Political centralization, economic integration and language evolution in Central Africa: An interdisciplinary approach to the early history of the Kongo kingdom

Fact Sheet

Project information

KONGOKING

Grant agreement ID: 284126
Status
Closed project

Funded under:
FP7-IDEAS-ERC

Overall budget:
€ 1 400 760

EU contribution
€ 1 400 760

Hosted by:
UNIVERSITEIT GENT
Belgium

Start date
1 January 2012
End date
31 December 2016

Objective

The magnificent Kongo kingdom, which arose in the Atlantic Coast region of Equatorial Africa, is a famous emblem of Africa’s past. It is an important cultural landmark for Africans and the African Diaspora. Thanks to its early introduction to literacy and involvement in the Trans-Atlantic trade, the history of this part of sub-Saharan Africa from 1500 onwards is better known than most other parts. Nevertheless, very little is known about the origins and earlier history of the kingdom. Hence, this grant application proposes an interdisciplinary approach to this question. Archaeology and historical linguistics, two key disciplines for early history reconstruction in Africa, will play the most prominent role in this approach. Paradoxically, if the wider region of the Kongo kingdom is one of the best documented areas of Central Africa from a historical and ethnographic point of view, it is virtually unknown archaeologically. The proposed research team will therefore undertake pioneer excavations in several capital sites of the old kingdom. Similarly, no comprehensive historical study has covered the languages of the Kongo and closely affiliated kingdoms. Nonetheless, the earliest documents with Bantu data, going back to the early 16th century, originate from this region. The proposed research team will therefore undertake a historical-comparative study of the Kikongo dialect cluster and surrounding language groups, such as Kimbundu, Teke and Punu-Shira, systematically comparing current-day data with data from the old documents. Special attention will be
given to cultural vocabulary related to politics, religion, social organization, trade and crafts, which in conjunction with the archaeological discoveries, will shed new light on th

Field of Science

/humanities/history and archaeology/history
/social sciences/psychology/cognitive psychology/mental processes/attention
/humanities/history and archaeology/archaeology
/humanities/languages and literature/linguistics
/humanities/philosophy, ethics and religion/religion
/social sciences/economics and business/business and management/commerce
/humanities/languages and literature/languages - general

Programme(s)

FP7-IDEAS-ERC - Specific programme: "Ideas" implementing the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007 to 2013)

Topic(s)

ERC-SG-SH6 - ERC Starting Grant - The study of the human past

Call for proposal

ERC-2011-StG_20101124

See other projects for this call

Funding Scheme

ERC-SG - ERC Starting Grant

Principal Investigator

Koen André Georges Bostoen (Dr.)

Host institution
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<td>Sint Pietersnieuwstraat 25 9000 Gent</td>
<td>Higher or Secondary Education Establishments</td>
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<td>Administrative Contact</td>
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<td>Beata Bibrowska (Ms.)</td>
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MUSEE ROYAL DE L’AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Belgium

Address: Leuvensesteenweg 13
3080 Tervuren

Activity type: Research Organisations

EU Contribution: € 14 400

Website
Contact the organisation

Administrative Contact
Els Thielemans (Ms.)

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Last update: 26 June 2017
Record number: 100819

Permalink: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/284126/en

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