Una vez colonizando territorio: las tierras de Angola disputadas en los registros oficiales de obras públicas portuguesas
Once Colonizing Territories: Angolan Disputed Lands on the Portuguese Official Public Works Records

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Short biography

Sónia Pereira Henrique is a researcher developing professional activity in Information Management and Library Science. Doctor in Historical Archives (2020/01/23) and master's in information and Documentation Sciences since (2010/11/30) by the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at NOVA University in Lisbon, Portugal. Currently, Sónia is an integrated researcher at DINÂMIACET-Iscte within the scope of the research project ArchWar - Dominance and mass-violence through Housing and Architecture during colonial wars. The Portuguese case (Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique): colonial documentation and postindependence critical assessment, funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (ref: PTDC/ART-DAQ/0592/2020).

Abstract

Colonial archives congregate intricate webs of information and knowledge articulating numerous historical public and private services.

What may represent a colonial public works archive? Are these archives solely collections of historical administrative documents? It seems that these archives can't be merely the result of colonial administrative and bureaucratic procedures as they perform similarly to territory. Public works records testify to a dense landscape, summoning actors from numerous arenas – politicians, architects, engineers, entrepreneurs, and subalterns – with European uses, customs, and technology overseas. To provide answers to some interrogations surrounding Angolan disputed land, the Portuguese colonial public works records will be addressed as references to the debate on colonizing territories.

Keywords

Colonial archives; information system; shared archival heritage.

Resumen

Los archivos coloniales congregan intrincadas redes de información y conocimiento que articulan numerosos servicios históricos públicos y privados. ¿Qué puede representar un archivo de obras públicas colonial? ¿Son estos archivos únicamente colecciones de documentos administrativos históricos? Parece que estos archivos no pueden ser simplemente el resultado de procedimientos administrativos y burocráticos coloniales, ya que funcionan de manera similar al territorio. Los registros de obras públicas dan testimonio de un paisaje denso, que convoca a actores de numerosos ámbitos (políticos, arquitectos, ingenieros, empresarios y subalternos) con usos, costumbres y tecnología europeos en el extranjero. Para dar respuesta a algunas interrogantes en torno a las tierras en disputa en Angola, se abordarán los registros de obras públicas coloniales portuguesas como referencias al debate sobre territorios colonizantes.

Palabras clave

Archivos coloniales; sistema de información; patrimonio archivístico compartido.

The theoretical framework that enables the study of colonial archives gathers contributions of fundamental authors: Peter Pels, Ann Laura Stoler, Oscar Salemink, Nicholas B. Dirks, and others (Autor, 2020: 11-42). Ann Laura Stoler set a clear division regarding archival studies. In *Along the archival grain*, Stoler rejects to approach archival production as an extractive enterprise rather as a consequential act of governance (Stoler, 2009 15; 25). Interestingly, official public works archives seem to surpass end results of colonial administrative and bureaucratic procedures performing as to territory. Official colonial records are key to studying ecosystems that orbited colonized territories (public works, education, justice, industry, religion, culture, economy, health, etc.) This paper proceeds the debate on colonizing territories through the archival records produced and accumulated by the Portuguese metropolitan services responsible for public works overseas – a Shared Archival Heritage.

The act of modifying territory resulted in what today constitutes an archival common heritage shared by the community of Portuguese-speaking countries. In this production, there are administrative documents that have their physical creation in the public services overseas. The International Council on Archives (ICA) established in 2016 an Expert Group on Shared Archival Heritage (EGSAH) that provides a forum for discussion and ultimately the resolution of issues related to archives pertaining to the history and cultural heritage of more than one community, country, or region where the custody, ownership and access is unclear or in dispute.[1] (Lowry 2017; Lowry 2022)

The Portuguese official archives produced and accumulated in Lisbon during the colonial span by the public works services (1830-1974) shaped themselves into complex ecosystems. By linking various services in the metropolitan administration, the paperwork produced by the public works services was disseminated overseas into as many similar services each province had functioning. Considering that in the Empire, each province had its own traits, to manage this documentary production could not be simple as we had the opportunity to investigate (Autor, 2020: 148-255). The Portuguese Overseas Historical Archive (Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon) is the holding institution of those services archives. Their archival description is available online at the database *Obras Públicas* hosted in the Digitarq portal.

"Making of history" resorting to colonial public works archives

The Royal Academy of Portuguese History (1720–1776) laid the foundations of a scientific historiography in Portugal (Mota 2003). However, the "making of History" during the 19th century was unaccompanied by a standpoint of an institutional practice (Curto 2013), a trend that shifted with historicism, which regarded historical development as the base aspect of human existence (Thornhill 1998). Later, in the 20th century, particularly after the great wars, the historiographic method entered a phase of re-examination of issues. That stemmed from the notion of globality (the event and its repercussions alongside), new schemes of thought, the decline of European preponderance and the disintegration of the liberal spirit (Barraclough 1987). In 1944, Karl Popper named this theoretical crisis the "poverty of historicism" (Popper 2007).

Archives and historical sources are nuclear to the writing of History. Over time, Archival Science has been continuously facing challenges. Though it presents solid knowledge of archival management, disputed archives are an inquiring topic on many levels. The records referred to in this paper were produced and accumulated by the Portuguese colonial administration seated

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[1] ICA (2023). EGSAH. (online) Available at: https://www.ica.org/en/expert-group-on-shared-archival-heritage-egsah

in Lisbon and have been in the custody of a national archive since 1931 - the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon[2].

Records and their imaginaries can lead to a biased perspective (Gilliland 2016). Official colonial archives can mislead an investigation if not read in context, just as a displaced record would. For instance, one must consider the gap between normative texts and reality. It is not advisable to confuse the regulation of public works services with their practice. Several regulations never had an impact locally despite being the law. That's why some archival records (including projects) are evidence of possibilities but not more. It is not a matter of distrusting archives as information sources, but rather contemplating alternative readings.

Researching colonial archives implies dealing with silence in several record production circuits. In it, a significant manifestation of silence comes from those who did not have a voice in the acts of governance that later became archives. The argument that this paper addresses aims to bring some resolution to the question "Are colonial public works archives solely collections of historical administrative documents?" because it acknowledges the uneven power relations perpetuated by colonialism. These have an impact on the "biased" reading that colonial archives seem to offer. Before engaging in the so-called "cultures of silence or secrecy at the archive," it is advisable to address archival records keeping some boundaries in mind.
Boundary nr 1: colonial archives should be distinguished from the sources of Colonial History (Chamelot 2022).

Until the 20th century, documentary production was not focused on information or archival management but rather on daily administration. Documentary masses were subjected to regulation but not managed. That leads to the current situation where national holders preserve meters of

colonial records that contribute little to History despite being sources of Colonial History. One day, collections held by the National Archives may undergo evaluation processes.

From a theoretical framework, colonial archives present themselves as rather complex organisms that are intricate in several other information systems: official, private, corporate, and individual. Colonial Public Works archives, apart from architectural and engineering projects, gather a multilateral production documentary of governmental areas: administrative, legal, economic, and public health. Considering the first archival boundary, one can problematize the second one: am I accessing the archive? Considering the first archival boundary, one can problematize the second one: am I accessing the archive? This question relates to the documentary context. Manuscripts present several reading difficulties: the handwriting, the lack of standardized spelling, and even the condition of the document itself can affect its reading, damaging its contextualization.

Boundary nr 2: Access to administrative official production in the 19th century was not customary.

Regardless of the conditions researchers still need to face to "meet" certain records, science fiction almost, it is customary to access administration archival evidence. Prior to the 20th century, there was no democratic access to information, and most of the population was illiterate. Apart from functional inaccessibility to the archives, there is also an intellectual inaccessibility to consider. Citizens may know how to read, but without literate knowledge, they will understand little of what they have just read. Something that massively evolved in the 20th century with a generalized acquisition of instruction skills. In 1854, the Portuguese Colonial Office launched a specialized journal that was the first access to the colonial archive

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[2] Acronym: AHU.

(Autor 2019). With a particular editorial policy - publishing solely official records - the journal influenced public opinion regarding the Empire (Autor 2022).

Manuscript documentation produced during the 19th and 20th centuries presents that as a minor palaeographic problem. Nevertheless, modern documents require solid palaeographic skills. A word misread can swift the documentary's purpose. Spain has had a national colonial archive since 1785 (El Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla). While holding extensive documentation, the present-day understanding of the Spanish colonial enterprise is partial due to the archive's intellectual inaccessibility. The UCA Project (2021) "Unlocking Colonial Archives" aims to develop interdisciplinary data science methods for the study of early modern Indigenous and Spanish-language materials. It gathers scholars, a team composed of interdisciplinary researchers in the Humanities and Computer Sciences from LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections (LLILAS Benson) at the University of Texas at Austin (USA); the Digital Humanities Hub at Lancaster University; and Liverpool John Moores University (UK) and interested audiences to decipher the Spanish colonial archive[3].

The same scenario happens in Portugal, where the inability to access modern records remains. To cope with it, the Centre for the Humanities (CHAM - NOVA University of Lisbon) developed an exploratory research project: "The

Transcription of the Processes of the Portuguese Inquisition (1536-1821)". A Portuguese-Brazilian team of palaeographers from 2022 January to July 2023 created a model of artificial intelligence based on machine learning to perform automatic transcription of the Portuguese Inquisition processes[4]. These records stem from a tribunal court with jurisdiction in Portugal and Brazil – the Tribunal do Santo Ofício[5].

Prior to unboxing archives, it is advisable to keep these two boundaries regarding research methodologic strategy: colonial archives may contain documents that are not sources of colonial history, which may refrain access.

Unboxing archives at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon

The documentary research and treatment developed over the last decade at the Portuguese Overseas Historical Archive (Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon)[6] enabled to map several public works archives with interests in several African and Asian territories (Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, S. Tomé and Principe, Timor, India, and Macao) from 1830 to 1975. Over 20000 archival records have been managed during several investigation projects as presented in its description at the Digitarq portal[7]. Public works records display a permanent identifier composed of the letters OP (acronym from "Obras Públicas") and a numeral from 1 to 20601[8].

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[3] The Spanish Palaeography and Digital Humanities Institute has a free online program that provides scholars with practical training in the reading and visualization of 16th to 18th-century manuscripts in Spanish. More information available at: https://texlibris.lib.utexas.edu/2022/06/latin-americanists-worldwide-unite-to-decipher-the-bensons-spanish-colonial-archive/

[4] The project is accompanied by the blog e-Inquisition hosted by the international Hypotheses network. More information is available at: https://traprinq.hypotheses.org/

[5] The Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT) in Lisbon is the holding institution. ANTT (2023). Tribunal do Santo Ofício. (online) Available at: https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=2299703

[6] Acronym: AHU.

[7] AHU (2023). [Public Works]. (online) Available at: https://digitarq.ahu.arquivos.pt/details?id=1119732

[8] Direct references to AHU archival records follow the formalism (AHU, Doc. OP00001). Complete references are provided at the end of the paper.

The "Public Works" database was created and organized during the investigation project "*Coast to Coast – Late Portuguese Infrastructural Development in Continental Africa (Angola and Mozambique): Critical and Historical Analysis and Postcolonial Assessment*" (2017-2019)[9] and completed recently by the "*ArchWar. Dominance and mass-violence through Housing and Architecture during colonial wars. The Portuguese case (Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique): colonial documentation and post-independence critical assessment*" project (2020-ongoing)[10] - both projects hosted at the Centre for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies DINAMIA'CET, Iscte (University Institute of Lisbon) and funded by FCT (the Foundation for Science and Technology, Lisbon).

Img. 1 Documentary treatment during the ArchWar Project

The goals of these research projects - to study Portuguese colonized territory in Africa and Asia through Architecture - impact while guiding the organization of these official colonial records among the historical documentary production of the Portuguese administration. Mapping and managing the public works archives among the Portuguese archival official colonial fonds filled a historiographic absence. This collection of historical

sources (1830-1975) comprises records of several areas: physical geography (orography, hydrography, meteorology, agricultural regions, geology and hydrology data and studies), communication ways (roads, railways, telegraphs, lighthouses, and post services), buildings, structures, infrastructures, and statistics.

The writing of History aims to restitute a past deed. However, one thing is the path necessary to it (regarding the access to historical sources), and another is the political and social incidents that provide context to the archive. Within the Portuguese Administration Colonial Public Works records are testimonies of the actors and the actions behind colonizing territory. This exercise enables researchers to revisit and study several layers of these land disputes: environmental, technical, social, cultural, financial, and political.

Occupation and land disputes

> "If you build it, they will come"
> Quote from the movie *Field of dreams* (1989)

One of the questions this article explores is "What may represent a colonial public works archive?" so far, addressing the writing of history topic resorting to public works collections enabled some reflections. The opportunity to explore these archives in detail through their archival management allows to establish a parallelism. While testifying the acts of governance that raised them, these records are evidence of occupation and territorial dispute.

Colonial land disputes as a historical phenomenon present convergent and divergent perspectives. It converges regarding matters of administrative and

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[9] FCT Ref. PTDC/ATP-AQI/0742/2014.

[10] FCT Ref. PTDC/ART-DAQ/0592/2020.

technical occupation and European settlement. But land disputes diverge, whether internal or external (with the resistance and agendas of the native population but also with conflict between European countries). All of these have left evidence on both territory and archives.

In the dynamics of colonies and occupied territory, the lack of technical conditions for European settlement in Africa made Portuguese demographic colonialism essentially a phenomenon of the late 19th and 20th centuries[11] (AHU, doc. OP15543). Portugal "discovered" how to reach Angola around 1482-1486 during the reign of King D. João II. The Portuguese establishment in African territory happened almost a century later, in 1575, with the foundation of Luanda (the capital of Angola). Until the 19th century, colonial efforts obeyed several other logics apart from the territorial domain concerning economic exploitation and commercial dynamics (AHU, doc. CU04951).

So, what did it mean "Portugal *discovered* Angola"?[12] In the 16th century, it meant that by finding a way to reach the lands of Angola, Portugal could claim it. But one thing is to find the way to it and claim it, yet another is to settle in while maintaining it. A small European nation such as Portugal could not promptly dominate the territory of Angola. It took the Portuguese several years to have an effective occupation of land in Angola.

In the modern age, colonial administration was substantially administrative. The value of correspondence was considerable because the metropolis was distant in space and in time from the provinces. Something that dissipated in the 19th century with improved communication means. Land disputes in Angola allowed the Portuguese to maintain an effective administration in a small part of the littoral between Dande and Cuanza in the last quarter of the 18th century (AHU, doc. CU04833). The first road project from Luanda to Dande dates to 1879 (AHU, OP13962). Only at the end of the 18th century, the Portuguese could go beyond Ambriz in the north of Angola. The Administrator of the province of Huila, Military Engineer Henrique Galvão[13], highlighted that administrative occupation was one thing and administrative division another. Administrative divisions obey geographic criteria, dividing the territory into provinces, districts, military districts, and posts. Performing an effective administrative occupation required further governmental instruments than geographical divisions.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, there were still adjustments regarding the administrative occupation of Angola. Local Administrators claimed not to be able to perform to their position's demands apart from answering metropolitan requests for statistics and reports. At the services overseas, there was a lack of personnel, housing, and the most elementary instruments to do the work (transportation means, sanitary services, etc.).

Angola was not easy to govern by Portugal, either administratively or technically. Geographically, it was a country 14 times bigger than Portugal. With a coast that ranges from 1650 km, Angola has borders with Congo at the north, Rhodesia at the east, and Southwest Africa at the south. With an area of 1246700 square km, Angola was wider than Nigeria, Mozambique, or South Africa, leading to its division in the 1930s into five provinces (Luanda, Malange, Benguela, Bié and Huila) and fourteen districts[14] (Galvão 1937, 98-106).

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[11] *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (2016), coordinated by Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini is a reference work on the history of demographic colonialism from a global and chronologically diachronic perspective, from Classical Antiquity to the 20th century.

[13] During the 1930s.

[14] In the Province of Luanda (being Luanda the capital of the province), Quanza Norte (headquarters Vila Salazar), Congo (headquarters Maquela do Zombo), Zaire (headquarters Santo António do Zaire), and Cabinda (being the headquarters of this district). In the province of Malange (headquarters of the district) there was also Lunda (headquarters Vila H. de
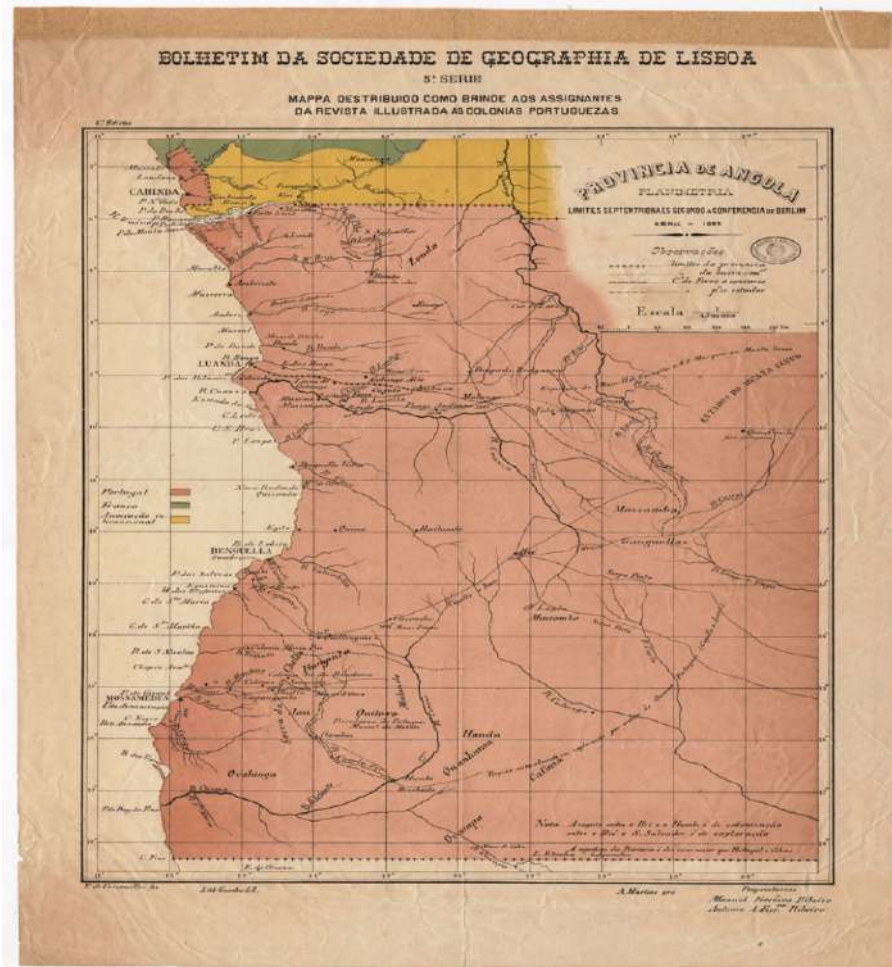
Img. 2 – Planimetry of Angola according to the Berlin conference (AHU Angola, doc. 354)

The lack of personnel, the unsuited administrative divisions, insufficient funds, the lack of materials and normative frames were sufficient to promote serious difficulties. All of these, to their extent, were not facilitating a technical occupation. Henrique Galvão, being himself an Administrator, claimed that the administrative authorities to perform the job needed (1) a district headquarters house; (2) an administrator residence; (3) a residence to the administrative and technical personnel; (4) an agricultural farm; (5) a breeding station; (6) a warehouse of materials and tools; (7) a selected seeds warehouse, (8) a purge chamber; (9) a medical post and medicine storage; (10) a sanitary tank; (11) a post office; (12) an indigenous court; (13) a Portuguese chapel; (14) inns for travellers and indigenous people; (15) lime, tile and brick kilns; (16) regional garner; (17) auto transportation; (18) a water or windmill; (19) a bread oven and, (20) a residence for soldiers and indigenous (Galvão 1937, 113-114).

Angola was the most extensive province of Portugal, overseas. A colonial technical occupation required proper means, and that was translating itself into territory intervention. Regarding European settlement, it would manifest the underlying idea in the quote from *The Field of Dreams*. Apart from general Public Work Services, several development services were necessary to administer the territory, turning colonization into an effective technical occupation. Services to govern the ports and railways of Angola were required, such as communication services - post, telegraph, and telephone services - and the service of electricity and water. Apart from these Public Works services, health and hygiene were necessary.

Carvalho). In the province of Benguela (headquarters of the district) there was Quanza Sul (headquarters of Novo Redondo) and Huambo (headquarters of Nova Lisboa). In the province of Bié, there was Bié (headquarters Silva Porto), and Moxico (headquarters Vila Luso). In the province of Huila, there was Huila (headquarters Sá da Bandeira), and Moçâmedes (also headquarters of the district).

Img. 3 - Cover of the Angola Public Works Services report of 1915

Technical staff for Public Works Services were scarce, as demonstrated by reports. At the beginning of the 20th century, eleven persons had worked at Central Services. The chief of the services was an engineer. The team had two senior engineers and an engineer to supervise the work. At the service, but without a superior degree, there were four technical employees and three designers. Despite being a small team, they were responsible for all the public works services of Angola. The lack of instruments to control documentary production exposes this scarcity. Archival management could not retrieve in over 20000 documents any records management plans, apart from some partial indexes. After 1878, official statistics incorporated data on documentary production. Nevertheless, relating documentary production and personnel is not simple. Data does not always correspond to physical existence (Autor 2020, 150-157).

Without first considering administrative and technical occupation, it was challenging to consider a sustained European settlement. Henrique Galvão has been operational in the field, and its clarity on colonizing territories is substantial. Its contribution to History and Science regarding colonial development is notable, publishing over a hundred titles until 1970. Galvão was against the regime of Salazar in Portugal but made a good point on the territorial problem discussing its politics. The respect for indigenous property and its limits, the advantages, or disadvantages of the types of land concessions (and the administrative issues associated with registration and transfer of property), the matters of free and systematic colonization, emigration, and others were relevant politics to European settlement in Angola[15]. All these problematics validate and empower official colonial records as objects of study.

Settlement evolution can be monitored by settlement patterns (AHU, doc. OP5844.04), census (recorded population (AHU, doc. OP12116), plough-teams: lands[16] and resources (AHU, Doc. OP16615)), expanding settlements (AHU, doc. OP18658), rivers, wetlands, roads, buildings, the establishment of farms, and others. Questioning how colonial infrastructure has conditioned the current development models of the new countries or what options taken

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[15] To access Galvão's (1895-1970) bibliographic production listed at the Portuguese National Library:
https://catalogo.bnportugal.gov.pt/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=169487C1H679R.112039&profile=bn&uri=link=3100018~!29344~!3100024~!3100022&aspect=basic_search&menu=search&ri=5

&source=~!bnp&term=Galv%C3%A3o%2C+Henrique%2C+1895-1970&index=AUTHOR (2023-09-16)
Its biography was released in 2011: Mota, F. 2011. [*Henrique Galvão: a Portuguese heroe*]. Alfragide: Oficina do Livro.
[16] Including common meadows, pastures, and woods.

by colonial administrations have been abandoned or otherwise strengthened after independence (Milheiro, Fernandes 2022) demonstrates how territory has been modified. Prior to it, public works expeditions happened. Starting in 1876 to be more abundant (AHU, doc. OP14003) these enterprises were pivotal to occupy he territory.
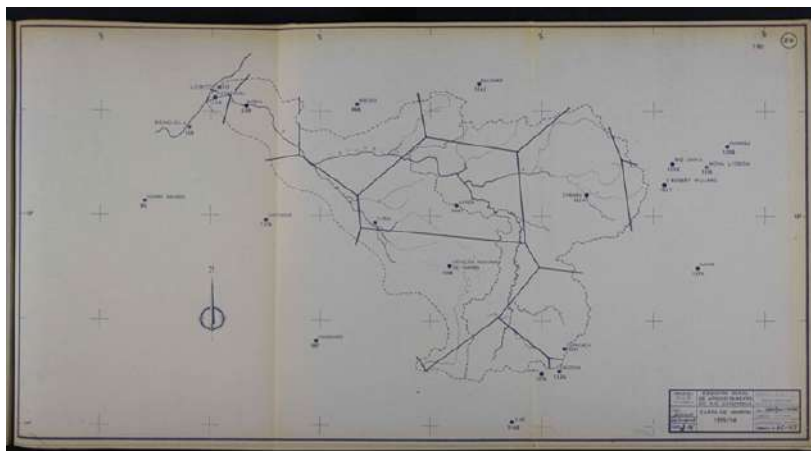
Img.4 - General scheme of the use of the Catumbela river, (AHU, doc. IPAD17931)

A solid example of colonizing territories is the origins of Lobito Bay. In Angola, after the foundation of Benguela, developments happened due to the trace of the territory made by expeditions (Matos, 1985:34). The hydrographic plan from Lobito Bay dates from the 1840s. The studies of the bay with drawings (AHU, Doc. OP17210), its accessibility to the Benguela railway (AHU, Doc. OP18325), and the need to accommodate the bay into a commercial port (AHU, Doc. OP18311) consolidate Lobito as a modern African city. All these works had an impact on the existing landscape enabling it to be appealing to further investment. For instances, this city is a prime example to study water uses and *rock strings*[17] in Angola.

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[17] *Restinga* in Portuguese language.

Img. 5 - Portuguese representatives at the Berlin Conference, (AHU, Iconography doc. 1953)

The year 1880 marked the beginning of the slow process of transforming Angolan territory into a colony of European settlement (Pimenta 2017). However, Portugal was not the only nation focused on Angola. After signing an Anglo-Portuguese treaty recognizing Portugal's dominance over the mouth of the Congo River, Bismarck convened the European powers for a conference on colonial issues – the Berlin Conference (1884-1885).

The participation in the Berlin Conference of powers that did not have colonies brought this subject of disputed land to a broader discussion. The colonial powers began to be bound by norms that were also drawn up and voted on by States that were not involved in the colonization or direct administration of territories but were willing to enjoy the benefits arising from the colonies without bearing the respective costs. And this was another difficulty to add to this colonial frame. However, giving up the land was not an option.

Representing Portugal at the Berlin conference was the Minister of Foreign Affairs António de Serpa Pimentel, the diplomat Marquis of Penafiel, the Founder of the Lisbon Geography Society Luciano Cordeiro, and the Attachés the Count of São Mamede, the Count of Penafiel, and Carlos Roma du Bocage, as portrayed above.

The difficulties of maintaining land

> 'Unaware of all collusion, we do not sell, we do not cede, we do not rent, we do not share our colonies, with or without reservation of any portion of national sovereignty.'
> (Galvão 1937, 15)

Occupation and land disputes entangle the archival material preserved in public works collections. The use of these records, re-constructing the land's disputed history, gained density with the Berlin Conference, as noticed at the archives. Documentary exchange regarding this foreign affair was significant. With it, we learn that despite the inherent difficulties regarding the occupation of territory, whether derived from the contexts of the colonizer (lack of funds and resources) or the colonized (opposition and resistance to colonial dominance), a phenomenon that escalated its existing proportions having multiple European parties' interest in same territories.

Until the Berlin Conference, the Portuguese presence in the African colonies regarded the administration and occupation of strategic areas along the coast, with most of the hinterland prevailing unknown. The Berlin Conference enshrined as a rule of International Law the principle of "*uti possidetis jure*" of the African coast, definitively removing the "historical rights" defended by Portugal. This understanding insisted that any State could have possession of the territory over which it claimed sovereignty. States could claim rights over territories where they did not have a presence. Urban planning and infrastructure were tools of colonial legitimization and territory control. A treaty signed with the local population, the exercise of administration acts, or military occupation could prove land possession. It could also comprise the acquisition of rights of permanent economic exploitation.

Despite the British insistence that this principle should apply to the entire continent, the contrary reaction of all other powers initially prevented it. Berlin's final declaration is restricted to coastal regions. To attain balance during the spread of European empires in Africa, the partition of the continent required Portugal to define the territorial borders with those new powers. It happened in 1886 through two conventions: a Luso-French and a Luso-German. Treaties of limits, these conventions do not express intentions of political-diplomatic rapprochement. However, in the German case, this hypothesis does not exclude (Guevara 2006).

To Portugal, the situation on disputed land with England reached its worst in the 1890s. However, settlement issues were not a novelty. The British Ultimatum of 1890 against Portugal provoked a social and political movement of patriotic exaltation and contestation by the Portuguese Monarchy. It marked the end of the so-called "pink map", a project presented in 1886 by the Lisbon Geography Society that intended to unite the territory between Angola and Mozambique – Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi - under the sovereignty of Portugal. A vast strip of territory that connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. This project specifically conflicted with English interests in linking Cairo (Egypt) to the Cape (South Africa).

Img. 6 - Chart of meridional Portuguese Africa[18]

The publication of this "pink map", a cartographic document drawn up based on Portuguese explorations of the territory between Angola and Mozambique, provoked the English Government to send a protest to Lisbon. The Portuguese Government argued that the letters exchanged were conciliatory and gave guarantees of the integrity of English rights. The international pressure exerted on the United Kingdom and Portugal to define spheres of influence and occupation of territories led Great Britain to impose on Portugal an ultimatum. The Government of Lord Salisbury presented in Lisbon an ultimatum demanding the Portuguese withdrawal from the disputed lands (Sardica 2014).

Concerning the extern difficulties of maintaining Angola, Ambriz District is a prime example. Ambriz is a city and municipality in the province of Bengo, in Angola. The Ambriz was a strategic place regarding the economics of partition because the municipal headquarters is on the banks of the Loge-Ambriz estuarine complex, where the strategic port of Ambriz is located. British, Dutch, French and German merchants who traded along the coast from the Cameroons to Ambriz had interests in the district.

The consolidation of Portugal's dominion over Ambriz dates from September 1st, 1855 (AHU, Doc. CU 774). Before the conference of Berlin, Portugal modernized the structures in Ambriz to facilitate exchanges and navigability. In 1878, a bridge to Ambriz was projected (AHU, doc. OP 13953), and a magazine to store ammunition (AHU, doc. OP 13952). Later, in 1880, Ambriz had a project of customs (AHU, doc. OP 13957) demonstrating its importance and development over time.

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[18] Document in the public domain. Available at: http://purl.pt/4220

Wrapping up the subject

Despite disputes and partitions, Portuguese colonies defined in the 1890s comprised possessions in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. In Africa there were islands of the Republic of Cape Verde, Portuguese Guinea, the islands of S. Tomé, the Fortaleza de S. João Batista de Ajudá, Angola and Mozambique. In Asia, there were Goa and Macau. In Oceania, Portugal ruled half of the island of Timor. And it remained that way until independence in the last quarter of the 20th century. Overseas, giving up on land was not an option to Portugal.

The colonial archive testifies to the backdrop of the shift and the continuum of Portuguese regimes and policies regarding disputed and occupied land overseas. It preserves evidence of colonizing territories and the Portuguese Colonial Public Works services archives' association with former colonial powers. Correspondence, reports, architectural and engineering projects, treaties, contracts, studies, statistical maps, tacheometric notebooks, photographs, blueprints, drafts, and sketches testify to the Portuguese territorial endeavours overseas.

The presence of native populations in this collection is noticeable in correspondence and reports. There are references to their engagement in the works (hiring mechanisms), teams, payments (signalling wage asymmetries between Europeans and natives, adults and youngers, and women), housing conditions, health, and alimentation. There are also requirements made on behalf of natives claiming advances or licences.

The research on untangled colonial records' contents and their connections in the legitimation process of the late Portuguese colonialism in Africa enables a broader conceptual frame. The relevance of this hypothesis resides in renewed access to historical sources associated with these multi-layered colonial landscapes.

Documentary collections referring to colonial public works maintain processes regarding delivered projects as historical, though those should not be considered "dead matter" despite their longevity. A remodel, an addition, an alteration, or other procedures that includes architectural studies can revive a former, even historical, public works process. Colonial archives have a particular pulse which seems to endure entangled in territory, even in Empires long gone.

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