Chapter 5
A Neglected Trophy, Elusive Oil and Re-workings of Memory in São Tomé e Príncipe

Now,
now that you have stamped my face
with the perfections of your civilization,
I ask you, Europe,
I ask you: NOW WHAT?[1]

Tomás Medeiros, in Hamilton (1975: 371)

Introduction

Located right on the equator, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is one of the smallest nations on earth, with only 1,001 square kilometres, distributed by two islands – São Tomé (859 km^2) and Príncipe (142 km^2) – which are roughly 100 kilometres apart. With little over 150,000 inhabitants in 2006 (INE 2006), and an 106.6 million euro annual budget in 2010 (80 per cent of which is foreign aid), the country's history and heritage are inseparable from a long colonial past, a plantation economy, and a short independence period. The archipelago's independence history is still in its infancy, but since 1975 a relatively stable democracy has been in the making. Despite its apparent 'cartographic transparency', the 'overseas province' of STP was the world's largest cocoa beans producer in the nineteenth century, and presently, the country is located in one of the most important geostrategic regions of the contemporary world: the Gulf of Guinea. Recently 'catapult[ed] (...) from strategic neglect into geopolitical stardom' (Oliveira 2007b: 5), this is a highly disputed region, being the arena of multinational oil and gas corporations, developed nations governments and their African counterparts. Until recently STP has been somehow marginal to these developments, but the global economy has recruited a new member for its powerful geopolitical games. It is the hopes and fears of future transformations that are being played here, as the country sets up itself for a new phase of its history, a phase which for many, holds the promise of a total change, of economic wealth and social wellbeing. In line with all transformations, memory, the past

1 Agora,/agora que me estampaste no rosto/os primores da tua civilização,/eu te pergunto, Europa,/eu te pergunto: AGORA? (Poem 'Meu Canto, Europa' – 'My song, Europe').

and the islands' landscapes are redrawn, recast, in order to engage with the novel dynamics.

This chapter attempts to unpack meanings related with two stone monuments – a Fort built in colonial times and a memorial built in a postcolonial context – and with the geographical, economical and political contexts in which the islands are presently living. I analyse in detail the sixteenth century built Fort São Sebastião, in São Tomé city, providing an extensive descriptive view/visit/stroll of the National Museum established there in 1976. I then zoom out to larger issues that have been shaping the Gulf region in the past decades, focusing on oil business and spatial and social changes. Finally, I return to São Tomé, to discuss how under the rationale of modernisation, progress and creative destruction, one of the most significant monuments of the independence struggle was recently demolished. My aim in presenting these stories is to sketch connections between places, to unravel some of the interpretation and representation performances of the past and explain how the construction of multiple temporalities and spatialities is inscribed in a colonial present, but open to postcolonial critique and acts of remembrance, and possible de-colonisation projects.

The Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea is a vague geographical term that traditionally refers loosely to the western coast of Africa from Senegal to Gabon. In a more narrow and strict definition, it refers to the concave recess of West and Central Africa, and is also called Bight of Biafra. In a wider perspective it can be understood as a macro region that includes nine countries: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroun, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé e Príncipe. Historically the region has seen the development of early African civilisations, especially around Ancient Ghana and the kingdoms of Benin (see Davidson 2001). At a later stage it was also one of the critical zones of contact (Pratt 1992) of European colonisers and African kingdoms, and an active stage of Atlantic slavery.

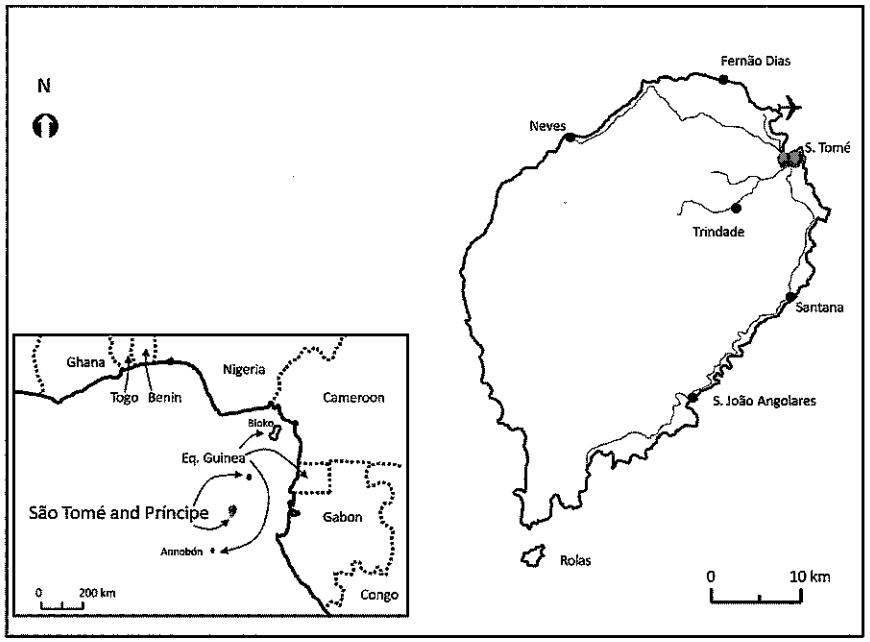
More recently, carved by the oil industry, the Gulf of Guinea stretches from Nigeria to south Angola. It has one of the most important estimated crude oil reserves in the world (Ariweriokuma 2009), and a century-long history of exploration for petroleum and 40 years of sizable production (Oliveira 2007b). Considering the increasing volatility of the Persian Gulf region, the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Gulf of Guinea (together with the Gulf of Mexico) acquired a particularly significant role in global geopolitics (Omeje 2008), illustrating how space is easily reconceptualised by capital and politics (Oliveira 2007b). This significance can be accentuated by the early 2011 turmoil in North Africa, especially in Libya, the fourth African oil producer. At the same time, an ever-increasing global demand for oil, with China and India playing a major role here, exacerbates this significance. In fact, the US is studying the possibility of having a new military operation base in West Africa, and STP is a candidate, being close to oil production countries, especially to Nigeria, which

in the future could account for one fourth of the total US oil imports (Frynas and Paulo 2007). The countries' diversity is astounding, from varied colonial backgrounds, postcolonial trajectories, experience in oil business, land size or demographics. They share the critical importance of the extraction of petroleum and the rents that accrue from its sale, based on monopolies controlled by handful of major oil companies (Oliveira 2007a), the state failure to deliver improved standards of living. STP is somehow different in this scenario in that oil as yet to be produced.

There are four main islands in the Gulf of Guinea, aligned along a volcanic ridge of over 2,000 kilometres – the Cameroon line of volcanoes – that descends from Chad Lake in the northeast to Annóbon island in the southwest (Map 5.1). From its 'discovery' by the Europeans (except for Bioko the islands were not inhabited), until the 1778 El Pardo Treaty between Portugal and Spain, the four islands were part of the Portuguese empire.[2] Bioko and Annobón are now part of Equatorial Guinea (Spanish Guinea up to 1967), and in fact its capital city – Malabo – is located on Bioko Island.

For different historical and geographical reasons the settlement and colonisation of the four islands was quite distinct. The Portuguese gave priority to São Tomé (settled in 1486), and both Príncipe and Annóbon developed in its shadow (settled in 1502 and 1503 respectively). Bioko, adjacent to mainland Africa (roughly 30 kilometres), was found later (possibly in the 1480s), and was already inhabited. Locals offered fierce resistance to the Portuguese so settlement was abandoned. It was only effectively occupied after 1778 (Tenreiro 1961). In very broad terms we can distinguish four different development periods in STP: the sugar cane plantations in the sixteenth century, the slave trade from the mid-sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, the coffee and cocoa plantations from the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, and a foreign aid dependency cycle from independence till now. Perhaps oil will establish and determine the start and conditions of the next cycle.

2 Portuguese interests related to South America and Brazil in particular and Spanish interests in claiming some soil on Africa led to a land exchange and to the settle of older conflicts (established in the Treaty of San Ildefonse in 1777 and confirmed in the Treaty of El Pardo in the following year). The Spanish kingdom took possession of Fernando Pó (former Formosa, renamed Fernando Poo by the Spanish and presently Bioko), Ano Bóm (present Annobón), and the mainland between the Niger and Ogoue rivers. The Portuguese claimed territory in Rio de la Plana (later originating the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil).



Map 5.1 The island of São Tomé, São Tomé and Príncipe

Fort São Sebastião, São Tomé

Fort São Sebastião was built in the context of a sugar cane plantation economy and society. Sugar was indeed the main drive of the colonisation process, which developed with Europeans from mainland Portugal, from Madeira Island and with slaves brought from mainland Africa (Figure 5.1). According to Seibert (2006), in the 1520s São Tomé imported annually about 2,000 slaves, of whom about 500 were re-exported to Elmina (present Ghana). It was only in the 1530s that the export of slaves to the Caribbean began. In the first half of the sixteenth century between 5,000 and 6,000 slaves were transported annually to São Tomé. Most were sold to the Americas, but those who stayed in the island were employed in the households and in the growing sugar industry plantations. By the mid sixteenth century there were about 10,000 slaves on the island (Seibert 2006). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, slaves were taken from two active slave regions: the kingdom of Benin[3] and the Congo (Tenreiro 1961 and

3 The kingdom of Benin was one of the most important states of Lower Guinea, and is now located in Western Nigeria. It should not be mistaken with the modern state of Benin, wedged between Togo and Nigeria, where following the presence of British and French, a Portuguese Fort was built at Ouida (or Whydah) in 1721 (construction started in 1680),

Lorenzino 2007). Unlike Angola and Mozambique, large continental territories of diverse ethnic groups with a history of uneven Portuguese presence and poor colonial integration (Chabal 1996: 13–14), São Tomé (and Cape Verde also) can be characterised by a stronger ethnical and racial mixture and a sense of identity based on a common Creole language.

On the one hand the building of a Fort can be understood as the result of a failure. It materially represents the failure to engage in mutually advantageous negotiations with the surrounding people and to establish a nonviolent and sheltered environment. On the other hand it reveals or marks the start of a less provisional settlement. The first defensive building in STP was the captain's tower, built in 1492–3 and located near the present government palace. It was both a defensive building and the captain's residence. In the following 70 years no other defensive buildings or structures were built, despite various internal assaults. In 1531, revealing incapacity to control and manage the whole of the island, the Portuguese residents asked permission to the crown to build fortifications to protect the people and the goods involved in the 'bush war'. To a large degree these requests, result of the 'wars' between the island authorities, the plantation owners and their slaves, on the one side, and the 'black escapees' on the other, mark the Africanisation of the island (Henriques 2000). Although the 'black treats' coming from the core of the island were always the most feared, the Portuguese interests in STP were also threatened by the French, Dutch and British colonial enterprises and merchants (often described as 'corsairs' or pirates). One year after attacking Funchal, in Madeira Island, the French attacked São Tomé in 1567. Not long after, in 1574, the Angolares[4] rebellion took place.

Fort São Sebastião was built between 1566 and 1575, and was considerably reformulated in 1579. With four bastions (Real, S. Sebastião, S. Anna and S. Tomé), the Fort was built upon coral reefs with three sides facing the ocean

becoming an extension of El Mina. From here, slave trade with Brazil flourished until the late eighteenth century (see Disney 2009). Up to 1961 the colony or overseas province of STP ruled over the exclave of Ouida. By then this colonial ground consisted of a Fort, a Trading Station and no more than a dozen men.

4 Various sources refer to the *Angolares* as descendents of Angolan runaway slaves, possibly arriving in STP after a shipwreck in the mid sixteenth century. Even today they form a separated social and cultural group of approximately 7,000 people (Seibert 2006) living in the southeast of the island and mostly from fishing (see also Lorenzino 2007). They never engaged in labour in coffee or cocoa plantations. In a very simplified manner we can still distinguish three other ethnic groups in the country: *Forros*, contract workers or *Serviçais* and *Tongas*. The former are a group of free Creole blacks who have both an African and a Portuguese identity, who arrived from the early sixteenth century onwards, and who were later gradually disposed of their ancestral lands, 'through purchase, fraud or force' (Seibert 2002: 291). They have always refused contract work in the plantations. Former contract workers are those who came mainly from Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique in the late nineteenth century to work on the plantations. Finally, *Tongas* are the descendents of contract workers (see Henriques 2000).

and with two floors. On the ground floor a large patio surrounds a pluvial cistern, which always functioned precariously due to the lack of stone masons and potters that could maintain it (Tomé 2004). Facing the entrance there is a chapel devoted to São Sebastião with an altar. On either side there was a kitchen and a food storeroom and a jail. Carpenter and blacksmith workshops were also located on the ground floor as well as the military caserns.

In 1585 there was a fire in the city, which was later sized by the Dutch in 1599, who aimed at upsetting the Portuguese trade circuits in the Atlantic (Emmer 2003). Since the Fort was considered to be too separated from the city, somehow secluded by the waterfront, other Forts were built in the city of São Tomé, in Ana Chaves Bay: Fort St. Jerónimo (of which only some ruins remain) built between 1613 and 1614 and separated by about 1.5 kilometres (Figure 5.2); Fort St. José, built in 1756 (Madeira 2001a) of which nothing is left; and the Forte Picão de Nossa Senhora da Graça, built between 1638 and 1639, which was possibly never completed (Madeira 2001b) or was later demolished (Carita 1989: 204). If we think that the existence of the Fort is connected in part with the internal resistance assaults, then we can also argue that the Fort symbolises the first victory of the subaltern and is a symbol of the coloniser's defeat.

The Fort was incapable of resistance to serious attacks. There were neither military captains nor trained soldiers nor adequate maritime power, and in time of war, the Governor and inhabitants locked themselves in the Fort, leaving the city and the plantations opened to attack. The Fort also lacked proper artillery. There were only six small guns and two bombards, and a lack of dry powder (Garfield 1992). Between 1641 and 1648 the Fort was occupied by the Dutch West Indian Company, which controlled the sugar and slave trade, and São Tomé became an entrepôt in a global trade connecting Dutch possessions and interests in Africa (notably Elmina, in present Ghana and Luanda, in Angola) and South America (Pernambuco, in northeast Brazil). There were other 'private' Forts that preceded São Sebastião. In fact, as early as the sixteenth century, several of the wealthy sugar cane planters built wooden Forts, which were highly armed, to protect their lands (Sibert 2006). These were decidedly privatised spaces where the planters maintained absolute powers, totally separated and autonomous from the meagre local authority.

There are very few sources regarding the Fort's 'life' during the following 200 years. In fact, Tenreiro (1961), names the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in STP as 'the great fallowing' (*O Grande Poisio*) and Tomás (2004) points to the state of degradation of various monuments in the late sixteenth century, aggravated by the French incursion of 1709. In the 1720s the weapons arsenal were moved to the first floor to avoid flooding and in the 1730s, the governor Sousa Coutinho altered the original wooden floors of the Fort, which required constant maintenance, and replaced them by paved floors (Tomé 2004). With the decline of the sugar cane economy, mainly due to competition from Brazil, but also due to some internal instability created by local rebellions (which led for instance to the governor's residence being moved from São Tomé to Santo

António in Príncipe Island in 1753), STP increasingly became a slave entrepôt. Until the move of the capital back to São Tomé in the mid-nineteenth century, the island was a very unstable place, where agriculture and public colonial order was frequently disrupted by fugitive slaves.

The Last 'Hurrah'

During the twentieth century the Fort was part of the captaincy of the Ports and was partially used by the statistical services of the colony. Occasionally the facilities were used for short imprisonment periods (see 1953 Massacre bellow). Yet, during the 1960s, pressed by the aspirations of a crumbling empire, the Fort experienced its final colonial phase. On 28 March 1961, reflecting the rising tension and instability in Lusophone Africa (the restructuring of the Navy was in place since the late 1950s and the first attacks in Angola were registered in February and March of 1961), the Overseas Ministry granted the Fort to the war navy (part of the Navy Ministry) with the goal of transforming it into the Maritime Defence Command. The winds of change were being felt across the world. Salazar's stubbornness resulted in the integration of Goa in the Indian Union in that same year. His obstinacy in holding to the 'overseas provinces', integral parts of the motherland, when the decolonisation years in Africa had started, would result also in the opening of three war fronts: Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, which lasted for more than a decade.

Luís Benavente (1902–93), architect commissioned to the Portuguese overseas Ministry from the Public Works Ministry (see Fernandes 1996), and working in Africa between 1957 and 1973, was responsible for the Fort's adaptation project.[5] The sizeable works, which indicate the state of decay of the Fort, included waterproofing and plastering all outside and inner walls, construction of inner rooms, replacing the roof by a reinforced concrete structure, replacing roof tiles, tilling floors and walls, renewing all sewerage, electric and plumbing, putting new wooden doors, metal or iron fittings, etc.[6] Living conditions for 34 men (one commanding officer, three officials, six sergeants and 24 privates) should also be attended: bedrooms and furniture, living rooms, kitchen, toilets.[7]

Benavente was an architect with a long experience in restoring and rehabilitating historical monuments, both in Portugal and abroad. He recognised that in the 1950s and 1960s the knowledge of the built heritage in Africa (and also India, Macao and East Timor) was close to zero. His grievance was a clear reflection of

5 In STP he was also responsible for the restoration of the Churches of Madre de Deus and Bom Despacho.

6 Estimated costs, the list of suppliers, and so on can be found at the Luís Benavente fund (LB 1961a).

7 A rich documentation on the work progress is available, which includes letters exchanged by Benavente while in Portugal and Alberto, the construction supervisor in STP (LB 1961b for example).

the repressive intellectual climate of the Estado Novo, which 'made impossible the development of any serious Portuguese historiography of (both metropolitan and overseas) Portugal', and 'impractical for non-Portuguese scholars to have access to the kind of historical sources which they were able to use for the study of the British and French empires' (Chabal 2002: 31). Benavente was mostly concerned with the built heritage and what it could tell of the historical presence of the Portuguese, of the 'civilization mission' that was taking place since the fifteenth century, materialised in churches, Forts, etc. He was also concerned with the surroundings of the Fort, since the building should not be treated like a house. The grounds beside it 'should be rough and entirely unblocked, the roughness that lends it a warfare look' (Benavente 1959a). He was also preoccupied at re-establishing the 'more natural' ochre colour of the walls, since in his opinion the existing dark looking walls resembled a 'gas factory'. He strongly opposed to the installation of a radio navy station inside the Fort, since this would imply fitting three red and white iron antennas of 30 metres height, plus steel cables. Benavente argued that monument preservation thinking should be the same here as in the metropolis, and this type of structures had already been eliminated in the metropolis – Tomar and Sagres (LB 1961c).

The architect regarded the presence of the statistical office as an inadequate use for the Fort (LB 1959b), and at the same time emphasised that owing to the lack of furniture and objects, the absence of archaeological artefacts and other open air elements, together with the insufficient lighting conditions of the interior, he did not advice to establish a museum at the Fort of São Sebastião (LB 1959a). Ironically, roughly 10 years after the conclusion of the adaptation works for the Maritime Defence Command, a National Museum was established in the Fort. Regrettably, documentation related to this later re-adaptation of the Fort (1975–6), which involved the demolition of some walls, could not be located.

The National Museum or the Fort's After Life

Unlike Fort São Filipe in Cape Verde or Fort Jesus in Mombasa (also the medina of Azamour in Morocco), which are monumental constructions clearly distinguishable within the immediate urban structure, Fort São Sebastião in São Tomé is relatively small, and it can be missed in a short visit to the town, since it is somehow peripherally located. Presently the Fort houses the National Museum, but unlike the National Museums of Kenya, for example, which were established in the intellectual and exploratory spirit of the early twentieth century (Scott 2007), this one was established in a very short period (Barros 2010)[8] straight after independence. In fact, the first steps to conduct an inventory of the cultural heritage were taken in May 1975. On 13 July of that same year, one day after the

8 Barros, J. 2010. Vice-Director of the São Tomé e Príncipe National Museum. Interview on 12 February.

country's formal independence, the Fort became part of the cultural department of the Ministry for Education and Culture, and the colonial command for maritime defence ceased to exist. With the quick nationalisation of the *roças* (Plantations),[9] many objects of interest were simply taken to the Museum (notably from Rio do Ouro – presently Agostinho Neto). The ecclesiastic chamber donated or agreed to deposit some religious objects in the museum, while items from the Town Hall were also offered. In 1976, even before the collection was completed, the National Museum organised a series of conferences that took place in another 'colonial' building: the city's high school (Liceu, renamed Liceu Técnico). These events aimed at fostering a new cultural environment, discussing and promoting the identity of the country through themes such as 'São Tomé e Príncipe and its Human Geography' (7 February 1976), 'Issues in Women's liberation' (14 February 1976), 'The medicine doctor and society' (21 February 1976) and 'African Literature of Portuguese expression' (28 February 1976).

At the museum's opening ceremony on 11 July 1976, integrated on the commemorations of the first anniversary of independence, 'comrade' Alda do Espírito Santo (1926–2010), at the time Minister for National Education and Popular Culture, and one of the most renowned national poets, freedom fighters, and teachers, stated: 'this museum is the witness of the past, the witness of the Faust built by a five-century old colonial feudalist system. It is not the Museum of silence but a screaming museum, enriched by a heritage that illustrates the clear vision of the people' (Revolução 1976: 3). This attempt to 'decolonise the mind' (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1981), understood as a first steep in decolonisation, was also accomplished in record time, a product of a revolutionary momentum and spirit, an organic and impetus creation, which intended to provide a fresh and truthful insight into the country's history as opposed to the dated hegemonic colonial perspectives. But it is unclear if the elimination of the colonial administration, the sovereign power over the juridical-political boundaries of the nation-state, and the establishment of a National Museum in record time, were enough to produce a decolonised representation of the colonial past, heritage and identity of STP. My interpretation is obviously very subjective, and to a certain degree speculative. It is also inescapable that I am a Portuguese white male taking a snapshot on STP. I am aware of Mbembe's (2001) argument that most discourses of Africa human experience are conducted by emphasising its incomplete, mutilated and unfinished nature, and thus, I attempt to be careful with statements, with complete diagnosis and with the unproblematised relationship between facticity and truth.

9 In September 1975, 23 Portuguese owned plantations of over 200 hectares were nationalised (Eyzaguirre 1989; Seibert 2006). They were later regrouped into 15 State Agriculture and Livestock Enterprises (*Empresas Estatais Agro-Pecuárias*).

Walking through History

Perhaps one of the most striking features of visiting the National Museum, which is housed in the Fort of São Sebastião, is the fact that nothing is told about the Fort itself. Visitors know and possibly feel this is one of the oldest buildings in the country, but its history, unquestionably central to the construction of São Tomean identity, is not present. Paradoxically, this defence building is omnipresent in most tourism brochures, leaflets and postcards.

A small entry corridor brings us to a relatively small room where six watercolour paintings from the 1950s are on display.[10] From this room we have access to the main courtyard, where visitors must ring a bell or search someone for guidance. At the time of my visits (February 2010), 11 rooms were opened and the visits followed a rigid one-way route. The route included a visit to the ramparts and started and ended in a small dark room where tickets are sold for 2 euros, and where a few handicraft objects are on display and for sale. There is no written script of the guided tours, but after engaging in a few individual visits as well as amongst small groups, and after an informal conversation with the guide, it was possible to establish that the guide reproduces an almost unchanging oral text, limited to a few observations in each room. There is no possibility of walking freely and unaccompanied through the museum.

The visit route takes us first to two rooms which focus on objects of religious and sacred art, collected as already mentioned, with the cooperation of the São Tomé diocese. It is a static view of objects. In the 1960s and 1970s these two dark and stuffy rooms used to be the dormitories of about 24 privates. It is interesting to see how religion is not represented as imposed from abroad, as a mark of colonialism, as coercive, and while most islanders are deeply religious,[11] Catholicism is limited to baptism and rites such as processions and funerals (Seibert 2006). Still today, Christian-style marriage respecting monogamy and male fidelity is an exception. Yet, the first thing that was done to slaves when they arrived in the islands was to replace their African names by catholic names, in order to acculturate them into Portuguese culture. At the same time, *Serviçais* were often excluded by *Forros* from various social and cultural practices, including from participating in religious institutions. Unlike in East Timor, where the catholic church had a critical role in helping Timorese going through a period of violence between the mid 1970s and the late 1990s, and contributing decisively to the construction of national identity (Sarmento 2006), in São Tomé the church had always a more secondary role, never able to establish itself as one decisive pillars of national identity. Despite this relative detachment, and the ending of most catholic feast-days as national holidays, an action certainly connected to an attempt to secularise the country by the radical Marxist-Leninist government

10 Five from M.M. Vigôço and one from Eduardo Alves. All are dated from 1955.

11 In the 2001 census, 70.4 per cent of the population declared to be catholic, 3.4 per cent Evangelic and 1.8 per cent Adventist.

in the late 1970s, throughout the year several saints are honoured in festivals in many villages around the country.

The route continues out to the central courtyard, and then ascending the stairs to the first floor, into the *Agriculture Room*. Considering that nothing is told about the Fort in the National Museum, it is quite a paradox that here the introducers of the cocoa and coffee beans in STP are celebrated without contextualising the implications of this recolonisation, which is deeply connected to the independence of Brazil in 1822, and the abolition of slavery in 1836. To a large degree the investments made on the islands' plantations are the result of slave trade earnings in Brazil, and the introduction of cocoa and coffee beans made large-scale production viable (Seibert 2006).

In display are two large oil paintings of João Baptista Silva de Lagos, who introduced coffee from Brazil in 1787 and cocoa possibly in 1820, and of Jorge Ferreira Gomes, known as the introducer of cocoa. To a large degree they mark the establishment of the plantation economy that developed in the islands using slave and forced labour, and which, according to Eyzaguirre (1989) have been the fundamental socio-political foundation of this Creole African society. Throughout the nineteenth century the land structure and ownership, and the social and demographic composition of the islands changed dramatically, as the Portuguese engaged in a process of land dispossession and reclamation, which accentuated in the 1880s and 1890s. The large cocoa plantations, employing hundreds of workers recruited from Cape Verde (Nascimento 2001) and from other places in mainland Africa, covered a large part of the island of São Tomé. Some were states within the state, with their own infrastructures (hospitals, schools, railways, etc.), and having a large degree of autonomy from the colonial administration (Seibert 2006). At the same time, the development of coffee and cocoa *roças* represents the beginning of a new colonial stage: the posts of surgeon and pharmacist (1857), the establishment of an agency of the overseas national bank (1867), a health centre for *serviçais* (1877), and several infrastructural improvements in the capital. From this moment onwards, a deeper crevasse is established between the African population and the colonists. The introduction of these cultures also represents the reigniting of social and ethnical dissensions, since the native elite (Creole descendents) were dispossessed of their lands. With the consolidation of colonial administrative structures, São Tomean society lost its 'racially porous' character, and an identity consciousness began to emerge, with a rapprochement and miscegenation of different African ethnical and cultural groups (Mata 1998).

In this 'agriculture room', it would be far more destabilising to approach and illustrate some of the agriculture practices conducted by the slaves that ran away from the plantations and organised their survival and resistance in the interior of the island. By emphasising the dominant landscapes of the plantations, the museum downplays the spatial, social and cultural organisation of the kilombos.

In a remarkable poem – 'A Sòcòpé for Nicolás Guillén'[12] – Tomás Medeiros 'asks' Nicolás Guillén (1902–89), an Afro-Cuban poet member of the *Negrista* movement, if he knows about 'the island of wealth', 'the island of coffee plants in bloom and of cacao trees swaying', 'the island where misery hounds the people's footsteps' (see Hamilton 1975 and Mata 1998).

The 'trail' continues into the *Independence Room*, in which we find the photographs of the first two presidents: Manuel Pinto da Costa (1975–91) and Miguel Trovoada (1991–2001). The exhibit includes the desk where Independence was signed and a glass cabinet where the last Portuguese and the first São Tomean flags are stored in two large drawers. There is hardly any information on the few things on display. Connecting this room to the next there is a dimly lit corridor next to a bathroom (not open to the public), in which we can (barely) see two representations in canvas. One depicts the mythical sixteenth-century figure of the self-proclaimed King Amador (Lorenzino 2007), and the other the sixteenth-century rebellion. King Amador, possibly a run away slave, is of critical importance to the construction of São Tomean identity. A large sculpture of King Amador can be found at the entrance of the Historical Archive of STP, his representation is present on the bank notes, and since 2005, the 4 January is a national holiday in his memory. In STP Amador is imagined as a key figure in the anti slavery movement and central to the colonial resistance. Nevertheless, not only the museum curators chose a hidden place for Amador, but they tell nothing, of the little that is known, regarding the organisation of his army and resistance wars.

The next room hosts temporary exhibitions (this room joined two of the 1960s and 1970s officers' bedrooms). I am told that in the past 12 months (from early 2009 to 2010) visitors could see glassware from some *roças* and Art Nouveau paintings. There is no information about their origin. Newspapers and blogs provide loose clues on past exhibitions. It takes us by surprise to find that the next room is committed to environmental awareness and ecological education, displaying a number of posters and paintings of turtles and their habitats in STP. The organiser of this room is Marapa, a nongovernmental organisation concerned with sustainable coastal living, and the display is funded by the European Union and by KUDU – Western African programme for the conservation of sea turtles. This is the most recent display of the museum, with some paintings dating from 1993 and several recent posters.

Visitors leave this room to the staircase opposite to where they ascended, and here the guide pauses and alerts visitors that the next room is somehow shocking, containing representations which might be too harsh for some. 'Past the turtles', immediately as we walk in *D. Maria de Jesus Agostinho Neves Room*, we face five black and white photographs of the faces and bodies of the victims of the 1953 massacre. The rest of the room displays photographs of Carlos Gorgulho, the governor between 1945 and 1953 (see below), scenes of interrogations, of

12 'Um Sòcòpé para Nicolás Guillén' – *Sòcòpé* is a popular San Tomean dance. Its beat is used in the poem in parallel with the Cuban rhythm of *son*.

the police forces and of a court-martial. There is also a set of clothes full of bullets of a man who allegedly survived the incident. The room is named after Maria Agostinho Neves,[13] who was imprisoned for 12 days in this same room in 1953. Here, contrary to the agriculture room, the colonial system is heavily and explicitly contested, but despite the shocking photographs of the massacre victims, it is a poor display that tells us very little about this important historical incident. There is a rich poetry related to this bloody event that could be used to enrich the exhibit. This is almost the only space in the museum that engages with the 'opaque and murky domain of power, a domain inhabited by obscure drives and that everywhere and always makes animality and bestiality its essential components, plunging human beings into a never ending process of brutalisation' (Mbembe 2001: 14). Considering the darkness of colonial history of the country, my understanding is that it makes it quite sweetly.

In the following two rooms the contrast between the luxury and aired bedroom of a plantation owner (the furniture was taken from Roça Rio do Ouro) and the basic, comfortless petite space in which workers lived in the plantation quarters is successfully illustrated, and visitors can sense the inequalities established under the plantation system. Past these rooms, visitors go up a few steps and come out to the ramparts. Here the visit acquires a more flexible tone, as visitors may wonder and gaze the magnificent views, and it is allowed to make photographs. The route follows clockwise, passing various gravestones, ornamental stones from buildings facades, the court of arms of the governor's house, cannons, the twentieth-century lighthouse,[14] and all four bastions. Visitors descend then the stairs back to the central courtyard, and enter the ethnography room. Back in faintly lit rooms visitors can gaze with difficulty at various interesting objects: traditional dancing dolls, fishing tools, musical instruments and other ethno-objects. There is an interesting corner with ritual objects, which deserve a more prominent place, since in STP various cults, beliefs and forms of witchcraft, which blend into syncretic forms are a critical part of history, society and identity. Partially they are an outcome of a weak indoctrination process (due to linguistic and cultural barriers) of African slaves and workers. Finally, crossing once again the central courtyard, visitors can see what was once the dining room of Roça Rio do Ouro. The luxury of the china and the particular emphasis that the guide makes in 'all' tours towards explaining that a little boy or a monkey was used to fan guests with a large canvas hooked to the ceiling, implicitly carries a critique to the colonial system and its prejudices.

It is obvious that the liberation expectations emanating from Alda Espírito Santo inaugural speech at the museum in 1976, voiced amongst the idealist context of a recently independent country – 'we are certain that in a decade our museum

13 Mother of Alda do Espírito Santo, Minister for National Education and Popular Culture, who was married to the President, Manuel Pinto da Costa.

14 Although sources mention the existence of a lighthouse in the original fort (Tomé 2004), the first modern lighthouse was built in 1866. The current lighthouse was inaugurated on the 10th December 1928 and remodelled in 1994.

will be enriched with contributes from national art' – did not realise. The museum is a depressing site for the young and rebellious minds. Rather than inspiring a cathartic or uplifting transformation in visitors, the experience is of loss and absence. The exhibit's historical treatment is odd, and there is no time rationale in the visit. Since there are no guide books with a detailed description of the National Museum, and no available catalogue – apparently and according to Barros (2010)[15] it has run out of print (I could also not trace any copy in the national library or historical archive in STP) – information is limited to our own interpretation of the display and to whatever the guide tells us (in Portuguese). There are several visitors that bring a guide, whenever they are engaged in a tour of the island or travelling by taxi. It was impossible to obtain visitor numbers, although Barros referred to about 2,000–3,000 per year.[16] In 2006, there were 12,266 international tourists in the country (INE 2006), although many of these were in STP only on business. Nevertheless, judging from tourists' views informally obtained, in the context of a tourist stay of six or seven nights, visiting beaches and old plantations, this makes a good two hours experience.

As already mentioned, the Fort is absent from within, and the National Museum exhibition is decontextualised of the Fort itself. At the same time it does not point to any of the defensive structures that once existed in the city or to those that existed in Príncipe. To go to the ruins of Fort Jerónimo, the only other defensive structure that can still be seen, one has to enter the gate of Pestana Hotel, a Portuguese five star hotel. This entry opens to a small roundabout around which hotel guests can park. To the left one finds the main hotel door, and to the right, following an almost hidden narrow path that crosses some bushes, we arrive to an impeccable green lawn with a wooden path that surrounds it and also leads to the sea. Here, facing the ocean, hidden from the road and the rest of the city by the recent yellow and pink neighbouring buildings that belong to Pestana Hotel where a casino and night club (Beach Club) operate, and almost acting as a private historical view for Pestana's tourists and framing the artificial beach, are the ruins of the Fort.

An analysis of the National Museum reveals an ambiguity and plastic mode of dealing with the past. Throughout the country, some of the former plantation buildings are now being used as tourist accommodation, while back in the museum, former plantations' furniture are key artefacts. The catholic religion, which also arrived with white Europeans and was imposed on 'barbarians' without history and without religion,[17] is in prominent display. Could the museum be elsewhere? An example of this ambiguity can be seen in the bank notes that are in circulation (all first issued in 1996). While they have King Amador and various

15 Barros, *ibid.*

16 Ibid.

17 Following the writings and characterisation of the four types of 'negative barbarism' of sixteenth-century Dominican Friar Bartolomé de las Casas (see Mignolo 2007: 471).

birds[18] on the obverse, several colonial buildings and works are represented on the reverse: the grandiose promenade leading to Roça Agostinho Neto, with the large colonial hospital in the background (5,000); Papagaio's bridge in Príncipe (10,000); the Santo António city bay, in Príncipe (20,000); and the central bank building (50,000). In 2008 a new 100,000 dobra bill was issued. Instead of the King Amador on the obverse, it has a representation of Francisco José Tenreiro, a national poet and geographer,[19] and a grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*); the reverse depicts men in costumes with shields standing before the Floripes monument, celebrating Auto de Floripes in the city of Santo António on the island of Príncipe. This is a very popular cultural manifestation that has its routes in sixteenth-century Portuguese plays, which in turn had their origin in eleventh-century tales (see Valverde 2000).

It is also quite a paradox that the period of slavery is almost absent from the National Museum. Slavery is older than the Fort itself. Vogt (1973), for example, mentions that in 1532, a Portuguese ship named Santo António transported 201 Africans bought in the Kingdom of Benin, directly from São Tomé to the West Indies, marking one of the earliest Middle Passage voyages. The Fort certainly played an important role in the development of the Atlantic slave trade, and so have the warehouses where slaves were kept, the port where slaves disembarked from continental Africa and embarked for the Americas, and the Customs and the Foremanship, both built in the second half of the sixteenth century (Tomé 2004). The places of memory of slavery in STP, such as sugar mills, churches, markets, trees, legends, myths, theatre representations, and so on, as described in Henriques' and Medeiros' (2001) guide for the Lusophone world, are not present here. More disconcerting is that the country's slavery archive – both the conventional physical, material and institutional storage of boxes and folders and especially the conceptual which allows for possibilities of future knowledge production and sites of contested knowledges – is inexistent.

The construction of identity is done upon a balance of memory and forgetting (Ricoeur 2004), and almost more important than what is represented, it is the absences, the silences, the gaps. As suggested, the treatment of time is peculiar, but the treatment of space is also puzzling. Perhaps it is a detail, but the fact that the museum does not have a single map of the country in display signals the absence

18 5,000 dobras: Papa Figo bird – Príncipe Glossy-starling (*Lamprotornis ornatus*); 10,000 dobras: Óssobô bird – African Emerald Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx cupreus*); 20,000 dobras: Camussela bird – São Tomé Oriole (*Oriolus crassirostris*); 50,000 dobras: Conóbia bird – Endemic São Tomé Kingfisher (*Alcedo thomensis*).

19 Ironically, although considered to be one the great national poets (see Seibert 2008b), Tenreiro was an advocate of the Luso-tropical thesis (see Pimenta, Sarmento and Azevedo 2011), which attributed to the Portuguese all the vitality in the creation of creoles, transforming women in pure sexual objects. His work 'Island of the Saint Name' (*Ilha do Nome Santo*), precisely the work from which a quote is used in the dobra bill, confirms this 'way of seeing' corresponding to the 'psychoses' described by Fanon (see Henriques 2000).

of the geography of the country. The Museum is aspatial, and the exhibition is just a juxtaposition of different materials from different locations and times which scarcely serves to advance cultural dialogue.

Finally, an interesting reading can be made from the large yard outside the Fort, regarding three large white statues: two fifteenth-century navigators who are credited with finding São Tomé – João de Santarém[20] and Pero Escobar[21] – and a nobleman to whom King João II of Portugal attributed São Tomé as a captaincy – João de Paiva[22] (Figure 5.3). Inaugurated in the 1950s in three different public spaces in São Tomé city,[23] the statues were dismantled after independence and taken to the yard in front of the Fort where they since remained. Dismantling and displacing the statues can be understood as a new beginning for the city, a cleansing process, the forgetting and nearly erasing the past western triumph, and is common to other postcolonial cities.[24] Although colonial monuments still abound in the city and on their original places (such as the monument erected to commemorate the 500 anniversary of Henry the Navigator's death in 1960, a standard colonial monument still found in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and East Timor), removing the 'three dismantled men', the embodiment of colonialism in human forms, to the Fort's yard (and the Fort could hardly be moved), created a sort of a colonial corner, a neglected and empty space of colonial ghosts. Under this light, the establishment of the National museum inside the Fort is rather ambiguous. In the early 1990s, whilst still displaced in the colonial neglected space, the statues were reassembled and re-erected. In the original squares, we find simple, non-figurative concrete objects. These blank objects establish a *tabula rasa*, while no opportunity is given for self-representation. As Mbembe (2001) argues, more than resistance and opposition, the postcolony is defined by its baroque practices, ambiguous, fluid and modifiable. This is in sharp contrast with the modern impulse of exterminating ambivalence (Bauman 2001), conducted by mapping, classifying, producing heritage inventories, by UNESCO's creation of global scale heritage mapping.

20 Closer to the sea, sculpted by A. Duarte in 1952.

21 Further away from the sea, sculpted by Euclides Vaz in 1953.

22 In the middle, sculpted by J. Correia, also in 1952.

23 João de Santarém in front of Império cinema (presently cinema Marcelo da Veiga); João de Paiva next to the stadium, and Pero de Escobar in the Praça da Alfândega (Square of Customs, nowadays Independence Square).

24 The colonial statue of Lord Delamere in central Nairobi, Kenya (Larsen 2004), the equestrian statue of the Duke of Orleáns in Algiers, Algeria, the equestrian statue of King Leopold II in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (see Marschall 2008).

Zooming Out: Oil and the 'New Scramble' for Africa

> One of the inherited traditions of Western education in the last four hundred years is that of putting things in compartments, resulting in an incapacity to see the links that bind various categories. We are trained not to see connections between phenomena, and we become locked in Aristotelian categories. So the East becomes East, and the West becomes West, and never the twain shall meet! (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2000: 120)

It is perhaps an abrupt move to jump from my speculative readings of the micro geographies of the National Museum of STP and its host building, to a somehow vague and brief account of neighbouring Equatorial Guinea (EG) and other Gulf countries spatialities. Yet, such a move attempts not only to prevent a single-minded focus on STP, but, following on Mignolo's (2007) border thinking, allows me to direct attention to the other trajectories in the Guinea Gulf region. By focusing on events that can modify the sleepy character of STP, events which are associated with places where 'oil is a mentality and expectation' (Oliveira 2007: 338), and which have the potential to rework memory and identity and transform the islands' landscapes, I attempt to connect different experiences of exploitation, and speak back to changes that are already taking place in STP.

While usually the 'Scramble for Africa' refers to the 1880s and 1890s endeavours of the partition of the African continent by various European countries, in the past 10 years, academics, politicians and the media have been referring to a 'New Scramble for Africa', pointing to commercial interests and increasing political involvement of the US and China, as well as other actors in the continent, all indicating the centrality of Africa in the twenty-first century (Frynas and Paulo 2007). Both scrambles are related to land and natural resources control. Although the former involved a formal partition conducted by colonial powers only, in the latter, clearly built upon oil and gas interests, states play an important role, paving the way for companies entrance in the African markets: opening, closing and re-opening embassies (the US in Equatorial Guinea, Brazil in STP in 2003), offering economic incentives, military aid, and promoting aid-for-oil schemes.[25] Like in the past, the 'new scramble for Africa' is unsettling and recreating identity and memory, and is altering landscapes.

Despite some parallel colonial dynamics, STP does not share with EG the deplorable post-independence violence and tyranny that the latter's dictatorial regime has established in the past four decades, in a country which has the highest per capita income in Africa. Until recently, STP has been practically an observer in the huge transformations that oil has been operating in the Gulf of Guinea. Apparently, the scale of political unrest in Nigeria, the continuous upraising against the state and the resurgence of secessionist moves seem remote

25 China is currently building and rebuilding railways, roads, hospitals, schools, and governmental buildings in Angola in exchange for oil concessions.

to the dormant daily life of São Tomeans. STP's closest neighbour has also been profoundly transformed by natural resources exploitation. Contrary to public discourses circulating in STP, oil developments have not generated significant job creation. As Maass (2009) describes in a 'crude' picture of the 'oil world', most workers are low-paid Asians (primarily Indians and Filipinos), who have previous experience in working in large projects, who can 'easily' work for 12 hours shifts, while managerial positions are filled by American or Europeans. The few locals working on-site are hired to comply with established quotas. In Malabo, business vitality relates mostly to nightlife and prostitution.[26]

Maass' (2009) description of the Marathon natural gas facility in Malabo reveals an intense heterotopian enclave space, of a nature not comparable to those described at Sambala Resort, in Cape Verde, or Mazagan Resort, in Morocco (see Chapters 4 and 6). The whole site functions with imported materials and it is totally disconnected from local suppliers. The plant has its own satellite phone network,[27] a power plant, water purification and sewerage systems, all independent from the local grid. Paint, portable toilets, wood, food, cranes, etc., all was imported. Clearly, in offshore explorations these issues are even more blatantly present. The recent controversy over the tourism resort at Rolas, (a small island off the south tip of São Tomé island), in which the Portuguese Pestana Group has been accused by politicians and local people of putting pressure on locals to abandon the island with the aim of creating a self-contained private tourism island, seems negligible when compared to the scale of land dispossession and inequalities registered in Nigeria and EG.

Viewing the Gulf region from STP, it is somehow alarming to note that changes can occur quite fast. EG started to be an oil exporter in the 1990s, and very quickly became the third largest energy exporter in Sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria and Angola. Flights to Texas, became frequent and known as the 'Houston Express' (Maass 2009). In 2007, oil and gas revenues accounted for 91 per cent of GDP, 91 per cent of government revenues and 99 per cent of exports. In STP, oil exploration licences were granted to British and American companies as early as 1970 (Frynas, Wood and Oliveira 2003). Seismic studies and drilling proceeded in the 1980s and 1990s. More recent technology allowing exploration in deep sea areas created an optimist environment in turn of oil production (even the recent disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 does not seem to affect developments in this part of the world), and pressed on the negotiations on maritime borders. In 1998, for the first time after independence, the delineation of the 200 miles Exclusive Economic Zone (roughly 167,000 km^2) was approved by the National Assembly,

26 I do not have room here to discuss transformations in Annobón. Suffice to say that on top of its peripherality and poor connections to the other three islands and to mainland Africa, there are worrying signs that the island is a large-scale dumping of western countries' toxic waste (Wood 2004).

27 In a reversal of space, calls to Houston were local calls, while calls to Malabo were international calls.

and in 1999 and 2001 maritime borders agreements with Equatorial Guinea and Gabon were reached. Yet, in 2000, negotiations between STP and Nigeria came to a halt, since Nigeria did not accept delimitation based on the equidistance principle (Frynas, Wood and Oliveira 2003). Faced with an eventual long legal dispute, STP agreed on establishing a Joint Development Zone (JDZ), in which costs and profits are shared at 60/40 per cent, in favour of Nigeria.[28] Despite all projections and hopes of the past 20 years[29] not a single drop of oil has been commercialised up to 2010. Two long decades of oil talk and oil expectations and geographical imaginations of landscapes that can finally escape the unequal wealth produced throughout centuries of colonialism have gone by. A simple newspaper analysis illustrates how oil has been high on the agenda.

Let me discuss two central aspects of the anatomy of STP, viewed here in the regional context. Firstly, despite 20 years of multiparty democracy with relatively free and fair elections, STP is a very fragile state: continuous political instability, weak institutions and misappropriation of development funds.[30] In 2001, STP president Fradique de Meneses turned to Jeffrey Sachs – a well-known development aid expert from New York Columbia University – for advice and for designing and implementing an oil revenue management law. Meneses also asked for assistance to the World Bank and to the IMF. In 2004, an oil law based mostly on Sachs' team was unanimously approved in the National Assembly, aiming at preventing what is known as the 'resource course' (Macartan, Sachs and Stiglitz 2007). The law requires oil revenues to be deposited into an account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, constituting a National Resource Fund, while only a small share of those revenues should be reinserted into the budget. The control of the oil should be in the hands of an 11-member Oil Control Commission, constituted by people of all political spectrums. Apparently the whole process is corruption free. Nevertheless, not only the Oil Control Commission has yet to be established,[31] but the negotiations and oil contracts between the government of

28 The JDZ covers an area of approximately 34,548 km^2 in water depths of 1,500 metres in the northern segment to 4,000 metres in the south western sector. The treaty was signed in 2001, and the JDZ headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, were inaugurated in 2002.

29 The International Monetary Fund (IMF), for example, forecasted that by 2009 the country would be producing 120,000 bbl/day, making it one of the more oil dependable countries in the world.

30 In 1997, former STP President Pinto da Costa (in Seibert 2006: 3), stated publicly that in STP 'corruption spreads and enjoys impunity, hatred is a virtue, political power is exercised without consensual rules, and prosperity is sought through illicit actions and activities'.

31 During the conference 'Transparency in the Management of Oil resources', sponsored by the International Alert, the USAID and a Platform of Non Governmental Organisations, which took place in São Tomé (17–19 February 2010), the journalists' questions on the constitution of the Commission remained unanswered by the President and Vice-President of the National Assembly. The aspiration of a perfect incompatibility system in such a small country as STP is close to utopian.

STP and private companies,[32] described by Frynas, Wood and Oliveira (2003) as unprecedented in Africa's oil industry since colonialism, revealing severe flaws[33] and a number of 'major irregularities', continued to be enclosed in secrecy and corruption (Seibert 2008a). In STP, negotiations, memoranda of agreement, letters of intent, stipulations, etc., have demonstrated not only the lack of experience of the country politicians in dealing with the oil dossiers, but also the absence of transparency and accountability (IMF 2002; Frynas, Wood and Oliveira 2003; Seibert 2008a; Weszkalnys 2009). Appalling examples from neighbours abound, as Nigeria, Angola and EG have been identified as countries in which oil revenues found their way into private accounts of corrupt governmental officials (Ariweriokuma 2009: 18; Maass 2009; Reed 2009). Historically, the comrades, clients, and cousins (Seibert 2006) have been looking after their own well being, and the open question is to know how much legislation and technical advice will change the existing *status quo*.

Secondly, despite the apparent tranquillity of the country, continued political instability associated with two military coups d'état direct us to consider the eruption of social unrest. In 1995 a coup illustrated the discontentment of the military which in turn reflected the economic difficulties of the majority of the population, despite the wealth of various politicians and their relations. It also proved the fragility of the state without the intervention of international donors and other nations to solve the internal crisis (Seibert 1996). Again in 2003, a coup which symbolised a condemnation of a disjuncture in living standards (Seibert 2003) increased the dependence of STP on regional actors, notably Nigeria. While not being directly the consequence of the country's hypothetical future oil wealth, the coup revealed the 'dissatisfaction with the course of government petroleum policy and their frustration over exclusion from the expected economic benefits' (Frynas, Wood and Oliveira 2003: 53). At this time there was a serious and committed involvement of three inter-state organisations and eight countries in the negotiation process to solve this coup, and in the normalisation of oil businesses and contracts. The bloodless nature of both coups and the relative easiness and promptness of their resolution, coupled with the absence of ethnic, religious and linguistic cleavages in the country point to a very different nature of reactions from those in the region. Many of the petro-states involved in the 2003 coup negotiations are characterised by violence, environmental and social degradation, and exclusion, as the egregious human rights violations of the Ogoni in Nigeria or the people of northern Angola demonstrate (Reed 2009). As Nash (2002) argues, colonialism continues in the present through modern systems of law and government, silencing or severely restricting the ability of first nations and indigenous people to contest their dispossession. For Mbembe (2001), it is

32 Notably the ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company), a small US firm which was later bought by Nigerians and is presently named Chrome Energy Corporation (see Frynas, Wood and Oliveira 2003; Seibert 2008a).

33 In favour ERHC/Chrome.

this uncontrolled violence, sparked by worsening inequalities and corruption, that may be the ultimate defeat of the African state as we have known it in recent years.

Moving again to Equatorial Guinea, it is valuable to look at the recent developments taking place in its capital, Malabo.[34] While the city is awkwardly lit at night by an orange glare from the oil platforms, resembling some Hollywood apocalyptic landscape scene, the 'colonial' dilapidated city is being frenetically traded by Malabo II, a totally new modern capital without memory which is under construction. The 'old' Malabo is about oil, with platforms scattered around the harbour, tankers steaming and refineries shooting off flames night and day (Lonely Planet 2007: 572). With roughly 100,000 inhabitants (80 per cent of whom do not have electricity or drinkable water), many of whom live in infra-human conditions the capital is being labelled as unviable for higher social classes. The past is decaying, and the rebuilding of the city's social and physical fabric was abandoned in favour of a totally new and separated city. With an estimated cost of 750 million dollars (OECD 2008), dystopian Malabo II, overlooks 'old' Malabo from a hill, but is located a world away. The glass and steel city of large avenues and parks, has a state of the art stadium, conference centre, government buildings, a new parliament, presidential palace, apartment blocks, etc., constructed mainly by Chinese, Moroccan and Lebanese contractors. The city represents the modernity of EG, the global power of this tiny African country, and the cornerstone of a novel phase of public investment. Marking the importance of festivities and celebrations as vehicles of *commandement* (Mbembe 2001), some of these developments were lavishly inaugurated by President Obiang Neguema, on June 2009, on the occasion of his 66th birthday.

EG is trying to reposition itself within the complex geopolitical space of West Africa. While being the only Spanish speaking African country, French, and more recently Portuguese, are also official languages. The latter was adopted by decree in 2010, as EG applied to upgrade its position from associate observer to permanent member of the Lusophone Space of the Community of Countries of Portuguese Language (CPLP). Established in 1996, CPLP can be understood as a postcolonial re-configuration of the Portuguese empire, in the form of a 240 million people (200 million in Brazil alone) community of relatively peripheral countries which have historical, cultural and linguistic bounds. For the moment the application has failed (the unofficial reason being that the community values the promotion of democratic practices, good governance and human rights, despite poor records on part of some members on these same issues) – but it is only a matter of time before the 'new scramble for Africa' (Frynas and Paulo 2007) dictates an enlargement of this imagined (and real) community. With the arguments of a shared culture,

34 Malabo was first founded by the British in 1827 and named Port Clarence or Clarencetown. Later, the Spanish renamed it Santa Isabel, and in 1973 it gained its African name.

history, heritage, and now language,[35] Sonangol, Gepetrol ('states within states'), Petrobras, Galp and many other large companies will be able to proceed in deeper business engagements and accumulating wealth. All oil rich CPLP permanent members have already officially and publically demonstrated support for EG entry.

Viewed from STP, and even considering their unparalleled sizes, lessons from Brazzaville, Luanda and Lagos together with the developments at Malabo II should provide enough material to reflect not only on the degenerate, out of control, unjust cities that are thriving in oil rich countries (see UN-Habitat 2010), but also on the lack of discussion on the material and intangible heritage of these places. São Tomé city is a rather lethargic and small African capital, which reflects the stagnant economy of the country, and most physical renovations result from NGOs actions and from internationally funded projects. Furthermore, and closer to the concerns of this chapter, is the fact that a fragile state in which politics and economics are overwhelmingly dominated by international entities (IMF, World Bank, International donors, NGOs), is a state which has little power over the fragmentation or dissolution of local public culture and memory. Therefore, creative destruction and gusts of neocolonialism that destabilise landscape and public memory in the Gulf of Guinea at large should be carefully examined. Under these circumstances public memory, as discussed bellow, becomes a vulnerable hostage of neoliberal paths, ambitions and imposed obligations.

The Inability to Territorialise Memory

> The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.
> (Milan Kundera 1981: 3)

In 1953, as a consequence of an unrelenting brutal work recruitment policy led by the colonial government (supported and practiced by Governor Carlos Gorgulho), *Forros* revolted against what they considered to be slave work. The authorities response to this upraise was disproportional and the imprisonment, inquire, torture and massacre of dissidents took place in STP. To substantiate the brutal response, the governor, who had also been engaged in a powerful colonial spatial ordering in the city, enveloped the occurrence in a hypothetical communist conspiracy. Still today the death toll is uncertain and different sources point to numbers that range from 30 to 2,000 (Seibert 1997). Regardless, the 1953 Massacre is regarded by São Tomeans as a key moment in the independence struggle, 'used as one of the founding myths of anti-colonial resistance' (Seibert 2002: 293), and it has been lived and commemorated as such since independence. On a poem inspired by the events Alda do Espírito Santo transposes her anger and revolt by questioning

35 Annobón Creole, a Portuguese based Creole, is spoken by about 4,000 Annobonese: 2,000 still living in Annobon and the other 2,000 dislocated in Bioko (Hagemeijer 1999, see also Ladhams 2009). They represent a tiny minority in a country with 650,000 inhabitants.

'Where Are the Men Hunted on This Wind of Madness?'[36] A 4th grade school manual published in 1979 (Ministério de Educação Nacional e Desporto 1979: 13 and 16) opens with the lyrics of the national anthem, followed by the importance of the national heroes ('the martyrs of freedom/on the beaches of Fernão Dias/ Massacre of 53/Heroes of the People') and a coloured photograph of Fernão Dias beach and the pier accompanied by a poem. This massacre is also commonly referred as the Batepá war, almost as if in STP an independence/colonial war had taken place, in a similar fashion to Angola, Guinea Bissau or Mozambique. For the nationalists, this is the key date that signals the beginning of a new struggle phase which led to the formation of the Committee for the Liberation of STP (CLSTP) in 1960, a movement created in exile with headquarters in Gabon. The 3rd of February was officially named 'Day of the Martyrs of Colonialism' and renamed in 1980 'Day of the Heroes of Liberty' (Seibert 1997, 2006). In 1976, a 'March of the Youth', starting from Independence Square and going in the direction of Fernão Dias beach, some 10 kilometres north of the capital, commemorated for the first time this event. Through this postcolonial memory practice the place surrounding the pier where an uncertain number of bodies were thrown into the sea became the *lieu de mémoire* of the traumatic events of 1953. In the words of President Pinto da Costa at his 1976 speech: 'By working hard to construct this country destroyed by five centuries of colonisation we shall succeed in honouring the memory of the martyrs of February 1953'. After 1991 a religious ceremony takes place annually on February 3, and from 1993, when a simple monument was erected in front of the Pier – a concrete pillar covered with different tiles, this ceremony takes place in Fernão Dias. Celebrations are officially positioned and endorsed as empowering and inclusive, fostering unity and nation-building. Every year flowers are laid by the president at the modest monument in Fernão Dias paying homage to the victims of the massacre.

Yet, in August 2008, following a feasibility study pointing the country's advantageous location for a regional hub for container shipping in West Africa (U.S. Trade and Development Association), the government signed a 300 million euro (400 million dollar) contract with the French company – Terminal Link[37] – to build a deep sea port in the country. Ironically, and after various prospective studies, the *lieux de mémoire* was elected as the best location for the engagement with the global shipping economy and industry. The port is expected to handle 2 million containers per year, generating 1,000 direct jobs and another 3,000 indirectly (Pinho 2008), so its future economic and social importance, cannot be underestimated. In the first year of operations an income of about half of the country's GDP would be generated. This is not an isolated development and the

36 Onde estão os homens caçados neste vento de loucura?

37 Terminal Link is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CMA CGM S.A, the world's third largest French container transportation and shipping company, which uses 200 shipping routes between 400 ports in 150 different countries (URL http://www.cma-cgm.com corporate web site, February 2010).

trajectory out of a forgotten location can also be seen through various emerging projects, such as the refilling station for ships in Neves (27 kilometres north of São Tomé), a 20 million euro investment of Sonangol, the Angolan national oil company (see Oliveira 2007a; Reed 2009).

In the middle of all the hype surrounding this investment, in August 2009, 12 months after the agreement signature, and as part of the initial works on the 40 hectare site, the Fernão Dias monument was demolished (Figure 5.4). The discrete and swift bulldoze generated widespread discomfort and protest and also an uncertainty about the 2010 memory commemorations. The situation considerably aggravated when news that the French company was going through a financial crisis led to postponing the deep port construction starting date to 2011. On a large photo in a weekly newspaper, Alda do Espírito Santo stated that this destruction 'was a lack of respect towards the people of São Tomé and Príncipe' (Semanário o País, 6 February 2010). As I fixed the debris of Fernão Dias monument on my photographic camera, I had the illusion of reclaiming it from the further effects of time – that is, from death.

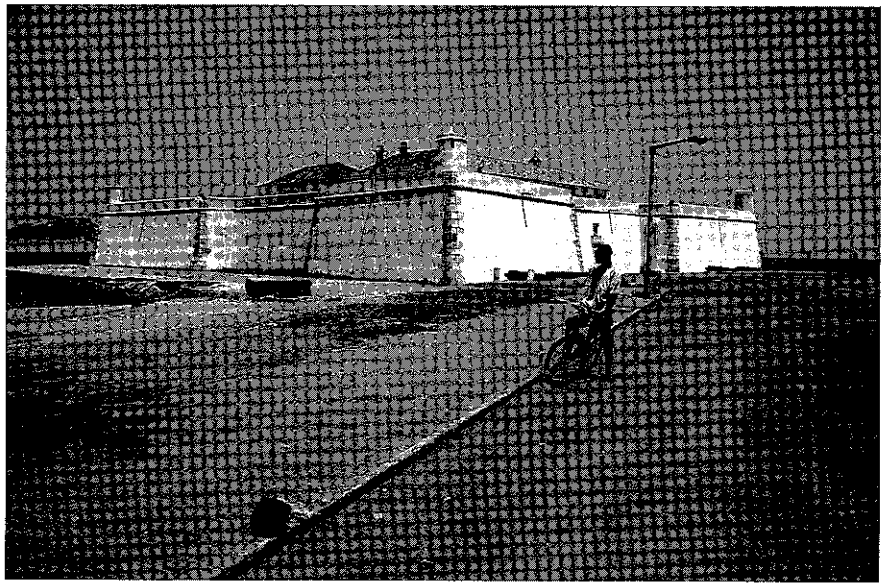


Figure 5.1 Fort S. Sebastião
Source: The author, February 2010.

Figure 5.2 Fort S. Jerónimo
Source: The author, February 2010.

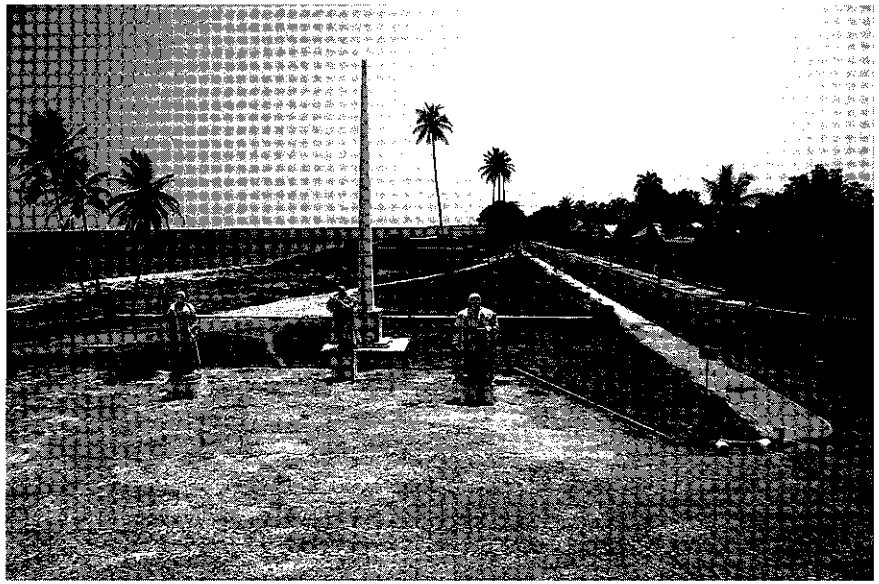


Figure 5.3 Three statues outside the Fort
Source: The author, February 2010.

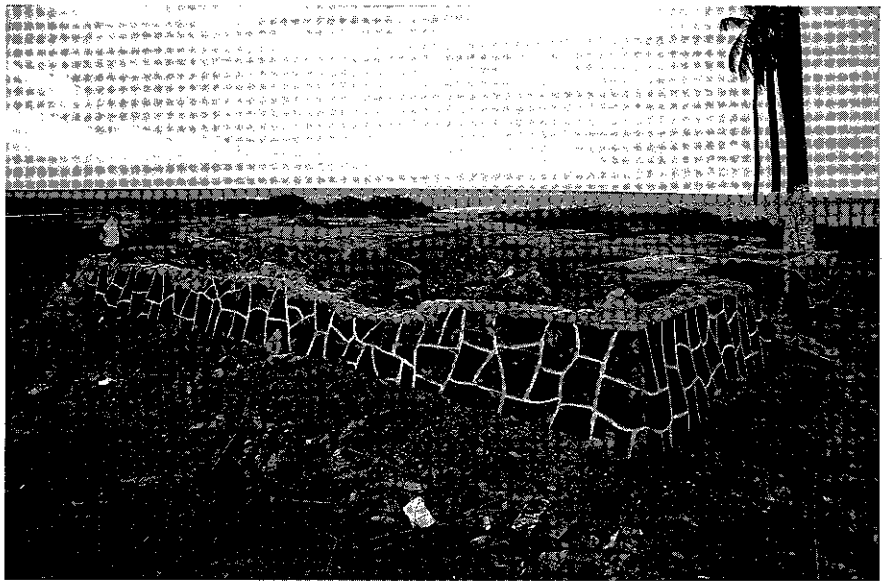


Figure 5.4 Destroyed monument of Fernão Dias
Source: The author, February 2010.

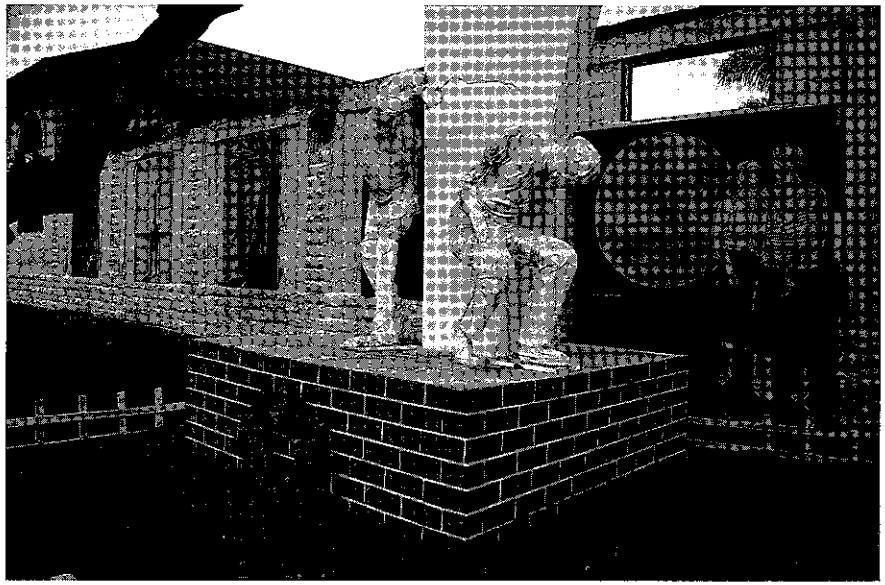


Figure 5.5 Provisional monument of Fernão Dias
Source: The author, February 2010.

Figure 5.6 Future site of Fernão Dias Monument with pieces from old monument
Source: The author, February 2010.

A short multiparty system history, together with the fact that 2010 was an election year, exacerbated the public debate about the monument's destruction. Shortly before the 2010 annual commemoration, the government decided to endorse the building of a temporary monument located in the Plantation of Fernão Dias, roughly one kilometre from where the old monument was located. The monument, built with an iron frame and covered with plaster and other materials, depicts a coloniser whipping a slave (Figure 5.5), and was made in record time by two artists from the Association of Plastic Artists of STP (Zéme and Armindo Lopes). Artists from São Tomé were also commissioned to represent the colonial history in a series of paintings that were hanged along the ruined walls of a warehouse, behind the monument. On a rather bizarre gesture, the government secretly brought a few pieces of the monument debris to the main yard of Fernão Dias, in an attempt to mark the place where it intends to build a new monument (Figure 5.6). All of this takes place within a set of old colonial plantation buildings and among an extremely impoverished population.

On the previous day of the commemorations the minister for education and culture, Jorge Bom Jesus, announced that a public competition was open for the construction of a new monument that should be completed by 2011. To the newspaper Correio da Semana (6 February 2010: 9) the minister explained that the idea is not to have an open air monument similar to the one just demolished,

but 'a kind of chapel, with a documentation and information space, with windows and doors, etc.'. According to the government (on various newspapers), financial assistance to build this 'new site of memory' is expected to emerge from the company Terminal Link. Further discourses related to the construction of a museum in this plantation, a documentation centre, social housing, and so on, can only be understood in the context of the vicinity of electoral elections. On the 3rd February 2010, about 600 youngsters participated in the march starting at Independence Square (Correio da Semana, 6 February 2010: 5). Before mass was given by the bishop at the new monument, there was a minute of silence in front of the ruins of the demolished monument.

It is rather ironical that one of the reasons to build a deep sea port in Fernão Dias is the political stability of the country in the regional context, while at the same time the site is precisely the one of the few where there is a national consensus on memory and on the commemoration of the past. The building of the new monument is dependent on the financial health of a French company and on the neoliberal logics of building of the deep sea port. On its turn the construction of the latter is dependent on the advances of the oil dossier in STP and on the geopolitical situation of West Africa. The destruction of a monument and the supposed construction of a new one highlight the complicated and entangled nature of this place, where the commemoration of the past has been silenced and is hostage of the inevitable and relentless pace of the neoliberal project. It also reveals the extraordinary power and performative force of colonial modernity: 'I ask you, Europe, I ask you: now what?' (Medeiros in Hamilton 1975: 371).

Epilogue

Unlike a celebration of colonial architecture such as that commemorated in the neocolonial style of the 'Seven Wonders of Portuguese Origin in the World' (Chapter 1), I argue here for a centrality of the Fort as a material site that can critically contribute to the dynamics of São Tomean identity. A postcolonial approach to the Fort would be the continuation of the work of its decolonisation which started in 1976 but for various reasons stopped. As STP made its way from a socialist to a multiparty system and from a diplomatically isolated country into a liberal and even neoliberal economy (if for a moment we close our eyes to the overwhelming importance of foreign aid), the National Museum should engage openly and critically with the interpretation of the country's colonial built heritage.

The Fort in STP is very different from those in Ghana (see MacGonagle 2006; Jordan 2007). It is not a magnet for tourists, it is not a focal point for roots tourism (which does not exist as such here), it is not a return to Africa trip for blacks, and yet, millions for Elmina crossed STP. Just as in Cape Verde's sweet past (Chapter 4), the Fort does not link disparate continents, identities or cultures and does not demonstrate the fragmentary character of space. The 'Atlantic triangle'

coined by Paul Gilroy (1993) is not present. As it fails to establish connections, as the museum remains a frozen attempt at mimicking the colonisers' western behaviours of memory-making, the island does not come out of itself and apparently it turns itself into a prison. The Fort does not mark the origins of African Diasporic identities. One wonders … where were the warehouses where slaves were kept? Where were the slave auction markets? STP ignores its trophy, not allowing for the Creole nation to emerge from invisibility! The country's 'distinctive historicity' (Mbembe 2001) is rooted in a multiplicity of times, trajectories, and rationalities, which must be conceptualised and understood in relation to a globalised world, for which the National Museum housed at the Fort is not able to respond. Following Mignolo's (2007) ideas on the decolonisation of knowledge, the 'museum' (maybe I should be calling it something else) should be a place where different experiences of colonisation and exploitation are engaged and de-linked from modern rationality. A possible world is destabilising the dominant view of the country as insular by engaging with the rich recent geographies of resistance embedded in the region at large, from actions in exiles like Libreville in Gabon or Accra in Ghana, to the links of socialist times with Cuba, the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic, rewriting history from a more multicultural perspective. It is in this regard that what is happening in Equatorial Guinea, together with other histories of exploitation and resistance in the Gulf of Guinea are central to this neglected trophy.

On a harsher analysis I could say that forgetfulness can be understood as a sort of capitulation to and perpetuation of former injustices. As Gandhi (1998) argues anti-colonial nationalists and post-colonial states sought to forget the past through a process of amnesia, as the basis of historic self invention and the erasure of what we may call violent memories. This repression has usually failed to surpass the past. The National Museum does not provide a distanced historical account of São Tomé (in its secular, intellectual and critical sense), but at the same time is does not constitute memory in Nora's (1989) terms, understood as life, as permanent evolution and open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. Perhaps the longevity of this structure of dominance has just coming to an end.

On the one hand I have attempted to illustrate how a close attention to the space of the museum and its memory work, is arguably an effective route to follow the nature of public memory and its forms, transformation and meanings within civil society. But on the other hand, perhaps the museum is not the place to take advantage of the trophy. Identity and memory circulate and are constructed in various ways and most importantly, they are not forged by transnational processes. Perhaps I should have studied how the museum conveys meaning in the everyday life. It is in school visits and teachers' words that subjectivities are constituted. Heritage promoted by the colonial and postcolonial state through official sites of memory are often irrelevant for local communities, which find different ways of engaging and commemorating the past, through songs, poetry, storytelling, ritual action and other performances (Marschall 2008). McMahon's (2008) work on the performative role of memory through theatre plays in Cape

Verde, suggests that the actors' imaginative use of the past, through changing representations of race, colonial authority and historical subjects' agency, can have lasting repercussions on the way a nation remembers its past. Tchiloli is a good example of how the past is revived annually through an historical performance (Valverde 2000). It is a hybrid cultural manifestation that is purely São Tomean. It represents counter-modernity, an act of resistance to the modern project of subjectification and subjection. At the same time, perhaps neglecting the trophy constitutes an unplanned strategy of dealing with the colonial past, and just as with the Vasco da Gama memorial in Malindi which is neglected and abandoned (Chapter 2), forgetting the past is a way of engaging with the trophy, as proof of the fragility of power.

Chapter 6
In the Shadows of Mazagan: The Medina of Azamour, Morocco

> (...) the fatal attractions of colonial nostalgia are inscribed within contemporary cultures of travel.
>
> Derek Gregory (2001: 113)

Introduction

In 2010, at a Lisbon exhibition named 'D. Afonso V and the invention of glory' (12 June to 12 September), four late-fifteenth-century (1471 to 1475) large tapestries (4x10 metres) depicting the *Fall of Tangier* (1), and the trilogy of the *Landing* (2), *Siege* (3) and *Assault* (4) of Arzila were at public display in Portugal. Concerned about his future image, and with a fundamental desire for celebration, Afonso V – the Portuguese king known as the African (1432–81) – chose to sumptuously and monumentally represent and portrait these key historical events in silk and wool, commissioning Flemish artists who wove time and space.[1] At a first glance we may wonder at the sheer size and detailed account of the glorious dynamics of conquest: tough soldiers, elegant horses, the king himself, royal postures, ships, cannons, firearms, armours, pikes, standards, banners, and so on. Yet, in a more meticulous analysis, we can also recognise that this contact zone (Pratt 1992) depicts dispossession and sack. While narrating the event more than providing a good perspective onto the site,[2] the Pastrana tapestries not only illustrate the 'panoply of glory', but depict what Mbembe (2001) describes as the founding violence, reflected in the depiction of various mothers carrying their babies and infants on their backs leaving the town. Certainly, notions of acceptable behaviour in warfare are quite different now than in the fifteenth century, otherwise the king would not chose to represent these scenes of dispossession.

1 Produced at the Tournai workshops, they have been, at least from the seventeenth century, at the Pastrana Collegiate Church, Spain. Almost five centuries after being made, Salazar (the Portuguese dictator who was in power between 1926 and 1968) unsuccessfully tried to bring the original tapestries from Spain, but as he failed he ordered copies to be made in the 1930s. The copies are permanently at display in Guimarães. One other remarkable representation of the conquest of Azamour can be found in Vila Viçosa, south Portugal. Here three large tile panels from circa 1600 tell one story of this event.

2 'The architecture of the city [Arcila] under siege is reminiscent of that of northern Europe (...) it bears no resemblance at all to the actual layout and defences of the Moroccan city' (Bunes 2010: 65).

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Fortifications, Post-colonialism and Power

Ruins and Imperial Legacies

JOÃO SARMENTO
University of Minho and University of Lisbon, Portugal

ASHGATE

Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington
VT 05401-4405
USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Sarmento, João.
Fortifications, post-colonialism and power : ruins and imperial legacies. -- (Heritage, culture and identity)
1. Fortification, Portuguese--History. 2. Portugal--Colonies--History.
I. Title II. Series
355.7'09469-dc22

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Sarmento, João, 1969-
Fortifications, post-colonialism and power : ruins and imperial legacies / by João Sarmento.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4094-0303-6 (hbk) -- ISBN 978-1-4094-0304-3 (ebook)
1. Fortification, Portuguese.
2. Fortification--Portugal--Colonies. 3. Postcolonialism--Portugal.
4. Portugal--Colonies--Civilization. I. Title.
UG429.P6S37 2011
355.709171'2469--dc23

2011017999

ISBN 9781409403036 (hbk)
ISBN 9781409403043 (ebk)

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C018575
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Printed and bound in Great Britain by the MPG Books Group, UK.

Contents