

69

LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO THE LORDS OF THE  
KINGDOM  
(1512)

For this present time & all the times to come until the end of the world, be it known & manifest to all the works & mercies that the all powerful Lord our God created by His Grace on us, Dom Afonso, king of Manicongo, & lord of the Ambu[n]dos, we notefy & make known to all those who now live & who will come in times ahead as our vassals & naturals of our kingdoms & seignories, as to all the Kings, Princes & Lords & our neighboring peoples & districts that in times past were our Kingdoms & seignories discovered by the peoples of the kingdoms & seignories of Portugal, as in the lifetime of the king Dom João the second, king of the said kingdoms; as now especially in the time of the most high & most powerful king & lord Dom Emanuel king of the said kingdoms & seignories of Portugal, both having sent to the King my father as by a divine inspiration & demonstration of hope of the present things for the increase of his holy Catholic Faith in this land planted by his piety, clergy & brothers & religious persons so that they show him the way to his salvation & to possess in the knowledge of his Holy Catholic Faith under whom the said Kings & their naturals live: because in this they created work according to the charity sent to them by God, & as faithful & true Catholics fulfilled in this His orders. It was by the said king my father be received the Christian teaching, & in it showed good beginning, from which he, by the Devil's envy, enemy of the Cross, was in his days separated & thus strayed so that in him the Grace of God did not work.//

In those times in which these things began & will pass when we as a boy of few years & enlightened by the Grace of the Holy Spirit by a singular & special mercy given to us from all the very holy Trinity, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three people [and] one sole God, that we firmly believe & confess, we were receiving the Christian doctrine so only by the misericord of God which was in our heart planted from hour to hour & from day to day, as confirmed and which separated us from all errors and idolatries in which our ancestors lived up to the present. We came into true knowledge that our Lord

God Jesus Christ & real man came down from the Heaven to the Earth [to] become flesh in the virginal womb of the glorious Virgin Mary His mother & for the salvation of all the human lin[e]age that by the sinn of our first father Adam under the devil's power, He receivet death on the wood of the Cross in the city of Jerusalem & was buried and resurrectet from death to life on the third day because that which was prophesied of Him was fulfilled & completed: by His death we are redeemed & saved.//

And being us in this true knowledge & continuing in the teachings of the religious & faithful Christians we fell into great vexation of the King our father, & of the great of his kingdoms & the people thereof, who with great disdain & much misery exiled us to lands far off where, separated from his sight and his grace, we spent much time not without great contentment & pleasure to suffer for the Faith of our Lord. But with much effort that His piety always gave us, to suffer much more with the firm hope that by so doing, it would assist us & earn us His grace that only preserveth us for the salvation of our soul, through our work & firm Faith from the void & thus spending our exile, we received a message that the King my father was passing into death & that our other brother was taking power of the Kingdom that was not his by right, but ours as first, & firstborn that we are, & that this he did with the favor of all the great & lords of the Kingdom & the peoples thereof that held us in hatred for having achieved the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ who never left helpless nor ever will leave helpless he who serves Him & to whom He calls, strengthened us so that we come to where our aforesaid Father was & with only xxxvj<sup>1</sup> (*sic*) men serving us & accompanying us, we came to where our aforesaid Father was, & at the time of our arrival he was already dead.//

And he our brother, who unduly supra-succeeded us & occupied us against justice, took up arms with an infinite number of people & was empowered by all of our Kingdom & seignories, whereupon, when we saw this, we looked to the only salvation of our person, and we pretended to be ill: & so being with our people by a divine inspiration of our Lord, we endeavored & called our xxxvj mens & with them we outfitted ourselves & we went with them to the city square where our aforesaid Father died & where an infinite number of people were with our aforesaid brother & there we cried out for our

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<sup>1</sup> 36

Lord Jesus Christ & began to fight with our opponents & saying to our xxxvj men inspired by Grace & assisted by God, flee now, flee now, our opponents were placed into defeat & they testified that a white Cross & the blessed Apostle Santiago dressed in white vestments with many armed horses came in the air to fight, & kill them, & the defeat & mortality was so great that it was a thing of great marvel.//

In this defeat our aforesaid brother was seized & judged by justice that he die, and he died for rising against us; & finally we came into pacific peace in our Kingdoms & seigniories, and today, sustained by the Grace of God, by the miracle created by our Lord, we send notification to the said lord king Dom Emanuel of Portugal, as at the beginning of this same account and by whose means, by grace of God we were illumened by so many good things, & with the reports of this we send to him Dom Pedro our cousin, who was one of the xxxvj who was with us, by whom we were informed by letters that the said lord King sent us the great glories that were given in his Kingdoms to the all powerful God for these mercies so manifested by His great & infinite power.//

And seen by the said lord King of Portugal, as a work worthy of perpetual remembrance & to serve as a good example to all in all the parts in which it is known to show the major increase of our holy Catholic Faith & also show our praise among many other things sent by the said Dom Pedro our cousin & by Simão da Sylva, a knight in his service, who came to us with him, who sent us the arms painted in this letter, to carry on our shields as insignia as do the Christian Kings & Princes of these parts who have the custom of carrying signs of whom they are & from whence they came & that all may be known by them.//

Those arms thus sent to us as significance of the Cross that in the sky was seen & thus the Apostle Santiago with all the other Saints with whom we fought & under whose assistance by God our Lord gave us victory. & in like manner, the said Lord King sent us to take with us the part of his arms, those that the all powerful Lord our God gave by his Angel to the first King of Portugal fighting a battle against many Moor Kings, enemies of his holy Faith that he won that day & defeated. Those arms sent to us by the said lord King of Portugal with much devotion & with much reverence we receive from the God our Lord & with very especial mercy by means of the said lord King of Portugal that sent them us from whom we have much &

whom we hold in mercy and with veritable obligation & as a faithful brother in Jesus Christ & very faithful friend in all times we recognize him, in all that is of us & of our kingdoms' & seignories' dominion, we will fulfill all that is offered by Him & by His, even unto death, by the infinite obligation in which we are beholden to you, not only by worldly benefits, but by spiritual & salvation of our soul & the souls of so many people, & of the persons saved by its means & we hope that there be even more of these to know & converse on the Faith of Christ to which we adhere, & in which we place with much work, & expense, that our Lord by His misericord in all His things He will reward you, since by Him alone & by His service you did it.//

And the said arms we pray, we commission & send by our benediction to our children & to all those who from us descend from now until the end of the world & in all the wars in which they were to be remembered for their significance & that by us were won & sent us by the said lord King of Portugal because with them we trust in the misericord of God that always will give you victory & emolument & will preserve you in His kingdom until the end of the world: as such because it is a just thing that those that good & faithfully serve their King & lord have their services awarded & satisfied with honors, & mercies so that their renown & works never be forgotten. These signs of arms will also be given to the honorable noblemen, & knights that well & faithfully serve their Kings & lords as the lord King of Portugal has made known to us that between the Christian Kings & Princes it is customary to do, and sent us twenty more escudos of arms to give us a count of thirty, & six that went into battle with us were of most clean blood & most noble, each perpetuating His fame & the praise of service that there we made, & with virtuous jealousy each one endeavored & inflamed the faithful, loyally his King & lord did serve, & with perpetual memory preserve: to our Lord Jesus Christ we ask that He who by His piety alone wished to suffer for us & die, if you wish to remember & have pity on us, in His Holy Catholic Faith preserve us & us in it & all of our children & may all our peoples finish in it as He knows we desire.  
Given, etc.

Damião de Góis – l.c.

88

LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM MANUEL I  
(5-31-1515)

†

Very high and powerful Lord

For as much as we wanted to send one of our actions to these kingdoms as we already have written to yur highness to prove Us of some things to so fulfill for our faith as for our person, we pray to Manuell Vās, your servant who came here, that he want to take charge of our things in as much as his is man who we always thought very faithful some of the things that we send you and all our people be good with him and he having very well served us, so that he fulfilled there as here he fulfilled for us and for knowing what fulfills for us better than anyone; and he told us that we didn't have to do without your highness ordering, for whom we ask to your highness that you send and that you take chare of our things and serve us in this, as long as we don't have any men in these kingdoms in whom we confide our actions if not this; and when by your wish we did not want to send him to your highness by force, for which we will receive much mercy; and we turn now to send Dom Francisco and Dom Pedro Afonso our nephews, in order to ask this and other mercies that your highness we send the request, those whom as our relatives that they are, we send to your highness; increase our Lord the days and remaining in your Royal Highness' holy service.//

Written in our city of Congo, on the last day of the month of May, by Joam Teyxera of jb<sup>o</sup> xb (sic) years.

a) The King † Dom A. <sup>o1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Afonso

89  
LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM MANUEL I  
(5-31-1515)



Very high and very powerful Lord

We the King Dom Afonso, by the grace of God King of the Kingdom of Congo and Lord of the Ambu[n]dos, etc.// with this veneration and reverence that from King to King we ought to do, we send to your Highness, Lord, many graces and praises to the very high God Father and Son and Holy Spirit that touches you at the door of your heart, to write so many letter[s] of consolation with which We receive much pleasure and comforted many years [the] heart. However, Lord, we cannot deter the answer to so many things, while all of my knowledge and all my force and all my understanding, and not only dignified of doctrinating and teaching our holy Catholic faith if not with the help of our very holy and very powerful Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of angels because all good holy things are done by God's will without him, we cannot do anything. However Lord, We who are sinners and low and less so many things to our holy Catholic faith, there is a mystery by good counsel and good examples so that in this our kingdom of Congo many times that the peoples lived according to their own will by following the women and the idolators, to change these things there is the help of God and of your Highness because Lord, we are men, we know the time and the moment that our Lord ordered our death because this Kingdom to our faith is still like glass, through bad examples that men from here came, gave teaching, because the covetousness of this world the little riches are truly destruction because for covetousness the jews crucified the Son of God, brother, until today crucified by bad examples and bad works because in the present time the Son of God receives more passion than during the time of the Jews because the time of the Jews, he suffered death and passion for his own will to save the lineage of mankind and in order that We others who walk and cry out this true valley of misery and valley of tears.//

because Brother, the greed of the present time give many bad examples to take our crucified Lord against his will because we all were born unholy spiritually, now from baptism and after being born, to turn the filth into the precious stone that [is] the life long-lasting so that our Lord when he suffered, his intention was to save us and to take us from the devil's captivity and from the world and from flesh to be with him in everlasting glory. However Lord brother, the present time is more petty, here the time passes because those same who minister the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are really persecuted, and so much so that greed and the devil enter into the world and are tempted by flesh and calumny the promise that was made for his own will and such that rising to the altar to doctrinate, to teach the word of everlasting life that [is the] word of our Lord Jesus Christ that he himself was teaching by the work and by example and by miracle causing much anxiety in the Jews and so many

tribulations to save the world for love. The greedy hands that take this holy sacramento that is body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in his hands have only to bring it and his heart is full of greed of this world and so much so that teaching the word of our Lord turn the filth by bad examples and so much so that taking the key to the cerestial (*sic*) kingdom that [is] a doctrine of our holy Catholic faith to open the hearts to other surprises to enter into everlasting life but to turn the infernal key, to open in order to place in himself the greed of the world, not only place his body and soul in hell, but to navigate those who are more blind in order to enter with him by his bad examples. We as thee Brother, be it that you come to my aid to praise our holy Catholic faith so that Lord Brother, for us it would be better not being born in this world because being born here to see so many of souls of our relatives and Brothers and cousins and nephews and grandchildren who are innocent to see their predicament that diminishes good examples//

Lord I ask thee to sent the stonemasons and carpenters of houses to make a school to teach our parents and our peoples, because Lord, while greedy and jealous men even though they give bad examples, We can move his heart because with a holy sacred Scripture we can remedy because the word of the Holy Spirit is against the world and flesh and the devil even though our Lord Jesus Christ who gave many day of life and praise to your royal State.//

Written in our city of Congo, today 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, Joam Teyxera of j b °xb years.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

Address: to the very high and powerful Lord the Lord King of Portugal etc. our brother//.

ATT-CC-I-26-24

98

LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM MANUEL I  
(3-4-1516)

Your Highness already knows that Symão da Sylva died when arriving to this Kingdom without my seeing him because there was great disarray in people and there was no one who could tell me the truth about what your highness wanted, I even saw Dom Pedro my cousin with Alvaro Lopez and he told me that your highness sent Alvaro Lopez as overseer and that he was your servant and person in whom your highness confided. And Lord, I made him Captain and overseer; and afterwards I saw the prefect and when they found Alvaro Lopez as captain, told me that that man was an idiot and that he was not one to be Captain, saying to me many other bad words about him. And I Lord, I pray that you who were his friend and he both judge and do as your highness orders. And he never wanted, but before me asked permission in order to go to Portugal in a ship that they call the Gayo. And he bothered me so that I gave him permission that he go; and in this time, Lord, it was necessary to go to war with the Ambundos because they rose up against me and I left Alvaro Lopez as Captain in Congo with all my power where the Queen my mother stayed. And while I went there Alvaro Lopez never did anything to my disservice, but did all that was Justice.//

And when I, Lord, came from war, they told me that the prefect was down at the port very ill and not even outside because the ship was already leaving when he arrived. And I soon sent for him and protected him within my walls praying thee many times that you be a friend of Alvaro Lopez and who both serve your highness and rule other people as does justice. And he never wanted, but before he started to do many meetings and councils with the other people who wanted great evil on Alvaro Lopez because he showed them the regulation of your highness and required that they fulfill it; they all came to want such great evil that they created a band against Alvaro Lopez, making the head of the prefect, as friars, as clergy, as laymen, not giving anything to Alvaro Lopez not even when I ordered it, but before Lord, they did not want to serve.//

And when I saw this, I asked for a book of the Ordenations in language that your highness ordered and the prefect told me that he had it. And when I asked him another time, because he had had it, he told me that he did not have such book, that all your books were in Latin and did not wish to give it me. And his boy took it. I ask for mercy from your highness who knows part of him and send it me because it is very necessary to me what reason will be not to judge a new law according to the old.//

from there on certain days father friar Nuno came to see me and brought me an order that I sign it saying to me that if I do not sign it that I would be excommunicated and that I could not say Mass nor receive any sacrament. And the order was that I hear well that the prefect make audience with my people and conduct inquisitions as they do in Portugal because it was in God's service. And I Lord, appearing to be as such, heard it was for good and signed the order. And



as the prefect had it in his hand, he soon started to make inquisitions against Alvaro Lopez and to walk about so arrogantly that I did not know what to do with them if not leave them because both were the servants of your highness.//

And from there to certain days I Lord, gave to Alvaro Lopez four chests of money so that he buy *peças*<sup>1</sup> for your highness. And from there to certain days, both the prefect and friar Nuno were seated in a house where I was, Alvaro Lopez came and kneeled before me and said: Lord, I already bought twenty five *peças* from the money that your Lordship gave me and there are six and a half *lufucos* (<sup>2</sup>) I came to see what to do with them. And I told him that he use them up buying *peças* to be added to the others. And when this was done, the prefect got up from where he was seated with friar Nuno and said: as Lord, is it possible that this robber thief has no shame in speaking to your Lordship after stealing from you and the king your brother [?]. Alvaro Lopez said: And what have I robbed from the King [?]. And the prefect said: the twenty five *peças* that you sent. And Alvaro Lopez told him: ask his Lordship who gave the most. And I said to him that I gave him the grace of ten *peças* when he arrived here and afterwards fifteen because in this way Lord it was true. And with these words the prefect came to where Alvaro Lopez was seated before me and gave him three or four blows with a stick that he used as a shepherd's crook and I was very surprised and did not know what to say to them. And Alvaro Lopez arose and with a sword and a dagger at his belt. And said: prefect, you who are justice slander me before your Lordship; why do you not do this outside [?]. For this the King our Lord sent us here [?]; this you do not even do to me, but you do it to the King of Congo who is here. Nevertheless preserve yourselves because I would kill you. And he left. And I Lord, I remained shocked and did not know what to do to them because both were your highness' servants.//

And from there some time, one day at night they came to tell me that Alvaro Lopez killed the prefect and took refuge in a church. And the other day all the white men petitioned me that I order him pulled out of the church and that I order him beheaded. And I did not want to, but I waited until I saw Manoell Váz and I ordered him that he take him to the island and that he place him in the Church since here he was in the Church. And this Lord, I make your highness know by alleviating my conscience and so that your highness know the truth.//

done in our city of Congo, at four days of March of one thousand five hundred and xbj years/.

a) The King † Dom Afonso

<sup>1</sup> Peça= piece in Portuguese and was used, amongst other meanings, for slaves. Here it refers to slaves that Afonso I wished to send to the King of Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> lufuco= name for money

112  
LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM MANUEL I  
(5-27-1517)



Very powerful and very high prince and King my brother.

I saw a letter from you highness in which you told me that my relatives who come to the Kingdoms to hlearn (*sic*), that from them if no profit followed of which they be very disconsolate because I do not send them for the other thing only so that they learn what is service of our lord Jesus Christ and for the increase of our holy Catholiq (*sic*) faith to illuminate the blind who are in my Kingdoms so that after my death they might sustain the faith in our lord Jesus Christ; and for this reeson (*sic*) I sent them to be tauught (*sic*) and chastised very good; it seems to me that this defense of your highness that they do not go to Portugall (*sic*) will be great opportunity to give space to the enemy of our Holy Catholiq (*sic*) faith that place most easily conquer our weaknesses; it will also be for me an immense embarrassment before my peoples because we always tell them that they had great help in teeching (*sic*) and increasing of our Holy faith in Portugall (*sic*); however it seems to me that they better go and those that have erred should be chastised because it is through work that the Kingdom of Heavens is won; to remedy this your highness should spread throughout the Kingdom these Houses of Riligin (*sic*) so that they do not see one another, for and in this way will make fruit that will be in the service of God and he who [does what he] should not be very chastized.//

Written in Congo on xxbij day of May, Ruy Godinho did it, was in the year 1517.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

140

## LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(3-18-1526)



Lord

/ We Dom Afonso, by grace of God King of Congo and Lord of the Embu [n]dos and the conquest of Pazoallumbu, etc., with that veneration that we owe, we kiss the royal hand of y. h.<sup>1</sup> (*sic*) since we were let known that we could have furty (*sic*) years more or less that our Lord by His piety and misericord alit us and showed us the crarity (*sic*) and took us out from the darkness in which we were living, to whose mercy our Lord gave us His misericord and wants that in this Itopia (*sic*) His name and faith praised and enexalted (*sic*) to which we hope in our Lord who will always be since his service was to open us the saintly and good path for salvation of our souls and y.h. would like to increase life [and] royal state so that this Kingdom be sustained and send it the ointments, medicines for our salvation and from this Kingdom and peoples who live in it, hope that y.h. be consoled and provided with that which you have so much necessity.//.

Item. Y.H. (*sic*) will know that by many times we have written to the King your father who holy glory, the great need that we have for many fathers to visit the great expanse of this Kingdom and Senhorios [to] clean it of much lepers and dirtiness of idolatry that there is in it, being this a land large and not having with which to clean it many fathers, as they are meted out throughout the Kingdom and Senhorios so that our Lord be served and His Holy Catholic faith be increased and we be consoled seeing what we so desire, seeing the necessity that this Kingdom has and we see the multitude of souls who lose themselves whereby y.h. entering and saving and before your Lord earning great merit what we believe will make much entirely (*sic*) since it is the first mercy that we ask of you since you are king; so Lord we ask y.h. for the death and passion that our Lord suffered for the sinners, that you send us fifty fathers that we most need. But not to give so much impression to y.h., we will not even ask thee more, in order to spread them throughout the Kingdom and Senhorios and in the places in which most necessary and that make most fruit and so that Lord know which way we ask you to name some of the biggest Senhorios that are in this Kingdom because to name [for] all the extensive would be make great reading and would bore y.h. //.

Item. a Senhorio that is called Sundy, in [which] we had made Lord one of our sons by the name Dom Francisco, is a very big land with many people in

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: y.h. = abbreviation for Your Highness in lower case as in the original.

whom we puut (*sic*) a vicarage with your fathers where they were provided and supplied with all [the] necessities.//

Other Senhorio that is called Bamba of which we have made Lord our other son by name of Dom Henrique where there are many people and [is] great size, where there is to be in a vicarage and its fathers and of all necessities will be well supplied and will always be occupied because the land is large with many people.//.

Item. Other Senhorio that is called Banta of many more people where there is to be at least eight fathers and a vicarage of which we have made Lord a principal person of our Kingdom by the of name Dom Jorge whom we like very much for his goodness.//.

Item. Other Senhorio called Huembo, of which we have made Lord our brother by the name of Dom Pedro, is great in size and many people where there is a vicarage and its fathers.//.

Item. Other Senhorio that is called Pango that we have given to the bishop our beloved and cherished son for his use that it is a great and very supplied land where there is a vicarage and its fathers.//.

and I do not want to name any more to y.h. to not make this writing long; so Lord in this way, we will disseminate throughout the Kingdom and the others with the most necessity will walk and lean to these places so that with good and Holy words will show them and bring to them true knowledge; and y.h. should well believe the necessity that these rustic and simple people who no longer know how to live and die have; so that you understand the truth of our faith, it is necessary that it be taught and indoctrinated to continue in time until becoming true recognition and salvation; and in this manner Lord, if they make many fruit and save themselves the many multitude of souls that are lost by the lack of fathers, for being in this manner that we tell y.h. so that with the Holy baptism and doctrine of your Holy faith they be saved; by love of our Lord we ask you that you remember us and your Kingdom that is waiting for the misericord of our Lord and for the oiments for our wounds, that this Kingdom needs very much many fathers for its salvation; and saving themselves, many souls prayed before our Lord for your highness since by your intercession they are saved; this way Lord, we ask you by the wounds of our Lord that we do not get lost, but before we send to visit much more as [the] King your father did, because now we need them more than ever because we are already of much age [and] being in the very last quarter of our life and we do not know the hour [in] which God will be served to take us for Himself and we would take with us much contentment in our days; y.h. send us these priests so that we leeve (*sic*) this Kingdom and Senhorios pacific in love in service of our Lord; and for such Lord, send us many priests who are the medicinal oiments for the wounds that the peoples of this Kingdom have open and so that the evil-souled inimy (*sic*) not have power nor vigor whatsoever over the souls that in the hand of y.h. are being remedied, that

we hope that the name of Jesus Christ and His death and passion preserve us and lead us to the state of salvation//

Item. Lord, many times our son the bishop requested and asked that we let him visit the Kingdom with these few priests that he has with him, they are four to officiate Mass it is not enough, even more so for such a large Kingdom; and we do not want him to go because the Kingdom is so large that to visit it all there more priests are needed to help it and go with it and also walking throughout the Kingdom far from us, we fear that they kill him with poison which would cause us great pain and sentiment and not live much after him because he is a son for whom we have great love and with him we receive much consolation and, thus, for such we do not let him go and by force we hold him so that he does not go. Not for not loving him much and his not requesting many times; and this is [the] case because he did not do it nor did not do it until now; so Lord, that for this and for all that in the present we ask Y.H. to help us//.

Item. Lord, we ask for mercy from Y.H. that you act so that your priests of riligin (*sic*) do come to be with our son the bishop because in them was created and received much consolation to have them in your company that three of the same order that you have with you, to the act, one went to Portugall and the two stayed so as to go soon too; Y.H. please know what they took from here, as all the other priests that come [to] our Kingdom do and Y.H. will know the bad company that we receive in our Kingdom for which we have to work while our God grants life/. May the Lord increase your life and royal state in His holy service, Amem//.

written in this our city of Congo, on the xbij day of the month of March, year ~~1526~~, Dom João Teyxeira, peer writer, did this.//.

a) The King † Dom Afonso

144

## LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(8-25-1526)



Lord

Two Letters from y.h.<sup>1</sup> that came from two ships of your tract and content were given to Us, we have the most great information, as in this other time we did, about the French that arrived to this our Kingdom and port of Sonho, that by other letters I wrote to y.h. Thus, so many French arrived in the said port, and of this we were certified, we rapidly sent Maneoll Pacheco, Servant of y.h. who serves us as prefect, who with much diligence worked with Afonso de Torres' carack and a large caravel of your content with all your naturals and our people (*sic*), they worked to capture the said carack and do all that they wish. The carrack was so strong of arms and artillery and had such warning (*sic*) about from its people who were on land, that they could not capture it; so, seeing the links that every day armed to damage their ship, they set sail taking a boat with certain number of our people who were to spy against them and those that remained on land were dexterously captured with the boat with a lot of marble and tobacco and red wood that we were sending to show you saying that all was for them. These things are so notorious and public to your naturals that if they were present, that they would say that it happened this way if they did not want to hide the truth.

Thus Lord, of this people many of theirs who stayed on land are dead and only twelve are alive, of these many times we send them to be delivered to y.h.'s ship pilots and contents; some of the bad were not picked up<sup>2</sup> to pick up *peças*<sup>3</sup> saying that they came to scavenge *peças* and not French. Others do not want to wait for them nor our message and went without anything; and because of this, the evil doers are in this Kinngdom (*sic*) up to now receiving those mercies and protection that y.h. deserves to receive from us and your naturals.

And so much that we saw the Letters and the desire of y.h., soon we sent them to be put in prison and the prisoners were sent to be delivered to the pilot (*sic*) that he take them and go addressed to one of our Servants who we have on the Island of Continao to go present them to y.h. As many other days we had ordered, if the said pilots take them with in all ten prisoners with one that said he is a priest of Mass. And two stayed in our Kingdom, one a carpenter whom we cannot excuse for not having another in this Kingdom to repair and protect the churches; the other who said he is our pilot. To this we ask much by mercy not

<sup>1</sup> y.h.= in lower case as in original text, abbreviation for Your Highness  
(Translator's note)

<sup>2</sup> picked up is here in the sense of embarked which was not used.

<sup>3</sup> *peças*= used to indicate *peças de escravos* or slaves.

to believe the evil-sayers nor people who do not have the care, if not in trafficking and selling their things badly possessed, and damage and corrupt with his disordered content, our Kingdom and Christianity that it be given so many years to this reach this point and has cost so much to your predecessors; such a precious treasure that the so very Christian and Catholic kings and princes like y.h. are, work so that in new peoples the service of God begin and be conserved, and increase your Holy Catholic faith so that we have all and be obliged to all. What cannot be done with so much merchandise and with such manners of bad counsel which have so much power in the simple and ignorant who stop believing in God to believe in the manners of bad counsel, which would not dispense the cause that there is a tie to the devil to condemn one or other part; and from this Lord, greed joins with the great collosus from which our naturals come and plenish yours and our relatives and Christians, merchandise and sell them for captives. In this manner Lord, there is this corruption that our forces cannot supply the remedy without doing many and very great executions. And thus, the just will be punished for the sinner.//.

This will not happen Lord if y.h. would wish to help to favor the way, as The King your father did desire, with the spiritual remedies from the many fathers that we cannot dismiss for the sacrifices, prayers, doctrines and confessions so that to all the parts of our Kingdom, that is very large and of many people, they be spread in twoes in order to be good grammaticians, to sit skool (*sic*) and teach our relatives who have begun Latin so that they not lose what they have learnt; and to these two, if y.h. have more that come by your service to make this fruit be it that they will go soon.

And if we many times describe to y.h. and explain and reason the things of the service of God and that which we need to uphold your Holy faith; the cause of this Lord is the little reverence that the said pilots make to us and to our orders because in cases we order that they do not leave without our message and dispatch they do not stop leaving so much that they have *peças* that they want neither waiting for ours that many times stay on land.

And many times it happens that we be b. bj. months without mass nor sacrament because the officials of y.h. wish it this way which is in little service of God and great perturbation for our peoples. And they say and they murmur that y.h. has already forgotten about us, neither the Christianity that The King your father who acts in Holy glory with so many years has conserved with his many visitations, provisions and assistance which was a great effort and constancy to all, and to us great consolation. And now it is placed in this balance that we have the forgetting that y.h. shows and that the said pilots make appear by the reverence in its parties and leaving without our message as we are accustomed to do, saying that in this way is sent to you by the officials of y.h. And when our Letters were sent we thought that they have already left. And they go saying that they will not let him know, and that we did not want to give you dispatch, all in order to hide his guilt and to place us in hate with y.h. so that all is forgotten of the nation; that we would give you the bishop our son so that in such manner the word of God be sown in the hearts of people so that it be imprinted in them so that even if they wish to give some diabolical poison for their condemnation the

virtue of such balm soften them.

And well, so Lord, avoid the merchandise from bad tracts and false merchandise that impedes the salvation of the soul and damages the good fruit that was made. And the inhabitants of Cacheu, mulatos and Benins of which our Kingdom is full, without any fruit or service to God if not taught as need be, many are dishonest and live a bad life and we cannot get rid of them from our Kingdoms.

Other yes Lord, we have much necessity of three or four good grammatical masters to finish confirming our people who already begun in this; because to teach to read and write we have many here, your naturals and ours that know it and do it, but to show them and declare the things of the Holy faith and serve the doubtful cases that the other men generally do not know that is very necessary.

yes Lord, b. or bj., other stonemasons and ten carpenters to finish some works of churches that we have started in service and praise of our Lord God, mainly one of our Lady of Victoria that we began in a very strong forest where in ancient times if the Rex were buried, according to its ancient idolatry with which we have completely broken and cut loose, that it was a very difficult thing to do by the harshness of the place for the great of our Kingdom in which we had doubted that they wanted to consent. These were to conform and be diligent with their own hands and they cut the great and thick trees and brought a stone for work to the coasts which seemed to exist by divine grace. And thus we gave many praise to the Lord God for such a miracle and consent of will in their hearts because we do not need *cairos*<sup>4</sup> and men because in our Kingdoms we have many of our naturals that know how to do well.

Because we ask y.h. for the love of Jesus Christ to be so kind as to want to help and favor us in all that is said and for many times we have asked since there is so much service of God and His and all carries it on his conscience; so that in us there is no bad power, for that we continuously endeavor and work. And that which falls to us we can remedy without other assistance we have done it and accomplished it. But that which without help and favor of y.h. we cannot do, we ask of you the remedy as to whom the right belongs. That which neither from the King of Castille nor from France nor any other Christian King have we requested or obliged as we were very certified in many respects, mainly because such care does not belong to them for the little part that in this Kingdom is. That which is so Portuguese and such loyal to your service as myself whom y.h. rightly sub-succeeded, and according because in us neither is there the place for ingratitude and we are in present knowledge of the very spiritual and corporal benefits received by us and there is not in us so much forgetting that we do not badly estimate the aggravation of our own and truthful mother whom the false stepmother counterfits and fakingly mimics even though all are conformed in faith and law. And from this, I would not even say mothers because y.h. is very certified of that which we have in us. And so certain of our state, Kingdom and Senhorios is always for my service; we ask y.h. for mercy to this respond to us

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<sup>4</sup> ancient Portuguese measurement corresponding to three fourths of an alqueire.



with effect as we hope. And thus the others that Manoell Varella brings that in this case strikes and in other of much service to God and the discharge of our conscience. Our Lord by His Holy misericord and piety would always want to have y.h. under his protection with days of life and growth of your royal state to his holy service.//

In this our city of Congo, spirit to the xxb days of August, Dom Joham Teyxera made of jbxj years.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

145

## LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(8-25-1526)

†

Lrd<sup>1</sup>

/Why did we remain forgotten, in the many writings that we have written to you, being so much in the service of God we turn to this to write.

You will know, Y.H.<sup>2</sup>, how the bishop our son remains in this Kingdom very sick and not disposed; and why wee (*sic*) did not have another so important this is what helps us maintain this holy Christianity that our God sent by his misericord; it is one sole candle before our eyes. Which, if extinguished, we will remain in darkness, that which God does not order in our days, we ask for mercy from Y.H. that you wish to provide him the bishopry of this Kingdom since he very much deserves it and by beeing (*sic*) our son, as for Manuell Varella we have written in length.

And thus we request much mercee (*sic*) that it exist for the good and your service in order that we have one who helps us with the said bishop in the service of God, send to Dom Afonso a third nephew who has our own blood, who for so many years is there learning, that he wish to bring hordes of clergy so that he come with them to serve God in these Kingdoms and do that fruit so that he learn what you know. And after his coming we will give him so much of ours that he can start to bishop<sup>3</sup> if Y.H. permits it as such in the service of God, and yours, and there cannot be more than this which we wish for you, by honor and for salvation. And sending him, Y.H., we believe that he will do it according to what he tells us that he has learned the good learning and things that are part of the good for which we give much thanks and praise to the Lord God for being such; since, by order of the King your father, Antonio Vieira, took him of all our many nephews and relatives, to learn what the former knows and of all we did not have another taste but sadness and disgust with his morteems, and only this one remained for our consolation that is great with your news.

Item. Lord, we have much marble and every day we see that which we desire to send in your ships to those kingdoms, so with it we excuse the expenses that Y.H. makes with our things and your pilots do not want to take it even though we order it loaded and so it stays as lost; we ask for mercy to Y.H. to send us provision so that we collect our goods in your ships and do not take it since all is for the service of God and of Y.H. too which the Lord God gave long days of life to his holy service.//

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<sup>1</sup> *sic* Lord

<sup>2</sup> Y.H.= Your Highness. Translator's note.

<sup>3</sup> officiate

Gonçalo Anez did write this in this city of Congo on xxb day of August,  
1526.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

154

LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(1-28-1530)

†

Lord

By Geronymo de Liam and Dom Symão, my nephew, carriers of the present, I send them kiss the hands of Y.H.<sup>1</sup> and bring you my remarks. By these I account to y.h. of all the things that in this Kingdom are done to me by your naturals; I ask for the mercy of y.h. that you be so kind as to hear my remarks because through them I discharge my conscience. And thus you will do me mercy in sending me soon the response by the same carrier because we are very consoled by your conversation, for it is a thing that the Queen Dona Lianor<sup>2</sup>, let holy glory act, sent to this Kingdom to serve me and he brings two silver bracelets that a noble of my land who is called Matamba sent me.//

Dom Joham Teyxiera wrote this in Congo on the xxbij day of January of jbxix.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

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<sup>1</sup> Y.H.= Abbreviation for Your Highness. Translator's note.

<sup>2</sup> mother of Dom Afonso

14

LETTER TO THE KING OF CONGO TO PAULO III

2-21-1535)



Extremely holy and very blessed Father and Lord Paulo III by the mysericord of the All mighty God are pontifice of the Holy mother Church. Dom Affonso by the grace of God King of Comguo, Jbugu and Cacomgo, Emgoyo from whom and from whence born, Lord of the Ambudos and Angola of Quisyma and Musuru, of Matambra and Muyllu and of Musucu and of the Amzicos and the conquest of Pamzualubu etc., humbly as loyal Christian King and obedient son to the Holy mother Church, kiss the feet of your Holiness. To whom I make known how I with much and major part of people and peoples of my Kingdoms and Senhorios through the benediction and immense mysericord of the very high Lord God come in knowledge and news of the Holy Catholic faith, law of Jesus Christ our Saviour and have received the [sacr]ment of Holy baptism that our Lord by his very Holy mysericord wished that we receive.//

And from there forward this fruit made that our weak and new learning could suffer close to the divine ecclesiastic offices and cerimonies which with effort and efficacious will and sending what is possible to us for the increase of our Holy faith and service of God: By which very Holy and very blessed Father, as I am a faithful Christian King and firm believer in the things of our very Holy faith and obedient son of the Holy mother Church, there is much time that I seek and desire, I and my successors, that my Kingdoms and Senhorios to be received only for the grace, favor and help of your Holiness and the Holy apostolic See in order to reach, have and possess from your Holiness and the Holy apostolic See those spiritual graces and gifts that the other Christian Kings and princes receive, have and possess for the health of the souls and increase of our Holy faith in order that I and these Christians be spiritually helped, favored and led with the sacrifices and all the other prayers for the dead of the Holy mother Church. So that this faith in Christ our Savior in these parts each time be more increased.//

And now I send again to your Highness and to the Holy apostolic See my ambassadors, lieges and attorneys, Dom Manuell my brother and my counsel, main representative of my person and royal sceptor, and Dom Afonso my nephew of my brother by second person and Francisco Muçio Camerte doctor, my orator and tongue. And Dom Afonso my nephew of furthest on and Dom Amrrique my nephew of brother peoples in whom I confide. So that all or each one of them, as his Superior is impeded, in my name and of my sub-successors, give to your Holiness and Apostolic See that obedience that as Christian Catholic

King and loyal people we owe you.//

I ask that your Holiness would benevolently like to receive and graciously hear my emb[assy] and ambassadors [and give them] credit in that which they tell you on my behalf. And that with that liberty that your Holiness and apostolic See offers other Christian Kings and princes, concede those graces, indulgences, liberties and privileges that I and my sub-successors, churches, monasteries, clergy and people of these Kingdoms and Senhorios rightly ask you. Many the Holy and very blessed Father and Lord; the true God our Lord has lived and been conserved in your Holiness' service for many years.//

Dom Yoão Teyxeira did write this in my city of Congo on the xxi of February the year of birth of our Lord Ihesu Christ 15...

a) The King † Dom Afonso

†

19

LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(12-28-1535)

†

Lord

So that y.h.<sup>1</sup> receive and favor with love the things that are in service of God, we present you and bring to memory this that is not less; at the time when by mandate y.h. sent father Master Gill to this Kingdom for our service; he brought with him one nephew of his of nine years of age, and we adopted him as our valet to take and speak the language of the land as if it were the natural one of our Kingdoms. By this we ask and pray very much to y.h., for service of God and ours, that you should wish to maintain him on account as one of the students that y.h. has studying in Paris. Because we hope in God he leave the said studies so lettered whereby he make much service to God with His doctrine for the salvation of souls of our peoples that they have whom knows to propose and declare to them in their own natural language of the land. And father Master Gill who will now fulfill the mandate of y.h., brings the said nephew Antonio of his, our valet to present him to y.h. and remind you what we ask here, that we will receive it from y.h. with much mercy.//

written in this our city of Congo, on xxbij day of December, Dom Joam Teyxeira scribe in the year of 1535.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: y.h. = your highness.

27

## LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(3-25-1539)

†

Lord

/ Six of our parents will go in the company of Dom Manuell, our brother who we now send to Rome with our obedience, we write to y.h.<sup>1</sup> through him, and because y.h. knows how a great position they have, we write to you so that they be favored and sent proof: Dom Manuell our grandson from our daughter, nobleman of lands and many vassals and of those twelve of our court. Dom Pedro de Crasto is our nephew from both parts, son of cousins with a sister, person who has already been in this Kingdom with the bishop Dom Amrique our son that he have Holy glory. These two will go to be in this Kingdom and learn to read and write and the things of service of the Lord God. Dom Matheus and Dom Amrique also are our nephews; these two are ordered to accompany our aforesaid brother and ambassador in going to Rome and give faith of the Holy and good things that came there and learn them and tell them to those who do not see them. Dom Gonçalo and Dom Francisco de Menesses, also our nephews and well born who are very small, were brought up in the church and in our chapel. And they go in order to receive minor orders and learn so that others will merit when it is time.//

We ask for mercy from y.h. that you act for good and send us shelter, provide and treat as parents and blood those that are ours; and thus follow that ordinance sent by us that leaves this Kingdom and we make this remembrance and ask your mercy because in life the King your father whom God in His glory has sent us by his mandate Antonio Vie[i]ra to this Kingdom to whom by us were delivered twenty [and] some boys, grandsons, nephews and our relatives the most avid to learn and be in service of God because such was the itenshun (*sic*) and foundation of the said Lord. Of these boys, the said Antonio Vie[i]ra left some on the land of Pamzuãlubo and we were required much work and others left the island of Santomé, he turned to us and took to the kingdom only ten boys who up to now we do not have knowledge if they are dead or alive nor the end that they will have nor reesun (*sic*) to give to their fathers and mothers and our pressumpshun (*sic*) is that for not being known that they are our parents, we do not even have to whom to make remembrance of them to y.h. they might all perceive and die helpless those whom we would hope for another remedy, another favor, other mercies of y.h. whose life and royal state the very high Lord God has always in His guard and conserves in the things of His Holy service//.

<sup>1</sup> y.h.= abbreviation in lower case as in original for Your Highness. Translator's note.



in this our city of Congo, Dom Yoão Teyxeira did it on xxb day of March  
year 1539./

a) The King † Dom Afonso

39

## LETTER FROM THE KING OF CONGO TO DOM JOAO III

(12-17-1540)

†

Lord

/By style we have very high and very powerful prince and Lord as your very loyal brother, we always take account by our letters to y.h<sup>1</sup>. of the things in our Kingdom. And because many times we have eyes long waiting the answer of things of importance and that one and two years pass without seeing a letter from y.h. in which the said negotiation is noted, we accept that some were not given you for some licit impediment as was for those that we send by Manuell Pacheco your good servant and [in] large account we give to y.h. and those that we leave off saying that we give to the said Manuell Pacheco so that we ask y.h. that you give him all credit so that we might confide in him. And he was captured by the French according to our news that came and others take vengeance on them on your island for not wanting that y.h. see them; no other thing we feel to attribute to him.

Many times we write to y.h. for [our] ships that came we send you our letters of all that came to pass here; when we want to dispatch with them one of our servants, there is this is no longer any ship or whom to send them with. It was time in which the pilots and captains of the ships when they came to this our Kingdom and port had a well-taught compliment with us that so much so that the ship arrived sent us message if the said ship fulfilled any thing in our service. And now even when they come even when they go or do not what causes us great pain; we do not know if the cause is y.h. having rented out the tract or the people that have it. We ask y.h. for mercy that y.h. provide it so that you be served; because having now, of all, dispatched our brother and ambassador that we sent you his dispatch and a message came to us that a ship that was in the port because we wanted to send it, had left. And it was not only because to write the things to you that we suffer here.//.

We write to y.h. that [the] virtuous father friar Alvaro wanting to make an end to our life ordered a day of Easter with seven or eight white men and we were listening to mass they pulled out all their rifles and at the hour of the feast killed person of ours before the true Savior of the world, whom provided sizable peril and so miraculously we were released, tied our moor who was together with our person to the stake with our sashes and came to give him justice and then went to kill a man and wound two others. And all this is nothing if not that I die so they make another King that they want. And why God freed us of this, by God

<sup>1</sup> y.h.= Your Highness. Translator's note.

give us a life with which we serve might Him.//

An Alvaro Peçanha, natural of your Kingdom, in payment of the mercies that we gave armed treason against us in order to kill us as was clearly manifest and clear to us; such foreign persons, y.h., came and ordered modus and manner to kill the King of the land from whence they came to win their livelihood. These things, and the service that in them God makes, despite our not giving you other that were not of our Kingdom he and one brother of his; and without any fear nor embarrassment and turned to him and to this our port and we believe truly that he wished us dead, that more than search for that which might come, we exiled him from our Kingdom for treason that he be castigated there that he came to forcefully to attack us. Y.H. these things, the ones as the others, provide that they be prayed for and in the service of God and yours. Very high and very excellent King and powerful brother prince, that the Lord God always have your [person] and royal state in His Holy guard.//

In our city of Congo, Dom Yoão did on the xbij day of December of the year 1540.//

a) The King † Dom Afonso

