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Colonial Brands in the Toponymia of Angola Case of the City of Benguela

Bernardo Kessongo Menezes

PhD student in History in the field of Contemporary History

Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Assistant researcher at the Humanities Center (CHAM) - linked to FCSH / NOVA

Resume:

There have been several procedures in the last few times about the urgency of correctly writing the names of the places and spelling them later; the place names whose origin goes back to the colonial period have been discussed in many moments, as they are not well known to the large public in Benguela. Indeed, the interest in discussing the meaning and impact of certain names of sites, can be a touchstone for an initial survey of toponymy, although, we believe that investigating the origins of toponyms is very important to know the historical-cultural importance that they close. The main objective of this work is to reflect on the toponymic reality of the Benguela area based on theoretical foundations of a historical character about colonization and toponymy. We dedicate time especially to field research and in order to achieve the recommended objectives, we use combinations of methods such as: Bibliographic research; biographical method; We will naturally use the terrain method or the ethnological method, to complete the terrain method and almost even in the final straight, we use the geographic information system with the help of the Google Earth Satellite. The geographic information system method. In order to summarily justify the path taken, from the beginning we hope to present a set of concepts and theories about onomastics and toponymy in particular; collect contributions to improve toponymic work.

Key Words: Colonial marks, Toponymy of Angola, City of Benguela.

Introduction

The place name is an element that contributes to the cultural framework and the perception that individuals have of the territory that surrounds them. It allows the understanding of a community's *modus vivendi*, pointing to the need for geographic organization of the population and space. Temporally, this organization is reflected in the community group and extends to the history itself, where effectively the human person is able to value the sociographic organization of these spaces, through the knowledge of the names of the localities, becoming a social and historical being.

As far as the onomastics and toponymy of Angola and Benguela are concerned, academics and policy makers must do much and much. Many of the names that answer our localities, streets, neighborhoods and cities mean little or almost nothing. Domingos do Ó Street. What does that mean? Who was Domingos do Ó? What relevance does it have today? There are toponyms that were created out of the nominator's ignorance, there are insulting toponyms that seem to have been created by some drunken passerby (Kamaniñga). It is, therefore, a matter that requires discussion. And here we go, starting with Benguela's toponymic considerations.

Notes On Toponymia In General

My family owns some farmland and lots of forests. Do you think you own the land? Impossible! It's like saying that you own your mother. After all - [...] it is the land that gives you life, that feeds you and gives you a drink from your first days until old age, and it will be the land that welcomes you again, when your days are over [...]. The earth is our mother; saying that we have it is almost an offense (Domingues, 2015: 49).

The word toponymy, at first sight, seems to be, very clear and obvious to its meaning. But, after closer consideration, it can be difficult to define. Of Greek etymology, the word toponymy, is composed of *topos* (τόπος), which means “place” and of *onoma* (ὄνομα), which means “name”. That is why the name of a place is designated with a place name. From toponym, it is easily changed to toponymy. And this last word, more than anything, is science about place names. a community and thus a stranger cannot fully understand them. For the inhabitants of a given locality, it is not acceptable to change names once assigned from prominent personalities in local history or in memory of historical facts. Errors in spelling and pronunciation of the name of the locality can cause embarrassing situations, as there is a social feeling of pride in the association of the place name with the place it designates. The place name is for the place what the proper name is for the person himself. Therefore, a toponym is untouchable and cannot be switched, when appropriate, without the placet of the inhabitants of the locality in question. As can be seen in the definition given below, by the Venezuelan anthropologist Salazar-Quijada toponymy is a “branch of onomastics that deals with the integral study, in space and in time, of the following aspects: geo-historical, socio-economic and anthro-linguistic, which allow and allow a number of places to originate and subsist” (Salazar-Quijada 1985: 18).

According to the provisions of the Basic Law of Toponymy, of 12 September 2016, toponymy is the “historical and linguistic study of the origin and evolution of the proper names of places or the designation of localities by names”. (cf. Diário da República da Angola, I Série-Nº155, of 12 September 2016, art. 3).

The toponymic study allows the understanding of the values and traditions of a people. The toponymy is also of paramount importance for political-administrative activities, since it allows to set the references of the limits of a municipality, district, state and even international limits. The cadastral tax collection policy is based on toponymic references, since the toponyms make it possible to locate public and private properties, differentiate them and demarcate them with precision. Carelessness in the correct writing of your location can cause serious inconveniences for the national registry, as well as for identification documents and other documentation. Solving the country's toponymic question is also giving an answer to the usual “street without a name” that we find in our people's addresses and residence certificates. Place names can have an essential affective meaning for the inhabitants of a community and, therefore, a stranger cannot fully understand them. For the inhabitants of a given locality, it is not acceptable to change names once assigned from prominent personalities in local history or in memory of historical facts. Errors in spelling and pronunciation of the name of the locality can cause embarrassing situations, as there is a social feeling of pride in the association of the place name with the place it designates. The place name is for the place what the proper name is for the person himself. Therefore, a toponym is untouchable and cannot be switched, when appropriate, without the placet of the inhabitants of the locality in question.

And toponyms constitute, according to Dick (1992: 21-22), true 'historical testimonies' of facts and occurrences recorded in the most diverse moments of the life of a population, [the toponyms] contain, in themselves, a value that transcends the very act of nomination: if the toponymy stands as the chronicle of a people, recording the present for the knowledge of future generations, the toponym is the instrument of this temporal projection. Often, it even spreads beyond its original focus, dilating roots in distant sites. It becomes, therefore, the reminiscence of a past perhaps forgotten, not outside its dynamic presence.

According to Quijada (1985 apud. Pereira 2009: 36-37),

(...), The name of a place constitutes a patrimonial asset of a country and it is through these names that nations demonstrate their geographic personality and stand out among other territories. The author adds that the man's attitude of identifying and qualifying the places around him demonstrates spiritual motivations, special meanings for the community on political, economic, religious and cultural aspects.

A toponym is a historical data through which a historian can reconstruct the culture of a people, its economy, its migratory movements, linguistic aspects and aspects of the social and spiritual life of the people who inhabited a region. The indigenous toponymy, in an area where these groups have disappeared, allows, together with the archaeological remains, to approach studies for the historical knowledge of former inhabitants of a geographical area.

ANGOLAN TOPONYMIA AND RESISTANCE TO APORTUGUESAMENTO

History still does not help to say exactly when the toponymic study began. But the need to understand the meaning of a name and the process that revolves around it seem not to be new, although until the 19th century there were no "systematic studies" on toponymy. However, the question of the name itself was already a reason for reflection among the Greeks.

[...], *The name of places and the name in general were examined by the Greeks in the expression "ónoma". (...) Thus, before the 19th century, there were studies that pointed to attempts at systematization, even though they lacked a solid direction: the proposal of a "proto-taxonomy" by Father Martin Sarmiento, in 1785, whose studies referring to toponymy Galician already point to the need to study the names of places not only by linguistic, etymological or dating affiliation, but by their own semantic substance* "(cf. Carvalhinhos 2008: 3).

According to the same author, in the 19th century, Auguste Longnon instituted toponymy as a scientific discipline at the École Pratique des Hautes-Études, in Paris. His work *Les noms de lieu de la France* was a reference for scholars like Albert Dauzat, already in the 20th century. It was Albert Dauzat (with *Les noms de lieux*, published in 1928) who promoted toponymy studies in France, basing his research on the method of areas and linguistic geography (cf. Carvalhinhos 2008: 4).

In Angola, little or nothing exists on the subject under investigation, so it is only possible to rely on some facts that constitute the initial framework of toponymic research in Angola, in general, and the region of study, in particular. Everything that one wants to do in the country about toponymy today should go through the intercultural and interlinguistic (or bilingual) history of the current name.

As we know, the present Angola is culturally and linguistically the daughter of the "encounter" between Portuguese culture and Angolan culture, between Portuguese-language onomastics and African languages onomastics. The colonial power, many times, tried to contribute or to replace the native toponymy. In fact, the first city "discovered" by the Portuguese was renamed the name of São Salvador do Congo, replacing Mbanza Kongo, and the king of Congo (Manikongo) was also converted to Catholicism in the 19th century. XVI. The city will be renamed African only in 1975, after independence.

The city of Ombaka, better known as Benguela¹, was initially called Baía das Vacas (at the time of the first European landings). Later it will be designated with the name of São Filipe de Benguela, in 17 of May of 1617, by Manuel Cerveira Pereira. Today the City of Acácias Rubras is simply called Benguela. But the people, in the African language of the region, do not renounce their Ombaka. Today the city, in Portuguese, is said to be Benguela and, in Umbundu, Ombaka, as if one name were the translation of the other.

To respond to a long-felt gap, Law No. 14/16, the Basic Law of Toponymy, recently established the basis for the definition and discipline of toponymy at national and local level, as well as the rules and procedures for the purposes distribution of police numbers (cf. *Diário da Republica de Angola*, I series-Nº155, of 12 September 2016), replacing Ordinance 18.137 - A, of 13 December 1971, Diploma of Reference of the Political Division Of Angola (the last), published in the Official Gazette of Angola no. 290, Series I, of December 13, 1971.

The law, in addition to many merits, sought to harmonize graphically the names of places, correcting a certain graphic uncertainty. In fact, there were toponyms (and there are still) spelled according to the Portuguese spelling and, at the same time, Umbundu. Now, this language still uses two orthographic patterns, one from the Catholic tradition and the other from the Protestant tradition, which is another reason for orthographic disorientation.

¹The toponym "Benguela" is of Umbundu origin: "Venga" or "mbenga", from the verb "okuvenga" or "okuvengela" which, according to Gomes (1999: 27), means "to be cloudy" (with respect to river water or lagoon). It can also mean "dark" or "opaque" (in relation to the closed forest). In his verbal (okuvengela) it means "to get dirty", "to muddy". Some say, for example, that the name was given to a girl (slave) of the royal court, the only one who always gave the chair to "Usomaou Osoma" (Soba), when he wanted to sit down: "love Mbengela, simbungendautukwanumbi, pokwiyavandjolaisa" (my name is Mbenguela, insulted in my absence, but hypocritically happy on my return) (cf. Chombela, Pedro Gabriel, 2013, (K) Ondjembo, Epistemological elements of the anthropological ékaton in Paideia "Hanha" among Ovimbundu, 1st Edition, Edizioni Vivere In, Roma).

Often the *aportuguesamento* was limited to slight phonetic and phonological accommodations, leaving intact radical elements of the name Umbundu. See, for example, these cases of desnasalization according to the initial stop / d /, / g /, / b /. So, where was the nasalization (the pre-nasal) nd, ng, mb we will simply have d, g, b.

Mbalundu → Bailundu
 Mbengela → Benguela
 MbunkuZau → BucoZau
 Ndembu → Dembos
 Ndjamba → Jamba
 Ndombe → Dombe
 Nganda → Ganda

It happens, however, that the names, although written without nasalation, the speakers of the region insist and persist with the vernacular phonology, especially when speaking in Umbundu. The harmonization carried out by some scholars and later sanctioned by law was decidedly in favor of the contribution. It is natural, therefore, that linguistic resistance will endure. The harmonization or graphic uniformity of toponymy is a great challenge in the current context, because it affects not only the spelling, but the language and culture. The organization of the space in Angola, as well as its nomination, is going through a glaring and painful historical-cultural crisis¹¹, plaguing the vortex of the toponymy of Angola, in general, and Benguela, in particular. What should we still do? What should law institutions do?

The entire country complains about a toponymy that conforms to the culture, history and nature of the people who inhabit each location. The subject goes far beyond harmonization and graphic uniformity, it goes far beyond naming the streets with alleged local heroes and figures. Historians, Africanologists, anthropologists and linguists need to work on interdisciplinary projects in order to offer policy makers instruments more in line with the cultural and linguistic soul of the people and peoples concerned.

1. BRANDS FOR THE APORUGUESAMENTO OF THE TOPONYMS OF BENGUELA

Bear in mind, sir, what has happened to us, look and see our humiliation. Our living goods became intruders, our homes strangers. We were orphaned, without a father, with mothers as widows. We have to drink our water for money, our firewood, we have to pay for it. On our soil we are persecuted, the fruit of our toil is taken away. But you, sir, remain forever, and your throne remains from generation to generation. Bring us back to you, sir, and we will return, give us the happy days of yore. (Lam. 5.1-5.19-21; cf.tb. Lukamba, 2001: 220).

Colonization probably started in Africa between 15 November 1884 and 26 February 1885, when the continent was divided. On November 15, 1884, Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck (Germany) summoned the main European colonizing powers to a meeting in the German capital, where the division or sharing of Africa took place, assigning to each of these colonizing powers the part that “competed”.

According to Henderson (1979: 23), “Participants in this conference simply ignored Africa's multiethnic characteristic and arbitrarily designed and divided this continent into slices where the borders corresponded to their political and economic interests.” This division of the African continent, carried out with a “European mentality”, had enormous consequences and gave rise to a spiral chain of endless conflicts and tore apart the onomastics of Angola and the Benguela area in particular.

According to Costa et al. (2014: 54) the “*characteristics of the African coasts changed (...), with the arrival at the mouth of the Senegal River, in 1444. Until then, navigators walked along the Sahran coast, inhospitable and sparsely inhabited, so the caravels progressed quickly to the south*”. Only later, the large

¹¹Usually the term “crisis” is used pejoratively. Originally, however, it means ‘moment of decision’. The term comes from the Greek verb *Krinô*: discerning, evaluating, therefore, a crisis can lead to ruin as well as becoming a *kairós*, that is, an opportune moment, a favorable occasion, a decisive time to project and launch the reconquest of the lost ideas (cf. MONTANI M., *Philosophy of Culture*, 2nd ed., Las, Roma, 1996, p.16).

areas of Angola suffered colonial domination in less than a century; after 1900, armed revolts and resistance movements such as the Bakongo, Bundos and Ovimbundu started in 1913.

From what we said above, colonizing can be understood as a way of “exercising” to, in the first instance, change the mentality of colonized populations in order to adjust them to the colonizer mentality. As stated by Múrias (1936: 152): “For colonization it is important that there are two peoples in presence, the colonizer and the colonized, and that there is, between one and the other, a difference in civilization; and that the colonizing people have, of the two, the highest civilization”.

The ethnocentric attitude fostered by the relationship between superior and inferior, imposition of cultural values, legitimized the process of subordination of the local populations, as well as making known to the black man the civilization that, until then, did not know. The aim of this action was to empty and eradicate not only local expressions, but also, to implant new historical paradigms in order for the people to become the “living image of the colonizer”. This process had great consequences that turned out to be “disastrous” in the toponymy of the Benguela area, which, according to the Ministry of Administration of the Territory of the Republic of Angola (MAT)^{III}, “this toponymy does not interpret and / or reproduce the true historical meaning of Angolan culture”.

The Europeans and, in particular, the Portuguese, in this period in the service of temporal power, were tireless baptizers of places they found (or discovered) and colonized. They assigned names to the localities (today provinces, municipalities, communes and villages), correctly or erroneously (on the one hand due to lack of knowledge of the local language, on the other, due to translation or interpretation errors), many of which are still preserved today. The history of the origin and evolution, corruption and proliferation of these names is, according to Mota (1950: 13),

[...] A truly exciting topic. Through it, we can continuously follow the phases of European expansion - the audacity of discoveries and explorers, which gave rise to the first flock of names applied to the remarkable points of the coast, the first settlements in strange lands, causing a density of place names around the preferred places.

Colonial power extended the designations to the interior, in the regions bordering the extreme of Benguela (Bocoio, Balombo, Cubal, Ganda, Chomgoroi) and on the coast (Lobito, Catumbela, Benguela and Baía-Farta), where, similarly to what was happening all over the country, the old names were kept, changing them according to the phonological characteristics of Portuguese.

So, for example, the case of phoneme prepositions:

Ngola → A + ngola = Angola;

Ndulu → A + ndulu = Andulu;

Mbuila → A + mbuila = Ambuila^{IV}

The change in names and languages ended up defining the ideology of colonization in general, that is, dominating not only the goods found, but also man, taking away his cultural soul and his identity^V pride. By providing everything, Portugal eradicated local expressions, replacing them only with those of Portugal. Thus, depending on the ability to assimilate Portuguese language and culture or not, “Angolans were divided into two groups: assimilated and indigenous. For an effective colonial subjugation, the principle of divide et impera was implicit”^{VI}.

^{III}The Ministry of Territory Administration (former Ministry of Provincial Coordination), abbreviated as MAT, is the Assistant Ministerial Department of the President of the Republic, whose mission is to formulate, coordinate, execute and evaluate the Executive's policy regarding Local State Administration, Municipal Administration, territorial organization and management, authorities and traditional communities and assist in the conduct of general and local election processes. (cf. Presidential Decree No. 247/12 of 11 December. “in” *Diário da República I Series-No. 236 - Of 11 December 2012*. Cf. Organic Statute of the Ministry of Territory Administration - Chapter I Nature and Attributions, Art. (Nature).

^{IV}As Professor Doctor Pedro Aires de Oliveira writes in the book *History of Expansion and the Portuguese Empire*, p230, “(...) the battle of Ambuila (Mbwila) marks the end of this kingdom as a danger to the Portuguese (...)”.

^VThe foundation on which temporal power rested (influence, both in the form of government and politics, that the Vatican State exercises over people, in which the supreme pontiff is given the power of Vicar of Christ - The Pope, representative of Pedro na terra) is to change local concepts (local names) about life and the world. For this reason, Martins says that “The act of colonization is essentially an act of transmitting culture” (Martins, Armando (1948), *Current Currents of Colonial Thought*. PublicationsandLibraryDivision, Agência Geral das Colónias, Lisbon, p.5).

^{VI}Okuma 1962: 23, apud, Chinbimda, José Simeão Ferreira (2009: 9), *The name in umbundu identity, anthropological contribution*, Ed. ETU - Studies of the Umbundu Tradition, Huambo

In Benguela, the *aportugueseamento* affected the names of almost all prominent locations. The examples below illustrate it with the names of the municipal capitals:

Mbokoyo → Bocoio: de-nasalization of the / mb / initial and vocalization of the semivowel / y /, which resulted in diphthong / hi /;

Nganda → Ganda: disnasalization of / ng /;

Kuvale → Cubal: sound from / v / to / b / and apócope of / and / final;

Mbalombo → Balombo: de-nasalization of / mb /;

Tchongoloyi → Chongoroi: rotation of the occlusive consonant / l / (l-r), vocalization of the semivowel / y /, which resulted in diphthong / hi /

There are designations of localities that suffered almost nothing, since they responded more or less to the requirements of Portuguese phonology such as the name Caimbambo, Catumbela, and the latter name as aetiology is quite interesting^{vii}.

In addition to phonological corruptions, names have been translated, based on their semantic values. Let's look at the name NdombeYinene, which became Dombe Grande (Yinene translation) and in NdambiMaliya for Damba Maria.

These and many other examples that can still be seen in our onomastics (toponymy) illustrate well the urgency with which, in the context of Benguela, toponymy must be addressed. It is also necessary to know some names of places that constitute colonial heritage and brand. This time, we talk about street names in the city of Benguela and its intra-urban divisions. They are fundamentally anthropotonyms. The table in it shows the following:

Rua Azevedo Gomes	Manuel de Azevedo Gomes, proeminente oficial da Marinha.	Da Av. Gov. Moutinho ao cruzamento da Trav. Luís Gomes e Rua Afonso de Albuquerque.
Rua Bernardino Correia	Correia (1879 – 1957), ligado ao Caminho de Ferro do Amboim e à Companhia Colonial de Navegação etc.	da Rua 5 de Outubro ao cruzamento das Ruas Serpa Pinto e Celestino Madeira.
Rua Sacadura Cabral	Artur Sacadura Freira Cabral (1880-1924), oficial da Marinha e arrojado aviador	Da Av. Manuel Cerveira Pereira à Rua Dr. António José de Almeida.
Rua Gov. Eduardo Costa	Eduardo A. F. da Costa (1865-1907), Militar Governador-Geral em 1906.	Da Av. Presidente Carmona à Rua 31 de Janeiro.

Source: MENEZES, Bernardo (2015: 67-69) Harmonization of the toponymic spelling of the Municipality of Benguela (adapted).

Among these names above, there is no African or African name. They are all elements of ancient power, colonial power. And these names are still preserved today. It is true that, in some streets (some cities more than in others), efforts have been made to replace colonial anthroponyms here and there, using national or African heroes, much more those linked to the MPLA movement and party.

^{vii}It is common to derive the toponym “Katumbela” from “Grande Soba” with the same name, however, a new hypothesis that results from our most recent investigation maintains that the anthropotopónimo (names of places derived from the names of people. Anthropotonyms are toponyms related to individual proper names: first name, hypocoristic, first name plus nickname, family surname and first name more family name.) Katumbela has its origin in an adage in Umbundu “UlumeKatombelwakotchahe” (man cannot or must not be subjugated what is yours), an expression that was often used by the sovereign. But just as Umbundu says “otchiselotchalingaonduko”, which means “the constant use of a term becomes a name”. For this reason, the inhabitants nicknamed the sovereign of Katombelwa, that is, Soma Katombelwa, whose name became widespread and, around 1630 the region was already known as Catumbela.

In addition to the already mentioned colonial marks, the assimilation policy implemented in the past; the contempt of local names, the consequences of which led some people to “strip” their names in Umbundu in order to remain only with the names of “outside”, considered modern.

It is a serious founded intervention. Language is a mirror of a mentality that, in turn, expresses convictions about life. When a language is annihilated, part of a life is equally lost. What's more, by suppressing the language of a society too, names expressed in the same language are eliminated. As a name informs a language, and the two constitute an inseparable unit, the war against the Umbundu language implied violence against their names.

Conclusion

The country is experiencing a rupture in the philosophy of naming, which dates back to colonial times and is still in force today. The place names are just one of the spaces to verify this critical situation of the Angolan onomastics. Onomastic policies, if they are to solve the problem, need to go to the sources of culture which, in Africa, are the olosekulu (elders) and the olosomes (local sovereigns). Their approach, in order to have fruit, must be taken not by political activists, but by academics, that is, historians, anthropologists, linguists and, in a word, Africanologists. This must be the essential epistemological condition, unless one wishes to perpetuate the remnants of the country's cultural colonization.

To conclude our article, we propose and recommend, in the name of science, that agents of toponymy consider some premises, as for us, unavoidable:

1. The maintenance or alteration of the old place names as well as the creation of new ones must obey the historical, cultural and linguistic nature of the local people. And this operation, to be genuine, requires wide-ranging, deep and without precipitations interdisciplinary consultation. Place names, when formulated according to ad hoc human sciences standards, make it possible to reconstruct the history of a population and its space, through syntactic-semantic structures that can be interpreted as identity-building elements, in addition to being means of orientation, information, delimitation and organization of the geographical space.
2. The increasing bantuization or umbundization of place names must be hailed as a happy cultural achievement. It is just that, after forty years of independence, a cultural liberation of gender is also operated. More than worrying about the graphic expression of the names (returning to the *aportuguesamentos*), the country needs to go further, that is, to coin the names from the cultural soul of its people. Therefore, it is not enough to replace the Portuguese place names with umbundu place names. What umbundu? Why this and not another? Where have such place names been scrutinized? By whom?
3. Historicity. If we do not stick to good historical knowledge, we run the risk of correcting the past, inventing other errors. Colonization was an experience that, in fact, exterminated or replaced the local names of Umbundu origin with foreign ones (European / Portuguese). The colonization operated the project of land occupation, extraction of minerals, precious stones, slave trade and the installation of a culturally imperial administrative system. Ours was one of the most hideous colonizations. This fact, however, should not serve as a protest for the replacement of Portuguese place names. Replacing Portuguese names just because they are Portuguese is to overshadow or deny the historical truth. There would be a risk of eliminating aspects essential to the understanding of place names as necessary elements in human history. That is to say, in other words, onomastics must return to Africa without denying history.

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