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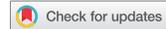
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## *Diamond Desire* – Probing the Epistemological Entanglements of Geology and Ethnography at Diamang (Angola)

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### ABSTRACT

In the wake of the Anthropocene there is a growing body of literature questioning the colonial and imperialistic underpinnings of geology, mineralogy and mining sciences. When focused on the African continent, these critiques echo and complement previous analyses of the role that anthropology has played as the ‘handmaiden of colonialism’. This article proposes to liken the two debates by focusing on the ethnographic practices promoted by the Angolan diamond mining company Diamang (1917–1988) during the interwar period. It argues that *mineral desire*, the greed for mineral resources such as diamonds, copper or gold, was the drive behind the introduction of ethnographic collecting and field-working to the Portuguese colony. The implications of this shift in perspective will be explored regarding the ongoing restitution debate. First, the article demonstrates that the history of the objects collected by Diamang disrupts ‘classic’ readings of the history of Portuguese anthropology focused on ‘disciplinary big men’ and their agendas. Second, it shows how the gathering and interpretation of ethnographic and archaeological data were totally integrated into the extractive apparatus of Diamang. The article then concludes by suggesting that the decolonisation of ethnographic collections must consider their entanglements with mining, geology and mineralogy.

### KEYWORDS

African archaeology; Angola; Anthropocene; Diamang; Portuguese anthropology; diamond mining; museum anthropology; settler colonialism; restitution

‘Already present in the archives of geology, available for operations then inconceivable, was the model of what would later be an alphabet’.<sup>1</sup>

Roger Caillois.

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1. R. Caillois *apud* M. Yourcenar, ‘Introduction’, *The Writing of Stones* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), xix.

'Relics of bygone instruments of labour possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economic formations of society as fossil bones do for the determination of extinct species of animals'.<sup>2</sup>

Karl Marx.

## Introduction

In her critique of the Anthropocene, Kathryn Yusoff points out several ways in which geology has informed the 'epistemic and material modes of categorization and dispossession' that became central to racialised relations of power.<sup>3</sup> These 'grammars of geology' have legitimised and operationalised both chattel slavery and settler colonialism and continue enabling antiblackness practices associated with mining and environmental racism.<sup>4</sup> Labelling the praxis of geology 'colonial earth-writing', Yusoff calls for a rereading of its disciplinary histories that echoes the challenge advanced by the advocates of the 'anthropology as the handmaiden of colonialism' thesis from the 1960s to the late 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Scholars are urged, as they were then, to pay close attention to 'point and erase' actions that obscure a backdrop of silenced experiences and voices.<sup>6</sup> In the Anthropocene debate, it is the naming of specific 'golden spikes' in the stratigraphic record and the 'selective perspectivism' of the linear metanarratives associated with them that authors like Yusoff, Heather Davis or Zoe Todd claim that are used to erase concomitant histories of racist violence, dispossession and genocide.<sup>7</sup>

A 'golden spike', Yusoff explains, is a discernible line in the stratigraphic succession that is read as a threshold between geological epochs and associated with a significant global historical event.<sup>8</sup> In the case of the Anthropocene, she argues, if the international scientific community agrees on occasions such as the invasion and plundering of the Americas, the settlement of Madeira or the industrialisation of the United Kingdom as the defining cause of its 'golden spike', settler colonial narratives become permanently enshrined in our reading of the

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2. K. Marx, *Capital – A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. I (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 286.
  3. K. Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2018) [e-book].
  4. *Ibid.*
  5. Compiling a bibliography of this debate is beyond the scope of my article. See e.g. P. Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassell, 1999); P. Pels, 'What Has Anthropology Learned from the Anthropology of Colonialism?', *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 16, 3 (2008), 280–299; P. Pels and O. Salemink, 'Five Theses on Ethnography as Colonial Practice', *History and Anthropology*, 8, 1–4 (1994), 1–34.
  6. H. Davis and Z. Todd, 'On the Importance of a Date, or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene', *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 16, 4 (2017), 761–780; J.S. Schneiderman, 'The Anthropocene Controversy', in R. Grusin, ed., *Anthropocene Feminism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 169–195. See also L. Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 194–242.
  7. Davis and Todd, 'On the Importance of a Date', 767; E. Johnson and H. Morehouse, eds, 'After the Anthropocene', *Progress in Human Geography*, 38, 3 (2014), 439–456; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.
  8. Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

geological past of the Earth.<sup>9</sup> Even if done as a condemning gesture, such choices would contribute to the ‘erasing’ of Indigenous or Black histories and knowledges by ‘pointing’ to specific stratigraphic lines and associating them with one-sided imperial metanarratives.<sup>10</sup> In other words, according to Yusoff, by singling out a single event and anointing it with global, quasi-universal meaning, the International Commission on Stratigraphy is reproducing the same rationale that justifies the destruction of native and aboriginal knowledge systems that are non-overlapping, both chronologically and epistemically, with the Western one.

In their historiographic critiques of the *classic* accounts of anthropology, Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink have pointed out how the disproportionate attention paid to the biographies of *disciplinary big men* diverts attention from the ethnographic rationales and practices that characterised daily colonial relations.<sup>11</sup> As they clarify, this narrative diversion continues to conceal ‘processes of othering’ such as those that in the Portuguese context gave rise to simplistic but totalising representations like ‘*civilizado*’, ‘*indígena*’ and ‘*assimilado*’, or ‘*colono*’ and ‘*colonizado*’.<sup>12</sup> These representations, in turn, have held us back from scrutinising the more complex entanglements of race and ethnicity, gender and class that the archive testifies to.<sup>13</sup> By doing so, *civilizado*, *indígena* and like designations work not only as operational concepts, providing the simple binary language necessary for the arithmetic of imperialism, but also as disavowals of all human existence that somehow overflows or antedates settler-colonial identities. In the end, the ‘voiding’ of these queer experiences, to recover Yusoff’s expression, derive from forceful attempts to ‘disentangle’ the rich time of African embodied experience and memory in order to extract from it what Achille Mbembe denounces as the ‘linear models’ at the root of colonial ignorance and imperial aggression.<sup>14</sup> According to Mbembe, ‘models’ operating with concepts such as *indígena* or *assimilado* were consequently inscribed into the living flesh of Africans and used to establish imperial sovereignty over colonised spaces, ‘writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations’ that

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9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. I adapt both the expression ‘classic’, to qualify academic-centred histories of anthropology, and the concept ‘disciplinary big men’ from Pels and Salemink. Pels, ‘What Has Anthropology Learned?’; Pels and Salemink, ‘Five Theses on Ethnography’; P. Pels and O. Salemink, eds, *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

12. C.N. da Silva, ‘Assimilacionismo e *assimilados* no império português do século XX’, in A.B. Xavier and C.N. da Silva, *O Governo dos Outros* (Lisbon: ICS, 2016), 323–364; J. Fabian, ‘Presence and Representation’, *Critical Inquiry*, 16, 4 (1990), 753–772; N. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco* (Coimbra: Museu Antropológico da Universidade de Coimbra, 1999), 54 (note 10); N. Thomas, ‘Against Ethnography’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 6, 3 (1991), 309.

13. A.L. Stoler and F. Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony – Rethinking a Research Agenda’ in F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler, eds, *Tensions of Empire – Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56.

14. A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 17; Davis and Todd, ‘On the Importance of a Date’; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 31, 111; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

European ‘history, geography, cartography, and archaeology’ backed, ‘closely binding identity and topography’.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, thanks to the reappearance of the restitution debate, ethnographic practices of violent extraction, collection and curation of objects are again under scrutiny.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, as Mbembe has noted, if the critiques prompted by this renewed debate limit themselves to examining the instances involving artefacts which were illicitly taken, they will most likely conceal the *world-sundering* cosmological dimension of the colonial project and, consequently, obscure the extractivist root cause of antiblackness-imbued mining practices, environmental racism and anthropogenic climate change.<sup>17</sup> Taking heed of Mbembe’s observations, in this article, I deploy a critique of both geology and anthropology to problematise and unsettle the institutional history of a collection of Angolan artefacts. More specifically, by unravelling the epistemic and methodological proximity which existed between the two disciplines, I will demonstrate how *mineral desire* practically informed everyday ethnographic practices in the Lunda province of Angola, from the mid-1930s to the early 1960s.

To achieve this objective, this article approaches the scientific activities that the diamantiferous company Diamang (1917–1988) sponsored at the Dundo Museum (Angola, 1942–) as another instantiation of the ‘libidinal economy’ of geologic prospection, extraction and transformation that propelled the corporation.<sup>18</sup> The *Companhia de Diamantes de Angola – Diamang* was a highly profitable international concessionary company operating in the northeast Angolan province of Lunda, often described as a ‘state within the state’ because of the all-encompassing social control it exerted over the inhabitants of its theatre of operations.<sup>19</sup> Building on Heidegger’s insight that such acts of *worlding* are always based on concomitant gestures of *earthing*, Diamang’s social, cultural and ideological activities will be understood as inextricable from the scientific practices and discourses promoted by the company.<sup>20</sup> This means that the effort Diamang made to build model settler colonies for its white employees (*worlding*) will be contextualised as part of a project of

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15. A. Mbembe, ‘Necropolitics’, *Public Culture*, 15, 1 (2003), 25–27.

16. F. Sarr and B. Savoy, *Report on the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage* (Paris, 2018).

17. A. Mbembe, ‘À propos de la restitution des artefacts africains conservés dans les musées d’Occident’, AOC, <https://aoc.media/analyse/2018/10/05/a-propos-de-restitution-arte-facts-africains-conserves-musees-doccident/>, accessed 17 August 2019.

18. Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

19. D. Collier, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016) [e-book]; N. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*; N. Porto, ‘Manageable Past’, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, 39, 155–156 (1999), 767–787; N. Porto, *Modos de Objectificação da Dominação Colonial* (Lisbon: Gulbenkian, 2009); N. Porto, ‘A Arte e etnografia cokwe’, *Etnográfica*, 19, 1 (2015), 139–168; W.G. Clarence Smith, ‘The Myth of Uneconomic Imperialism: The Portuguese in Angola, 1836–1926’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 2 (1979), 177.

20. J. Young, *Heidegger’s Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Porto, *Modos de Objectificação*.

substitution of indigenous institutions (*world-sundering*) and imposition of Western categories and epistemologies of nature (*earthing*).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, by resisting the practice of celebrating the fathers of anthropology in Portugal, the analysis here conducted will allow us to see the Dundo Museum as an ethnographic institution which was integral to the geo-ethnological *worlding* and *earthing* apparatuses of colonialism and, at the same time, shed further light on the fact that the museum hid the ruthless depletion of the African land in plain sight. Perceiving different disciplinary aspects of colonial epistemology as deeply entangled with a myriad of forms of economic and political exploitation, this article then probes the limits of representation, denouncing instances when a single narrative, disciplinary biography or ethnographic object are made to uphold an uncritical reading of the colonial past and the postcolonial present.

### The biography of *disciplinary big men* as a ‘point and erase’ rhetorical device

Portuguese reactions to Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy’s *Report on the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage* (2018) were neither as dramatic nor as articulated as those voiced in other former colonial metropolises.<sup>22</sup> Faced with the resurgence of the restitution debate, the director of the National Museum of Ethnology (NME) simply declared that its collections were ‘special’, and that the institution was ‘a case apart’.<sup>23</sup> The most telling aspect of his statement was the choice to mobilise the works of several *disciplinary big men* to justify his position, which rests on the assumption that the objects exposed at the NME are a by-product of ethical ‘scientific’ expeditions, and are thus endowed with an unimpeachable past that differentiates them from other European collections.<sup>24</sup> This foregrounding of *classic* disciplinary history cuts short any further inquiry into the everyday ethnographic practices at the genesis of Portuguese national collections, functioning as a ‘point and erase’ technique, in the vein of those criticised by Pels and Salemink.<sup>25</sup>

Amongst all tutelar figures, the director of the NME singled out Jorge Dias (1907–1973), whose connection with the collections held in the museum was

21. *Ibid.*

22. See, for instance, T. Hunt, H. Dorgerloh and N. Thomas, ‘Restitution Report’, *The Art Newspaper*, 27 November 2018. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/comment/restitution-report-museums-directors-respond>, accessed 18 August 2019.

23. L. Canelas, ‘Museu Nacional de Etnologia, um caso à parte’, *Publico*, 7 December 2018. <https://www.publico.pt/2018/12/07/culturaipsilon/noticia/caso-museu-nacional-etnologia-1853017>, accessed 18 August 2019; Lusa Agency, ‘Museu Nacional de Etnologia não recebeu pedidos de restituição de peças’, *Diário de Notícias*, 22 March 2019. <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/interior/museu-nacional-de-etnologia-nao-recebeu-pedidos-de-restituicao-de-pecas—diretor-10714516.html>, accessed 18 August 2019.

24. Canelas, ‘Museu Nacional de Etnologia’.

25. Pels, ‘What Has Anthropology Learned’; Pels and Salemink, ‘Five Theses on Ethnography’; Pels and Salemink, *Colonial Subjects*.

presented as an endorsement of their exceptionalism.<sup>26</sup> The practice of associating institutions to prestigious figures is rather common in the Portuguese-speaking context, where it constitutes what Janet Mawhinney has defined as a ‘move to innocence’.<sup>27</sup> Dias is often portrayed as the *disciplinary big man* who heroically steered Portuguese academic anthropology away from the racist ‘Porto School of Anthropology’ towards a culturalist approach that was more palatable to the *Estado Novo* elites of the late 1950s.<sup>28</sup> While this *classic* rendering of the history of Portuguese anthropology is superficially accurate, its narrow focus on academia effectively deviates our critical attention from the everyday ethnographic practices which were integral to the ‘technologies of domination’ that the Portuguese employed in the colonial field.<sup>29</sup> This inconsideration of the practical side of the discipline is historically situated and politically motivated. Tellingly, just as the connections between racial and anthropometric research and the Portuguese settler-colonial project were candidly accepted by the members of the Porto School, so were the entanglements between anthropology, geology and prospecting by the generation that preceded it.<sup>30</sup> António Mendes Correia (1888–1960) and Bernardino Machado (1851–1944), the *disciplinary big men* of the two generations before Dias, began their careers as professors of geology and curators of evolutionary museums that built upon notions such as geological *deep time* and stratigraphic succession to interpret and display, often side by side, geological specimens, ethnographic objects and human remains.<sup>31</sup> While doing so, Machado and Correia admitted

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26. H.G. West, ‘Inverting the Camel’s Hump: Jorge Dias, His Wife, Their Interpreter, and I’, in R. Handler, ed., *Significant Others: Interpersonal and Professional Commitments in Anthropology* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 51–90; J. Leal, ‘A Antropologia em Portugal e o Englobamento da Cultura Popular’, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 6, 2 (2016), 293–319; P. Israel, *In Step With The Times: Mapiko Masquerades of Mozambique* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).
  27. E. Tuck and K.W. Yang, ‘Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education Society*, 1, 1 (2012), 1–40; J. Mawhinney, ‘Giving up the Ghost: Disrupting the (Re)Production of White Privilege in Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Organizational Change’ (Master’s thesis, Ottawa, University of Toronto, 1998), 94–120.
  28. C. Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998); P.M. Ferraz, ‘Mendes Correia e a Escola de Antropologia do Porto’ (PhD thesis, Lisbon, Universidade de Lisboa, 2012); R.M. Pereira, ‘Raça, Sangue e Robustez: Os paradigmas da Antropologia Física colonial portuguesa’, *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, 7/8 (2005), 209–241; R.M. Pereira, ‘Uma visão colonial do racismo’, *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, 9/10 (2006), 129–140.
  29. Pels and Saleminck, ‘Five Theses on Ethnography’; Pels and Saleminck, *Colonial Subjects*.
  30. See, for instance, the works compiled in the two volumes of the proceedings of the ‘First National Congress of Colonial Anthropology’. This event was organised by the Portuguese Society of Anthropology and Ethnology (1918–), the academic study association which stood beyond the ‘Porto School of Anthropology’. *Trabalhos do 1º Congresso Nacional de Antropologia Colonial*, vols I and II (Porto: Edições da 1ª Exposição Colonial Portuguesa, 1934).
  31. Bernardino Machado became a full professor of the University of Coimbra while still lecturing in agriculture, in 1879, but began lecturing in geology immediately afterwards. He was responsible for establishing the first chair of anthropology in Portugal, in 1885, and curated the Ethnographic Collections of the Natural History Museum of the University of Coimbra. António Mendes Correia, who was the leading figure of the ‘Porto School of Anthropology’, became a full professor of mineralogy and geology of the University of Porto in 1926. He established and directed the Museum of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology of the University of Porto. A.A.M. Correia, *Geologia e Antropologia em Portugal* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1939); A.F. Moller, ‘Catalogo do Museu Ethnographico

their indebtedness to the geological and geodesic missions sent to the Portuguese colonies to access their mineral richness and gather the data necessary to coordinate future extractive activities.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Mendes Correia went as far as authoring a booklet on the subject, entitled *Geologia e Antropologia em Portugal* (*Geology and Anthropology in Portugal*, 1939).<sup>33</sup> In its pages, he unambiguously traces the origins of physical and museum anthropology to the geological campaigns that took place in Portugal and its colonies during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

The decision to intervene in a debate about the problematic legacies of imperialism by evoking Jorge Dias, the ‘move to innocence’ undertaken by the director of NME, has a long history of uses, all of which aim at obscuring the violence of Portuguese colonialism.<sup>35</sup> In the specific case of the NME and its collections, this manoeuvre is structurally embedded in the institution itself.<sup>36</sup> As a matter of fact, the Portuguese Directorate General for Cultural Heritage today still publicly refers to the NME as the outcome of the ‘inspiring moment’ that followed Jorge Dias’ exhibition *Life and Art of the Makonde People* (1959).<sup>37</sup> The logic underpinning this statement can be traced back to the momentous catalogue *Escultura Africana no Museu de Etnologia do Ultramar* (*African Sculpture at the Museum of Overseas Ethnology*), which was published in 1968 while Dias was still the director of the NME (then known as the Museum of Overseas Ethnology, MOE).<sup>38</sup> In its anonymous afterword, the African collections there illustrated are presented as the outcome of two of Dias’ interventions in the field of ethnography.<sup>39</sup>

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da Universidade de Coimbra’, *O Instituto*, 44 (1897), 674–682, 749–757; J.L. de Vasconcelos, *História do Museu Etnológico Português* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1915), 284.

32. Correia, *Geologia e Antropologia*, 15–16.

33. All translations from Portuguese are the responsibility of the author.

34. Correia, *Geologia e Antropologia*.

35. A detailed analysis of this history goes beyond the scope of this article. See, for instance, D. Gallo, *O Saber Português: Antropologia e Colonialismo* (Lisbon: Heptágono, 1988); L. Macagno, ‘Antropólogos na “África portuguesa”’, *África*, 35 (2015), 87–118; L. Macagno, ‘A Brazilianist in Portuguese Africa’, *Portuguese Studies Review*, 26, 1 (2018), 221–246; West, ‘Inverting the Camel’s Hump’.

36. See Adriano Moreira’s interview reproduced in Macagno, ‘Antropólogos’, 108–110.

37. Directorate General for Cultural Heritage, *National Museum of Ethnology*. <http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt/en/museus-e-monumentos/rede-portuguesa/m/museu-nacional-de-etnologia/>, accessed 18 August 2019.

38. J. Dias *et al.*, eds, *Escultura Africana No Museu de Etnologia do Ultramar* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigação do Ultramar, 1968), afterword.

39. Although this afterword is anonymous, a *festschrift* edited in 1989 by the Centre for Ethnologic Studies in praise of Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira (1910–1990) suggests that it was written by Oliveira, close collaborator and friend of Dias. The anonymity seems meant to signal the collective nature of the work performed by the team of the MOE. Oliveira would repeat the exact same claims under analysis in a series of later articles and chapters. E.V. de Oliveira, ‘L’Art Africain au Portugal’, *Antologia di Belle Arti*, 17, 5 (1981), 25–44; E.V. de Oliveira, ‘Escultura Africana em Portugal’, in *Escultura Africana em Portugal*, (Lisbon: IICT, 1985), 11–44; E.V. de Oliveira and B. Pereira, *Catálogo da exposição no Centro de Arte Contemporânea do Porto* (Porto: SEIC, 1977); F.O. Baptista, J.P. de Brito, M.L. Braga *et al.*, *Estudos em Homenagem a Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de Etnologia/ INIC, 1989), 15–16.

The first intervention occurred in 1957 and 1958, when the team Dias was leading in Mozambique procured the 300 Makonde objects that marked the beginning of the *Life and Art of the Makonde People* collection.<sup>40</sup> As the afterword to *African Sculpture* states, these artefacts constitute the *lower stratum* on top of which the remaining MOE collections grew by slow accretion.<sup>41</sup> The second intervention took place in 1955, when Dias, as general secretary of the *Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires*, delivered a speech concerning the ‘nomenclature and subject-matter of Folklore’ before the *Congrès International d’Ethnologie Régionale* in Arnhem.<sup>42</sup> Once again, the anonymous writer of the afterword retrospectively establishes this speech as a watershed moment, which, as he reports, greatly influenced subsequent Portuguese legislation, including the one regulating the organisation of the MOE and the creation of its associated Study Centre of Cultural Anthropology.<sup>43</sup> However, what the afterword fails to clarify is that Dias had simply reinstated the methodologies of José Leite de Vasconcelos (1858–1941).

After introducing these moments as foundational, the concluding pages of *African Sculpture* explain some of the ways through which MOE collections came to encompass, at the time of writing, around 16,000 objects. As a number of scientific expeditions and private purchases are listed, we are informed that, via a Ministerial Order approved on 26 April 1963, all the ethnographic pieces and collections held by the institutions overseen by the Portuguese Overseas Ministry, namely the Overseas Agricultural Museum and the Overseas General Agency, were surveyed and transferred to the MOE.<sup>44</sup> The same Ministerial Order also issued an open call for contributions and donations. By 1968, several students of the School of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy and the diamantiferous company Diamang had already answered this call.<sup>45</sup> Contrary to what is stated in the afterword of *African Sculpture*, these historical details contradict the attribution of a major role to Dias, hinting at the fact that the establishment of the MOE and the subsequent gathering of dispersed ethnographic objects was the realisation of an old project that both preceded and persisted after Dias’ interventions.<sup>46</sup> However, and rather puzzlingly, this information is presented as further evidence of Dias’ historical importance.

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40. Oliveira, ‘L’Art Africain au Portugal’; Oliveira, ‘Escultura Africana em Portugal’.

41. *Ibid.*

42. B. Rogan, ‘A Remarkable Congress and a Popular General Secretary’, *Etnográfica*, 19, 3 (2015), 567–576; J. Dias, ‘The Quintessence of the Problem: Nomenclature and Subject-Matter of Folklore’, in *Congrès International d’Ethnologie Régionale, Actes du Congrès International d’Ethnologie Régionale* (Arnhem: Het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum, 1956), 1–14.

43. Dias *et al.*, eds, *Escultura Africana*, afterword.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.* ‘School of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy’ was the new designation of the old Colonial School, established in 1906 next to the Lisbon Geographic Society.

46. See, for instance, the plans for a new museum presented to the ‘First National Congress of Colonial Anthropology’ in 1934. M. Afonso do Paço, ‘Da necessidade da criação do Museu de Etnografia’, in

To make sense of the fact that this contradiction has never been registered as paradoxical, we need to shift to geology, or more accurately, take into consideration Yusoff's critique of the practice of marking and naming 'golden spikes' on the stratigraphic record.<sup>47</sup> As broached in the introduction, when specific global events are associated with the threshold existing between geological epochs, these associations, which become known as 'golden spikes', silence concurrent narratives.<sup>48</sup> With this geological metaphor in mind, the singling out of Jorge Dias' intervention can be understood as the naming of a significant *layer* in the historical process of artefact accumulation and ethnological work which resulted in the MOE collection, and which is still ongoing at the NME. This means that to establish Dias' intervention as crucial, it can be admitted that a large part of these collections was not gathered and organised in accordance with his methodologies. Since it was Dias' method that, according to the authors of *African Sculpture*, established the conditions that allowed Portuguese understanding of these pieces to be put into a global perspective, it is his imprint that is accepted as the defining common denominator of all the collections, thus diverting our attention away from a series of equally foundational processes.<sup>49</sup>

In spirit of the same geological analogy, different nuclei of the MOE/NME collection seem to be read as if they were successive *strata*, lying and accumulating on top of one another. Some of these have a clear *sedimentary origin*, encompassing and amalgamating disparate elements of diverse origins into a coherent whole. Others are presented as if they were of *igneous origin*, resulting from abrupt eruptions of authorial 'inspiration' and pure 'scientific' interest.<sup>50</sup> In the end, by being turned into a *marker*, it is Dias' *layer* that turns this consecutive series of *strata* into a tangible coherent historical whole, defining, in turn, an entire *epoch* of Portuguese museology and cultural anthropology. Consequently, once we take this metaphor into account, we can see how Dias' scientific motivations persist to be strategically employed to protect the MOE/NME collections' reputation, while hiding in plain sight the processes that led to the assemblage of lesser known parts. This manoeuvre is effective insofar as it is articulated as disinterested history of science. However, from a critical perspective, the staging of Jorge Dias' revolt against the Porto School of Anthropology gains a new meaning. It not only allows the MOE/NME collections to be exempt from the 'taint' of having once related to anthropometry and race science, but also distances them from the 'libidinal economy' of extractivism that moved

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*Trabalhos do 1º Congresso*, volume II, 23–27; L. Chaves, 'Museu Etnográfico do Império Português – Sua necessidade – Um plano de organização' in *Trabalhos do 1º Congresso*, vol. II, 28–45.

47. Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Those which account for the objects incorporated because of the Ministerial Order of 26 April 1963, for instance. Dias *et al.*, eds, *Escultura Africana*, afterword.

50. Canelas, 'Museu Nacional de Etnologia'; Directorate General for Cultural Heritage, *National Museum of Ethnology*.

Bernardino Machado and Mendes Correia, the latter pushing for the creation of a museum of colonial ethnology as early as 1934.<sup>51</sup>

Far from being innocent, the discursive strategy illustrated above constitutes a practice of epistemic violence which, especially in the case of the objects donated by Diamang, obscures, as Mbembe puts it, the deep entanglement existing between the collection of African artefacts and large-scale *world-sundering* processes.<sup>52</sup> According to the 1963 report of the Dundo Museum, which was funded and sponsored by Diamang, in response to the aforementioned Ministerial Order, a total of eight crates, brimming full with 555 already catalogued and curated ethnographic objects, were sent to the planning committee of the MOE.<sup>53</sup> This report also states that another shipment, consisting of two boxes with 53 objects, was sent to the *Museu de Ovar* (established in 1961), a regional museum situated in the northwest of Portugal.<sup>54</sup> In 1962, Diamang had already offered 312 ethnographic objects to the *Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola* and another 33 to the *Associação dos Naturais de Angola* in Luanda.<sup>55</sup> The impressive number and comprehensiveness of these donations, which continued in the following years, raises several questions.<sup>56</sup>

Not only were these objects collected, curated, packed and redistributed outside Dias' direct supervision, but they were also, and more importantly, assembled into stand-alone collections according to the rationale and practices of functionaries of the mining company, whose values cannot plausibly be conflated with those animating Dias. As the director of Diamang, Ernesto de Vilhena (1876–1967), bluntly stated in 1954, the company pursued 'one very specific goal, which [was] to extract diamonds, in good administrative and economic conditions, thus allowing it to return the capital invested in the enterprise'.<sup>57</sup> This suggests that the constitution of the Dundo Museum, its collections, and the donation to the MOE/NME stemmed from interests that significantly differed from paternalistic benevolence or pure scientific curiosity.

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51. 'I Congresso Nacional de Antropologia Colonial', *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia*, 7 (1935), 17–21.

52. Mbembe, 'À propos de la restitution'.

53. A. Videira, M. Fontinha et al., *Relatório Anual 1963*, 4 (1964), 32–34. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=1503>, accessed 23 August 2019; Porto, 'Manageable Past', 768–770.

54. Videira, Fontinha, et al., *Relatório Anual 1963*, 35.

55. A. Videira, A. Oliveira et al., *Relatório Anual 1962*, 4 (1963), 27. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=1502>, accessed 23 August 2019.

56. Companhia de Diamantes de Angola, *Relatório do Conselho de Administração e Parecer do Conselho Fiscal relativos ao exercício de 1964* (Lisboa: Diamang, 1965), 27–31; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 157.

57. Before becoming chief executive of Diamang (1919–1955), Vilhena had been Minister of Colonies (1917) and the Governor of the Nyassa Chartered Company (1902–1904), having then signed the agreement with the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association that turned the Portuguese company into a provider of forced labour for the South African mines. D.R. Curto, 'Um álbum fotográfico da Diamang', *Mulemba – Revista Angolana de Ciências Sociais*, 5, 10 (2015), 167; E. Vilhena, *Companhia do Nyassa* (Lisbon: Typographia da 'A Editora', 1905); *Aventura e Rotina (crítica de uma crítica)* (Lisbon: Oficinas Gráficas da Editorial Império, 1955), 18; M.J. Carvalho, 'As Esculturas de Ernesto Jardim de Vilhena' (PhD thesis, Lisbon, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 2014), 72–73, 104–108.

Nevertheless, no matter how intuitive this understanding appears to be, *classic* historical readings of the ethnological work promoted by Diamang perpetuate the myth of the institution's epistemic innocence, thus characterising its collecting practices as run-of-the-mill salvage ethnography, with René Pélissier going as far as celebrating that, thanks to the company's philanthropic actions, diamond capitalists from London and Amsterdam had 'paid out of their pockets' for the preservation of African art.<sup>58</sup>

This naïve interpretation is at odds with Ernesto de Vilhena's claim that the only drive behind Diamang's actions was the pursuit of profit. Therefore, it seems to stem from an inability to imagine how salvage ethnography might have enhanced the revenue generated by the company. Such a difficulty might arise from a lack of understanding of the complex epistemic continuities between geology and ethnography, which, in turn, translates into a lack of research into their unsuspected disciplinary and methodological connections. Even the most important scholars who have written about the Dundo Museum, Delinda Collier and Nuno Porto, have fallen short of advancing an in-depth analysis of this entanglement according to its own immanent logic.<sup>59</sup> In their otherwise effective critique of the role that the museum played in materialising, operationalising and sustaining Diamang's obsessive-compulsive settler colonialism, it is always the ethnographic and African art collections that are at the centre of their attention.<sup>60</sup> Collier's approximation of the processes of diamond extraction and cultural reification of individual 'units of culture' is paradigmatic of this approach.<sup>61</sup> While recognising Diamang as a colonial *worlding* 'apparatus' capable of recombining or 're-mediating' the subjectivities and materialities of all those involved in its mining operations, her thorough critique of the commodification of local cultures precludes further inquiries about their instrumentalisation as mere cogs in the mechanical processes of diamond prospecting and mining.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, additional motivations for the actions of the diamond mining company become a necessary topic of speculation, with Collier proposing that the creation of effective propaganda and a romantic search for the African 'soul' should be accounted for as complementary drives.<sup>63</sup>

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58. Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe'; R. Pélissier, *Le naufrage des caravelles* (Montamets: Editions Pélissier, 1979), 23–25, 30.

59. Nuno Porto's *Angola a Preto e Branco* is the monograph which comes closest to proposing such a reading. Collier, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda*; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*; Porto, 'Manageable Past'; 'The Arts of the Portuguese Empire'; Porto, *Modos de Objectificação da Dominação Colonial*; Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe'.

60. Collier, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda*; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*. For an analysis of how the ethnographic efforts promoted by the museum became entangled with the obsessive-compulsive security measures set in place by Diamang's security forces, see F. Calvão, 'The Company Oracle, Corporate Security and Diviner-Detectives in Angola's Diamond Mines', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59, 3 (2017), 574–599.

61. D. Collier, 'Diamang as Apparatus: The Production of *Painted Walls of Lunda* in 1953' in Collier, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda*, 29–72.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

Because of this focus on ethnographic and art collections, salvage ethnography, with its own logics and methodologies, has become the exclusive lens through which the above-mentioned authors approach the collection of all the materials gathered at the Museum, be they of geological, botanical, zoological or archaeological extraction.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, and understandably so, academic studies concerning Diamang's abusive labour practices, medical services, security forces and public health campaigns have not shown any interest in integrating the company's seemingly disinterested passion for collecting ethnographic artefacts with its scientific pursuit of diamond mining and prospection.<sup>65</sup> Cumulatively, this lack of interest has left further room for the *classic* account of the collections to construct their heterogeneous unity as an accumulation of successive *strata*, each characterised by its association with different tutelary figures. This has happened because the logics and drives dictating their constitution, accumulation and 're-mediation' are viewed as running parallel to the ones conditioning the core mining activities pursued by Diamang and, as such, understood to animate individuals and not the company as a corporate whole.<sup>66</sup>

In his most recent articles about Diamang, Porto presents us with a succinct instance of this kind of reading.<sup>67</sup> As he argues, several *disciplinary big men* such as Albert Maesen (1915–1992), Franz Olbrechts (1899–1958), Hermann Baumann (1902–1972) and Olga Boone (1903–1992) became indirectly involved in the curation or in the research that was done at Dundo. Similarly, as he continues, figures like José Redinha (1905–1983), Marie-Louise Bastin (1918–2000), José Osório de Oliveira (1900–1964) and Barros Machado (1912–2002) had a more hands-on influence on the creation, management and internationalisation of the collections.<sup>68</sup> In his account, Redinha is retrospectively positioned as the first key figure who marked the *lower stratum* upon which posterior interventions accrete more ethnographic *matter*.<sup>69</sup> A self-taught amateur, Redinha was invited in 1936 to curate a 'Diamang ethnographic collection' or 'Gentile Museum' on the basis of the pre-existing materials he had amassed during his time serving as an aspirant colonial administrative officer.<sup>70</sup> This ever-expanding collection

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64. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 24–25, 30.

65. Calvão, 'Company Oracle'; J. Varanda, "A Bem da Nação": Medical Science in a Diamond Company in Twentieth-Century Colonial Angola' (PhD thesis, London, University College London, 2007); J. Varanda, 'Crossing Colonies and Empires', in A. Digby, W. Ernst and P. B. Mukharji, eds, *Crossing Colonial Historiographies: Histories of Colonial and Indigenous Medicines in Transnational Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 165–184; T. Cleveland, *Stones of Contention: A History of Africa's Diamonds* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014) [e-book]; T. Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015) [e-book].

66. Collier, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda*.

67. Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe'; Porto, 'Manageable Past'.

68. Porto, 'Manageable Past', 768–770; Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe'.

69. P.M. Ferraz, 'Projectos Coloniais e seus efeitos', *Poiésis*, 2, 2 (2009), 50–54; T.I.M. Pereira, *Uma Travessia da Colonialidade* (PhD thesis, Lisbon, Universidade de Lisboa, 2011), 99–100, 159–161.

70. A.B. Machado, 'Notícia sobre a Acção Cultural da Companhia de Diamantes de Angola', in M.L.R. Areia and A.B. Machado, eds, *Diamang* (Coimbra: Departamento de Antropologia, 1995), 11–28; Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe', 151–152; Porto, 'Manageable Past', 768–771; J. Redinha *et al.*,

eventually crystallised into an Ethnographic Museum in 1938, and then was inaugurated as the universalist-inclined Dundo Museum in 1942, which Barros Machado came to direct while still entrusting Redinha with the curation of its ethnographic collections.<sup>71</sup>

By attributing to each successive *stratum* of elements gathered in Diamang's collection a *raison d'être* which was associated with the academic credo of *disciplinary big men*, the historical narrative inadvertently reproduced by Porto cuts off the practices of collecting and curating from the mainstream scientific, industrial and extractive activities of the diamond mining company.<sup>72</sup> Diamang was above all a diamond corporation, one that by 1937 began to slowly introduce large-scale automated industrial mining and terraforming to Angola, setting in motion a massive *world-sundering* extractive operation while *worlding* a white-settler's heaven for scientists, technicians and other white European workers and their extended families.<sup>73</sup> Even when, in the face of these large-scale socio- and geo-engineering interventions, we decide to accept salvage ethnography as a cover-all explanation for why Redinha's original collection was considered worth expanding upon, accepting the related *classic* account of the history of Portuguese anthropology still poses a significant problem. According to this account, in fact, it was Jorge Dias who, after 1955, shifted Portuguese anthropology from the study of biologically determined racial differences to the cultures of 'non-white' populations. When this proposition is considered, Diamang's precocious interest in financing cultural ethnography (c. 1936–1946) becomes even more puzzling, as international propaganda only became a priority for the company after the establishment of the United Nations, which Portugal joined in 1955. Tackling this conundrum allows me to rewrite the history of the ethnographic collections offered to the MOE/NME considering the larger geo-ethnological *worlding* and *earthing* practices of Diamang.

### **Diamond desire as the drive for methodological and epistemic innovation**

The ethnographic collection of Dundo Museum was steadily enlarged via a series of 'ethnographic campaigns' which followed the same scientific models and methods as the Portuguese geographic expeditions of the nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> However, the first *stratum* of non-ethnographic objects added to

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*Relatório Anual 1942*, 1 (1943), 39. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=6>, accessed 13 September 2019.

71. Porto, 'A Arte e etnografia cokwe', 140; *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 10, 21, 24, 149–157.
72. P. Matos, 'Projectos Coloniais e seus efeitos: o caso do trabalho de José Redinha desenvolvido no Museu do Dundo', *Poiésis*, 2, 2 (2009), 48–49.
73. Cleveland, *Stones of Contention*; Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough*; Curto, 'Um álbum fotográfico'; J.O. de Oliveira *et al.*, *Flagrantes da vida na Lunda* (Lisboa: Diamang, 1958); Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*, 10–11, 15, 49; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 133.
74. Namely, Henrique de Carvalho's journey from Luanda to the capital of Lunda Empire, between 1884 and 1887. B. Heintze, 'A Rare Insight into African Aspects of Angolan History: Henrique Dias de

this assemblage was composed of ‘artefacts of archaeological interest’ gathered at the diamond mines.<sup>75</sup> Findings began to multiply by the late 1930s and, by 1940, Jean Janmart (?–1955) took notice of them (see Figure 1).<sup>76</sup> Consequently, in 1945, after Machado became the director of the Dundo Museum, an archaeological section was created under Janmart’s curatorship.<sup>77</sup> In 1946, when Diamang launched a book series dedicated to the scientific and cultural works sponsored by the company, the geologist authored the company’s first volume, a monograph entitled *Les stations paléolithiques de l’Angola Nord-Est – Analyse géologique, climatologique et préhistorique d’un sondage fait en bordure de la rivière Luembe* (*The Palaeolithic Stations of North-Eastern Angola – A Geological, Climatological, and Prehistoric Analysis of a Survey Made at the Riverside of the Luembe*, 1946).<sup>78</sup> In its introduction, Janmart makes this cryptic comment: ‘Isn’t it a case of “what goes around comes around”, that my modest studies, due to the interplay of prehistorical and geological correlations, in which lithic instruments behave more and more like true fossils, might lead to profitable discoveries’?<sup>79</sup>

To understand this remark, we need to look at the monograph that Louis Leakey (1903–1972) authored for Diamang’s *Cultural Publications* in 1949.<sup>80</sup> Janmart had met Leakey in 1947 at the first Pan-African Congress on Prehistory in Nairobi, which was an event Diamang subsidised.<sup>81</sup> Following their encounter, Janmart invited Leakey to come to Dundo on behalf of the company so that he could examine his findings *in loco*. Accepting to visit Angola in 1948, Leakey wrote the aforementioned monograph as a report of his stay, dedicating a whole chapter to ‘the importance of the study of prehistory from the point of view of the economic development of the diamond mines’.<sup>82</sup> The prehistorian explains that in Lunda the strata of potential diamond-bearing gravels are often buried under thick layers of Kalahari sand (3–300 feet high) or redeposited Kalahari sand and red clays (4–40 feet high).<sup>83</sup> However, as he notes, not all of these

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Carvalho’s Records of His Lunda Expedition, 1880–1884’, *Portuguese Studies Review*, 19, 1–2 (2011), 93–113; J. Redinha, *Campanha Etnográfica ao Tchihoco – Volume I (Alto-Tchicapa)* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953); *Campanha Etnográfica ao Tchihoco – Volume II (Alto-Tchicapa)* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953); Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 13, 20–21.

75. M.L.R. Areia, ‘The Dundo Museum (Angola)’, in P. Allsworth-Jones, *West African Archaeology* (Oxford: Achaeopress, 2010), 157–160; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 27–28.

76. J.D. Clark, *Prehistoric Cultures of Northeast Angola and Their Significance in Tropical Africa*, vol. I (Lisbon: Diamang, 1962), 19–20; L.S.B. Leakey, *Tentative Study of the Pleistocene Climatic Changes and Stone-Age Culture Sequence in North-Eastern Angola* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1949), 13, 19; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 27–28.

77. Areia, ‘Dundo Museum (Angola)’, 157–160; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 26–28.

78. These editions were freely sent to libraries and universities across the globe. J. Janmart, *Les stations paléolithiques de l’Angola Nord-Est* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1946); Matos, ‘Projectos Coloniais’, 48; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 27, 52.

79. *Ibid.*, 9.

80. Leakey, *Tentative Study*.

81. J. Janmart, *The Kalahari Sands of the Lunda* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953), 13–14; Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 11; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 52.

82. Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 15–18.

83. *Ibid.*, 17.



**Figure 1.** Janmart sitting on top of a tool-bearing gravel stratum. The geologist and amateur archaeologist headed the Prospecting Department of *Diamang*.

Source: L. S. B. Leakey, *Tentative Study of the Pleistocene Climatic Changes and Stone-Age Culture Sequence in North-Eastern Angola* (Lisbon: Companhia de Diamantes de Angola, 1949), 28.

gravels are of economic interest. Some, dating from the Miocene (about 23 million years ago), are completely destitute of diamonds, while those from the Pleistocene (from 2,588,000 to 11,700 years ago) appeared to bear them in different concentrations.<sup>84</sup>

Pleistocene gravels stemming from prehistoric river terraces were empirically found to be less bountiful than the ones that originated in smaller prehistoric streams and creeks. The first kind of gravels were deposited when past humidity and pluviosity levels were abnormally high, while the second were sedimented during periods characterised by temperate climates.<sup>85</sup> As a result of this fortuitous correlation, Leakey adds, ‘an accurate means of determining the nature of the particular gravel exposed in the prospecting pits’ became essential to cost-

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84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*



**Figure 2.** Vertical section of the Camafufo mine, 'showing Miocene gravels overlain by a great thickness of Kalahari sand'. The arrow indicates the stratum in which lithic tools could be found. Source: L. S. B. Leakey, *Tentative Study of the Pleistocene Climatic Changes and Stone-Age Culture Sequence in North-Eastern Angola* (Lisbon: Companhia de Diamantes de Angola, 1949), 27.

effectively direct the expensive and labour-intensive mining process of removing the thick layers of Kalahari sands, which were mostly picked by shovel (see [Figure 2](#)).<sup>86</sup> As he continues, the best means to determine whether a given *stratum* consisted of the diamond-rich gravels deposited on the streambeds of old creeks was by paying attention to the kind of prehistoric lithic artefacts it contained. This happened for the following reasons: firstly, Miocene gravels are devoid of stone tools; secondly, 'distinct cultural stages' can be associated with 'different Pleistocene gravel deposits'; and, thirdly, some 'cultural stages' are linked to tropical climates and forest biomes while others are associated with temperate climates and savannah biomes (see [Figure 3](#)).<sup>87</sup>

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86. *Ibid.*; Cleveland, *Stones of Contention*; Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough*.

87. Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 17.



**Figure 3.** The scalloped display of the strata laid bare at the old diamond mine of Cataila allowed Janmart to speculate about the climacteric past of Lunda, associating it with global glacial events. Source: H. Breuil and J. Janmart, *Les limons et graviers de l'Angola du Nord-Est et leur contenu archéologique* (Lisbon: Companhia de Diamantes de Angola, 1950) 10–19.

Unearthing the right kind of prehistoric artefact quickly became a litmus test, but for this prospecting method to be totally effective a last challenge had to be overcome.<sup>88</sup> As pre-historians knew at that time, the association of given lithic tools with temperate climates was possible through a chemical and physical geological analysis only when these artefacts were found in proper stratigraphic order.<sup>89</sup> When this condition was not met, the climates associated with artefacts were determined by means of a formal comparison with the contemporary material cultures of 'forest', 'savannah', 'grasslands' and desert-dwelling 'peoples of southern and eastern Africa'.<sup>90</sup> Albeit problematic, this practice enabled field engineers to determine where diamond-rich gravels of prehistorical streambeds lay. As Leakey comments, when this method is applied to 'a number of adjacent prospecting pits', it becomes possible to reach an 'extraordinarily accurate forecast of the gravel systems' that can be found in each area of the mining field.<sup>91</sup> Over time, the 'knowledge of the Prehistory' that Diamang accrued became so exhaustive that the whole African landscape turned into a vast 'diamond field' (see Figures 4 and 5).<sup>92</sup> Traces of the deep and recent cultural past of Africa were thus *scientifically* instrumentalised to optimise the rates of return of capitalist investment.

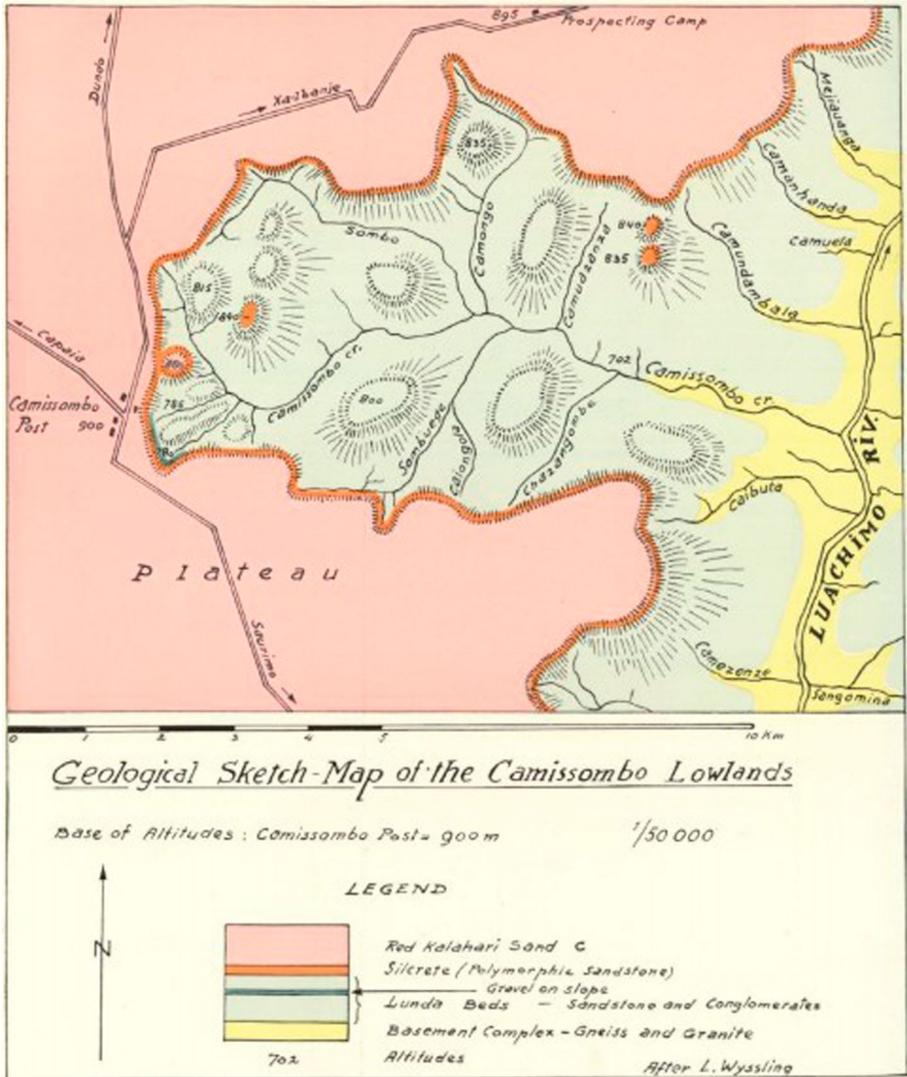
88. *Ibid.*, 15–18.

89. The relative oxidation of the lithic materials, the presence of kaolin and other chemical indicators could be combined with a physical analysis of the stratigraphic 'sorting' of smaller and larger elements and of the axial rotation at which the larger ones became deposited, in order to estimate the relative level of humidity that characterised the epoch when a given geological stratum was formed. Janmart, *Les stations paléolithiques de l'Angola Nord-Est*, 13–16.

90. Clark, *Prehistoric Cultures*, 20–24.

91. Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 17.

92. *Ibid.*, 17, 82.



**Figures 4 and 5.** Above, a landscape picture of the 'Camissombo Lowlands'. Below, a stratigraphic rendering of the 'Camissombo Lowlands' which effectively turns them into a prospective mining field.

Source: J. Janmart, *The Kalahari Sands of the Lunda* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953), 24–25.

Working in relative isolation, and not knowing about Henri Breuil's (1877–1961) method for dating African lithic cultures until 1942, Janmart devised an idiosyncratic formula to date groups of stone tools which were not found in stratigraphic order.<sup>93</sup> The application of this method required the collection of 'large series' of objects which, in turn, depended upon training native populations in screening the debris left by the mechanised 'sluicing' and diamond-sorting machines.<sup>94</sup> To assuage his fear that archaeological findings of uncommon typology might be confused with simple stones, the Dundo Museum issued collecting instructions and illustrated inventory sheets to the mining personnel.<sup>95</sup> After grouping his lithic material into smaller typological 'assemblages', Janmart proceeded to align the elements of each subset upon a 'table', beginning with the pieces with the highest 'percentage of wear and tear' (*pourcentage de roulé*) and ending with the ones that had the lowest.<sup>96</sup> He would then consider the 'index of resistance to erosion' (*indice de résistance à l'usure*) of each artefact, a value associated with their particular material composition.<sup>97</sup> The benchmarks used for this 'subjective' evaluation were empirically determined by having different kinds of stone go through a hundred consecutive programmes of an old tumble-dryer (see Figure 6).<sup>98</sup> With these two elements at hand, Janmart used his formula to reach an 'average index of deterioration' (*indice d'usure*



**Figure 6.** Sequenced pebbles from a 'fluvio-glacial conglomerate'.

Source: J. Janmart, *The Kalahari Sands of the Lunda* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953), 22.

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93. Janmart began corresponding with and visiting University of Cape Town Professor A.J.H. Goodwin (1900–1959) in 1942. J. Janmart, 'Méthode pour le classement par rang d'âge des pierres taillées préhistoriques contenues dans les nappes de gravier des plaines alluviales', in J. Janmart and J. Redinha, *La station préhistorique de Candala* (Lisboa: Diamang, 1948), 47–50; J. Redinha et al., *Relatório Anual 1943*, 2 (1944), 125. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=26>, accessed 13 September 2019.
94. J. Janmart, 'Méthode pour le classement', 49–50.
95. J. Janmart, 'La station préhistorique de Candala (District de la Lunda, Angola du Nord-Est)', in Janmart and Redinha, *La station préhistorique de Candala*, 18–24; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 52–53. See also the annexes 'A' and 'B' to the administrative circular no. 21-D/41 in J. Redinha et al., *Relatório Anual 1942*.
96. Janmart, *Les stations paléolithiques de l'Angola Nord-Est*, 46; 'Méthode pour le classement', 48.
97. *Ibid.*, 50–54.
98. *Ibid.*

*moyenne du groupe*) for each subset of lithic tools, which he then equated with the relative age of the ‘cultures’ the artefacts were understood to represent (see Figure 7).<sup>99</sup>

$$I_U = \frac{1}{n} \sum_1^n U_n R_n$$

**Figure 7.** Janmart’s formula for establishing the relative age of a subset of lithic tools. ‘ $I_U$ ’ stands for the ‘average index of deterioration’, ‘ $n$ ’ for the number of pieces composing the subset, ‘ $U_n$ ’ for the ‘index of resistance to erosion’ of each given piece and ‘ $R_n$ ’ for their given ‘percentage of tear and wear’.

Source: J. Janmart and J. Redinha, *La station préhistorique de Candala* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1948), 54–57.

While this method allowed Janmart to chronologically organise subsets within the total set of archaeological findings, in order to attribute absolute-age intervals to each group, and thus insert their sequence into a scientifically established global narrative about prehistorical climate and cultural change, each group had to be associated with a given biome and a major past global climate shift.<sup>100</sup> This last step made Janmart’s method profitable and, as J. Desmond Clark (1916–2002) pointed out, the association between lithic findings and past biomes and climates was greatly facilitated by the ethnological work that Redinha conducted at the Dundo Museum.<sup>101</sup> According to Clark, ‘the excellence of the ethnographic collections in the museum’ enabled for the ‘most valuable parallels to be drawn between some of the prehistoric artefacts and certain tools used by the present day Chokwe and connected peoples’ (see Figure 8).<sup>102</sup> In spite of Clark’s enthusiasm, the comparative use Janmart made of Diamang’s ethnographic collections was innovative only insofar as it facilitated diamond mining and profit sharing.

In fact, the abuse of African ethnographic and archaeological objects as fodder for racist analogies had been a common practice in Portuguese evolutionary museums since the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1893, inspired by revolutionary discoveries in the emerging fields of geology and Darwinian biology, and the works of John Lubbock (1834–1913) and Augustus Pitt Rivers (1827–1900), Leite de Vasconcelos successfully lobbied with Bernardino Machado, then Minister of Public Works, for the creation of the Portuguese Ethnologic Museum.<sup>103</sup> In the next year, another evolutionary

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*; Janmart, *Les stations paléolithiques de l’Angola Nord-Est*, 10; Janmart, *Kalahari Sands of the Lunda*, 62–64; Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 77–80.

101. Clark, *Prehistoric Cultures of Northeast Angola*, 19.

102. *Ibid.*

103. J. Leite de Vasconcelos, *História do Museu Etnológico Português (1893–1914)* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1915 [1916]); J.L.S. Machado, *Subsídios para a História do Museu Etnológico do Dr Leite de*



**Figure 8.** Picture of an African *Diamang* worker from Lunda used by Janmart to make sense of a prehistoric lithic finding.

Source: J. Janmart and J. Redinha, *La station préhistorique de Candala* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1948), 18.

museum was established by António Rocha (1853–1910) at Figueira da Foz.<sup>104</sup> Both institutions had ‘comparative rooms’ where African objects were used to draw speculative parallels between the uses and customs of contemporary Africans and those of prehistoric inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula. When analysing his own curatorial practices in the late 1930s, Mendes Correia accepts both museums as direct influences, suggesting that Janmart’s method can be best understood as a practical application of a metropolitan epistemology in the colonial context.<sup>105</sup>

The analysis here conducted amply demonstrates that it was Diamang’s *mineral desire* and not enlightened attitude that drove the epistemic and methodological reform of the Dundo Museum in 1942. Conversely, it was the ethnological work performed by this institution that allowed Diamang to comply with the successive labour agreements it stipulated with the Portuguese state after it joined the United Nations.<sup>106</sup> This was the case in that, by providing concrete models of *culturally* adequate forms of housing, health, education or entertainment for Diamang’s African employees, Redinha substantiated the ‘othering’ of local populations in a way that enabled the subsistence of Diamang’s peculiar forms of indirect rule and racial segregation.<sup>107</sup> As Filipe Calvão and Porto have argued, the

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*Vasconcelos* (Lisbon: Ministério da Educação, 1965); M. Heleno, ‘Um Quarto de Século de Investigação Arqueológica’, *O Arqueólogo Português*, 2, 3 (1956), 221–237.

104. A. dos Santos Rocha, *O Museu Municipal da Figueira da Foz: Catalogo Geral – Com indicação dos escriptos e desenhos que se têm publicado sobre muitos dos objectos catalogados* (Figueira: Imprensa Lusitana, 1905).

105. Correia, *Geologia e Antropologia*.

106. I am here referring to the Decree Law 27.898 of 28 of July of 1937, and then the Decree Law 39.920 of 10 February 1955. Carvalho, *As Esculturas de Ernesto Jardim de Vilhena*, 202–203; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 90.

107. Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*, 24–25, 27–32, 38–39; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 2–7.

company simultaneously co-opted local African elites and forced them to behave in accordance with prescribed cultural scripts, which were purposefully devised by white ethnographers to resolve the seeming contradiction between assimilation and segregation.<sup>108</sup> Likewise, Redinha's work was published as a unofficial guideline for any settlers' company to comply with the *Código do Trabalho Rural* (Rural Work Code) of 1962.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, as I will show below, Redinha's epistemology depended on heuristic methods analogous to those of Janmart.

After being dismissed by the company in 1959, Redinha took up a position at the *Museu de Angola* (National Museum of Natural History of Angola, established in 1938).<sup>110</sup> In 1961, he became part of the *Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola* (Institute of Scientific Research of Angola), where he stayed until his retirement in 1970, and published several booklets based on his previous research.<sup>111</sup> These mostly consisted of abstract classificatory essays dedicated to broad categories of ethnographic objects, such as musical instruments, pottery, sculptures or traditional housing (see Figure 9).<sup>112</sup> In these pamphlets, Redinha proposed the existence of clearly delimited typological subsets within each of the larger sets of ethnographic objects, and then proceeded to sequence these into a relative chronological order of more 'primitive' and more 'advanced', while also associating each subset with a biome and climate.<sup>113</sup>

Starting from large series of undifferentiated data, Redinha abstracted from his historic collections 'cultural cycles' that were analogous to the African 'cultures' pre-historians like Janmart theorised about.<sup>114</sup> By naming these cycles 'cultural strata' and ordering them in a sequential manner, Redinha proposed that, although the elements comprising them were contemporary, they proved

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108. Calvão, 'Company Oracle'; Porto, 'Manageable Past'; Porto, *Modos de Objectificação da Dominação Colonial*.

109. According to its articles 193° and 194°, employers were obliged to provide means of conviviality and free housing befitting the 'uses and costumes of the region' and respecting self-determined ethnic divisions. Alencastro, 'Política dos diamantes' em Angola durante a primeira era colonial', *Afro-Asia*, 57 (2018), 86–87; J. Redinha, *A habitação tradicional em Angola* (Luanda: Centro de Informação e Turismo de Angola, 1964), 3–7; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 90.

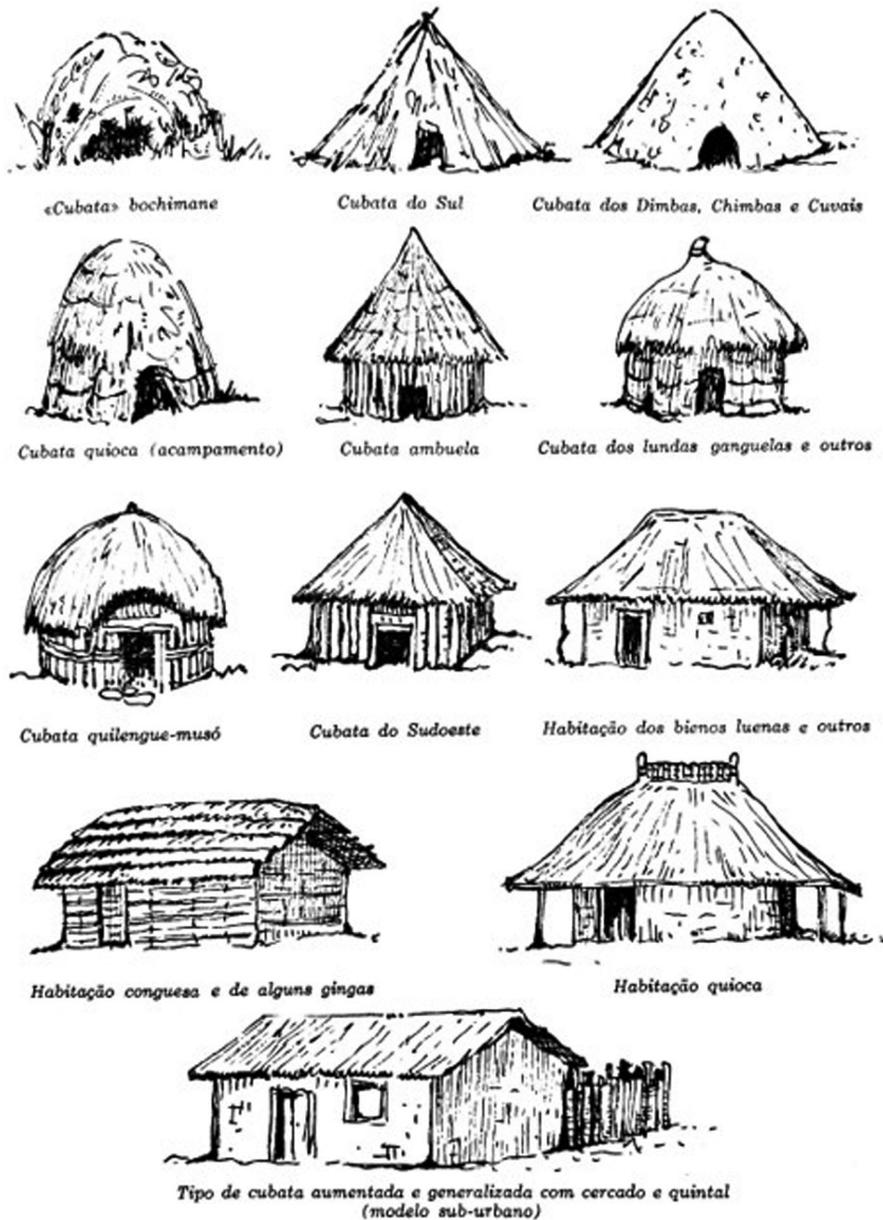
110. E. de Vinhena, 'Observações', in J. Redinha et al., *Relatório Anual 1958, 3* (1959), 2–3. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=1495>, accessed 13 September 2019; Porto, 'Arte e etnografia cokwe', 139; Matos, 'Projectos Coloniais', 51–55.

111. J. Fortunato, 'Contributo para a valorização do espólio de José Redinha', *Jornal de Angola*, 10 October, 2016, [http://jornaldeangola.sapo.ao/cultura/contributo\\_para\\_a\\_valorizacao\\_do\\_espolio\\_de\\_jose\\_redinha](http://jornaldeangola.sapo.ao/cultura/contributo_para_a_valorizacao_do_espolio_de_jose_redinha), accessed 30 September 2019; J. Fortunato, 'Mapa dos instrumentos tradicionais angolanos', *Jornal de Angola*, 25 September, 2017, [http://jornaldeangola.sapo.ao/cultura/mapa\\_dos\\_instrumentos\\_tradicionais\\_angolanos](http://jornaldeangola.sapo.ao/cultura/mapa_dos_instrumentos_tradicionais_angolanos), accessed 30 September, 2019; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 20–21.

112. It is beyond my scope to present a complete bibliography. For an example of his late style, see J. Redinha, 'A habitação tradicional' or 'Um esquema evolutivo da escultura antropomorfa angolana', *Mensário Administrativo*, 173–182 (1961), 3–8. A comprehensive list of his publications can be found in the nineteenth edition of *Distribuição Étnica de Angola*. J. Redinha, *Distribuição Étnica de Angola* (Luanda: Fundo de Turismo e Publicidade, 1975), 33–35.

113. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 17.

114. J. Redinha, 'Esboço de classificação das máscaras angolanas', *Mensário Administrativo*, 173–182 (1961).



**Figure 9.** Evolutionary scheme of contemporary 'native dwellings' proposed by Redinha in 1963. Source: J. Redinha, *A habitação tradicional em Angola* (Luanda: Centro de Informação e Turismo de Angola, 1964), 3–9

the existence of an Angolan *stratified* cultural evolution.<sup>115</sup> This meant that, according to him, local cultural sequences were not only determined by a slow formal evolution but were also conditioned by quick paradigm shifts

115. *Ibid.*, 4–12.

aligned with drastic climate changes. For instance, Redinha presented coeval objects used in savannah environments as if these were living *fossils* of past tools whose development had been arrested when the biome was preponderant throughout the Angolan territory.<sup>116</sup>

If Janmart interpreted prehistoric artefacts with the help of evidence collected in contemporary biomes analogous to past ones, Redinha opted to classify present-day ethnographic objects by attributing to them a historical origin determined by the known succession of past climatic conditions.<sup>117</sup> While the first methodologic proposal can be epistemologically questioned while still being accepted as scientific, the latter is unquestionably problematic. In this regard, it is important to stress the differences between the processes of commodification of individual ‘units of culture’, which Diamang also promoted, and Redinha’s *fossilisation* of ethnographic objects.<sup>118</sup> While the first, as Collier pointed out, churned out ‘de-territorialised’ or alienated art pieces and ethnographic samples, the second chronologicalised classes of African artefacts and then ‘re-territorialised’ them according to evolutive timelines and geographic coordinates stipulated by the colonisers.<sup>119</sup> Establishing past and present objects as *fossils* can thus be understood not as a productive or extractive activity *per se*, but as a means of reproducing the conditions that allowed extractivism to take place. In other words, the *fossilisation* of local cultures both legitimised Diamang’s settler-colonial presence and functioned as a diamond-prospecting tool, thus being completely integrated with the mining company’s *worlding* and *earthing* apparatuses.

It is unsurprising, then, that Redinha’s method crystallised into a general institutional attitude that Diamang held until its dissolution in 1988.<sup>120</sup> Similarly to Janmart’s method of chronologically ordering ‘cultures’ out of large sets of prehistoric lithic tools, Redinha’s approach depended on denying ‘coevalness’ to the pieces that he collected so that a sequential logic could be abstracted from their sets.<sup>121</sup> This likeness suggests that the abstract ‘grammars of geology’ devised by Janmart had a profound impact on Redinha, an autodidact until 1945, when he was sent by Diamang to be formally instructed by Manuel Heleno (1894–1970), the second director of the Portuguese Ethnological Museum.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, when reporting on his first collaboration with the *Museu de Angola* (July and August 1950), Redinha stated that, by then, he had already

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116. *Ibid.*, 7.

117. As the one systematised by Leakey. Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 77.

118. Collier, ‘Diamang as Apparatus’.

119. *Ibid.*

120. This is amply demonstrated by the two 16 mm documentaries which were commissioned in 1964 to illustrate ‘the survival of practices and uses that date from the pre-historical period’ in Lunda: Companhia de Diamantes de Angola, *Relatório do Conselho de Administração*, 28. See also Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 72.

121. J. Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

122. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 26; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

devised a ‘system’ of his own.<sup>123</sup> The first stage of his method consisted in typologically dividing the ethnographic objects of the *Museu de Angola* collection into subsets which were subsequently made to represent internally consistent ‘cultural families’.<sup>124</sup> The second stage entailed these ‘cultural families’ being sequenced according to their chronological arrival in the Angolan territory.<sup>125</sup> The use of specific woods, stones, animal parts or clays in the objects allowed him to speculate about their ecosystem of origin, situating each artefact in a specific climate and biome.<sup>126</sup> By postulating that each ‘cultural cycle’ coincided with a given climate or ‘geography’, he could then use Diamang’s surveys of Angola’s climactic past as a means to sequence the origin of contemporary ethnographic objects chronologically.<sup>127</sup> For instance, if an object was made out of grasses collected in a savannah, Redinha considered that it was typical of a ‘cultural cycle’ that was dominant when savannahs were the key feature of the Angolan landscape, and therefore its contemporary makers were more primitive than the creators of tools made from materials associated with the climates that became prevalent afterwards.

Redinha’s method allowed him to produce ethnic maps that echoed in flat *extension* Janmart’s prehistorical *in-depth* charting of Diamang’s concession areas (see [Figure 10](#)).<sup>128</sup> These maps not only functioned as ancillary tools to Janmart’s geo-ethnological prospecting apparatus, but also helped other prospectors, interested in copper or iron, to instrumentalise past and present African occupation of Lunda in the service of their own *mineral desire*.<sup>129</sup> This continuity suggests that a future history of Portuguese anthropology could be thought and written from the perspective of the epistemic and practical entanglements this discipline has with geology and mineralogy. Such a project would greatly benefit from a critical reappraisal of Mendes Correia’s 1939 booklet about the topic and could enter into a fruitful dialogue with classic works such as Ruth First’s *Black Gold: Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (1983).<sup>130</sup> By acknowledging the gravitational pull of Witwatersrand or Copperbelt mines, this history could be more attentive to South–South networks, such as those promoted by Diamang, than *classic* national histories. Situating ethnographic objects such as the 555 pieces sent by Diamang to the MOE/

123. J. Redinha *et al.*, *Relatório Anual 1950* (1951), 37. <http://www.diamangdigital.net/index.php?module=diamang&option=item&id=1216>, accessed 30 September 2019; Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 127.

124. Redinha *et al.*, *Relatório Anual 1950*, 37.

125. *Ibid.*, 37–38.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*

128. See ‘Esquema I’, ‘Esboço A’ and ‘CARTA – Migrações I’ in J. Redinha, *et al.*, *Relatório Anual 1943*, 20–22. J. Redinha, *Distribuição Étnica de Angola* (Luanda: Fundo de Turismo e Publicidade, 1975), 14.

129. In the case of diamonds, ethno-geological prospecting techniques were made obsolete in Angola with the discovery of kimberlites. They would remain useful to prospect for iron, or gold in the case of Uganda. C.F. de Andrade, *A Geological Survey Made in 1945–46* (Lisbon: Diamang, 1953); J.B. Bebiano, *Notas sobre a siderurgia dos indígenas de Angola e de outras regiões africanas* (Lisbon: Serviços Diamang, 1960), 15–16; Leakey, *Tentative Study*, 77–80.

130. Correia, *Geologia e Antropologia*; R. First, *Black Gold: Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983).



NME in 1963 in this new historical account would allow ongoing discussions about restitution to consider the wider impacts, environmental and financial, of the extractive operations performed by mining companies.

### Conclusion: decolonising a *worlding* implies reassessing an *earthing*

In 1954, when publicly replying to a harsh critique of Diamang that renowned Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre had made in his monograph *Aventura e Rotina* (1952), Ernesto de Vilhena took a pause to speculate about the way in which the *worlding* processes promoted by the company were affecting the surrounding environment.<sup>131</sup> According to him, Diamang had succeeded in ‘humanising’ the climate of Lunda to such an extent that the ‘detropicalisation of Africa’ was close at hand.<sup>132</sup> He hoped that this portentous event would transform Angola into the perfect territory for white Portuguese settlement.<sup>133</sup> ‘The *heat is not as stifling* as in previous times’, Vilhena stated, and ‘if, in the past, the remembrance of feeling *cold* in Africa was always associated with the nights of a given season’ – low temperatures seemed to be getting increasingly common.<sup>134</sup> Pluviosity was also dropping and, as he celebrated, the clear-cut boundaries between the dry and rainy seasons had completely lost their cyclic stability.<sup>135</sup> In his interpretation, these changes were partially the result of large-scale geosociological engineering, exemplified by the opening of roads and railroads, the building of dams, the widespread deployment of insecticides and antibiotics and the massive use of superphosphates to fertilise ‘barren’ Kalahari sands.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, at a deeper, quasi-mystical level, Vilhena understood anthropogenic climate change as the physical manifestation of a Portuguese ethno-psychological predisposition, the concrete fulfilment of a national *manifest destiny*.<sup>137</sup>

According to Vilhena, in the face of all these cataclysmic *world-sundering* events, which we would now understand as heralds of the *Anthropocene*, African populations had little choice but to get onboard Diamang’s *worlding* programme.<sup>138</sup> That meant that they could either face white-settler aggression or accept to cooperate with the company as ‘assimilated’ members of white ‘civilisation’ or affiliates of one of the local ‘cultures’.<sup>139</sup> These local ‘unassimilated’ cultures were increasingly understood, framed and dealt with as if they comprised *fossilised* institutions depending on *fossil* tools. If in Diamang’s

131. G. Freyre, *Aventura e rotina* (Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 1952); Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*.

132. *Ibid.*, 54–57, 60–66.

133. *Ibid.*, 65–66.

134. *Ibid.*, 60.

135. *Ibid.*, 60–61.

136. *Ibid.*, 61–66.

137. *Ibid.*, 65–66.

138. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 50.

139. Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*, 44–47; Alencastro, ‘Política dos diamantes em Angola’, 93–97.

concession, 'due to the interplay of prehistorical and geological correlations', lithic instruments had begun to be understood as 'true fossils' (rocks that bear the traces of past beings), it is also true that the epistemology this method relied on inevitably led to the understanding of Africans as 'living fossils' (humans who bear the traces of the past with the same passivity as stones).<sup>140</sup> This implies that, as Katheryn Yusoff points out, racialised individuals began being governed according to, and inscribed in scientific and political discourses, which replicated the 'grammars of geology'.<sup>141</sup> In the case of Diamang, this also involved the elaboration of a concrete response to the requirements of Portuguese labour agreements.<sup>142</sup> When defending his company from Freyre's accusation that Diamang failed to supply its workers up to par living conditions, Vilhena simply pointed to the *fact* that the African *fossilised* workers preferred housing which was ethnologically adequate to their *fossil* 'cultural cycle'.<sup>143</sup>

The reliance upon geologically inspired analogies, epistemologies and heuristics also led to the widespread adoption of a catastrophist outlook towards local cultures, which translated into a fierce segregationist policy, and a very specific form of white-supremacist *anthropic bias*.<sup>144</sup> In order to visually collect his data, Janmart depended on the massive transformation of the Lunda landscape, the 'colonial earth-writing' that was made possible by both capitalist investment and forced labour of Africans.<sup>145</sup> The 300 feet-plus cuts in local hillsides which were made in the search for diamonds allowed him to *directly* read the African deep past in a way which *earthed*, or silently pushed into the 'natural' background, several assumptions about the way cultures evolve and science establishes proofs. By reproducing the images of tool-bearing strata, which were not more than a couple of feet high and divided from each other by vast layers of barren Kalahari sands (see Figure 2), Janmart couldn't help but cement the basis of a *catastrophist* understanding of cultural change.<sup>146</sup> This was the case in that each tool-bearing stratum was read as containing a discontinuous and self-contained 'cultural cycle' or 'cultural family', each of them separated from the next by sand deposits accumulated over thousands of years. Kalahari sands are indeed devoid of fossil remains and archaeological vestiges, not necessarily because of long intervals of cultural stagnation or non-occupation, but because their corrosive high acidity erases all traces of past activity.<sup>147</sup> From this perspective, more than the *voiding* of local epistemologies, Janmart's graphic rendering of African deep time precludes

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140. Janmart, *Les stations paléolithiques de l'Angola Nord-Est*, 9.

141. Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

142. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 90; Redinha, *A habitação tradicional em Angola*.

143. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 78; Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*, 15–19.

144. N. Bostrom, *Anthropic Bias* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1–5.

145. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 36, 74, 86; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

146. Janmart, *Kalahari Sands of the Lunda*, 64.

147. Redinha *et al.*, *Relatório Anual 1950*, 37–38.

the possibility of their existence by unsympathetically presenting the gaps in the 'archives of geology' as scientific proofs of anti-African prejudices.<sup>148</sup>

By not questioning Janmart's privileged position as the observer of this visual data, which was a by-product of the machinations of white supremacy, colonial settlement and Western science, the specific societal choices that enabled its collection are naturalised as an unavoidable corollary to 2,588,000 years of punctuated *evolution*.<sup>149</sup> Such a conclusion is then reinforced by the application of a similar method to *make sense* of the ethnographic collections gathered at the Dundo Museum, or the *Museu de Angola*.<sup>150</sup> 'What doesn't evolve becomes a fossil', Vilhena claimed was one of Diamang's mottoes.<sup>151</sup> The seeping of the 'grammars of geology' into the analysis of cultural contact also provided the *scientific* backbone to Vilhena's ideologic aspiration of a white-supremacist Portuguese *Anthropocene*: the 'detropicalisation' of Africa. If his narrative constitutes a *worlding*, an active and positive way of giving substance to both 'linear models' about local cultures and white supremacist techno-capitalist aspirations, the scientific and metaphysical presuppositions which sustain it and recede into the background are its concomitant *earthing*.<sup>152</sup> Stand-alone ethnographic collections, such as those of the Museu do Dundo, or the smaller one shipped by Diamang to the MOE organising committee, encapsulate within their self-sustaining logic both Diamang's colonial *worlding* and its co-constituted *earthing*.<sup>153</sup>

Most often, appeals for the restitution of African pieces to the continent simply tackle the *worldings*, and not the *earthings*, which were promoted by companies such as Diamang, or colonial administrations such as the Portuguese. This translates into an overattachment to *classic* histories of anthropology and *disciplinary big men*, which, in turn, allows appeals to 'scientific' neutrality to go unchecked.<sup>154</sup> As Mbembe has observed, these critiques leave untouched the *earthing* practices that were concomitant to the extraction of African art and ethnographic pieces from the continent.<sup>155</sup> Redressing these practices is the first step that post-colonies and their old metropolises ought to undertake to establish a post-colonial relational ethic.<sup>156</sup> In other words, what needs critical attention is not only whether the conclusions reached by Janmart, Redinha or Jorge Dias were scientifically valid but, also, to what extent their studies and collecting practices were driven by *mineral desire* as well as depended upon massive

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148. Yourcenar, 'Introduction', xix; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes*.

149. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 62, 67.

150. *Ibid.*, 50.

151. Vilhena, *Aventura e Rotina*, 26.

152. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 17.

153. Porto, *Angola a Preto e Branco*, 111–115.

154. Canelas, 'Museu Nacional de Etnologia'.

155. Mbembe, 'À propos de la restitution'.

156. Sarr and Savoy, *Report on the Restitution*.

environmental damage, the use of forced labour and a segregationist ‘othering’ of African cultures.

### **Note on the contributor**

João Figueiredo has a BA (Hons) in anthropology and a PhD in history. Currently, he is a post-doctoral research fellow in the project ‘LEGALPL: Legal pluralism in the Portuguese Empire (18th–20th century)’ at the New University of Lisbon, Portugal.

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