
The Portuguese statues, on display awaiting a museum, in the fort of Cacheu. Visit to Guinea-Bissau and the Memorial of Slavery and Slave Trade of Cacheu

Retrieved 18 January 2024. Available in: <https://memorialcacheu.org/>

Location in <https://maps.app.goo.gl/MhRphEDDy8Hf3ivVA>

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Sunday, November 12, 2023 we traveled in two all-terrain vehicles from the capital Bissau to Cacheu, on the way to the Slavery and Slave Trade Memorial at 9 am. In one of them was all the material that accompanied us for the three-day stay, namely a fan, a Data Show, digital camera, and a huge load of bottles and bags (photo 1) of drinking water, for consumption since there is no basic sanitation or running water on site. We were also accompanied by several diesel jerricans because there is no electricity at the memorial and the supply would thus be guaranteed and rationed with a generator that they turn on between 7 pm and 6 am either for the operation of the fans to ward off mosquitoes or for charging mobile phones. In the other car, in addition to the project coordinator, a nurse, on a mission in Guinea-Bissau, an obstetrician and a doctoral student in medicine, who were

also on a mission in Bissau and thus intended to visit, on that Sunday, the city of Cacheu. The temperature in the morning exceeds 30°C and the humidity is always above 80%. Which makes it only comfortable to be either indoors or in the car with air conditioning on. Otherwise, we are constantly sweating and any walk or physical effort, no matter how small, becomes quite painful. The distance from Bissau to Cacheu is about 120km, approximately two hours, and the roads just after leaving the vicinity of Bissau are pieces of tar full of huge craters, eaten by the rains, sometimes several kilometers on dirt, which do not allow us to move safely above 60/70 km/h, reducing almost to immobility to cross some of the biggest holes. Cars often cross the wrong way as everyone dodges these obstacles as they can.



Photo 1. Drinking water bag.



Photo 2. Memorial Street with the museum building on the right.

Tabancas

Along the road you can see large houses, some of adobe, others of grass, others of brick, round or rectangular, some with reed roofs, others of zinc sheet, and in the vicinity women, children or men in various tasks or simply sitting watching the cars go by. Many sell items by the roadside: coconuts, breadfruit, cashews from the trees that accompany the road, or voles from the field, the size of cats and already cleaned of guts, which they show us and offer holding by the tail. The number of people and especially children, often almost naked and barefoot, always seems much higher than the number of visible dwellings available. Later we came to know that the tabancas (villages) (Photo 10) are in fact almost invisible in the middle of the bush, away from the road and some are of considerable dimensions with dozens or hundreds of people. Despite this, on the side of the road

there is rarely a sign indicating a nearby village and not even access to it makes it obvious, as it is often a simple path, with ground trampled in the bush, where a car would not be able to pass. None will have basic sanitation or piped water. They are apparently served by latrines at the back and the water is obtained from wells or boreholes. This, according to the technician who accompanied us on the mission, is one of the serious public health problems in Guinea-Bissau, because the underground runoff of the former invariably contaminates the latter and if the locals already resist this lack of hygiene a little more, the occasional visitors, namely Westerners, can contract serious dysentery or worse ailments simply by washing their hands and inadvertently contaminating their mouths. In other words, washing your hands with soap and water is not a guarantee of healthiness.



Photo 3. Main Entrance of the Slavery and Slave Trade Memorial of Cacheu. Guinea-Bissau.

Precariousness of women and children

The nurse and the obstetrician reported cases from the hospitals. Many men have multiple wives, not just those of Muslim faith, and all women invariably have multiple children. Hospitals often do not have enough medicines, equipment or manpower, so there are cases of women, but also children, abandoned to their fate. Both professionals even said that “in Guinea-Bissau all those who survive to adulthood are genetically the strongest, authentic supermen and superwomen”. The experts reported that maternal and child mortality has been decreasing, with life expectancy at birth increasing¹ from 43 years in 1980, to the current 59 in 2021, in recent years, thanks also to the intervention of NGOs and other institutions, but that cases of sick or injured children, such as those that the professionals have seen burned, who cried without assistance in the Bissau hospital, will be frequent. Likewise, those born with a fragile or sick appearance are often simply abandoned by their parents

in the hospital, they reported, because the parents “have more children”. Many of these children, said the nurse and the doctor, faint alone in the face of everyone’s indifference “until they go out”. “We are the ones who buy the medicines many times,” they assured. Guinea-Bissau is a country where, although legally prohibited, female genital mutilation is also culturally practiced quite extensively and is even increasing, with more than 50% of women and children victims of this centuries-old practice².

Memorial of Slavery and the Slave Trade of Cacheu

We arrived at 12 noon at the Cacheu Slavery and Slave Trade Memorial (METNC) (Photo 3), a museum/interpretive center recovered in 2016 from the old facilities of the slave building, with funds from the European Community and which, according to Guinea-Bissau officials, is currently the only museum open and operating in the country. Like most buildings and despite having been restored a few years

1 - Guinea-Bissau - Life expectancy at birth. Retrieved 11 January 2024. Available in <https://pt.countryeconomy.com/demografia/esperanca-vida/guine-bissau>

2 - Cajucam, Casimiro. 2019. Guinea-Bissau - Increase in cases of female genital mutilation. Radio Sol Mansi, Bissau. In: Vatican News. Retrieved 11 January 2024. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/pt/africa/news/2022-04/guine-bissau-aumento-de-casos-de-mutilacao-genital-feminina.html>



Photo 4 and 5 – Respectively from left to right, Albertina and Angelique (both Manjaco). Two trainees at the Memorial of Slavery and Slave Trade of Cacheu.

ago, the building is quite marked by the hot humidity of the climate, with the characteristic black spots of mold all over the walls.

In Guinea-Bissau, currently with about one and a half million inhabitants, there are approximately 30 different peoples or ethnic groups, each with distinct cultural, family and social characteristics. The main ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau are the Balantas (27%), the Felupe (23%), the Mandingas (12%), the Manjacos (11%) and the Papéis (10%).³ The most striking characteristic, to the common visitor, in relation to other African PALOP countries is that in Guinea-Bissau blacks are very black. Women (Photos 4 and 5), although characteristically in Africa they are submissive in relation to men, here they keep a certain look of pride and defiance,

inquisitive and curious. About the marked difference in skin color, Gomes Eanes de Zurara, in the chronicle of the discovery and conquest of Guinea, states in 1453:

These people of this green land are all black and that is why they are called the land of blacks or the land of Guinea, for which reason the men and women of Guinea are called Guineaus, which means the same as blacks.⁴

However, it is known that the rivalries between some of these ethnic groups are old. These animosities were even used by Portuguese colonialism as an aid in their domination and exploitation, namely in the slave trade (PAIGC. 1974). In this sub-Saharan geography, conflict and civil upheaval, even between ethnic groups, were always frequent. This is

3 - Porto Editora – Guinea-Bissau on Infopédia [online]. Porto: Porto Editora. [consult. 2024-02-15 12:52:14]. Available in [https://www.infopedia.pt/\\$guine-bissau](https://www.infopedia.pt/$guine-bissau)

4 - Catalogue. 2016. Memorial da escravatura e do tráfico negreiro. Cacheu. Guinea-Bissau. CPLP. Editing Action for development. Retrieved February 15, 2024. Available at: <https://pt.scribd.com/document/615877224/Catalogo-Memorial-Escravatura>

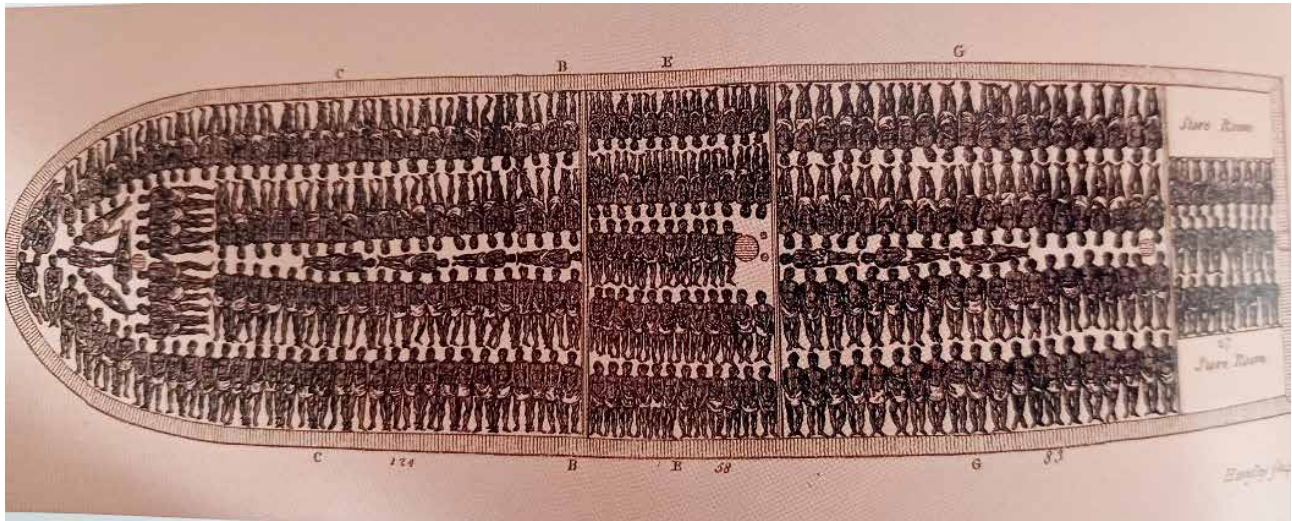


Photo 6. Slave ship slave ship diagram. 1787. Idem, p.24

also demonstrated by the architecture of the small fort of Cacheu (Photo 8), whose construction took place around 1669 (Catalogue. 2016) three hundred meters from the Slavery Memorial, where the gunboat mouths (Photo 9) are also facing the mouth of the river and the land, denouncing frequent sieges, either by rival sailing powers, or robberies by local natives.

Slavery and Creole

Cacheu would become one of the most important trading posts for the cruel slave trade in West Africa, which from 1500 and in the following centuries, in a true globalization of horror, would send (Photo 7) mainly to the Americas, but also to Europe, millions of human beings, men, women and children in conditions of absolute and total inhumanity. On board slave ships, human beings were transported for months in confined spaces without breathable air, water or food,

among waste and vomit, disease, rape and aggression. Many, no longer able to be sold, were simply thrown overboard on the routes and the eventual revolts, which also took place, were immediately crushed with torture and death.

In Africa, the enslavement of men was a reality at the arrival of Europeans. Different ethnic groups warred among themselves and victors made slaves of the vanquished. The Balanta Felupe dwellings, for example, were inside "more labyrinths than houses." And they do it in this way because of a nation of blacks called Bijagós (...) who continually have war with them (...) making many preys".⁵ "Prisoners" are also understood as slaves. The dwellings in question (Photo 10) even had a secret concealed compartment where the inhabitants hid during enemy incursions, thus trying to avoid death or slavery. "There were trans-African networks that supplied many African potentates with slaves and distant

5 - Ibid., p. 16

markets such as the Mediterranean, from the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent to China through the Indian Ocean” (Catalogue. 2016, p19). By making wars “holy” and also under the pretext of saving the souls of the Gentiles, the capture and slavery of idolaters was legitimized. Gradually slavery became a specific and exclusive condition of black Africans. The arrival of the Europeans without introducing slavery did, however, significantly alter the political balances, the trade routes, but above all substantially expanded the demand for slaves. Many of the incursions into the African interior, carried out by Europeans and where slaves were also branded, were carried out by local chiefs who thus obtained horses, trinkets, fabrics, various manufactures, alcoholic beverages and even weapons (Catálogo 2016, p.19).

Creole is the language of the “white” criola and initially appeared in the Mandinga and Biafada ethnic groups also as a consequence of this domination by Europeans. “Creole in Portuguese, Creole in Spanish and Creole in French referenced since the end of the century. They were used to name people, plants or animals as beings born at home, in the colonies, but not indigenous.” (Catalogue. 2016, p.27). The demonization of the white man as the entity that provides, but also dominates and submits, is traditional and widespread. It is mentioned that this distrust, specifically of the Felupe society, still extends to the present day in relation to the Guinean state itself, which they continue to nickname Alulum-âu, i.e., the “White”. (Bayan. 2015, p.185).

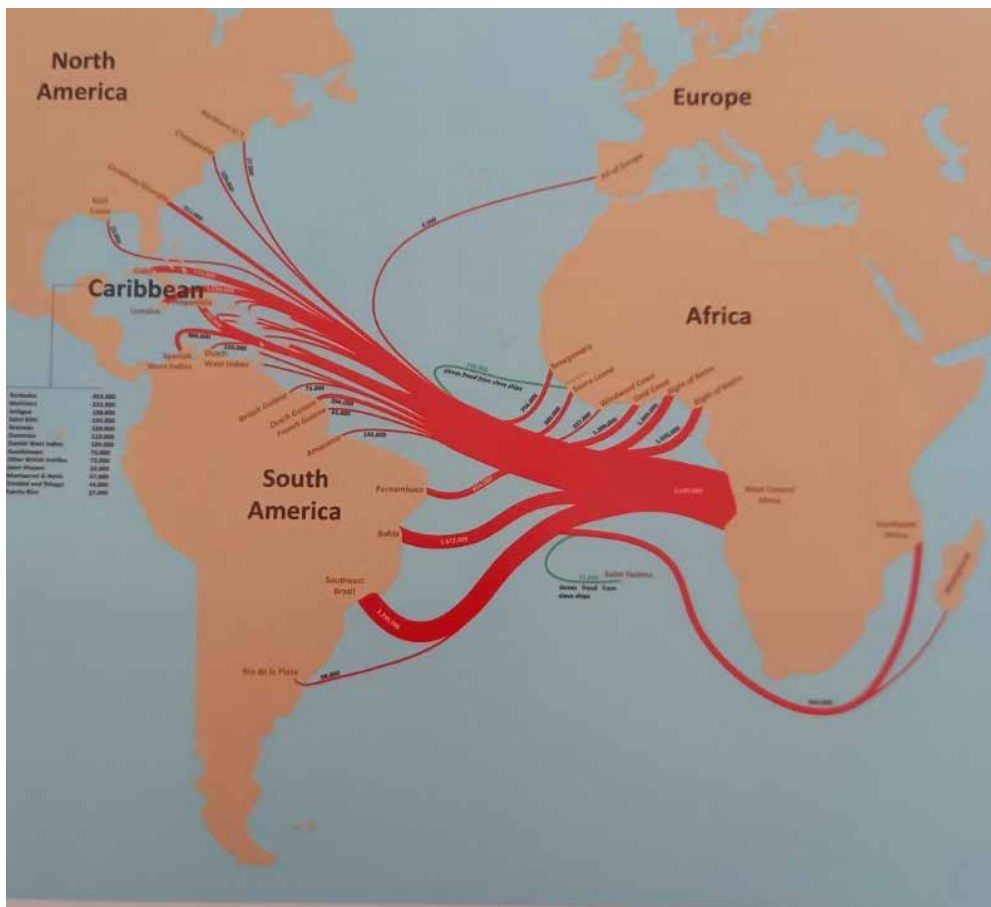


Photo 7. Flows of the African slave between 1501 and 1867. Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Eltis and Richardson, 2010. In: Catalogue (2016, p.31)



Photo 8. South façade of the Cacheu Fort with artillery piece peeking out of the battlement at the back facing land.



Fig. 9. Portuguese cannon at the Cacheu fort, facing the river.



Photo 10. Felupe type housing in the village "Beroto", Cacheu. Information of the name of the locality that the author thanks to the METNC graduate Amélia Manga.

The statues of Cacheu

Correia (2019) referring to the transformation and recovery by the Estado Novo in the metropolis of the built heritage states that "The monuments thus constituted privileged documents in the (re)definition of the image of Portugal, but also superior vehicles for the affirmation of a global ideological strategy (...) had as its ultimate purpose the reidentification of the collective being".

The so-called Squares of the Empire are identified by the "urban structures of representation of the political power of the Estado Novo (...) disseminated throughout the African cities of Portuguese colonization (...) the strategy would be to implement an iconographic program of celebration of the colonial presence through the placement of public art and statuary at key points" (Milheiro, 2014).

Also in this logic, the affirmation of the power of the colonizing power was thus expressed not only by its urban structure but also by the statuary that crowned it, dispersed throughout the colonies. In Guinea-Bissau, as in other latitudes, there were works of the regime in the form of statues, which glorified the deeds and exploits of the discoveries, in a romanticized and exalted vision of Lusitanian nationalism.

Much of the public art of the Estado Novo comprised monuments and statues intended to show the people certain passages or characters representative of national history (Elias. 2007). Modernism was imposed as the official style of the regime by António Ferro (1895-1956), an ideologue of the art of the Estado Novo. Society, mostly rural and illiterate, created the conditions for sculpture to gain prominence as a vehicle for propaganda of a State with a nationalist bent:

This domesticated modernism – in its terms a paradox – found the conditions to impose itself through the vast campaign of public works launched by Salazar (1889-1970), from the 1930s onwards, which he maintained until the death throes of the regime. Throughout the national territory, including the colonies, there appears, in monuments, statues or decorative programs of public buildings, the fixation in stone or bronze of personalities from the history of Portugal, with particular emphasis on the heroes of the Discoveries period, but also writers, poets or religious figures. A strategy of power repeated in other totalitarian regimes in Europe

and which became known in Portugal as the Politics of the Spirit. The epitome of this strategy, the 1940 Portuguese World Exhibition glorified the uniqueness of the Portuguese action in the world, celebrating peace at a time when war was ravaging the entire European continent.⁶

In the light of the context we explained above, it becomes evident that these images represent, for the locals, still today, not glorifications of past generations, but symbols of oppression, inhumanity and suffering. In the fort of Cacheu there are four bronze statues, some cut or mutilated, which represent respectively Diogo Gomes, Nuno Tristão, Honório Pereira Barreto, Teixeira Pinto. They were works commissioned by the Estado Novo to several Portuguese sculptors whose award they won by competition or distinction. Its original location was not Cacheu. Those of Diogo Gomes, Nuno Tristão and Honório Barreto were originally in the capital, Bissau. Teixeira Pinto's was in the village that since 1948 has also been called the village of Teixeira Pinto, in honor of the Portuguese colonialist military João Teixeira Pinto, returning to the original name after independence, which remains today: Canchungo. The statues were brought to Cacheu after independence. Guinea-Bissau was the first colony to see its independence recognized by Portugal, in September 1974. A year earlier, the liberation movement had already unilaterally declared the country's independence⁷.

6 - Modern art center. 2018. Sculpture in the Estado Novo. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Retrieved 29 February 2024. Available in <https://gulbenkian.pt/cam/novas-leituras-2/escultura-no-estado-novo/>

7 - Aranha, Ana. Ferreira, Iolanda. 2011. The life of sounds. The independence of Guinea-Bissau. Podcatst. RTP teaches. Retrieved February 28, 2024. Available at: <https://ensina.rtp.pt/artigo/independencia-guine-bissau/>



Photo 11. Statue of the Portuguese Navigator Diogo Gomes in front of the Pidjiguiti Pier Bridge. 1969. Bissau. Illustrated Postcard, edition Photo Serra. In: <https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2006/11/guin-6374-p1310-postais-ilustrados-12.html>

Statue of Diogo Gomes

Portuguese navigator of the fifteenth century, whose dates of birth and death are between 1402 and 1502, respectively (the Encyclopedia Britannica⁸ refers to his period of “flourishing”, perhaps understood to be of greater activity, between 1440 and 1484). Diogo Gomes (also referred to as “from Sintra”), is referred to as “he was one of the navigators of the House of Infante D. Henrique and assumes himself as

a man of the Infante, contacting unknown peoples, initiating diplomatic and trade relations with them while spreading the faith”⁹

It sailed in 1456 to the mouth of the Rio Grande, Geba channel. On the way back, he went up the Gambia River to Cantor, in search of information about the gold trade and the routes that connected the gold regions of Senegal, Upper

8 - <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Diogo-Gomes>

9 - In: Instituto Camões. <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/navegaort/d24.html>



Photo 12. Detail of the front of the Statue of the Portuguese Navigator Diogo Gomes next to the Pidjiguiti pier in Bissau. 1969. Photo obtained from: <https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2006/11/guin-6374-p1310-postais-ilustrados-12.html> The pedestal is referenced as project 527 in Millheiro, Ana. Dias, Eduardo. 2009. Architecture in Bissau and the Colonial Urbanization Offices (1944-1974). ISCTE. <https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/7029> but without a signature. The statue is also unknown to its authorship.

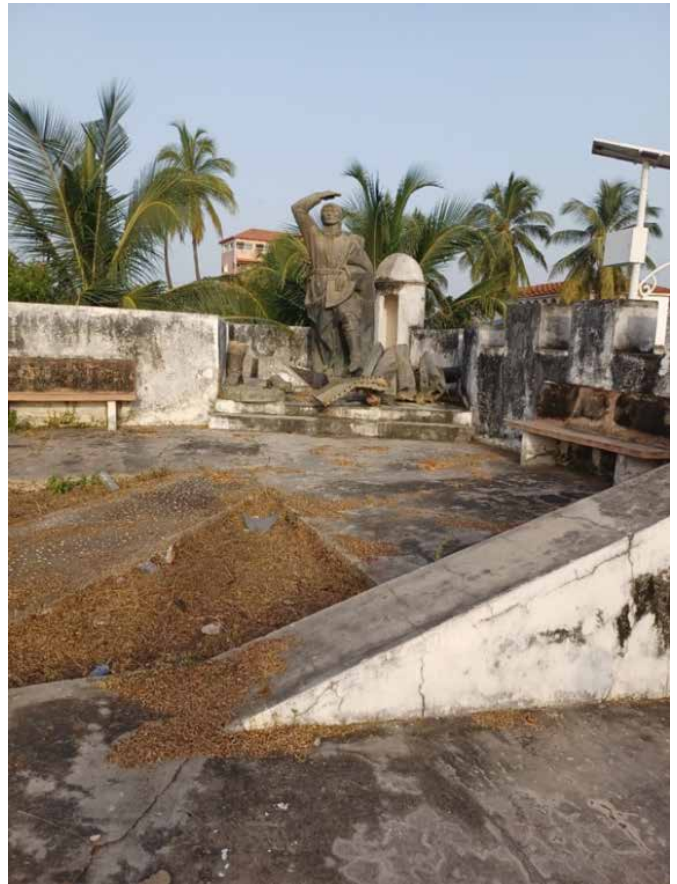


Photo 13. Statue of Diogo Gomes or Diogo Gomes de Sintra, bronze, possibly from 1958. Fortress of São José de Cacheu, Guinea-Bissau today.

Niger and the trading post of Timbuktu to the Saharan routes that led to the Moroccan coast. During this expedition, Diogo Gomes captained a squadron of three ships. Possibly

on the return of this exploration he touched the archipelago of Cape Verde, whose discovery he claims for himself ¹⁰

10 - Ditto



Photo 14. Statue of Nuno Tristão in Bissau. Postai Serra de Guiné-Bissau Series. 1960. Statue of Nuno Tristão in a postcard “Serra” from 1960. Retrieved 28 February 2024. Available at: <https://jenikirbyhistory.getarchive.net/media/dc-foto-serra-no-120-monumento-a-nuno-tristao-bissau-91f029>

Nuno Tristão¹¹

Portuguese In 1441, ordered by Prince Henry the Navigator to explore the African coast, he crossed the Rio do Ouro and discovered Cabo Branco. Later, in 1443, he discovered the islands of Arguin and Garças, and the following year, on a third voyage of discovery, he reached the Senegalese region. In 1446, he crossed Cape Verde and reached the Gambia River, near whose mouth he was killed in clashes with indigenous people.

The statue was designed by the sculptor António Duarte (1912 - 1998) who won the competition for the 5th centenary monument to Nuno Tristão in Guinea-Bissau, an urban project developed with the architect. Alberto José Pessoa (Machado. 2015)

In the Blog “Fora nada e vai três” by Luis Graça and comrades, we find the description, by those who lived it in the place, of this monument:

11 - Porto Editora - Nuno Tristão at Infopédia [online]. Porto: Porto Editora. [consult. 2024-02-26 18:53:19]. Available in [https://www.infopedia.pt/\\$nuno-tristao](https://www.infopedia.pt/$nuno-tristao)



Photo 15. Statue of Nuno Tristão currently in the Fort of Cacheu.

This artery, the main avenue of Bissau in our time, came from Praça do Império to Cais do Pidjiguiti, with the statue of Nuno Tristão at the end; in the upward direction, that is, from Pidjiguiti to Praça do Império, there was Casa Gouveia on the left [, visible in this photo, behind the statue, and further on, on the right, the Cathedral]. Nuno Tristão, now

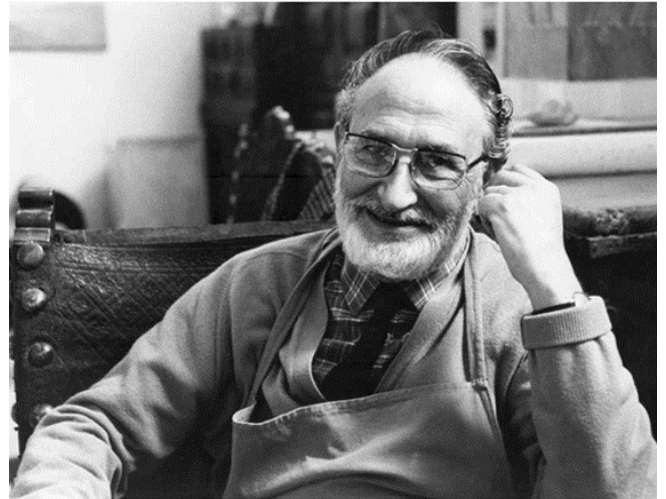


Photo 16. Sculptor António Duarte (Caldas da Rainha, January 31, 1912 - Lisbon, March 2, 1998) at the Atelier-Oficina de Belém, 1983, Photo: Arts Center, Caldas da Rainha (Machado. 2015). One of the most prominent sculptors belonging to the second generation of Portuguese modernist artists

“on foot and exiled” in the village of Cacheu, c. 2012. The navigator arrived in these parts around 1446. His statue was erected on the occasion of the 5th centenary of the navigator’s landing in Guinea.¹²

12 - Blog “Fora nada e vai três” Retrieved February 28, 2024. Available at: <https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2014/12/guine-13997-caderno-de-poesias-poilao.html>

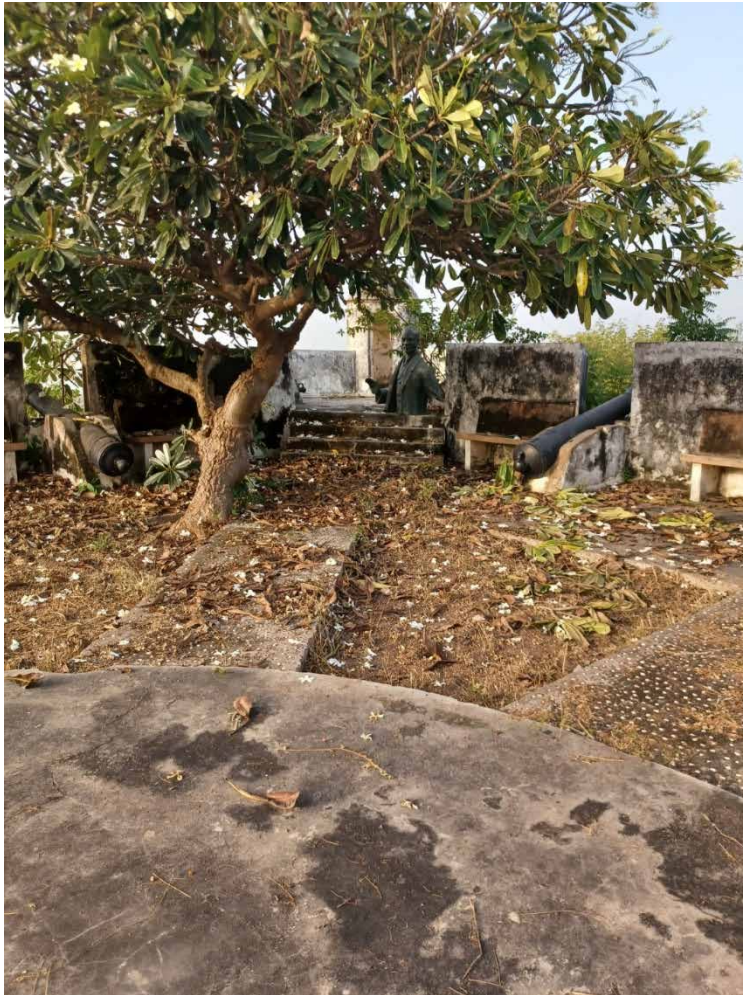


Photo 17. In the background, the upper part of the statue of Honório Barreto Bronze, 1958, by the sculptor Maria Barreira and her husband, Vasco Pereira da Conceição, Carvalho, Maria Fernanda. 2000. Maria Barreira. Conversations with sculptors. Faculty of Fine Arts. University of Lisbon. In: *Arte teo.* - Lisbon, 2000. - N° 11 (2008), p. 241-250. ISSN 1646-396X. <http://hdl.handle.net/10451/20583>, awarded in a public tender promoted by the Portuguese state.

Honório Pereira Barreto¹³

Honório Pereira Barreto (24 April 1813 - 16/26 April 1859) was a Portuguese soldier and colonial administrator, son of a Cape Verdean father and a Guinean mother. He retained Portuguese control of the area and even extended his influence. Despite being a native, he held the highest

positions, from Provedor de Cacheu to Governor of the then Colony. Considered a brave colonial governor, however, he also managed a family business with his mother, where the main mercantile products were slaves¹⁴.

13 - Honório Pereira Barreto in RTP Arquivos. Retrieved 29 February 2024. Available in <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/as-grandes-figuras-do-mundo-portugues-4/>

14 - In a common home. Mário Soares Foundation. Retrieved 29 February 2024. Available at: http://www.casacomum.org/cc/dossiers/memorial/img/paineis/07_02.jpg



Photo 18. Part of the statue of Honório Barreto in the fort of Cacheu. Photo of Honório Barreto at the Cacheu fort. Retrieved 28 February 2024. Available at: Photo: <https://www.arquipelagos.pt/imagem/honorio-barreto-bronze-de-1958-c-fortaleza-de-cacheu-guine-bissau/>



Photo 19. Photograph (Photo of statue of Honório Barreto in Blog Fora nada e vai três. Retrieved 28 February 2024. Available at: <https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2013/04/guine-6374-p11361-notas-de-leitura-471.html>) of the Statue of Honório Barreto in Bissau in the square that at the time bore his name. Currently Che Guevara Square (Praça Che Guevara. Bissau. Consultado a 27 de fevereiro de 2024. Disponível em: <https://www.google.pt/maps/place/Pra%C3%A7a+Che+Guevara,+Bissau,+Guin%C3%A9-Bissau/@11.8601112,-15.5860858,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0xee6c52812d75e3b0xe8cbd3aceb40c6f2!8m2!3d11.8601138!4d-15.5834826!16s%2Fg%2F11bzv5hwppb?entry=ttu>).



Photo 20. Sculptor Maria Barreira (Lisbon, 1914 – Lisbon, 2010) author of “pieces of graceful and tranquil forms that express all her sensitivity” (Maria Barreira. In: Museum of Neorealism. Retrieved 29 February 2024. Available at: <https://www.museudoneorealismo.pt/pages/5484>) in her studio (Maria Barreira. Photo: Carvalho. (2000, p.242)).



Photo 21. Statue of João Teixeira Pinto in the village of Teixeira Pinto, now Canchungo. Photo: Postcard, Collection “Guiné Portuguesa, nº 112. (Photo edition Serra, C.P. 239, Bissau. Printed in Portugal, Imprimarte, SARL). In: Blog Fora nada e vai três, accessed on February 29, 2024. Available in <https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2021/01/guine-6174-p21738-o-nosso-blogue-como.html>

João Teixeira Pinto¹⁵

João Teixeira Pinto (March 22, 1876 – November 25, 1917) is a Mozambique. He was a colonial soldier, having reached the rank of Major of Infantry in the Portuguese Army . In 1897 he incorporated the Army School (No. 68 of the Student Corps) unit: Indigenous Expeditionary Infantry Companies. Knight of the Military Order of the Tower and Sword of Valor, Loyalty and Merit, Silver Medal Queen D. Amélia with the legend “Cuamato 1907”, Gold Medal of Distinguished Services. He fought in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, participating in the so-called “pacification campaigns”. The Portuguese force deployed defensively in the valley of the Ludjenda River (Negomano) was surprised by a German guerrilla attack at 10 o’clock in the morning of November 25. Initially wounded in the arm, he was later,

during the German looting, found a corpse with a shot to the head. The statue of João Teixeira Pinto in the village that was named after him in Guinea-Bissau, previously still kept the name of Canchungo. By ordinance of July 18, 1948, it was renamed the village of Teixeira Pinto, in honor of the Portuguese colonialist soldier, returning to the original name after independence.

Pinto, Ana and Tapadas, Sandra. In his 2022 article, *Do gesto como retrato: o caso da estatuária pública por Euclides Vaz*. In: *O Retrato. Theory, practice and fiction*. From Francisco de Holanda to Susan Sontag, they analyze the sculptor’s work precisely through this and other statues of his authorship. José-Augusto França considers it a “modernized Academism” (França. 2009, p.191).

15 - João Teixeira Pinto in: Academia Militar. Retrieved 29 February 2024. Available at: <https://academiamilitar.pt/joao-teixeira-pinto.html>



Photo 22. Front view of the statue of Teixeira Pinto. ¹⁶



Photo23. Forte de Cacheu. Statue of Teixeira Pinto in the background, today.

16 - Photo Teixeira Pinto in Blog Fora nada e vai três, consulted on February 29, 2024. Available in <https://blogueforanadaevotres.blogspot.com/2021/01/guine-6174-p21738-o-nosso-blogue-como.html>

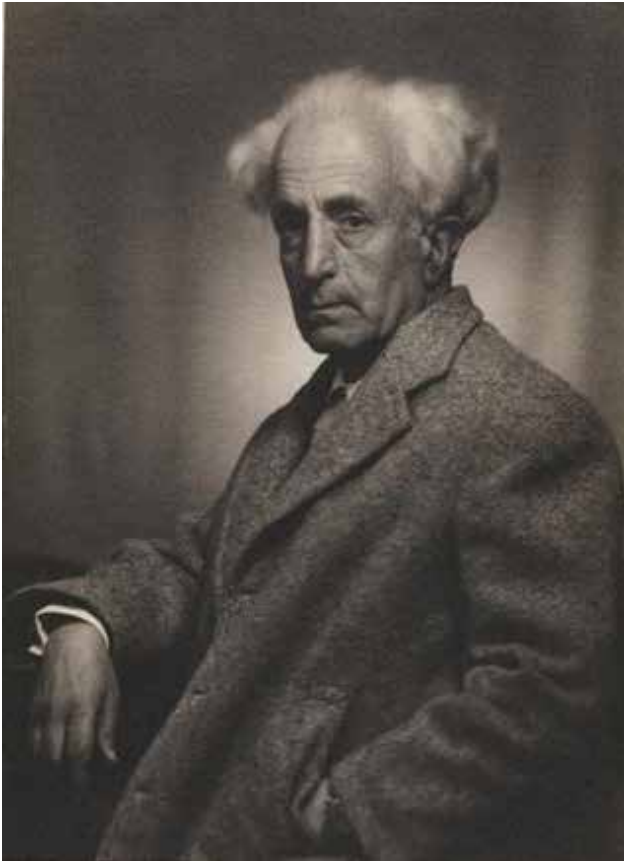


Photo 24. Sculptor Euclides Vaz (Ílhavo, November 10, 1916 - Banzão (Colares), February 10, 1991)¹⁷

Conclusion

If in Guinea-Bissau there are those who want to erase this memory, there are also those who consider that, on the contrary, it should be preserved. The LUSA agency notes this¹⁸ in an interview on November 25, 2015 with a well-known traditional chief of the Cacheu region:

Lúcio Rodrigues, a well-known traditional chief of the Cacheu region, northern Guinea-Bissau, is against the “attempt to erase from the history” of the country the presence of Portuguese colonization, which he says is “more than evident”. Former member of Parliament and now régulo (traditional chief), Lúcio Rodrigues told Lusa that he does not understand how in Guinea-Bissau “the statues of figures of colonization are thrown into oblivion”, when in other countries they are preserved, he said. Statues of figures such as Diogo Cão, Nuno Tristão, Teixeira Pinto, Honório Barreto, among others, are piled up in the courtyard of the old fort of Cacheu after being torn from different places in the new independent state in 1973. The process until independence went through colonization, the slave trade. It is part of our history. It is this total ignorance that reigns in our heads that have to be washed”, noted the chief Rodrigues. He also argues that students should be taught this part of the country’s history, so that they can know, for example, that Nuno Tristão was killed in the Cacheu River, by the felupes, Tne of the ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau.

In the West and specifically in Portugal when the theme addressed is Africa and the discoveries, the romanticized idea that endures, in the collective memory, is always invariably that of courage, greatness, the exploration of the unknown, the suffering and anxiety of the valiant navigators, who crossed fearless and daring the seas never before sailed. Popular culture, also sometimes manipulated or less intentionally, and in an inertia that establishes itself, has been in charge of retransmitting this idea over the centuries. See the case even today in music, for example, where Faust¹, Vitorino Salomé² and even Madredeus³ are examples of this melancholic exaltation of the sea and the navigation of the unknown, induced by the theme of discoveries. However, maritime discoveries are also, and perhaps above all, deep wounds that still torment and destroy peoples and countries today. Stories of unspeakable suffering perpetrated on human beings at the hands of their fellow human beings. Where greed, greed, abuse and crime were the daily reality

17 - Photo: Portrait of Euclides Vaz - San Payo (Photographic Documentation Archive, DGPC).png. Created: 1950. Uploaded: June 18, 2023. Retrieved February 24, 2024. Available at: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euclides_Vaz

18 - SAPO News. Retrieved February 28, 2024. Available in https://www.sapo.pt/noticias/actualidade/chefe-tradicional-da-guine-bissau-contra_5659f8405d8652103355dd2b

not only for generations of men, but also and above all for generations of millions of women and children. The reluctance, one would say, of the dignitaries of the state of Guinea-Bissau themselves, who even today do not clearly assume the exiled statues of Cacheu other than as ones "on display waiting for a museum" shows that it is a complex subject that also causes a deep pain and not fully appeased by those who suffered from colonization. Especially one that seems to have no understanding or even the notion of its existence also on the part of the descendants of those who eventually originated it.

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Project book available in paper on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/5LaeULE>

In PDF in the University of Évora repository: <http://hdl.handle.net/10174/36845>

Films: S. Tomé and Príncipe: https://youtu.be/KADot7_MZ8g; Guinea-Bissau: https://youtu.be/kTYd7f4r_pY; Cape

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