

Meanings of the names of Towns in the Republic of South Sudan

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>The purpose of this article is to unveil the underlying rudimental meanings and historical bearings of the names of some South Sudan towns that fell subject under this study. The study, as well, exposed the structural changes in their spellings exclusively made, or rather corrupted by non-native speakers of the languages of the people inhabiting these towns or places. Hence this study is, undoubtedly, important as it sheds light on the meanings of the names of the towns. Although such meanings might not be fully comprehensible or wholly palatable, however, the truth remained that they bore some fact.</i> <i>To reach out for the accomplishment of this article the descriptive method was used with all its historical connections. Thus, the study resulted into established credible meanings of town names, despite various contradictory versions pertaining to such names. However, the article, in conclusion greatly urged for further research in this aspect.</i>
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Introduction

Names of nearly all the towns in South Sudan (see the attached map) underwent structural changes in spelling, corrupted by the colonial British administrators and the Arabs. This is apparent with native names of towns like Jubek, Tungo, Zara, Tony, Arang, Kapweta, and Bitim, which were respelt as Juba, Tonga, Anzara, Tonj, Renk, Kapoeta and Bentiu respectively.

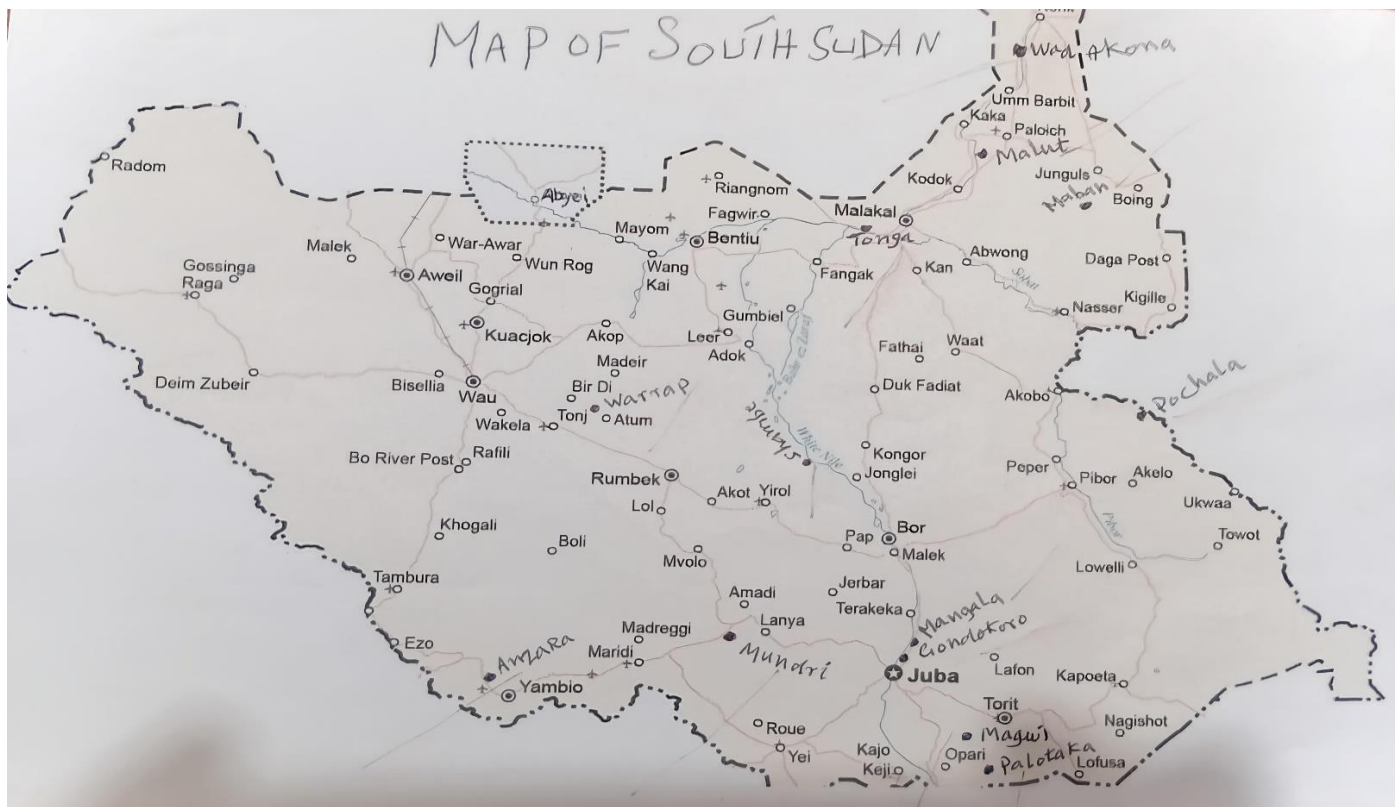


Figure 1. Map of South Sudan showing the towns/places discussed in the study.

In this endeavor I have tried to shed light on rather obscure meanings of names of some towns in the Republic of South Sudan. Lest semantics set astray minds of the readers, the various versions related in connection with some names were specifically stated without haziness. These names also reflect historical glimpses of these areas, communal relations and inter-migrations, traditional legends and beliefs as expressly exemplified by the names Yirol and Malakal; leave alone the natural bearing on such names, for instance, Yambio, Anzara, Pibor and Akobo which are natural rivers, while Waraap and Tonj signify fertile and grassy Wetland fit for grazing and cultivation. Furthermore, Magwi and Terkeka stand for edible vegetables and plants. Lastly, one should not forget the unpleasant environment where mosquitoes swarm and bitterly inject bites, as apparently expressed by the word Bentiu or Bitim.

As a matter of fact, the bulk of material collected for this article was orally contributed by a host of informants in addition to some written sources. Although it presents a considerable challenge to set specific methods under which to categorize these names, however, they could be classified hereunder the alphabetical headings:

Abyei

The word Abyei is the Dinka name for *Banya tree (Ficus Bangalensis)*, which was said to exist in plenty all over the current Abyei area. For this reason, it impelled the Dinka community living in this area to bestow the name Abyei upon the area

Akobo

In regard to the word "Akobo", two versions were, however, been cited; first, it was said to be derivative of the word "Kwob", meaning talk, in Anyuak language. Nevertheless, no apparent significance was given as to the attribution of this word "Akobo" to the talk "Kwob". Second, it was further related that "Akobo" is a point where Sundry materials rested after being driven by an extremely swift river. Perhaps such river might, however, had slowed down a bit, subsequently causing accumulation of the said driven materials. Thus, both area town and river acquired the names Akobo area, Akobo town and Akobo River

Amadi

Amadi originally was said to be a Madi tribe word, which means; 'we are here.' It was related that during communal migration in the past, people used to move in small groups; and while in the process, the back groups would communicate with groups in front, saying; 'where are you now? Then the first groups would answer; "Amadi?" that is, we are here."

Anzara

It means a river that inundates (floods) widely. This Anzara River runs from Zande land up to Wau where it is named Jur River. Anzara River is originally known among the

Azande people as Zara River, but foreigners added (an) so that the word became Anzara.

Aweil

Three traditional versions were related in regard to the name Aweil. The first version was that a certain Aguk (Apuk) Dinka from Gogrial area in the current Warrap State brought a bull-called Mading for sale in the location of the present Aweil market. While there, he was approached by another Dinka customer who expressed interest to buy the bull. The two men agreed on the deal and as it was already late in the day, the owner of the bull asked his customer for a place to spend the night; the latter willingly accepted to host him in his house and told him that the price of the bull will be paid in the following morning.

The host man tied the bull somewhere in the house compound, but surprisingly at night, he sneaked there and slaughtered the bull and has it prepared for sale at the butchery in the morning. Furthermore the host, that night, prepared a meal from the meat of the quest's bull who thus consumed it unknowingly.

In the morning the bull owner had breakfast from the remnant of the last night's bull meal. After breakfast, the bull owner asked that host for his money, that is the price of the bull, but the latter bluffing requested him to wait for a while. Again the bull owner asked for his money, but the host kept on dodging. Lastly, when the bull owner became fed up, he angrily left for Gogrial but cursed the host and named that place Mading Aweil. i.e. the land of dodgers.

The second version was that, a certain section of Dinka called Aweil claimed that this town was named after them.

The third version, which is the most likely to be true, is that a certain man probably a well-known person called Ayuel was the one who named this area after his bull, Mading, hence, the area became Mading Ayuel. However, his name Ayuel was later mispronounced as Aweil by the British administrators.

Bentiu

It has been orally related that "**Bentiu**" is an Arab corruption of the original word "**Bitim**", which means "You will regret" premised on the account that "**Bitim**" or "**Bentiu**" is geographically a swampy land with plentiful mosquitoes. Therefore, anyone who happened to stay there was warned that he would regret (**Bitim**) as he would severely suffer mosquito bites;

Bor

Bor is a Bari tribe word, which means a wet or swampy land. It originally stems from the word "bar," meaning flood. Historically speaking, this area, Bor, was inhabited by the Bari people before the Dinka Bor moved east across

the Nile, after Bari migration southward due to constant flooding.

Gandokoro

Gandokoro is a compound word which consists of Gandu, means difficult or tiresome; Koro, means, to cultivate.

Some Bari tribe informants stated that Gandokoro means a difficult land to cultivate, perhaps due to environmental factors such as being too grassy, bushy, rocky or so wet. Others maintained that Gandokoro means an extremely large land that can not wholly be cultivated. However, the notable inference here is that such land is characteristically difficult to cultivate.

Juba

Two versions have been cited in regard to the meaning of the word "Juba". First, it was stated that the Bari tribe usually give this name to the first-born child according to the common tribal tradition.

Second, the version went that this area was named after a famous traditional witch doctor called Jubek from Nyori Bari clan who came to Tindu (or Juba Nabari) from northern Bari, specifically Nyarkenyi, or nowadays Jebel Lado, between 1880-1920; and he was highly welcomed and hosted in the new area by Lumberi Bari clan.

Shortly afterwards, his reputation shot beyond the bounds of Tindu due to wondrous magic and traditional rituals. owing to the good services he rendered to the Bari community in this context, as, he, for instance, protected them from diseases averted evils, warded off external incursions, made rains that prevented drought and availed abundant pasture and agricultural crops and topically he sacrificed his daughter, Pita, and buried her ritually alive in order to reconcile and bring together all Bari feuding clans around Juba. Hence, for this prosperous life, the people of Tindu loved him and considered him a savior, and above all named the area Jubek, after him.

The noticeable variations in the word Jubek are most probably attributed to geographical and external factors, for instance it was related that northern Bari people drop sound "k" at the end of the word in speaking such as "Jube" from the word Jubek and Tombe from "Tombek", while such sounds "K" remained unchanged with southern Bari speakers. Thus, many informants have confirmed correctness of the latter speaker's pronunciation that maintains the sound "k". As for external factors, it has been aptly related that Europeans who entered Equatoria in late nineteenth century have caused the change of the sound "e" to "a" in the word "Jube" as well as dropped the sound "K" in "Jubek" in order to fit or ease their pronunciation, consequently the word became "Juba".

Kajo-Keji

Kajo-keji is a compound word which consists of: "Kajo", which is originally Kajok, meaning calves, and "Keji" means cattle camp. The source that dropped the sound "K" from Kajok is unknown, but it is popularly pronounced at such in the kuku community.

However, it has been related that the present site of Kajo-keji was named after a certain community chief called Kajo-keji whom the British officials then met and thus confirmed the name Kajo-keji.

Kaka

There are two versions overtly related in regard to the word "Kaka". First some informants attributed it to a certain village chief called "Kak", son of a paramount chief named Ajack, who was said to have ruled over the area known as Mwomo Ajak, which extended from Akurwa to Wad Akona.

The second version put it to be land between two streams known as "Kaaki", but not an Island. However, non-Shilluk speakers twisted it to Kaka, possibly for easy pronunciations.

Kapoeta

The word Kapoeta is a corruption by foreigners especially the British, of the original word Kapwat, son of Kuleu, the last Toposa tribe prophet (diviner).

Two versions have been cited in regard to the meaning of this word; first: it was related that this name was given by Tenet tribe because it was a place that had plenty of food, The second was said to have been the name of the above person, Kapwata, who was killed in war in 1927 by the British and consequently was buried in the present Kapwata area.

Kodhok

Ko, in Shilluk (Collo) means alongside, semi-middle or a point therein. Dhok, means mouth or watercourse. So, Kodhok means the current town which falls along that watercourse which streams out from the White Nile running northwest across the area of Kodhok town; consequently it was named after it.

Before the coming of Reth Nyadwai (originally Dikwor wad Tugo, 1715-1745) to the throne, that watercourse was locally called "apen rigo". It runs into lagoons just northwest of Kodhok town but later was renamed river Nyadwai after the incumbent Reth (King).

Maban

Maban is originally, Mak-ban, but the letter "k" was dropped, perhaps, for easy and smooth pronunciation. This word, in all cases, is structurally compound and consisting

of two forms: "Mak" means people, and "ban" means Land, thus all such compound means "people of the Land" or "owners of the land". At present this word is popularly pronounced and written "Maban" and not "Makban".

Magwi

The word Magwi originated from a Lotuho speaking community clan Kuawa "Koyo". Magwi is basically known as "Amagwi" which means a kind of edible vegetable (in Arabic Likiya and scientifically Cassia tora). The present Magwi location, was originally known for abundance of such vegetables (Likiye). Due to difficulty in pronouncing "Amagwi" by other communities, including the British colonial authorities, the word later was changed to "Magwi", which is currently being used and known worldwide.

Malakal

Malakal is a corruption by non-Shilluk speakers (who added the two sounds, L, a) of the word Makal or "Mal ba Kal", in Shilluk language, which means the on-earth home is ephemeral or temporary home; however joyful it is; in the end man will retire to the eternal after-life home. This meaning concurred with the religious belief of the temporal earth-life and the permanent one after death.

Historically speaking, Makal village was founded by Reth (King) Di Wad Wad Ochollo (1635 – 1650); from where he ran the affairs of the Shilluk Kingdom during his tenure in office.

Maluth

The name of Maluth of Dinka origin has been inaccurately rendered in some foreign records as (esp. British) Melut, according to their pronunciations.

The correct and culturally authenticated spelling is Maluth.

Three versions were orally cited in regard to Maluth; first, it was related to be name of a greenish-black flecked colour bull which was speared on the establishment day of this town. Second, it was also related that Maluth is name of a section of Beir Padang Dinka around khor Adar area which was influenced by the neighbouring Nuer tribe. The story went that in the nineteenth century, the Beir collaborated with certain Dinka section of Maluth and were able to defeat and chase away the Dongjol Padang Dinka.

Consequently, the Beir were settled north of Maluth town by Anyarkuei clan who had been settling in the area for decades. Following the development of Maluth town, the British authorities suggested that Beir people be returned to their original location, but they refused. Therefore, a popular court was held, attended by the Shilluk king (Reth), which eventually decided their relocation to their present areas that lay South of Paloch and Khor Adat areas.

Historically speaking, the government centre in Maluth during the British rule was at Dimtama site 5 Km east of Maluth port at the White Nile, but the unsuitability of the area and being far from the main river bank of the White Nile, the British authorities decided to relocate such post to the present site of Maluth town, which later flourished following the establishment of the river port around which was fairly inhabited by the Turkish, Maluth Dinka freed slaves called Rayafa, literally, ruralists. And in around 1905 Maluth became part of Renk district.

The third version went that there were three greenish-black bulls (commonly known as oluuthi Awabek) owned by Nyireth (prince) Awabek Yor. They lived on the western bank of the White Nile at Arubwath Buma, but they daily swim the Nile across to the eastern bank to graze and return in the evening. Then when Nyireth (prince) Kudit brother of prince Awabek, established a village at Kwom area on the eastern bank, the latter too, competitively, founded a bigger village on the same bank which he named Oluthi Awabek, which is the present Maluth. Awabek's shrine remained standing for long in Maluth until 1980, only to be later vandalised and razed to the ground not to feature forever.

It had been related that certain good hearted Shilluk Princess used to friendly host the off-river Dinka to their neighbourhoods on the White Nile bank instead of their faraway forest. Even Reth (King) Awin was stated to have banned the annual tribute that his Dinka uncles used to pay for watering their cattle in the River Nile.

Mangala

There are four versions cited in regard to the name Mongalla or Mangalla.

First, according to the Peri tribe informants, the word Mongalla is contraction of two words, Maong and gala. Means belongs to, and gala mean government. Hence, Mangala means belong to the government. or it is for the government. Peri Tribe claimed that this land historically belonged to them, but later, they conceded it to the invading Turkish authorities, thus came the word Mangala, i.e. the land became property of the incumbent Turkish authorities. It is noteworthy that the word 'gala' is Turkish but does not mean government as dubbed by the Peri people. It means festival event or premiere. The word 'gala' might have been probably used by the Turks which made, perhaps, the Peri people and such like to dub the name of the place Mongalla to the made the Turks. The second version was given by the Latuho tribe informants that the word Mongala also consists of two parts; "mong" (not Mang), which means, greeting, and "gala", means, government. Thus Mongala means welcome government.

It is noticeable that the two languages: Peri and Latuho, concurred on the meaning of the word “gala”, that is the government, but they differed on the first part, Mang/Mong.

The third version was stated by Bari tribe informants that the word Mangala, means abundance of mango trees of which that area was renowned for in the early decades of history, most probably during the Turko-Egyptian or Condominium rules.

In fact mango trees were planted in South Sudan in Mongalla (Mangala) during the Anglo-Egyptian colonial era, around 1906 to 1920 when mongalla served as administrative headquarters for the colonial power.

The fourth version is that, the name Mongalla (or Mangalla) originated as a phonetic misunderstanding by the early British colonial administrators. When the officials arrived in the area to establish a government station, they asked the local Bari chief named Lado lo Wuson, the name of the place. The chief replied “Mankaro”, which was the local name for his village and surrounding region. Mankaro sounded similar to Mongalla leading the British to record it as Mongalla.

Maridi

It has been related that “Maridi” is an Arab corruption of the original word “Merdi” of Baka tribe. It is a compound word which consists of “Mer” means land, and “di” means far away. So “Merdi” means far away land. This area is inhabited by three main tribes, namely: Baka, Mundu and Avukaya. All tribes who resided in the area from Mundri up to the border with Congo were dubbed Jabellyeen (hillers) by the Turks who by then ruled the whole of Sudan because of their hilly land.

Mundri

The town of Mundri, located in western Equatoria State, gets its name from an evolution of original Moru “Mundrä – the name of a hill north-east of the present location of the town. The present location of the town was occupied by a thick forest; the Moru called it “Ngolangwa” forest. The town should have been called Ngolangwa. However, a town centre developed and they named the town Mundri, a corruption of the word Mundrä. Why they decided to name the town with the name of the hill is still unclear.

Nasir

The site of the present Nasir town is originally called Nyarum, high or elevated ground, by Anyuak tribe, first inhabitants of that area, while lately named Kuach Lual Thoan or Nor Deang by the Nuer who afterwards occupied it.

During the governorship of Charles Gordon Pasha of the Egyptian province of Equatoria, the Turko-Egyptian forces occupied and founded a military post at the afore site in

1874 for monitoring slave raids and establishing a reign of order and security on the Sobat River. To meet these objectives the post was strengthened with a large number of Danagla irregulars (Sudanese) who had intimate knowledge of the country and its people. This town was named after the Egyptian garrison commander, Nasir Ali (Most probably a Dongolawi, not Egyptian). However, the behaviours and activities of the Danagla irregulars were not compatible with the policies of Governor Gordon as they continued with slave trade and rule by violent methods. But at the fall of Khartoum in the hands of Mahdists in 1885, the Nasir garrison was immediately withdrawn.

Nyimule(Nimule)

Nimule is a compound word which consists of: Nyi: means you, and Mule: means watching secretly with the aim to attack or to escape from a stranger.

It was related that in the past, the Madi people used to be alert and on the watchout to detect strangers who would be likely lurking around to launch harmful attacks on them. Hence the word Nimule connotes awareness of potential danger.

Pachala

Pachala is a Compound word which Consists of Pa; means home or village, ochala, is name of a person, and he was the man who founded Pachala. He was said to have been chief or agent of the overall Anyuak King to that Area (Pachala). Pachala should have been "Paochala", but the "o" was dropped perhaps for easy pronunciation, although it is retained in the normal talking, for instance; you ask; Whose Village is this? Then the response is, "Pa Ochala." So, the whole word "Pachala" means home or Village of Ochala. The ever-migrating characteristic of the Anyuak made them to early lose their areas such as Akobo, Pibor, and Nasir only to straddally settled partly in Pachala and partly in Gambela, Ethiopia.

Palotaka

Palotaka is a compound word which consists of; **pa** means village in the Luo language; and **Lataka** is said to be name of a man whose origin is uncertain, he maybe Lotuho, Lango, or Logir.

He lived in the Acholi tribe territory where he founded that village which was subsequently named after him. So, Palotaka means the village of Lataka. During the condominium rule to Sudan, the Catholic missionaries established a big Catholic church there which helped raise the fame of the area.

Pangak

Pangak, which means the home of crows is a compound word that consists of "Pan" means "Home" and "Gak"

which means "Crow". Originally, this place belonged to the Dinka who inhabited it since time long in history. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were ecological changes and demographic problems that forced the Nuer tribe to migrate from their homeland in Bentiu eastwards to Zaraf Island and further afield into the Sobat and Pibor valleys.

The Gavar Nuer arrived the Zaraf island in about 1820, and with the continuous waves of Nuer migration to the Island, the Dinka were outnumbered and subsequently forced out to far fringes.

Pibor

Two versions were cited in regard to the word Pibor; first, the informant here focused on the original name of the place itself, stating that it was originally called Kogolti means "a point where cattle herds drink water.

The second version referred to the Anyuak origin of this compound word which consists of Pi, meaning water, and bor, derived from the word "debwor", meaning greyish. This land was early inhabited by the Anyuak tribe long before Murle tribe migrated to it. So, the whole word Pibor means "greyish water." Thus came the name of the river and the town as well. Such a name might have been dictated by the alluvially greyish color of the water of that river that runs down all along together with other rivers, such as Akobo, to pour into the Sobat River.

Raja

Two versions were related in regards to the name Raja. The first one is attributed to Forge tribe, which said that whilst they were on their marauding move, they realized that they had bypassed the seasonal stream that existed in that area. Therefore, they decided to come back [Raja in Arabic] to it. Thus, came the name Raja meaning coming back.

The other version, which is most likely attributed to Indri tribe, the original people of that area. They claim that the term Raja comes from the word Reze. That is water, particularly of the seasonal river which traverses the area, and divides the current town into two. Hence the area was named Reze after that river but got corrupted to raja in the form of the Arabic term and became acceptable as the inhabitants of the area extensively use the Arabic language.

Renk

The present name, "Renk," is a corruption by non-Dinka speakers of the original form "Arang" which is attributed to "Arang Choom," who was a Mahdist Amiir (prince) renamed Abdel Gadir, who has been in charge of Bahar Abiet (White Nile) area from al-kawa southward up to Jumeiza in Equatoria.

In the past, Renk was composed of a group of small villages, prominent amongst was Wunkiir village (currently military headquarters). Formerly during the Funj sultanate, it was the seat of paramount Chief, Beng Nyok Achek, who was killed by the Funj and had his village burnt and vandalised as well as plundering all the ivory fenced his settlement.

Renk remained a capital of the Mahdist Emirate until the condominium period when it was made seat of the northern district of upper Nile province.

Rumbek

Rumbek is a compound word, made of two words: Rup and Beck. Rup can be a description of a forest, a bush, or a bushy area. A general name for forest is roor. But when Rup is attached or attributed to something, it becomes Rum of something; "P" is turned into "M". So, it became Rumbeek or Rumbek. Some relevant examples would be Rup-Buol, the Rum-Buol or Rumboul (Buol is hare), Rup-Lai, to be Rum-Lai or Rumlai (Lai are animals).

The word beek has two meanings: firstly, it is a male's name. in this issue before us, Beek was the name of a person who lived lonely in a Rup (forest). He was suspected of stealing goats and sheep from the nearby villages; killing and eating them. Later it was proved that it was Beek who was eating goats and sheep. When the Rup was searched by the villagers, piles of bones were discovered. So, the area became known as Rum-Beek or Rumbek. But the first invaders possibly the Turks, wrote it Rumbek omitting one "e". Secondly, the word Beek is attributed to a bird called Arial-Beek, usually shortened as Beek. Arial-beek is a very beautiful bird, with black, red and white colours. This bird (the crane) is in the flag of Uganda. It is said that these birds were in a forest or Rup. So, the Rup became Rumbeek. But this second meaning is doubtful.

It was also related that the current location of Rumbek was inhabited by the Lou (Gel or Jur) people. Due to incessant bloody hatchets, the spiritual leader of Agar Dinka, Buol Kuot, decided to give his daughter Akon to me married by the Jur chief in exchange for land and peaceful co-existence. The Jur chief accepted and together with his people moved to the present Wulu and Mvolo. Akon gave birth to a boy called Liet, this is why sometimes Rumbek is called; Rumbek Liet Akon Buoi.

Shambe

The name Shambe was originally known in a compound form: Anyob. Chambi; which means fishing area. Of course, that area commonly abounds in fish, which are caught hunted and sold in the nearby markets and distant towns. It is notable that non-Dinka speakers have changed the sound "Ch" to "Sh", possibly for easy pronunciations,

as well as shortened the compound form “Anyob chambi” to “Shambe”.

Since the condominium rule, Shambe had been made a river port which facilitated communication with all areas of Bahr al Ghazal province and western part of Equatoria province.

Terkeka

Terkeka is the main town in Mundari tribe land. The popular name Terkeka is a corruption of the original form “Tergege”, the name of a shrub plant scientifically called *Grewia tanex* from *Tiliaceae* family. It grows in dry and wetlands. Its ripe fruit is edible and in some places, used for medication. As it was growing all over the area, the Mundari tribe named the location Tergege, which was later corrupted to Terkeka.

Tonga

The term Tonga is a corruption by non-Shilluk language speakers of the original word Tungo which is derived from the word Wij-tung, means the far end or side of something. Hence Tungo means the farthest end. Geographically Tungo falls in the farthest south end of Shilluk land or kingdom.

Tonj

The word "Thony" in Dinka language means a wet grassy land where cattle graze during the dry season. However, such a word was subject to some alteration by non-Dinka speakers, especially the British and the Arabs, who substituted the sounds "Th" with "T" and "ny" with "j", in order to fit their pronunciation. Hence the town became known as "Tonj" instead of "Thony"

Torit

The word Torit originally came from Latuka word Atorit, which means a low-lying grassy wetland where cattle are grazed during dry season. Athorit is bisected by river Hineti corrupted to Kineti which flows from Imatong Mountain. The British administration developed a town in this grassy wetland, and instead of calling the Town Athorit, they called it Torit to suit their way of pronunciation. Kineti River and Hoss River form a delta at a distance north of the Present Torit Town; and in turn spread into wide swampy area, forming the Bandinglo wildlife game reserve.

Tumbura

Tumbura is the name of a town in Western Equatoria state. The name is a corruption of the original Zande tribe word spelt as Tumburo.

Oral history related that Tumbura, son of the famous Zande King Ghudwe, was the founder of the town; and was subsequently named Tumbura by the British colonial

administrators. Informants assertively attributed the replacement of (o) with (a) to fit the tongue of the ruling British authorities.

Other Zande informants reported that Tumburo is a compound Zande word Tu-mbu-roi which means "after I have left you." Tu means afterwards, mbu means leave and roi, is the second person pronoun, you.

The likely story in connection with this name Tumburo, is that King Gbudwe was stated to have divorced one of his wives, who was pregnant but the King was not aware, only to learn of it after the divorce. Therefore, the child was later named Tumburo, means "after I left you".

Wad Akona

Wad Akona is a corrupted form of the word Wad Akon, which is a past tense of the verb Akon, meaning that an angry relative has secluded himself from the rest and has opted to live at a far distance away from his brothers. Wad Akon was founded by Gyel, brother of King Dok son of Nyikang in the wake of his return from al Jabalein after fighting a War with the Funj.

Warraap

Warraap is a compound word which consists of: Waar, means water pool or a low wet place, and raap, means Dura beans. It is remarkable that when the words are combined, the vowel "a" is dropped, possibly for easy pronunciation. The actual meaning of the word "Warraap" is a low wet fertile land where Dura is grown or cultivated.

Wau

Two versions have been cited in regard to the word “Wau”; first it has been stated that, most probably, during the nineteenth Century, and with the advent of the missionaries; one day, one of them asked a certain Luo man who has been fishing by the side of river Jur about the name of the area they then inhabit, then the man said; “look at that bird”, which was also by the river, this area is called “Wau” after that bird which is locally called “Owau”. Thus, the area became known as “Wau”.

The second version is the account of Fr. Stefano Santandrea (1977) who attributed this name, “Wau” to the Luo origin, according to him the name of “Wau” seem quite natural to attribute a Luo origin; as Luo are the earliest inhabitants of the place.

Yambio

It was related that when King Gbudwe (also Sultan Yambio) came to the present site of Yambio town from a place called Yambi (name of a river there), he was asked; “where did you come from?” he answered; “from Yambio (in Zande language). Hence this new site was renamed Yambio and thus remained up to date. Gbudwe became

famous for his resistance to the British colonialists; he fought fiercely until he martyred in 1905.

Yei

Yei originally stemmed from the word Lujule, meaning I am at Panyana that is a place. However, three versions were aptly given in regard to this term, Yei. First, this area is for the Kaliko tribe of Morobo County. It has been related that when the Europeans came to this area, they asked about the name of the river that runs through it and were told that such river is called Aeyi (running water or stream) in Kaliko language; but they corruptly wrote it "Yei" in order to fit their language.

The second version went that there was a woman called "Yayi" living near this Kare (means river in Kakwa language); and that people started to call such river Kare na Yayi, (the Yayi River) then the Europeans, in turn corrupted it to Yei.

The third version also related that "Yei" is a corruption of the word "Yiki" which means to raise something. They further related that the two terms "Yiki" and "Yikina", to offload something, were commonly used by the Kakwa people while raising or loading off their luggage during their long migration journey from eastern Equatoria to the present site which became known as Yei.

Yirol

Yirol is said to be name of a girl; and that such girl was related to have frequently used to hear somebody speaking to her from inside the water well (borewell) during her usual visits to fetch water. One day that figure expressed willingness to marry her. At home she communicated that issue to her father who categorically rejected it. But the girl, being determinedly willing so, went ahead, and one day while on her usual visit to fetch water, and in the presence of some people, she jumped into the well. Hence, those people reported the event to her father. That figure, subsequently, married the girl, and afterwards the well sprang up with a lot of water which consequently formed the current Lake of Yirol named after that girl who married a mysterious figure.

Conclusion

This study revealed a host of backgrounds and meanings of some names of South Sudan places or towns. In fact, with the exception of the accounts of few founders of places, like Renk, Pachala, Palataka, Kaka and others, most versions on these places run stunningly obscure or dim. For instance, the mythology of the present Yirol Lake which resulted from a spring is absolutely hard to believe or even rather conceive. Others further went too parallel to each other such as the Bari version versus the Peri one on Mangalla.

The study also revealed violent Communal relations in the early days of migration and settlement, namely the prevalent tribal fighting. The names Pangak and Nyarum are the legacy of the Dinka and Anyuak after sweeping dislodgement by the Nuer on their eastward migration from the west. However, while this study drew mostly on oral accounts, it is imperatively left to the discretion of the reader that could sieve all that Lot with cognizance and great caution. The reader is also expected not to get mired in the just presented place meanings, but to mindfully delve deeper for more discernible ones. Further, the notable divergence in the variously related versions should be a matter of serious reconsideration and more keen research. Take for instance the account of Maluth where clear variation is seen in the versions of the Shilluk and Dinka informants leave alone the rather fictitious story of Rumbek and its attendances, which pose a host of questions whose answers seem uneasily established due to the complexity of the matter.

So far, and in time to come, there seems to be no easy or possible panacea to such obscure and contradictory versions of place names in point other than deep and serious analytical research.

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