

8 *From America to Africa: How Kongo Nobility Made Smoking Pipes Their Own*

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Introduction

The KongoKing project aimed at examining the origins and development of the Kongo kingdom through the combination of two disciplines that have been key to the reconstruction of Africa's early history, i.e. archaeology and historical linguistics. As for the archaeological component, the project's stated objectives were to establish a sound cultural sequence of the Lower Congo region, to map the spatial distribution of Kongo structures and remains in the landscape, and to study the evolution of the kingdom's material culture. To that end, it was planned to focus the project's archaeological excavations on the kingdom's central capital Mbanza Kongo, its provincial capitals (e.g. Mbanza Soyo in Angola and Mbanza Nsundi and Mbanza Mbata in Congo-Kinshasa) and their immediate surroundings. As the project never obtained official authorization to excavate in Mbanza Kongo, situated in present-day northern Angola and recognized as UNESCO World Heritage since July 2017, its archaeological research focused on the Kongo-Central province of Congo-Kinshasa. This eventually turned out not to be a major drawback, given that the origins of the kingdom may be situated there (cf. Thornton 2001; see also Thornton on Kongo origins in Chapter 1) and the capitals of the kingdom's northern most provinces were also located there: Mbata, Nsundi, Mpangu (Thornton 1977: 523; Thornton 1983: 4; Hilton 1985: 7). Our archaeological fieldwork has shown how difficult it is to locate these ancient capitals geographically, as their architecture, material culture and lay-out were not fundamentally different from those of ordinary villages except for size (Clist *et al.* 2015c).

Our archaeological research concentrated first on Mbanza Nsundi, where extensive excavations were carried out on a large hill called Kindoki. Already in 2012, this strategy led to the discovery of a cemetery consisting of eleven tombs dating from the late seventeenth century

until the early nineteenth century. These contained the remains of men and women belonging to the local elite as indicated by the funerary objects. Excavations were continued in 2013 and 2015, and resulted in the unearthing of artefacts of both Kongo and European origin, mainly ceramics. We were able to prove the existence of a vast settlement on Kindoki hill during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our fieldwork also led to the discovery of a previously unknown type of comb-impressed pottery dating back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This constitutes the main evidence for arguing that the hill was already settled before the arrival of the first Europeans (Clist *et al.* 2015c; Matonda *et al.* 2015; Clist *et al.* forthcoming b).

The more southerly Ngongo Mbata site, situated on the Sabala plateau, was excavated between 2012 and 2015. Here we found traces of early human presence during the Late Stone age as well as the remains of a settlement dating back to the sixteenth century. We were able to recover the foundations of a stone church that had already been excavated in 1938. We demonstrated that its construction probably dates from the seventeenth century, just like most of the Kongo and European material culture that we excavated on this site. The re-examination of the objects found in the graves located in the church led to the conclusion that upper-class Kongo people were also buried there. Our archaeological finds corroborated seventeenth-century historical sources indicating that this settlement formed an important trade post between the Atlantic ports in the West, the capital Mbanza Kongo in the centre and the Kwango area in the East. Ngongo Mbata was probably the most important settlement of the Mbata province and larger than Mbanza Mbata, the official residence of the Mwene Mbata, the provincial political leader (Clist *et al.* 2015d; Clist *et al.* forthcoming a).

Besides the extensive excavations on the Kindoki Hill and the Ngongo Mbata site, various surveys and smaller excavations were carried out on numerous locations across the Kongo-Central Province, for instance in the Misenga, and in the Mindouli and Boko-Songho regions in southern Congo-Brazzaville (Clist *et al.* 2013a; Clist *et al.* 2013b; Nikis *et al.* 2013; Clist *et al.* 2014; Matonda *et al.* 2014; Nikis and Champion 2014; Clist *et al.* 2015a; Nikis and De Putter 2015; Clist *et al.* forthcoming a; Clist *et al.* forthcoming b; Nikis forthcoming b). These border regions were particularly interesting, because of the ancient copper exploitation (Nikis forthcoming a), which has been associated with the origins of the Kongo kingdom (Hilton 1985: 3).

As for Mbanza Kongo, the KongoKing project team was invited there by the Angolan Ministry of Culture for a two-week mission in November 2015 in order to collaborate with an international team of Angolan, Cameroonian and Portuguese archaeologists, who had been carrying out archaeological research in the ancient capital of the Kongo kingdom since 2011 as part of a UNESCO World Heritage project. During that short stay, the artefacts collected over the past four years and their contexts could be examined. This joint research led to a scientific report (Clist *et al.* 2015e), to which we also refer in the present chapter. The report was submitted to the Angolan national heritage authorities to support their UNESCO World Heritage application, which was eventually successful.

The KongoKing project's archaeological research contributed significantly to our understanding of the region's ancient past, not least because our excavations were the first south of the Congo River for 25 years and north of it for 60 years. A series of new dates was obtained for the Early Iron Age and even if there is still a hiatus between that period and the beginning of the second millennium of our era, the region's chronology has become much more precise for the millennium during which the Kongo kingdom emerged. Thanks to the KongoKing project, we can now monitor, in an uninterrupted way, the evolution of cultural traits in the Kongo region from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries using the cultural sequences developed.

Such a *longue durée* perspective on material culture is also possible for an item we regularly found during the excavations, namely smoking pipes. The excavations carried out between 2012 and 2015 yielded not only several tens of thousands of pottery fragments and fifty-three new radiocarbon dates, but also more than a thousand fragments of both terracotta and stone pipes dated between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Smoking pipes have their origin in the Americas, but as we show in this chapter they were imported commodities which the Kongo kingdom's elite readily adopted and appropriated. The study of these archaeological pipe remains provides us with insight into Kongo's complex social structures and the relations that existed between Mbanza Kongo functioning as the geographical and symbolic centre of the kingdom and the northern provinces of Mbata, Nsundi and Mpangu on which the KongoKing project's archaeological field-work focused. In this chapter, we will first briefly discuss the history of tobacco and the first pipes to pinpoint when and how Kongo pipes

could have appeared. We will then present an overview of the formal and stylistic attributes of Kongo pipes, which have been studied in more detail elsewhere (Clist forthcoming). Finally, we will assess whether the development of Kongo pipes attests to the homogenization of Kongo material culture in the course of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, as has been argued for its pottery (decoration) during the same period (Clist *et al.* forthcoming c; see also Cranshof *et al.*, Chapter 7).

The Introduction of Tobacco and Smoking Pipes in the Kongo Kingdom According to the Historical Sources

Nicotiana sp. is a plant that originates in South America and was cultivated for several millennia on the eastern flanks of the Andes (Pickersgill 2007: 929; Siirro *et al.* 2014). Before the Columbian Exchange started at the end of the fifteenth century, *Nicotiana rustica* was grown on the Atlantic coasts of Canada and the United States, while *Nicotiana tabacum* grew in Brazil and on the Caribbean islands. The tobacco plant was grown and smoked in parts of North America, South America and the islands of the Caribbean Sea (Staden 1557; Thévet 1558; King 1977; Goodman 1993; Keoke and Porterfield 2003). Initially, native Americans snuffed tobacco or smoked it using either so-called ‘cigars’ made of leaves wrapped around the tobacco or ‘tubes’ (Mason 1924; Dunhill 1999: 29–42). Tubular-shaped pipes were known in both South and North America including Canada (Cartier 1545: 31). Two major types exist, i.e. short-stemmed and long-stemmed pipes. In eastern North America, for instance, so-called ‘elbow pipes’ or ‘bended pipes’, with a short stem and made of stone or terracotta, were common during the Late Woodland and Mississippian Periods, i.e. around AD 1000–1550 (Rafferty 2016: 14–16; 18–21). Later, early colonists in North Carolina and Virginia adopted smoking tobacco with local clay pipes (Dickson 1954: 231; Walker 1975: 231) and these are known to have been used and taken back to Europe by early settlers and traders, such as the English in North Carolina in the 1580s (Harriot 1588: 21–2). In Florida, the French trying to establish a colony in the 1560s used local short-stemmed pipes (Rowley 2003: 29–30). The discovery of a short-stemmed bended clay pipe in the wreck of the Spanish ship *Atocha*, which sank in 1622 off the coasts of Florida, shows that native American pipes were indeed transported

on board of European ships (Sudbury and Gerth 2014: fig. 8). In this way, during the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, tobacco and the practice of smoking were exported from the Americas as part of transatlantic trade into both Europe and Africa (cf. Laufer 1924; Laufer *et al.* 1930; Dickson 1954; Goodman 1993; Dunhill 1999; Rowley 2003).

The cultivation of tobacco along the African coasts is historically attested in Senegal and on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe in 1602 (de Marees 1602: 11, 18), while it is already described for the first time at the Cape of Good Hope in 1601 (Goodwin 1939, cited by du Toit 1980). As early as 1607, men and women from both Sierra Leone and Liberia were reported to smoke tobacco with articulated pipes made of terracotta and to grow it themselves everywhere between their houses (Purchas 1625; Laufer 1924: 169; Alpern 1995: 26). In Gambia, around 1620–1, men and women were known to smoke tobacco imported from Brazil (Jobson 1623: 155; Laufer *et al.* 1930: 170). Then again, archaeological evidence indicates that smoking must have been a common practice at El Mina in Ghana, mainly using imported English and Dutch pipes, with only a few indigenous African pipes (DeCorse 2001: 163–7). Ossah Mvondo (1988) situates the earliest smoking pipes in the West-African archaeological record in the sixteenth century. However, according to Canetti (2011: 35–9), none would actually be older than the early seventeenth century, when pipes also start to be mentioned in the historical documents of that particular region. In Central Africa, and more specifically in the Kongo kingdom, tobacco and the smoking of it were probably introduced in the same period.

The oldest historical sources relating to the Kongo kingdom remain silent on tobacco, the practice of smoking and the use of smoking pipes. Neither the early account of Pigafetta (1591), which was mainly based on the testimony of Duarte Lopes who lived in Mbanza Kongo between 1579 and 1583, nor Father Diogo's report of 1583 (Brásio 1954: 355–92) provide any indications. The extensive travel diary of Jan-Hugo Van Linschoten describing his experiences from 1583 to 1592 (De Linschot 1638), Peter Van den Broecke's travel notes from 1607 to 1612 (Cuvelier 1955) and the chronicle of Andrew Battell, who lived in Angola and visited the kingdoms north of the Congo River between 1590 and 1610 passing through Ngongo Mbata during a trade expedition around 1603 (Ravenstein 1901), likewise do not

provide any evidence for the existence of tobacco or pipes in the Kongo kingdom. We owe the oldest testimony on the practice of smoking tobacco in the region to the Swiss merchant Samuel Brun who visited Mbanza Soyo on the Atlantic coast in 1612: ‘They can bear hunger for a considerable time, as long they have “*magkay*” or tobacco, whose leaves they grind and ignite, so that a strong smoke is produced, which they inhale for thirst and hunger’ (Jones 1983: 61). This confirms that tobacco was consumed in the first half of the seventeenth century, but it does not make clear whether this happened with the help of smoking pipes or rather by rolling cigars. Other references to smoking similarly do not explicitly mention pipes (see below).

The first explicit mention of smoking pipes occurs no earlier than the second half of the seventeenth century, in the account of Giacinto Brugiotti da Vetralla, who lived in the Kongo kingdom between 1652 and 1657. He briefly reported a pipe together with its Kikongo name in the following passage: *cosi tenendo sospesa con una delle mani la pipa o carimbeo* (‘and thus he holds a pipe or *carimbeo* hanging between his hands’) (Simonetti 1907: 321). The missionaries Michelangelo Guattini and Dionigi Carli, who resided at Mbanza Mbamba in 1668, provided a more detailed testimony, which indicates that by that time tobacco consumption was already quite common within the kingdom and was done by means of ‘pipes as big as a small cooking pot with a stem of two fathoms long, which were never exhausted’ [our translation from the French translation: *pipes grandes comme une petite marmite avec un tuyau de deux brasses de long qui ne sont jamais épuisées*] (du Cheyron d’Abzac 2006: 139). We think this rapidly developing practice of smoking tobacco may be related to local tobacco production, perhaps creating new trade networks and eventually even allowing slaves to smoke, a process that had previously occurred in the Gulf of Guinea between 1602 and 1607 (Bontinck 1970: 145). On São Tomé and Príncipe, slaves are known to have attended their tobacco gardens in 1626 (Labat 1732: 337). This is partly confirmed by a few texts referring to tobacco plantations in the areas close to Malebo Pool and the Bengo River (Cuvelier 1953b: 200; Bontinck 1970: 145; Vansina 1973: 450, 464). Girolamo Merolla da Sorrento (1692: 563, 696), who lived in the Kongo between 1683 and 1688, testified that both men and women in Mbanza Soyo smoked using long pipes, especially nobles when they walked the town’s streets and attended church. He also provided an illustration of a man smoking while being carried

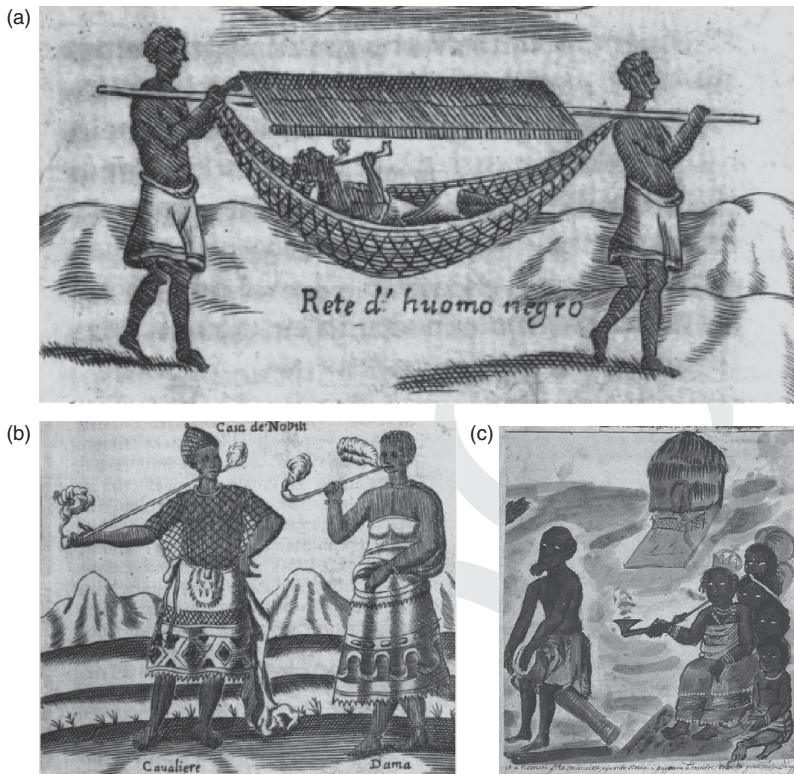


Figure 8.1 (a) ‘Black man’, probably a noble, smoking his pipe while being transported using a ‘wooden horse’ (Merolla da Sorrento 1692: 27); (b) Noble man and woman smoking tobacco using long-stemmed pipes (Merolla da Sorrento, 1692: 116); (c) Queen Nzinga using her pipe (Cavazzi 1687)

about in a ‘wooden horse’ (hammock), and of two nobles, a man and a woman, indulging in the pleasures of tobacco (cf. Figures 8.1 a and 8.1 b) (Merolla da Sorrento 1692: 116). Unfortunately, the illustrations are not detailed enough to determine the exact type of pipe they were smoking. A long-stemmed bended pipe is also depicted with interesting details in one of the watercolours adorning the work of Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi (1687)(cf. Figure 8.1 c). This pipe has a characteristic large imposing furnace ending in an everted lip as well as a long stem and an extension with a length similar to the ones depicted by Merolla da Sorrento. The fine and complex details of the

mouth, in which the pipe's stem made of perishable material (wood or reed) is inserted, highlight the aesthetic quality of the watercolours in Cavazzi's manuscript. Although the picture represents Queen Njinga of the neighbouring kingdom of Ndongo, this pipe strongly resembles the seventeenth-century Kongo pipes discovered further north on the Kindoki hilltop and in Mbanza Kongo and Ngongo Mbata.

Archaeological Evidence of Kongo Kingdom Tobacco Pipes Between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries

As for the pipe remains discovered in the archaeological record of Mbanza Kongo, Kindoki and Ngongo Mbata, major differences can be observed between those dated between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, produced in either clay or stone, and the more recent ones from the later eighteenth to twentieth centuries, exclusively made from clay (Clist forthcoming). It is probably not a coincidence that this typological divide set in with the end of a long period of civil wars (1641–1718) that wracked the Kongo kingdom (Thornton 1983), especially after the Battle of Mbwila in 1665. By that time, the polity's strongly centralized structure, which had developed since the reign of Afonso I (1509–1542), had vanished. The period between the late seventeenth century and the start of European colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century was one of growing decentralization and political fragmentation (Broadhead 1971, 1979; Heywood 2009). The same divide is also reflected in other aspects of Kongo's material culture, most prominently its pottery and its glass beads imported from Europe (Clist *et al.* forthcoming c; Karklins and Clist forthcoming). In the subsequent analysis, I will focus on the oldest Kongo pipes from the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

The excavations in Ngongo Mbata, corresponding to a total of 847.5 m², resulted in a corpus of 358 stone and 771 clay pipe fragments from contexts dating from the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, while only 74 clay and no stone pipe fragments date from later centuries. The excavations in Kindoki, corresponding to a total of 537 m², yielded only 10 stone and 27 clay pipe fragments from the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, while the bulk of the pipe remains – all in clay – are more recent, i.e. 190 in total. In Mbanza Kongo, 206 pipe fragments have been collected from different sites in the town, of which only 7 are in stone. Not all contexts in which they

were discovered can be dated exactly, but many of the pipes excavated in Mbanza Kongo probably date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and most of them are identical in stylistic features to those found in Ngongo Mbata and Kindoki. Several others can be recognized as being of European origin and/or post-date the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Clist *et al.* 2015e). Roughly speaking, about 1,300 of the entire collection of more than 1,800 pipe fragments from those three sites were found in contexts corresponding to the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. At this point, it needs to be stressed that Kongo stone pipes were exclusively produced during the seventeenth century.

The high number of pipes in Ngongo Mbata is an indirect testimony to their specifically intensive use since the first half of the seventeenth century. This is confirmed by the characteristic tooth wear on three men buried at Kindoki and Ngongo Mbata, aged around 20, from 24 to 30 and from 30 to 35, which all attest to heavy smoking at quite a young age (Polet forthcoming). As their bodily remains date from between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this further corroborates the statements in the seventeenth-century texts. The two men buried in Kindoki were nobles; the one from Ngongo Mbata may have been a young priest as his head had been positioned eastwards. He was, however, not a Capuchin missionary as no deaths were reported from Ngongo Mbata between 1645 and 1835 in the list of deceased Capuchin missionaries (Saccardo 1983: vol. 3, 19–112), apart from Joris Van Gheel, the well-known ‘martyr’ who passed away in 1652 (Hildebrand 1940). During this period, clay pipes are more commonly found in the archaeological sites and their use leading to tooth wear complements testimonies, such as *y todo el dia sin cesar están tomando tabaco en humo* (‘without stopping, throughout the day, they use tobacco to smoke’ [our translation]) (Brásio 1974: 462), or *Le missionnaire ne laisse point d’être incommodé dans ces circonstances par la fumée continue de la pipe des Nègres (ce qu’il ne faut pas leur défendre) ...* (‘The missionary is regularly bothered by the continuous tobacco smoke of the Negroes (which they should not be forbidden)’ [our translation]) (Nothomb 1931: 52, who translated and edited Da Bologna’s book from 1747) and *les Nègres fument du tabac toute la nuit* (‘the Negroes smoke tobacco the whole night long’) (du Cheyron d’Abzac 2006: 243, who edited the work of Michelangelo Guattini and Dionigi Carli from 1668).

Another striking observation is the fact that most of the pipes of the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, whether in stone or in terracotta, are long-stemmed. This characteristic feature can be related to the way they were introduced into the Kongo kingdom. As a matter of fact, the first production of English pipes, which probably started around 1575, was inspired by long-stemmed native American models from coastal North Carolina and Virginia, which had already been used there by English settlers and sailors for quite some time (Dunhill 1999: 52, 210). The earliest depiction of such an English elbow pipe, i.e. a so-called 'little ladell', is found as an engraving in the work of Anthony Chute (1595). The first Dutch pipes, which were produced in Amsterdam, Gouda and Leiden from about 1610, were also long-stemmed and resemble very much the earliest English exemplars, as English pipe-makers set up the first Dutch workshops (de Vries and van der Woude 1997: 309–11). Given that long-stemmed pipes were not in use in sixteenth-century southern Europe, where tobacco was more commonly snuffed than smoked (Teixeira *et al.* 2015: 25–8), it is very likely that Kongo pipe-makers took their inspiration from English or Dutch clay pipes. It is well known that English and Dutch traders, along with other Europeans, already operated in the vicinity of the Congo mouth and moored at Kongo's Mpinda harbour towards the end of the sixteenth century (Cuvelier 1955: 174–5; Thornton 1998a: 39; Thornton 2016c: 196; see also Brinkman and Bostoen, Chapter 9). As mentioned above, English and Dutch sailors also seem to have had a hand in the introduction of smoking along the West-African Gold Coast, as most pipes discovered in the archaeological record of El Mina were imported from England and the Netherlands while only very few were locally produced (DeCorse 2001: 163–7). This does not seem to be the case in the Kongo region, given that the archaeological excavations at Mbanza Kongo, Kindoki and Ngongo Mbata have yielded only very few imported pipes. Kongo pipe-makers appear to have very rapidly appropriated the foreign models and to have made them into something of their own, both in terms of shapes and decoration. As the pictures in Figure 8.2 illustrate, Kongo pipes tend to be thicker than their contemporaries from Europe and their furnaces are generally also bigger and almost all of them are decorated using local designs.

Figure 8.3 synthesizes the furnace-based typology of Kongo pipes from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries as developed from a

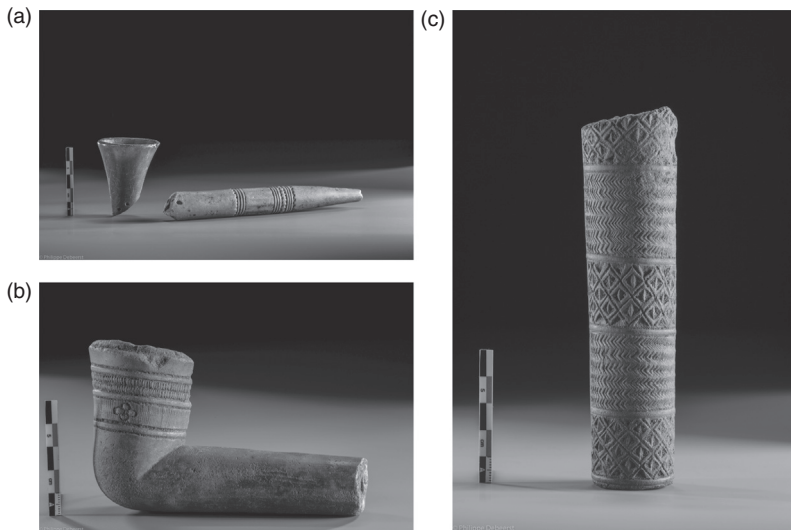


Figure 8.2 (a) Stone pipe fragments coming from two different pipes, Ngongo Mbata site, seventeenth century; (b) Large fragment of a clay pipe, Ngongo Mbata site, eighteenth century; (c) Large fragment of a fully decorated clay stem, Ngongo Mbata site, eighteenth century (All pictures @ KongoKing & Ph. Debeerst)

corpus of over 1,300 fragments. Types labelled ‘Af’ (‘Ancient Furnaces’) are clay pipes, those labelled ‘Afs’ are stone pipes. A detailed description of this typology can be found in Clist (forthcoming).

The clay pipes of the types Af1 to Af3 are the most common at Ngongo Mbata and Mbanza Kongo. Af2 and Af3 pipes are identical, except that Af3 pipes have a kind of shoulder creating a slight rupture of the profile (Figure 8.3). Type Af4 corresponds to a single artefact that was discovered in the so-called ‘south trench’ of the Kindoki site, more specifically from a pit which was radiocarbon-dated to a most likely time interval between the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century (Clist *et al.* 2015c: 391). Its decoration very closely resembles that of a type Af2C furnace, also unique, which was retrieved from the monumental platform mound, on which the stone church in Ngongo Mbata was built in the second quarter of the seventeenth century (Clist *et al.* 2015d). It is possible that the Af2C and Af4 types constitute some of the first manufacturing tests before the Af1–Af3 types became standard and widespread. The Af5 type may

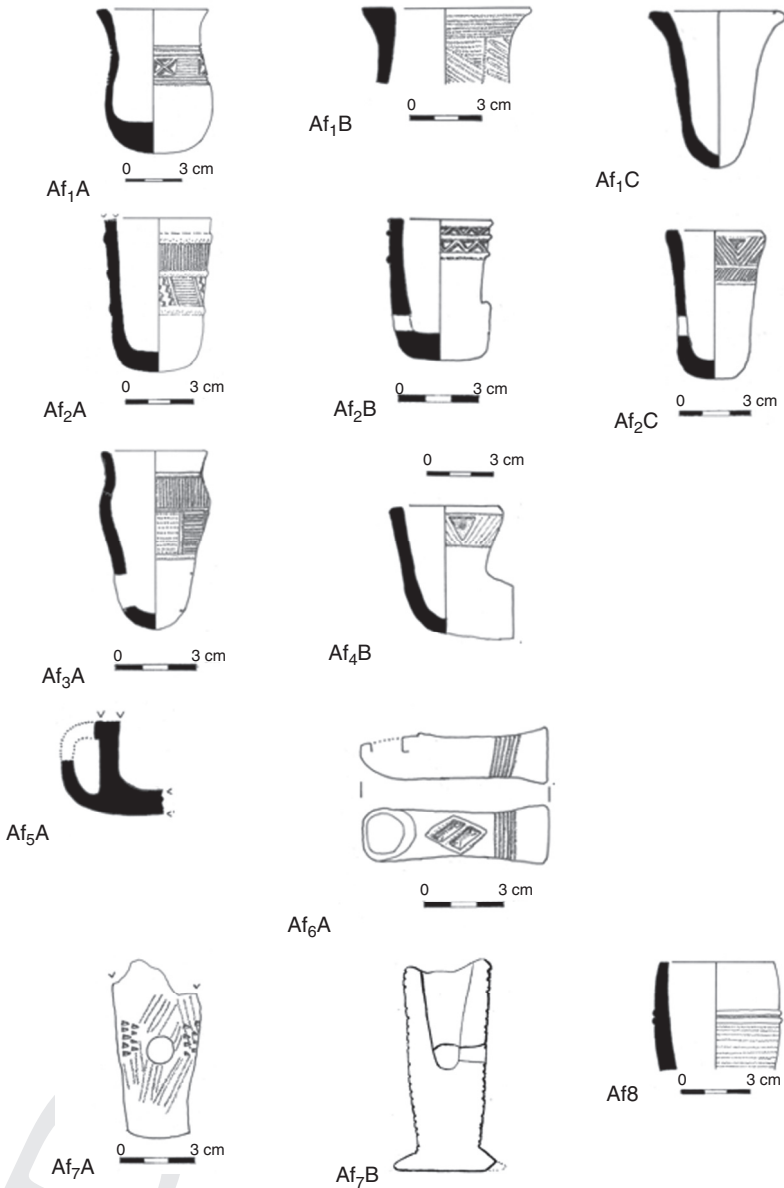


Figure 8.3 Typology of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century clay pipes of the Kongo kingdom. All Af types are clay pipes; the Afs are stone pipes (All drawings © KongoKing & B. Clist)

be another example of such an early production. A few fragments of several Af5 pipes have been found at Ngongo Mbata, but only in pit 1 of trench 1, which was radiocarbon-dated and estimated to stem from the first half of the seventeenth century. Their specific fragile clay, their flat handle and their rarity set them apart from the other types. The Af6 type is of special interest, since it was first discovered to the south of Luanda (Ervedosa 1980: 224; figure 54B). Five Af6 pipe fragments were found at the Tadi dia Bukikwa and Lumbu sites in Mbanza Kongo, dating back to the first and second half of the seventeenth century respectively (Clist *et al.* 2015e). Several others were retrieved from different pits at Ngongo Mbata; their dates of production range between the first half of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century (Clist *et al.* forthcoming a). Even if such a hypothesis is still very tentative for the time being, several elements suggest that Af6 pipes could have been imported from south of the Kongo kingdom. Arguments for this hypothesis could be that their clay and fabric are different from the other types, they sometimes have short stems and a flared mouth, their decoration is based on a pattern of triangular or lozenge shaped excisions, their numbers are small compared with types Af1 to Af3, their present geographical distribution ranges from Luanda in the south to Ngongo Mbata in the north and they are always found in small numbers in the excavations of Mbanza Kongo and Ngongo Mbata. Type Af7 is restricted to one single item found at Ngongo Mbata, which is labelled type Af7A. It very closely resembles three specimens discovered in the 1920s at Kalina Point (currently known as Gombe Point) in Kinshasa (Bequaert 1938; Cahen 1976; Cahen 1978) and still three others discovered in the 1980s at the Kintele and Lifoula sites in neighbouring Congo-Brazzaville (Pinçon 1988), which are labelled Af7B. Type Af7 could thus be of northern origin. Finally, type Af8 consists of only two specimens discovered at Ngongo Mbata in early-seventeenth-century and mid-eighteenth-century contexts. Just like type Af7, it might be a northern import, since it strongly resembles pipes that were also found in Congo-Brazzaville.

A final interesting discovery regarding Kongo clay pipes is the use of an iron oxide to give them a red colour. This pigment was found inside the hollows of geometric excisions on several Af1B, Af6A and Af6B pipes, both in Mbanza Kongo and Ngongo Mbata, suggesting that this colouring technique was part of the manufacturing process of these types.

Stone pipes seem to have been manufactured exclusively in the Mbata province, more specifically at workshops in Ngongo Mbata and the nearby village of Kinlongo (Figure 8.2 a and types Afs1 and Afs2 in Figure 8.3). This is evidenced by unfinished pipe pieces on both sites, which in Ngongo Mbata are exclusively found in seventeenth-century contexts. While we have retrieved 358 stone pipe fragments from Ngongo Mbata, the centre of their production and use, only ten were discovered in Kindoki located about 70 km to the north and just seven in Mbanza Kongo some 112 km to the southwest. All seven Mbanza Kongo exemplars were discovered at the Lumbu site associated with the capital's quarter traditionally hosting the king's public decision-making court where the most important nobles of the kingdom gathered, like the Mwene Mbata. The two types of stone pipes only differ from each other in terms of the position of the stem with regard to the axis of the furnace, i.e. either oblique (type Afs1) or straight (type Afs2) (see Figure 8.3). The furnace lip of all stone pipes is identical to that of Af1 clay pipes. While the furnaces of all stone pipes are undecorated, about 26 per cent of their stems are decorated. This rather standardized decoration is placed in the middle of the pipe stem or at its mouth. We discovered only one fully decorated stone pipe stem, i.e. in Kinlongo. Fully decorated clay stems are also rare: one specimen from Mbanza Kongo and five from Ngongo Mbata, one of which is illustrated in Figure 8.2 c.

The differences between clay and stone pipes are summarised in Table 8.1, which makes clear that Kongo pipe-makers did not simply model the production of stone pipes on that of clay pipes.

Clay pipes were produced from local material and their shaping technique was not difficult to acquire, especially not for artisans familiar with pottery. Although the modelling of clay pipes closely resembles the production of ceramics, certain techniques, decoration types and their layout also betray woodworking, engraving and weaving craftsmanship (see for instance Figure 8.2 c). While pottery was most often the apange of women during at least the twentieth century (Kaumba forthcoming), men most commonly practised these crafts in the Kongo area (Bassani and McLeod 2000: 280; LaGamma 2015a: 185; Martin 2015: 81). Hence, it is not excluded that clay pipe-making was the apange of men at that time, as it is known to be the case in the neighbouring coastal kingdom of Kakongo at the end of the eighteenth century (Proyart 1776: 107). Later, possibly in

Table 8.1 Differences between Kongo stone and clay pipes from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries

	Clay pipes	Stone pipes
Material	Local clay found in the immediate vicinity of the production centre	Serpentinite found at a distance of at least 100 km as the crow flies from Ngongo Mbata
Furnaces	Nearly always decorated, especially in the case of Af1, Af2 & Af3 types	Never decorated
Stems	18% decorated at Ngongo Mbata, while only 4,5% in Mbanza Kongo	26% decorated at Ngongo Mbata
Decoration pattern	Covering the furnace, limited on the stem	Absent from the furnace, limited on the stem
Chronology	Late sixteenth to eighteenth century	Late sixteenth (?) to seventeenth century

the nineteenth century, the *sa kya boondo* or *sa tshya boondo*, the funerary terracotta monuments west of Matadi, were made by men using the same type of clay (Cornet 1981a). The intricate decoration patterns as well as the bright red colouration on at least some of them indicate that pipe-makers undertook painstaking efforts to embellish certain clay pipes, no doubt because they were specifically produced for the kingdom's elite. This is more than probable for the rare clay pipes with an entirely decorated stem that were found in Mbanza Kongo and Ngongo Mbata, such as the one illustrated in Figure 8.2 c. Moreover, it needs to be stressed that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, specific types of clay pipes, i.e. Af1, Af2 and Af3, were widespread in the kingdom and contemporaneously used, both in the central capital and in important centres in the Northern provinces, such as Ngongo Mbata and Kindoki. The same was true for certain specific types of pottery (cf. Clist *et al.* forthcoming c). These observations suggest that Kongo material culture underwent a certain degree of homogenization during the kingdom's heyday under the stimulus of political centralization and economic integration (see also Cranshof *et al.*, Chapter 7). This process was backed up by the spread

of Christianity and literacy through education (Brinkman 2016) and also favoured contact-induced linguistic convergence (Bostoen and de Schryver 2015; Goes and Bostoen forthcoming, see also Brinkman and Bostoen, Chapter 9, as well as Bostoen and de Schryver, Chapter 3).

The stone pipes were in all likelihood exclusively produced in the Mbata province, in and around Ngongo Mbata. As far as we can judge from the currently available documentation, they seem to have been produced during the seventeenth century only. Their production was both labour-intensive and expensive. The stone pipes were of serpentinite, probably extracted from quarries situated in the remote Mayombe area north of the neighbouring Nsundi province and thus had to be transported over long distances, over 200 km return journeys. Moreover, the manufacturing of stone pipes required the mastering of specific techniques and mechanical tools to shape, drill and decorate the stone. This could suggest again that men were the specialists of this particular item of Kongo material culture. It is known that men were the producers of the funerary stones or *mintadi* found west of Matadi in both Angola and Congo-Kinshasa (Cornet 1981b). These were made from the same kind of soapstone extracted from local quarries of the Mayombe range. The stone sculptures seem to date back to about 1695 at least (Cornet 1981b: 214). In other words, the production of these high-value stone pipes involved a strictly organized system, which probably did not simply develop to only serve the Kongo elite's well-known desire for luxury goods (see also Vos, Chapter 10). If stone pipes had been highly desired among Kongo nobles, they would have been found in larger numbers in Mbanza Kongo, the kingdom's central capital. Given the fact that stone pipes are mainly concentrated in Ngongo Mbata and its immediate vicinity, we may surmise that the Mwene Mbata and his court may have exploited them to distinguish themselves within the kingdom's nobility. The few stone pipes found at the Lumbu site in Mbanza Kongo may be understood as attesting to the presence of the Mwene Mbata at important decision-making meetings in the capital.

It is worth noting that a clay furnace was found at Kindoki, which was made of grey white clay, probably in an attempt to imitate the white or beige colour of 35 per cent of the stone pipes without any decoration and with a shape identical to the furnace of stone pipes (cf. Figure 8.2, type Af1C). At its discovery, this item was thought to be a stone pipe. It is obviously a clay copy of a stone pipe, which suggests

that the latter had an important social status inciting the production of cheaper copies. This phenomenon has also been suggested for some pots of the Mbafo Group of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, which could be copies of high status ones (Cranshof *et al.*, Chapter 7).

Conclusions

The KongoKing project developed a new cultural sequence for the region based on the changes in style, form and decoration observed on the excavated pottery. This new cultural sequence suggests that during the fifteenth century, before the arrival of the first Europeans, the homogenization process of Kongo material culture had already started, probably related to an increasing political centralization and economic integration. This homogenization process may have accelerated after 1483 due to the importation of European commodities, which were appropriated and reinterpreted by Kongo people, and by the local creation of new types of pottery for the king and for the nobles representing him in the kingdom. This process was probably completed early in the sixteenth century as by then these types of pottery were present in the capital and in the important settlements of the northern provinces (Clist *et al.* forthcoming c, Cranshof *et al.*, Chapter 7).

Engravings, watercolours, written sources and archaeological objects all reveal the extent and the speed of the material cultural transformation within a generation of contact under the leadership of the first Christianized Kongo kings. This process of extraversion, as discussed by Vos in Chapter 10, can be followed through the rapidly changing nature of the Kongo regalia, incorporating European-made objects in no less than a century in all parts of the kingdom (e.g. Randles 1968: 183–4). This is also attested to by the material found in the few cemeteries from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, which illustrates the strongly cosmopolitan nature of Kongo material culture based on European products or imports (textiles, beads, Christian objects like crucifixes and religious medals, swords, gold necklaces, copper-hawk bells, Chinese porcelain, etc.). In Chapter 6, Fromont notably discusses textiles in this connection.

Tobacco smoking and tobacco pipes originated from Northern, Central and Southern America. First encountered in 1492 in the Caribbean by navigators working for the Spanish king, then by

Portuguese explorers in Brazil in 1500, tobacco smoking was subsequently introduced in Europe.

The new practice of smoking tobacco and the use of smoking pipes in the Kongo kingdom seem to have constituted two separate historical processes. It can be argued that tobacco smoking using cigars started in the second half of the sixteenth century and was limited to some locations on the Atlantic coast. The use of pipes started during the final years of the sixteenth century, probably after 1583, and quickly spread throughout the kingdom. For this new practice, long-stemmed clay pipes were used, based either on the first English clay pipes (if before 1610) and/or on Dutch pipes (if after 1610) or on the few and rare Amerindian pipes brought by European ships.

It can be suggested that the creation of the first Kongo pipes in clay followed the introduction of tobacco and tobacco smoking at Mbanza Soyo at the latest in 1612. Later workshops were set up in Ngongo Mbata to create the first stone pipes. Probably first tried by the nobles due to the high price of imported Brazilian tobacco, smoking and the way of smoking could have been status symbols, as evidenced by a 1692 illustration of Merolla da Sorrento (Figure 8.1 b), by some highly decorated clay pipes found in Mbanza Kongo and Ngongo Mbata and by stone pipes produced in and around Ngongo Mbata. We consider the latter as specific status symbols used by the Mwene Mbata and the nobles from the Mbata province to further reinforce their important position within the kingdom's political structure.

Texts of the second half of the seventeenth century clearly show how fast and widespread tobacco smoking had become, for both men and women, in use first by the nobility, later by commoners and then perhaps by slaves when cheaper local tobacco production started. This is confirmed by the characteristic tooth wear on three men buried at Kindoki and Ngongo Mbata. It shows heavy smoking was practised during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries at quite a young age, i.e. 20 to 35 years old. The archaeological data reveal that tobacco smoking – only known from texts of the second half of the seventeenth century – was already practised much earlier. Tobacco plantations developed in the Kongo kingdom and in Angola in the course of the seventeenth century.

The rare types of clay tobacco pipes found at Ngongo Mbata may be interpreted as early creations (types Af2C, Af4, Af5), after which types Af1A and B, Af2A and B, and Af3A became the

standardized clay pipes widely used in the kingdom's central capital Mbanza Kongo and in the most important settlements of the northern provinces. This fast process of homogenization is in line with the spread of other items of Kongo material culture, like pottery, completed early in the sixteenth century. The creation and making of Kongo clay tobacco pipes was immediately adopted for use throughout the kingdom. In this manner, tobacco pipes became true markers of the kingdom's material culture.

As with all other conclusions from the KongoKing project based on archaeological data, one must bear in mind that the excavations carried out in Mbanza Kongo did not follow the same strategy as in the northern provinces, that no elaborate archaeological fieldwork has been pursued in Mbanza Soyo and that none at all has been carried out in the other *mbanza* or in any of the important settlements of the central and southern provinces, not to mention the Angola colony or the kingdom of Ndongo.

Today, thanks to our cataloguing of the shape, style and decorative attributes of Kongo clay and stone pipes, we can start to study the American collections of pipes to possibly identify Kongo influence on them stemming from the enslaved Kongo men and women who were taken to the Americas.