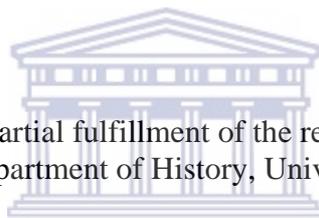


**MANDUME YA NDEMUFAYO'S MEMORIALS IN NAMIBIA AND
ANGOLA**

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A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister Artium in the Department of History, University of the Western Cape.



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Supervisor: Dr Patricia Hayes

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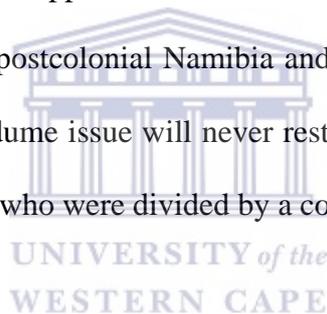
ABSTRACT

Mandume has fought two colonial powers, Portugal and British-South Africa from the time he became king in 1911 to 1917. This thesis looks at the different ways in which Mandume ya Ndemufayo is remembered in Namibia and Angola after these countries had gained their independence from colonialism. His bravery in fighting the colonizers has awarded him hero status and he is considered a nationalist hero in both Namibia and Angola. However, he is memorialized differently in Namibia and Angola. The process of remembering Mandume in different ways is related to where his body and head are buried respectively. This is because there is a belief that his body was beheaded, and his head was buried in Windhoek (under a monument) while the rest of his body is buried in Angola. The monument that is alleged to host his head is claimed to belong to him to this day. However, this monument was erected for the fallen South African troops who died fighting him. I argue that this belief was in response to the need to reclaim a monumental space to commemorate Mandume in the capital city.

In the postcolonial Namibia and Angola, Mandume is memorialized at Heroes Acre and Mandume Memorial respectively. There are also other forms of his memorialisation in both countries such as roads, streets etc, named after him. I am most interested in finding if the two countries share Mandume or they are competing for him. If they share him, how are the politics around his memory negotiated? I argue that Mandume is used as a tool in processes of nation-building for Namibia and Angola. He is considered a nationalist icon to bring about unity amongst people in both countries. This is because national unity, nationhood, identity and reclamation of

the self are all evident in the memorial work that is put in Mandume's name in these two countries. I argue that the notion of nationhood associated with Mandume ya Ndemufayo has hidden agendas in the two countries. Mandume's monuments in Angola and Namibia service national healing processes especially to unify nations that were divided by civil war and apartheid laws respectively. For both countries, the formal honouring of anti-colonial fighter such as Mandume obviously promotes the recovery of nations that underwent violent conflict.

I conclude that these two countries use Mandume as a resource in the nation-building process to unify their people respectively and this consequently divides the Kwanyama people, which is the opposite of what Mandume was doing. As long as his memory is used this way by postcolonial Namibia and Angola, the Kwanyamas will never be united and the Mandume issue will never rest because it was his goal, as he was trying to unite his people who were divided by a colonial border.



DECLARATION

I declare that *Mandume ya Ndemufayo's memorials in Namibia and Angola* is my work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: Napandulwe T. Shiweda

Date 15 November 2005

Signed.....



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Chapter One

Introduction

The history of Ovamboland is a subject of lasting fascination. Its history includes the Kwanyama kingdom, which was one of the most important Ovambo kingdoms. The colonial border between northern Namibia and southern Angola affected this area. Mandume ya Ndemufayo was the last king of the Ovakwanyama¹ and he fought the colonial occupiers (Portuguese and South Africans) from 1911 to 1917. The essence of this research is to show how Mandume is remembered and memorialized in different ways by the Namibians and Angolans. Traces of Mandume's memory are present in many things such as songs, folklore, poems etc, and this way he is remembered in both countries. But what is happening here is that these two countries are making his memory concrete by building memorials for him after independence. The ways in which he is remembered varies from places and people being named after him, to the monuments built in his honour. This process of remembrance is preconditioned by many factors, and postcolonial nation building is probably most significant. In this regard, this chapter will explore Mandume's reign in the existing historiography and how he encountered the colonial powers: Portugal, Germany and British-South Africa. The literature on memorialisation is also discussed. This is in regard of understanding how he ended up being a resistance "hero" for the two countries with the result that both have erected monuments in his memory.

¹ Ovakwanyama is one of the Oshiwambo-speaking societies in northern Namibia (Ovamboland). They are situated in the central north and southern region of Namibia and Angola respectively.

Mandume's historiography

There is a density of written material concerning Mandume in Namibian historiography, which is utilised in this research. The first set is oriented in the books that contain oral data of Kwanyama history since Mandume's reign and even years before his rule. Patricia Hayes in a number of works² has dealt with the pre-colonial history of the Kwanyama (in general the Owambo history) and when they finally came under colonial rule. The book *Healing the Land* deals with a transcribed interview with Vilho Kaulinge, who provided the most comprehensive account of Mandume's reign which begun in 1911. In a series of long interviews, Vilho Kaulinge gave the history of the origin of the Owambo people as a group and the Kwanyama kingdom in particular Mandume's rule, colonization and the struggle against it. These interview accounts will be referred to later in the course of the thesis.

Patricia Hayes's PhD thesis also deals with the Kwanyama kingdom and looks at the processes of socio-economic change over a period of merchant capital and colonial rule in the kingdom.³ It also covers Mandume ya Ndemufayo's character, resistance and internal reformist approach towards his *omalenga* in asserting his authority. Another paper written by Patricia Hayes deals with Mandume's death and it attempts to historicize

² Hayes, P. et.al, *Namibia under South African Rule, Mobility and containment*, (Ohio University Press, 1998). Idem, "Order out of chaos: Mandume ya Ndemufayo and oral History", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (Vol.19, No.1, March 1993): p 91, Idem, *Healing of the land, Kaulinge's history of Kwanyama*, (Rudiger Koppe Verlag , Duisburg 1997): pp8-9, Idem, *The colonizing camera, Photographs in making of Namibian history*,(University of Cape Town Press: 1998),

³ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Ovambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1992).

his iconographic representations which now find their way into homes, shops, memorials, conservations, school books and local and national politics.⁴

Jeremy Silvester's short book, entitled *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong* tells the history of Mandume Ya Ndemufayo and his fall based on the analysis of official documents and correspondence compiled mostly by the British and South African military he confronted. Silvester gives insight into how the colonial officials made him out to be an uncontrollable and blood thirsty corrupt King, and shows how the omission of his side of the story put him on the wrong side of these colonial powers. These sources are reconstructing Mandume's history and struggles of the Kwanyama kingdom during colonial rule. This is trying to redress what is presented because there are contradictions in written and oral accounts of both his life and death his ideas due to his powerful and complex personality. Even though this is the case there are still gaps in the historiography. Thus, this thesis seeks to fill gaps in Mandume's representation especially regarding the problematics around his memorialisation.

Memory and methodology

The second area of literature used in this thesis is thematic and theoretical, and concerns memory and memorialization. The notion of memorials and memorial sites whether tangible or intangible has generated intense and passionate debates in post colonial Africa. Since the First World War in Europe and elsewhere, a change occurred in the ways soldiers are commemorated after war. This change is especially noticeable by how nation-states choose to remember their war dead, individually or as a common soldier.

⁴ Hayes, P. *Blood on our eyes: Mandume's death (1917) in Photographic context*. Available F:\South African Museum - Encounters with Photography.htm Accessed: 8 November 2005.

The war dead were previously not properly remembered or forgotten. They were either left anonymous; missing without a trace, often buried in common graves. This led the different nation-states around the world to come up with the creation of monuments honouring soldiers who died in the war.

Werbner referring to the Great Powers (European nation-states), argues that the ceremonial and shrine complex was brought forth not merely in war between nations but in conflict within them, between state, kin and community, between rulers and subjects and within ruling elites.⁵ The need to built commemorative complexes after the ‘war heroes’ has begun recently in African postcolonial states. And while the memorial complex has been reworked significantly upon its reception in postcolonial Africa, it has continued to be politicized in post wars of the dead, in conflicts over the appropriation of their memories and identities.⁶ In asking how that reworking and politicization actually taken shape from one phase of nation-building to another in African postcolony, Werbner explores the Zimbabwe’s Heroes Acre (a national shrine).⁷

In Zimbabwe the modern memorial complex has been given a distinctively postcolonial form, glorifying above all the individuality of great heroes of the nation.⁸ Although this memorial complex represents a nation triumphant in its displacement of racist white settler domination, it also registers the increasing disaffection between Zimbabwean people and masses.⁹ These disaffections are brought up by the question of whom, as an individual, is considered sufficiently a “hero” to get recognition at memorial complexes,

⁵ See Werbner, R. *Memory and the Postcolony*. (Zed Books Ltd, London, 1998) p 72.

⁶ Ibid. p 72.

⁷ Ibid. p 72.

⁸ Ibid. p 73.

⁹ Werbner, R. *Memory and the Postcolony*. (Zed Books Ltd, London, 1998). p 73.

such as the Heroes Acre. There are distinctions between the people and the masses. As Werbner says, “Running against much popular expectation, the elite distinction is memorialized at the expense of official oblivion for most of the warriors, in this case the comrades or ordinary guerrillas of the liberation struggle”.¹⁰ In Zimbabwe the memorialisation process is centered strongly upon an inner circle with elite members, enshrined for their heroic dedication to the liberation cause.

The book *Management guidelines for cultural world of heritage sites*, defines monuments as “architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science”.¹¹ This refers to ‘structures built for commemorative or symbolic reasons rather than for any overtly functional use’. It is also defined as “an architectural structure, or a formal building erected either over a tomb or elsewhere as a commemorative structure”.¹² Defining monuments makes it easier to analyse what they really are and what they do. This refers to their values and uses in the public – historical sphere. Monuments are important in terms of reclamation and also significant to the making of history and identity.

As said earlier, there are various reasons why people started erecting monuments. In interpreting why Americans were creating monuments in the nineteenth century Kirk Savage claims, “the impulse behind the public monuments was an impulse to mold

¹⁰ Ibid. p 73.

¹¹ Feilden, B.M, Jokihelto, J. *Management guidelines for cultural World Heritage sites* (Rome: ICCROM, 2 Edition 1993): p 13.

¹² Ibid. pp 13-14.

history into its rightful pattern”.¹³ He further argues, “And history was supposed to be a chronicle of heroic accomplishments, not a series of messy disputes with unresolved outcomes”. Following this, the thesis will explore what is messy and unresolved about Mandume ya Ndemufayo’s representation as a nationalist hero in Namibia and Angola.

Savage in emphasizing the reasons behind commemoration processes claims, “Even now, to commemorate is to seek historical closure, to draw together the various strands of meaning in a historical event or personage and condense its significance for the present in speech of a monument”.¹⁴ Monuments attempt to mould a landscape of collective memory, to conserve what is worth remembering and discard the rest.¹⁵ Made of imperishable stone or metal, and erected prominently in shared civic space-parks, town squares, public buildings-public monuments were meant to be a genuine testimonial of the people’s memory, an eternal repository of what they held most dear.¹⁶

Sabine Marschall’s article titled ‘Gestures of compensation: Post apartheid monuments and memorials’, deals with almost the same issue of post apartheid monuments and memorials in South Africa. She argues, “...New monuments and heritage sites are gestures of compensation”.¹⁷ She further highlights “...the declaration of a site as a heritage site and erection of a monument are intended as a symbolic reparation to victims and their descendants, often compensating for the lack of ‘real’ reparation (i.e. monetary

¹³ Savage, K. *Standing Soldiers, kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monuments in nineteenth-century America*. (Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1997): p 4.

¹⁴ Ibid. p 4.

¹⁴ Ibid. p 4.

¹⁵ Ibid. p 5.

¹⁷ Marschall, S. ‘Gestures of compensation: Post apartheid monuments and memorials’ (*Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* - 55, 2004, pp. 78-95): p 78.

payments)".¹⁸ Additionally, as with all forms of heritage, the establishment of monuments contributes to the construction of a 'desired past' and foregrounding of specific memories, as a means of compensating for potential shortcomings and errors that taint the 'real past'.¹⁹

Petrina Dacres explores the same issue dealing with monuments and meanings in Jamaica. She looks at a certain monument called Redemption Song and the issues that were raised after its erection, but I will look at what she says about the National Hero erected right after independence. She claims, "The National Hero monuments, erected during the 1940's and 1950's, were an attempt to visualize a new national history by appropriating local memory of particular personalities and events as a means of mobilizing a sense of national identity in the postcolonial era".²⁰ She further emphasizes, "Such monuments were central to a discourse of heroization, which emerged as early as the 1940s...".²¹ I believe these cases, which tackle the need to erect monuments in different countries respectively, apply to what is questioned by this thesis, the reason why post-colonial Namibia and Angola need to build monuments for Mandume ya Ndemufayo. These varied sources are somehow useful to my analysis of the different ways in which Mandume is remembered by the two countries. The questions raised by Werbner on Zimbabwe's Heroes Acre will help me to compare and analyse the issues surrounding the Namibian Heroes Acre (where Mandume is represented) studied here. Furthermore, the analysis of this work on monuments and meanings gives clarification as

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 78.

¹⁹ Ibid. p 78.

²⁰ Dacres, P. 'Monument and Meaning' (*Small Axe* - Number 16 (Volume 8, Number 2), September 2004, pp. 137-153): p 144.

²¹ Ibid. p 144.

to why post colonial nations tend to build memorials for their war heroes. This will help me to challenge and examine critically the issues around Mandume's memorialization in Namibia and Angola.

Aims of the Research

It is the aim of thesis to determine if the issues addressed earlier also apply to Namibia and Angola's memorialisation processes, respectively. For Zimbabwe the main problem is the differentiated representation of the heroic dead in distinguished tombstones. Although it is probably the intention of the postcolonial state to build monuments for the liberation war dead to bring the state together as whole, in other words for the nation-building process, it is proving to be in fact problematic. In addition to that, a lot of money is invested in these projects, which would have been used for useful projects that can benefit the population directly and mobilize unity, such as hospitals and schools. In this regard, it is perhaps important to note that this always happens where efforts are made to register memory for future generations, such as in cases of monument constructions. Because postcolonial states like Namibia and Angola have constructed monuments the question here is why exactly do they make memories of figures particularly Mandume ya Ndemufayo known in the public sphere? This will be explored in the course of this thesis.

However, there are questions about the criteria concerning who is considered a hero to be commemorated, and who is not. As indicated earlier, this is ostensibly based on a person's contribution to the liberation struggle. I believe for somebody to be commemorated and remembered as a hero in a post colonial state certain politics are

involved and this is one aspect this mini-thesis is striving to explore critically. In an attempt to understand who and how one becomes a hero, this mini-thesis will explore the memorial work erected in Mandume's name in Namibia and Angola.

It is however essential to show and analyze the placement of the monuments and the intended audience of these postcolonial memorial agendas, and how successfully they communicate the respective messages to their audiences. It is against the above mentioned questions that this mini-thesis examines the notion of heroism and memorialization in post colonial Africa and here Mandume Ya Ndemufayo offers a good example.

Historical Background

As said earlier, Mandume ya Ndemufayo was a king of Oukwanyama from 1911-17. His six years as leader of the Kwanyama people were years of struggle.²² He struggled to preserve the independence and unity of his people at a time when the tightening grip of the colonial powers worked to dominate and fragment them.²³ The mapmakers divided his kingdom between Portugal and Germany during the Berlin Conference in 1884. Thus, his people were residing on both sides of the border. Some of them lived north of the border, the land claimed by the Portuguese as part of their colony Angola while others lived south of the border on land which Germany claimed as part of Namibia. The region was however only occupied in 1915 during World War 1, when Mandume was king. Despite the set rules by the colonial powers preventing Mandume from crossing over to

²² Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 1.

²³ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 1.

his other subjects on the Portuguese territory, he continued to exert his authority to all his people irrespective of the border. Mandume's defiance of the colonial powers (the British-South Africans) was the reason that finally pushed them to send a military expedition to eliminate him. After his death two accounts came about, one claiming that he was killed by Maxim fire while the other claimed he committed suicide. The Kwanyama people also believed that Mandume's body was beheaded and his head taken to Windhoek where it was buried under a monument. Eventually in 1928, after Mandume's death the boundary issue came up again whereby the boundary was shifted, giving the whole of the neutral zone to Portuguese territory consequently taking more of the Kwanyama area in Angola. The shifting of the border meant that Mandume's grave and his residence at Oihole are now included in Angola, while his head, which was supposedly buried in Windhoek, is allegedly in Namibia. Based on the belief that his body was beheaded, I argue that the two countries (Angola and Namibia) feel they have affiliation to his body parts and therefore qualify them to be custodians of his memory and heroism.

Due to these popular and official accounts of his resistance the mini-thesis will investigate how the two countries claim rival custodianship over his body parts. It is therefore the purpose of this work to investigate the extent to which these countries remember Mandume Ya Ndemufayo respectively and the way people see and interact with the monuments to his memory in both countries. It will also seek to understand why certain monuments were created where they are, how these monuments work in the past-present-future alignment in the context of two different postcolonial nations.

The issue of timing will also be looked at, as the two countries went through liberation struggles and gained independence at different respective times. It is worth noting that Angola has gained its independence from former colonial power Portugal in 1975. This was after the thirteen-years Angolan war for independence, in which three rival nationalist groups fought the Portuguese. The leader of one of the country's rival factions, Dr Agostinho Neto of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was proclaimed the country's first president. He was succeeded by José Eduardo dos Santos as president after his death in 1979. From 1975-2002 the country has been plagued by civil war, causing death to many people and destruction to much of the country's infrastructure. The country has become peaceful after the opposition group (UNITA) leader Jonas Savimbi died in 2002.²⁴

In the case of Namibia, it gained its independence on the 21st of March 1990 from the South African government, under UN supervision after many years of liberation struggle. The mini-thesis will then ask, when exactly did these nation states start putting up memorials for Mandume Ya Ndemufayo and why? It will also examine more popular forms of commemoration or ritual practices that take place annually around the respective monuments. The mini-thesis will ask if the two countries are competing for Mandume Ya Ndemufayo or whether they are sharing him, and further investigate how they negotiate the politics around this shared symbolic resource. I believe there is however, a gap between the memorial works erected in Mandume's honour in Namibia and Angola. The reason I am saying this is because, there is a difference in memorials made in Mandume's name in the two countries. It could be argued that the cause of this can probably be

²⁴ <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/angola/angola16...05/01/03> Accessed: 12 January 2005. pp 1-4.

attributed to the Kwanyamas being divided. Although the Kwanyama people shared the same culture, the border that was incorporated has created a wedge between the Kwanyamas in Namibia and Angola. The result is that they have acquired different histories and backgrounds because they had different colonial influences, which must have influenced them differently especially in setting up their Nation Legislature systems for certain Acts. It is important to recognize that these two countries went through liberation struggles and this could explain why they are both using Mandume probably as a resource for nation building. This will show to some extent how the two countries managed to be sharing one symbolic resource. It will be very important to see how these two countries define monuments, and if the shared monument is accessible to everyone from both countries. It will also look at how the two counties contributed to the construction of this monument. Another thing will be to know if it is only this particular Mandume's monument in southern Angola that is shared and why? These issues will be looked at a more considerable depth in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter outline

The thesis constitutes five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter gives an account and analysis of the demise of the Kwanyama kingship in relation to the historic border demarcation and colonial occupation by Portugal and South Africa. It also deals with the period of Mandume's internal reforms in trying to curb the powers of *omalenga* and reasserting central royal power. His resistance and refusal to adhere to colonial rules will be discussed in this chapter. After his death, two versions of his death cropped up, one saying Mandume was killed by Maxim fire; while the other says that the King committed suicide and was subsequently decapitated by Union forces.

An analysis of why people believed that Mandume committed suicide will be made following a discussion on the interpretation of the history of suicide.

The third chapter explores the role of a belief that the Ovambo had (and still have) about the Ovambo Campaign Memorial in Windhoek – the Capital city. The belief was based in oral history that says after the Kwanyama king's death his head was cut off and taken to Windhoek where it was buried under the base of the monument, called the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. Because the Oshiwambo speakers who have this belief did not originate there, but ended up there as migrant labourers, this thesis will analyse why Windhoek was the appropriate place to have this belief. The mini-thesis will also look into the role of the Mandume Memorial Committee that was created and the colonial state's reaction towards the committee. It will also ask questions about the commemoration that took place at the site in 1937, analyzing why it happened only occasionally. This chapter will also deal with the purpose this belief was probably serving.

The fourth chapter will give the broad composition of the Heroes Acre, its meaning and significance. It will also relate to what is discussed in chapter 2 about a belief that Mandume ya Ndemufayo's head is buried in Windhoek. This chapter will explore the shift of Mandume's sites of memory, from the Ovambo Campaign Memorial to his symbolic grave at Heroes Acre. During the colonial rule, Mandume's association with the Ovambo Campaign Memorial was seen as irrational and he was not officially recognised as a hero. In the post colonial context, Mandume's memory is recontextualised at the Heroes Acre, made official and it is inserted in a collective national monument.

Therefore, this chapter will explore how Mandume is being represented at Heroes Acre. A comparative study of the Zimbabwe Heroes Acre will be covered in this chapter to give basis for comparison on how heroes are represented there and in Namibia.

The fifth chapter will look at the memorial work that exists in Angola for Mandume ya Ndemufayo. He is remembered in Angola in many ways, and has several memorials that are distributed in the southern areas and the capital city Luanda. This chapter will cover his recently erected monument called the Oihole Shrine in southern Angola. Its construction and the annual commemoration that takes place at this site will also be looked at in detail. The other memorials (referring to his unmarked grave) that existed prior to the newly erected monument in memory of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo at Oihole in southern Angola on 6 February 2002 will be highlighted. This chapter will also examine if there used to be commemorations and rituals at the respective sites. Thereafter, this chapter will focus on the construction of the nationalist icon, which is Mandume, looking specifically at why postcolonial countries like Angola and Namibia need nationalist icons and policies? The chapter concludes with a discussion about the problematics of nationalism and memorialisation.

Sources and limitation of Research

The research was done in the two countries, Namibia and Angola. The only archival materials consulted are located in the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek, as it wasn't possible for me to consult the archives in Angola. The documents consulted in the archive were from the South African colonial period in Namibia e.g. concerning Mandume's reign, the Angola-Namibian border, and Windhoek Municipality records

around 1930s. I also consulted numerous secondary sources that cover Namibian history during South African rule. As it is so commonly said that oral history is at present the main source of informing the community about its history and traditions, this research relies heavily on oral evidence. The interviews were done in both Namibia and southern Angola specifically in Ondjiva and Oihole early in 2005, in late January and February. Additionally, photographs were used as part of the research methodology and the skills of photography were introduced to me by Jenny Gordon, who taught the Visual History course.

This research is qualitative in approach and open-ended questionnaires were used in conducting the interviews. There were certain limitations towards the collection of information due to particular reasons, particularly in Namibia. One major challenge to this research is that there had never been a written academic research on monuments that exists for Namibian leaders accessible in our institutions. Therefore, it would be important to say that this has been one of the reasons why this thesis relies more on oral sources for its data gathering and analysis. Although not many people were interviewed, a number of them were prominent in the field, for example Ana Maria de Oliveira (an anthropologist behind the vision of the Mandume memorial in Angola).

A few people were reluctant to engage with issues (especially in Namibia), and as a result I was not able to cover much concerning the historical background of the Owambo Campaign Memorial in Windhoek, Namibia, which is included in my study. It was also difficult to get views concerning how the public view this particular monument as the people were very silent, those who were involved did not want to talk about their

experiences. It would be interesting to know why there is this attitude of silence and fear in sharing what people know about this monument. Could it be that it is due to post coloniality and the fear of opposition to the ruling party? In this thesis, I give some consideration as to why people are not free to talk about, and have direct contact with, public monuments. This was specifically driven by my own experiences because I was initially not allowed to enter the vicinities of the particular monument in question which was generally just to look at it close up and also take pictures of it. It was also very difficult to talk to the people in charge of the monuments but during a visit to Namibia in late September 2005, I finally succeeded. I realized that the problem lies in the fact that the person in charge and has the keys for the monument stays far from the headquarters of the company that claims ownership of the monument, the TransNamib. In other words, access to public monuments is a problem.

In the case of Angola however, the language barrier was a little problematic as most people there speak Portuguese and it was a little difficult for me to understand some of the things that were said as my Portuguese language was at beginner's level. But, before I went for this research, I had to learn Portuguese language²⁵ for at least four months to enable me to communicate with people in Angola. The fact that I had to cross the border (on my own) between Namibia and Angola to do my research concerning Mandume's memorials, made it very exciting for me. The overriding reason why I went there was to see, photograph and study the Mandume memorial in Oihole, southern Angola. This also included taking part and interacting with locals during the annual commemoration that takes place there at Mandume's grave since its inauguration in 6 February 2002. For the

²⁵ My scholarship programme funded by the Carl Schlettwein Foundation supported private tuition in Portuguese at UWC.

two weeks that I have been there, I got the opportunity to interview elders around Ondjiva who know Mandume's history and also see other places of importance such as where Mandume was born and also where his biggest battles against the Portuguese took place. The whole experience was very interesting and I was able to understand the border problematic and divided history of Oukwanyama at first hand.



Chapter 2

Historical Background: Oukwanyama Kingdom, the Namibian-Angolan border and the death of Mandume

The Oukwanyama Kingdom

This chapter gives an account and analysis of the demise of the Kwanyama kingship in relation to the historic border demarcation and colonial occupation by Portugal and South Africa. Oukwanyama was the largest of the pre-colonial Owambo kingdoms situated on the Cuvelai floodplain that today constitutes the most densely populated area of Namibia. As said earlier, European mapmakers divided the kingdom between the Portuguese and the German empire in 1884-85, but it was only during World War 1 that it was effectively occupied by Portugal and South Africa.²⁶ At that time “the claims of both colonial powers over frontier areas were precarious, but Portugal gave priority to the occupation of her southern border area, whereas Germany did not”.²⁷ However Oukwanyama was of concern because it straddled the over-disputed boundary with the Portuguese and attracted rival officials, traders and later labour recruits and famine relief programmes.²⁸

The Portuguese occupation of the frontier was delayed by financial crises in Lisbon and the prior need to bar Kwanyama raids by colonizing the intervening chiefdoms.²⁹ To put simply, Portugal was manifestly weak, she has not yet undergone an industrial revolution

²⁶ Hayes, P. “Order out of chaos: Mandume Ya Ndemufayo and Oral history”. *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Vol.19, No.1, March 1993) p 93.

²⁷ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. p 123.

²⁸ Ibid. pp 123-4.

²⁹ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. p 125.

and her imperialism remained largely extractive.³⁰ Therefore, Portugal's efforts to subjugate the southern Angolan frontier were unsuccessful until the conquest of Ombandja in 1907 and Evale in 1912.³¹ For Germany, preoccupied with establishing a settler's colony in central and southern Namibia, Ovamboland was too distant and formidable to fully conquer.³² And in economic terms, the occupation of Ovamboland held little attraction, as possibilities of plantation agriculture were slim.³³ Additionally, the initial lack of German influence in the north was due to the fact that it had its hands full with the rebellions in the south, which started with Herero in 1904 and continued when the Nama engaged in their revolt between 1904-07.³⁴

When the two colonial powers finally made contact with the Kwanyama kingdom, Ovakwanyamas were constantly under pressure from them. This is evident during the Kwanyama king Nande's reign as it was marked by increased informal pressure from both Portuguese and German official visits around 1904-6.³⁵ Here the Germans showed their agenda towards the Ovambo 'reserve' had changed after the rebellions in the south; migrant labour was now a priority.³⁶ The Portuguese had even greater urgency in sending an official delegation to Oukwanyama, led by Joao de Almeida.³⁷ It was in response to the German establishment of military post on the border with Angola which the Kwanyama claim tribute.³⁸ But Portuguese overtures to Nande also fitted into

³⁰ Ibid. p 125.

³¹ Hayes, P. "Order out of chaos: Mandume Ya Ndemufayo and Oral history". *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Vol.19, No.1, March 1993) p 90.

³² Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 70.

³³ Ibid. p 116.

³⁴ Ibid. p 125.

³⁵ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 139.

³⁶ Ibid. p 139.

³⁷ Ibid. p 139.

³⁸ Ibid. p 139.

(Portuguese) strategy for southern Angola after the humiliating Portuguese defeat by the Mbandja in 1904.³⁹ It was an attempt at peaceful penetration.⁴⁰ In return for Portuguese protection from German attack, the Portuguese presented Nande with demands for a fort in Kwanyama territory, his military assistance against other Ovambo states, a cessation of raiding and Kwanyama labour for railway construction to the north.⁴¹ It is important to recognize that the overall significance of Nande's agreement with the Portuguese was limited as he also reached an agreement with the Germans, which included concessions on migrant labour to the south in return for German protection.⁴² This clearly shows that Kwanyama kings had to some extent had good cooperation with the colonial powers, but Nande sought to avoid provoking either Portugal or Germany and maneuvered diplomatically between the two.⁴³ When the Kwanyama king died on 5 February 1911, his successor was Mandume ya Ndemufayo⁴⁴ who from the beginning did not tolerate the fact that the colonial powers wanted to take over his land.

Mandume ya Ndemufayo and the colonial encounters

Mandume ya Ndemufayo was born around 1894.⁴⁵ He was the son of Ndapona, the sister of the Kwanyama King Nande, and thus, under the matrilineal system of the Kwanyama people, heir to the position of king".⁴⁶ His life since childhood had been endangered. Thus, "Mandume was moved to Oshiteve until he was about ten, then was kept in border

³⁹ Ibid. p 139.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p 139.

⁴¹ Ibid. p 139.

⁴² Ibid. p 140.

⁴³ Ibid. p 140.

⁴⁴ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis, p 157.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p 157.

⁴⁶ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 2.

areas of Oukwanyama always in fear of assassination”.⁴⁷ After his uncle Nande’s death, he became king of the Kwanyamas in 1911.

Mandume had a different approach to ruling his kingdom to his predecessors. In his “initial approach to Kwanyama external policy, he made friendly overtures to the Rhenish mission, but showed no compunction towards Portuguese traders present in the country”.⁴⁸ He “is represented in both written and oral accounts as having from the first a coherent, integrated vision of necessary internal change”.⁴⁹ Mandume first issued a law on fruit trees whereby he said “No unripe fruit was to be picked, especially from *omuandi* trees, whose fruit had been increasingly beaten off prematurely during recent droughts, a practice which Nande had allowed to continue unchecked”.⁵⁰ Hayes continues, “...the first offender was forced to eat all unripe fruit he had picked”.⁵¹

In addition to the first order he also ordered an end to all unnecessary shooting. ‘Mandume’s judgment and punishment of the first offender, who pleaded in mitigation that he had been bewitched’, was to shoot the culprit.⁵² Once these preliminary measures were in place, Mandume began to tackle rival power bases, by curbing the powers and abuses of senior headmen.⁵³ The senior headmen were accused of culling the ‘naturally rich’ people of Oukwanyama, in order to appropriate their crops and cattle.⁵⁴ This was because they could make legal decisions in cases of bewitching or poisoning.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis, p 158.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p 159.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p 161.

⁵⁰ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis, p 161.

⁵¹ Ibid. p 161.

⁵² Ibid. p 162.

⁵³ Ibid. p 163.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p 164.

⁵⁵ Ibid p 164.

Mandume argued that if the wealthy suffered under witchcraft accusations, then people would be afraid to work hard and accumulate property because it would attract attention and jeopardize their lives.⁵⁶ It was seemingly that he did this to re-assert the central authority of the kingship, with legal processes and raiding no longer the initiative of ambitious *omalenga*.⁵⁷ Another measure was to stop raids for cattle and captives to neighboring states without Mandume's personal sanction. In this regard, the first transgressor was forced to drink milk from all the cows he raided until he was ill. This law served to prevent raids to kingdoms with which Kwanyama had good relations. However, the main problem that triggered this need to re-assert the central authority was the fact that *omalenga* had so much power and opportunity to enrich themselves and thus could 'build up their own followings'.⁵⁸

There are however ambiguities in how Mandume is represented, both in the missionary and colonial sources⁵⁹ and now as an anti-colonial hero. This is because his ideas and personality were powerful and complex.⁶⁰ Some of these ambiguities are that Mandume is represented as being possessed of a vision of restoring Oukwanyama to a perceived status *quo ante* because before he had succeeded to the kingship, he was known to be highly critical of the manner in which the Kwanyama kingdom had become impoverished and disorderly through the weakness of its kings and self-aggrandizement by *omalenga*.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid. p 164.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p 163.

⁵⁸ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 163.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p 160.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p 160.

⁶¹ ibid. pp 163.

In oral accounts Mandume is also represented as a peaceful man who had done everything for his people, but the fact is he was also forceful and controversial. This is evident in the way he opposed missionaries and Christianity. In one case in February 1912 Mandume's horses were deliberately driven by youths into Rhenish community's fields to graze, destroying their crops.⁶² In another case, Mandume shot a Christian's young son for giving the prohibited war cry, though a fellow-offender was spared after his father offered the king a basket of grain in payment.⁶³ These accounts are disregarded and ignored in his representation because it is an ugly side to Mandume's populism.⁶⁴ It is true that his reforms were seen as rebuilding the kingdom but in true sense, he wanted to reclaim his authority. Namibia and Angola do not present this kind of history; they only focus on his bravery in fighting colonial occupation because they are also anti-colonial. An example of this can be derived from the quotes that the Angolan government has chosen to portray him. One quote says '*O meu coracao diz-me que nao fiz nada de errado*' (My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong). And the other says, '*Se os ingleses me procuram, eu estou aqui, e eles podem vir e montar-me um ardil. Nao farei o primeiro disparo, mas eu nao sou um cabrito nas mulolas, sou um homem..e lutarei ate gastar a minha ultima bala*' ('If the English want me, I am here and they can come and fetch. I am not a steinbok of the veld, I am a man, and not a woman and I will fight until my last bullet is expended'), [See figure: 1]. Namibians also make reference to these quotes when talking about Mandume's bravery especially the latter. I believe they have chosen these particular quotes because they want to portray a picture of Mandume that

⁶² Ibid. p 168.

⁶³ Ibid. p 168.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p 169.

shows defiance and courage. One should however note that these quotes were documented by the South Africans which means they have become decontextualised.

For his reforms to work, Mandume urged his subjects to cultivate more land.⁶⁵ The reason behind urging people to cultivate more land was the fact that the area was just experienced drought and there was food shortage. However, it should be noted that what hindered his dream was the fact that war and colonialisation came in its way, and other priorities emerged.

The border issue, colonization and Mandume's death

As indicated earlier, Oukwanyama kingdom was divided in half following the political scramble of European imperial powers Portugal, Germany and Great Britain in 1884-85 [see figure: 2]. The actual occupation took place in 1915, although the process started earlier. During this time disagreements often broke out between the Portuguese and the Germans concerning the border issues as each colonial power held the opinion that the claims of the other cut too deep into its sphere of interest. The reason was the ambiguity around cartography, as the two powers agreed that the latitude would be demarcated by the 'cataracts' on the Kunene river.⁶⁶ But the respective cartography revealed Germany had intended one set of falls, and Portugal another.⁶⁷ Thus Germany claimed several miles further north than Portugal would allow ⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis, p 167.

⁶⁶ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 114.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p 114.

⁶⁸ Ibid. pp 114-115.

Hayes asserts, “The slide towards direct occupation of the frontier began in 1914 and although Germany and Portugal were not at war, diplomatic strain was severe”.⁶⁹ They both had their fears regarding the activities of the other because although the border was demarcated, it was not finalized due to some geographical errors in identifying exactly where respective boundary lines were. The Germans had claimed that their border with Angola followed latitude 17 17 10, while the Portuguese claimed that the border should be approximately six miles further south at latitude 17 23 10.⁷⁰ Because no agreements were reached, the disputed area became known as ‘neutral zone’ with representatives from both sides stationed within this zone at Namacunde⁷¹ [see figure: 3]. Arguably this was just temporary to give diplomats enough time to reach an agreement on how to demarcate the boundary without collisions. In the end “the unresolved border question did not help as Portugal feared Germany’s intentions towards the fertile upland region of southern Angola were fostered by the activities of the *Angolabund* and the joint project for linking the two colonial rail systems”.⁷²

In October 1914, their situation intensified when a consignment of goods bought in Luanda (Angola) by the Germans traveled to the south for the border, whereby Schulze-Jena an administrator for Outjo traveled north to collect it. On 17 October 1914 “Schulze-Jena was shot dead by a Portuguese trooper” at the Naulila fort.⁷³ German reprisals followed, when a Portuguese fort in the Kavango was attacked.⁷⁴ Following this, which was probably after one month, a punitive expedition commandeered by Major Franke

⁶⁹ Ibid. p 178.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p 16.

⁷¹ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992). pp 16-17.

⁷² Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. p 178.

⁷³ Ibid. p 179.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p 180.

arrived at the Kunene River in December 1914⁷⁵. In the attack on Naulila on 18 December 1914 the Portuguese were routed. The Portuguese were reported to have had lost 69 dead, 76 wounded and 37 captured.⁷⁶ The Portuguese abandoned the line of southern frontier forts altogether to avoid further German confrontations. Thus, due to the outbreak of the World War and the sudden departure of the Germans from South West Africa the unsettled boundary question remained open until South Africa took over the territory on behalf of the British, and in 1915 became the mandatory power by order of the League of Nations.

In 1915 Mandume, ya Ndemufayo fought the Portuguese army at Omongwa in Angola, where he was defeated. He consequently then moved his capital across the border into then Namibia at Oihole. Mandume sought protection from the British South Africans by signing a protection treaty in September 1915 with Colonel Pritchard the Union Government officer at the time. There were however, conditions attached to the agreement as his access to the Neutral Zone as well as his subjects over the border was prohibited. In January 1916, the new South African Resident Commissioner named Manning had recommended the creation of a “Buffer State” between the Portuguese and British territory, to which Mandume or his immediate followers have no access.⁷⁷ The Union Government complied with the Portuguese demand to restrict the Kwanyama king from the Neutral Zone, although it was not in the original agreement to which Mandume

⁷⁵ Ibid. p 180.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p 180.

⁷⁷ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. pp 211-12.

was a party in September 1915, leading to the Union officials appearing untrustworthy to Mandume.⁷⁸

The South African Union Government complied with the Portuguese to restrict Mandume from his other subjects on the Angolan side. After the Oukwanyama occupation by the two colonial powers, initial control measures were undermined by violent and criminal activities. In addition to the earlier addressed problems, there were cases where criminals used Mandume's name and in the process complicated his position with the colonial officials saying that he showed lack of control.

Another problem that arose and contributed to difficulties in having Mandume's dreams fulfilled was his inability to sort out the criminal grievances imposed on the people on the other side of his kingdom and he was constantly told not to enter the Portuguese area. This made it very difficult for Mandume, as he could not do something for all his people. As a result other priorities changed as he concentrated on repossessing and reintegrating his land, by continuing to implement his authority towards all his subjects even against the colonial power's laws. His problems of control in Oukwanyama were sharply caused by violent or criminal activities that were taking place in his kingdom.⁷⁹ Most common among these activities was banditry, which was done by both 'masterless men' and omalenga.⁸⁰ It was reported that the hazy frontier gave haven to this activities. It was due to these problems that were prevailing north of the border and the fact that Mandume was still recognized as the Chief of the portion of his tribe left behind in Portuguese territory,

⁷⁸ Ibid. p 213.

⁷⁹ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 208

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp 208-9.

that he made visits to the forbidden area.⁸¹ Mandume refused the rule that said he should stop entering the other side of the border and continued implementing his authority on his subjects irrespective of this border. He especially did this in cases of raiding and theft.

On 17 February Mandume entered the Zone despite instructions not to do so, to investigate the case of a young woman detained by the Portuguese interpreter.⁸² In this instance Mandume convinced Major Fairlie (the Union Government Resident in Namacunde) that he believed the ban on his entry was only for his own safety and this was not regarded as a serious breach.⁸³ On 1 March, however, Mandume crossed through the Neutral Zone right into 'Portuguese' territory'.⁸⁴ Again Mandume explained that he went to the Portuguese territory because there were rumours of a Portuguese raid and he wanted to bring people to the British side. When this didn't happen, he apologized, undertaking not to enter the Neutral Zone again.⁸⁵ 'The next charge leveled against Mandume in 1916 was killing of a headman in Portuguese territory, an act which he freely admitted'.⁸⁶ This headman was accused of usurping a cattle post south of the border and fled back across the border. Mandume pursued him with some seventy followers, killed Mapangasha (the headman) in self defence and returned with the cattle.⁸⁷ The Portuguese accused Mandume of traveling 120 miles into Angola with 800 fighters and killing a number of people.⁸⁸ The resident British South Africans, on the

⁸¹ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 16.

⁸² Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 214.

⁸³ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 214.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p 214.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p 214.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p 219.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p 219.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p 219.

other hand, interpreted Mandume's trips as blatant defiance of their authority⁸⁹ because he had entered Neutral Zone again.

It was through his movements to the other side of the border and his implementing authority on all his subjects that Mandume kept violating their agreement with the colonial powers, which was not to enter the forbidden territory. Although considered as violations of their agreement, "...the primary reason for his visits-seen as repeated 'violations' of the cartographical border by the colonial powers was Mandume's attempt to maintain his borders of allegiance".⁹⁰ Right after these occurrences there was a collision between Mandume with his followers and the Portuguese. In this case, the Portuguese were defeated. Nineteen white soldiers including their commanding officer were killed and they lost four horses, two Maxims, two motorcars, rifles and ammunition.⁹¹ The encounter was reported to have had brought the Kwanyamas together. One colonial official stated that, "Mandume's success and capture of ammunition tends to unite his people on both sides of the border and creates a dangerous position".⁹²

Arguably it was believed to have been a dangerous position because the colonial powers worked on creating division among the Kwanyama people especially amongst Mandume's headmen to keep them from uniting against them. In May, after this affair, General Botha himself became involved when he advised Mandume to go to Windhoek to explain his conduct before his administrator, Gorges.⁹³ Although Mandume was

⁸⁹ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 16.

⁹⁰ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992). p 18.

⁹¹ Ibid.p 22.

⁹² Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 224.

⁹³ Ibid. p 220.

willing to do as he was told, ‘Ovambo law prohibited any king from leaving his territory’.⁹⁴ This refusal was the turning point in the South African administration’s decision to dispose of Mandume.⁹⁵ In the situation “Mandume made clear there was no question of surrender” but to fight until death if need be.⁹⁶ Because now it was impossible for Liet. Hahn (the Union Intelligence officer) to make Mandume surrender himself peacefully; he therefore presented Mandume an ultimatum of facing elimination. Hayes argues that he was reported to have had responded, “If the English want me, I am here and they can come and fetch. I am not a steinbok of the veld, I am a man, and not a woman and I will fight until my last bullet is expended”.⁹⁷ Following this, on 25 September discussions were held in Windhoek regarding the removal of Mandume.⁹⁸ This was to be carried out by the South Africans alone as they rejected joint military action with the Portuguese.⁹⁹ They were however cautioned to prepare for the eventuality that Mandume might escape into their territory.¹⁰⁰

The British-South African left nothing to chance and also assembled a powerful armed expeditionary force to be sent against Mandume. The military Expedition of over 270 troops left Ondangwa for Namacunde on 2 February 1917.¹⁰¹ That night Mandume mobilized omalenga and fighters near the Ondonga border while he stayed at his *embala* (his palace) in Oihole.¹⁰² The South Africans avoided the ambushes that were set for

⁹⁴ Ibid. p 220.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p 220.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p 225.

⁹⁷ Silvester, J. *My heart tells me that I have done nothing wrong: The fall of Mandume*. (Namibia National Archives, 1992) p 24.

⁹⁸ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. p 222.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p 230.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p 230.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p 233.

¹⁰² Ibid. p 233

them and headed straight for Oihole without engaging them. Mandume himself was reported to have a bodyguard at Oihole of between 200-300 well-armed men.¹⁰³ The South African troops approached Mandume's residence from the opposite direction in which the attack was anticipated. However, Mandume chose to fight rather than run but he was hopelessly outnumbered and he died in battle. Afterwards two versions of his death cropped up, one saying Mandume was killed by Maxim fire, while the other says that the King committed suicide and was subsequently decapitated by Union forces.

It is important to clarify probably why the Kwanyama people believe that Mandume committed suicide, as attitudes towards it vary from culture to culture. Firstly, it was because Mandume expressed the firm intention of committing suicide rather than being killed by anybody.¹⁰⁴ Generally, suicide is the act of intentionally ending one's own life. Some cultures view it as sin, while some as crime. However some cultures view it as an honourable way to exit certain hopeless situations. An article titled *Suicide* dealing with the history of suicide says, "In Roman society, suicide was an accepted means by which honour could be preserved ... In ancient times, suicide sometimes followed defeat in battle, to avoid capture and possible subsequent torture, mutilation, or enslavement by the enemy".¹⁰⁵ In hopeless cases, one prefers to kill himself or herself rather than face their enemies. This can be related to Mandume Ya Ndemufayo case here as Hayes quoting

¹⁰³ Ibid. p 233.

¹⁰⁴ Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. p 225.

¹⁰⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/suicide>. *Main article: History of Suicide*, Page last modified 00:57, 30 October 2005.

Kaulinge in his account says, “His expectations were not to be captured alive by any white man so that they would go around boasting and asking him strange questions”.¹⁰⁶

It is also important to recognize that suicide in this case is part of the debate about heroism, refusing to surrender. Committing suicide is (in a strong sense) linked to standing ground, remaining in a chosen place.¹⁰⁷ In cases like this, as Hayes argues, “Reference to suicide was not just a question of courage, which Mandume never lacked...it tapped into a deep ideological vein surrounding the kingship”.¹⁰⁸ The notions of honour, holding ground and remaining ‘spiritually’ inviolate which have been articulated in modern Kwanyama discourse, and which are associated with militarized societies, may have been present.¹⁰⁹ It was also believed that Mandume’s head was cut off and taken to Windhoek. This means his body lies buried in Oihole (Angola) while his head is buried in Windhoek (Namibia). These are two popular, distinct and separate accounts surrounding Mandume’s death, which differ radically from the colonial account. It is to the “colonial monument” that we turn in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Hayes, P. ‘The colonization of Owambo kingdoms in Namibia, Oukwanyama in 1915-17’ (unpublished chapter from ‘The African Threshold’). p 47.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p 47

¹⁰⁸ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis. p 226.

¹⁰⁹ Hayes, P. ‘A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930’ unpublished PhD thesis, p 226.

Chapter 3

Ovambo Campaign Memorial

Introduction

This chapter explores the role of a belief that the Ovambo had (and still have) about the Ovambo Campaign Memorial in Windhoek – the Capital city. The belief was rooted in oral history that says after the Kwanyama king’s death, his head was cut off and taken to Windhoek where it was buried under the base of the monument, called the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. It is important to look at the role of this monument or this site at the heart of the city, in relation to those Oshiwambo-speakers who did not originate there but ended up there as migrant labourers.

Ovambo Campaign Memorial is the name given to a monument that is nestled in the city center of the capital, Windhoek. The city is historically known by two names, //Ai-//Gams, in the Nama language and Otjomuise in otji-Hererero language. //Ai-//Gams literally refers to the hot springs that were once part of Windhoek, and Otjomuise means a place of steam. According to an article titled ‘Windhoek’ from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia on internet, it explains that, “The prevailing water from the hot springs led to the early settlements of Captain Jan Jonker Afrikaner of the Oorlam people in the mid 1800s”.¹¹⁰ It further explains that the name Windhoek came from the Cape Dutch language spoken by Afrikaner’s group, meaning Wint-hoek, “a corner of wind”.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰<http://www.windhoekcc.org.na/default.aspx?page=30>, *The city of Windhoek’s history*. Accessed on the 10 July 2005.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Overview of Windhoek as Capital City

Windhoek was a place claimed and reclaimed by Africans before 1890 when the Germans made it their capital.¹¹² However, colonial Windhoek originated primarily from the process of conquest and dispossession.¹¹³ The German colony came into being in 1890 when Germany sent a protective corps (Schutztruppe) under Major Curt Van Francois to establish order. Von Francois stationed his garrison at Windhoek, which was strategically situated with a spring that provided water for the cultivation of food. The present Windhoek was founded on 18 October 1890 when Von Francois laid the foundation stone of the fort, which is known as the Alte Feste (Old Fortress). Windhoek developed slowly, with only the most essential government and private buildings being erected. The German colonial era ended during World War 1, and the South African troops occupied Windhoek in May 1915 on behalf of Britain. From 1915-1921 a military government administered Namibia.

Windhoek as the capital stood at the heart of SWA and controlled its bureaucracy, which was highly centralised.¹¹⁴ The importance of this piece of urban space is illustrated by the (contested) efforts made to produce it as a colonial capital, by progressively inscribing colonial boundaries onto the landscape.¹¹⁵ Abdullah describes the typical African capital city, as “a colonial creation founded on violence and was not built for Africans”. He continues by saying “Rather it was built for the white man, the foreigner, the other”.¹¹⁶ In

¹¹² Wallace, M. *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945* (P. Schlettwein Publishing Switzerland 2002): p 24.

¹¹³ Ibid. p 40.

¹¹⁴ Wallace, M. *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945* (P. Schlettwein Publishing Switzerland 2002): p 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p 6.

¹¹⁶ Abdullah, I. “Space, culture, and Agency in contemporary Freetown: The making and remaking of a postcolonial city” in *Under Siege: Four African cities*. (Kassel:Hatje Cantz, 2002): p 201.

Windhoek, as is common with other African cities, the colonial elite struggled to produce the capital as colonial space.¹¹⁷ Furthermore it was a site for continual reconstruction of the dominance of white elite; it was also the base from which control was exercised over the territory of South West Africa.¹¹⁸

However, Windhoek has a long history of precolonial occupation¹¹⁹, although it is often argued that it was a colonial creation. This indicates that it is organic and not entirely artificial as it is present in indigenous people's histories who had stayed there longer. The Herero and the Nama had long connections with the site; during colonial rule the Ovambo also came to be at this place as migrant labourers where they lived in locations. It is not clear when they first came to Windhoek, but certainly from the German period. Wallace highlights that by 1915 when the South Africans took over, "the black population of Windhoek was concentrated in the main location to the west of the town and a smaller settlement in Klein Windhoek..."¹²⁰ She further emphasizes "Apart from these locations there were 'compounds' (in reality, collections of huts or sheds) for Ovambo contract workers..."¹²¹

The first occupiers of SWA, the Germans, had been very keen on the use of Ovambo as labourers on the extensive white-owned farms, and in the new mines and other industries, although Ovamboland as an area was not subjugated earlier. The labour force was initially drawn from indigenous communities further south, but with the opening of

¹¹⁷ Wallace, M. *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945* (P. Schlettwein Publishing Switzerland 2002): p 23.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p 23.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* p 40.

¹²⁰ Wallace, M. *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945* (P. Schlettwein Publishing Switzerland 2002): p 39.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p 39.

Tsumeb copper mine in 1906 and the Luderitz diamond mine in 1908, more Ovambo and other northern peoples were recruited on fixed term contracts. Hayes argues that “For the [South African] colonial administration in Ovamboland, the period of 1915-21 showed dependency on existing mechanisms of labour organisation”.¹²² Basically their colonial strategy in Ovamboland was concerned above all with securing an abundant and reliable migrant labour force especially for central and southern Namibia. This was one of the major features of the economy, which channelled large numbers of men from Ovamboland to the mines and farms of the Police Zone.¹²³

It is usually in response to certain issues that people tend to migrate in search of work and in this case it was no exception. Moving to the white controlled areas as migrant labourers was thus presented as the only viable solution to the problem of population pressure and limited natural resources (land shortage and deforestation were an acute problem by the mid twentieth century).¹²⁴ In an almost similar case where migrations to colonial cities occurred in response to development, for Freetown (Sierra Leone): “The two World Wars and the decisions to abolish slavery in 1927 were the major developments that shaped the history of the city in the colonial period...the numerous construction projects during the wars created job opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labour”. Abdullah further emphasizes, “The boom in construction meant that more people left the hinterland for Freetown in search of jobs”.¹²⁵ Like Freetown and other colonial African capitals, Windhoek as a capital city was seen as a viable option to

¹²² Hayes, P. “A history of the Owambo of Namibia, c 1880-1935 (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge 1992): p 280.

¹²³ Ibid. p 26.

¹²⁴ Moorson, R. “Underdevelopment, Contract Labour and Worker Consciousness in Namibia 1915-1972, JSAS, 4, 1 (1977, 53-87).

¹²⁵ Abdullah, I. “Space, culture, and Agency in contemporary Freetown: The making and remaking of a postcolonial city” in *Under Siege: Four African cities*. (Kassel:Hatje Cantz, 2002): p 205.

find contract work in the southern areas, especially for Ovambo men in those years. However, their work was heavily controlled by labour bureau South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA).¹²⁶ Thus, Windhoek was very much an intersection point between north and south and the coast, with labour coming from the north and mines, harbours and farms in the south.

Windhoek was therefore strategically located in the centre, and everything passed through it whether bound for the sea, export or elsewhere. The building of railway systems evolved out of economic and military needs which also brought about the establishment of telephone and telegraph communication systems to the country. This development, beyond any question, contributed to a faster expansion of mining, farming and other activities in the territory. By examining these viabilities tied to Windhoek at that time, my intention is to show how Ovakwanyamas or Oshivambo-speakers came to live or pass through Windhoek. Since Windhoek is the centre and had all the facilities such as railways, which links it to other towns that were created, the Oshiwambo people obviously have to pass through, the capital to their work places. My argument is that this is linked to how such a belief that Mandume's head was buried under the monument came to be propagated in Windhoek. This is mostly because the Oshiwambo speakers who have this belief did not originate there, they ended up there as migrant labourers. My point here is that although these people came from Ovamboland, they claimed a space within the Capital city (a white controlled area) when they claimed the monument.

¹²⁶ SWANLA has been responsible for administering, hiring and regulating migratory contract labourers, from May 1943. See paper by Crush, J. et.al 'Migration in Southern Africa' (September 2005). <http://www.gcim.org/attachements/RS7.pdf>, Accessed: 15 November 2005.

The Ovambo Campaign Memorial

Ovambo Campaign Memorial was erected in Windhoek at the time when South Africa was ruling. It was inaugurated in 1919 in “an attractive garden with shady trees” near the railway station, in memory of the Ovambo Campaign in 1917.¹²⁷ The Ovambo Campaign Memorial “consists of an ‘obelisk’ with six sides, in reference to the date of the Oihole battle (6th February 1917), surrounded by nine palm trees to commemorate the number of South Africans killed”,¹²⁸ [see figure: 4]. Placed between tall palm trees and green lawns this monument retained its original form to the present day. However due to the popular beliefs that Mandume’s head was decapitated and taken to Windhoek it is believed to have been buried under this monument. It is important to recognize that people still have this belief and that they associate this monument with Mandume.

It is also important to analyse the centrality of the gesture. The gesture here being the belief that people have about Mandume’s head under the monument in Windhoek. As said earlier, Windhoek is the capital city founded by Jan Jonker Afrikaner, and later taken over by the Germans and later by the British South Africans. However, it is very surprising that people have this belief here, considering that the campaign and Mandume’s death took place in northern Namibia and southern Angola respectively, on Ovakwanyama soil, and Windhoek as an area had little connection with these events. In addition, Windhoek was more of a white controlled area unlike the Ovakwanyama’s environment and what they were fighting against. Windhoek was the administrative

¹²⁷ Municipality document (Windhoek Memorials).

¹²⁸ Timm, M. “Transpositions: The reinterpretation of colonial photographs of the Kwanyama king Mandume ya Ndemufayo in the art of John Mwafangejo” in Hartman et.al (eds), *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the making of Namibian history* (University of Cape Town Press,1998): p 147.

centre. How did it then come about that this belief achieved such centrality in the Ovakwanyama or the Oshiwambo-speakers' consciousness? What is the meaning of ascribing a monument to Mandume in the capital city, the center or heart of the colony? Additionally, why was Windhoek so convenient to have this belief? What was it about historic conditions in Windhoek for the Ovambo that this belief found a home here?

In responding to these questions, I will look at what was taking place at that time especially in terms of identities and reclamations of oneself. Wallace claims that Windhoek “in the South African period was the site not only of struggles against colonial domination, but also of (re) construction of African identities and hierarchies”.¹²⁹ I argue in agreement with Hayes et.al claiming, “The sudden surfacing of the Mandume Memorial Committee in Windhoek represented a collision with colonial history and a competing claim to the public space”¹³⁰. Furthermore, “In doing so, and in trying to reclaim a monumental space to commemorate Mandume, urbanised Ovambo were drawing on ‘tradition’ to mobilise some form of self-constituting unity, which they could present not only to the colonial authorities, but also to other emerging ethnic identities in Windhoek such as ‘the Herero’”.¹³¹ In addition to that, it was also probably done as an indication of intention, a political gesture and also a gesture of defiance at the time of colonialism. One can also say the monument was used as a tool as the people obviously attach anti-colonial sentiments to it.

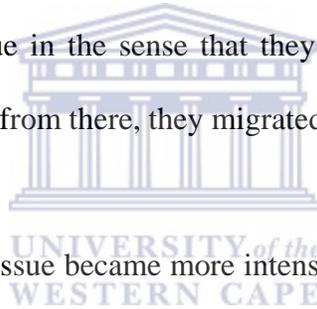
¹²⁹ Wallace, M. *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945* (P. Schlettwein Publishing Switzerland 2002): p 24.

¹³⁰ Hartmann, W, Hayes, P, Silvester, J, Wallace, M. *Namibia under South African Rule, Mobility and containment*, (Ohio University Press, 1998): p 11.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p 11.

Mandume's association with Ovambo Campaign Memorial

As said earlier, the Ovambo Campaign Memorial was inaugurated in 1919. It was erected by members of the South African army in memory of their comrades killed on February 6, 1917 near Oihole. It was in the battle against Chief Mandume ya Ndemufayo fought by the colonial South African troops. Mandume was killed in battle with the South African soldiers who are honoured by this monument. However, after its installation, “many Ovakwanyama claimed this monument as memorial to the King himself and an affirmation of his presence within the capital city”.¹³² It is however surprising that there is this wide acceptance of this belief. Namibian people especially the Ovakwanyama, still continue to say it is Mandume's monument and still honour him through this particular memorial. They center the issue in the sense that they (Ovakwanyama) also colonised Windhoek because they are not from there, they migrated.



At certain points, this memory issue became more intense. Hayes et.al state that “In 1937 and 1938, the attention of the administration in Windhoek was drawn to the existence of a ‘Mandume Memorial Committee’, composed of Christianised Oshiwambo-speakers living in the location”.¹³³ In some ways similar to the "Otjiserandu" (Red Band Organisation or Truppenspieler) of the Ovaherero and the "Green Band Organisation" of the Damara, the Ovambo also had an “association-Organisation”, where they held a memorial service in memory of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo at the colonial “Mandume

¹³² Hartmann. W, Hayes. P, Silvester.J, Wallace. M. ‘Introduction’, in Hayes et.al (eds), *Namibia under South African Rule, Mobility and containment*, (Ohio University Press, 1998): p 10.

¹³³ Ibid. p 10.

Campaign Memorial” at the Windhoek railway station.¹³⁴ However it is important to note here that this particular ceremony or the organisation (the Mandume Memorial Committee) only cropped up once in 1937 and never took place again unlike the “Otjiserandu” of the Ovaherero, which took place every year until now. For this one occurrence, it clearly shows that people really had a belief that it was Mandume’s memorial and in turn formed a committee to represent the affairs concerning the monument that is honouring their king. However the commemorations and the committee’s existence were short-lived while the belief persisted for all these years.

The committee was made up of eight people, namely: Titus Namuyo, Johannes Kapitira, Johannes Haihumba, Isaac Ndatjapo, Solomon Shitaleni, Gabriel Mbidi, Tobias Shinkupeni and Ananias Shipena.¹³⁵ These are the people that came together and visited the site by laying a wreath of flowers on 6 February 1937. This only happened once as in the second year in 1938 when they invited people to attend, they were denied access from entering the site. They reportedly questioned why they were granted permission in the previous year (1937) and not in that year (1938). According to an archival document, a series of questions were asked in an interview between the Windhoek Superintendent of Locations called Captain Bowker with one committee member Titus Namuyo. The System manager of the railways (where the monument is situated), the Town Clerk and together with the Superintendent of Locations refused to allow these Ovambo people to hold their memorial service at the monument site. Captain Bowker in particular has replied in a letter to the Town Clerk, saying “It seems to me absurd that the Ovambos

¹³⁴ <http://www.klausdierks.com/Chronology/90.htm>, Chronology of Namibian History from pre-Historical Times to Independent Namibia (December 2000), Klaus Dierks 02 January 2005.

¹³⁵ NAN MWI 36/1/37 vol. 14, ‘Interview with Titus Namuyo’, 2, 14 February 1938.

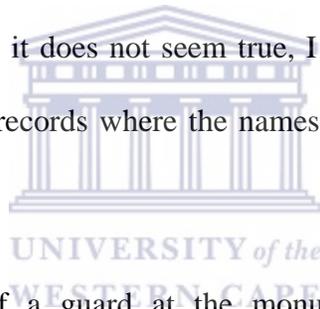
should hold their services at a memorial erected to the memory of men who were killed by themselves (the Ovambos)".¹³⁶ Due to the fact that people did not know for whom the monument was erected, the colonial officials thought it was inappropriate for the Oshiwambo-speakers to commemorate their King at this monument. In doing so, the Mandume Committee's request for a second memorial service was refused, and the group seems to have disappeared.

It is important here to analyse this colonial stand, to clarify why they did not allow the Oshiwambo-speakers entrance to the memorial for the second time. I argue that the reason why these colonial officials refused the Mandume commemoration at the site was to protect their colonial space. Meaning that at the time knowledge of the colonial space depended on official documentation, and the colonial archives. The fact that the Mandume's alleged suicide was not documented in the colonial files, the Kwanyama belief of Mandume's beheading and his head buried under the monument would not be documented either. The official sources make no mention of suicide nor do they refer to decapitation, so it was not considered valid. Another thing can be attributed to the spatial separation of local people and the colonisers, embodying the need to prevent the mixing of these people. Lastly, as said before it was also the fact that the monument was ostensibly erected for the dead South African troops and not for King Mandume ya Ndemufayo.

Due to the silence that prevails around this issue, I would argue that maybe all the committee members have passed on or maybe they just do not want to talk about their experiences. One specific interviewee I talked to does not accept the statement, however,

¹³⁶ NAN MWI 36/1/37 vol. 14, 'Interview with Titus Namuyo', 2, 14 February 1938.

that there was a committee or just local people visiting the monument. He stated the supposed facts as follows: “From the time when Mandume’s head was put in that monument, there was a guard outside its gate, he only moved when Namibia got independent. That time if you are passing the railway station on your way to the township, you have to walk very far away from the monument. Blacks were just not allowed, you could even find out from other people who have been here that time, they will tell you the same thing. Therefore, I cannot agree that there were some black people allowed near the site, maybe it changed later because I also left the country. But I have been in Windhoek for a very long time”.¹³⁷ It is very important to look at this account closely in terms of the issues raised. Firstly, looking at the existence of the Mandume Memorial Committee, although it does not seem true, I believe that it did exist. This is clearly evident in the colonial records where the names of the committee members and their activities are indicated.



Another thing is the issue of a guard at the monument. Apparently the colonial government had a guard by the monument at every hour.¹³⁸ It is a little surprising that there was a need for someone to look after the monument every time. Was there fear that the Ovambo people would come and destroy it? I doubt this very much because since the installation of this monument, the Ovambo people considered it Mandume’s. They had so much affiliation towards it. Additionally, it is hard to accept that this guard has been at the monument since the time of its erection until the time when Namibia got independent. It could also be that Nangonya could be exaggerating because according to his *Biografia*

¹³⁷ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya, Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

¹³⁸ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya, Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

Política,¹³⁹ he did not stay in Windhoek for as long as he is claiming. Anyway local people didn't just walk close to it because they were probably scared of what might happen to them if they did. This always comes to the reason that it was probably because there was no trust between people from different racial backgrounds.

However it is important in this case to analyse the fact that local people did not use to walk close to the monument, probably scared of what will happen to them. This is because even though they were not always in proximity of the monument they still continued to see it as King Mandume's. It must have been difficult as they were probably torn apart by desires to go near it and also the fear of what will happen if they do. Even though this was the case, the belief and affiliation towards this monument did not go away but took up a kind of 'underground existence' where it continued to be at work. One can argue that it is a belief 'driven underground' where, while not openly displayed, it grows powerful. I believe the inaccessibility fed this memory or belief as I think that maybe barriers create beliefs.

Hayes asserts that this particular monument "became a site of visitation for different generations of Ovambo passing through or resident in Windhoek". This was because it "was on the route – at the crossroads even – of migrant workers from the north en route

¹³⁹ Godfrey Nangonya's *Biografia Política*, shows that he was in Cape Town in 1949 where he joined the Movement International Pan-Africanist of the Youth, in Cape Town, South Africa as well as in the Youth of ANC (African National Congress), also in Cape Town. He later went to Kenya in 1950, back to Cape Town in 1952 and later went to Luanda where he had his first political meeting in February of 1953, home of Mr. Alberto Marques. After the formation of the local structure in Luanda, and in agreement with the intentions of Directions of International Pan-Africanism, he was sent to Ondjiva. He maintained contact in Benguela with an employee of the underwater Cable of nationality Ghanaian, of name Alexander, and with oldest Bragança. The story is long but this was to briefly indicate that Nangonya did not stay long in Windhoek as claimed.

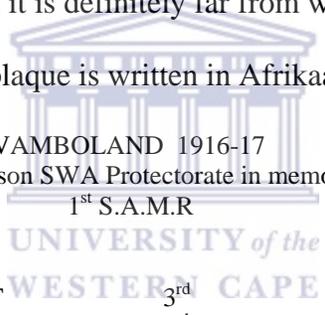
to their contracted work sites”.¹⁴⁰ This is in relation to the indication made earlier that since the monument was established close to the railway station, these migrant workers had always passed this monument as they go to their work places. This was both in Windhoek and elsewhere in the country as the train passed through the center (Windhoek) en route to the south e.g. diamond fields and farms. This clearly shows that even though people were not allowed in the site, it did not stop them from believing that the monument was Mandume’s. The fact that people pass and see it everyday, fuels the belief. Therefore people don’t need to see the actual monument close up to believe that it is Mandume’s.

In the early years when this monument was erected, a fence used to enclose it, with a gateway and a path leading to it. As indicated earlier it was surrounded by an attractive garden with nine palm trees and beautiful lawns. This was not the case a few years ago because there was only a sign of what used to be a fence back then. In 2000, concerned students from University of Namibia UNAM (history and visual history students) approached the City of Windhoek municipality with their concern towards the state of the surrounding of the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. Due to its beautiful lawns and shade provided by the palms trees, the site was being used as a recreation area. People were taking their food and drinks there, in turn littering it badly with beer bottles and rubbish. This was seen as a sign of disrespect for the people being honoured here. In response the municipality constructed a fence around it with the electrical wires on top of it and locked the gate. Although this was done in good faith, it is proving to be very difficult to get

¹⁴⁰ Hayes. P, unpublished chapter from book project, “The African Threshold” (concerning the colonisation of Ovambo kingdoms in Namibia, especially Oukwanyama in 1915-17): p 42.

access to the site. This is in cases of researchers and interested students who are involved in studying this monument. It is impossible to see anything and maybe take photographs, as you cannot even get too close for fear of being electrocuted. The people in charge of public access are plainly inaccessible themselves.

Despite all these limitations in the past and in the present, I guess that the local people interact with the site as they could see it from far when they are passing and they still see it as Mandume's. As indicated earlier, that the site has been enclosed since then until now just intensifies or fuels the belief and supports Mandume's claim because people would see no evidence of who the monument is 'really' made for. Shown below is what is inscribed on the monument, and it is definitely far from what people think is written there [see figure: 5]. One side of the plaque is written in Afrikaans but it is not included here.



OVAMBOLAND 1916-17
 Erected by the Garrison SWA Protectorate in memory of
 CDL.R.TWINE 1st S.A.M.R
 KFM.R.F. PFOHL
 C.Z BURGER
 CPL.P.M.G KNOTT 3rd
 RFM.D.M.G. LE ROUX 4th
 DTE.J.V.D. MERWE 2nd MIL. CONSTAB.
 I.VAN NIEKERK
 R.A. BURGER
 KILLED IN ACTION AT ESOLE 6 FEB 1917
 SGT.B.G.W. CLARK 1st S.A.M.R
 RFM.D. ROOS
 G.PL.J.O'DEA S.A.I.P.& T.C
 DIED GESTORVEN¹⁴¹

The Ovambo Campaign Memorial was erected for the dead South African troops, but it is still the first monument that people came to identify or associate with King Mandume ya Ndemufayo in Namibia. Although it was not originally erected for him, nowadays, it is referred to in popular discourse as his. Therefore, as said earlier, these people had an

¹⁴¹ The names and the indication of the erection are inscribed on the metal plaque at the Ovambo Campaign Memorial.

attachment to the monument as they felt it was their king's and they are claiming it. It is important to recognize that there exists a psychology related to why people feel that this monument is Mandume's. This is because the whole conviction is "imaginary", a fantasy which was probably a reaction to trauma following Mandume's death. Some of the Oshiwambo-speaking people, who were in Windhoek at the time when Mandume died, believed his head was buried under this monument. I always think that since the people believed that Mandume's head was cut off and that it was taken to Windhoek and later a monument was built in honour of the whole campaign, it gave them all the reason to believe it was put there. They probably needed to believe that, needed something to make it 'real'. Somehow it is a fantasy that came to be considered real. However this needs close examination as there is no proof that Mandume's head was really buried there or whether he was decapitated for that matter. It would really be of great interest if people would dig under this monument to clear this up once and for all. Sadly, I believe this would be very problematic as it will go against and violate the Ovakwanyama values and beliefs.

When I interviewed people on this issue of the monument being identified as Mandume's, their views reflected a general consensus towards this belief. They all said it was definitely Mandume ya Ndemufayo's monument as apparently his head was kept there. However, obviously there were and still are many different versions. As like many oral accounts from which they are taken, these accounts also provide contradictory information regarding the issue that black people were allowed to see Mandume's head or not. Godfrey Nangonya claims that, "Mandume's head was kept in that monument, I

am sure of it”.¹⁴² He further told me that, “I am sure of it because during South Africa’s control, people came to see the head, that time I was also in Windhoek”.¹⁴³ He stressed that it was only white people who were allowed in this site or to see Mandume’s head. However, another interviewee by the name of Emilia Nhinda claims, “I have seen Mandume’s head in Windhoek, when I used to go to school there. They used to show it at that place near the railway station, so when I went to school I saw it”.¹⁴⁴ On the same issue, Vilho Kaulinge¹⁴⁵ who was present at the time when Mandume died also claims to have had seen Mandume’s head when it was decapitated by the British South Africans saying, “I only came to see his head when we brought his belongings to Ondonga”.¹⁴⁶ This relates to the fact that before Mandume’s death, it was his wish that all his belongings be taken to King Martin of Ondonga. After his death his senior commanders (including Kaulinge) took Mandume’s possessions to Ondonga as he requested before his death. When this happened, the colonial authorities asked all the senior commanders to go to Ondangwa for interrogation. It was then here that they were shown Mandume’s head when the colonial officers told them that if they wanted to see it they would show, which they did. He also claims “The king’s head was taken to Windhoek where it is kept in a very nice room. If you go there as a tourist you would be allowed to see it. You will be allowed to go inside the yard only, but not inside the room”.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Interview with Godfrey Nangonya, Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

¹⁴³ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya, Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Emilia Nhinda, Ondobe, 12 February 2005. Emilia was born at Omupanda (in the present southern Angola, Kunene region) in 6 July 1908. Her father was Tomas Nhinda, a close friend of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo. She moved from Omupanda to Ondonga (in Namibia), but she was 9 years old when Mandume died and she claims she knew him well.

¹⁴⁵ The late Reverend Vilho Kaulinge was known as a great authority on Ovambo History.

¹⁴⁶ Hayes, P. Haiping, *D Healing the Land, Kaulinge’s history of the Kwanyama* (Rudiger Koppe Verlag Duisburg 1997): p 89.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p 93.

It is important to analyse Reverend Vilho Kaulinge's accounts. He was interviewed first in April 1989 at his rural homestead at Ondobe in Oukwanyama, northern Namibia. He was born in the precolonial era in 1900, and he died in the late 1992.¹⁴⁸ He was a youth when South Africa forces colonised the Kwanyama kingdom in 1915-17.¹⁴⁹ The young king Mandume was well known to Kaulinge as a boy and a youth.¹⁵⁰ Therefore Kaulinge's narrative carries extra weight amongst Ovambo-speakers because he was present at the time and able to render details of Mandume's death and decapitation.¹⁵¹ His account is probably the most authoritative, as his narrative brings some order to a chaotic historical moment for the Kwanyama.¹⁵² Despite all this, we can say though that like any other oral accounts, one can never really tell its credibility. It was so long ago, about 80 years when all this took place and it must have gone through a lot of changes. Emilia and Nangonya's accounts are recent and Kaulinge's was recorded in 1992, there is time lapse between them. Kaulinge's testimony shows the relaying of a body of tradition (which in this case includes the beliefs surrounding Mandume's death), which has passed through a chain of transmission. He has added to it from his own lifetime experiences as he was present in Oukwanyama during the whole episode of Mandume's death and the aftermath of Ovamboland administration that followed.¹⁵³

What should be taken into account here is the reason why these people are having different accounts, on this issue. Each was probably trying to give her / his view regarding what was happening then. As indicated earlier, one interviewee claims that

¹⁴⁸ Hayes, P. Haipinge, *D Healing the Land, Kaulinge's history of the Kwanyama* (Rudiger Koppe Verlag Duisburg 1997). p 8.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p 9.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* p 14.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* p 14.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* p 14.

Mandume's head used to be displayed where only white people were allowed in while the other claims that, the head used to be displayed and that she saw it herself. This implies that local people could also view it, while the other disagrees. However, we should put in consideration that human beings have the ability to construct any past that is deemed necessary for various situations and different reasons. Luise White in her interpretation of vampire stories, in the context of oral history in Africa, says, "...people do not speak with truth, with a concept of the accurate description of what they saw, to say what they mean, but they construct and repeat stories that carry the values and meanings that most forcibly get their points across". She continues by emphasizing, "people want to tell stories that work, stories that convey ideas and points".¹⁵⁴ Therefore, I as the interviewer or audiences are always disadvantaged whenever there is no prior knowledge to the past that is being looked into. The construction of individual memories always employs different types of understanding of the past, each with different claims to the truth and authenticity. As for what Emilia and Kaulinge are saying, I believe it is mere speculation of what used to happen then. It is true that we all have the ability to twist what actually happened to what never happened to satisfy some aspects of what we want to put across. The fact is that people had a belief that Mandume's head was buried under the monument although there was and is still no proof to justify this.

Therefore as public historians, we need to be aware of such speculations when dealing with oral sources. It's very important to analyse our oral sources because the histories that we encounter have shape and purpose and mostly because what these people

¹⁵⁴ White, L. *Speaking with Vampires, Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (University of California Press, London England 2000): p 30.

believed in was a reaction to trauma. They needed something to believe in and this particular story may have taken hold. Another way of looking at it, is that these stories may have meanings just like White is arguing about vampire stories saying, “Vampire stories are, then, confusions and misunderstanding of the best kind: they reveal the world of power and uncertainty in which Africans have lived in the century”.¹⁵⁵ Meaning “their very falseness is what gives them meaning; they are a way of talking that encourages a reassessment of everyday experience to address the workings of power and how regimes use them”.¹⁵⁶ I believe this can be interpreted the same way with the stories concerning the decapitation of Mandume’s head and its burial under the monument.

In an almost similar case where oral sources are concerned, Alessandro Portelli deals with the change (placement in time and context) in stories about Luigi Trastulli’s death. Luigi Trastulli, a 21-year-old steel worker from Terni, an industrial town in Umbria, central Italy, died in a clash with the police on 17 March 1949 as workers walked out of the factory to attend a rally against the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty by the Italian government.¹⁵⁷ The walkout, the clash, and the killing of Trastulli lasted less than thirty minutes; but, from that moment on, the memory of this brief episode has exerted a shaping influence on the town’s identity and culture.¹⁵⁸ He highlights that “Many narrators, including eye-witness, believe that Trastulli did not die at an anti-NATO demonstration in 1949, but during the street fights which followed the announcement of the firing of more than two thousand workers from the steel factory in October 1953

¹⁵⁵ White, L. *Speaking with Vampires, Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (University of California Press, London England 2000): p 43.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p 43.

¹⁵⁷ Portelli, A. *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in Oral history*. (State University of New York Press, Albany. 1991): p 1.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p 1.

(following the firing of another seven hundred in December 1952)".¹⁵⁹ In analysing why the narrators changed Luigi's death story by placing it in another context and time, Portelli argues that "The causes of this collective error must be sought, rather than in the event itself, in the meaning which is derived from the actors' state of mind at the time; from its relation to subsequent historical developments; and from the activity of memory and imagination".¹⁶⁰

I chose to look at this particular case in relation to why people believe Mandume's head is buried under the monument although there is no proof reinforcing it. This is in an attempt to show that there could be reasons why people had and still do have this belief similar to why narrators of Luigi's death changed its context and placement. Portelli in showing the motive behind why these people merged the two most dramatic events into one coherent story, he claims that "The collective, community mode would be the proper collocation, because here is where the event carries more weight...avoiding a message of collective powerlessness and defeat".¹⁶¹ This was a way to lessen the blow to the community's pride by changing the date of the event. In comparison I think this is probably the case with the belief of Mandume's head under the monument. As indicated earlier, the Oshiwambo people were probably reacting to the shock of Mandume's death and they wanted to reclaim themselves through some form of anti-colonial propaganda presented to the colonial authorities at the time.

¹⁵⁹Portelli, A. *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in Oral history*. (State University of New York Press, Albany. 1991):p 14.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p 15.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p 21.

I believe this was necessary as after Mandume's death or earlier a levelling process in which the colonial reconstructing of political authority in Ovamboland took place.¹⁶² This process reduced or increased power exercised by existing rulers.¹⁶³ Thus the vacuum created by Mandume's removal led eventually to the creation of a council of headmen in Oukwanyama, who had been outside Mandume's close circle.¹⁶⁴ The most prominent headmen in Oukwanyama were now Noyoma, Aufiku, Ndjukuma and Hamukoto wa Kaluvi.¹⁶⁵ And as the actual 'council of headmen' crystallised, these headmen assumed jurisdictions which were smaller than Mandume's had been, but larger and more legitimised than any previous *omalenga*.¹⁶⁶ However the reason for all this was, 'where 'levelling' was effective officials could then afford to maintain a *laissez-faire* presence, not interrupting political organisation that worked smoothly 'by itself', especially with regard to migrant labour'¹⁶⁷ which was central to the administration of Ovamboland. Thus resistance from the Kwanyama leadership disappeared.

Another thing to consider is the age difference between these interviewees varies, as Emilia is 97 years old at the time of interview while Nangonya is about 76 years old. As indicated earlier Vilho Kaulinge was 89 when he was interviewed for the first time and it was so long before when Mandume died and everything happened. This means that they grew up in different times and experiences. We should also put into consideration that, yes, old people's narratives are a rich source of evidence that provide both eyewitness testimony and what was heard during that time. Concerning this issue Paul Thompson

¹⁶² Hayes, P. 'A History of the Owambo of Namibia, 1880-1930' unpublished PhD thesis. pp 240.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p 240.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p 241.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p 241.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p 241.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p 241.

citing Hunter argues, “There is, in the elderly person, an impairment of a general neurological kind recalling activities undergo progressive disorganization”.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, while their importance is undeniable, old people’s narratives are filtered by forgetfulness and subjectivity, which can distort knowledge and limit perspectives. An important thing to consider is the fact that the interviewees were not able to remember exactly when the display of Mandume’s head took place. I believe this is because it is difficult for old people to know the years when certain events took place. By this I mean that they describe certain times of occurrences by referring to major events such as droughts, floods etc, e.g. something happened during the year of that biggest flood. This is because the archive files indicates that the monument was inaugurated on the 6th of February 1919 and the commemorations that took place there were held around 1937 and 38. Nevertheless, the popular discourse that Mandume’s head is buried underneath this particular monument still exists. This reconstruction of Mandume’s past through the body of Mandume was and still is consistent among the Kwanyama people as it is reproduced through oral history. I believe it was something they identified with when thinking about Mandume.

Whose monument is it really?

It is just now that people, myself included, are figuring or finding out that the monument was actually honouring other people, not Mandume. This also emerged in Pombili Ipinge’s account when he says, “when I was growing up, I used to hear people saying there was a Mandume grave here in Windhoek, but when I came I found out that memorial is not commemorating Mandume at all, it was commemorating the soldiers

¹⁶⁸ Thompson, P. *The Voice of the Past, Oral History*. (Oxford University Press 1978) p: 113.

who died fighting him”.¹⁶⁹ It is widely believed by many people that after the Kwanyama king’s death, his body was decapitated and the head taken to Windhoek, consequently buried under a monument. It is a bit odd now, because there is no mention of Mandume or the Kwanyamas who died with him at this monument. In addition, maybe the inaccessibility of the monument helped in this way as I think if people had known earlier, they wouldn’t probably be feeling this way towards this monument. I also think the issue of literacy contributed, as I doubt many people were literate then. Therefore, I believe the formation of the Mandume Memorial Committee and all these associations were probably in reaction to establishing stability and identity at the time when their chief died and the colonizers were in charge. They wanted to reclaim their position in their own country by identifying with someone who was anti-colonial. Association with Mandume gave them courage, in other words it inspired them to continue the fight against colonialism. It is evident in the way the people chose to represent him as a brave, defiant leader irrespective of his other shortcomings. In relation to this, Thompson argues, “Other stories may be of value for their incidental details, or for their symbolic meaning, rather than for the narrative itself”.¹⁷⁰ Therefore his stories of resistance and bravery are of value to the people.

This could also be related to what Portelli concluded in the case of Luigi Trastulli’s death. He analysed why the people had changed the placement and context of Trastulli’s death to an anti-NATO demonstration in 1949, while he died during the street fights after the announcement of the firing of more than two thousand workers from the steel factory

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Pombili Iipinge, Windhoek. 24 February 2005. He is the acting site manager and curator at the Heroes Acre, Namibia.

¹⁷⁰ Thompson, P. *The Voice of the Past, Oral History*. (Oxford University Press 1978) p: 107.

in October 1953. While Portelli looked at what the change in story was probably serving, I propose symbolic and psychological reasons in my analysis of the belief about Mandume's head. In the attempt to show why people believe that Mandume's head is buried under the Ovambo Campaign Memorial, I argue that this belief was probably to serve psychological needs, which are "...to heal the feeling of humiliation and the loss of self-esteem following upon the impossibility of reacting adequately to the comrade's death (and loss of power which it reveals)".¹⁷¹ It is also symbolic in the sense that it was an anti-colonial tool directed at the colonial British South Africans and it was also a means to make the brutalities of colonial system visible and unforgettable. Luise White in analysing stories of vampires, fire stations and injections, claims that these stories "allow historians a vision of colonial worlds replete with all the messy categories and meandering epistemologies many Africans used to describe the extractions and invasions with which they lived".¹⁷² This serves to explain that although these stories lack proof and have a lot of uncertainties; one should probably look at them closely and not just discard them, because they report the aggressive carelessness of colonial extractions and ascribe potent and intimate meanings to them.¹⁷³ As indicated earlier, I believe this is the case for the Mandume belief, as it is probably in reaction to the brutal way (it was believed) in which the colonial officials cut off Mandume's head. However, what is most important here is that the colonisers brought the old Kwanyama kingdom and the world as people knew it to an end.

¹⁷¹ Portelli, A. *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in Oral history*. (State University of New York Press, Albany. 1991): p 26.

¹⁷² White, L. *Speaking with Vampires, Rumour and History in Colonial Africa* (University of California Press, London England 2000): p 5.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* p 5.

Chapter 4

The Heroes Acre of Namibia

Introduction

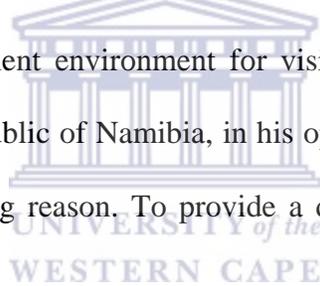
This chapter seeks to show what the Namibian Heroes Acre is and what it represents. Most importantly it strives to analyze how Mandume ya Ndemufayo (a national hero) is represented at this site. The official brochure for the monument describes the Heroes Acre as a ‘historic memorial site, which is honouring, paying homage, tribute and due respect to the heroes and heroines who died fighting in the liberation struggle of the Namibian independence’.¹⁷⁴ This chapter will give the broad composition of the Heroes Acre, its meaning and significance. Additionally, this chapter also relates to what is discussed in the previous chapter about a belief that Mandume ya Ndemufayo’s head is buried in Windhoek. This chapter will explore the shift of Mandume’s sites of memory, from the Ovambo Campaign Memorial to his symbolic grave at Heroes Acre. During the colonial rule, the colonial officials saw Mandume’s association with the Ovambo Campaign Memorial as irrational and he was not recognised as a hero. The notion of “hero” only became popular when Namibia got independent. In the post colonial context, Mandume’s memory is recontextualised at the Heroes Acre, made official and it is inserted in a collective national monument. This also means that, at this site he is recognised as a hero together with other Namibian heroes. I also believe that people tried to constitute a memorial grave for him, to concretise his presence in the capital city since it is believed that his head is buried there. To give basis on how the heroes are

¹⁷⁴ *The Unknown Soldier, Inauguration of the Heroes Acre.* (Heroes Acre Committee on Media Liaison 2002): pp 10-11.

represented in other post- colonial African countries such as Zimbabwe a comparative study of the Heroes Acres in these respective countries will be covered in this chapter.

What does the Heroes Acre represent?

The Heroes Acre is the ‘largest and most ornate national monument’ constructed after independence in Namibia. It was inaugurated on 26 August 2002, the day specifically reserved as a national holiday for the ‘remembrance of our heroes and heroines’. In the past all Heroes Day celebrations took place at Omugulugombashe in Ongandjera, the site of the first clash between SWAPO combatants and South African forces.¹⁷⁵ The Heroes Acre is situated in the outskirts of capital city Windhoek, just a few kilometers from the city municipal area. It is situated “... between two hills on the northern slope of the larger southern hill to allow an ambient environment for visitors...”,¹⁷⁶ [see figure: 6]. The former President¹⁷⁷ of the Republic of Namibia, in his opening speech said, “This shrine was chosen with one overriding reason. To provide a dedicated place for all of us, as



¹⁷⁵ On 26 August 1966 SWAPO proclaimed the ‘armed struggle’ and its first insurgent force was engaged by South African police and troops at Ongulumbashe in Ovamboland.

¹⁷⁶ *The Unknown Soldier, Inauguration of the Heroes Acre*. Heroes Acre Committee on Media Liaison 2002: p 9.

¹⁷⁷ The former president was Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma. He was born on 12.05.1929 at Okahao. He entered active politics as a member of the Mandume Movement 1954. Nujoma was a founder member of both, SWANU and OPO, 1959. Because of his trade union and political activities in 1957, Nujoma became one of the leading opponents of the South African authorities. Nujoma went into exile with the assistance of Hosea Kutako in February/March 1960. In 1969 he was reconfirmed as SWAPO President at the Tanga Consultative Congress and has retained the position ever since. He gained official recognition for SWAPO at the United Nations and official member status of the Non-Alignment Movement in 1979. Nujoma returned to Namibia on 14.09.1989 with the implementation of the UN SC Resolution 435. He was the President of the Republic of Namibia from 21 March 1990. He served for three terms of five years each. He left office this year on 21st March 2005 and was succeeded by President Hifikepunye Pohamba. The Heroes Acre was Sam Nujoma’s project. The idea of building a Heroes' Acre was "conceived" by Nujoma in 1997 during an Organisation of African Union (OAU) summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. (http://www.klausdierks.com/Biographies/Biographies_N.htm, Copyright © 2003-2004 Dr. Klaus Dierks).

Namibians, to pay homage and to give solemn and due respect to the heroes and heroines of our soil, whose blood waters our freedom”.¹⁷⁸

The Heroes Acre is believed to foster the ‘spirit of patriotism, national reconciliation and national unity’. As the former President further emphasizes, “In the final analysis, it must be seen as one of those tangible expressions of our policy of national reconciliation, Statehood and unity as a nation”.¹⁷⁹ He further says, “With the inauguration of this Heroes Acre we, Namibian people, are writing the history of Namibia, the history of victory, the history of unity, the history of dedication, indeed, the history of nation hood”.¹⁸⁰ A good question is, is the government’s so-called policy of “national reconciliation” a genuine attempt to come to terms with the past and heal the wounds it left, or is it just a smokescreen behind which other agendas try to hide?

The Heroes Acre includes certain features of the past and present, while it neglects others. I understand there was an attempt to depict a broad ethnic range of national heroes (in the case of the first traditional leaders that were honoured there), but this does not mean the history of unity is depicted. This is because I believe the history depicted there includes particular groups in concept of heroism and their contribution to the liberation struggle, but other groups and individuals are clearly excluded and marginalized and left outside of the supposed underlying concept of statehood and unity. Thus, the challenge to the tangible expressions of the policy of national reconciliation and other pressing issues remain unresolved.

¹⁷⁸ “Heroes Acre Inauguration speech of the president of Namibia”, 26 August 2002: p 1.

¹⁷⁹ Heroes Acre Inauguration speech of the president of Namibia: 26 August 2002, p 1.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p 1.

The Heroes Acre is believed to depict the Namibian history since 1884 and highlights the anti-colonial resistance of the Namibian people. Basically, the whole idea behind the construction of the Heroes Acre was to portray the country's history. This is the history from the early subjection to colonialism, mobilisation and the start of the armed struggle to the ending of colonialism and lastly victorious independence. This has gone through to the awakening of a more complex nationalist idea. Andre du Pisani argues, "Heroes Acre attempts to reframe our history, to retrieve history from the distorted narratives of colonial representation".¹⁸¹ It is seen as a means to redress the incorrect presentation of what the colonisers were writing about Namibian people. Therefore, it is through these histories that people get united and work together as a cognate nation aiming for common interests, which is ideal for nation building. This means a place which the future generations will be proud of. As indicated earlier, although the underlying objectives for the Heroes Acre were to honour the nation's heroes who died fighting to liberate the country, it's important to analyse these objectives. I believe the biggest of all objectives is the one mentioned earlier of honouring all nations' heroes who died fighting to liberate the country. I think there are a lot of exclusions in this because particular groups of people are marginalised. From the people who are buried at the Heroes Acre recently, it is evident its acknowledgement lies with SWAPO associates only, and in particular those who were in exile.¹⁸² The people who were fighting inside the country are not really considered for burial at the Heroes Acre. I argue this because a lot of people who are

¹⁸¹ Du Pisani A. *Namibia Review, A review of Policy and Development* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, information and Broadcasting, August 2002): p 19.

¹⁸² See Akawa, M. "Our Memories of the Liberation War: Civilians in Post War northern Namibia remember the War". Unpublished Thesis (The University of the Western Cape, 2004): p87.

known to have fought for the country (not necessarily SWAPO members) have died but are not buried at Heroes Acre.

Women are also marginalised, as only a few are buried there so far compared to men. As of last year, out of the eleven people who have found space and recognition at Heroes Acre only two are women.¹⁸³ Thus, the claim that the Heroes Acre is honouring all people (supposedly regardless of race, gender, affiliation etc.) who died fighting for the country is really an overstatement. Therefore it seems like most of the stated outcomes are not reached at all, as there seems to be disparities in the histories that are presented there leading to people questioning the whole outlying purpose. These issues will be dealt with in more detail later on.

Composition of Heroes Acre

As said earlier, the construction of Heroes Acre was motivated by the need to foster the 'spirit of patriotism and nationalism and to pass this legacy on to future generations of Namibia'. Analysis of postcolonial discourses of nationalism in the heritage sphere and their problems is needed here to question the motivation behind the construction of the Heroes Acre. In most African states, heritage has become a new means to locally achieve national identity and to re-inscribe the nation in the imagination of global society.¹⁸⁴ However, major difficulties remain particularly around the identification of elements that will bring national cohesion and achieve a sense of belonging.¹⁸⁵ Part of the problem is that postcolonial states are profoundly multicultural and therefore difficult to portray as a

¹⁸³ Ibid. p 89.

¹⁸⁴ Boswell, R. *Re-Inscribing the Nation: Cultural Heritage Management and Nation Building in South Africa and Seychelles* (UNESCO Annual Meeting 2005).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

unified whole as different people within the nation belong to it in differing ways.¹⁸⁶ Thus, to achieve unity (which symbolises a particular version of democratic progress and modernity), multiculturalism and nationalism have to be presented as icons of integration.¹⁸⁷ To do this, existing differences are glossed over and only certain memories of the past are allowed to surface in public discourse unless those dark memories still serve the political ends of those in power.¹⁸⁸ I believe the above also applies to the Namibian situation because there was obviously a driving need to build the Heroes Acre and as it happens, not every hero is represented there. Clearly the Heroes Acre aimed at nation-building is not directly helping to construct a nation, but it is perhaps reinforcing the nationalist discourse and its agendas (which in this can be to mobilise support, manifest power/corruption and accumulate wealth etc.).

The construction process took 13 months and it covers a total area of 732.9212 hectares, 286.70 meters in length and with a width of 134.20 meters.¹⁸⁹ The whole layout of the Namibian Heroes Acre is a symmetrical polygon. It consists of a public seating area that can accommodate 5000 people, an arrival platform which is the lowest part of the “saddle”, the main area consisting of graves, the obelisk area and a staircase walkway leading to the Pavilion, which allows for a panoramic view of the City of Windhoek.

My argument here will be based on a literature on the cultural meaning of panoramic view; therefore it is discussed at length to give clarity on probably why the Heroes Acre

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ *The Unknown Soldier, Inauguration of the Heroes Acre*. Heroes Acre Committee on Media Liaison 2002: p 9.

is situated where it is. According to Oettermann the “panorama” is a word from the Greek words for ‘all’ and ‘view’. Today it can be used to refer to anything from a “general overview, like a collection of poetry, to the name of a store selling electronics, none of which are what it was coined to mean”.¹⁹⁰ However, according to another author, he says, “...the modern usage of the word ‘panorama’ developed when the technical term coined to denote a new type of round painting came to be applied generally to mean “circular vista, overview (from an elevated point)” of a real landscape or cityscape; this was very soon followed by metaphorical use to mean a survey or ‘overview’ of a particular field of knowledge, such as art, literature, or history”.¹⁹¹ Therefore the panorama refers to a form of painting; large, very long paintings that could be hung on the inside wall of a round room. Here a viewer may stand on a platform in the middle of the room to see representations of cities, landscapes, battles or other interesting scenes. The end of the eighteenth century saw the invention of the modern panorama. This new form of entertainment quickly became very popular and lucrative for many painters.

The Panorama came into being at the time when other inventions were being tried out such as scientific inventions. These inventions represented or acted as symbols of development and advancement for certain classes of the society and were interpreted differently. Certain inventions such as “the invention of the montgolfier was in fact understood as a triumph of middle-class skill and ingenuity, and the hot air balloon became, if only in a diffuse way, a symbol of the political aspirations and demands of the

¹⁹⁰ <http://brickhaus.com/amoore/magazine/hughes.html>, Review of *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* by Stephan Oettermann: By Danielle Hughes.

¹⁹¹ Oettermann. S, *The Panorama History of a Mass Medium* (Zone Books, New York, 1997): p 6.

bourgeoisie on the continent”.¹⁹² Therefore “what the Montgolfier symbolised, and what the panoramas expressed, was the freshly acquired ability of the bourgeoisie to ‘see things from a new angle’, in both a literal and metaphorical sense”.¹⁹³ This means that the invention of the panorama was seen as a way of looking at things in a landscape and ‘corresponds directly to the economic and political situation of the bourgeoisie under the absolute monarchs of Europe burgeoning hopes’ for a liberal nation through the construction of classes. Although the panorama was initially ‘constructed as a model for a topographical site at a particular time in history’, “the choice was highly symbolic”.¹⁹⁴ This is referred to issues of nationalism where people viewed panorama as a way of identifying themselves, looking at what their nations have achieved. Additionally, the panorama horizon's importance included the sense of promise lying just out of reach beyond the horizon, which is the symbolism of signs of development and infrastructures. Another symbolism attached to panoramas was the issue of nationalism as mentioned earlier. Earlier panoramas were also done after the wars, especially in Europe where in cases such as “the Crimean War and the U.S. Civil War, right up through the Boer War” were represented by at least a half dozen panoramas.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, panoramas thus became central to the emergent nationalisms of the nineteenth century. Where they were ‘duly encouraged and supported by the State, both through official sanctions and patronage, and by the endorsements of military figures’.

¹⁹² Oettermann. S, *The Panorama History of a Mass Medium* (Zone Books, New York, 1997). p14.

¹⁹³ Ibid. p19.

¹⁹⁴ Oettermann. S, *The Panorama History of a Mass Medium* (Zone Books, New York, 1997): p 21.

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/arthist/icono/rapotter/panoram.htm> by Stephan Oetterman. Zone Books, 1997 Translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider from, *Das Panorama: Die Gesichte eines Massenmediums* Frankfurt/M, Syndikat, 1980.

Making this point I want to argue that this is probably why the Namibian government opted to build their Heroes Acre at a site that gives a panoramic view of almost the whole of the Capital city. As the former Mayor of Windhoek Immanuel Ngatjizeko is reported to have had said at the time of the Heroes Acre's construction, "The central point will be a rocky hill, which stand 1 878 metres above sea level and commands an attractive view of the Windhoek Valley and the city".¹⁹⁶ Evidently the site gives an expansive view over the entire Windhoek, as the Heroes Acre is on a hillside. The reasons could be the same as those mentioned earlier, particularly the ones on nationalism, rendered according to the panorama's perceived significance, where as a whole gave each nation, each city, a visual means of apprehending what is most vital to itself. One should also remember that the Heroes Acre is also seen from the city as well, especially at night and as a reminder from a distance. A good example would be of a Namibian Politician by the name of Matjila, who comments on the location of the Heroes Acre, sayings "...a better place in Namibia could not have been selected: A hill overlooking the city of Windhoek". The dead "lying there in their graves, they can forever turn their eyes with pride towards downtown Windhoek and say: 'We set you free, Namibia!'"¹⁹⁷ Similarly, the era of colonialism and independence is presented at the Heroes Acre, the vast mural of all stages of the war and after which indicates what Namibia went through. These are all known through their panoramic representations at the site.

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.namibian.com.na>, January 28, 2000 "*Green light for Heroes' Acre*".

¹⁹⁷ Matjila A. *Namibia Review, A review of Policy and Development* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, information and Broadcasting, August 2002): pp 6.

However, the “Heroes Acre has other prominent features, which are the eternal flame¹⁹⁸ that burns for 24 hours, the Heroes medal, and the eight meter tall Unknown Soldier and the curved relief depicting the struggle and its capacity to hold 174 graves”.¹⁹⁹ At the time of its inauguration nine people were honoured, among them Mandume ya Ndemufayo. The people being honoured with symbolic graves are categorized as those who fought in early colonial resistance, and mostly traditional leaders (Kings and Chiefs). Mandume Ya Ndemufayo is one of those represented at the Heroes Acre in this particular category of early colonial resistors.

Representation of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo at the Heroes Acre.

During the Namibian Heroes Acre inauguration on August 26, 2002, nine symbolic graves were unveiled. These were the graves of the national heroes and heroines whose names were identified from the period of the Namibian’s resistance against early German and South African colonialism to the era of modern anti-colonial struggle. Amongst these people Mandume ya Ndemufayo is represented. He is represented as one of Namibia’s ‘foremost anti-colonial fighters’, who died fighting the colonial forces. The symbolic grave is being honoured to his ‘revolutionary spirit’ and his ‘visionary memory’. I believe the ‘visionary memory’ here means the way in which people remember him because of his ‘idealistic’ dreams and his bravery when he fought the colonial invaders. What is most important here is the way chosen to describe him, which is to memorialize his willingness to put his life on the line, and his determination to fight his colonial

¹⁹⁸ The former President of Namibia in his official inauguration speech of the Heroes Acre, said, ‘The eternal flame symbolises the light that illuminates the path towards a stronger, united and more prosperous Namibia’.

¹⁹⁹ Oettermann. S, *The Panorama History of a Mass Medium* (Zone Books, New York, 1997): p 9.

opponents. Therefore, he is depicted as someone who deserves recognition and respect for what he has done in resisting colonialism.

In emphasizing this point, Mandume with other anti-colonial fighters are considered national heroes as their resistance enabled the country Namibia to be where it is today. However, although they are all considered national heroes, there are ambiguities about each figure yet they are constructed this way. For example, I think Iipumbu ya Tshilongo is considered a lesser hero than Mandume ya Ndemufayo. This has cropped up in Kaulinge and Haufiku's joint interview where Kaulinge claimed, "Iipumbu may be a hero but surely he shouldn't be put on the same on the same category of Mandume as a hero. What important work did he do? We don't hear of Iipumbu's fights against the colonizers we only hear of Mandume's and others such as Hendrick Witbooi...".²⁰⁰ Therefore this clearly shows that there are ambiguities in the way these national heroes are viewed raising questions about how really are they constructed.

However Mandume's symbolic grave at the Heroes Acre needs to be analysed more closely. This is because I see it as a way of finally making Mandume's 'supposed grave' in Windhoek tangible. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Ovambo Campaign Memorial was inaugurated in 1919. It was originally erected in memory of the South African soldiers killed on February 6, 1917 near Oihole, where Mandume was also killed. However, after its installation, many Ovakwanyama claimed this monument as memorial to the King himself. This claim is based on a belief in oral tradition that says after the Kwanyama king's death his head was cut off and taken to Windhoek. In addition to this

²⁰⁰ Interview with Bishop Apollus Kaulinge and David Haufiku on the 26th January 2005. Rev. Apollus Kaulinge is the Late Vilho Kaulinge's son. He knows some background knowledge of King Mandume from his father who knew him.

popular belief, people believe that his head was buried under the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. As I argued in the previous chapter, the reason why the people believed Mandume's head was buried under this memorial was probably to reclaim a monumental space to commemorate Mandume. Meaning urbanized Ovambos were drawing on 'tradition' to mobilize some form of self-constituting unity, which they could present not only to the colonial authorities, but also to other emerging ethnic identities in Windhoek.²⁰¹ I argue again that Mandume's symbolic grave at the Heroes Acre serves to reclaim an important symbolic space and give birth to a new movement of making this belief concrete, tangible. By doing this, the belief becomes real, something that one can see. The whole notion of Mandume's symbolic grave gives an impression that he is reclaimed in the capital, Windhoek. I believe this acts as a connection with past forms of social (belief) authority that the colonised had despite the disruption that was caused by the colonisers at the time. I also argue that the fact that Namibia as a postcolonial state has begun to perform in a physical reoccupation of historical space such as the Heroes Acre, attests to the relative initiative to redraw boundaries of the capital city. Since the Capital city was relatively white-controlled, the current state government seems to want to redraw boundaries that include everyone irrespective of their backgrounds, races and cultures. And I believe this is done by having Mandume's grave in the city as it has always been believed although only symbolically.

It is also important to note and analyse the photographic engraving of Mandume ya Ndemufayo used on his symbolic grave [see figure: 7]. I know that there are other pictures of Mandume that are circulating around e.g. on T-shirts and in books, but I will

²⁰¹ Silvester.J, Wallace. M, Hayes. P, Hartmann. W. *Namibia under South African Rule, Mobility and containment*, (Ohio University Press, 1998): p 11.

just focus on the one that is on his grave at Heroes Acre. This is to give clarity on probably why they chose to use the particular photograph on his grave. The Namibians opted to use Mandume's face taken from a colonial photograph. This photograph was taken at the time when Mandume ya Ndemufayo signed a protection treaty with the British-South African representative, Colonel Pritchard in 1915 [see figure: 8]. Even though the Namibian government opted to use a colonial image they were supposed to use other photos of Mandume taken in a different setting, where Mandume seemed more in control of the situation. I am referring to photographs taken with Hahn (an Intelligence Officer) at King Mandume's residence in Oihole in 1916.²⁰² The specific one I am referring to here is in the book entitled *The Colonizing Camera* of King Mandume and the Intelligence Officer Hahn in 1916 [see figure: 9]. This photograph shows Mandume seated together with Hahn. However Hahn "is literally on the edge of his seat, tensed forward with his hands clenched".²⁰³ Mandume by contrast has relaxed, open (even graceful) hands and sits back at his ease.²⁰⁴ Thus Hahn's face shows grimly beneath his pith helmet, while Mandume's face, shaded by his hat, remains enigmatic.²⁰⁵ Therefore, I am arguing that they would have used a photograph like this one (if only the face was visible) where Mandume looked majestic. Hence since a new method has been established of transferring original images to different spaces / surfaces, it would be good to question if these images should be seen as real and reliable? It is widely known that photographs claim to have realist representation, and therefore it will be good to analyse

²⁰² Silvester, J., Hayes, P., Hartmann, W. *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the making of Namibian history*. (University of Cape Town Press, 1998): p 175.

²⁰³ Ibid. p 175.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p 175.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p 175.

this particular imprinted image (on granite) of Mandume on his symbolic grave at the Heroes Acre, with reference to the original photograph it is derived from.

The image on the grave is still very much similar to the original as it still black and white. This was due to the technique of transference to marble which is a method of engraving an image from the real photo. However, huge cropping has taken place because the scope and depth of image has changed. His face was brought closer (it is now a close-up image), unlike the in the original photograph. This has in the process slightly changed the features in the way that the cheeks, nose, mouth and chin are more defined. The eyes (which are not really noticeable, especially the left eye in the original) are more visible. In fact the whole face is visible and the expression clear, sharp. There is eye contact on the imprinted image, as his gaze is more focused and engaging while in the original his look was withdrawn and he was crouching. It is clear that his face is made more plump (made fleshy and soft) and lively than it was in the original image. This is because in the real picture his face appears a little taut and bony (I believe at the time they were just recovering from drought). However the quality of the colour in the imprinted picture is very poor, because the texture is lighter, less shaded as in the original. Meaning the whole image is much clearer than the original. The background is a little hazy, not clear like in the original image. His face is clarified and the backdrop made obscure, while the real photo is the other way round. I think this is done to draw attention to his face which is made clear.

One thing that I also noticed was the hat's brim. It looks smaller in the imprinted image while as it is actually bigger in the original. I believe the hat brim was made smaller to

lift the shadows on his features. And this has the effect of his face giving a note of bravery unlike in the original photograph. Another thing to consider here are the layers of selection. It is interesting to note that they opted to only include his face not the whole body. As a result the image is decontextualised; his position is changed from where it was in the original photograph. This led to the dehistorisation of the whole photograph because it was originally for the purpose of colonial representation. They probably opted to use the face only because if they have had include everything in the original image, then it wouldn't have been appropriate. The image wouldn't be having the same representation; it would also show the stage when Mandume was vulnerable. This is not what they want to present to the people. They want to show a defiant, strong brave Mandume and I believe the imprinted image serves that purpose.

Selection criteria of 'heroes and heroines' at the Heroes Acre.

The former president of Namibia claims, "in the process of establishing our Heroes Acre, I call on all Namibians to contribute to the national effort of honouring our heroes and heroines in this befitting manner. By proposing the names, and where possible, giving the details of heroic deeds for inclusion in the list of names those whose names will appear at the Heroes Acre now and in the future".²⁰⁶ Choosing heroes in this case was as said above a national process where everyone was expected to take part. However in the case of the early colonial resisters, Ipinge highlights "I think the people who were first honoured here, mostly the traditional leaders and chiefs from the old generation, it looked like a word go. It looks like the Namibian people agreed on a point of a national

²⁰⁶“ *Heroes Acre Inauguration speech of the president of Namibia*”. 26 August 2002, p 2.

consensus that Mandume is a hero, Jacob Marengo is a hero and others”. He further claims “I don’t think it would have been debatable to say Mandume is a hero or not”.²⁰⁷ This means that there is no debate that Mandume is a hero or not, as he is ‘perfect’, unquestionably a hero by virtue of his acts at the time of colonisation.

Therefore, in order to ensure that justice is done to all deserving national heroes and heroines, everyone is apparently invited to participate in the process of choosing a hero. I would argue that what is claimed to be the case in the choosing process does not really happen, as it is very difficult to take part. As indicated earlier, only certain people take part in the process of nation-building and only certain memories and people are presented as heroes unless whatever is presented serves the political agendas of those in power. National consensuses are rarely done on these issues, or maybe they are only done in the government offices. There is a lot of uncertainties about the selection criteria as according to a study done this year on memorialisation issues in Southern African countries it says, The director of the Namibian Monument Council, when asked about the criteria to be used to determine who should be buried at heroes' acre, replied: “I don't think I'm presently in the position to talk about these things. The issues you mentioned ... are all politically sensitive and ... I'm not the person to express myself on such issues”.²⁰⁸

This clearly indicates that there is a political climate that continues to be characterised by caution and silence. However, for the new people who are now being honoured or buried

²⁰⁷ Interview with Ipinge Pombili. Windhoek. 24 February 2005. He is the acting site manager and curator at the Heroes Acre in Namibia.

²⁰⁸ Memorialisation and Reconciliation in Transitional Southern African Societies. Research report written as a part of the Southern African Reconciliation Project by a group of social scientists from Zimbabwe. Research contributions were made by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and its partners in Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe, July 2005.

here, there is apparently a Heroes Acre committee at the office of the president. This committee receives submissions or declaration that puts forward names of heroes. It is done on regional, local, individual levels and it's then decided if that person should be declared a national hero.²⁰⁹ That committee will then rate the motivation of that person to be considered and then decide on the final verdict if that person should be declared a national hero or not.

It is a very difficult thing to do, and it is a very hard thing for the committee to make a decision on who is more of a hero and who is not. But there are various categories of rating heroes as people have personal heroes, national heroes and many others. We know it is very difficult to choose heroes and we only have to avoid saying somebody is not a hero as that will seem like we are not grateful for what that person has done for the country. However, heroes are not many in nature, which is probably why the Namibian Heroes Acre only has the capacity of 174 graves.²¹⁰ A good question would then be, if it were argued that the Heroes Acre is for all the heroes and heroines who died fighting for Namibian Liberation, will it be able to accommodate all of them with a limited number of graves? I don't think so, and that is what is so problematic concerning what qualifies those heroes and heroines that are already or still to be buried there.

This situation is similar to what is mentioned earlier in chapter 1, which covered Richard Werbner's work where he talked about the tensions created by memorial work for the elites. He argues that these tensions are arising because there are distinctions between the

²⁰⁹ Interview with Ipinge Pombili. Windhoek. 24 February 2005. He is the acting site manager and curator at the Heroes Acre in Namibia.

²¹⁰ Interview with Ipinge Pombili. Windhoek. 24 February 2005. He is the acting site manager and curator at the Heroes Acre in Namibia.

people and the masses. Not everyone who participated in the liberation struggle (and therefore arguably a hero) is going to be recognized at the Namibian Heroes Acre. That is why there is the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, even though most of the fighters killed are known. They are basically just condemned to anonymity. This has really got people questioning the 'hero identification' and on what it is based. One Namibian historian Vezera Bob Kandetu argues, "Maybe we need to have a nationally set standard and modus operandi for the identification and recognition of heroes...if we are to remain true to reconciliation and sensitive to the process of nation building".²¹¹ Meaning there should really be some transparency in the selection process to show how things work for people to understand what goes on with the identifications.

To address these issues, I am briefly going to do a comparative study of the Namibian Heroes Acre and the Zimbabwean Heroes Acre. The Zimbabwean Heroes Acre was created in and built by North Koreans in Warren Hills, west of Harare, in 1980; the Acre remains the most prestigious place for Zimbabweans to be buried.²¹² Annual rituals are held at the Acre, and in other shrines across the country every August 11, to mark Heroes Day. Similarly, like in the case of Namibia the Zimbabwean Heroes Acre is honouring the nationally distinguished heroes who sacrificed their lives for Zimbabwe to be liberated. These people are being honoured here for their unwavering support for the cause of freedom and justice for which they accepted and endured pain, suffering and brutality with fortitude. Werbner quoting a national monument's brochure says, the Zimbabweans "Heroes Acre is: an expression as well as a symbol of the indefatigable

²¹¹ Kandetu B V. *Namibia Review, A review of Policy and Development* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, information and Broadcasting, August 2002): p 9.

²¹² <http://business.zambezitimes.com/fulltxt.php?news=2094>.

collective will of Zimbabweans to be makers of their own history, and to be their own liberators by participating in the protracted, arduous and bitter struggle for self determination”. He further went on saying, “(Heroes Acre) arouses national consciousness, and forges national unity and identity... (it) is a symbol of the masses’ struggle for freedom that transcend(s) tribalism, ethnicism, regionalism and racism”.²¹³

However in this postcolonial state, heroes are graded from local to the provincial to the national, making sure that each hero is buried in an appropriate place within a graded order of Heroes Acres. Seemingly for both countries, heroes are categorized, which leads to some heroes being marginalized and neglected and unrecognized. There is a hierarchy in the way heroes are buried as they are categorized in levels from national, regional and local. The Zimbabwean situation has similarities with the Namibian way of selecting heroes, as the names of heroes go through some screening by a Heroes Acre committee at the President’s office, to be decided on if the person is really worth being identified as a hero or not. As for the layout of graves in Namibia, I am not certain if the graves are spatially organized in a hierarchical way, but similar to the Zimbabweans the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is on a higher level and below are the graves of the national heroes. At almost the bottom of the stairs are terraces laid out with 174 individual gravesites and at the official opening of the Heroes Acre nine of these graves were occupied (not with bodies but symbolically). As said earlier, these graves are the graves of early leaders of anti-colonial resistance. On the left of the stairway are new graves of Namibian heroes who were buried there recently and it is not clear if they too are laid out hierarchically. Here I am referring to the visual aspect of these graves because they are all the same. The

²¹³ Werbner, R. *Memory and the Postcolony* (Zed Books Ltd, London: 1998) p 77.

difference is only names and pictures engraving on these graves otherwise everything look similar. I argue that homogenization is taking place regarding the heroes because they are all uniform. These people all did different things and they are not memorialized the same way, but at this site they are all the same. The first real bodies to be buried there were of the retired head of the Namibian Defence Force and former PLAN commander, Dimo Hamaambo; Gertrud Kandanga-Hilukilwa, who was one of the founders of the Owambo People's Organisation (OPO) - the forerunner of Swapo - in 1959²¹⁴; and David Meroro was a member the first National Assembly from 1990 to 1995. One thing to consider here though, is that, Mandume's grave is empty as it is just symbolic but it is accorded the same importance.

Like it is indicated earlier in the first chapter, at the Zimbabwean Heroes Acre, the memorialisation process is centered strongly upon an inner circle with elite members, enshrined for their heroic dedication to the liberation cause. Although they claim that the chosen few buried at the two Heroes Acres are almost exclusively figures of the liberation struggle, it is not necessarily people who really fought or freedom fighters. But these could be people from within the inner circle of the state such as politicians and senior state officials. As said earlier, the graves are spatially organized in a hierarchical way, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is on a higher level and in front a catafalque, which is used when a hero is being buried. There is another catafalque, which is "still unused and apparently reserved for a head of state"²¹⁵. Still following Werbner, he describes the layout of the graves at the Heroes Acre saying, "In that foreground, on three semicircular terraces around the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, to the left and right,

²¹⁴<http://www.namibian.com.na/2003/January/national/03AB24A2B2.html>.

²¹⁵ Werbner, R. *Memory and the Postcolony* (Zed Books Ltd, London: 1998): pp 83.

are the graves of the nationally distinguished heroes”.²¹⁶ This evidently shows that there is some sort of hierarchy in the positional layout of heroes’ graves. Whereas a higher level is accorded to those elite heroes, who are seen as higher than others, ‘the masses’. As a result, especially in Zimbabwe “many war veterans insist on an unpaid debt to them, they are increasingly demanding that their special claims against the state be met, because of their contribution to the liberation struggle”. However at the time of Werbner’s writing where most of the information relating to this issue came from, the state was at that time making efforts to find the resources for the war veterans. During that time, the state offered and promised people redistribution of white owned commercial farms.

However, during the “Operation Discarding the Filth” which took place on the 19 May 2005 in Zimbabwe in some areas, groups of supposed ‘war veterans’ who had illegally occupied previously productive commercial farms with the encouragement and support of the Mugabe regime were ordered to vacate the farms three weeks after Operation Murambatsvina began.²¹⁷ Thus, the operation does not care whether you are for the ruling party or not... the war veterans are the hardest hit, as they were building illegal structures on unallocated land.²¹⁸ The police came, saluted the Zimbabwean flag at one war veteran's home, then removed the flag and proceeded to demolish.²¹⁹ Some of the war

²¹⁶ Ibid. pp 83-84.

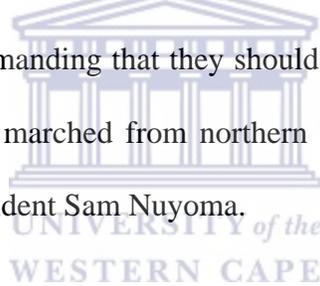
²¹⁷ http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2005/july/20/zimbabwe/ Embassy, July 20th, 2005. FEATURE By Archbishop Pius Ncube, Dr. Roger Bate, and Richard Tren.

²¹⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/4095252.stm Last Updated: Wednesday, 22 June, 2005, 18:53 GMT 19:53 UK.

²¹⁹ Ibid

veterans were even attacked during this operation, as they are considered too powerful. My point here is, even though war veterans sacrificed themselves for the liberation struggle, in postcolonial Zimbabwe many are cast aside and forgotten leaving them very unhappy with the postcolonial state and its policies.

Similarly the Namibian government is also faced with the same problem. Many war veterans (in 2000 or earlier) were very unhappy. They were complaining and were keen on questioning what the government was doing for them. Many war veterans were disabled as a result of the war. “A number of the group lost their sight or limbs, or sustained other injuries, during the liberation war”.²²⁰ They are however unable to work and get themselves integrated into their societies. There were cases of public protests made by these war veterans demanding that they should get compensation of N\$ 75 000 each. In early July 2000, they marched from northern Namibia to protest and demand their request from the then President Sam Nuyoma.



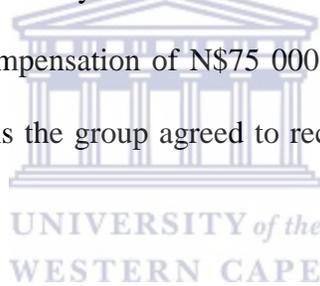
An article in the *The Namibian* newspaper in 2000 on this issue says, “more than 113 war victims and veterans who have for the past five days slept outside the Osona military base (a few kilometres from Windhoek) after the Police prevented them from proceeding to State House where they wanted to meet the President to discuss their demands for payouts of N\$75 000 each”.²²¹ The government was determined to keep this display of anger under wraps by preventing the protesting war veterans from going to State house. In response to this “some of the war veterans then removed their prosthetic legs and arms and told Shikerete (a Police Commissioner at the time) to take them to Swapo saying that

²²⁰ Inambao, C. “War vets gear for State House march”, *The Namibian*, Thursday, July 27, 2000.

²²¹ Inambao, C. “Grim struggle continues for blind ex-combatant” *The Namibian*, Thursday, July 13, 2000.

they will never wear them again”.²²² The “Technical Committee angered the war veterans by telling them that Government was not prepared to pay them the N\$75 000 which they wanted but that they would only receive the N\$500 monthly payment, backdated to April 1 (2000), State grant approved by Parliament”.²²³ They flatly refused the offer made to them and threatened to take their dispute with Government to court.

What angered them most was the fact that at the time some families of people being killed in the DRC were getting paid N\$250 000 each.²²⁴ They couldn’t understand why long-suffering victims of the liberation struggle should not be paid compensation. This was mostly because there seemed to have been an understanding between themselves and the former head of state. Apparently there were claims that “in 1997 the President pledged they would receive compensation of N\$75 000 each”.²²⁵ This however did not happen. After some negotiations the group agreed to receive a monthly N\$500 monthly payment.



It is important to note that although these protests cooled down some problems came up again after this agreement. The agreement was that everyone was supposed to receive N\$500 on the spot with the balance (N\$1 500) to be deposited into their savings accounts. This didn’t materialise because some of the people got their money and some didn’t. I believe in the end it worked out, as there were no more cases of this in the past four

²²² Angula, C. “Cops block war vets”, *The Namibian*, Friday, August 4, 2000.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ “Nujoma loath to meet ex-fighters”, *The Namibia* Wednesday, July 12, 2000.
<http://www.namibian.com.na/Netstories/2000/July/News/008E592CDA.html>

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

years. But this does not mean people are happy about their situation. However the government is still striving to please everyone especially war veterans. This is evident in what the former president said that, “The plight of ex-combatants, school leavers and disabled people are among the pressing problems receiving Government attention”.²²⁶ But it is not really clear how they were going to do it. However, the government made an offer to assist protesting war veterans and victims through the provision of jobs and other measures by employing the able-bodied among the veterans, while other assistance was offered to the elderly and the disabled.²²⁷

Another issue at the time of the Heroes Acre’s construction was as it is reported a “heated debate between SWAPO and Congress of Democrats (CoD)²²⁸ in the National Assembly”.²²⁹ Many people had questions about who would define the kind of hero to be buried or named at the Heroes Acre. They wondered if the Heroes Acre will be used to honour Namibia's major historical epochs or events and those who played major roles in major events, or it will be used to honour self-made heroes. “The opposition parties asked as to whether the naming of heroes should be “party-political” or left to an independent body, and this drew the response that “history will define whether you will be a hero or you will be considered as one who betrayed the cause” from the members of the ruling

²²⁶ Hamata, M. “President says resources must target marginalized”, The Namibian Wednesday, February 20, 2002.

²²⁷ “Offer for war vets on cards”, The Namibian, Wednesday, July 19, 2000.

²²⁸ COD is a Namibian official opposition party launched at the end of the Namibian first decade of independence (1999). It was founded on 23rd March 1999. Its main aim is the defense, maintenance, advancement and strengthening of the ideals and principles of a vibrant and functional multi-party democracy in the Namibian society and Africa at large. COD’s significance comes from the fact that largely former Swapo members have formed it. It is seen as a ‘new beginning’ as it is claimed to focus on hard current political issues and not on the anti-colonial liberation struggle.

²²⁹ <http://www.namibian.com.na/2001/May/news/01EE96EE11.html>, “*Heroes Acre on way to becoming reality*”, Tangeni Amupadhi.

party. I believe this statement refers to someone's role in the liberation struggle which was a movement (SWAPO) fighting for independence and democracy against an apartheid colonial regime and also to those who were tools in the hands of colonialist powers bent on reversing the achievements of the fight for independence. But it also refers to who defines 'history'. Tied to this is the question whether Ben Ulenga and others who split from SWAPO are considered less of Heroes who fought for the independence of the country? I think this is exactly what is meant by the statement above. This is evident when they (SWAPO members) were emphatic that the definition of a hero would not include "a political hitchhiker, a traitor, a defector or deserter". It means that anyone who is considered a traitor, defector or deserter would not be qualified to be one of those to be buried at the Heroes Acre. However, CoD President Ben Ulenga called for the building of a smaller site. He accused "living politicians" of budgeting for a monument and "burial site for themselves". The CoD considers the idea as 'unaffordable megalomania'. In response Swapo argued that people do not need to die to be heroes.²³⁰

One can conclude the Namibian situation is similar to that of the Zimbabweans, as they are operating in almost similar ways. I believe both Acres stand for nation building and unity. By this I mean that the Heroes Acres are both highlighting phases that the countries went through from the early colonial subjugation to their respective independences. The ultimate purpose of these Heroes Acres is probably to put what happened in the past behind everything and strive / concentrate on overcoming all their people's differences and unite as one. This is evident in what people wish for or strive for in both countries, which is representing everybody as one nation. However unity is under a certain

²³⁰ Amupadhi T. "Heroes Acre on way to becoming reality", The Namibian , Friday, May 11, 2001.

hierarchy and prevents dissidence and opposition. This is because the ruling party government preaches national unity to stop people from questioning its other agendas saying they oppose unity. Thus postcolonial states use national heroes as opportunities to bring about unity and harmony among its people, while at the same time there are hidden agendas that are difficult to question.



Chapter 5

Mandume's memorials in Angola

Introduction

This chapter will explore Mandume ya Ndemufayo's memorials in Angola. He is remembered in Angola in many ways, and has several memorials that are distributed in the southern areas and the capital city Luanda. His recently erected monument called the Oihole Shrine will be covered here. Its construction and the annual commemoration that takes place at this site will also be looked at in detail. The other memorials (referring to his unmarked grave) that existed prior to the newly erected monument in memory of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo at Oihole in southern Angola on 6 February 2002 will be highlighted. This chapter will also examine if there used to be commemorations and rituals at the respective sites. Thereafter, this chapter will focus on the construction of the nationalist icon, which is Mandume, looking specifically at why postcolonial countries like Angola and Namibia need nationalist icons and policies? The chapter concludes with a discussion about the problematics of nationalism and memorialisation.

Historical background of Angola

Angolan political history will be discussed here at length, to give an understanding of the history and politics that influence present-day Angola. This will seek to indicate why Mandume Ya Ndemufayo is considered a nationalist hero and what this is serving. Angola is a sprawling country roughly square in shape that stretches inland from the south-western Atlantic coast of Africa and is bordered by Zaire (present DRC), Zambia and Namibia.²³¹ The Portuguese explorer Diego Cao encountered Angola for the first

²³¹ WS van der Waals. *Portugal's War in Angola 1961-1974*, (Ashanti Publishing (Pty) Ltd 1993): p1.

time in 1482, when he reached the mouth of Congo River. Henceforth the penetration and trade of Angola by the Portuguese began. This early interaction was based on good relations between Portugal and the rulers of the Congo kingdom. Initially, Angola was considered an excellent source of slaves for the Portuguese colony in Brazil and other small Portuguese colonies. The full Portuguese authority over the whole of Angola came after the scramble for Africa by colonial powers (at the Berlin Conference). It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that Angola was generally recognised as part of Portugal's colonial empire.²³² However Portugal was faced by the need to subjugate the independent kingdoms of the interior. The period after the Berlin Conference, Angola was marked by progressive military action. This military action was directed mainly against the Kwanyama in south Angola, the Ovimbundu in central highlands and the Dembo tribes in northeast Luanda.²³³ Skirmishes took place over a number of years and it was not until 1919 that these kingdoms were truly subdued.

Angolan resistance to Portuguese rule has a long history dating back to the nineteenth century. Three principal nationalist movements took shape in Angola in the 1950s and 1960s, sinking roots among different ethno-linguistic groups. The Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) dates the start of its liberation war to an attack on prisons in Luanda in February 1961.²³⁴ The movement was almost wiped out in the capital, but then led a small guerrilla campaign in the Dembos forests, to the north of Luanda.²³⁵ Most of its leaders either were detained by the Portuguese or went abroad, to organise

²³² Ibid. p 24.

²³³ Ibid. p 25.

²³⁴ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): p 7.

²³⁵ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): p 7.

guerrilla incursions from across the country's borders. Until the Portuguese Revolution in April 1974, the MPLA had little direct contact with its Mbundu heartland.²³⁶ Led by Agostino Neto from 1962 onwards, the MPLA was heavily influenced by Marxist ideas although it was nominally a broad-based nationalist movement.²³⁷ This was an elitist group with leadership drawn in the main from the small, educated and multi-racial urban population of Luanda. It grew from a Luanda milieu (the Kimbundu-speaking population) since its creation in 1956. It received arms and diplomatic assistance from the USSR and the other Soviet bloc countries from the 1960s.²³⁸

The other main group was the União das Populações de Angola (UPA). Its rebellion also started in 1961 based in Kinshasa. Afterwards the UPA set up a national 'front', known as the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) and a 'revolutionary government in exile', GRAE, in 1962.²³⁹ Headed by Holden Roberto the FNLA continued to wage a low-key guerrilla war in northwestern Angola, backed up from bases in Zaire, where it enjoyed the support of the former dictator Mobutu Seseseko.²⁴⁰ The FNLA relied primarily on Kikongo-speaking northern Angola and on exiles in the former Belgian Congo.²⁴¹ The União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) came into being in 1966 after Jonas Savimbi split from the FNLA in 1964. It had very little external support and concentrated on building up an underground political movement

²³⁶ Ibid. p 7.

²³⁷ Ibid. p 7.

²³⁸ Ibid. p 7.

²³⁹ Ibid. pp 7-8.

²⁴⁰ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004). p 8.

²⁴¹ Minter, W. *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): pp 17-18.

among the Ovimbundu, who despite constituting Angola's largest ethnic group had not been mobilised to any significant extent by either the MPLA or the FNLA.²⁴²

However, these groups were based on different streams of nationalism, which resulted in divisions. Even during the war against Portugal, the leadership of the three main Angolan movements proved unable to mount a united front, and at times fought each other. This seriously weakened the anti-colonial movement, which by the early 1970s was little more than a minor irritant to the Portuguese.²⁴³ Therefore disunity and geographical manoeuvring undermined prospects for a sustained guerrilla offensive against Portuguese rule.²⁴⁴ But other Portuguese colonies African wars (during the early 1970s) including fierce nationalist struggles in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau were draining Portugal's resources. By 1974 the Portuguese had lost 11,000 military personnel in Africa. On April 25, 1974, a group of disillusioned military officers, led by the former governor and commander in Guinea-Bissau, General António de Spínola, overthrew the Lisbon government in the *coup d'état* in Lisbon on the 1 April 1974.²⁴⁵ However, it was the success of the liberation movements in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and not Angola that eventually brought about the downfall of the Salazarist regime of Marcello Caetano thereby paving the way for the independence of all five Portuguese African colonies.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): p 8.

²⁴³ Ibid. p 8.

²⁴⁴ Minter, W. *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): pp 17-18.

²⁴⁵ Abshire, David M., and Michael A. Samuels (eds.). "The Continuing Crisis in Angola," *Current History*, 82 (No. 482, March 1983,): 124-25, 128, 138.

²⁴⁶ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): p 8.

This means that the Angolan's armed struggle by the different parties was not the cause and effect of Angolan independence.

When the transition to independence began, following the Alvor Accord between Portugal and the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA in January 1975, the nationalist movements quickly proved unable to work together.²⁴⁷ Instead they embarked on a desperate race to achieve supremacy before the scheduled date for independence in November of the same year. This conflict was exacerbated by external intervention, which was motivated by competition to control Angola's oil or other natural resources, by the geo-political rivalries of the Cold War and by South Africa's determination to weaken Angola's ability to aid nationalists in the South African-ruled Namibia to the south.²⁴⁸ Thereafter South Africa aiding UNITA and the FNLA invaded southern Angola in August 1975 and by October, had advanced more than half way up the Angolan coast to about 400 km from Luanda.²⁴⁹ The Zairean army invaded in the north, in support of FNLA.²⁵⁰ The United States meanwhile provided covert support to both UNITA and the FNLA, to counter-balance Soviet military assistance to the MPLA.²⁵¹ In response to the South African invasion Cuba sent thousands of ground troops to Angola from October 1975.²⁵² This ensured that, when the independence was formally declared in November, the MPLA was in control of the capital and appointed its leader Agostino Neto as president.²⁵³

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p 9.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p 8.

²⁴⁹ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): pp 8-9.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p 9.

²⁵¹ Ibid. p 9.

²⁵² Ibid. p 9.

²⁵³ Ibid. p 9.

However post-independent Angola faced serious structural weaknesses; some left by colonialism others inherent in the divided nationalist legacy.²⁵⁴ The FNLA became increasingly ineffective in the north in the late 1970s and subsequently suffered further setbacks when the Mobutu regime in Zaire established more cordial relations with the MPLA government in 1978-79.²⁵⁵ In contrast UNITA was able to reorganise itself after its defeats. By the early 1980s, UNITA forces were entrenched in rural areas across much of southern and central Angola.²⁵⁶ UNITA, unable to gain more than nominal support from China, turned to South Africa. MacAttila Andrew asserts, “South African’s targets and objectives of the various security operations conducted in Angola by their security forces were two-fold”.²⁵⁷ Firstly, the former government South Africa’s considered the possibility of the (MPLA) taking power in Angola as a threat, because it was viewed as a Soviet surrogate.²⁵⁸ The introduction of Cuban forces into Angola in support of the MPLA simply confirmed that view. As indicated earlier, the South African government’s initial objective, therefore, was to prevent the MPLA from taking power at independence. When this failed, the goal became its overthrow and replacement by a ‘friendly’ anti-Communist government led by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Secondly, the movement of the forces of the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) into bases in Angola was regarded as escalating the threat to South Africa’s position in South West Africa. Aware that it would ultimately have to implement UN Resolution 435, the South African government was determined to weaken

²⁵⁴ Minter, W. *Apartheid’s Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): p 24.

²⁵⁵ Hodges, T. *African Issues, Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 2nd Edition 2004): pp 9-10.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p 10.

²⁵⁷ http://www.macatilla.net/War_vol_2_chapter_2.htm, By MacAttila Andrew, 2002, Accessed 23 October 2005.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

or cripple SWAPO's military capacity in preparation for the time when SWAPO would enter the electoral stakes inside South West Africa.²⁵⁹

However, South Africa's active involvement in Angolan politics after the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule escalated with the SADF's invasion of Angola, through Operation Savannah, in the second half of 1975.²⁶⁰ Though the operation was undertaken with the covert support of the US State Department, this undeclared act of war did not receive the approval of the South African cabinet. As indicated earlier, the SADF's intervention failed to prevent the MPLA from taking power at independence in November 1975, which led to the withdrawal of SADF forces in March 1976. However, South African military and political involvement in Angolan affairs continued for the next thirteen years, with human and other consequences of varying degrees of severity for all the parties involved. These were the Angolan people, South West Africans (Namibians), South Africans, Cubans and Soviet forces. South Africa's forces were not entirely withdrawn; the SADF created an eighteen-kilometre-wide demilitarised zone (DMZ) along a 1 000 kilometre stretch of the border, which it retained after the termination of the invasion. By creating a 'free-fire' zone, the SADF effected further large-scale displacement of people, this time of residents from both sides of the border.²⁶¹ Between 1976 and 1978, the SADF's strategy in respect of Angola focused on establishing a string of bases along the border, on rearming and strengthening UNITA's fighting capacity through the launch of Operation Silver and on preventing SWAPO

²⁵⁹ http://www.macatilla.net/War_vol_2_chapter_2.htm, By MacAttila Andrew, 2002, Accessed 23 October 2005.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ http://www.macatilla.net/War_vol_2_chapter_2.htm, By MacAttila Andrew, 2002, Accessed 23 October 2005.

from moving south. This it did by deploying the 32 Battalion in frequent forays against SWAPO in the south of Angola.

Despite all these obstacles, by as early as 1976 the MPLA had gained control of most of the country. When Neto died in 1979, José Eduardo Dos Santos succeeded him as president. Afterwards, civil war began in Angola, with the ruling party MPLA fighting against the rebels UNITA. Civilian and military casualties of the Angolan people were considerable in addition to the known extent of damage to the social infrastructure and thousands of people were displaced internally. In May 1991, a cease-fire was implemented between the ruling MPLA and UNITA with remarkably few violent breaches.²⁶² UNITA and the MPLA government agreed to make Angola a multiparty state. However, when dos Santos won UN-supervised elections held in September 1992, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi charged fraud and refused to accept the results. In November 1992, further bitter fighting broke out between rebel UNITA troops and government forces, destroying many cities and much of the country's infrastructure. In November 1994, with UNITA on the verge of defeat, Dos Santos and Savimbi signed the Lusaka protocol, a new agreement on ending the conflict. The two sides committed themselves to the integration of several thousand UNITA troops into the government armed forces as well as the demobilization of thousands more from both sides. UN peacekeeping troops began arriving in June 1995, to supervise the process. Troop integration, however, was suspended in 1996, and UNITA's demobilization efforts lagged.

²⁶² Minter, W. *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): p 54.

A new government of national unity was formed in 1997, including several UNITA deputies. However, Savimbi declined a vice presidency. With renewed fighting in 1998, Angola's ruling MPLA put the country's coalition government on hold, saying that UNITA had failed to meet its peace-treaty obligations. Fighting continued, resulting in the death of Savimbi in battle in 2002. This was a severe blow to the rebels, who subsequently signed a cease-fire agreement. As many as one million people have died in the fighting since 1975, and the country's infrastructure has yet to recover from the effects of the warfare.²⁶³ Many believe that Jonas Savimbi was the principal driving force behind the war and since his death in 2002 peace has been prevailing and reconstructions are taking place.

Mandume ya Ndemufayo's memorials in Angola

This section contextualizes southern Angola and the Kwanyama speakers in that area, and analyses their role and involvement in the politics discussed above. This will assist in analyzing the nature of the violence suffered by the victims of government and UNITA forces. It will also show how the history outlined above mark the area of the Kwanyama speakers and why it is important. Generally, most parts of Angola were affected by the civil war that raged for more than thirty years. Southern Angola was one of them as it was the "Operation Zone" where battles between UNITA, FNLA and SWAPO took place. As indicated earlier, South Africa occupied much of Kunene province continuously from 1981 to 1984, simultaneously assisting UNITA in the southeast. UNITA and SWAPO were initially politically aligned as both had strong support in

²⁶³ http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/section/angola_history.asp, Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth Edition, Copyright (c) 2005.

Kwanyama-speaking areas in Namibia and Angola.²⁶⁴ Some of these people were kept in the brutal grip of UNITA forces, compelled to work for them while government forces gradually displaced others either on voluntary or involuntary basis, meaning by force. Here the aims of both UNITA and FAPLA/MPLA forces were to deprive each other of human and logistical support.

Basically southern Angola was a UNITA-controlled area especially the southeastern Kuando-Kubango province. For the ethnic groups that resided there, the Ovambo tended to align themselves with the Ovimbundu-dominated UNITA especially in the nationalist struggle of the 1960s and early 1970s and in the post independence civil war.²⁶⁵

However, “Many people from the border area privately supported the Angolan government rather than the FNLA or UNITA, but had no choice but to make their peace with the South African-sponsored groups” (UNITA and FNLA).²⁶⁶ From 1976 to 1984, many Kwanyamas under their traditional leader António Vakulukuta participated in UNITA on a voluntary basis.²⁶⁷ It was only after the conflict between Savimbi and Vakulukuta (which resulted in Vakulukuta’s death) that led to the reduction of this participation. UNITA was apparently considered a ‘natural movement for southerners’.²⁶⁸

Thus, people joined because it was their group and they identified with it. Because UNITA fighters were operating in alliance with SWAPO in the 1960s, activists sent to

²⁶⁴ <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No86/Chap2.htm> Grobler J Chapter 2 Namibia (Published in Monograph No 86, September 2003) edited by Peter Gastrow.

²⁶⁵ <http://www.embangola-can.org/kwanyama.html>, “Kwanyama, Ovambo, Nyaneka-Humbe”, 1998 Angolan Embassy in Canada, Last modified: 11/19/04

²⁶⁶ Minter, W. *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): p 81

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p 220.

²⁶⁸ Minter, W. *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (Zed Books London and New Jersey, Witwatersrand University press 1994): p 81

the UNITA office in Kunene began spreading talk of 'Ovambo Unity'. South African propaganda in Namibia echoed the UNITA talk, calling for a 'greater Ovambo Bantustan' to embrace the Angolan Kwanyamas.²⁶⁹ This helps to understand why the MPLA government made Kunene a national priority area for reconstruction.

This was in the same area of the Kwanyama speakers, where king Mandume ya Ndemufayo had ruled and fought the colonial forces to defend his kingdom in Ondjiva (in southern Angola) which was finally conquered by the Portuguese. And since Mandume is considered as a hero in this postcolonial country, the MPLA led government deemed it necessary to honour him through the erection of a monument. This is regardless to the fact that Mandume was a king for the Kwanyama speaking people who some of them during the liberation and civil war teamed up with UNITA. Therefore he is regarded as a hero due to his bravery shown during the colonial era. For some years, with the pressing need to recognize and identify heroes, king Mandume ya Ndemufayo has been actively inserted in the new national memorial landscape in Angola. There are schools, places, roads and even people who are named after him. To pin point places, streets and roads named after him I would start with a college in Lubango. It used to be called Collegio Diego Cão (named after the Portuguese explorer), but was later named Mandume Ya Ndemufayo after Angola gained independence in 1975. Nangonya claims that during the colonial era this school was for whites only but immediately after independence this changed.²⁷⁰ Another memorial, in Luanda, the capital city of Angola, is a main street named after Mandume. However the most recent memorial, is the Mandume ya Ndemufayo road, named during the official opening of Oihole in 2002 February 6. This

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p 11.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek , 10 January 2005.

road starts from Ondjiva (the main town of Kunene region) to the *Oukwanyama-Ondonga* borders in Namibia. According to Nangonya, he says the Angolan government decided to name this road Mandume Ya Ndemufayo road.²⁷¹ Furthermore he claims that the Angolan government informed or agreed with the Namibian government to name the road after Mandume up to the above-mentioned point in Namibia called *Omwandi wonhala*.²⁷² Again according to many other people interviewed in southern Angola, they claim that there are many memorials honouring Mandume in different parts of Angola. Apart from the mentioned physical memorial that exists, there are also people who are named or named themselves after Mandume. This was mostly found during the time of liberation struggles in movements such as Swapo PLAN and MPLA, where commanders and fighters would name themselves Mandume.²⁷³ It was believed that if one names himself after this particular courageous king, then the fighting would be worth it.²⁷⁴ He was and still is an inspirational figure to many people, perceived as possessing courage and bravery. These perceptions are communicated through oral history. People like the late Reverend Kaulinge and Nangonya propagated these stories where certain issues such as bravery are highlighted. This is because Kaulinge and Nangonya's father were present in Oukwanyama when the actual events (of Mandume's fighting and his death) took place.

²⁷¹ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

²⁷² Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

²⁷³ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

²⁷⁴ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

However, most importantly there is a monument dedicated to, and in honour of the memory of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo in Oihole, southern Angola. It was inaugurated in February 6, 2002. Still following Nangonya in his account, he claims, “Before this new commemoration, there used to be some sort of commemoration at Mandume’s grave, which was done annually, on the 6th of February. Even the Portuguese used to attend this commemoration, by joining in the festivities as people slaughtered cattle and prepared drinks. Besides the festivities, people also used to shoot their guns during this day, around Mandume’s grave. Soldiers who felt like firing their guns, after Angola got independence usually did this. Anyone would just go to Oihole and fire his/her gun in Mandume’s memory. The area around Mandume’s grave was considered sacred, but people were allowed to fire their guns freely. Even when they are found doing it there, nobody would bother them, they would simply say they are greeting the king and they will be left alone”.²⁷⁵ This is to emphasize that what goes on today or merely the ongoing commemorations did not just start now, they were there long before. These practices come from the fact that during happy or sad occasions it is common to hear gunfire. This is an indication to whoever is at the focus of such an event. Thus, I believe the fact that traditionally during events such as these guns are fired, this is the origin of such practices that take place here.

The Oihole Shrine

The Oihole Shrine is a name given to the memorial or monument to king Mandume ya Ndemufayo. Its conception and development is described and illustrated below. The anthropologist Ana Maria de Oliveira, who was also responsible for the coordination of

²⁷⁵ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

the project and its symbolic conception, drew up the philosophic-anthropological conception.²⁷⁶ The initial model of the make up was constructed by the Architect Jorge Cruz (Angola). Furthermore, the definitive model of the make up on the basis of initial draft was elaborated in the studio of the Architect Axel Dainat. The construction of the workmanship was the position of the "WML/Consulting Engineers."²⁷⁷ Since at the time Ana Maria was a member of parliament, she convinced the Angolan government that a man of good deeds like Mandume should be honoured.²⁷⁸ The government agreed, funds and materials were collected and made available. In response to these ideas, the Angolan President (Dr Eduardo Jose Dos Santos) was quoted saying during his visit to Ondjiva in 1997, "...we are the descendents of Mandume, from Queen Njinga and of the other distinct kings of this good people which never bent, fought until death for our liberation...why not a statue of Mandume".²⁷⁹ Njinga was a queen by the name of Njinga Mbandi Ana de Sousa (1582? -1663), who became famous in Angola and far beyond. Because of dissension among the Europeans at the time, the Dutch were encroaching on Portugal's share of the slave trade and this created an opportunity for Njinga where she established a strategic alliance with the Dutch, pitting them against the Portuguese.²⁸⁰ Therefore, it is believed that during the short time of Dutch occupation of Angola (1641-1648) Njinga was a dangerous opponent of the both Dutch and Portuguese. After the Portuguese routed the Dutch, Njinga retreated to the hills of Matamba, where she

²⁷⁶ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August to 11 September 2005

²⁷⁷ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August to 11 September 2005

²⁷⁸ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

²⁷⁹ Ministério das Obras Públicas e Urbanismo. *Memorial ao rei Mandume*. (Multi services Printers, Windhoek, NAMIBIA, February 2001): p2, Translated by Humberto Saeze.

²⁸⁰ <http://www.embangola-can.org/nzinga.html>, Queen Nzinga a Mbande - 1582-1663/1998 Angolan Embassy in Canada, Last modified: 08/15/04.

established a formidable resistance movement against the Portuguese regime. Njinga is one of the most important resistance figures in the Angolan history and was an unusual personality. In recent time she has been developed as a national symbol figure of African resistance against colonial rule.²⁸¹ I think this was done in response to processes of symbol-making which has taken place in many postcolonial countries including Angola. De Oliveira claims that Queen Njinga Mbandi was a traditional Leader, and is seen as a heroine of resistance in the Kingdom of the Matamba /Sec.XVIII.²⁸² Hence like Mandume ya Ndemufayo, she is considered a hero in Angola and a monument has been built in her honour.²⁸³

The Angolan president's statement cited above serves to clearly show that many people especially senior state officials felt it was needed for Mandume to be remembered for his bravery. People who knew Mandume or had heard stories about him were called to come forward to give the Oukwanyama history. Nangonya further highlights that when the people with the Kwanyama history came together, they discussed what the memorial should be like, where should it be put and so forth.²⁸⁴ This monument work is the first work in the Kunene province in honour of a king, in this case King Mandume, as there are many other important figures in the province that participated in the resistance of the

²⁸¹ botschaftangola.de/content.php?nav=ueber_angola/kunst_kultur/ndongo, by Dr. Beatrix Heintze, ehemalige Mitarbeiterin des Frobenius-Institutes, Frankfurt.

²⁸² Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August to 11 September 2005.

²⁸³ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August to 11 September 2005.

²⁸⁴ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

colonial occupation. An example of one specific figure was King Sheetekela²⁸⁵ of the Ombadja kingdom, who was subjugated by the Portuguese.

The monument to king Mandume ya Ndemufayo is “an architectural complex of the beautiful aesthetic”.²⁸⁶ It is argued that the monument remembers the traditional housing of the Kwanyama people being associated to other complementary elements that borrows from the original beauty and function adapted to the modern times. I do not agree, and will argue that this monument is not simply commemorating Mandume and the Kwanyama tradition but I believe it also serves to endorse a particular MPLA government position based on legitimising vested political interest [see figure: 10 and 16]. Here, Mandume’s recognition is used to shift the psychology of the majority people living in the Kunene province so that the ruling government will gain support rather than UNITA during the civil war. However, in the new context of peace and reconstruction, this monument is considered as development for the Kunene province as it is destined to become a tourist attraction and that brings money.

This monument is located in Oihole- Namacunde area where the king was buried, the grave having been provisionally constructed in the traditional way, as *ompampa*. It is important here to analyse and briefly give a description of the *ompampa* and how it works. In the Ovambo tradition, there were certain rituals and rites that were practiced (some are still practiced). Some of these rites were burial rites. In the past, before the introduction of Christianity by missionaries, Ovambo burial rites reflected a notion of

²⁸⁵ King Sheetekela was a King for the Greater Ombadja. When he lost to the Portuguese in battle at Mufilo in September 1907, he fled to Oukwanyama where he became a headmen under King Mandume. He fought together with Mandume against the Portuguese.

²⁸⁶ Ministério das Obras Públicas e Urbanismo. *Memorial ao rei Mandume*. (Multi services Printers, Windhoek, NAMIBIA, February 2001): p 32. Translated by Humberto Saeze.

transition. Whenever someone dies “the corpse (*oshimhu*), naked and anointed with red *olukula* grease, is placed in the grave in a foetal position with the head turned to face the east; now he or she is ready for ‘rebirth’ into the realm of the spirits”.²⁸⁷ Graves of dead people were normally ‘located within the confines of the *eumbo*’, with the exact position being determined by the deceased’s age, social status and gender. Thus, for example, the householder (usually male) is buried in either the main cattle pen or the hearth area of the main meeting place (*olupale*), depending on his clan. His body is also wrapped in a pure black cattle skin. Graves of adolescent males are located in the cattle enclosures, and those of babies and very small children in the sleeping huts of their mother.²⁸⁸ This was because “Ovambo considered that both their cattle and their land were the heritage from their ancestors, who in their view were able to influence rainfall”.²⁸⁹

As for the kings in this case the “circumcised kings of Ukwanyama were always buried within a dense grove of trees, near the *ombala* (royal residence), which was regarded as sacred”.²⁹⁰ Proper burial is absolutely vital to the successful transformation of a person

²⁸⁷

http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:Rr2DHqNaqsJ:lucy.ukc.ac.uk/csacpub/Davies_thesis/chap3.pdf+ompampa&hl=en, Accessed on the 15 August 2005.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Hayes, P. “A history of the Ovambo of Namibia”, c 1800-1935 (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 1992): p 62.

²⁹⁰

http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:Rr2DHqNaqsJ:lucy.ukc.ac.uk/csacpub/Davies_thesis/chap3.pdf+ompampa&hl=en, Accessed on the 15 August 2005.

²⁹⁰http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:Rr2DHqNaqsJ:lucy.ukc.ac.uk/csacpub/Davies_thesis/chap3.pdf+ompampa&hl=en, Accessed on the 15 August 2005

²⁹⁰http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:Rr2DHqNaqsJ:lucy.ukc.ac.uk/csacpub/Davies_thesis/chap3.pdf+ompampa&hl=en, Accessed on the 15 August 2005

²⁹⁰ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August 2005 and 11th September 2005.

into an *omukwamungu* (essentially benevolent spirit).²⁹¹ King Mandume ya Ndemufayo's traditional grave was made of a palisade structure before the present monument was constructed. It was a pyramid-like mopane pole structure propped up by stakes, called *ompampa* [see figure: 12]. It is however in this way that this monument restores the dignity of the king's grave and simultaneously gives a possibility for visitors to know the history of Mandume.

The construction process

Ana Maria de Oliveira in her account explains, "The idea of the construction of the Memorial to king Mandume ya Ndemufayo, results from the application of the cultural politics of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Angola (1993), for the rescue of the memory of the figures of its old and recent History".²⁹² Since 1993, Ana Maria de Oliveira made visits to Oihole locals to take notes, reports, photographs, and conduct interviews with families, and local traditional authorities to acquire information to guide in the construction of the monument. The President of the republic of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos tried to meet the greater needs of the population by understanding and giving priority to the materialization of the dream of the Kunene province and of the country in general. According to de Oliveira, this was fulfilled through dignifying the grave of one of the figures more captivating in the history of Angola, Mandume ya Ndemufayo.²⁹³ Initially, the project was only limited to the improvement of the grave.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, from the 15th August 2005 and 11th September 2005.

²⁹³ Ministério das Obras Públicas e Urbanismo. *Memorial ao rei Mandume*. (Multi services Printers, Windhoek, NAMIBIA, February 2001): p 6 Translated by Humberto Saeze.

But with the intense research that went on and the request of the population as well as the local government, amplified the initial idea to a bigger complex. The work was permanently accompanied and supervised by the Kunene province government, assisted by the local traditional authorities and specialist technicians from the Ministry of Public Works and Urbanism of different disciplines.²⁹⁴

It is argued that this ‘work has specific characteristics which may be used as tools for others which eventually may come to be built in future to honouring other national heroes or with other objectives’.²⁹⁵ I don’t think this is true because this particular monument has been constructed based on the Kwanyama values and these values are different from other groups. How can the same characteristics of this monument be used as tools for other monuments honouring different groups of people? Which tools are being referred to here anyway? The whole architecture concerning the grave consists of three circular levels, which allegedly represent the three powers, political, administration and executive united by a ring which symbolized the union of the Kwanyama people,²⁹⁶ [see figure: 13]. Nangonya added to this by highlighting that, “the ring symbolizes the union between Ovakwanyama people from both sides (Namibia and Angola) and their strength”.²⁹⁷ However, it is important here, when discussing symbolic artifacts, to highlight the relevance and meaning of the *Omufiati* leaf. This leaf is said to have relations with funeral ceremonies or the intervention of the Kwanyama people’s daily lives. Thus, it is important here to analyze this and see if this leaf is being blown out of proportion or is it

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p 6.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p 6.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. p7.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

really the way that people are making it out to be. Therefore the significance of this leaf is looked at in more detail.

Significance of the *Omufiati* Leaf

The historical references prove the importance of this vegetal element on the Kwanyama community imaginary. The *Omufiati* leaf has since the conception of the monument, assumed an important role. Nangonya explained that the *omufiati* leaves are very important: "...in those years, especially in cases when an elephant dies, people have to put branches and leaves at the site from the *omufiati* as custom".²⁹⁸ He further explains, "Another thing is that whenever there was '*oudano weengobe*' (cattle herding/shows) the firewood that are used should be from *omufiati*. But before, the monument was constructed; Mandume's grave was always covered in branches and leaves from *omufiati*. I think this is because the *omufiati* leaf is considered a Kwanyama emblem that these people identify with especially important people such as kings. It was a common practice by all people passing Mandume's grave. Because whenever someone passed it, she/he had to stop and lay a branch from *omufiati* in respect of the king".²⁹⁹ That was probably the reason why they decided to construct the monument in the shape of these leaves.

Nangonya further states, "...It was only appropriate to use *omufiati* leaves as when the king died he was not baptized, so we could not use a cross. We also decided that we couldn't put the *omushii* (pounding stick) as it was traditionally done in Oukwanyama, because it is a memorial".³⁰⁰ The *omushii* was usually used as a marker of a Kwanyama person's grave as it was considered strong and can withstand termites. The leaf and its

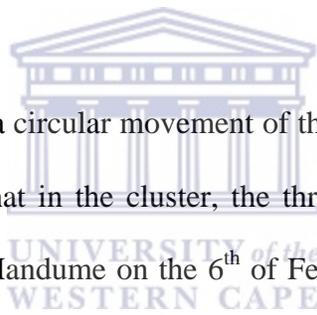
²⁹⁸ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

stem perform symbolic functions in other daily situations of the Kwanyama people, and so it is also used in commemorations when people visit graves where they deposited the remains of their dead, especially the kings.

The structure of the monument has the symbolic explanation based on primary and secondary information collected and also oral tradition. The symbolic explanation here refers to what is said earlier about this leaf being the emblem for the Kwanyama speaking people. This information was gathered from the oral accounts that were collected from the locals who know these issues. This is due to the fact that it is composed of differentiated elements that show its symbolism and each has been attributed to specific meanings discussed below.



The three leaves, which are on a circular movement of the monument site, have a distinct spatial distribution. Meaning that in the cluster, the three leaves mean the three of the warriors who died with King Mandume on the 6th of February 1917. These warriors are put in order of importance from leaf one to three; Shihapu sha Weyulu, Shikololo Shongoya and Uhela. The three *omufiati* leaves, which are highlighted in the interior were constructed with a strong metallic structure and filled in their interior with concrete. The thickness of each leaf and concrete is 0.20m, and of the ring is of 0.15m. In the right hand side of the frontal leaf, are printed two preferred sentences of King Mandume in 1916, with high patriotic meaning, historical and cultural as well as a fixed photograph of the king. However, it is important here to analyze if this is a construction of tradition or not. I suppose for a given set of symbols and practices such as those that take place at this place to be called tradition; they must have existed for long. I believe knowledge of his

reign together with his famous statements existed since early 20th century and they are now given status as tradition. However, it is important to take note that this statement was in colonial records for many years and it was only some years back when it was published in many researcher's works. But the most distinguishing characteristics of this tradition are the rituals that take place at the site and their repetition every year.

The area closer to the grave is called *Olupale*. This space is restricted or reserved for the reception of the visitors. The place where the *omufiati* leaves are put symbolizes King Mandume's dog. The fence around the monument symbolizes the Kwanyama people. It also represents the Kwanyama traditional 'eumbo' or dwelling because of the whole layout has the exact palisade look of the Kwanyama homestead [see figure: 10 and 11]. The main gate to this fence must be situated towards the east, according to the local traditions. This is because during the Portuguese time, when people visited Mandume's grave, they came from every direction, and they go away in any direction they chose to. This has however changed because of the order that is put in place. The fence close to the grave symbolizes the cattle that Mandume had.³⁰¹ The drawing on the pavement in the enclosure symbolizes the traditional elements of Kwanyama culture. This means the ones that contribute to the Kwanyama daily life. Thus, the things drawn on the pavement represent the things that are made use of everyday in many Kwanyama homesteads such as traditional cups (*eholo*), knobkerries, hoes, axes and others.

³⁰¹Ministério das Obras Públicas e Urbanismo. *Memorial ao rei Mandume*. (Multi services Printers, Windhoek, NAMIBIA, February 2001): p28 Translated by Humberto Saeze. All the above remarks about the symbolism of the monument came from this source.

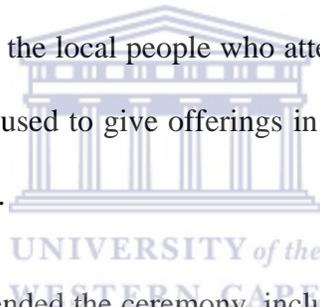
The ongoing commemoration ceremony

The official Mandume Ya Ndemufayo's commemoration takes place annually on the 6th of February since 2002, in Oihole, southern Angola. I call this official because apparently before these new annual ceremonies, local people used to have commemorative ceremonies on the same day in honour of their king, where people took drinks and food. It is important to recognize that the practice of laying *omufiati* leaves was present then, as Nangonya says, "...people used to take food and drinks. While they are drinking and eating, they also take *omufiati* branches and put them on the grave, the Portuguese who visited the grave during this event also did the same",³⁰² [see figure: 14]. Seemingly, the Portuguese also took part in the ceremonies but I wonder why they would do something like that because they were the same people who wanted to get rid of him. Was it part of collaborative colonial politics? Or was it that the Portuguese were trying to make peace with the locals by respecting commemorations of their dead king? I think so, because it cannot be that they are rejoicing his death as they did not kill him the South Africans did. I believe the Portuguese were trying to create peace to avoid further collisions with the Kwanyamas.

The annual commemorations that take place now are more highly rated than used to be the case. This ceremony is considered important not only to the Kwanyama people but to the entire Angolan nation. The Namibian notables, especially the Kwanyama people on the Namibian side, are also invited to witness the commemoration in honour their king. The high-ranking state officials also attend this function and it gets this huge coverage in the media. I believe this display is crucial as it functions in portraying a picture of

³⁰² Interview with Godfrey Nangonya. Windhoek, 10 January 2005.

nationhood, whereby all the people come together as a nation. This representation confirms that Mandume ya Ndemufayo is not only for the Ovakwanyamas, but also for everyone. He is probably seen as a unifying tool for the people of Angola and all citizens including Namibians who see him as a nationalist icon. All the people around the Oihole-Namacunde-Ondjiva area and Namibia flock to the ceremony which entails visiting the king's grave and later the feast [see figure: 15]. Cattle are slaughtered and drinks are served, culminating in a much enjoyable event. The visit to the grave is conducted adhering to certain rules and regulations, as indicated earlier. The people queue up with the *omufiati* leaves in hand, walking solemnly to lay them on the king's grave [see figure: 16]. People are welcome to put whatever they have as offering to the King, from money to food and more. According to the local people who attended, they claim that ever since they have been in Oihole, they used to give offerings in kind at the King's grave as it is being done now [see figure: 17].



Important figures who have attended the ceremony, include the president of the Republic of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos and former president of the Republic of Namibia Sam Nujoma who attended together at the monument's unveiling ceremony on the 6th February 2002. This does not necessarily mean these figures attended all the ceremonies that came afterwards as of this year 6 February 2005, the Namibian former President of Namibia attended but the Angolan president did not. The former president of Namibia is reported to have had said at the unveiling of the monument in 2002, "King Mandume ya Ndemufayo was and continues to be a common hero of our people on either side of our

common border”.³⁰³ He further stated, “Our people are bound together by unbreakable bonds of blood, kinship and a common culture”.³⁰⁴ Another Angolan national I interviewed claims “The commemoration at the monument in Oihole serves as a reminder of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo in Angola and Namibia, because it is for everyone”.³⁰⁵ By saying the ceremony is for everyone implies that Mandume is universalised. I believe that Mandume is universalised because he gets to be talked about everywhere and a lot of people get to hear about him. I also think it happens because his body straddles the border. On this issue De Oliveira says, “I think the constant interested visits of national and foreign programs with diverse motivations of spreading this in the mass media and research works (such as the present work) are going to turn the figure of Mandume more and more universal. The curiosity around the architectural conception of the memorial also is a reason of research on the side of academic groups”.³⁰⁶ It can presumably be interpreted that there is an understanding between the two countries as they are peacefully sharing Mandume. Both countries consider him as a nationalist hero, and they claim that they share him equally but I doubt this very much because Angola seems to take all credit in claiming his memory. While I do not deny that they are sharing him, I just do not think it is equal.

There are however interesting accounts from some interviewees, that claim that the funds to the construction of this monument was shared by the two countries. This emerged in

³⁰³ http://www.grnnet.gov.na/News/Archive/2002/February/Week2/monument_rpt.htm, Accessed on the 12 July 2005.

³⁰⁴ http://www.grnnet.gov.na/News/Archive/2002/February/Week2/monument_rpt.htm, Accessed on the 12 July 2005.

³⁰⁵ Shapwanale, T. Ondjiva. 7 February 2005. He was born in Embulunganga in southern Angola. This area, Embulunganga is Mandume’s birthplace. He is one of the Kwanyama oral historian.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, August 2005.

lipinge's account when he says, " I think the two countries shared the cost of the monument's construction...".³⁰⁷ Another interviewee says, "...The monument in Oihole was initiated and constructed because the president of Namibia (Sam Nujoma) thought they should honour Mandume, he was even the one who unveiled it".³⁰⁸ In this regard, it is perhaps worth noting that even though these two countries are sharing one symbolic hero, there is no mention of them having had shared the costs of the monument's construction. However, De Oliveira saying, "The Government of the Republic of Angola was the one who financed the project", made this clear.³⁰⁹ This means Angola paid it all.

In emphasizing what is covered at the beginning of this chapter, it is important to recognize that since the country was so wrenched by civil war, the construction of the monument was a good way of building national unity. This is because the civil war had an impact on the consciousness of nationhood. The Angolan people were fragmented and divided by war, but I believe the government is aiming to unite the people through this monument. As mentioned earlier, the nationalist division had profound effect on the people of Angola and this monument brings together a wide range of previously unintegrated communities. These are the different communities that took part in the movements for national independence irrespective of the political organization. Therefore, this monument is seen as having a very strong character in relation to social, cultural and political meanings on the Angolan territory and the whole Kwanyama family in Angola and Namibia and elsewhere. I however think it is being used as a national tool

³⁰⁷ Interview with Pombili lipinge, Windhoek. 24 February 2005. He is the acting site manager and curator at the Heroes Acre, Namibia.

³⁰⁸ Interview with Emilia Nhinda, Ondobe, 12 February 2005. Emilia was born at Omupanda (in the present southern Angola, Kunene region) in 6 July 1908. Her father was Tomas Nhinda, a close friend of King Mandume ya Ndemufayo. She moved from Omupanda to Ondonga (in Namibia), but she was 9 years old when Mandume died and she claims she knew him well.

³⁰⁹ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, August 2005.

in uniting the Kwanyama and all the Angolan people, and maybe tightening the bonds that exists with the neighbouring Kwanyama in Namibia. But one thing to consider here is the construction of a nationalist icon (Mandume). Why does a country like Angola need Mandume as nationalist hero?

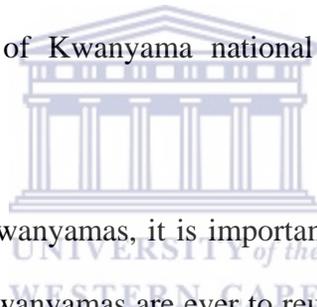
As said earlier, I believe there are agendas behind why the ruling government deemed it necessary to have this monument set up. It is also evident in De Oliveira's account that all decisions were made by the government when she says, "The financing of a workmanship involved significant financial values that always had to be approved by the Cabinet, heard the proposals (of the author of the idea), the teams techniques, the involved Ministries and entities, as for example: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public works, Ministry do Planning, Ministry of Finances, Army Ministry, Provincial Government where it went to build the monument, Consultations with the Local Traditional Authorities in case that of Monument of King Mandume...".³¹⁰ However, the justification for building Mandume's monument is evidently embedded in nationalism. According to an article entitled 'Nationalism and Ethnicity' by Calhoun says, "Nationalism, in particular, remains the pre-eminent rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities, claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to 'the people' of a country".³¹¹ Furthermore, "Nationalism has become the preeminent discursive form for modern claims to political autonomy and self determination".³¹² I would say the reason for the erection of this monument is to mobilize support from the Kunene province and to sideline UNITA which was clearly a threat in the area from what

³¹⁰ Interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira through email, August 2005.

³¹¹ Calhoun, C. 'Nationalism and Ethnicity'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 19 (1993): p 212.

³¹² Ibid. p 214.

is discussed earlier. There can be other reasons besides this, as Calhoun asks, "...can 'nationhood' be taken as the prior basis for nationalist claims? Or is "nation" at best a rhetoric mode of making political claims and at worst a way for certain elites to manipulate mass sentiments in pursuit of power?"³¹³ I think these questions have merit and I argue that most postcolonial states need nationalist policies to keep their power, which in turn facilitates their ability to accumulate wealth. Thus, all these are hidden behind the discourses on promoting national unity and Mandume is a good tool to use for this. Another thing to consider here is that, Mandume promotes patriotic desire, power of patriarchy that leads to the appropriation and subordination of women. Hence, the underlying point in this is that Mandume's heroism has been conscripted endlessly to serve as symbolic repository of Kwanyama national identity, only to be exploited relentlessly by nationalists.



On the issue of unifying the Kwanyamas, it is important to emphasize and examine the problem that will arise if the Kwanyamas are ever to reunite. This has happened in cases where artificial borders divided ethnicities and attempts are made to reunite them. This has often resulted in civil wars and national chaos for many countries. The blame lies on the outsiders who were neither cognizant of, nor interested in the realities of the ethnicities prevailing on the ground where boundary lines were drawn. Although the Ovakwanyama groups in Namibia and Angola share similar cultural history, a common language, common religion values most of the attitudes towards life have changed, they have grown to be different. This is because they were colonised by different colonial powers and these contacts influenced them differently. They have gone through different

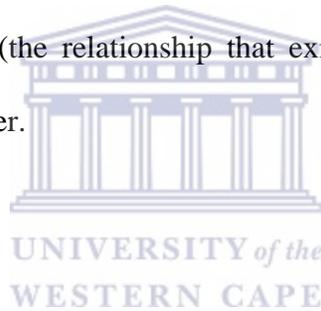
³¹³ Ibid. p 215.

traumas especially the civil war in Angola for the Kwanyamas on the Angolan side. The two countries (Angola and Namibia) are striving for nation building and unity, so I believe reuniting the Ovakwanyamas will jeopardise that. By this I mean that since it is said that many of the Kwanyamas are residing in Angola it will be very difficult to decide where all of them will live, in Namibia or in Angola. How would one remove the border that exists? When the whole Kwanyama existed there were no borders, so I think it will be very difficult to reunite them. As said earlier, ideas of reuniting ethnicities often result in ethno-nationalisms, where the people would want to unite as a nation. This will be so difficult as within this there will probably be fights over who is ruling and from which group of the two Kwanyama groups.

This has already proved to be impossible when a group of Kwanyamas in Namibia came up with a committee to reunite all the Kwanyama people. A report in *The Namibian* newspaper says, "...the Mandume Traditional Community Discussion Committee (MTCDC), ... said their aim was to have the border shifted 60 kilometres up to Ondjiva in Angola so that Oshikwanyama-speakers in Angola and Namibia could be reunited".³¹⁴ This was brought up by the fact that 'when the Kwanyama kingdom on the Namibian side was restored in 1998, it did not cover the majority of Oshikwanyama speakers who live in Angola'. Here the kingdom refers to the position of a 'king' restored under postcolonial traditionalist agendas. It seems the restoration of the Kwanyama kingdom was trying to unite people and forge their identity. But, for a postcolonial like Namibia and Angola to achieve meaningful and lasting national identity, it is imperative that the different units (ethnic groups) which make up the nation-state are strongly united among

³¹⁴ Shivute, O. "Kwanyama group wants northern border shifted" *The Namibian*, Wednesday, March 14, 2001.

themselves. Therefore, even though it is claimed that Kwanyama kingdom has been restored, these traditionalists are not really involved in what used to take place before because its institution is seen as a hindrance to national unity. Although the restoration of Kwanyama kingdom triggered the need to include all the Kwanyama people living in both countries, its proposal did not get approval from many governmental officials and it is not known how this ideas seemed to have had disappeared. Arguably, this clearly shows that it is very problematic to try and unite the Kwanyamas in Angola and Namibia as it will cause trouble and also that these goes against what the two governments are striving for. Nevertheless, I argue that the building of Mandume's monument in Oihole has potential for reinforcing national unity for Angola and probably Namibia as well. However, postcolonial reality (the relationship that exists between the two countries) dictates the keeping of the border.



CONCLUSION

Mandume ya Ndemufayo is remembered in both Namibia and Angola after these countries won their independence from colonialism. Unlike other anti-colonial fighters of early resistance, he is much more recognised. His heroic deeds made him a nationalist hero for both countries in question. It is then because of this that he is (to both Namibians and Angolans) considered as an unblemished hero of anti-colonial resistance. However, he is memorialised differently in Namibia and Angola. The process of remembering Mandume in different ways is related to where his body and head are buried respectively. There is a belief that his body was beheaded, which resulted in the head being buried in Windhoek (under a monument). The thesis then asked, how do the two countries take custody over his body and memory?

This thesis focused on three different memorial sites where Mandume is commemorated. Two of these sites are in Namibia (the Ovambo Campaign Memorial and the Heroes Acre) while the other is in Oihole (Angola). This was done in order to understand how these memorials work in the past-present-future alignment in the context of two different postcolonial nations. The Ovambo Campaign Memorial was inaugurated in 1919; it was erected by members of the South African army in memory of their comrades killed on February 6, 1917 near Oihole. After its installation, many Ovakwanyama claimed this monument as memorial to the King himself and an affirmation of his presence within the capital city. With this belief in place, his body is now buried in Oihole, Angola, while his head is allegedly buried in Windhoek, Namibia.

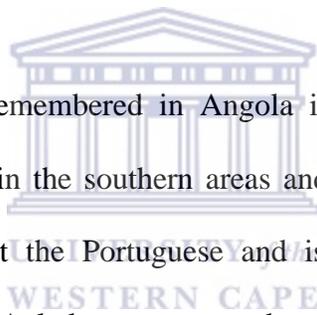
Windhoek as a capital city was seen as a viable option to find contract work in the southern areas, especially for Ovambo men in those years. Since Windhoek is the centre and had all the facilities such as railways, which links it to other towns that were created, the Oshiwambo people obviously have to pass through en route to their work places. The belief played a role in the city, in relation to the Oshiwambo-speakers who did not originate there but ended up there as migrant labourers. My argument is that this is linked to how such a belief that Mandume's head was buried under the monument came to be propagated in Windhoek. Although these people came from Ovamboland, they claimed a space within the Capital city (a white controlled area) when they claimed the monument. The sudden surfacing of a committee called Mandume Memorial Committee in 1937 history [concerning Mandume's head] in Windhoek represented a collision with colonial history and a competing claim to the public space. Furthermore, in doing so, and in trying to reclaim a monumental space to commemorate Mandume, urbanised Ovambo were drawing on 'tradition' to mobilise some form of self-constituting unity, which they could present not only to the colonial authorities, but also to other emerging ethnic identities in Windhoek. In addition to that, it was also probably done as an indication of intention, a political gesture and also a gesture of defiance at the time of colonialism.

It is important to recognize that there exists a psychology related to why people feel that this monument is Mandume's. This is because the whole conviction is 'imaginary', a fantasy which was probably a reaction to trauma following Mandume's death. They probably needed to believe that Mandume's head was buried under a monument, needed something to make it 'real'. Somehow it is a fantasy that came to be considered real. This needs close examination as there is no proof that Mandume's head was really buried there

or whether he was decapitated for that matter. I chose symbolic and psychological reasons in my analysis of the belief about Mandume's head. This is an attempt to show why people believe that Mandume's head is buried under the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. I argue that this belief was probably to serve psychological needs, which are to heal the feeling of humiliation and the loss of self-esteem following upon the impossibility of reacting adequately to the comrade's death and loss of power which it reveals. This belief is also symbolic in the sense that it was an anti-colonial tool directed at the colonial British South Africans and it was also a means to make the brutalities of colonial system visible and unforgettable. It was a response to the fact that the colonisers brought the old Kwanyama kingdom and the world as people knew it, to an end.

This thesis also explores the shift of Mandume's sites of memory, from the Ovambo Campaign Memorial to his symbolic grave at Heroes Acre. During the colonial rule, Mandume's association with the Ovambo Campaign Memorial was seen as irrational and he was not recognised as a hero. In the post colonial context, Mandume's memory is recontextualised at the Heroes Acre, made official and it is inserted in a collective national monument. This also means that, at this site he is recognised as a hero together with other Namibian heroes. I also believe that people tried to constitute a memorial grave for him, to concretise his presence in the capital city since it is believed that his head is buried there. Mandume's symbolic grave at the Heroes Acre serves to reclaim an important symbolic space and give birth to a new movement of making this belief concrete, tangible. By doing this, the belief becomes real, something that one can see. The whole notion of Mandume's symbolic grave gives an impression that he is reclaimed in the capital, Windhoek. I believe this act is a connection with past forms of social

(belief) authority that the colonised had despite the disruption that was caused by the colonisers at the time. I also argue that the fact that Namibia as a postcolonial state has begun to perform a physical reoccupation of historical space such as the Heroes Acre, which attests to the relative initiative to redraw boundaries of the capital city. Since the Capital city was relatively white-controlled, the current state government seems to want to redraw boundaries that include everyone irrespective of their backgrounds, races and cultures and in doing so instate the new nation. I believe this is done by having Mandume's symbolic grave in a new memorial site in the city, and the main avenue named after him in the city center although he has long had a prior presence at the Railway station [see figure 18].



Mandume ya Ndemufayo is remembered in Angola in many ways, and has several memorials that are distributed in the southern areas and the capital city Luanda. Since 1915 Mandume fought against the Portuguese and is considered as a hero in this postcolonial country, the MPLA led government deemed it necessary to honour him through the erection of a monument. This is regardless to the fact that Mandume was a king for the Kwanyama speaking people who some of them during the liberation and civil war teamed up with UNITA. He is regarded as a hero due to his bravery shown during the colonial era. Since the 1990s, with the pressing need to recognize and identify heroes, king Mandume ya Ndemufayo has been actively inserted in the new national memorial landscape in Angola.

A monument to king Mandume ya Ndemufayo was constructed in Oihole. I argue that this monument is not simply commemorating Mandume and the Kwanyama tradition but

I believe it also serves to endorse a particular MPLA government position based on legitimising vested political interest. Here, Mandume's recognition is used to shift the psychology of the majority people living in the Kunene province so that the ruling government will gain support rather than UNITA during the civil war. However, in the new context of peace and reconstruction since Savimbi's death in 2002, this monument is considered as development for the Kunene province as it is destined to become a tourist attraction and that brings money.

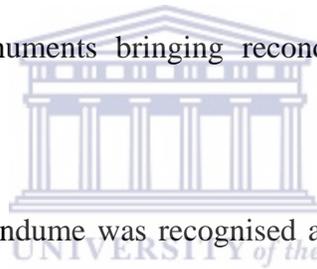
It can presumably be interpreted that there is an understanding between the two countries as they are peacefully sharing Mandume. Both countries consider him as a nationalist hero, and they claim that they share him equally but I doubt this very much because Angola seems to take all credit in claiming his memory. While I do not deny that they are sharing him, I just do not think it is equal. This monument is seen as having a very strong character in relation to social, cultural and political meanings on the Angolan territory and the whole Kwanyama family in Angola and Namibia and elsewhere. I however think it is being used as a national tool in uniting all their people respectively, and maybe further dividing the bond that existed between the Kwanyamas in Namibia and Angola.

I believe the move to erect more tangible memorials for Mandume in Namibia and Angola suggests a need to focus on unity as the ultimate goal of his commemoration. National unity, nationhood, identity and reclamation of the self are all evident in the memorial work that is put in Mandume's name in these two countries. Additionally, Mandume's memorials grew out of a need to honour and remember his strength and bravery in fighting colonisation. But most importantly people who are involved

(especially government officials in both countries) define Mandume's monuments as a way of uniting people. But the question here arises, are they really doing that? I argue that this works only when the kinds of historical significance and commemorations that are practised at these places are shared. I believe for both countries, Mandume's memorial work emphasizes the way commemorative moments integrate the glory of society's past into its present concerns and aspirations. The need to remember Mandume has a significant role in the nationalist projects in these countries that are seeking to express the future oriented spirit of these new nations. I argue that, Mandume's commemorations are governed by national or local agendas that are set to produce a unified positive image of the past.

The use of Mandume's monuments to create and reflect national unity reveals existing efforts that are being utilised by the new political ruling groups. I am referring this to the values that are attached to monuments. These could be the social, political and cultural values that were probably drafted resulting in the memorial work in Mandume's name. This means that the priorities of postcolonial nations such as Namibia and Angola are to create stability for their people and I believe to achieve that certain values have to be implemented. The political values attached at these monuments are obviously national unity, being implemented by the ruling parties in both countries. Therefore I think Mandume's monuments in Angola and Namibia serve as a national healing process especially to unify nations that were divided by civil war and anti-apartheid struggle respectively.

This argument is based on the fact that since Angola went through civil war and there were divisions among people, something that brings people together as Mandume will make a lot of difference. Similarly, monuments in the post colonial Zimbabwe (and Namibia) although carrying the danger of nurturing bitterness and inciting hatred, on the contrary meant to facilitate reconciliation. I think that this is doing the same in especially Namibia with the erection of the Heroes Acre as people have so many questions about who are buried or will be buried there and why. Most questions are directed toward why the people they feel deserve to be buried there are excluded. Debates about the selection of heroes based on ethnicity and party affiliation are also dealt with consistently and I think this creates bitterness and hatred for others. Therefore, I agree that in some cases instead of these national monuments bringing reconciliation and peace, they bring problems.



In conclusion, the fact that Mandume was recognised as a nationalist hero by Namibia and Angola is very important. Heroes in general play a significant role in the discourse about memory and memorial work meanings. The fact that Mandume's heroic deeds are invariably noted means that he is understood to be authoritatively the most recognised anti-colonial resistor. His memorial works here are legitimating marks. His bravery made him a generalized hero, a collective representative in his own right. His bravery also resonates power, which helps to give an inspirational image for others. Put simply, his memory is potent. As a king he is perceived or interpreted as giving up his life for his people's freedom and this makes him a kind of saviour. He is a near-perfect hero because he has suffered for his people, his kingdom to redeem his people. For both countries, the

formal honouring of anti-colonial fighter such as Mandume obviously promotes the healing of nations that underwent violent conflict.

However, by dealing with these memorial works in Namibia and Angola respectively, made it easier to bring together the resemblances and differences involved in the remembering processes under a single analytic framework. I argue that there is a gap or difference in ways that Mandume ya Ndemufayo is remembered in the two countries. This is evident in the sense that by erecting the significant monument for Mandume, Angolans have gone much more abroad in remembering the King than Namibians. This is because even though King Mandume is remembered in different ways such as at the Heroes Acre and the main avenue in the capital city Windhoek in Namibia, one cannot really compare it to the gigantic monument made over his grave at Oihole, Angola. Therefore, I think Angola has more claims over him than Namibia, although both governments claim to be sharing him equally.

Lastly, these two countries use Mandume as resource in nation-building process to unify their people respectively consequently dividing the Kwanyama people, which is the opposite of what Mandume was doing. As long as his memory is used this way by Namibia and Angola, the Kwanyamas will never be united and Mandume will not rest because it was his goal to unite his people who were divided merely by a colonial border.

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The author conducted all the interviews listed below. Ten of the interviews were recorded in Oshiwambo, which I later translated to English; in all cases notes were taken during interviews. One interview with Ana Maria de Oliveira was done through e-mail and the responses were in Portuguese. Humberto Saeze translated these accounts to English.

Name of informant	Date of interview	Place
1. Godfrey Nangonya	10 January 2005	Windhoek
2. David Haufiku	26 January 2005	Ongwediva
3. Bishop Appolus Kaulinge	26 January 2005	Ongwediva
4. Pombili Ipinge	24 February 2005	Windhoek
5. Emilia Nhinda	12 February 2005	Ondobe
6. Rev. Phillipus Nakanwe	29 January 2005	Onekwaya
7. Tomas Shapwanale	7 February 2005	Ondjiva
8. Fudeni Sheelongo	6 February 2005	Oihole
9. Maria Naomi Kalipi	6 February 2005	Oihole
10. Tomas Simon	6 February 2005	Omupanda
11. Ana Maria de Oliveira	15 August and 11 September 2005	Luanda

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At the archives, I have gone through the Resident Commissioner in Ovamboland (RCO) files, although these were not used in this thesis. The reason for this is that they are heavily used in the Namibian historiography particularly in Hayes and Silvester's work. These files consist of Mandume's period of ruling, the border issues after his death etc. Their chronological finding-aid is 1/1/52. However, this thesis used Municipal files concerning the Mandume Memorial Committee and also the Ovambo Campaign Memorial. These files are located in NAN MWI 36/1/37.

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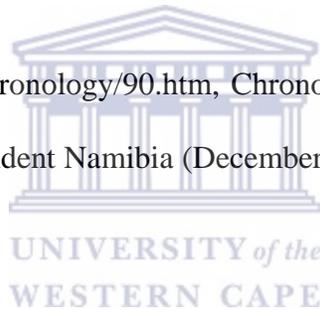
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