanda and Burundi.

The Germans, who only became alarmed by the situation in the middle of 1905, built a small lazaret for the victims. Then in 1908 they established a much larger hospital (200 patients), but used such coercive methods to fill it that the sick were frightened off: "Since the first of July, the doctor [Leupold] is trying to fill his hospital with sleeping sickness patients: terror once again spread among the natives; they no longer want to go to the Usumbura marketplace. They maintain that we want to gather them in order to burn them and send their ashes to Europe."[31]

The Germans did not deal with the problem until the beginning of 1909 when they became more interested in doing something because nine among them, including Resident von Langen, were afflicted by the illness.[32] They then realized that their objective of constituting a colonial settlement - still quite current at this period - could fail. But, it must be reiterated, it was too late to bring sleeping sickness under control in 1909.[33] "Since there was no

[27] The same observations are valid for animal trypanosomiasis. See R. van Saceghem, "La trypanosomiase au Ruanda," *Bulletin agricole du Congo belge*, XII, 2 (1921), 294, observed that in the Gisenyi region (Rwanda) the disease "was absolutely unknown several years ago. The illness seems to have been introduced by the mules of troops during the war. It was propagated from herd to herd in the entire region."

[28] Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique (SMA), *Chroniques trimestrielles* (Rome, March 1906), 182.

[29] SMA, Diary of Mission Station (DMS), Zaza (Rwanda), 7 August 1909.

[30] SMA, German records (GR), manuscript copy concerning Burundi in German records, Policy reports 1897-1915, letter from the Residency dated 31 May 1911.

[31] SMA, DMS, Buhonga (Burundi), 5 July 1908.

[32] *Ibid.*, 8 August 1909.

[33] These events are contemporary with research conducted on the illness: Dutton discovers *T. Gambiense* in 1901 and Castellani discovers the illness's originating agent, trypanosomiasis, in 1903. But it is only in 1909 that a German expedition on the banks of Lake Victoria in Kirundu (led by Kleine) elucidates the evolution of trypanosoma. For information on sleeping sickness in the Lake Victoria region, see Harvey G. Soff, "Sleeping Sickness in the Lake Victoria Region of British East Africa, 1900-1915," *African Historical Studies*, II, 2 (1969), 255-268; and, more broadly, J. Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiases in African Ecology: A Study of the Tsetse-Fly Problem* (Oxford, 1971).

hope of overcoming the illness by healing all the patients, the Germans decided to find a way of exterminating the glossina";[34] thus they had the underbrush in the infected zone cleared.

This clearing project (see chronology 1910-1911), conducted *manu militari*, required not only the conscription of the inhabitants in the contaminated zone but also of those who lived on the mountainous foothills of the Congo-Nile crest - until then untouched by the disease; they, in turn, were contaminated and died en masse. In short, the measures that were taken contributed to the propagation rather than the arrest of the illness; the anthropologist Hans Meyer, who sojourned in the region, said he was "terrified by the ravages caused by the epidemic in a once dense population full of vitality."[35] For his part, the writer of the Buhonga diary attested that "everywhere there is desolation and death"; noting that "the German officers play with people's lives," he accused the authorities of "immoral deeds."[36]

Today the remedies applied, even when they were not outright failures, seem derisory in the face of this hecatomb. For, if the use of atoxyl and salvarsan, for example, had rather good results for the hemolymphatic stage of sleeping sickness, they were completely powerless in healing the sleepers (encephalitic stage).

Rwanda and Burundi are not isolated cases: the diffusion of diseases outside their "traditional" circumscription or the conversion of an endemic, infectuous pathology into an epidemic are constants of colonial rule. Good irrefutably proved this for eastern Congo and Uganda between 1900 and 1920:

> the colonial administrations of the Congo Free State in 1896 and the British in Uganda in 1913 altered African settlement and mobility patterns in such ways as to promote the convergence of man, pathogen, and disease vector in space and time. These preconditions were superimposed on the traditional spatial network of the Katwe-Kasenyi salt trade, which, as shown by the distribution of endemo-epidemic areas, served as a primary medium of transport for *T. Gambiense*.[37]

More generally, what I have just said about sleeping sickness and its geographical dissemination outside its usual boundaries also holds true for a certain number of other infections. Thus relapsing

[34]Pierre Ryckmans, *Une page d'histoire coloniale. L'occupation allemande dans l'Urundi* (Bruxelles, 1953), 28.

[35]Hans Meyer, *Die Barundi. Eine völkerkundliche Studie aus deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig, 1916), 144.

[36]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 16 February 1910, 4 May 1911, 11 January 1912.

[37]Charles M. Good, "Salt, Trade and Disease: Aspects of Development in Africa's Northern Great Lakes Region," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, V, 4 (1972), 576.

fever (*ibibwa, kiimputu*) and paludism (or malaria),[38] which together with trypanomiasis represented the dominant pathological characteristic of the Lake Tanganyika plain alone in the precolonial era, reached the high plateaux at the beginning of colonial rule. Sporadic cases became increasingly frequent and new epidemic pockets were formed here and there: in Rwanda malaria reached Ruhengeri as early as 1905; Nyanza was afflicted in 1907 and in 1908 relapsing fever was reported in Gisaka (see Chronology).

The infestation of the Ruhengeri region by paludism (*ubuganga*) is indicative of the trajectory and evolution of this illness; it also poignantly highlights colonial negligence. Malaria was first noticed in its epidemic form - outside its zone of origin - in Mulera in 1905 where it caused numerous deaths before spreading to Bugoyi; it was again reported in 1912 and in 1926 (see Chronology). Faced with symptoms never before encountered in these regions, the inhabitants designated the "new" sickness as *gapfuura*. The missionaries of Rwaza, who cared for the sick, described the symptoms as follows: "It is a very pernicious illness. It causes extreme stiffness and cuts the appetite. The gray buttons that cover the roof of the mouth and the tongue, secrete a venimous pus which ultimately poisons the entire organism."[39] The missionaries, caught off guard, diagnosed it as diphteria although they were describing malaria.[40] For the inexperienced observer, malaria symptoms can indeed be mistaken for diphteria; benign cases are accompanied by fever and headaches whereas serious cases may result in hyperthermia and cerebral disorders leading to coma, stertorous breathing, and death by suffocation. This explains the native remedy (adopted immediately) of scraping the tongue and roof of the mouth with a reed until blood was drawn. In Burundi, precisely because of the saburral coating obstructing the throat passage, paludism (appearing for the first time in the interior of the country) was identified with quinsy or mycosis of the throat and called *agafindofindo*.

[38]The name of the ornithodores that cause relapsing fever (by stinging) is usually given to the illness itself: *ibibwa*. For information on this disease, see Good's research on the illness's epidemiology and, in particular, on the role played by large-scale migration from Rwanda-Burundi to Uganda and its diffusion (beginning in 1920). Charles M. Good, "Man, Milieu, and the Disease Factor: Tick-Borne Relapsing Fever in East Africa," in Gerald W. Hartwig and K. David Patterson, eds., *Disease in African History: An Introductory Survey and Case Studies* (Durham, 1978), 46-87. For information on paludism, see J. Schwetz, H. Baumann and M. Ford, *Recherches sur le paludisme endémique et le paludisme épidémique dans le Ruanda-Urundi* (Bruxelles, 1948).

[39]SMA, DMS, Save (Rwanda), January 1906.

[40]The term diphtheria - which is incorrect - was maintained in the chronology; it is the term used in the documents I consulted. The reader should correct the reference by substituting paludism/malaria, the real disease in question. The same holds true for *amaseeke* (spelled *maseke* or *massaka* in the chronology) which quite rightly connotes the first stage of paludism. The recurrences that follow a period of apyrexis after the *amaseeke* are identified as *ubuganga*. See Lestrade, *La médecine indigène*, 151. But, as it is used in the sources (for Rwanda), the term *amaseeke* designates - incorrectly - typhoid fever. When examined superficially, paludism can indeed be confused with typhoid fever or with paratyphoid (to the point of being designated as typhomalaria), but in the chronology, we are undeniably dealing with the first phase of paludism (*amaseeke*) - proof once again of a recent introduction. All the same, it is only in 1928, in Bujumbura, that typhoid fever was diagnosed and determined with certitude. Since 1921 it existed under the names of septicemia, pneumoccocis, and ironically, "usumburitis" (see Dr. S'Heeren, "La fièvre typhoïde et paratyphoïde à Usumbura en 1927, 1928 et au début de 1929," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale*, X, 3 (1930), 363-367. In addition, we can question exactly what the word "fever" includes as it is used in the sources (and therefore in the chronology).

It was only in 1930 that Mattlet had the idea of using quinine for healing the disease.[41] The immediate success of the treatment finally enabled him to correlate the symptoms to the right sickness: malaria/paludism, *gapfuura,* and *agafindofindo* were of the same nature. After examining several thousand cases, he then proved that the expansion of paludism was recent because cerebral malaria outbreaks were frequent precisely when paludism first spread over a given territory. There are no doubts about the diffusion of the disease: the passage of troops and porters, the mingling of populations. In fact, the appearance of the first epidemic seat in Mulera in 1905 was preceded (1902, 1904) by the sojourn of several military expeditions in the region and by the regular passage (ever since 1902) of soldiers from the Gisenyi outpost "who wander about the country in every direction."[42] These soldiers necessarily transited through the infested zone of Bujumbura, the base of operations for imperialism ... and disease.

For the infection, long ago dormant in the plain, proliferated increasingly as "pacification" evolved and new caravan routes opened up. In 1925, a Belgian administrative report notes that "malaria seems to broaden into mountainous regions, in places where it once was rare, and intense pockets are notes in places where there had been no mention of it until now."[43] In 1946, Vincke and Jadin indicated another factor contributing to the process of the illness: they noted a correlation between the "impaludation" of the high plateaux and the cultivation of the swamps made obligatory in 1925 in order to bring famines under control by diversifying production and increasing the number of harvests.[44] As early as 1931, Laplae had already noted that the disease's dissemination was such that mortality due to long-standing famines was inferior to the loss in human lives directly caused by malaria and by the weakened resistance of malaria victims to other diseases.[45] Ultimately, the remedy proved to be even worse than the ill.

Besides the long-standing diseases whose unprecedented growth concurred with colonial implantation, the chronology also underscores the appearance of a certain number of imported diseases.

[41] G. Mattlet, "Le Kapfura ou Kafindo-findo," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale,* XV, 4 (1935), 521-525.

[42] SMA, DMS, Rwaza (Rwanda), 21 October 1905.

[43] CR (1925), 72. The reference is to the foothills of the Congo-Nile crest since, as we have seen, the presence of the illness in the interior was not yet suspected.

[44] I.H. Vincke, "Introduction au problème de la malaria au Ruanda-Urundi," Servir, II (1943), 72; I.H. Vincke and J.B. Jadin, "Contribution à l'étude de l'anophélisme en pays d'altitude," *Annales de la Société belge de Médecine tropicale,* XXVI, 3 (1946), 483. In fact, improvement of the swamps through drainage - beneficial to agriculture - multiplied the number of anopheles in the swamps or, more exactly, substituted the *Taeniophynchus* and other *Culicidae* with anopheles. Initiated without much effect under the German rule, taken over on a much larger scale by the Belgians at the beginning of the 1920s, the improvement was considerably activated following the large 1943 famine.

[45] *Plan décennal pour le développement économique et social du Ruanda-Urundi* (Bruxelles, 1951), 100.

Among these, let us examine cerebrospinal meningitis (1917) and the Spanish flu (1918-1919).[46]

Documents on the respective importance of these two terrible pandemics are practically non-existent. As far as meningitis is concerned - its spread was favored by all other forms of affliction - I could only find two precise facts: in Rwanda research in the Kansi region demonstrates that of 642 identified cases, there were 198 deaths, or a 31 percent rate of mortality;[47] in Burundi, around the Buhonga mission station, meningitis decimated one-twentieth of the population in two months. Elsewhere, information is exasperatingly vague. Sources are even more cryptic about a flu epidemic that presumably provoked a "high mortality rate." The silence on this point testifies to the disaster's magnitude, and one must see in it (Rwanda and Burundi were then under military occupation) the hand of strictly applied instructions. Patterson, however, managed to write that "the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 was almost certainly the single greatest short-term demographic catastrophe in the continent's history. Nothing else, not slaving, colonial conquest, smallpox, cerebrospinal meningitis, the rinderpest, panzooties of the 1880s and 1890s, nor the great trypanosomiasis outbreaks in East and Equatorial Africa after 1900 killed so many Africans in so short a time."[48] In Rwanda and Burundi, the ravages of the epidemic are all the more difficult to assess because two other terrible ills raged in concert: dysentery and, above all, smallpox (its most deadly recurrence since 1892-1893).

Smallpox, which was long thought to have broken out in a periodic manner in East Africa, represents a typical example of the colonial administration's inability to discriminate between "native" infections and imported illnesses. This confusion was easy to make since the diffusion of the ill preceded the arrival of Europeans.

Hartwig definitively solved the controversy over the origins of smallpox by demonstrating that it first appeared on the Indian Ocean coast.[49] Simultaneously, he posed an even more interesting question: when and how was it introduced into the interior? The necessarily hypothetical answer largely depends on the meagerness of our knowledge concerning long-distance trade which, together with the usual goods, could carry the illness into the interior.[50]

[46]For information on cerebrospinal meningitis, see B.B. Waddy, "African Epidemic Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis," *Journal of Tropical Medecine and Hygiene*, LX, August (1957), 179-189, 218-223. Outside of East Africa, see Mario Joaquim Azevedo, "Epidemic Disease among the Sara of Southern Chad, 1890-1940," in Hartwig and Patterson, eds., *Disease in African History*, 118-152. He describes several illnesses examined here: sleeping sickness, smallpox, and Spanish flu.

[47]SMA, DMS, Kansi (Rwanda), 20 December 1917.

[48]K. David Patterson, "The Demographic Impact of the 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Preliminary Assessment," in *African Historical Demography*, 404; see also, K. David Patterson, *Infectious Diseases in Twentieth-Century Africa: A Bibliography of their Distribution and Consequences* (Waltham, 1979).

[49]Gerald W. Hartwig, "Demographic Considerations in East Africa during the Nineteenth Century," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XII, 4 (1979), 653-672; Hartwig and Patterson, eds., *Disease in African History*.

[50]Gerald W. Hartwig, "Economic Consequences of Long-Distance Trade in East Africa: The Disease Factor," *African Studies Review*, XVIII, 2 (1975), 63-74; and "Social Consequences of Epidemic Diseases: The Nineteenth Century in Eastern Africa," in Hartwig and Patterson, eds., *Disease in African History*, 25-45.

Hartwig, noting "that traders from the coast did not arrive in Unyamwezi much before 1830," defined the problem as follows:

> Movement of hunters seeking elephants may well have been responsible for conveying smallpox into the interior before 1800. Thus the entire question of when smallpox initially broke out in any given community will doubtless remain unanswered. My experience with Kerebe elders concerning the initial appearances of smallpox and cholera reflects this dilemma. That the diseases were present during the reign of Mihigo II (ca. 1780- ca. 1820) was readily accepted by men who had information about Mihigo II. But had the diseases been present earlier?[51]

In Rwanda and Burundi, sources reporting on the first appearance of smallpox diverge significantly. Thus in Burundi, according to informants, the large epidemic that raged from October 1892 until the first months of 1893 was its first appearance in the country. Let us note that it coincides with the passage of the Oscar Baumann expedition (September-October 1892) and, more generally, with the pandemic that ravaged all East Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century. Burundi, kingdom farthest to the west of the diffusion axis, was then (with Rwanda) the finishing point of the disease. To be sure, as of 1845, Arab traders and their agents could easily reach Burundi (or at least the shores of Lake Tanganyika) from Ujiji, and their incursions into the plain, followed by their permanent presence, could have introduced the seeds of death. But for one reason or another (and whereas in 1876 Stanley describes the ravages caused by the disease in Ujiji), there was nothing of the kind. While Baumann reported several appearances of the disease before 1892,[52] he is in complete contradiction with informants who affirm that under the reign of Mwezi Gisabo the only smallpox epidemic was the one between 1892 and 1893. Their assertion is particularly credible since Mwezi Gisabo had to face many challengers and was habitually accused of all ills. Moreover, how would it have been possible for this pitiless killer to strike before 1892-1893, without leaving the slightest trace in collective memory? The informants also pointed out that the term *akaranda*,[53] designating this unknown ill, was invented precisely at this period.[54]

[51] Hartwig, "Demographic Considerations," 664-665.

[52] Oscar Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle. Reisen und Forschungen der Massai-Expedition des deutschen antisklaverei-Komitee in den Jahren 1891-1893* (Berlin, 1894), 222.

[53] *Akaranda* stems from *-rand*, "to spread." During the second large epidemic in 1899, smallpox is known as *ubushita;* later, both terms are used indifferently. It is important to note that the local medical glossary distinguished between smallpox, chickenpox (*ibiharabagabo* in Rwanda, *agasama* in Burundi), and varioloid (*ruduruvuru* in Rwanda and *ubududuru* in Burundi).

[54] Ford and Hall, "The History of Karagwe," 13, 21, also provide the date of 1892-1893 for Karagwe and Ankole, thinking all the while that smallpox already existed in an endemic state in these regions: "It is a reasonable assumption that the sudden starvation of the pastoral people so weakened their resistance to disease that the endemic form of smallpox rapidly became epidemic." Meanwhile, in Rwanda and Burundi, smallpox - on the contrary - precedes the famine, and in fact, is one of its causes.

In Rwanda, to my knowledge, no study of the epidemic at the end of the nineteenth century exists and thus there is nothing on whether it was thought to be a recurrent phenomenon or the first appearance of the ill. On the other hand, two authors - Pagès[55] and Kagame[56] - who reported on esoteric court traditions and not on what collective memory could have retained, observed that a smallpox epidemic broke out during the reign of Mibambwe Sentabyo who died victim of it. His death occurred between 1780 and 1790 (Pagès), or more precisely between 1787-1807 (Vansina).[57] We should note the parallel between this epidemic and the one pointed out by Hartwig in Kerebe under the reign of Mihigo II: the dates coincide almost perfectly. Is there a tie between these two identical events occurring at the same time but in different places? Let us forward the following hypothesis: suppose that the disease followed a trajectory from one relaying station to the next, all along the routes of a still informal exchange sector. Kagame, in fact, demonstrates that such exchange currents existed during the reign of Yuhi Mazimpaka, the insane king;[58] in other words, as of the end of the seventeenth century. In fact, articles (cloth, pearls, copper, and brass rods) coming from Asia or Europe were traded throughout East Africa and ended up in Rwanda, through the intermediary of the princes of Bushubi and Bujinja, in exchange for wire edge.[59]

But if Mibambwe actually died of smallpox (and not, so to speak, from a lapsus in tradition), how can we then explain the disease's long abeyance until the last decade of the nineteenth century? (There is not another mention of it in Rwandese narratives until then.)

Smallpox mutilates, disfigures - the smallpox victim was called "hyena" - but above all, it kills. In Burundi, the epidemic of 1892-1893 was deemed responsible for carrying off more than half of the population.[60] And even if these estimates seem exaggerated, the disease undoubtedly hit quite hard. The nickname attributed to it, *zana agafuni*, testifies to its virulence: it means "bring out a hoe [to bury the dead]," for, according to informants, "throughout the country, it seemed that the only occupation of survivors was to bury those who had perished." The only fairly precise figures available to us concern another epidemic that, while far removed from the first appearance of the scourge, still allows us to imagine its impact. In 1923, for example, Olivier counted 26 dead out of 69 hospitalized victims (37 percent mortality rate) who had received

[55]Pagès, *Au Rwanda sur les bords du lac Kivu*, 146.

[56]Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire*, 168-169.

[57]Kagame's chronology dates this king's rule at ca. 1741-1746. I am using Vansina's chronology. See Alexis Kagame, *La notion de génération appliquée à la généalogie dynastique et à l'histoire du Rwanda, du X^e-XI^e siècles à nos jours* (Bruxelles, 1959); Jan Vansina, *L'évolution du royaume Rwanda des origines à 1900* (Bruxelles, 1962).

[58]Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire*, 131; Alexis Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire du Rwanda de 1853 à 1972* (Butare, 1975), 91.

[59]As Newbury demonstrated, there also existed an important regional activity in the zone of Lake Kivu. See David S. Newbury, "Lake Kivu Regional Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal des Africanistes*, L, 2 (1980), 6-30.

[60]SMA, "Variole et variolisation dans nos missions d'Afrique" (Rome, 1905), 1.

all the appropriate care.[61] It must be admitted, he adds, "that the proportion of death in the indigenous villages is certainly higher and must amount to approximately 50 percent."[62]

Meanwhile, while variolation or inoculation was practiced in Europe ever since 1701 (Pyralino in Constantinople), and whereas it was known and applied with success by Arabs in East Africa,[63] the colonial administration remained idle: their "laissez-faire" attitude was downright criminal. Besides several periodic attempts at vaccination, the Germans who were present during several epidemics - particularly the serious ones in 1899 and 1913 - took no real prophylactic measures. And what can be said of the Belgian administration while the henceforth endemic scourge raged without intermittency (sometimes locally, sometimes generally) between 1916 and 1923, except that no illusions should be nourished about the colonial administration's sanitary action. And yet, healing methods were possible; indigenous "bricoleurs" applied them with some success: "In Gacaca (Rwanda) a black charlatan vaccinates with smallpox pus. He maintains that this is tantamount to making a bloodpact with the smallpox so that it removes all malevolent sentiments. It seems that he has great success."[64]

Armed Felonies

Let there be no misunderstanding: the military expeditions have been included in the chronology inasmuch as they compose, together with disease and famine, the implacable triptych of the assassination. It is the terrifying aspect of this triad that I want to highlight; thus a study of conquest should not be expected.

It is important to note, however, that these expeditions - especially during the German period - differed rather significantly from one country to another. Basically, they were the principal instrument of German policy, but, as Lemarchand emphasizes, "in Rwanda, these were directed against the *mwami*'s [king] opponents whereas in Burundi the *mwami* was more often than not the victim rather than the beneficiary of German militarism."[65] In fact, in the case of Rwanda, the repression systematically led to a reinforcement of royal power to the detriment of Hutu principalities or contestations stemming from within the system. Thus, in 1912, Resident Gudowius, who had just led a ferocious expedition against Ndungutse, confided that the latter was the legitimate pretender to the throne but that the German government could not dethrone King Musinga "because of the good services he has rendered the Europeans ever since their arrival in Rwanda."[66] In the case of Burundi, the

[61]Olivier, "L'organisation de l'hygiène publique," 356.

[62]For a discussion on the impact smallpox had on the mortality rate, see Hartwig, "Demographic Considerations," 665-669.

[63]Eugenia W. Herbert, "Smallpox Inoculation in Africa," *Journal of African History*, XVI, 4 (1975), 547, 549-550.

[64]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 20 February 1918.

[65]René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London, 1970), 62.

[66]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 25 February 1912.

priority, on the whole, was to weaken royal power, notwithstanding several German policy reversals. These two facets of one and the same policy were not without repercussions on the localization of famines, their magnitude, and consequences: the scale of resistance to imperialist aims - incomparably more intense in Burundi than in Rwanda - conditioned the gravity of these calamities to a certain degree.

In the final analysis, however the apparatus of repression may have been used, the results were the same: the confiscation of the local political game to the benefit of foreign economic domination. Besides territorial "rape" and armed felonies, colonial conquest was essentially a vast enterprise of demolition of precapitalist societies. There is indeed little similarity between colonial ravages, the only goal of which was imposing socio-imperialistic rapports, and the damages and turmoils of the past. To be sure, it would be naive to idealize precolonial society - and I have indicated the various antagonisms that shook Burundi on all sides[67] - but the warlike manifestations of that era cannot be compared with colonial conquest. Both during the reign of Ntare II in Burundi (and his successor) and that of Rwabugiri in Rwanda, war was also conducted to establish new social relations; it did so by consolidating state centralization and favoring an extraordinary rise in productive strength - as the vitality of land-clearing throughout the nineteenth century demonstrates - and thus also demographic growth. It is true that precolonial conflicts also provoked severe depredations, but the goal of the armed battles was not the destruction of the system. At the opposite end of the spectrum, colonial aggression created such conditions of disequilibrium and instability that famine and disease rushed in with unequalled frenzy.

Above all, the most terrible effects of the physical violence of the conquest were those long-term effects that were to become apparent after the conquest and once the era of "pacification" had begun; it was then that precolonial society, in a general state of dilapidation, became irremediably decomposed. Finally, it was then that new imported social ties were brutally or insidiously imposed on a social organism that was too weak to offer more than a sporadic and ephemeral resistance. In short, oppression had succeeded repression. It would be up to the Belgian administration, which received this ailing body, to give it the ultimate *coup de grâce*. Incomparably accelerated by the shock of the First World War in Africa, the full effects of the decay of the precolonial state were felt between 1916 and 1930. These dark years coincided with a practically uninterrupted period of famine, the origins of which cannot be found solely in the the weaknesses of the agrarian system or in climatic fluctuations. It therefore seems logical to assume that the German and Belgian colonial systems were in some way jointly responsible.

Hunger

In Rwanda, accounts attest to dramatic ruptures in the balance of food once or twice per century. Thus, between the sixteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century, it seems that six

[67] Botte, "La guerre interne."

great famines devastated the country.[68] These sources should be treated with some skepticism, however. Preoccupied with the deeds and exploits of the dominant group, they do not readily refer to the miseries of the times, retaining only the most serious crises and leaving to collective memory the task of recalling isolated accidents, local penuries, and, for the most downtrodden, the durable implantation of malnutrition. Although the historical data at my disposal does not authorize generalizations, I will nevertheless make a few observations.

According to oral tradition - and later, according to the colonizers - famine came from the heavens. But let the heavens be placed in their proper perspective: the scourges - their duration, spread, and incidence - were not independent of the economic, political, and religious structures of the society.

To be sure, agriculture in Rwanda and Burundi remained extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in the weather; not only were the rains irregular, but they were also localized. Hailstorms or torrential rains could annihilate a man's work in the space of a few hours. Small local famines would then break out here and there. But these did not develop and become generalized until other elements grafted themselves onto this basis of climatic insecurity. We observe this in Burundi at the time of the famine ca. 1820: the consequences of the mobilization during the campaign against the Bushi combined with a severe drought to provoke a deplorable food situation.[69]

This is clearer still when the conjunction of the same causes produces the same effects. We know that upon the death of a king, cultivation was stopped in order to mark the departure of the one who ensured the religious conditions of social reproduction. In Rwanda, the break in cultivation upon the death of Mibambwe Sentabyo (ca. 1797) coincided with a prolonged drought and triggered a famine that left the entire country cadaverous.[70] The same holds true for the famines that followed the funerals of Ntare II of Burundi (ca.

[68]They took place during the reign of the following kings: famine n° 1, Mibambwe Mutabazi who died in 1552 (±14); n° 2 famine, Ndahiro Cyamatore, 1600 (±18); n° 3, Mutara Semugeshi, 1648 (±22); n° 4, Cyilima Rujugira, 1768 (±12); n° 5, under the reign of Yuhi Gahindiro upon the death of Mutara Rwogera in 1860 (±5).

Sources: Pagès, *Au Rwanda sur les bords du lac Kiku*, 125, 127, 129, 141, 214, 236-238, 586-596; Kagame, *Un abrégé du l'ethno-histoire*, 141, 174. Rennie, cited by Webster also refers to a famine under the reign of Kigeri Nyamuheshere (maybe around 1657), who died in 1672 (±20); see J.B. Webster, "Noi! Noi! Famines as an Aid to Interlacustrine Chronology," in Webster, ed., *Chronology, Migration and Drought*, 37. If we compare the possible dates of these famines with those cited by Webster (*ibid.*, 34-37) for the interlacustran region, we obtain the following correlations: famine n° 2 ca. 1580, n° 3 ca. 1620, n° 4 ca. 1780, n° 5 ca. 1797. This last famine was equally mentioned for Burundi (informants), where I have no anterior data, except for around 1700, at the beginning of Ntare I's reign.

[69]The return of Ntare II in Burundi coincides with the inception of the rainfall; for this reason, the woman (called Nyanzobe) whom he had just married in Bushi was nicknamed Nyamvura, "mistress of the rains" (oral data).

[70]This famine was called *Rukungugu*, "dust heap," see Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethnohistoire*, 174.

1852) and Mutara Rwogera (ca. 1860) of Rwanda.[71] Such a strict observance of social practices provoked or accelerated the collapse of production.

The society, leaving it up to the rainmaker to adjure the heavens, was undoubtedly aware of the nefarious consequences of these "penitential famines."[72] The measures taken in Burundi to relax the strictness of the mourning bear witness to this. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, cultivation came to a complete standstill throughout the kingdom not only upon the death of a king but also upon that of a prince. "Because the country died of hunger," the princes appealed to the sovereign to limit the interdiction to the territory of the deceased prince. This was done.[73] The royal mourning practices also underwent important changes.[74]

This is why the colonial administration's unsubtle accusations concerning the lack of productive or mental ability of "traditional society" are not fully justified. It is necessary to take into account the cultural innovations which, by upsetting food habits, motivated a significant rise in foodcrop production and consequently brought about a diversification of risks. Ever since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, plants of American origin (corn, beans) were progressively substituted for the long-standing East African cereals (sorghum, eleusine), and in the nineteenth century, peas and sweet potato were introduced and banana cultivation became generalized.[75]

Finally, despite the enormous latitude left for conjecture, this detour via precolonial famines demonstrates that the conditions that triggered famines and fostered their evolution cannot be understood unidimensionally; on the contrary, they can only be explained by taking into consideration both weather patterns and socio-economic data. The latter's impact is difficult to analyze inasmuch as salvation-bearing innovations combined with practices which, for reasons stemming from the political system, restrained the rise of productive power. The full dimensions of this complex process reach a height in the last third of the nineteenth century with the formidable thrust of state control. The process manifests itself in a contradictory fashion with the acceleration of social differentiation which, particularly in Burundi, led to the formation of a class

[71] In Burundi, Mwezi II, Ntare's successor, was nicknamed Serubebe, "master of *bebe*," that stems from the name of a plant (*urubebe: erlangea spissa*) which covers the fields when cultivation is stopped. In this case, conflicts over succession to the throne also played an important role in the spread of the famine. In Rwanda, the famine was called *Gikoko*.

[72] P. del Perugia, *Les derniers rois mages* (Paris, 1970), 43.

[73] Oral data.

[74] The interdiction to cultivate, or *gukura amasuka* ("removing the hoes") originally specified a three-month period, but if the funeral took place during the rainy season, the period was limited to 10 days. In addition, iron tools (particularly hoes) were forbidden, but if the mourning period fell during the weeding time, cultivators could use a tree branch (oral data).

[75] In 1874, a Rwandan expedition brought peas back from Butembo, and in 1878-79, another expedition, this time to Kigezi, brought back the sweet potato. For the latter, the king ordered that each warrior return to Rwanda with a stem attached to his arc (Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 46, 55). The 1894-1897 famine provoked a considerable extension of banana plantations (oral data).

of landless peasants.[76] This trend was further precipitated by the impact of internal war[77] and in Rwanda by the unbridled rhythm of military campaigns under Rwabugiri's reign.

Even though they may have represented the summum of contradictions, precapitalist socio-economic structures had their own logic and efficacity.[78] The crisis of the 1890s and, above all, the European intrusion were to alter these structures beyond recognition. The weather, it is true, continued to be capricious, and the sluggishness proper to precolonial society persisted, but the unprecedented succession of famines owes little to past contingencies. The transformations induced by colonial rule must henceforth sit in the dock in first place. The military expeditions, the war of 1914-1916 in East Africa, trade (especially pelts),[79] porterage, tax, forced labor, and so on, are the many factors that either directly or indirectly had a negative impact on the food situation.[80] This is the subject of the chronology.

[76]Botte, "Processus de formation."

[77]Botte, "La guerre interne."

[78]Jean Copans, "Images, problématiques et thèmes," in Jean Copans, ed., *Sécheresse et famines au Sahel* (Paris, 1975), I, 31.

[79]J.M.M. van der Burgt, "Land und Leute von Nordurundi (deutsch-Ostafrika)," *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, LVIII (1912), 326.

[80]An article devoted to the famines of the colonial period will make a much more convincing case in point.

CHRONOLOGY

1889

Burundi

- During the month of September, passage of the comet *icicamo co kw-ijuru*, "the little fire from heaven."[81]

- Appearance of the dog Runyerere, a fabulous animal said to abduct nubile girls and to leave his den only upon the death of a king. This time, the king in question is Gihanamusango, a contender to the throne.[82]

Rwanda-Burundi

- On 22 December, early afternoon, solar eclipse, *ubwirakabiri*, "to become dark twice."[83]

1890

Rwanda

- *Muhatigicumuro* famine in the Astrida region.[84]

Burundi

- Famine in the center.[85]

- Grasshoppers ravage the countryside.[86]

1890-1892

Rwanda-Burundi

- Bovine pest epizooty (*muryamo*, Rinderpest). Having broken out in Burundi around June 1891, it comes to an end during the first months of 1892. It decimates more than 50 percent, possibly even 70 to 80 percent, of the cattle; it also attacks small livestock (sheep and caprine). Introduced into Erythrea by the Italians, it propagates throughout East Africa where it

[81] Oral data.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] Oral data; Gray, "Annular Eclipse Maps," 153.

[84] *Histoire et chronologie du Ruanda* (Kabgayi, 1954), 12.

[85] CR (1929), 79.

[86] J.M.M. van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire française-kirundi* (Bois-Le-Duc, 1903), 339.

appears for the first time in this form. In Rwanda, it rages between 1890 and 1891.[87]

1892

Rwanda

- Foot-and-mouth disease (*uburenge*) is brought into the country by cattle picked up while raiding the Ndorwa during the Rwabugiri expedition.[88]

Rwanda-Burundi

- Oscar Baumann (nicknamed Bakari) delegate of the German anti-slavery committee, is the first European to penetrate the interior of the Burundi (5-10 September; 16 September - 11 October) and Rwanda (11-15 September). He encounters violent resistance in Burundi, where he causes "heavy losses for the Barundi": 30 deaths on 17 September and still other deaths on the 18th.[89] This event introduces a new calamity: the magazine-rifle.

1892-1897

Burundi

- The various calamities that sweep throughout the country at this time must be treated together because of their close interconnection: The bovine epizooty (see above 1890-1892) is transmitted to man and has deadly repercussions between 1892-1893; it is called *zana agafuni*, "bring on the hoes" (for burying the dead).[90] In October 1892, smallpox (*akaranda*) combines with the plague and causes considerable devastation. It is followed by a significant outbreak of yaws (*ikinyoro*). Jiggers, or the South American fleas (*tunga penetrans, amavunja*),[91] appear at the same period; they are carried into the country from the Indian Ocean coast by the porters of the

[87]Oral data; CR (1921), 29; *Histoire et chronologie*, 11, 130; P. Capus, "Eine Missionsreise nach Uha und Urundi. Auszug dem Tagebuche des Pater Capus," *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, XLIV, 8 (1898), 182; Meyer, *Die Barundi*, 43; Van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire*, 19, 204; Van der Burgt, "Land und Leute," 325.

[88]*Histoire et chronologie*, 11.

[89]Oral data; Baumann, *Durch Massailand*, 77-99; Capus, "Eine Missionsreise," 183.

[90]Oral data.

[91]In certain cases, the damages caused by jiggers - *Tunga penetrans* - are connected with those provoked by leprosy: "If, when the flea is extracted, even the smallest particle remains, a festering wound forms, the finger swells and fills with serosity that is difficult to squeeze out even when pressing very hard. These wounds sometimes last for weeks. I saw negros who were too lazy to remove the jiggers and had the extremities of their toes or fingers completely devoured, and even the entire finger or toe missing." See François Ménard, "Les Barundi. Moeurs et coutumes," ms (SMA, 1918), 253.

Baumann expedition.[92] These calamities provoke the biggest famine ever known in Burundi, *Urwagunda*. The famine is aggravated by disastrous weather conditions, particularly in the northwest. Finally, "according to the Warundi, these disasters not only decimated, but removed half of the population."[93]

1893

Rwanda

- The smallpox epidemic, which appeared in 1892, continues.[94]
- Appearance of jiggers.

1894

Rwanda

- 2 May, Lt. von Götzen, accompanied by Lt. von Prittwitz and Dr. Kersting, enter Rwanda from the east, crossing the Kagera river at Rusumo. They encounter *mwami* Rwabugiri in Kageyo (Kingogo) on 30 May. On 16 June, in Gisenyi (Bugoyi), the chief Bisangwa's warriors enter into conflict with the unit composed of about 500 men, including porters. End result: "several volleys fired by a machine-gun are enough to put an end to the opponents, armed with outdated and worn weapons."[95]

1895

Rwanda

- *Kijugunya* famine - the most important during Rwabugiri's reign - has the same causes as the *Urwangunda* famine in Burundi (see above 1892-1897).[96]

[92] Oral data; Baumann, *Durch Massailand*, 95; Meyer, *Die Barundi*, 142. This is my informant's opinion. Baumann (*Durch Massailand*, 222), on the other hand, maintains that they existed before his passage. This is possible, but they only become a scourge toward the end of 1892, precisely after the passage of the Baumann expedition. In Rwanda, Mibambwe Rutarindwa was the most illustrious victim of jiggers which "covered him with disgusting wounds"; see Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 108-109.

[93] Stems from *urugunda*, "high herbs in large numbers." The famine was given this name because these herbs grew a bit everywhere around abandoned dwellings, the inhabitants having died of hunger or migrated. Oral data; Van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire*, 287, 389.

[94] SMA, DMS, Kigali (Rwanda), 11 May 1925.

[95] A. Arnoux, *Les Pères Blancs aux sources du Nil* (Paris, 1948), 39; see also, *Histoire et chronologie*, 12, 131; R. Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi* (Bruxelles, 1957), I, 168; G.A. Graf von Götzen, *Durch Afrika von Ost nach West. Resultate und Begebenheiten einer Reise von der deutsch ostafrikanischen Küste bis zur Kongomündung in den Jahren 1893-94* (Berlin, 1895), 218-220; Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 95-97; Roger Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi, 1884-1919* (Oxford, 1963), 104-105.

[96] *Histoire et chronologie*, 12.

- Dysentery epidemic (*amacinya*) in the Astrida region.[97]

- Death of *mwami* Rwabugiri at the end of the year.

1896

Rwanda

- In July, Belgian Lts. Long and Deffense set up camp at Shangi. They are attacked by *mwami* Rutarindwa's warriors led by Chief Nshozamihigo. Bisangwa, one of the generals, and Rugambiture's son, is killed along with numerous warriors.[98]

- End of November or beginning of December, *mwami* Mibambwe Rutarindwa is assassinated at Rucunshu (Marangara) and replaced, in the first months of 1897, by Yuhi V. Musinga.[99]

Burundi

- In May, Captain Ramsay founds the German military station of Ujiji; he "rules over his immense district, which extends almost from Nyasa to Rwanda, with an iron but fair hand."[100]

- July-August, Ramsay leads a German military expedition along the shores of Lake Tanganyika and in the northwest. In August, the first German military outpost is founded in Burundi on the Rusizi river, at Kajaga (comprises one non-commissioned officer and 10 askaris).[101]

- German military expedition led by Lt. Colonel von Trotha, vice-governor of the colony (8 September - 8 October). The count was cruelly disappointed: "neither naked girls waving palms, nor men voicing their fanatical joy in order to welcome me as God's messenger"; yet, "the march across this magnificent country would have been a great and real pleasure had the question of 'war and peace' not arisen daily" (*hätte die Frage, ob Krieg, ob Frieden, nicht täglich auf dem Programm gestanden.*)[102]

[97] *Ibid.*, 91.

[98] SMA, DMS, Nyamasheke (Rwanda), Preliminaries; *Histoire et chronologie*, 13; Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 113-117.

[99] *Histoire et chronologie*, 13; Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 122-126; H. von Ramsay, "Uha, Urundi und Ruanda. Nach einem vorläufigen Bericht des Hauptmanns Ramsay," *Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, 10 (1897), 177-181.

[100] SMA, DMS, Mugera (Burundi), 29 October 1896.

[101] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 19 October 1896; Lothar von Trotha, *Meine Bereisung von deutsch-Ostafrika. Vortrag des Oberst von Trotha, gehalten in der Sitzung der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde am 12. Juni 1897* (Berlin, 1897), 72, 75; A. Vetter, *Die Ergebnisse der neueren Untersuchungen über die Geographie von Ruanda* (Darmstadt, 1906); see also, *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, 24 (1896), 15.

[102] Trotha, *Meine Bereisung*, 9, 60, 71. Besides Von Trotha, this expedition included Feldwebel Kamp, 50 askaris, 60 carriers, and 40 boys. Among the carriers' chiefs (*Hauptführer*), the reader will notice the name of Haillala, who shared in Baumann's expedition (1892) and Shehe, who were with Götzen's expedition (1894).

1897

Rwanda

. A Belgian post with three Europeans is founded at Nyamasheke.[103]

. October-December, mutineers from the Dhanis column, sent to fight against the Mahdists, cross the country from north to south, killing everyone and pillaging everything in sight. These mutineers (nicknamed *Abagufi*) crush the Belgians (Lt. Dubois) at Gaseke (Bukunzi-Kibazi). They are stopped north of Bujumbura by German reinforcement troops from Ujiji and are finally defeated by the Belgians on 27 December.[104]

Burundi

. November, influenza epidemic: "many people die."[105]

Rwanda-Burundi

. 29 January - 24 April, German military expedition (Ramsay) in order to "resolve the question on the sources of the Nile river," but above all "to deploy military might (*militärischen Machtenfaltung*)."[106] Actually, this mission is the first colonizing act in the country. The two kingdoms react quite differently. From 20-22 March, Ramsay encounters the king of Rwanda, Yuhi Musinga, at Runda: "Yuhi, with whom I sealed a bloodpact placed himself under German protection,"[107] while

[103]SMA, DMS, Nyamasheke, Preliminaries; *Histoire et chronologie*, 105. On the rivalries between Belgians and Germans for control of the Kivu, see Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika. Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren* (Berlin, 1910), 34-36; and Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi*, 41-97.

[104]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 2 November - 30 December 1897, Nyamasheke, Preliminaries; *Histoire et chronologie*, 14, 116; Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda*, I, 176; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 35; J. Gorju, *En zigzags à travers l'Urundi* (Namur-Anvers, 1926), 17-19; Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi*, 43.

[105]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 12 November 1897.

[106]R. Kandt, *Caput Nili. Eine empfindsame Reise zu den Quellen des Nils* (Berlin, 1904), 264; Trotha, *Meine Bereisung*, 65.

[107]Ramsay, "Uha, Urundi und Ruanda," 180. Besides Ramsay, this expedition included Lt. Fonck, Dr. Hoesemann, Sergeant Ullman, 112 askaris, 110 carriers (armed with rifles or weapons that loaded by the muzzle), boys, and so on - on the whole some 350 individuals; see Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 179.
In fact, Ramsay did not encounter Mwami Musinga but Mhamarugamba (Mutijima's son). Mhamarugamba had been "designated" by soothsayers to receive the Europeans as if he were the king - the latter having to avoid these possible carriers of an evil spell. Received in the same way were Bethe, Grawert, and Pfeuffer at Gitwiko in March 1898, Kandt at Mukingo from 14 to 19 June 1898, and Ldp. Hirth at Nyanza on 2 February 1900. Finally, Kandt was the first European to encounter Yuhi Musinga at Nyanza in July 1900; see H. von Bethe, "Bericht über einem Zug nach Ruanda," *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, X, 1, (1899), 6-12; Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 130, 143-144, 147, 148-149; Kandt, *Caput Nili*, 264.

on 8 April at Bukeye, Burundi, "the interminable negotiations to induce the Sultan [Mwezi II] to appear amount to nothing."[108]

- June-July, grasshopper invasion (*inzige*). As an inhabitual source of food, they contribute to putting an end to the *Urwangunda* famine in Burundi; in Rwanda, on the other hand, they ravage the fields, and toward the end of the year, in Kinyaga, they are the cause of a deadly famine called *Ruyaga* ("violent wind") or *Rwakajugushu* that will last until the end of 1898.[109]

- Military station at Bujumbura is founded;[110] in 1905, it will become the Residence for the two countries.

1898

Burundi

- August, *amahere* (dermatitis mycosis); approximately 300 sick visit the Muyaga mission station per month, "the majority wounded and crippled by *funzas* [jiggers]."[111]

Rwanda-Burundi

- 13 March to 27 May, German military expedition (Bethe) in order to reconnoitre the Congolese border (Kivu) contested by the Belgians.[112] This expedition is exemplary of the practices of the times.

  In Burundi, the royal forces, headed by Serushanya - son of the king - stubbornly oppose the unit's progress: on 11, 12, 13 May, "36 Warundi were killed, 10 were made prisoner and, judging from the bloodshed, many people must have been wounded. As booty, the patrols brought back 24 head of cattle and approximately 400 head of small livestock."[113] Bethe, who lacks provisions, praises himself: "one could almost say that the hostilities on the part of the natives, who brought us victuals and livestock in abundance, were 'welcome'." On 16 May, another conflict on the occasion of a food raid: "the inhabitants went into an uproar and jeered at us, so much so that here again I was forced to punish them for their insolence" (*einer Bestrafung des Uebermuthes*). The same thing happens on 19 May: "the losses incurred by the enemy as a result of these two raids amount to 84 dead, a large number of

[108] Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 194.

[109] Oral data; CR (1929), 78.

[110] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 3 August 1897.

[111] SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1898), 352.

[112] Bethe, "Bericht über einem Zug nach Ruanda," 6-12.

[113] *Ibid.*, 9.

wounded, and 36 prisoners, to which should be added 16 head of cattle and 400 head of small livestock." On 20 May, Bethe had "all the houses burnt; at this time 6 natives were killed and a small number of cattle and 90 hoes - which are highly valued here - were taken."[114] Finally, on 21 May, "the people forced us, by their provocations, to use our weapons." These three days of battle at Mbuga seem to have resulted in 136 deaths,[115] or probably in the neighborhood of 200 deaths for the total number of clashes.

- Expedition led by Dr. Richard Kandt (nicknamed Kanayoge). In the beginning of September he encounters strong resistance from the Barundi but "since I only fire in extreme cases, they lost only four men during this child's play."[116]

1899

Rwanda

- The German military station of Shangi is founded by Bethe (nicknamed Rukiza).[117]

Burundi

- The grasshoppers, who had appeared in Buyogoma at the end of 1898, spread to the north, totally destroying the fields of sorghum and eleusine (January-February), ravaging the bean fields (October), and provoking famine.[118]

- German military expedition (Bethe) against the political capitals of the kingdom (31 May to the end of June) in order to subjugate the country.[119] As of 11 June, three askaris, sent to the Mugera mission, announce that the Germans "have destroyed six of the king's *lugo* [*ingo*, "residences"]; the king fled; they killed 247 Warundi (many Watutsi), not counting the number of wounded; they appropriated 360 head of cattle, 1,800 goats and sheep."[120] The final count proves to be much heavier. During the expedition's stay in Mugera, the officers attest to 500 deaths: "the officers maintain that the Warundi were courageous, that they fought bravely, tore guns

[114] *Ibid.*, 10.

[115] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 10 February 1899.

[116] Kandt, *Caput Nili*, 252.

[117] SMA, DMS, Nyamasheke, Preliminaries; *Histoire et chronologie*, 14, 105; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 36.

[118] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 22 January - 29 December 1899.

[119] On the preparation of the expedition, see SMA, DMS, Mugera, 19 February to 24 April 1899.

[120] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 11 June 1899.

out of the hands of the soldiers, etc. It is highly doubtful, but some sort of pretext was necessary to justify the 500 deaths."[121] There are more clashes upon the principal expedition's (Bethe) return to the Bujumbura military station.[122] In the meantime, a delegation comprising the king's sons met with the Germans on 14 June and 2 July: following the negotiations, certain chiefs call the king "the Europeans' man."[123]

- From 26 June to the end of August, secondary military expedition (Grawert and 19 askaris), especially in Buyogoma against Muzazye. The patrols burn the country, and "it will be like this every day until the chief admits defeat."[124] Lt. von Grawert, nicknamed Digidigi (or *Kitikitiki* = sound produced by a Maxim machine-gun) leads the repression. His trip in the Muyaga region (30 June - 24 July) results in 135 deaths. On 12 August, there are 12 more deaths in Muzazye's mother's village and 40 deaths in the area of the Kanyandaha chiefs. Extortions continue on 8 August, and then on 23, 26, 27 August, when Grawert comes to claim war fines.[125]

- September, new smallpox epidemic and fresh outbreak of jiggers.[126]

1900

Rwanda

- A serious famine ravages the country, especially in the regions of Gisenyi, Gisaka, Gatsibo, Nyanza, and Rubengera; called *Ruyaga, Nyamabara* or *Rw'inzige* (because of a grasshopper invasion), it causes a considerably high mortality rate. In Gisaka, where the famine has already lasted for five

[121] *Ibid.*, 27 June 1899.

[122] *Ibid.*, 30 June 1899.

[123] In exchange for Mwezi's surrender, the delegation demanded a letter of protection and a German flag, and set up the following conditions: (1) that the Germans recognize Mwezi as the king of all Burundi, including the chiefs directly subject to German authority; (2) that the Germans drive out the dissident chiefs, Maconco and Kirima; (3) that the missionaries find another area to establish the Mugera mission station. These conditions are refused by the Germans who dictate their own conditions: (1)the Mugera mission station will stay where it is; (2) they will "punish" chief Muzazye who twice burnt the Muyaga mission; (3) Grawert will be responsible for the "punishment"; (4) the expedition will end once damages have been paid to the mission station (SMA, GR, Bethe's report dated 3 September 1899).

[124] SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles, 4 July 1899. For details on this expedition during Grawert's sojourn in Muyaga (from 30 June to 24 July), see SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1899), 83-86.

[125] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 4 August, 7-27 August, 2 September 1899.

[126] *Ibid.*, 1, 12, 23 September 1899; Meyer, *Die Barundi*, 142.

years, "only walking skeletons" can be encountered on the paths, and there is talk of revolt.[127]

- In December, the Save mission identifies a significant number of patients suffering from "inflamation of the lungs, coughing, and measles."[128]

Burundi

- In March, Oberleutnant von Beringe from Bukoba, two officers (Beesten, Dr. Eggel), and two non-commissioned officers cross the country to reinforce the German troops at Rusizi river, against Belgians. A strong military contingent is at stake: 125 askaris and 125 irregular Abaziba (*ruga-ruga*) with numerous porters - a total of 800 men. "The flag of these irregulars is characteristic - a skull on a red background."[129] This unit's behavior - diverse types of extortions, food raids - is typical of the German troops in this country. In a letter dated 21 April, Father Astruc notes that "the Bayogoma have bloodied themselves in order to furnish food to all these people."[130] On 27 and 28 March, when the unit had already left the Mugera mission to fight at Kihinga ("many dead"), food supplies continued to arrive: "they come even from Mosso and from Rusengo's chiefdom."[131]

1901

Rwanda

- In Gisaka (Gihunya) where famine is rampant (see 1900), Rukura, descendent of Kimenyi of Abagesera of the ancient kingdom of Gisaka, leads an independence movement against the Rwanda chiefs (central power structure). Mwami Musinga asks for German intervention: military expedition (Grawert) in May-June to "re-establish order." The number of dead is not reported; Grawert appropriates a thousand cows.[132]

Burundi

- Violent clashes in Bweru between dissident princes and royal forces.[133]

[127] SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1900), 87; SMA, DMS, Save, March 1900; Kabwayi, 20 November 1925; Murunda (Rwanda), 1 June 1909, 2 March 1912; CR (1929), 78.

[128] SMA, DMS, Save, December 1900.

[129] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 27 March 1900.

[130] SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1900), 547-550.

[131] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 28 March 1900.

[132] SMA, DMS, Save, May-June 1901; Zaza, 25 May, 31 June 1901; *Histoire et chronologie*, 14-15; Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda*, I, 174; Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 150.

[133] Oral data.

- 9 May, passing of the *Ruvuzantanagi* comet.[134]

- On the way to his expedition in Gisaka (see above), Grawert clashes in Busoni with Prince Coya who seeks refuge in Rwanda.[135]

- December, grasshopper invasion in Buyogoma.[136]

1902

Rwanda

- January, members of the German commission for the delimitation of the Belgian Congo/Ostafrika (Grawert, Hermann) take advantage of their journey to lead an expedition in Ruhengeri (Mulera) against the populations "who still have difficulty acknowledging German domination";[137] approximately 100 deaths and appropriation of a considerable booty.[138] Dufays underscores the opposition's tenacity: "the officers were exasperated to see that the Balera audaciously penetrated their camp, even their tent, in spite of the number of men, the soldiers, and the machine-gun; the patrols were harrassed ceaselessly, even decimated."[139]

- From June 1902 to February 1903, the *Ruyaga* famine rages in the Butare region. Its causes are a drought that destroys the bean plantations, an invasion of caterpillars that ravage sweet potato fields, and finally, late rains that cause the harvested sorghum to germinate before it can be stored. Deaths are especially numerous.[140]

- During a voyage across the country, three German officers (Beringe, Engeland, Parish) encounter Mwami Musinga in Nyanza between 26 September and 1 October.[141]

[134]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 9 May 1901; SMA, "Variole et variolisation."

[135]Oral data; SMA, GR, Grawert's report dated 12 January 1904.

[136]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 15 December 1901.

[137]SMA, DMS, Save, January 1902.

[138]SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1902), 477; SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 22 July, 28 October 1904; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 35-36.

[139]F. Dufays, *Pages d'épopée africaine. Jours troublés* (Ixelles, 1928), 77-78.

[140]*Histoire et chronologie*, 12; CR (1929), 78.

[141]Hauptmann von Beringe, "Bericht des Hauptmanns v. Beringe über eine Expedition nach Ruanda," *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, XIV (1903), 234-235, 264-266, 296-298, 317-319; F.R. von Parish, "Zwei Reisen durch Ruanda 1902 bis 1903," *Globus*, 86 (1904), 5-13, 73-79.

. From 16 December 1902 to 14 January 1903, German military expedition (Parish) to the Burundi border against chief Seshyamba; there are twenty deaths.[142]

Burundi

. From 24 March to 25 June, German military expedition (Dr. Engeland and 16 askaris). The goals are: "1) political orientation; 2) to deploy the armed forces before the natives."[143] The report speaks of "burnt huts" but does not give any indication of Barundi losses. Nevertheless, the troop's extortions unleash a famine in Buyogoma, the effect of which are aggravated by the drought and by the grasshopper invasion the preceding year.[144]

. September-October, measles epidemic.[145]

. October-December, violent clashes in the center north between rebel peasants (headed by Kirima) and royal troops. In December, German expedition (Pfeiffer) to support Kirima: "a hundred men were massacred and hundreds of cattle and goats were taken."[146]

Rwanda-Burundi

. 22 April, at 10 p.m., almost total lunar eclipse that lasts an hour and a half.[147]

1903

Rwanda

. On 3 January, Beringe fines Yuhi Musinga 40 cows, and lectures him in public following a slaughter at the royal court: "this is the first time in history that a Rwandese monarch suffered such an affront."[148]

Burundi

. 19 January - 28 February, German military expedition (Werner) into the center of the country; from 30 April to 15 July, it is followed by the most important repressive expedition (Beringe) against royal power since the beginning of colonial

[142] SMA, GR, Reports dated 5 January and 26 March 1903.

[143] *Ibid.*, Report dated June 1902.

[144] SMA, DMS, Muyaga (Burundi), May 1902.

[145] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 30 September 1902.

[146] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 1 January 1903.

[147] SMA, DMS, Mugera, 23 April 1902.

[148] Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire*, 151.

rule; punitive expeditions are simultaneously led in the south and east (Münzner, Ledebur).[149] In spite of stubborn resistance from King Gisabo's partisans, these expeditions achieve their goal: acknowledgement of German supremacy (*Oberhoheit*) over Burundi, on 6 June. The repression is atrocious, "officially, it is said that there are 200 deaths. Cruelty toward the women and the weak is not lacking."[150]

1903-1904

Burundi

- *Ikigoyi* famine (litt., "famine"), also called *Gakwege*.[151] It begins as a serious dearth in the center following the 1902 internal clashes; it becomes a famine as a result of the 1903 German military expeditions: hundreds of deaths, cattle raids, burning of crops. Repression in the south and west is responsible for spreading the shortage that progressively extends throughout the country by contagion. This famine, afterwards, merges into the one between 1904-1906 (see below).

1904

Rwanda

- The year is particularly marked by several German military expeditions. In May the inhabitants of Kabagare, situated on the banks of the Nyabarongo river, contest the extortions by a caravan of "black merchants" whom they rob. Grawert is travelling through the region (expedition from 1 May to 15 July), and "sends approximately 20 soldiers who pillage, burn, and kill in the course of two days."[152]
  June-July, military expedition (led by a non-commissioned officer) to Bugarura against two warring lineages (Abazaga, Ababoro) and against the "brigandages" of Kayondo.[153]
  October, in Gisaka, soldiers sent to accompany a caravan of Abaziba merchants kill "quite a number of people at Gasama and in another area because an Umuziba had been shot with an arrow."[154] About ten people are killed.[155]

[149] Oral data; SMA, DMS, Mugera, 27 April - 28 June 1903; Hauptmann von Beringe, "Bericht des Hauptmanns v. Beringe über die Expedition nach Urundi," *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, XV, 1 (1904), 6-12; Meyer, *Die Barundi*, 168-169.

[150] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 18 June 1903.

[151] Oral data; SMA, DMS, Mugera, 1903-1904. *Gakwege:* from the verb *gukwega*, "to pull," which yields the noun *umukwege*, "copper wire" which is pulled in order to make bracelets (*inyerere*). These bracelets were precisely the ones used in exchange for food - hence, the name of the famine.

[152] SMA, DMS, Save, 15 May 1904.

[153] SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 18 June, 22 July 1904.

[154] *Ibid.*, 9 October 1904.

[155] *Histoire et chronologie*, 48.

In October and November, Grawert leads an expedition to Bugarura (Mulera) where the "countryside is ravaged from top to bottom."[156] Grawert announces that "at the slightest show of resistance, the entire guilty region will be wiped out and so it will be every six months at harvest time."[157]
The repression, especially in the area surrounding the Nyundo misson, attempts to break down the fomenting resistance to assure "the opening of the region to commerce."[158] In effect, the repeated extortions of the caravans have reached an intolerable threshold (see below, 1905). As for troubles in Mulera, they are a direct consequence of the military abuse and of the "hatred toward the whites on the part of the Abalera, tired of the soldiers who have been moving about their country for three years."[159]

- Dysentery epidemic (*myambi*) in Ruhengeri, until 1905.[160]

- Cerebral coenurosis epidemic (*nkwakwa*) spreads among the livestock, until 1905.[161]

Burundi

- Taxes collected for the first time, in Burundi, in the region near the Bujumbura military station (Imbo).[162]

- November, scarlet fever epidemic in the east.[163]

1904-1906

Rwanda

- General famine: "we hear of nothing but *amapfa* ('hunger,' 'death') in all Rwanda."[164] Known as *Rwakabaga*, it begins in May-June 1904 and continues until the beginning of 1905. Military exactions combine with the drought to cause a dramatic situation. In Bugoyi, "the Abagoyi have suffered the horrors of famine for six months ... the victims are no longer

[156] SMA, DMS, Save, November 1904.

[157] Dufays, *Pages d'épopée africaine*, 42.

[158] SMA, DMS, Kanyinya (Burundi), 22 November 1904; SMA, GR, Report dated 5 December 1904.

[159] SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 21 October 1904.

[160] *Histoire et chronologie*, 11.

[161] *Ibid.*

[162] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 26 January 1904.

[163] SMA, DMS, Muyaga, 7 November 1904.

[164] SMA, DMS, Save, June 1904.

counted; on certain hills one fifth of the population has disappeared. Entire families have died of hunger."[165]
Following a lull at the beginning of 1905, the famine returns, this time it is called *Kimwaramwara* (from *ramwaramwara*, "we find food nowhere"); it continues until 1906. The hardest hit regions are Mulera (March 1905 - February 1906), Bukamba, Buhoma, Rwankeri, Bushiru, and Bugoyi (beginning December 1905), while Bukonya, Bugarura, Kigali, Gisaka (August 1905 - January 1906) are also affected. It causes the death of at least 10 percent of the population.[166]

Burundi

- The *Ikigoyi* or *Gakwege* famine that began in 1903-1904 continues. Owing to the ravages caused by the German expeditions (see 1903), the famine especially affects the royal capitals (center): "one could say that the entire population is dying; never before have we seen such misery";[167] and Buyogoma: "a terrible calamity has been devastating our mission for the past 18 months and, alas, it doesn't look as if will end soon."[168]
Regaining strength in November 1904, the famine proceeds until March 1906. The mortality rate is frightening and reaches a peak in February and in November 1905. On account of unfavorable weather conditions, the beans hardly seed and the sorghum, which was sowed too late because of internal clashes, produces nothing.[170]
These clashes begin in August 1904 in the central north of the country, continue through 1905 and provoke famine - "a necessary and inevitable outcome of war."[171] Simultaneously, new German expeditions (see 1905 and 1906) further aggravate the situation.

1905

Rwanda

- January, important cattle raid in Mulera by Belgian forces (Captain Verbloet, Lt. James) who came from Congo.[172]

[165]SMA, DMS, Nyundo (Rwanda), 1904; see also, Zaza, July-August 1904; Rwaza, 26 May, 3 November 1904; Mibirizi (Rwanda), 14 April 1904; *Histoire et chronologie*, 12.

[166]SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1905), 392; SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 9 April 1905, 28 January 1906; Nyundo, 1905; CR (1929), 78; Dufays, *Pages d'épopée africaine*, 45.

[167]SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 16 December 1904, 8 January 1905.

[168]SMA, Chroniques trimestrielles (1905-1906), 282.

[169]CR (1929), 79.

[170]Charles de l'Epine, "Historique des famines et disettes dans l'Urundi," *Bulletin agricole du Congo belge*, XX, 3 (1929), 440.

[171]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 8 May 1905; and also oral data.

[172]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 14 January 1905.

- July-August, fresh outbreaks of diphteria (*gapfuura*) (see note 40), "endemic in Mulera; the sickness is catching on increasing: the deaths are numerous."[173] The epidemic spreads to Bugoyi.[174] Meanwhile, in Gisaka a fever (*nzigo*) "violent enough to inspire fear of death" rages.[175]

- The movement of resistance (see 1904) to "the opening of the region to commerce" grows: Mwami Musinga "forbids all breeders to sell cattle." Learning of this interdiction, two European traders (the Austrian Fritz Schindelar and the Boer Praetorius) accompanied by armed escorts "seize the cattle in Gisaka and Nduga"; they take "women hostages in order to force the people to sell or else they steal the cattle and burn the houses."[177]
  We are not dealing with isolated acts here; in fact, "Shindelar and Praetorius were a flagrant example of the small invasion of Ruanda by petty merchants, most of whom were Indians and Goans, who came from Uganda and the region around Lake Victoria."[178]
  In January, Grawert dispatches his first lieutenant, Von Nordeck, to arrest Schindelar and seize the 300 stolen cows.[179] On 29 January 1906, Praetorius is attacked by the exasperated inhabitants of Ndorwa; he loses 49 men - eight askaris and his Indian foreman among them.[180]

Burundi

- Massive jigger invasion in March in the Kanyinya region.[181]

- Significant propagation of syphilis in Bujumbura by Abaganda Christians.[182]

- Because of a sudden change in the German policy of support for the dissident princes in the northeast (Bweru) and the peasant revolt in the northwest, military expeditions are launched against these two movements: in January-February (one sergeant) and from 25 August to 25 October (Grawert,

[173] *Ibid.*, 5 August 1905.

[174] SMA, DMS, Save, January 1906; Nyundo, 1905.

[175] SMA, DMS, Zaza, August 1905.

[176] *Histoire et chronologie*, 15.

[177] SMA, GR, Grawert's report dated 5 December 1904; and also SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 28 December 1904, 14 January 1905.

[178] Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi*, 124-125.

[179] SMA, DMS, Zaza, January 1905.

[180] SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 29 January 1906.

[181] SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 6 March 1905.

[182] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 14 April 1905.

Hoelzl).[183] These expeditions aggravate the famine in both the northwest and northeast (see 1904-1906).[184] The country is "ruined for twenty years" as a result of the severe repression.[185] In the northwest Grawert makes the following entry for 26 September: "the villages we occupied were burnt without exception and I remained in the region for the entire day to make sure that the work was well executed (*damit dies in aureichender Weise Geschah*)."[186]

- 15 August, partial lunar eclipse.[187]

- December, a German governmental investigation of malaria in order to "identify the countries that could be infested by it in view of making them accessible to European colonists."[188]

1906

Rwanda

- June till December, *Kiramaramara* famine ("to scour," allusion to the quest for food) in all of Nyanza and a part of Astrida region. Provoked by drought, it is a late recurrence of the famine with the same name that began in 1904 (see 1904-1906). Many die of starvation.[189]

- June and August 1905, Mutwa Basebya' defeated the troops dispatched by Mwami Musinga for the people of Basebya "seem to be conscious of their power and have refused to pay him taxes [traditional prestations] or render him a service." Following these events, the German dispatch a military expedition (February 1906: Grawert, Lt. Keil) to Mulera (Nduga) against Basebya: "Mr. von Grawert's mission will be wholly political; he will wage a small war against Mr. Basebya, the big chief of the Batwa."[190] The number of victims is unknown but numerous villages, "which were the hideouts of the rebels against Batutsi," are burnt.[191]

[183]SMA, GR, Grawert's reports dated 21 February and 29 October 1905.

[184]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 3 September - 8 November 1905.

[185]SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 7 February 1905.

[186]SMA, GR, Report dated 21 November 1905.

[187]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 15 August 1905.

[188]*Ibid.*, 21 December 1905.

[189]SMA, DMS, Kabwayi, 13 and 25 June 1906; CR (1929), 78.

[190]SMA, DMS, Kabwayi, 7 February 1906.

[191]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 14 and 16 February 1906; Kabwayi, 19 February 1906.

Burundi

- New military expedition (Grawert) from 17 January to 31 March against the dissident princes of the northeast, where fighting against royal troops has resumed since November 1905, and against rebel peasants in the northwest.[192]
  In the northwest, the expedition "burns and pillages everything,"[193] while Kirima, head of the revolt, is arrested in Rwanda on 10 April and made prisoner by non-commissioned officer Klinger with the aid of Rwandan warriors.[194]

- May, millions of caterpillars invade the Kanyinya region.[195]

- September-October, measles epidemic in the Imbo region.[196]

- October-December, following an "unprecedented drought," green grasshoppers or crickets invade Burundi for the first time.[197]

Rwanda-Burundi

- A decree, dated 20 June, names the military district of Bujumbura (*Militärbezirk*) as the Residence (*Residentur*) of Rwanda-Burundi.

- At approximately 7 p.m. on 21 July, a meteorite crosses from the northwest to the southwest of Rwanda. This meteorite is said to "augur a new famine." In Burundi, a meteorite is also sighted on 23 July at 6:58 p.m. whereas in Rwanda a comet is sighted on 25 July at around 6:15 p.m.[198]

1907

Rwanda

- The *Kiramaramara* (or *Kiramwaramwara*, "he who prowls while robbing") famine that began in June 1906 grows; it will continue until the beginning of 1908.[199]

[192] Oral data; SMA, GR, Report dated 25 April 1906.

[193] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 19 April 1906.

[194] SMA, DMS, Mibirizi, 10 April 1906.

[195] SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 17 May 1906.

[196] SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 3 October 1906.

[197] Oral data; SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 10 November 1906; Kanyinya, 2 December 1906.

[198] SMA, DMS, Zaza, 21 July 1906; Buhonga and Kanyinya, 23 July 1906; Kabwayi, 25 July 1906.

[199] SMA, DMS, Save, 1907; Kabwayi, 20 March - 19 December 1907, 21 March - 6 April 1908; *Histoire et chronologie*, 12.

- Meteor sighted on 3 February at around 5 p.m.[200]

- March, increase in the number of jiggers in the Mibirizi region.[201]

- April, military expedition (Lt. Knecht) to Buberuka against the Abayoka who refuse to do forced labor; there are several deaths.[202]
  Also in April, an expedition of "a few soldiers" is dispatched to Bukunzi to fight against the *mwami* Ndagano.[203]
  September, the Abayoka present themselves at the Gisenyi military station because "it seems that they are fed up with being burnt by the soldiers."[204]

- May, measles epidemic (*iseru*) and malaria epidemic (*amaseke*) in the Nyanza region.[205]

- July, smallpox epidemic in Bugoyi, Budaha, Kingogo, etc.[206]

- From 15 July to 7 October, an important military escort (Grawert, Wintgens) accompanies the Duke of Mecklenburg's scientific expedition.[207]

- End of 1907 to the beginning of 1908, outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.[208]

Burundi

- January, a type of chicken-pox epidemic "that attacks everyone, children and adults alike" breaks out in the Mugera region.[209]

- 13 April, torrential rains (89mm in three quarters of an hour) fall in the Bujumbura region.[210]

[200]SMA, DMS, Zaza, 3 February 1907.

[201]SMA, DMS, Mibirizi, 15 March 1907.

[202]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 20-23 April 1907; *Histoire et chronologie*, 16.

[203]SMA, DMS, Mibirizi, 28 April 1907.

[204]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 28 September 1907.

[205]SMA, DMS, Kabwayi, 11 and 17 May 1907.

[206]*Ibid.*, 3 July 1907.

[207]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 14 July, 7 October 1907.

[208]SMA, DMS, Kabwayi, 21 November 1907; *Histoire et chronologie*, 11.

[209]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 5 January 1907.

[210]SMA, DMS, Buhonga, 13 April 1907.

- 7 June, a meteorite coming from the west-northwest and heading for the southeast is sighted at 6:30 p.m.[211]

- 25 July, lunar eclipse.[212]

1907-1908

Burundi

- Following war ravages (see above 1904-1906, 1905, 1906) and because of a new military expedition (see below 1908), the famine continues in the northeast. In the northwest, a serious dearth is developing mainly as a result of bad weather.[213]

1908

Rwanda

- In the course of the year, a new plant appears. Probably of European origin, it is called "the exterminator" (*kimari*, from *kumara*, "to end") because it suffocates all other plants if not carefully weeded out in time. It propagates much faster than scotch-grass (probably because of its innumberable small grains). It will progressively spread throughout the country and, during the famine at Bugoyi from 1916-1918, the starving who eat it will die in large numbers.[214]

- On 20 March, at 11:30 a.m., a curious phenomenon is sighted in the sky: "it is a rainbow that forms a completely closed circle around the sun and there is a large black space in between the rainbow and the sun."[215]

- April-May, Stegman leads an expedition to Nyanza and Bukamba (Ruhengeri): "huts were burnt; several people killed; much livestock taken."[216]

[211]SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 7 June 1907.

[212]SMA, DMS, Mugera, 25 July 1907.

[213]SMA, DMS, Kanyinya, 1907-1908.

[214]Albert Pagès, "Flore domestique du Ruanda," *Bulletin agricole du Congo belge*, XIX, 1 (1928), 129.

[215]SMA, DMS, Zaza, 20 March 1908. In all likelihood, these are the dark spots that cover the photosphere. Their importance varies according to a cycle lasting an average of eleven years, made evident in Europe for the first time in 1851. Here, the date of 1908 corresponds to the average of this cycle.

[216]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 30 April, 3 May 1908.

. September, grasshopper invasion in Bugarura, Kiryi, and in the Rwaza region. It is followed by a famine from October to December; during the same period there is a considerable food shortage in Bugoyi.[217]

September, measles epidemic in the surroundings of Zaza (Gisaka) and, in October, flu epidemic. Numerous dysentery victims owing to the food shortage in Bugoyi. Finally, in December, the Zaza mission station receives orders to destroy the huts that serve for boarding couriers because "they were seemingly infested by relapsing fever."[218]

(Part II will appear in the next issue.)

[217]SMA, DMS, Rwaza, 3-4 September, 6 October, 17 November 1908; Nyundo, 20 October 1908.

[218]SMA, DMS, Zaza, 17 September, 1 October, 17 December 1908; Nyundo, 20 October 1908.