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The Ancient Kingdom of Kongo: Its Present Position and Possibilities: Discussion

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (May, 1902), pp. 558-560

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1775622>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 04:44 UTC

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The first rain in 1900 fell on September 15. June to August were rainless. There are two rainy seasons, as at San Salvador, with maxima in April and in October or November. Heavy hail fell in the afternoon of December 29. Many of the hailstones were over half an inch in diameter, and the ground was white.

MR. LEWIS'S MAP.—The map accompanying this paper is based upon the Rev. Thomas Lewis's itinerary surveys, checked by latitude observations at eleven stations. The longitudes are dependent upon the Rev. Geo. Grenfell's careful determination of the position of San Salvador, viz. $6^{\circ} 15' 45''$ S., $14^{\circ} 17' 30''$ E. These results differ very considerably from the results claimed to have been obtained by Dr. Chavanne, viz. San Salvador, $6^{\circ} 20' 28''$ S., $14^{\circ} 47' 3''$ E.; and Kizulu village, $6^{\circ} 17' 19''$ S., $15^{\circ} 18' 54''$ E. ('Reisen und Forschungen im alten und neuen Kongostaate,' Jena, 1887, p. 455). Information furnished by former explorers of the country has been inserted in skeleton letters.—E.G.R.

Before the reading of the paper, the CHAIRMAN (Mr. G. S. MACKENZIE, Vice-President) said: I regret to say that through indisposition your President is unable to be present to-night to fill the chair, and I am called upon to do so in his absence. I have much pleasure in introducing to you the Rev. Mr. Thomas Lewis, who has spent twenty years of his life on the West Coast of Africa, and will to-night read to you a paper on "The Ancient Kingdom of Kongo: its Present Position and Possibilities." We are indebted to the African missionary, not only for his work in educating and civilizing the native, but also for the many important geographical explorations made by him. In connection with the latter, I have only to mention the names of Livingstone, Moffat, Hannington, Mackay, and many others too numerous to enumerate, to ensure our giving Mr. Lewis, as a member of the missionary body, a most hearty welcome here to-night. I will now ask Mr. Lewis to read his paper.

After the reading of the paper, the following discussion took place:—

The CHAIRMAN: We have a letter of regret from Sir Henry Stanley, saying that he is unable to be here to-night. He made an effort to get off a previous engagement, but was unable to do so. Sir Harry Johnston wrote also to say he had an engagement, but, if possible, would look in.

Mr. E. G. RAVENSTEIN: I am a very poor substitute for either Sir Henry Stanley or Sir Harry Johnston, but I will, nevertheless, offer a few remarks. I think you will all agree with me that we are very much indebted to the Rev. Mr. Lewis. It is not the first time that the Society has been indebted to a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society. Mr. Grenfell before this has achieved distinction as an African explorer, and, though a missionary, has done geographical work which, I believe, exceeds in value the work done by many men who claim to have gone into Africa as African explorers. Mr. Lewis has spoken wisely and discreetly of the needs of Africa. It is wonderful to think that the ancient kingdom of Kongo, which was supposed to be a glorious kingdom in the days when the Portuguese first became acquainted with it, should have sunk so low, notwithstanding the influence of civilization. But this is not what I should like to speak about to-night; I rather wish to draw attention to the great value of the geographical work done by Mr. Lewis. He is quite right in deploring that this kingdom of Kongo, with its history of 400 years—a very long history for an African kingdom—should not be better known in these days. The Portuguese knew it in their early days, and so did the missionaries, but their accounts were so vague that we utterly failed to

reduce their views to anything like a correct map. And as to other facts, I am afraid we shall have to take, and we have taken, all they have said about the history of this State, and of their own achievements as missionaries, with a grain of salt. Anyhow, I do hope a better time may come; and certainly so far as geographical exploration and a careful mapping of the country are concerned, that time has come with the advance of our missionaries and explorers. The country to the east of San Salvador in ancient days was frequented by Portuguese slave-traders and missionaries, who were also slave-traders, but even at the present time we know very little about it. It has been crossed recently by two or three German explorers, but their work is of very inferior value. I believe now for the first time we get some accurate geographical information through Mr. Lewis's work. He determined latitudes and made careful route surveys, but probably not as careful as he will do next time, after he has passed through the hands of our very competent instructor, Mr. McCarthy. We are thankful for favours past, but we look forward to favours to come. Very important is the careful determination of the position of San Salvador. It is really remarkable that a town of historical interest for 400 years past should have been placed hitherto 30 or 40 miles out of its true position. Mr. Grenfell, by careful observations, aided by Mr. Lewis, has now placed it in its proper position, and it is now a point from which we can start survey work. I hope these Baptist missionaries will not neglect geographical work. I really do believe that geographical and meteorological work would considerably aid them in their more professional duties as missionaries, and I do hope that some of the £500,000 which Mr. Arthington has left to the Missionary Society will be employed in forwarding geographical work.

Dr. ARTHUR HAYDON: Mr. Lewis just now drew our attention to an albino, and I should like to ask him whether, in the course of his travels, he came across what you might call "white natives." I have seen in South Africa what are known as "White Kaffirs," who are not albinos. They have normal eyes and black woolly hair, and are in most points exactly like the ordinary black Kaffirs; but they differ in having a skin as white as an Anglo-Saxon. There appears to be no mixture with European blood to account for this. If Mr. Lewis could give us any information on that subject, I think it would be particularly interesting. Also I should like to ask whether there is any alteration in the physiognomy, whether the white native or the white Kaffir still retains the native physiognomy, or if it is in any way altered?

The Rev. THOMAS LEWIS: With regard to the question of the albino, in travelling all through the Zombo and the Congo country I have never come across any white natives; we have many brown and different colours, some more black than others, but nothing approaching white natives such as we hear of in South Africa. I have simply seen the albinos only.

The CHAIRMAN: I feel sure you will join with me in thanking Mr. Lewis for his interesting paper. My personal experience of the difficulties surrounding the opening up and civilizing of Africa enables me to appreciate Mr. Lewis's very pertinent remarks regarding slavery, a difficulty that cannot be ignored by the missionary or the explorer. Mr. Lewis very truly says, "Freedom without principle means anarchy and confusion; for this reason domestic slavery cannot be abolished by force." We all desire to see the slave trade promptly and vigorously stamped out, and if more gentlemen of Mr. Lewis's calling were to discriminate, as he evidently does, between "domestic" slavery and the "slave trade," it would not only lighten the burden of the administration under which the missionaries live, but it would tend to promote the noble work which they themselves have so much at heart. Unfortunately, many well-meaning and earnest men frustrate their own efforts by

provoking through misplaced zeal the natives to present a hostile attitude, which might be prevented by the tact and wisdom so evidently displayed by Mr. Lewis. It only remains for us to join in thanking Mr. Lewis for his very interesting paper, and I am sure I have your approval in doing so.

THE ARTESIAN WATER-SUPPLY OF AUSTRALIA FROM A GEOGRAPHICAL STANDPOINT.*

By W. GIBBONS COX, C.E.

IN treating upon the artesian water existing in the crust of the Earth in Australia, and the changes, present and future, incidental to its utilization upon the surface, more particularly in neutralizing the effects of the droughts to which the country is subject, it will be necessary to consider, if only briefly, the evolution of the continent during the geological phases through which, according to the most recent scientific research (especially that of the late Queensland Government Geologist, Dr. J. L. Jack), it has passed.

A central sea still existed in Mesozoic times, and was then filled up to a large extent by sediments (in Cretaceous times). These were subsequently (in Tertiary times) uplifted, and formed with the Palæozoic rocks a united continent. Further depression again submerged part of the coastal and central land, and these depressions were followed by a re-elevation. The climate during these periods of depression was doubtless much more moist and equable than at present. Before the deposition of the Cretaceous sediments there were mountain chains on the eastern side of Australia, almost alpine in character, with which the ranges of the present time are insignificant in comparison. Those mountain chains induced great precipitation of the water held in suspension in the clouds by which they were, in all probability, constantly surrounded. Before the beginning of the Cretaceous period—of the deposit of the Cretaceous formation of thousands of feet in thickness, consisting of alluvial strata, including the artesian water-bearing rocks—the whole continent had subsided, but the strata lying above the Cretaceous, which has been proved in Queensland to be over 5000 feet in thickness, shows the great length of time which must have elapsed in the formation of the present surface, the great tablelands, or rolling downs, of the interior. Taking into consideration that during the Tertiary age there was a great deposit of rich alluvial soil from the decomposed material of the ranges, and also considering the climatic conditions prevailing, it is easy to imagine that the vegetation was of a most abundant and luxurious character, especially in the vicinity of the lakes, swamps, and inland rivers. Those conditions resulted in the development of a great variety of animal life, notably of an herbivorous

* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, January 29, 1902. Map, p. 668.