

# EXPÉDITION AFRICAINE ROGOZIŃSKI

## „VIVAT POLONIA 2016”

FLAG REPORT  
FOR THE EXPLORERS CLUB  
2017



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### **FLAG REPORT**

**for The Explorers Club**

by

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Dariusz Skonieczko  
Władysław Rybiński

**Ostrów Wielkopolski - Łódź - Warsaw - New York  
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## Aknowledgments

First, we would like to express our great appreciation to persons involved in our African endeavour, especially to Consul Mirosława Etoga and Father Dariusz Godawa without whom nothing would have managed, but also to Marianne and Achille Ndinga, the late Father Paweł Truszkowski, Mamadu, Bernardin Toungbo Kouamé, Cecile Kouadi Affoue, François Esmel Meledje, Adammo Ouattra, Henry Osaje, Spencer Oqua, Salivert Molindo, Willie Dweh and Monrovia taxi driver Sam for their assistance. Special thanks to Barbara Kłosowicz-Krzywicka whom we met on the way to Africa in Paris.

The project could not be realized without help of charming friends in Poland, particularly Agata Kosmalska - co-originator of the first African trip in 2014, Piotr Makos - tv producer and advisor, Julian Kernbach - our camera man in 2014, Jacek Łapott, Ambassador Eugeniusz Rzewuski, Michał Jarnecki, friends in Kalisz Eliza Smolińska, the late Hubert Pałęcki, Margot and Cezary Suszyński, Przemysław Kaczmarek, Dariusz Trenkler, Janusz Wysogład and Marzenna Pawlak. We also appreciate our families support and comprehension.

The commemorative plaque unveiled in Limbe, Cameroon, was sponsored by Adam Rybiński and Andrzej de Virion, the descendants of Branicki Family who financially helped Rogoziński, by The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw as well as by City of Kalisz, which is highly appreciated. Thanks to Bogdan Wajberg for the plaque design. Special thanks are due to HM Chief Ekoka Molindo who agreed to host this plaque on the walls of his palace and who organized a splendid ceremony in Limbe.

We are grateful for essential support received from The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw through a scientific patronage and a delegation assistance during the stay in Cameroon. We thank Adam Czyżewski - Director, Ewa Czyżewska and Mariusz Raniszewski for the company and all valuable discussions.

Our special thanks are extended to all media for their patronages and interest, namely to National Geographic Traveler, Dookoła Świata, Amazing TV, Koncept, Ziemia Kaliska, Radio Merkury (Radio Poznań) and Pangea Magazine.

Last but not least, The Explorers Club Flag award is highly recognized.



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## The Explorers Club Flag award letter

# THE EXPLORERS CLUB



January 22, 2016

Tomasz H. Grzywaczewski  
Narutowicza 8/10 m. 25,  
Lodz 90-135  
Poland

Re: Expedition Africaine Rogozinski "Vivat Polonia 2016"

Dear Mr. Grzywaczewski,

On behalf of the Flag and Honors Committee, we are pleased to announce The Explorers Club Flag award to you and your expedition. We will notify the Board of Directors at its next meeting. The Flag represents an impressive history of courage and accomplishment. It has been carried by our members to the Moon, to the depths of the ocean, and around the globe. It is both an honor and a privilege to receive this special recognition. Congratulations.

Please confirm in writing the address where we may send the flag. Should you have any special instructions, please notify us as soon as possible.

Both Emerald Nash, at Headquarters, and I stand ready to answer any questions or requests you may have with regard to the flag award and subsequent flag expedition report.

We wish you every success on your expedition and look forward to learning more about your accomplishments upon your return.

Best regards,

Vice President for Flag and Honors

/en

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## 1. General information

Dates of the expedition: January 29 to February 20, 2016

Starting place: Wrocław (Poland)

Visited places:

Paris (France)

Limbe, Douala, Kumba, Mambanda, Yaoundé, Mt. Cameroon\*, Buea\*, Foumban (Cameroon)

Ntoum, Bitam, Libreville (Gabon\*)

Malabo (Equatorial Guinea\*)

Calabar, Lagos (Nigeria)

Monrovia (Liberia)

Abidjan, Assini-Mafia, Krindjabo, Yamoussoukro (Ivory Coast)

\* places visited during a reconnaissance in January 2014

## 2. Historical background

Between 1882 and 1885, Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński together with Klemens Tomczek and Leopold Janikowski undertook an expedition to the area of the present Cameroon aimed at finding a place for the rebirth of the new Poland. At that time, Poland was under the partitions of Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary, which fully took place in 1795. The situation of the Polish population deteriorated, in particular the repression against Poles intensified after the failed January Uprising in 1863. It was this difficult geopolitical situation that inspired Rogoziński to seek some kind of asylum for his compatriots who were forced to leave Poland.

His expedition was preceded by a nationwide discussion in which Henryk Sienkiewicz or Boleslaw Prus, the most famous Polish writers, took part. 20-year-old Rogoziński charmed the writers a lot. Prus even compared him to Paul Edmund Strzelecki, Sienkiewicz in turn, saw Rogoziński's intentions as something out of the Jules Verne's novel.

It was also of exploratory-research character, and this part of it was a full success. The explorers gave Polish names to among others the highest peaks of the Cameroonian Mountains, and as the first white people they reached Barombi-Mbu Lake (named Benedict Lake). Their relations with natives were of a partner nature. Rogoziński was invited to participate in tribal deliberations, in the treatment of the sick or in court proceedings. The island of Mondoli, which was purchased by Rogoziński and located off the coast of today's Limbe, had become a symbol of friendly relations that combined the different cultures. The relations were extremely different from the typical ones as Europeans' expeditions were usually of the looting nature at those times. Eventually, Rogoziński controlled 63 villages and the area of several hundred square kilometres.

An important historical fact was solicitation done with British Vice-Consul Harold Whyte, who was residing in Calabar, in order to submit the controlled by Szolc-Rogoziński territories to the British as well as to retain the colonial march of the Germans on Cameroonian soil. Unfortunately, Stefan Rogoziński's efforts were annihilated, and the Cameroonian interior, by virtue of the findings of the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885, fell to the Germans. With the personal guidelines of the Emperor Bismarck the Polish names were erased from the geographical atlases.

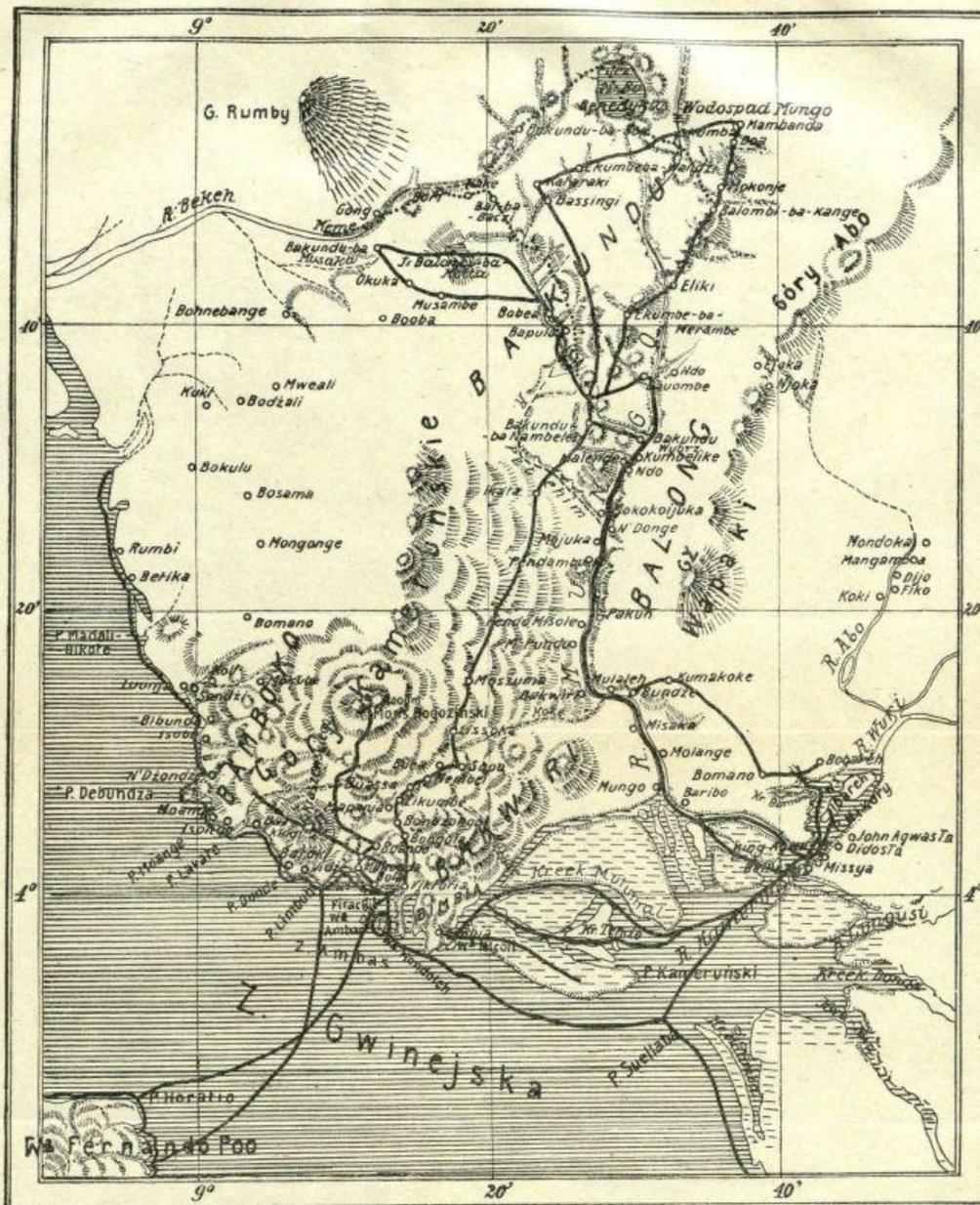
Stefan Rogoziński modified his name several times for one simple reason - he felt Polish and he wanted to stress it as much as possible (his father was German and mother was Pole):

- Stefan Scholtz - after his farther, this is a German name,
- Stefan Scholtz-Rogoziński - mother's family name added,
- Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński - German "Scholtz" now spelled in a Polish way,

- Stefan Rogoziński - German name skipped; this name was used for his African expedition in order to underline its unique Polish character.



Map of Cameroon with Rogoziński & Tomczek route in 1883; courtesy of National Museum in Szczecin Poland



Itinerarium wyprawy Rogozińskiego zestawiono na podstawie map S. S. Rogozińskiego (Rozprawy Akad. Umiej., Wydział Mat.-Przyrodn. 1884 i Petermanns Mitteilungen 1884), wprowadzając ponadto uzupełnienia, wynikające z opisów i relacji podróżnika.

Map of Cameroon with Rogoziński & Tomczek route in 1883 including Polish geographical names; source J. Ślisz, O Wyprawie S.S. Rogozińskiego do Kamerunu, Wiadomości Geograficzne, 1932, nr 8-10 (in Polish)

### 3. Objectives of the expedition

Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" is the most important part of the project remembrancing the forgotten Polish explorer Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński, patriot - dreaming about the Polish enclave in Africa, a researcher - discovering the last white spots on the map of the Black Land, humanitarian - being against colonial actions of European powers.

For everyone who gets to know the story of Rogoziński, this figure becomes an idol - the embodiment of the dreamer, the young brilliant organizer, the explorer and the 19th century traveller who knew how to set the highest goals and effectively executed them. It is his victory that even today he can infect others with his passion for life. It is worth promoting him because he is ideal for "processing", not only as a historical figure, but above all as a model for young people - idealist, but pragmatist, visionary and patriot. There is no need to look for good models far, since the best Polish "Indiana Jones of XIX Century" is so close.

Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" is part of a larger project of promotional activities, although it is a historical expedition in itself. It repeated the original route of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński. His itinerary included a visit and research in Cameroon (a region of Limbe and Kumba, a visit in Yaoundé and Foumban) as well as a visit in Nigeria (Calabar). It was in Calabar where Rogoziński was leading his brilliant diplomatic game with British Vice-Consul Whyte, containing briefly the effective march of the Germans through the lands managed by the Pole. At Ivory Coast the 19th century travellers travelled the area between Assini-Mafia and Krindjabo by boat to finally reach King Amou N'Doufou II, an enlightened old man who had the highest honour of welcoming European guests. None of the historical expeditions have ever replicated the Rogoziński route in this part of Africa. Only Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" sailed according to the preserved map of 1883, made by Klemens Tomczek (see page 42). The subsequent audience with King Amou N'Doufou V was a copy of Rogoziński's meeting - souvenirs from Poland, talks about the political situation as well as gin and whiskey toasts. The king gifted us with a two-volume description of the Sanwi people history and the engravings of the Rogoziński visit. On the other hand, staying in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, was an emphasising the importance of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński's visit to that country, the first independent piece of African land. It is worth recalling that the Poles were then taken over by the President of Liberia Alfred Russell.

Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" was the continuation of the first authoritative expedition in the footsteps of Szolc-Rogoziński (M. Klósak, A. Kosmalska, D. Skonieczko, J. Kernbach), aimed at reaching selected places in Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

The culmination of the expedition was the celebration concerning the unveiling of the commemorative plaque in Limbe in honour of Rogoziński and his companions. It hung on the wall of the palace of Chief Ekoka Molindo - great-great-grandson of Chief Ekema II, from whom Rogoziński bought part of the famous island of Mondoli, where a base of Poles was built in 1883. The stone plaque in Polish national colours was designed by the artist Bogdan Wajberg and is already the second such memorial after a plaque brought to Cameroon in 1973 by First Academic African Expedition led by Eugeniusz Rzewuski. Unfortunately, the first plaque is missing. The new plaque hung with the support of the descendants of the Branicki family - Adam Rybiński and Andrzej de Virion, The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw and the City of Kalisz.

The expedition added value was a participation of the delegation from the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw attended by Adam Czyżewski, the director, Elżbieta Czyżewska and Mariusz Raniszewski. It related only to the Cameroonian part of the expedition. The delegation's purpose was to establish cooperation with the museum in Fouban. The effects of this visit are already there: the first personnel exchange, and in the next phase the exhibits exchange, which will take place this year.

On the expedition leader initiative in November 2016 Kalisz City Council announced the year 2017 as "Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński Year". The result of the expedition is also the novel "Africa Direction", which covers part of the Szolc-Rogoziński fate and is the first fictional publication about the traveller. Maciej Klósak and Dariusz Skonieczko are its authors. Moreover, a comic book was published which coincides with the book according to the scenario of the authors mentioned above supported by Przemysław Kaczmarek and with drawings by Adam Polkowski. *Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016"* is therefore an important element in a whole range of activities already undertaken, as well as planned activities related to restoring the memory of Szolc-Rogoziński and promoting him as an interesting personal model for young people.

The Explorers Club decided on 22 January 2016 to award the Club Flag to "Vivat Polonia 2016" expedition.

#### 4. Logo and name of the expedition

The logo of the expedition was designed by Piotr Łopatka, the artist from Ostrów Wielkopolski. It was an evolution of his first logo designed and used for a reconnaissance trip to Africa in 2014.

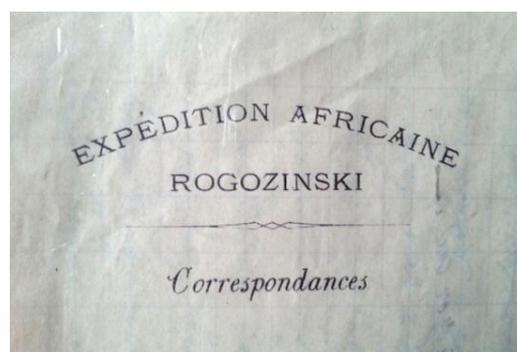
The current logo font and the name of our expedition was inspired by Rogoziński expedition of 1882-1885 (compare to Rogoziński original stationary presented below).



*Logo of Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016"*



*Logo of the reconnaissance to Africa in 2014*



*Stationary - Rogoziński expedition 1882-1885*

## 5. Expedition team members



**Dr. Maciej Klósak**

expedition leader and co-ordinator of the project, author of several publications on Rogoziński including a novel "Kierunek Afryka" [*Africa Direction*]; former member of the editorial team and author of texts in "Dookoła Świata" [*Round-the-World*] - the oldest Polish traveller magazine; PhD in applied mechanics, researcher and academic teacher in Morocco and Poland.



**Tomasz Grzywaczewski**

journalist, writer and PhD student in international law domain; originator of several travel reportage projects /Long Walk Plus Expedition to Siberia on the traces of Polish escapers from the Soviet gulag, Dead Road 1953-2013 - scientific expedition along the Transpolar Railway called Dead Road in collaboration with New York University/; author of prized books "Przez dziki Wschód" [*Through the wild East*] and "Życie i śmierć na Drodze Umarłych" [*Life and death on Dead Road*]; author of many travel papers in Polish journals and magazines; member of the Polish branch of The Explorers Club.



**Dariusz Skonieczko**

art historian, specialist in tribal and contemporary African art, keeper of African collections in the Department of Ethnography of Non-European Countries at The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw, participant of the expedition "Vivat Polonia 2016" as representative of the expedition patron (The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw) and scientific Consultant. Curator of the exhibition "Vivat Polonia! In the footsteps of Poles in Africa", in which Rogoziński expedition is one of the central points of exposure.



**Władysław Rybiński**

journalist, camera operator, documentalist. He studied history of art at Warsaw University and ended post-gradual studies (diplôme d'études approfondies) in Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. As filmmaker he participated in more than a dozen expeditions, from Maghreb to Antarctica. His document "Amrar i Grioci. O szaleństwach pewnego etnologa" [*Amrar and Griots. On follies of an ethnologist*] has been awarded with the Golden Swallow on the Afrykamery Festival in 2012. He cooperates permanently with the Polish Television where he makes TV reports.

## 6. Deliverables

### 6.1 Along Rogoziński traces in Paris

There is little known about last months of Rogoziński life. In 1895, he was staying some time in the psychiatric hospital in Bonn (Germany). This was when he started to contact Gabriele Whyte he knew well from African times. She was an ex-wife of Vice-Consul Harold Whyte with whom Rogoziński collaborated in Cameroon. She lived in Antwerp (Belgium) as their affection started to grow. Finally, Rogoziński moved to Paris where he seemed to look for new exploration projects again. It is possible that Gabriele followed him. Unfortunately, on December 1, 1896 he was tragically struck by an omnibus (horse tramway) and died on the spot. A few days later Rogoziński's brother Kazimierz paid a perpetual concession for the grave.

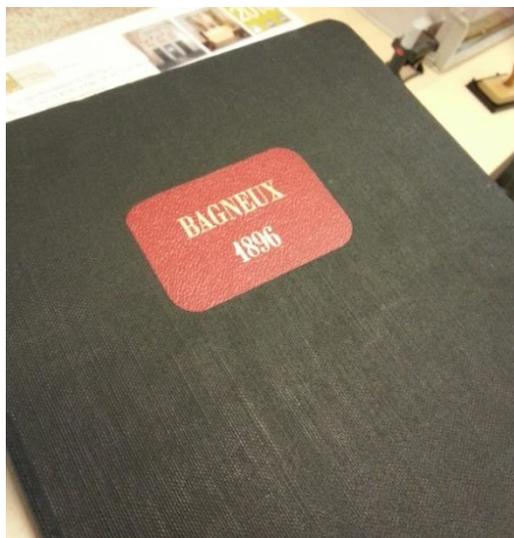
The place of Rogoziński's tomb was not known until 2013 where it was discovered by Mrs Barbara Kłosowicz-Krzywicka, inspired by the historian Michał Jarnecki. The tomb is located on the communal cemetery (still active) in Bagneux, the commune in the vicinity of Paris. The exact spot was independently confirmed by Maciej Klósak who visited the place four times.

**The aim of our visit in Bagneux was to make a first documentary about the place of the eternal rest of the explorer.** Mrs Kłosowicz-Krzywicka was invited to participate in filming. She explained how she searched the tomb. It is to be noted there is no tombstone, it is just an empty, abandoned place. The idea of the expedition team is to exhume the remains of Rogoziński and to place him in the family grave in Kalisz. Another option would be to re-construct a tomb in Bagneux. Currently, a legal situation is clarified concerning the rights to carry out any of these actions.

An incorrect picture of the tomb has recently been published in one Polish book "Klemens Tomczek - szkic biograficzny 1860-1884" /Klemens Tomczek - biographical sketch 1860-1884/. The correct picture presented below is made by Maciej Klósak and confirmed by Mrs Kłosowicz-Krzywicka as well as by the cemetery manager.



*Cemetery of Bagneux - the tomb of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński (empty place with no tombstone, marked by flowers), photo by Maciej Klósak taken in 2015*



*Cemetery of Bagneux - book with Rogoziński's tomb reference number*



*Cemetery of Bagneux - meeting with Mrs Barbara Kłosowicz-Krzywicka who found the Rogoziński's tomb*



*Cemetery of Bagneux - the team while filming*



*Cemetery of Bagneux - a symbolic torch on the grave of Rogoziński: D. Skonieczko, M. Klósak, B. Kłosowicz-Krzywicka*

Another point of interest during the French stop of the expedition was located at 36, Sainte-Anne Street where Hotel Maintenon is located. This is where Rogoziński spent his last moments, probably sitting in a small bar on the ground floor. When leaving the hotel, he was struck by the omnibus. The witnesses confirmed in the death act that it was late in the evening.

**This place of Rogoziński's death was visited for the first time for historical reasons. A documentary film was made.** Possible circumstances and causes of the accident were analyzed. The first idea was Rogoziński could be a bit drunk when leaving the hotel, entering the street and facing an oncoming vehicle. However, the on-site verification made us aware of the fact how the street was narrow. In this case, the fault might have been on any side, either on Rogoziński's or on a tramway driver. The tramway driver could ride too close to building facades.

No records in the hotel (guests book) from the 19th century were available. No other information could be found.



*36, Sainte-Anne St. in Paris - place of Rogoziński's tragic death; T. Grzywaczewski and M. Klósak while filming*

## **6.2 Missionary activities of Rogoziński in Cameroon and Gabon**

Rogoziński's achievements are well reported in the literature, however, one aspect seems to be completely underestimated and practically not known. This is his missionary activity.

When Polish expedition arrived to Cameroon, protestant missions co-existed with local communities along the country. The first one came in 1843 from London, sent by the Baptist Missionary Society. Alfred Saker established Victoria town (today Limbe) where Rogoziński landed w 1883, just 2 years after Saker had passed away. The problem of indigenous people was not a contact with the European missionaries, but an aggressive competition between different religion representatives who wanted to take hold of most of the African territories and their population. The same was happening in Cameroon. Catholics were present close to its borders: in Fernando Poo (Spanish Jesuits) and in Gabon where the Congregation of the Holy Spirit from France settled down. Protestants did not allow them to enter.

The objective of our trip to Gabon was to confirm where Rogoziński exactly spent time during his visit in 1884. Before arrival to Gabon, a profound study of available sources was made, however with poor results. All the authors who tried to write a biography of Rogoziński (Saliński, Szumańska Grossowa, Jarnecki) mentioned little about Rogoziński and Janikowski's trip to Gabon after Tomczek's death. General information says it was during the summer of 1884 and it was aimed to visit the catholic authorities as well as to make a weekend boat trip on Remboué river. Finally, a deeper study through missionary archives gave more precise data, especially findings from Father Antoni Kurek's papers

who confirmed exact days of the visit (June 20 to July 7, 1884) and oriented us towards the archives of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit located in Paris. The archives contain a lot of interesting information. There are letters describing talks between Rogoziński and bishop Le Berre who first intended to make a deal with Poles by setting a catholic mission in Cameroon on the land offered by Rogoziński. It should be noted that Cameroonian historical books (i.e. "Cameroon History in the 19th and 20th centuries" by Tazifor Tajoche) put Rogoziński's missionary activities ahead from his exploration achievements. This may be an objective assessment of T. Tajoche, but there may be other reasons: either all Rogoziński's geographical successes were erased by Germans, but missionary traces remained in religious archives or this is due to the subsequent important role of the Catholicism in Cameroon. Just to be noted that the current structure of the religions in Cameroon is the following (rough values): Catholics 40%, Protestants 30%, Muslims 20% and some minor ones. The missionary process initiated by Rogoziński's activity brought the Catholicism to the first position among other religions in the country.

Our trip through the main road from the Cameroon/Gabon border in Bitam to Libreville stopped in Ntoum, some 40 kilometres from the capital to meet Polish missionaries of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchins. The stay was fruitful: we received 700 pages of the mission history in Gabon (in French) and precise maps of the region. **It was confirmed with no doubt that two missionary stations existed in Gabon at that time and Rogoziński must have visited both of them, not only the head office of the bishop Le Berre in Libreville (as Father A. Kurek wrote in the above-mentioned papers), but also in Donguilla. This was an important discovery as no historical sources described that.** We visited Donguilla missionary buildings from which only one remained that could remember Rogoziński's visit (see photo hereafter). The Remboué river is just across the estuary and its mouth to the estuary is seen from the mission.

Le Berre was ready to make a deal with Rogoziński, but unhappily to this plan, Germans colonized the Cameroonian territory in 1884/85. The bishop decided to play with Germans as they were ready to accept and implement catholic monks. However, finally, due to the existing restrictive law, the order that was linked to Jesuits could not be introduced on the land controlled by German. Even the German Parliament refused to change this law in favour of the French mission.

It seemed Rogoziński's missionary activity had a sad end. Not at all. **Before he left Africa, he sent to Paris a donation act of passing all his lands in Cameroon to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit; this fact was discovered during archive works. Some 26 years after, in 1910, the Holy Trinity Parish was established in Bota around a new catholic church building exactly on the land donated by Rogoziński. A true happy end. This church was spotted during our expedition. It is located on the banks of the Amba Bay where we set off on the Mondoli Island boat trip.**

Many times in religious archives, scientific papers and books, Rogoziński's role to develop the Christianity in Africa is highlighted and appreciated. Father Antoni Kurek called him "a charismatic leader who was one of the most outstanding secular initiators of the missionary activities in Africa". So why is this role neglected?



*Donguilla church (built in XX century)*



*Donguilla mission - the only building dated from Rogoziński's times*

### **6.3 Kingdom of Bamoun**

The Kingdom of Bamoun with its capital in Fouban is the only place on the expedition route to which Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński did not arrive. Due to the uneasy political situation in Kumba and Mokonja, the explorer was forced to stop his journey to north and return to the coast. Within our expedition framework not only historical research was planned, but also ethnographic activities involving gathering of collections for The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw and starting the cooperation between the Museum and the Fouban Royal Palace which presents unique exhibits related to the history, culture and tradition

of the Bamoun people. Since the founding of the state in 1394, the kingdom was ruled uninterruptedly by one dynasty started by King (Mfon) Nchare. Her most prominent representative was Sultan Ibrahim Mbouombouo Njoya XVII, who sat on the throne between 1887 and 1933. It was during his reigns that a remarkable Royal Palace inspired by Prussian architecture was built. The palace later became partially an ethnographic museum.

After reaching Foumban, **the expedition members were received on a special audience by the currently ruling Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya XIX. Especially for this ceremony the ruler, holding The Explorers Flag 112, sat on the throne of his famous grandfather.** At the same time he narrated an extraordinary history of the birth of religious ecumenism in the Sultanate:

"My grandfather Sultan Ibrahim Njoya decided to abandon animism and accept Islam when he saw emir troops from Nigeria vanquishing their opponents. Since Allah gave them so much power, it is worth making an alliance with emir. But then came the mighty German army. Allah had to bow in front of Jesus of Nazareth. The pragmatic ruler quickly converted to Christianity" says Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo. The ruler is wearing festive robes and yet for a moment he is sitting on a richly carved wooden throne with lion skin spread out at the footrest. "However, there was a problem. As you know in the Christ religion polygamy is not possible..." - he continues smiling significantly. His ancestor had a great trouble with choosing the only one beloved, because at the time of accepting the new faith he had already made over six hundred spouses. The king returned to Islam... "But Muslims are not allowed to drink alcohol. And it is so hard to refuse yourself a glass of wine. Desperate Njoya decided on a Solomon solution and finally created his own religion, combining various elements of the two religions. Although the new faith was not accepted yet nowadays Christians and Muslims in my kingdom live peacefully side by side. Normal things are mixed marriages. Everyone can choose the religion that suits him most."

**After the audience, a delegation from The State Ethnographic Museum led by Adam Czyżewski signed a letter of intent on the cooperation between the Polish and Cameroonian museums and scientific institutions. The collected exhibits related to the history of the Bamoun people will supply the Museum's African collection in Warsaw.**

The cooperation agreement is of particular importance in the context of the extraordinary undertaking being realised vis-à-vis the Royal Palace. On the wooden scaffolding workers are bustling, adding more new fragments of the impressive buildings. Double-headed snake, a spider and a bell. Victory over enemy armies, wisdom and power. The emblems of the Kingdom of Bamoun imprisoned in a concrete mass over Foumban. Soon to the new building the collections stored in the Sultan's estate until now will be added.

The modern ethnographic museum will be the first one of its kind in this part of Africa, and the letter, signed as a part of the expedition, will provide a unique opportunity for cooperation between Europe and Cameroon, contributing to the preservation and promotion of African cultural heritage.

**It is worth mentioning that the expedition members were received by Sultan in a manner reserved only for the most distinguished guests. Sultan sat on the throne of his grandfather Sultan Njoya XVII.** The last time President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, was received in such a solemn manner.



*HE Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya XIX*



*Foumban - HE Sultan Njoya XIX granted an audience to the expedition members*



*Foumban - documentary about the audience with HE Sultan Njoya XIX*



*Palace in Foumban*



*Rare photo of HE Sultan Njoya XIX sitting on the throne of his grandfather Sultan Njoya XVII*



*Fouban - construction of a new museum; the shape of the museum is that of the symbols of Kingdom of Bamoun: the double-headed snake, the spider and the bell*

#### **6.4 Limbe - Chief Ekoka Molindo**

"On this coast, lots of Europeans had always been arriving to my compatriots: Germans, French, English. But they all had one goal: conquest. They wanted to seize our lands. However, your compatriot - Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński - came here as a friend and was welcomed by my grand-grandfather" - Chief of the Mondoli people **Dr. Ekoka A. Molindo dressed in ceremonial attire chairs the ceremony of unveiling the commemorative plaque devoted to Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński, the Polish explorer of Western Cameroon.** From the white-red granite slabs made by the artist Bogdan Wajberg from Łódź (Poland) and hanging on the wall of the royal palace in the seaside village of Wovia on the outskirts of the city Limbe, the image of a young traveller who made pioneering discoveries in this part of Africa at the end of the 19th century looks at the collected people. The atmosphere is solemn. Among the guests apart from the expedition members and the director of The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw Adam Czyżewski was also Honorary Consul of Poland Mirosława Etoga and many ordinary residents who with a great interest were looking at an unusual event. "Starting today there is also a piece of Poland here" - Chief Molindo ends the speech and asks the guests in. In order to reach the palace of the leader Molindo you have to leave the city of Limbe in the Southwest Region by the main road N3 along the coast to the west and after about 3-4 km ask about the village (pull off the road N3 to the left in front of the stadium and follow the bumpy path approx. 500 meters).

Next day Chief Molindo, with his strong machete hits, paved the way through a dense equatorial forest covering Mondoli Island a few kilometres from the mainland. The blade

cuts liana, bushes and small trees. It is sultry and stuffy. The deciduous vault restrains the rays of the setting sun. Everything drowns in the typical for jungles dimness. "Do not be afraid. There are no snakes on the Island" - he smiles when he notices how carefully we make every single step on the soft underwood watching simultaneously the branches in search of lurking attackers. It is here that Rogoziński and his associates geologist Klemens Tomczek and meteorologist Leopold Janikowski founded the "Stefania" base from which they conducted research trips into the depths of the Black Land. **After a hundred years, only fragments of stone foundations remained. It can be confirmed thanks to the sketches from the National Museum in Szczecin, that the base of Rogoziński was located just here.** The abundant and wanton tropical nature is rapidly absorbing every single symptom of human presence. Once the island inhabited several dozen people but now it is completely deserted. Lack of fresh water chased away even the most persistent inhabitants. The local tribes chiefs were coming here in the days of Rogoziński as he earned their friendship and kindness. Rogoziński wrote in his memoirs: "The natives of the southern slope of the Cameroon Mountains have been already growing accustomed to us for some time, and the coastal caciques more often than not were coming to Mondoli station along with the highlanders, asking us to solve their disputes, and finally their confidence went so far that the main cacique, King George of Bota, gave his country over to my hands, and soon followed him other caciques neighbours."

"The entire island belongs to the Mondoli people. I hope we can manage it again. My ancestor leased its fragment to your compatriots. I am ready to give you a part of this land as a sign of friendship between our peoples" - said Chief at the conclusion of the expedition stay on the island which for some two years was the tiny kingdom of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński. The foundation of the plaque as well as the trip to Mondoli Island were primarily symbolic. **The purpose of this part of the project was not only to find the remains of the "Stefania" base (as it turned out to be extremely few) but above all to commemorate Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński as a traveller and an explorer ahead of his epoch.** The explorer, whose aim was not to conquer and rob but broaden our knowledge while building a bond of mutual understanding between the people of Europe and Africa. That is why the unveiling of the plaque just by Chief Molindo has given this event a special meaning underlining the fact, as a century ago Szolc-Rogoziński wrote, that "even the poorest country has no right to inhibit those individuals whose dedication displaces them out of their own interests into the broad international arena of knowledge, where there are no nations, but there is humankind".



*Talks at Ministry of Arts and Culture before ceremony, Yaoundé*



*Limbe - opening of the 50 kg parcel from Poland who contained the plaque*



*Limbe - installation works*



*Reception at the palace of Chief Ekokola Molindo in Limbe*



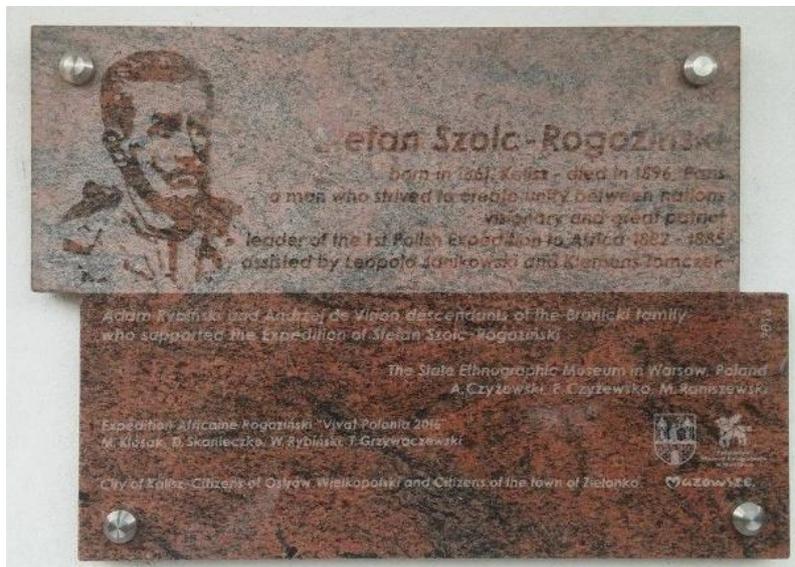
*Limbe. Unveiling of a memorial plaque; from the left: Chief Ekokola Molindo, Consul Mirosława Etoga, Maciej Klószak*



*Limbe. Unveiling of a memorial plaque; Chief Ekokola Molindo and Consul Mirosława Etoga*



*Limbe, after ceremony talks: Adam Czyżewski, Maciej Klósak and Chief Ekoka Molindo*



*Memorial plaque designed by Prof. Bogdan Wajberg*



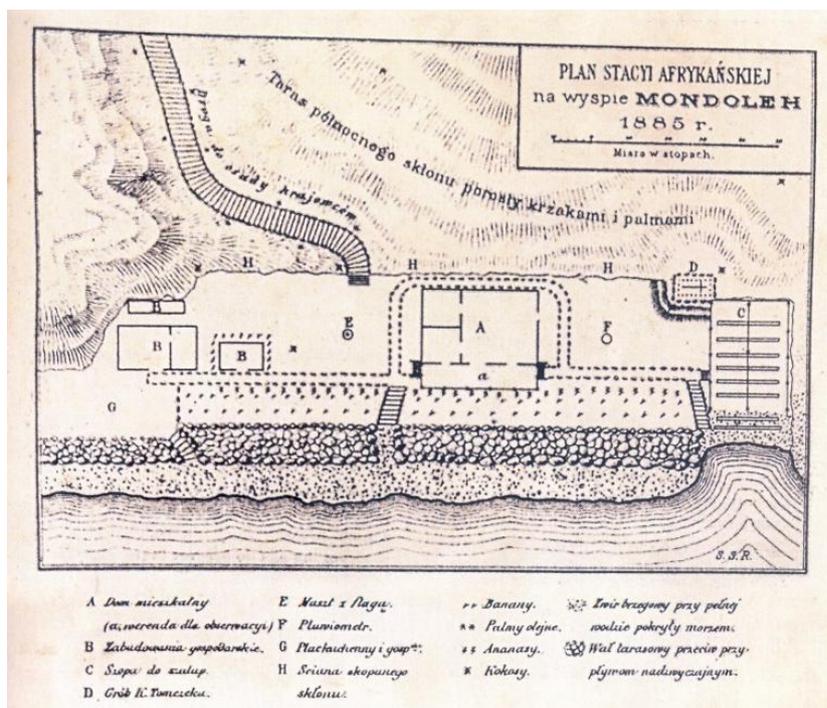
*Dr. Adam Czyżewski - Director of The State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw and Chief Dr. Ekoka Molindo*



Mondoli Island, Ambas (Amboise) Bay



Mondoli Island - remains of retaining wall of Rogoziński's base "Stefania"



Mondoli Island - sketch of Rogoziński's base - stoned retaining walls marked on the bottom



*Limbe - memorial photo of guests gathered at the ceremony on February 6, 2016*



*The Explorers Club Flag on Mondoli Island; from the left: Maciej Klósak, Władysław Rybiński, Chief Ekoka Molindo, Tomasz Grzywaczewski*



*Limbe - expedition team with the Flag in front of the memorial plaque*

## 6.5 Way to Kumba

Limbe-Kumba was the main axe of Rogoziński and Tomczek first trip to the interior. As previous scientific-historical visits were limited to Limbe (E. Rzewuski, J. Łapott), this task was of a special importance.

Several stops were made along the road to gather filming materials, however the most important towns were Mambanda and Kumba which appeared in Rogoziński's diary.

Rogoziński described in details a history of a sacred waterfall which was a place of worship for Bakundu people. Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński and Klemens Tomczek were supposed to discover it on September 15, 1883. While standing in front of the 80 ft high waterfall, they exclaimed the unforgettable slogan "Vivat Polonia"... The problem was no waterfall could be found in Kumba and its vicinity. We went through the Mungo River, located around 30-40 kilometres from Kumba, because we thought that Rogoziński dairy might be inexact.

Finally, after several inquiries, a waterfall with the comparable height was found on Mungo River, close to the main N8 road leading to Mamfé, just in front of a very characteristic and unique long viaduct over a beautiful valley. **It can be confirmed this is the very waterfall Rogoziński described.** However, the point is it is located approximately 40 kilometres from Kumba, while in his diary Rogoziński wrote they heard the sound of the water falling on arrival to Kumba. Therefore, his description could not be true.

**Our hypothesis is that he learned about this important sacred place of Bakundu people but due to a big distance through the remote jungle, he could not get there. He decided to immortalise the waterfall by bending facts and reality.** In our opinion, it does not undermine a positive evaluation of Rogoziński's expedition achievements.

Other important places of the visit were Barombi-Mbu and Barombi-ba-Kotta Lakes. The first one was close by, just on the outskirts of Kumba. The lake was discovered by Tomczek alone, because Rogoziński got injured during the elephant stampede. Dangerous passages of herds of African forest elephants were known to Bakundu people. This rare species of elephants could also be met around Cameroon mountains in times of Rogoziński's expedition. Today it can still be seen in the southern part of Cameroon, but mostly in Gabon and Central Africa. The species is threatened with extinction. Tomczek named the lake as Benedict Lake in honour of Count Benedict Tyszkiewicz who helped Rogoziński. The name was deleted from the maps by Germans a year later after they took over this part of Cameroon. In Barombi-New-Town we met a local chief who gave us interesting information about the history of Barombi-ba-Kotta Lake.



*Limbe, Ambas (Amboise) Bay*



*On the way to Kumba, Muyuka*



*On the way to Kumba, local chief of the village*



*Barombi-Mbu Lake at the outskirts of Kumba*



*Barombi-Mbu Lake - TEC Flag held by Maciej Klósak and Tomasz Grzywaczewski*



*Mambanda - main road*



*Unpaved road north of Kumba*



*Mungo River near Kumba*



*Barombi-New-Town - meeting the local chief*

## 6.6 British Consulate in Calabar

This coastal Nigerian city located in Cross River State was a key administration centre in the region during Rogoziński's exploration. A colonial protectorate was established here in 1849 to control a regional policy around the Gulf of Guinea (Biafra). The splendid new governor's building was constructed in Calabar to underline the British supremacy. It was located on a hill from which a clear view on the river, which was an important trade route, was offered. Thus, the British could control any move of ships coming from outside or in the interior of Nigeria.

The Consulate Office was managed by Consul Edward Hewett. As his health gradually deteriorated, Vice-Consul Harold Whyte became more and more important and finally carried out principal duties.

A natural border of the British Crown controlled lands towards south-east were Cameroon Mountains. Bakundu people living on the south-eastern slopes of the mountains were free people, the same as all the people living further to the south. When Rogoziński arrived to Cameroon in 1883, the situation of this land was unchanged since centuries. Small kingdoms were governed by local chiefs, some of them being more powerful and widely recognized such as King George of Bota or Sultan Njoya in Foumban. Rogoziński quickly managed to build up friendly relations with local leaders. They were surprised by his different approach to explore the country and to deal with people, which was in a complete opposition to the aggressive colonial policy of European countries. He gained their respect and used to be invited to solve tribal disputes and conflicts as a judge. Finally, he got control over 63 villages, while keeping perfect relations with their chiefs.

The problem began when Germans started to impose forced labour to local communities and to attack some villages in order to get hold over Cameroon. They were installed in the region since 1869 as traders, but in 1884 it changed into a military presence. When Rogoziński realized that, as he was unarmed and could not resist to Germans, he decided to sail to Calabar in order to protect his people. He convinced consul to extend the British protectorate over his land in order to stop aggressors. He knew what he could expect from Germans as they were Polish territory occupants at that time. The young and ambitious Vice-Consul Whyte decided to make a deal with Rogoziński. The British flags were handed over in all villages and Rogoziński became Acting Chief Civil Commissioner with his office located in Victoria. This was his most brilliant diplomatic game against powerful Germans. He blocked their march towards north of the country for many months. Even Bismarck personally attacked Rogoziński's acts in Berlin. Unfortunately to Rogoziński, Whyte and all Cameroonian people, the Berlin Treaty was signed in February

1885 and gave this land to Germans. The British withdrew and Rogoziński had to leave Cameroon for safety reasons.

**Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" was the first scientific expedition to visit Calabar** in order to verify historical facts as well as the first one that take a ship to travel from Limbe (previously Victoria) to Calabar as Rogoziński did. It was not sure where Rogoziński met consul. **The photos found in The Calabar Museum confirmed that this 19th century building was once the British Governor's place and the house of the Consulate. It was proved the building already existed in the times Rogoziński visited the city (constructed in 1884) and he must have met consul on this location. This was an important historical confirmation.** A deception was the state of the library which did not allow to discover any other materials. The suggestion would be to search in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office archives or at Royal Geographic Society, located in London.

**An important part of a journey was an overnight ship trip from Limbe to Calabar. It was the first historical trip made on this section of Rogoziński expedition. Rogoziński must have done it several times.** At present, the maritime activity is highly discouraged in this region as the whole Nigerian coast east from Niger River estuary is controlled by pirates (status for February 2016). As this small passenger regular ship was not visited by unexpected guests since four months, we decided to take a risk. It was just strictly forbidden to go out to the deck during the trip as ships were non-stop observed using night vision devices. **This sailing between Limbe and Calabar enabled to complete a missing section of Rogoziński's path in Africa.**

It should be noted that Rogoziński returned to Calabar several times between 1888 and 1891 when he lived on a farm at Fernando Poo (today Bioko) Island with his wife Helena "Hajota". Another thing is that Calabar may be considered as a birthplace of his true love - Gabriele Whyte. The ex-wife of Vice-Consul Whyte started to date with Rogoziński in Antwerp and Paris just before his tragic death in December 1896.



*On the way from Limbe to Calabar - captain of the ship*



*On the way from Limbe to Calabar - passengers from Mali and Senegal*



*The Calabar Museum, previously the Governor's house and Consulate*



*The Calabar Museum on the photograph from 1884*



*Calabar - an overview from The Calabar Museum*



*Calabar - Rogoziński and Janikowski visiting Consul Whyte (first from the left) and his wife Gabriele, 1885*

## **6.7 Monrovia**

A short stay in Liberia was deliberately limited due to Ebola virus epidemic that ended just a few months before the arrival of the expedition. It was the first research visit in the country related to the history of Rogoziński in Africa.

Coming back to the past, Monrovia was the first Rogoziński's stop on the continent, yet not a very typical African one. Those days, Liberia was one of very few places in Africa which was an independent, not colonial, country. The land was governed by ex-slaves who started to settle down in 1822 after the abolition in America. The Liberian society was modern in terms of the community organization, there was a president and parliament, contrary to African tribal traditions.

Stefan Rogoziński and his team was received by President Alfred Francis Russell who was the son of a slave woman. He was born in Kentucky and arrived to Liberia in 1833 after he was emancipated with his mother. He was interested in the Polish history which was a sad example of the European partitioned country. Polish explorers received a warm welcome and spent several days travelling across Liberia.

Any attempts to find details about Rogoziński's visit turned to be unfruitful. It must be reminded Liberia suffered a tragic military junta introduced by Samuel Doe's violent coup d'état in 1980. Things got worse when he was killed by his ex-minister Charles Taylor who imposed a reign of terror for many years. The active opposition, in which Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was a key person, finally managed to bring peace. Mme Sirleaf - the Noble Peace Prize winner - became President of Liberia in 2006. The country was completely devastated - many lives were lost and the infrastructure damaged or ruined. That's what happened to all Liberian archives. **A visit in Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism confirmed that no written evidences from the 19th century shall be found. The only result of the visit is a video footage and photographs.**



*Monrovia - Grand Masonic Temple turned into ruin during the reigns of terror*



*Monrovia, Providence Island - a historical place of the American settlement in Liberia; now inhabited by bats who were (improperly) accused of spreading the Ebola virus in 2014-2015*



*Monrovia - visit at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (Mr Willie Dweh - assistant to Minister)*

## **6.8 Assini-Mafia and Krindjabo - palaver at King Amou N'Doufou V palace**

Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński, Klemens Tomczek and Leopold Janikowski landed in Assini in March 1883 to visit Kingdom of Sanwi. Assini is beautifully located on a lagoon and river mouth, however the entrance by ship from the ocean is hardly possible due to side waves. When sailing up the river, the city of Krindjabo - the capital of Sanwi - is found. This place was a target of Rogoziński. He intended to meet the local king. It should be noted that this was their first meeting with a typical African ruler (the government in Monrovia was organised according to the American order).

**"Vivat Polonia 2016" was the first expedition ever to repeat a pathway of Rogoziński in this region of Africa (current border between Ivory Coast and Ghana). Tomczek sketched a map of their trip which nowadays can be found in The National Museum in Szczecin (Poland) - see page 42. The trip in 19th century took up one day with an**

overnight stopover at a French factory. We managed to reproduce a part of it in a rented boat, listening to the local guide histories. It looks like time stopped in this area: the same long fishing boats, typical fishing net supporting constructions standing in water, the only noisy difference is that most boats are now equipped with an engine.

On arrival, we contacted the king's palace and the next day we were invited to participate in a palaver. It is a kind of the assembly meeting in which local chiefs participate and discuss local problems with king. Rogoziński's team was received by Amou N'Doufou II, our expedition team had a pleasure to meet king with the same name: Amou N'Doufou V. We repeated the historical event during the palaver: Amou N'Doufou V was endowed with gifts - Polish collector coins, Rogoziński also came with coins donated by the local French businessman. King gifted us with two volumes of the history of Sanwi. Some photos and sketches from historical times were analysed to find traces of the Polish expedition. The problem is there is little or no historical materials made by locals. The whole history during the colonisation time was written by the French. There are a lot of missionary histories, texts about French factories and trade links, but no traces of Rogoziński's visit. King Amou N'Doufou V was especially interested in The Explorers Club Flag we used for common commemorative photos.

Local officials kindly showed us all interesting places Rogoziński might have been in. First, the place near the Krindjabo River where probably Polish travellers landed, was visited. Then the Holy Forest which is a forbidden place for local people. We also entered the abandoned king's palace which existed when Rogoziński arrived. Apparently, this palace was constructed by King Amou N'Doufou II with the French technical support after he earned good money when trading with the French.



*Assini-Mafia - place where Rogoziński took the water road to Krindjabo*



*Krindjabo - a historical place where Rogoziński got off the boat to meet King of Sanwi*



*Krindjabo - a historical place where Rogoziński got off the boat to meet King of Sanwi; expedition team received by local officials*



*King Amou N'Doufou V at his palace in Krindjabo*



Map of Assini-Krindjabo region with traces of a boat trip from Assini (nowadays Assini-Mafia) to Krindjabo made by Rogoziński and his team; at present the land belongs to Ivory Coast at the border with Ghana; courtesy of The National Museum in Szczecin, Poland



Talks with King Amou N'Doufou V about historical achievements of Rogoziński expedition during the palaver



*Memorial photo with TEC Flag at King Amou N'Doufou V palace in Krindjabo*



*Holy Forbidden Forest near Krindjabo*

## **7. Concluding remarks**

Expedition "Vivat Polonia 2016" was the first research project to fully examine the traces of Rogoziński's 19th century expedition. An extended bibliographical study started in 2013 and it confirmed there were many weak points in available literature and even some historical facts were confused. These facts were partially explained as far as it was possible.

The key axe of the whole project was to bring back the memory of this great Pole and his achievements and to promote him worldwide. The Polish "Indiana Jones of the 19th century" is a perfect idol for a young generation which seeks brave and extraordinary heroes to get inspired. Rogoziński is a perfect role model who possesses the qualities that affect us and make us want to become better people.

The unveiling of a memorial plaque by Chief Ekokola Molindo has symbolically confirmed that Rogoziński was not only an explorer but also, what is even more important, a visionary humanist believing that "even the poorest country has no right to inhibit those individuals whose dedication displaces them out of their own interests into the broad international arena of knowledge, where there are no nations, but there is humankind". We understand it is time to bring him into the light of day.

Expédition Africaine Rogoziński "Vivat Polonia 2016" gathered satisfactory documentary material to produce a film, a photo exhibition, to write some popular-science papers as well as a novel. This knowledge is being shared during numerous presentations in Poland. Plans are made to carry out thematic seminars abroad in 2018.

The fruit of the expedition was awarded on the Traveller's Festival in Bydgoszcz in April 2016 and nominated to Kolosy Prize - the most distinguished traveller prize in Poland - in March 2017.

## **Contact data**

Please, feel free to contact us for any questions about the expedition and history of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński:

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Annex: comic book - exemplar pages



KLUB AFRYKAŃSKI. NEAPÓL, CZERWIEC 1881r.  
ODCZYT ROGOZIŃSKIEGO.





STARA, ALE PIĘKNA!

NAZWĘ JĄ...  
...LUCJA MAŁGORZATA,  
A TERAZ WYRUSZAM  
ZDOBYWAĆ RESZTĘ  
FUNDUSZY. NADAL  
MAMY ZA MAŁO!



PARYŻ...

PANIE STEFANIE!  
PANSKI PLAN JEST NAPRA-  
WDĘ NIESAMOWITY.  
CHĘTNIE POMOGĘ, JAKEM  
HRABIA BRANICKI!



OCZYWISTIE NA TYLE, NA ILE  
POZWOLA MI TE CIĘŻKIE CZASY,  
W KTÓRYCH PRZYSZŁO NAM ŻYĆ.



WALKA Z ŻYWIŁEM CIĄGNĘŁA SIĘ W NIESKONCZONOŚĆ?



SITUACJA OPANOWANA, ALE  
SZTORM WYRZĄDZIŁ MNOSTWO  
SZKÓD LUCJI-MAŁGORZACIE.

PATRZCIE! WŁAŚNIE  
MIAMY TANGER?

