Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin's Photographs for *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1928–1954): The Construction of an Ambiguous Idyll[1]

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The collection of A.M. Duggan-Cronin photographs at the University of Cape Town has experienced mixed fortunes since it was acquired some seventy years ago, being displayed proudly at one moment and stowed away in embarrassment at the next, only to be exhibited again for some new purpose. This paper looks at the original context of Duggan-Cronin's The Bantu Tribes of South Africa *in political, anthropological and aesthetic terms; and it examines the first volume on* The Bavenda *(1928) in some detail. The paper argues that Duggan-Cronin may be shown to have constructed his photographs of African subjects in certain ways apparently to create a specific image of Africa that had obvious political connotations. This primitivising image made a forceful contribution to the 'Native Question', which was the most important single issue of South African politics of the mid-twentieth century. However, given the openness of visual communication, on the one hand, and change in political circumstances, on the other, the Duggan-Cronin photographs show that, over time, the same image can serve apparently quite contradictory purposes.*

For the past few years I have enjoyed having A.M. Duggan-Cronin's original, full-size, framed photograph of *A Venda Mother and Child at Sibasa* of 1923 in my office at the University of Cape Town: this image was later reproduced in Duggan-Cronin's book on *The Bavenda*. (Figure 10) I will explain how this came about later on in this paper. I have enjoyed this photograph for its own sake: I find it very beautiful and intensely evocative. And I have enjoyed the opportunity of taking it to the lecture I give on Duggan-Cronin most years in my History of Photography class at the University – to engage the students with an original image and to encourage them to respond as they see fit. Initial discussions invariably involve such ideas of the significance of the nakedness of the woman – would this have been as the photographer found her? Or was she persuaded to bare her torso? Either way, what is the significance of this feature? Does it indicate prurience on the part of the photographer? Or is it a sign of primitivism? If so, what might this primitiv-

1 This article is an expanded form of a lecture I gave to the African Studies Center at the University of Gainesville, Florida, in October 2009. Since then I have had the opportunity of returning to the Duggan-Cronin archives at the McGregor Memorial Museum, Kimberley, and making fuller use of unpublished sources. In addition to the images and texts in the eleven volumes of *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Reproductions of Photographic Studies by A.M. Duggan-Cronin*, published by the McGregor Memorial Museum in Kimberley between 1928 and 1954, the main sources of this paper are the preparatory albums that record Duggan-Cronin's expeditions from which the published work was selected; and a collection of press cuttings on Duggan-Cronin's project that was made either by the photographer or someone working on his behalf. I am very grateful to Robert Hart, curator of the Duggan-Cronin collection, for guiding me through these archives.

ism mean? The students also respond to the obvious aesthetic quality of the photograph, in particular its apparent relationship to the Madonna and Child theme in Renaissance art. With such idealising notions in mind, the class is invariably disappointed, if not actually shocked, when I read the caption to the photograph as it is printed as Plate VI in Duggan-Cronin's book on *The Bavenda*, with its crude physical anthropology and the clear imputation of primitive superstition:

> Sibasa is one of the largest villages of the Bavenda, and the centre of the Venda country. The woman's facial features are typical of the 'aristocratic' section. The pendant at her neck probably contains 'medicine' for the baby, for use in time of need.

With this brutal contradiction to the obvious beauty of the photograph it is easy to make the pedagogical point that the meaning of an image is not fixed and that, even if one were to agree on one aspect, such as the quality of innocent beauty, this might also invite different interpretations at different times: some would see it as a form of primitivism unfit for integration into a civilised society; others as a sign of how well African people coped before colonialism; and others again that African people in this condition had no need of state benefits, such as education or health care. In this article, I want to suggest an original meaning in Duggan-Cronin's project by putting it into historical context, before analysing in more detail the first volume of the series, *The Bavenda*, in which the *Venda Mother and Child* is found. But first, it may be useful to give a brief account of the photographer himself.

Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin was born in Ireland in 1874, and educated in England.[2] In fact he was born with the single name Cronin, adopting the double-barrelled surname by public announcement in the *Irish Times* on 20 October 1924. He started training to become a Jesuit priest but after two years abandoned the idea and came to South Africa in 1897. He found employment in Kimberley at De Beers, at the time the world's biggest diamond mine, first as a compound guard and later in the dispensary of the prison hospital. On a visit home in 1904 he bought his first camera, which he soon put to use making studies of the migrants who worked on the mine. Early examples are portraits in full-face and profile such as might be used for identification purposes on the mine. But he soon began to take more honorific portraits and clearly encouraged his sitters to display any item of material culture that they had brought with them to the compounds, for example the beads in three Bhaca portraits (Duggan-Cronin archives: 1319, 1320 & 1321) and the tobacco pipes in the portraits of two Xhosa men (3870a & 3870b). From these images he quickly took the significant step of arranging such subjects in imaginative per-

2 Duggan-Cronin wrote notes on his life in 'Kimberley's Monument to a Vanishing Culture' in *Twenty-One* (a periodical of the Twenty-One Air School, Kimberley) March 1943, 10-11. But see also Basil Humphreys, 'The Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery, Kimberley', *Lantern*, 11(2), September-December 1961, 71-78; R. Hart et al, *Thandabantu: A Photographic Journey through Southern Africa, 1919 to 1939* (Kimberley: McGregor Memorial Museum, n.d.); R. Hart, 'Alfred Duggan-Cronin', 33-37 in A. Douglas, ed., *Life Less Ordinary: Performance and Display in South African Art* (University of Nottingham: Djanogly Art Gallery, 2009); and D. Newbury, *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2009), 15-17.



Figure 1: 'Three Bhaca men running', undated compound study, in 1925 field album, photograph number 1322, McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

formances of their tribal identity: photograph 1322, for example, shows the same three Bhaca men running towards the camera brandishing knobkieries and dance shields (Figure 1); and 3873 shows a group of six Xhosa men apparently relaxing with their pipes. Anna Douglas illustrates a similar composition on a compound mine dump that Duggan-Cronin fancifully titled 'A Zulu impi on the march'.[3] As Douglas states, such romantically contrived images obviously perform Duggan-Cronin's ideas of African life and culture – and they give a clear indication of what he would look for in the field. These photographs brought Duggan-Cronin to the attention of Maria Wilman, the first Director of the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum in Kimberley which supported his efforts. After service in the South West African and East African campaigns in the First World War, during which he continued to take photographs, Duggan-Cronin was helped by Wilman to secure assistance from the Union Research Grant Board and the Carnegie Trust to fund expeditions to the so-called Native territories to secure, as Wilman's Introduction to his first book put it, 'while there was yet time, a useful and comprehensive series of illustrations which would help to depict the lives of our already fast-changing native tribes'. The Introduction continued, 'Except in Zululand, natives as yet unspoiled by civilisation, and especially men, are becoming more and more scarce.'[4]

3 A. Douglas, 'Life Less Ordinary', 7-11 in Anna Douglas, ed., *Life Less Ordinary*: the 'Zulu impi' is on page 10.
4 M. Wilman, 'General Introduction', 7-9 in *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Vol. I, Section I, The Bavenda*.

Between 1919 and 1939, Duggan-Cronin travelled some 128,000 kilometres throughout South Africa and beyond into South West Africa/Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho. He made seven thousand negatives from which he printed several hundred prints. In 1925 he opened his first 'Bantu Gallery' at his home at Kamfersdam, outside Kimberley, which, twelve years later numbering 750 framed photographs, he offered to the city of Kimberley on condition that the collection be suitably housed and accessible to the public. With the support of De Beers, the Gallery was incorporated into the McGregor Memorial Museum and put on permanent display as the Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery together with what was called for a time 'a large collection of native arts and crafts which, for the most part, Duggan-Cronin himself collected in Native territories'.[5] In 1928 he published *The Bavenda*, the first volume of *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Reproductions of Photographic Studies by A. M. Duggan-Cronin*, which continued as a series in 11 volumes intermittently until 1954, the year of his death. Duggan-Cronin regarded his project as a monument to the Bantu people 'to whom', he said, 'we in South Africa owe so much'. But it was also a monument to the photographer himself: Prime Minister Jan Smuts is reported to have told him on a visit to the Gallery, 'You can die now, Cronin; your monument is raised.'[6]

To try to make sense of Duggan-Cronin's project, and the contradictory responses it arouses, I will look briefly at its historical context in three distinct forms: the political context, the anthropological context, and the aesthetic context. In 1923, when Duggan-Cronin took the photographs of the Bavenda, and in 1928, when he published them as the first volume of his series, the political map of South Africa was the product of the first Land Act of 1913 through which no more than 13 per cent of the country was made over to African people who at that time constituted about 66 per cent of the population.[7] These Native Reserves or Territories were not only separate from each other but also, in some instances, split within themselves – Zululand, for example, was divided into North and South, and the Northern territories constituted a veritable patchwork on the map. Moreover, the Native Administration Act of 1927 effectively retribalised African people, whether they lived in the towns or on the Reserves, by placing them directly under the authority of a chief.[8] It was on these foundations, obviously, that the Bantustans of apartheid segregation policy were built. But, in the same way that the image of the *Venda Mother and Child* could elicit radically different responses according to the point of view one brought to it, so also the Native Reserves could be construed either as pristine wildernesses protected for the exclusive use of the country's African population; or, as one commentator put it, vast rural slums serving as reservoirs of cheap migrant labour for South Africa's diamond and gold mines and the burgeon-

5 Humphreys, 'The Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery, Kimberley', 74.
6 Humphreys, 'The Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery', 77.
7 The amount of land was increased a little in the second Land Act of 1936. For both Acts, see T.R.H. Davenport and K.S. Hunt, eds., *The Right to the Land* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1974), 44-46; and C. Walker, 'Looking Forward, Looking Back: Beyond the Narrative of Loss and Restoration in the History of the Land' in Michael Godby ed., *The Lie of the Land: Representations of the South African Landscape* (Cape Town, 2010), 12-27.
8 N. Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 72-79.

ing industries of the Witwatersrand;[9] or any view in between. From his experience of the compounds of De Beers diamond mine in Kimberley, Duggan-Cronin was obviously conscious of the economic interdependence of South Africa's industrial and rural areas.[10] And the presence amongst his press cuttings of articles such as the essay by J.G. Strijdom, later Nationalist Prime Minister but at the time Mission Secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church, on 'The Detribalization of the Natives' from 24 February 1931, and the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* report in 1938 of Chief Bhekinkosi, half-brother of the Zulu regent Mshingeni, lamenting the degeneration of African people, confirms that he was fully aware of the debates around the 'Native question'. Under these circumstances, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Duggan-Cronin's project, whatever else it was, also represented his personal contribution to the most pressing political issue of his generation.

The Introduction to *The Bavenda* provides the anthropological context for Duggan-Cronin's project, at least in its early stages. This was written by G.P. Lestrade, author of *Some Notes on the Ethnic History of the Bavenda and their Rhodesian Affinities* (1927), who was at that time Ethnologist in the Union Native Affairs Department, but is better known as a linguist who became Professor of Bantu Languages at UCT in 1935.[11] As we have seen, his caption to the *Venda Mother and Child* identified the woman's features as 'aristocratic' which suggests that Lestrade, if not Duggan-Cronin himself, still subscribed to the principles of physical anthropology. His Introduction explains that, while anthropology no longer took precise measurements of various parts of African people's anatomy (and, unlike Gustav Fritsch and other nineteenth-century forebears, Duggan-Cronin is not known to have used his camera for such purposes), it did use the idea of facial types to reconstruct the history of the group it was studying. Thus Lestrade proclaimed:

> There is such a thing as a Venda facial type; indeed two types have been distinguished, besides the general observation that the members of the royal houses exhibit here, as elsewhere, a markedly more delicate and noble cast of features than the common people. The two types referred to are, first, a flat and rather fat face, with broad squat nose; and second, a sharper but still flattish face, with thinner and more pointed nose. It has been maintained that these two types correspond to two different strains in the Bavenda and are to be explained presumably by the traditional absorption of an alien tribe in the course of their wandering southward. Unfortunately we have not sufficient evidence on this point to enable us to form a definite conclusion, but one may legitimately draw from the conflicting traditions the inference that not one but several strains have been so absorbed.

9 L. Marquard, *The Peoples and Policies of South Africa* (1952), 2nd ed. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1960), 33.

10 Photographically this interdependence, as well as the aborted promise of future development, is witnessed in the survival of many early studio photographs of middle-class black subjects that have been restored recently to the historical record by Santu Mofokeng in the *Black Photo Album*.

11 H. Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948: The Formative Years* (Cape Town: U.C.T. Press, 1999), 271.

Presumably with his consent, Duggan-Cronin's photographs were used in support of this spurious science: the caption to his Plate IX *Venda Young Woman*, for example, reads simply, 'This is a mixed type intermediate between the "aristocratic" and the "common".' Lestrade's Introduction continues by looking at other issues that exercised contemporary anthropologists such as the question of the ethnological position of the Bavenda in the family of Bantu tribes; and Bavenda social and political life – bearing in mind that 'any description of the life of a South African native people today must be to a certain extent a description of a passing, if not actually in some measure a past, state of affairs' – in which he considers the role of the chief, the administration of justice, the patriarchal family structure, and marriage and initiation practices. Lestrade had looked briefly at Bavenda architecture and dress at the beginning of his essay and he concludes his Introduction with an account of their aesthetic feeling – which he claims expressed itself mainly in music and dancing – and their religious ideas. In this part and elsewhere, Lestrade's prejudice shines through his supposedly scientific project. He is quick to condemn superstition, as in his comment that 'Great distinction is made by the Bavenda between the [witch-doctors] and the medicine doctors; to us the distinction between a fraudulent quack and a fraudulent fortune-teller is not so obvious'. And he repeatedly makes such censorious statements as the *Domba* dance 'leads to a good deal of immorality'.

As a photographer, Duggan-Cronin, of course, was concerned with the visual form of 'a passing, if not actually in some measure a past, state of affairs' and, as the more fanciful of his early compound photographs suggest, he had very clear ideas as to what it should look like. In an article in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of 13 November 1937, Angus Collie described Duggan-Cronin's methods in the field towards the end of his working life, which almost certainly depended on conversations with the photographer himself. Thus, having praised the beauty of the photograph of 'Zulu girls drawing water', Collie continued:

> And you are tempted to think that the photographer has been lucky in getting so perfect a picture apparently by chance. But there was no chance about it. Mr Duggan-Cronin had probably studied that particular scene for days before he attempted to photograph it. When he has at length produced his camera, he has been quite certain of the exact picture that would convey at one glance every detail of the graceful scene.

Collie's choice of example is significant because Duggan-Cronin constructed a scene of girls drawing water from a river in most of his published volumes, including the first *Bavenda* collection. But what Collie does not say is that the photographer experimented arranging his subjects before settling on the image he would publish. Duggan-Cronin's several studies of young girls at the Mutshindudi River and at the Papiti Falls for the Bavenda essay in the Venda preparatory album of 1923 (919 & 920 and 915 & 916) show that he had this idea from the very beginning of his project (Figure 2). The comparison between the study and the published Plate XIII of *Venda Girls Going to Draw Water at the Mutshindudi*

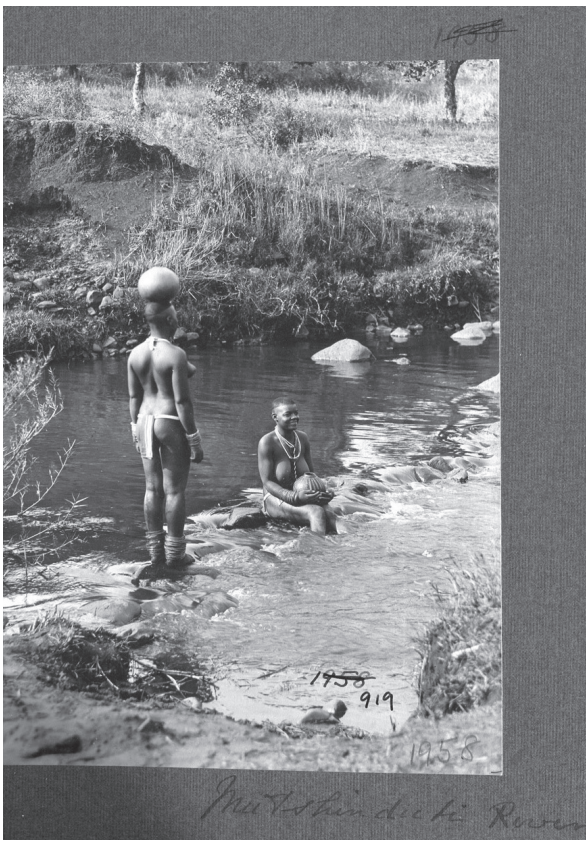


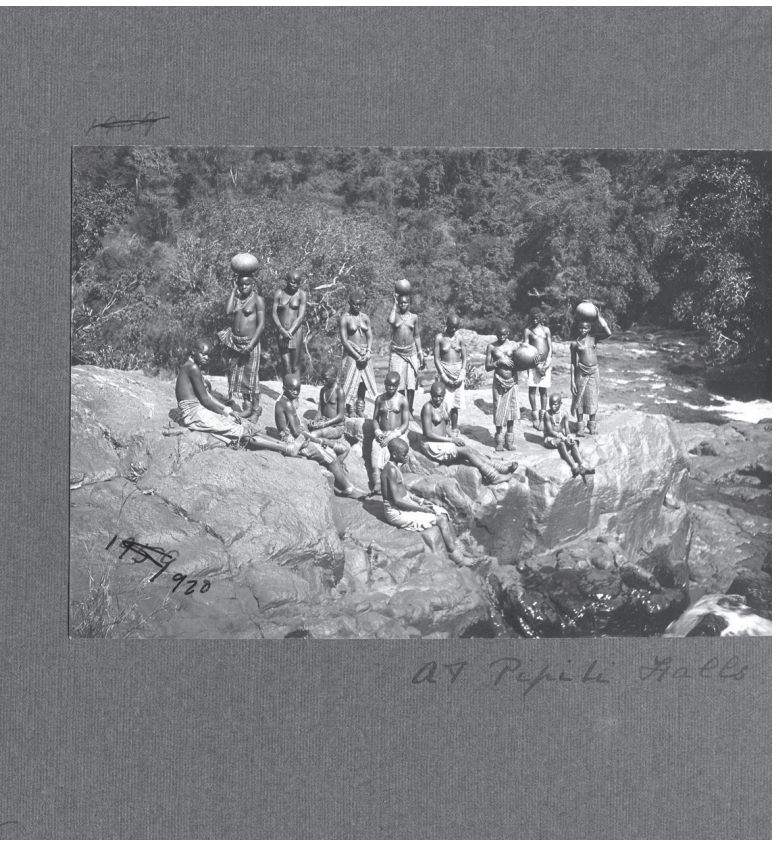
Figure 2: Venda Album 919, Mutshindudi River, and 920, At Papiti Falls, McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

River confirms Duggan-Cronin's working method and his directorial approach to his subjects (Figure 13).

Collie's article also draws attention to another significant theme in Duggan-Cronin's project, his determination to photograph chiefs and to portray them in traditional dress. The Native Administration Bill of 1927 greatly enhanced the authority of the chiefs at this same time and, anyway, Duggan-Cronin's project obviously depended on their favour.[12] Collie described how in 1932 Duggan-Cronin obtained the portrait of Chief Victor Poto, Paramount Chief of West Pondoland:

> Poto is a Christian and favours European dress, and he led Mr Duggan-Cronin a merry dance before he consented to sit in the royal lion skin of Pondoland. For three weeks Mr Duggan-Cronin followed Poto about his territory, meeting only with blank refusals to sit at all, let alone in native dress, which the chief had never worn in his life, until at length Poto was shown the portrait of Dalindyebo, Chief Regent of the Tembu, taken in his royal regalia. If the great Dalindyebo could sit for his portrait, so could Poto, and the result is one of the best pictures Mr Duggan-Cronin has ever taken.

12 Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa*, 74-75; and H. MacMillan, 'A Nation Divided? The Swazi in Swaziland and the Transvaal, 1865-1986' in L. Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London: James Currey, 1989), 297.



Unfortunately, Collie does not say where the lion skin, which Poto had never worn in his life, was found, but another of his stories indicates that Duggan-Cronin was not averse to supplying such props himself. Thus Samuel Ulana, Headman of the Fingoes of Keiskammahoek,

> exercised his royal prerogative over a brand new blanket that Mr Duggan-Cronin had brought for the purpose of draping the royal shoulders. Samuel wore European dress and before he would consent to sit in native costume he insisted that as a chief he must wear a new blanket. The blanket was forthcoming and the picture taken. Samuel was very pleased with his portrait but made no mention of returning the blanket, though he immediately resumed his European clothes.

Albeit without written corroboration, countless photographs in the preparatory albums confirm that Duggan-Cronin regularly supplied items of dress to create a more 'authentic' image: for example, in the Southern Natal H album of 1937, three Bhaca chiefs, from three different places, wear what is obviously the same regal leopard skin (1138, 1139 & 1140); and in the Nguni and Sotho Ndebele album of 1923 and 1933, an old woman and an old man wear not only the same blanket but also the same necklace – and the old man clearly has a Western shirt underneath (1744 & 1745). Interestingly, in a review of *The Basotho* of 1933, R.F.A. Hoernlé



Figure 3: Venda Album 1717, 'Ndebele bride', McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

found that the portrait of the late chief John Molapo 'amusingly shows the mixture of old and new in dress; under the skin kaross, over which the royal leopard skin is thrown, there appears a European vest', without thinking for a moment, apparently, that Duggan-Cronin most probably supplied the leopard skin. Collie concluded his review of this aspect of Duggan-Cronin's work: 'As one native aptly put it, "What is the use of trying to civilise us, if you want to photograph us in our skins which we have already thrown away."'

There is ample visual evidence also, although again no written corroboration, that Duggan-Cronin regularly introduced items of material culture into his photographs. Indeed, the Bantu Gallery's 'large collection of native arts and crafts which, for the most part, Duggan-Cronin himself collected in the Native territories' was undoubtedly made to supplement the sense of authenticity of the photographs both in the gallery and as important signifiers inside the photographs themselves. For example, the beaded cape and beadwork doll that feature so prominently in the *Ndebele Bride* are still in the McGregor Museum collection (Figure 3). And the Bavenda album of 1923 that includes this photograph (1717) has another image of the same woman wearing a different cape. Similarly, Anna Douglas has discovered an inventory number on a decorated ostrich egg in the photograph of a San woman filling eggs with water (another version of this favourite picturesque

scene).[13] Duggan-Cronin appears to have used such items to suggest the general authenticity of his images because, as we shall see, he occasionally included them in entirely inappropriate situations.

An unidentified press cutting following the Shona expedition of 1930 in the Duggan-Cronin archive gives further evidence of the photographer's methods in the field. Apparently the Assistant Native Commissioner at Mtoko had the happy idea of photographing the photographer at work and these records are preserved in the McGregor Museum archive: while a couple of images focus on Duggan-Cronin himself, for example his expression at the moment of activating the shutter release, at least two show him intervening directly with his subject. In one, he is showing a woman how to lift her head as if to communicate pride in her appearance; and in the other he is clicking his fingers so that the child in the Shona Mother and Child composition will look his way. Clearly, as Angus Collie indicated, Duggan-Cronin knew down to the last detail exactly what he wanted in each image.

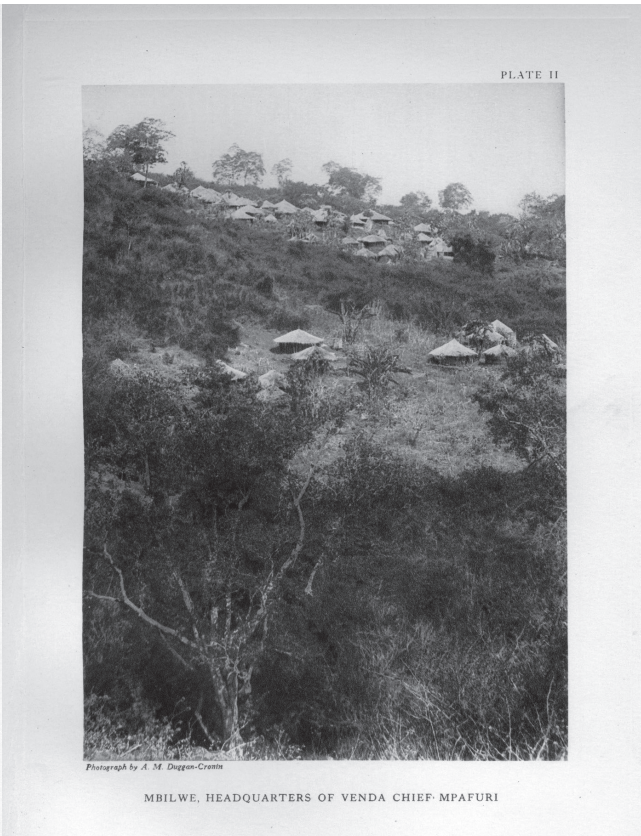
The aesthetic context of Duggan-Cronin's project may best be understood as two separate but overlapping photographic ideas. On the one hand, the photographs are clearly created as self-consciously aesthetic objects: the soft focus, with its gentle lighting and atmospheric quality, clearly relates to the fashion of photogravure of the Pictorialist movement. In line with this, Duggan-Cronin has signed many of his large format prints and effectively signed each image in his books. In fact, early reviews of the published volumes suggest that one could remove the plates and display them as pictures. Moreover, the reproductions in the books suggest plate marks as if the prints were actually engravings. On the other hand, Duggan-Cronin clearly imposed an aesthetic frame onto his ethnographical subjects. For example, he constructed his image of the *Venda Mother and Child* in relation to a Renaissance Madonna: in fact, the photograph in the preparatory album is actually labelled *Venda Madonna*. And many of his figure studies suggest reference to the history of European art, notably to classical sculpture. European travellers from the earliest times had compared young African men and women to antique sculpture; and the practice of women carrying burdens on their head invariably excited great admiration in these terms. Thus in the field, Duggan-Cronin soon abandoned the rhetorical bravado of Zulu *impis* and other early compound studies and sought out, or constructed, overtly classicising forms. Statuesque poses, often emphasised through placement against the sky or a vague atmospheric background, large areas of bare skin, and abstracted, expressionless faces constantly put the spectator in mind of classical sculpture. Moreover, the use of the evocative photogravure style for these statuesque figures contributes a sense of nostalgia, as if one were actually looking at figures from the past. This contrived vision is clearly gendered – male figures tend towards the heroic while female figures tend towards the sentimental – but as a whole it expresses a romantic view of a vanished or vanishing Golden Age when society was structured and humankind lived in peace with each other and in harmony with nature. Like Edward Curtis, whose great project on Native Americans he surely knew, and who also freely interfered with dress and material culture in his images, Duggan-Cronin used the elements of his art to create images

13 A. Douglas, *Life Less Ordinary,* 6-7.


PLATE I

Photograph by A. M. Duggan-Cronin

WYLIE'S POORT, LOUIS TRICHARDT


PLATE II

Photograph by A. M. Duggan-Cronin

MBILWE, HEADQUARTERS OF VENDA CHIEF MPAFURI

of a society that was evidently present in front of the camera, yet simultaneously both past and distant.[14]

Besides Maria Wilman's General Introduction to the series, *The Bavenda* (1928), Duggan-Cronin's first representation of a supposedly homogeneous South African social entity, comprises twenty photographs and the several texts written by Lestrade – his introduction 'The Bavenda', the titles of the plates, and their captions. It is clear that the photographs were always understood to be the primary content of the series and the relatively low number of plates in the first volume is probably to be explained by the need to keep costs down: the continuation of the project depended on the sales of the first part. Duggan-Cronin, with the probable assistance of Lestrade, who had not been with him in the field, made his selection of plates from around seventy photographs in the preparatory album of 1923. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of September 1928 identified the subjects that would occupy him in this and subsequent volumes as male and female figures, 'peculiar customs', huts and characteristic landscape, but it is also obvious that Duggan-Cronin chose the photographs that worked best in aesthetic terms. Insight into Duggan-Cronin's project can be gained, therefore, by considering the *Bavenda* photographs in relation to their captions, on the one hand, and as the result of choices he made from the

14 Interestingly, at least one contemporary reviewer, A.J.H.G. in the *Cape Times*, July 1930, 'Bantu Tribes of the Union: A Focus of World Art', connected the realism – at least in the representation of authentic people in their Reserve context – with the demands of contemporary European art, as represented locally by Irma Stern.



Figure 4 (opposite left): *The Bavenda*, Plate I, 'Wylie's Poort, Louis Trichardt'.

Figure 5 (opposite right): *The Bavenda*, Plate II, 'Mbilwe, the headquarters of the Venda chief Mpafuri.

Figure 6 (right): Venda Album 892, Chief Mpafuri, McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

preparatory album, on the other. Moreover, the twenty images may also be considered together as a representation of Bavenda and, by extension, all African society.

The caption to Plate I *Wylie's Poort, Louis Trichardt* (Figure 4) reads: 'Near the old stronghold of Makhado, "the lion of the North". The rugged and sometimes gloomy nature of the mountain fastnesses in the Venda country gave rise to the name "Spelonken" (caverns) originally applied to it by the Boers.' This, the only full landscape of the series, was chosen from a number of scenes in the preparatory album and it does indeed convey something of the character of the Venda territory. But, as the first photograph in the book, indeed the series, the image of a mountain pass surely also works to confirm the separation of the Native reserves from 'white' South Africa – and suggests the absolute 'Otherness' of their inhabitants.

Plate II has the title *Mbilwe, the Headquarters of the Venda Chief Mpafuri* (Figure 5) and the caption: 'The Bavenda are like most South African tribes in that they build their villages, and in particular the approaches to their chiefs' residences, on a rising slope. Note how irregularly the huts are spaced.' This photograph provides the village setting for much of what is to follow but it has the secondary purpose of drawing attention to the person of the Chief. The *Bavenda* volume is unusual in the series in not including any portrait of a chief and the reason for this is apparent in the preparatory album: photograph 892 portrays Chief Mpafuri resplendent in full military uniform (Figure 6). It is not known whether the Chief

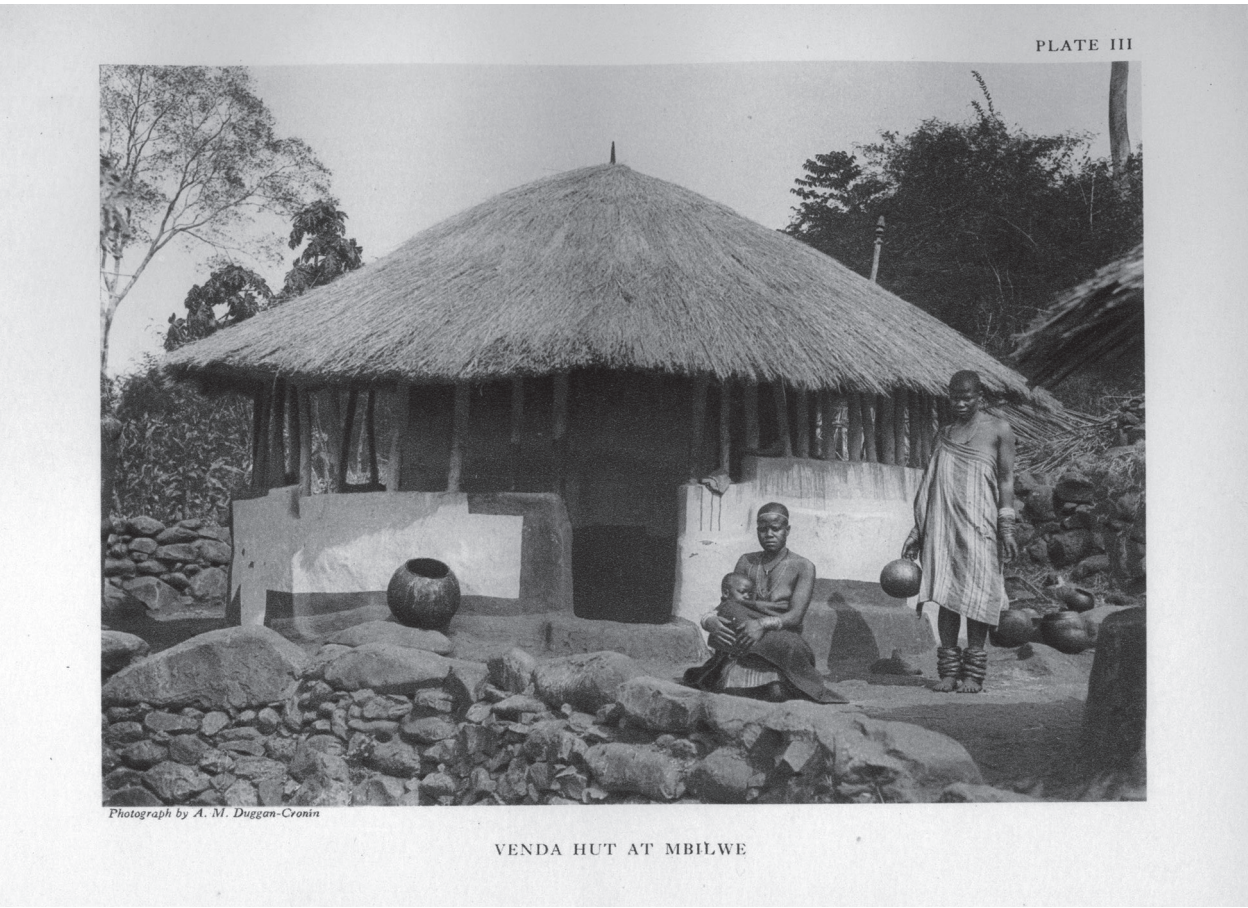


Figure 7: *The Bavenda*, Plate III, 'Venda hut at Mbilwe'.

simply refused to adopt traditional dress or whether in 1923 Duggan-Cronin did not ask him to do so: either way, five years later Duggan-Cronin clearly decided that the portrait in Western clothes was not appropriate to the image of the Bavenda he was trying to create.

Plate III (Figure 7) represents a *Venda Hut at Mbilwe* and has the caption:

> Note the characteristic spire-point on the roof [a feature that the Introduction claims distinguishes Venda architecture from its neighbours']. The work of cutting and erecting the poles of the hut is done by men, the plastering is done by women, as is the thatching. The little wall around the verandah is usually very skilfully ornamented, with various colours obtained from the different-coloured earths in the region.

This text is a clear example of the ethnographic present suggesting that traditional ways have not at all been disrupted by migrant labour. Similarly, the photograph, by such strategies as the obvious posing of both the mother-and-child

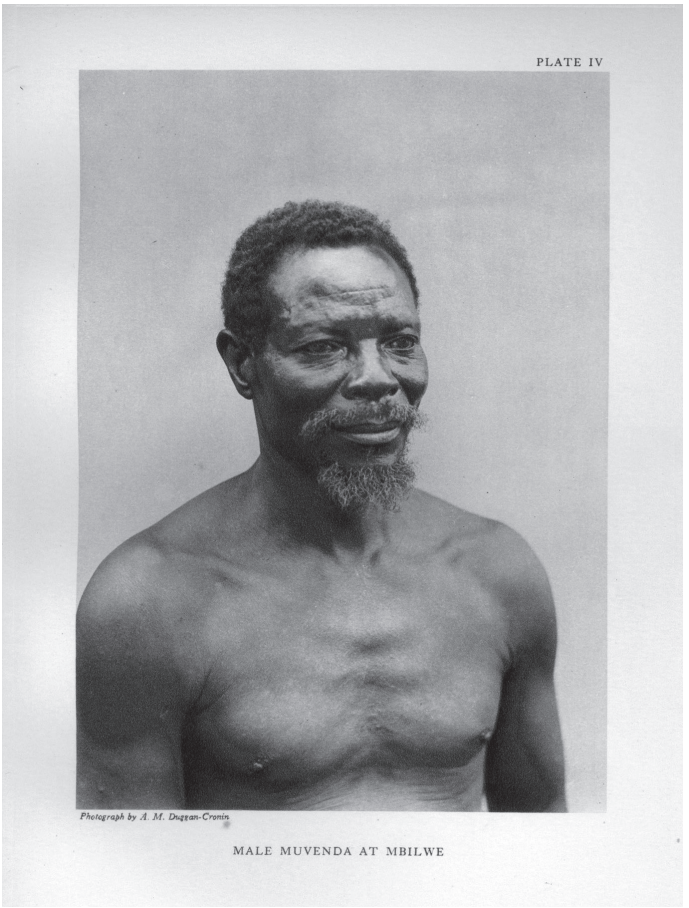


Figure 8: *The Bavenda*, Plate IV, 'Male Muvenda at Mbilwe'.

group and the single woman, the probable removal of all signs of Western material culture such as enamel bowls, and the likelihood of a good sweeping for the occasion, also suggests a perfect, natural condition that could, in effect, be timeless.

The first figure study of the series is Plate IV, *Male Muvenda at Mbilwe* (Figure 8). The caption for this portrait reads:

> Exhibiting the more 'aristocratic' type of face, with which also seems to go a somewhat greater degree of hairiness on the face than the other type shows. The African negro in general is glabrous, and great pride is usually displayed in the possession of facial hair.

The caption suggests the vacuity of the project in anthropological terms. It also omits any reference to the relatively old age of the subject which would render him unfit for migrant labour and so explain his presence in the village. In fact this image was chosen from a group of four elderly Muvenda subjects in the preparatory album – evidently because it was the most pleasing photograph. The charm of the portrait, and the seniority of the subject, relate the image to the burgeoning



Figure 9: *The Bavenda*, Plate V, 'A Venda drawer of water at Mbilwe'.

category of 'Native studies' that played such an important role in both the art world and amateur photographic clubs in South Africa at this time: one thinks particularly of the work of Irma Stern.

Plate V, *A Venda Drawer of Water at Mbilwe* (Figure 9) is a very much more assertive statement on African life. The biblical tone of the title – which was changed from the less pretentious form in the album of 'Drawing water at Mbilwe' – reinforces the suggestion of earlier plates of the antiquity and unchanging nature of African life. The caption confirms this idea by drawing attention to the widespread use of the natural form of calabashes:

> The utensils are either calabashes – universal before the advent of pottery – as here, or clay pots, which are skilfully baked with asbestos, serving the double purpose of standing fire and holding water. The calabashes are often decorated with poker work.

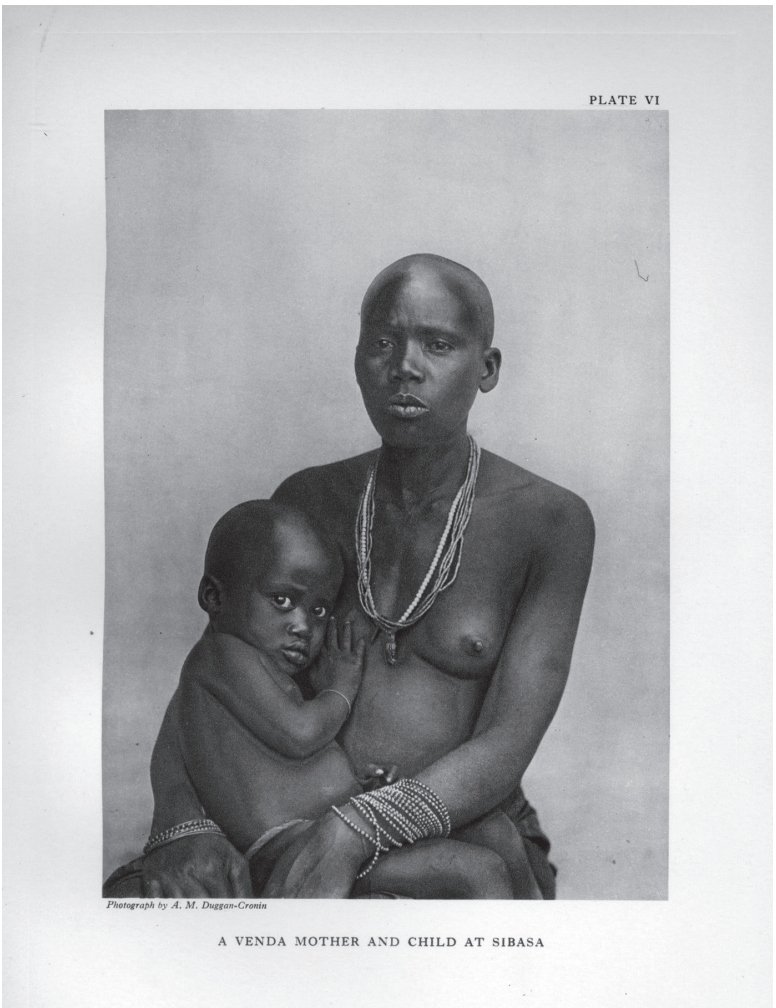


Figure 10: *The Bavenda*, Plate VI, 'A Venda mother and child at Sibasa'.

This plate is somewhat anomalous in the collection because it appears to replace the several images in the preparatory album of Venda girls at the Papiti Falls (see Figure 2 above). Since it is not even certain that there is any water in the gully towards which this young woman is leaning, it would seem that the selection of this figure was made primarily on aesthetic grounds.

The primordial indications of calabashes and biblical reference are developed in the quality of primitive innocence of Plate VI, *Venda Mother and Child* (Figure 10) or, as the preparatory album has it, the 'Venda Madonna'. The suggestion of great antiquity, in effect a distance in time, here and elsewhere, complements the suggestion in *Wylie's Poort*, the first plate, of a distance in space. This image is the first of what, with the encouragement of Princess Alice and other members of the British Royal Family,[15] would become a series of 29 'Mother and Child' studies which in 1938 would fill the first room of the Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery.

15 *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 29 October 1932.

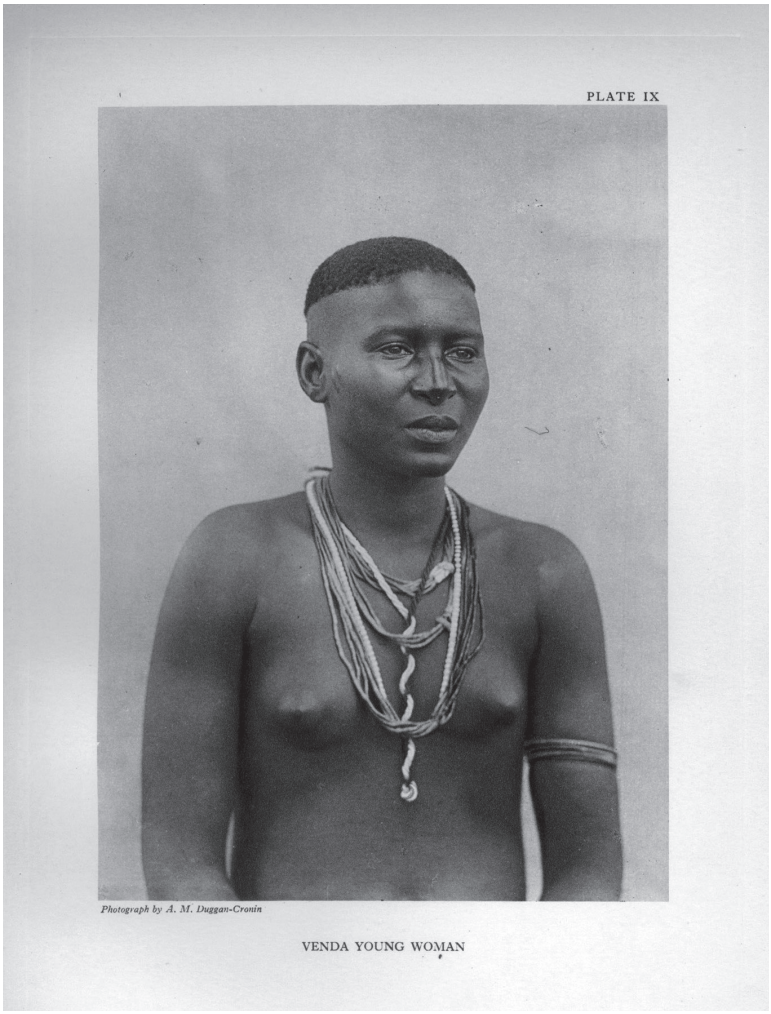


Figure 11: *The Bavenda*, Plate IX, 'Venda young woman'.

Plate VII, *Venda Induna or Person of High Rank at Sibasa*, Plate VIII, *Venda Girl at Sibasa, The Headquarters of Chief Ramaremisa*, Plate IX, *Venda Young Woman* (Figure 11), and Plate X, *Venda Gentlewoman at Sibasa* are all studies of individual women chosen, apparently, to indicate the stratification of Venda society, with captions that cite facial types and status items, such as ostrich-shell beads: as we saw earlier, the caption to Plate IX *Venda Young Woman* states simply, if somewhat absurdly: 'This is a mixed type intermediate between the "aristocratic" and the "common".' Incidentally, the fact that the preparatory album refers in all only three times to this anthropometrical language suggests that it was imported into the project by Lestrade.

Plate XI returns to the idealising visual language of classical sculpture in the *Venda Water-Carriers at Sibasa* (Figure 12). The reference is reinforced by the low viewing point and the vague atmospheric background. The caption to this beautiful image is one of the most telling of the series:

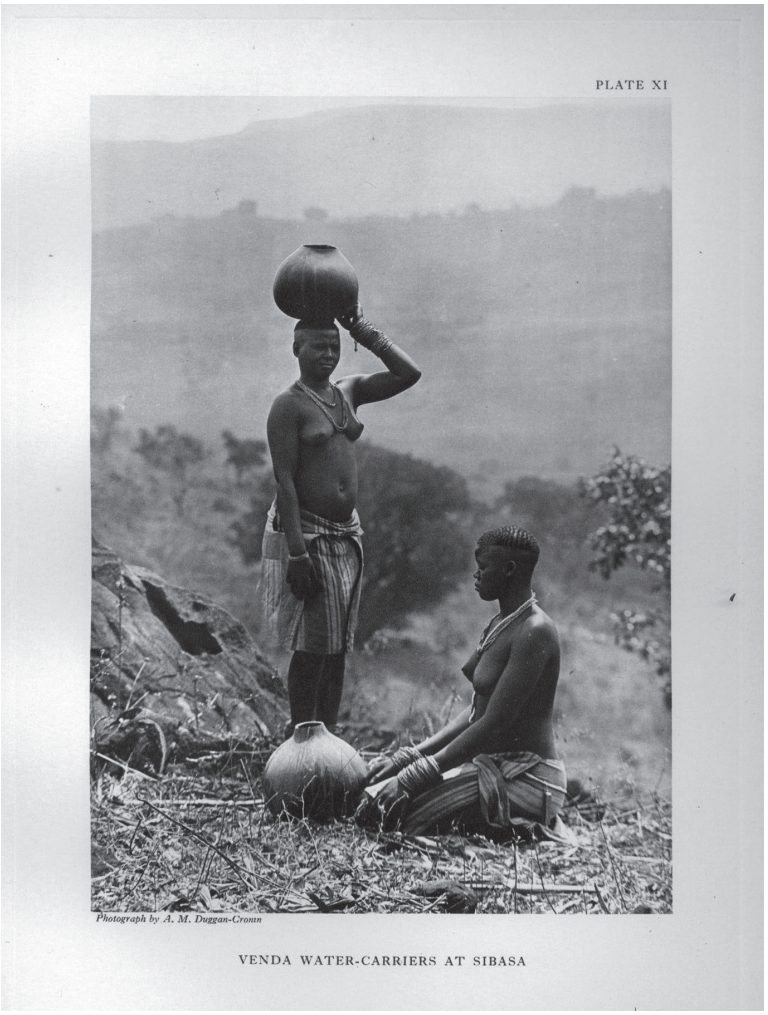


Figure 12: *The Bavenda*, Plate XI, 'Venda water-carriers at Sibasa'.

> Women spend a good part of their days fetching water, sometimes at very long distances from their homes, and these occasions are the social functions corresponding to our polite afternoon teas. The women acquire a beautiful upright carriage as a result of their habit of carrying heavy burdens on their heads.

While the caption twice raises the question of labour only both to trivialise it and to describe it as actually beneficial, the photograph takes as given the beauty of the women's posture and effectively denies the idea of labour altogether by masking the sense of distance they had to walk in atmospheric perspective. A similar picturesque aesthetic governs the selection of Plate XIII *Venda Girls Going to Draw Water at the Mutshindudi River* (Figure 13) from the many staged versions of this scene in the preparatory album (Figure 2).

The captions of the two photographs of initiates, Plate XII, *Girls Who Have*



Figure 13: *The Bavenda*, Plate XIII, 'Venda girls going to draw water at the Mutshindudi River'.

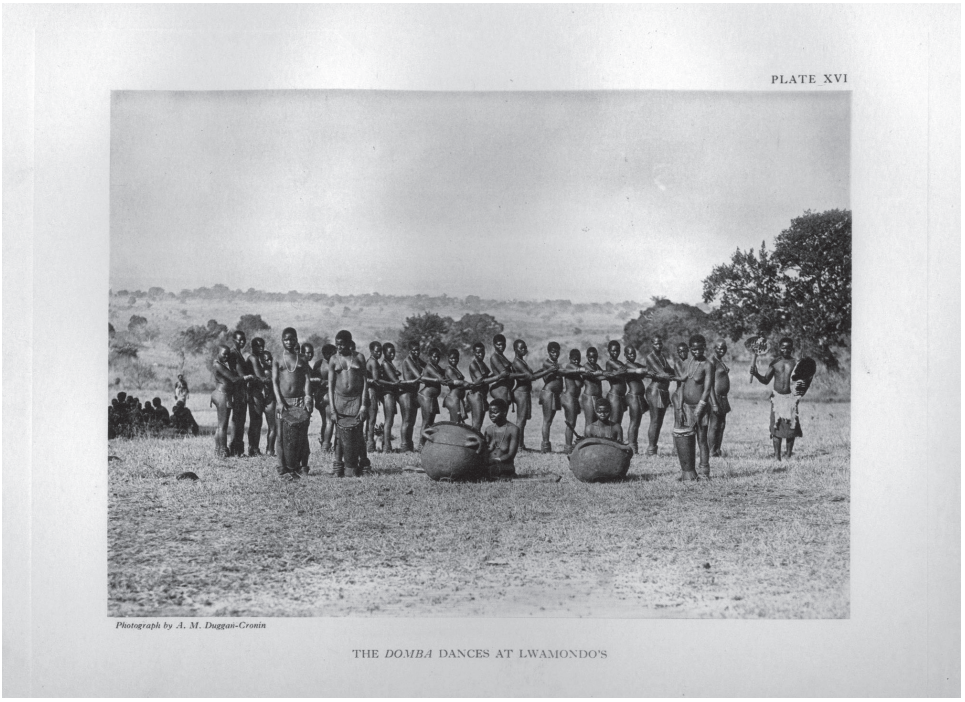


Figure 14: *The Bavenda*, Plate XVI, 'The *Domba* dance at Lwamondo's'.

Been through the Initiation School, and Plate XIV *Boy Initiates in Ceremonial Dress at Lwamondo's*, talk mainly about the dress – that is, the visual appearance – of the young people: neither here, nor in the Introduction, is there any real information on the practice of initiation. But the captions to the three plates on music and dance, the practices through which 'the aesthetic feeling of the Bavenda expresses itself mainly', are more substantial. The caption to Plate XV, *A Venda Xylophone*, describes at some length the *mbila*, 'the finest and most perfect of the Venda musical instruments'. And the caption to Plate XVI, *The Domba Dance at Lwamondo's* (Figure 14), reads:

> These dances, which usually last several months, are held in public, though privacy obtains for the remainder of the ceremonies. The drums figure in the ceremonies and are considered sacred. Men and women join in this public dance: in this picture however there is only one male present, who is the master of ceremonies.

In noting the absence of men, this caption would seem tacitly to acknowledge the impact of the migrant labour system on Venda society even while claiming that the tradition is intact – as, of course, does the photograph. Men are also conspicuous by their absence from both the title and the caption to Plate XVII, *Girls and Women Dancing to the Music of the Phalaphala Horns*, and these texts are also rendered in terms of the ethnographic present as if the event were totally immune to history. The caption reads:

> These horns are used for calling the people together for various purposes, such as dances and other gatherings. Each horn is capable of producing a different note, and a weird tune is the result. Note the dress of the girls, a narrower skirt in front and a wider one behind, which is characteristic. Note also the two different types of drum in this and the previous picture.

Since attention is drawn to these drums, one might also note that they have probably been arranged specifically for the photographs: because they have their sound-hole at the base, these drums are normally played on their side. Duggan-Cronin seems to have decided that this view would not make such a good picture. In fact, it seems appropriate to ask whether perhaps these entire scenes were staged specially for the photographer. Certainly it seems coincidental that these large ceremonies should have taken place at the precise moment of Duggan-Cronin's expedition which, until his retirement from De Beers in 1932, was confined to his annual vacation. The idea finds some support in the absence of men from their usual place in the ceremonies.

The final three photographs are given over to the produce of the land. Plate XVIII, *Venda Women Shelling Mealies, Sibasa*, has the caption:

> Mealies and cereals generally form the staple food of the Bavenda, and much of the work of the women consists in the preparing of the food.

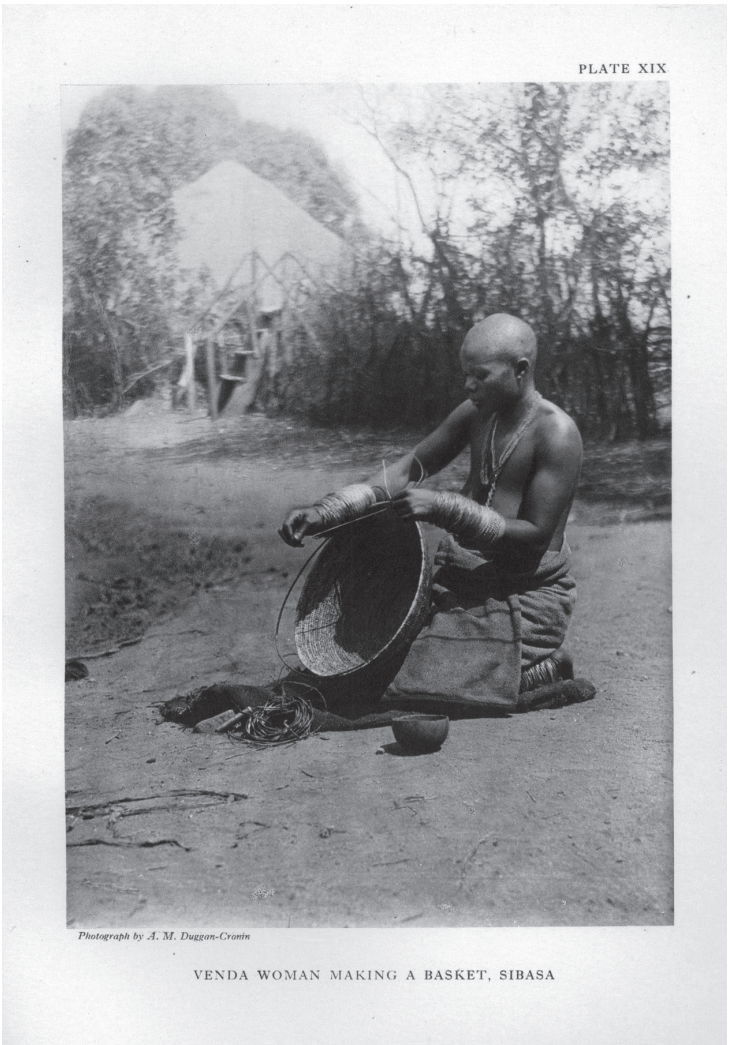


Figure 15: *The Bavenda*, Plate XIX, 'Venda woman making a basket, Sibasa'.

> The actual work on the lands is shared by the men. The mealies are shelled by hand and afterwards stamped in a mortar with huge wooden pestles. The Venda women have a reputation for making very fine meal.

Plate XIX illustrates a *Venda Woman Making a Basket, Sibasa* (Figure 15) although, confusingly, the caption states that this is a Thonga basket, not a typical Venda one. At that time, as now, the Venda and Thonga peoples lived amongst each other and so it is possible, if unlikely, that a Venda household should have had a Thonga basket – and vice versa. However, it is hardly possible that a Venda person should actually be making a Thonga basket. But closer inspection suggests that the basket is not actually being made but is already finished: if this is the case, then it would seem that for the purposes of illustrating the material culture of the Venda, the woman has been asked to show how a basket would be made, and



Figure 16: *The Bavenda*, Plate XX, 'Venda girls filling granaries'.

that the Thonga basket was supplied from somewhere – perhaps even Duggan-Cronin's own collection – and used for demonstration purposes in a completely constructed image.

The last photograph, Plate XX, shows *Venda Girls Filling Granaries* (Figure 16) and has the caption:

> These are only the temporary granaries containing the supplies for current use. Larger surplus stocks are kept in grain-pits. The beadwork belt and the *thaho*, peg-topped and funnel-shaped, is well seen on the figure of the girl filling the granary.

** * * *

A review of the Bavenda collection as a whole reveals several notable absences. For example, there are no children depicted, other than one babe-in-arms. In fact, the preparatory album has a few images of boys demonstrating the use of musical instruments but they were probably excluded from the published volume because they are not very successful visually and the anthropological theme of music is covered by other images. At this early stage in his project, it would seem, Duggan-Cronin had not found a place for children in his image of Africa, although later he made charming photographs of children swimming in rivers, lighting fires, and other playful scenes. In any event, the general nakedness of children lent nothing to the inventory on material culture, nor could their unformed features sup-



Figure 17: Venda Album 939 & 940, Venda gleaners, McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

port any supposed theory of physical anthropology. Equally conspicuous by their absence are photographs of men. In fact only three images of men are included in the entire series, the old Muvenda [Plate IV], the boy initiates [Plate XIV] and the Master of Ceremonies in the *Domba* dance [Plate XVI]. This lack is explained, as Duggan-Cronin would have known well, by the absence of many men of working age because of the migrant labour system. Moreover, since, as Maria Wilman noted in her General Introduction, men were more liable to be 'spoiled' by civilisation than women, Duggan-Cronin may well have chosen not to photograph those men he did come across in the Native Reserves because their choice of clothes and other Western forms would not have fitted his image of Africa.

Another remarkable absence from the series is the lack of representation of work. As we have seen, the reader is told that *Venda Water-Carriers* fetch water from great distances but their labour is trivialised in the caption by the comparison to 'our polite afternoon teas' and, anyway, it is said to be good for deportment: the photograph, of course, confirms the statuesque beauty of the water-carriers, and further removes the idea of difficulty by shrouding in atmospheric perspective the great distances they had to travel. Moreover, the production of Venda staple food is represented in a curious way in the essay. The captions inform one that 'The actual work on the lands is shared by the men', but the book omits all reference to both labour itself and the site of labour, the fields. And, although the preparatory



album includes images of 'Venda gleaners' (Figure 17 - actually reapers: Venda Album 939 and 940), which clearly show both work itself and worked fields, the landscape that surrounds the Venda villages shown in the published volume, where it is visible through the hazy atmosphere, is entirely natural: there is absolutely no indication of agriculture or of any other work in the landscape. Nonetheless, despite the fact that August, the month that Duggan-Cronin visited the Bavenda, is generally a quiet time agriculturally, the harvest is represented as plentiful, mealies are shelled, and granaries are filled. Even the practice of shelled mealies being 'stamped in a mortar with huge wooden pestles', as the caption described it, an activity that Duggan-Cronin witnessed and recorded in the album (947), is not included in the book, seemingly because it involved the representation of strenuous labour. And another fine photograph of a young woman mixing 'dagga' (933) for the plastering of a house (as is described in the caption to Plate III) was omitted presumably for the same reason. In short, the published photographs seem to suggest that a bountiful Nature provides and that there is plenty. Not only is there no sense of difficulty, no hardship or deprivation, there is, more positively, the suggestion that all is healthy and benign.

In political terms, of course, the message is that the Venda Reserve and, by extension, others, are autonomous and self-sufficient; that there is no need for state intervention in the form of education or healthcare: indeed, that outside influence

would only 'spoil' what is there. This is the ideology that led to apartheid. Duggan-Cronin's position on the difficult issue of the development of African peoples at this time was never actually made explicit, but it is instructive to note how strongly the myth of tribal Africa is endorsed by the sheer beauty of his photographs. Thus R.F.A. Hoernlé's calling attention to the urgency of the 'Native question' was obviously influenced by the powerful rhetoric of Duggan-Cronin's photographs. In his review of Duggan-Cronin's *Basotho* volume in the *Sunday Times* in November 1933, Hoernlé commented on the image of a Southern Sotho warrior: 'There he stands with horse and dog – a magnificent specimen of muscular black humanity', and continued

> It will be a disaster, both for white and black South Africa, if, thinking only of ourselves, we let the fine human material of our black fellow citizens degenerate for lack of guidance, or their human potentialities go to waste unused for fear of the consequences of encouraging and developing them.[16]

Curiously, Duggan-Cronin's contemporaries appear to have seen no contradiction between the artistic and scientific aspects of his project and therefore they had no sense that the beauty of the photographs has been in any way constructed. In her review of *The Bavenda* in *The Star*, September 1928, the anthropologist A.W. Hoernlé noted that 'As for Mr Cronin's photographs – each of them is a work of art, as pleasing to the eye as useful to the scientific student of our native tribes.'[17]

Similarly, as we have seen, in a second review of *The Basotho*, her husband, R.F.A. Hoernlé, read John Molapo's wearing of a leopard skin over a skin kaross over a European vest as an amusing mixture of old and new rather than as the result of the photographer's intervention. And when the impact of Western culture on black society was acknowledged in Duggan-Cronin's texts – as when Miss Beemer noted in the Swazi volume that roughly 40 per cent of the men between 16 and 40 years of age are annually away from their homes working on European-owned mines or farms – Duggan-Cronin's image was seen as incomplete rather than actually incorrect. Thus Nota Bene in a review of the Swazi volume in the *Natal Mercury* of 26 September 1941 wrote that 'Duggan-Cronin has deliberately concentrated on picturing the primitive – that side of Bantu life that is so rapidly making room for their semi-civilized and too often sordid development' and went on to challenge 'an artist of enterprise and vision to travel the land in similar fashion and make pictures (movies and stills) of Bantu progress': he did not challenge the authenticity of Duggan-Cronin's image. Similarly Alan Paton praised the Bantu Gallery as 'a splendid achievement on the part of Mr Duggan-Cronin' even as he asked the Kimberley branch of Toc H to create an alternative gallery of urban Africans in their present acculturated state as opposed to their 'natural state', which was represented in the Bantu Gallery. All of these commentators, evidently, were persuaded that Duggan-Cronin's images were true.

16 R.F.A. Hoernlé, 'Review of A.M. Duggan-Cronin, *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: The Basotho*', *Sunday Times*, Nov. 1933.

17 A.W. Hoernlé, ' Review of A.M. Duggan-Cronin, *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: The Bavenda*', *The Star*, Sept. 1928.

I promised to explain how the *Venda Mother and Child* ended up in my office at UCT. In her 'General Introduction' to the series that was printed in the first volume on *The Bavenda* of 1928, Maria Wilman wrote that some of Duggan-Cronin's 'negatives have been lent to several of our universities for the preparation of lantern slides; copies of photographs have been supplied to various institutions in South Africa and in Europe'; and the School of African Studies at UCT acquired both forms of images at some point, if not before 1928, then perhaps when Lestrade was appointed to the Chair of Bantu Languages in 1935. But the School of African Studies was home also to the Department of Social Anthropology and Isaac Schapera, who became Professor in the same year, 1935, expressed very different views from Lestrade on the study of African peoples:

> The day has passed when ethnography was concerned solely with recording details of primitive cultures as they flourished before the days of European intrusion. The first task of the ethnographer is to give detailed and faithful description of a culture as he actually finds it; and any attempt to ignore the presence of the European factor will result in a completely distorted and erroneous picture of the Native as he now is.[18]

These ideas, of course, challenged the very foundations of Duggan-Cronin's project. Although Schapera contributed expert bibliographies to *The Bavenda* and other volumes in the series, most of the photographs he himself took in the field between 1929 and 1940 are obviously working records quite different from Duggan-Cronin's self-consciously artistic creations.[19] In fact, his remarks may even have been meant as an indirect criticism of Duggan-Cronin. As his title suggests, Leon Levson's *Meet the Bantu: A Study of Changing Cultures* of 1947 responded to the new style of anthropological study and it is surprisingly close to the project outlined in Nota Bene's article.[20] For all these reasons, Duggan-Cronin's project soon fell out of favour. When I took up my position as Professor of History of Art at the University in 1988, the then Professor of Anthropology presented me with the collection of Duggan-Cronin lantern slides evidently in the belief that an art historian would have more use for them than an anthropologist. And the framed photographs, meanwhile, were stowed in an attic for about half a century. About ten years ago an enterprising Administrative Officer in the Department of African Languages decided to explore the attic over her suite of offices and discovered the Duggan-Cronin photographs. She hauled them down and, deciding that they were relevant to her Department's discipline, hung them on the walls. Soon afterwards I saw them there and, as the curator of part of an exhibition on South African photography at the South African National Gallery that subsequently travelled to

18 I. Schapera, 'The Present State and Future Development of Ethnographical Research in South Africa', *Bantu Studies*, 8, 1934, 264-265, cited by Phillips, *The University of Cape Town*, 271.

19 J.L. Comaroff, J. Comaroff and D. James, eds., *Picturing a Colonial Past: The African Photographs of Isaac Schapera* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

20 For Levson, see A. Odendaal, compiler, *The Leon Levson Photographic Collection: Catalogue and Background Material* (Cape Town: University of the Western Cape, Mayibuye Centre, 1990).

the Bamako Biennale in Mali,[21] I asked if I could borrow six photographs. At the same time, I mentioned the collection to the University Works of Art Committee, on which I then served. When the photographs came back from Bamako they were returned to the African Languages Department, but very soon afterwards the University authorities decided that the collection was too valuable to be on the walls of offices and immediately ordered it into storage. However, the frame of the *Venda Mother and Child* had been damaged in transit from Bamako and, when the National Gallery had had it repaired, I decided to keep it as a teaching aid, as it had been intended, rather than lose it from sight for another indefinite period.

Since then, however, a new political potential has been recognised in the images. While to some of Duggan-Cronin's generation the idea of an 'unspoiled' Africa might have signalled the economic autonomy of the Native Reserve areas, with the dire political consequences we now know, to some in post-apartheid South Africa the photographs offer a tantalising glimpse into a pre-colonial past. Writing of the project to restore the entire collection at the McGregor Museum, Nelson Mandela proclaimed that the photographs are 'a unique representation of the wealth and diversity of our many cultures. The dignity and the individuality of the people who chose to stand in front of Duggan-Cronin's camera shine out' and that the collection, when restored, 'will stand as a fine symbol of the African Renaissance'.[22] One may perhaps question Mandela's art history but certainly not his leadership of South Africa's renewal. In the same spirit of the African Renaissance, in 2007 the Works of Art Committee at UCT took its collection of Duggan-Cronin photographs out of storage and displayed it prominently in the African Studies Library. But the UCT images seem fated to be hidden from view. Academics from Anthropology and African Studies complained that the photographs portray a colonial, rather than pre-colonial, vision of Africa which had not been mediated by any contextual information in the library, and the entire collection was quickly removed and consigned to storage in the Centre for Curating the Archive where, in due course, the *Venda Mother and Child* will join it.[23]

Over the past few decades, especially in Italy, the restoration of well-known art works has been identified by big businesses as an opportunity to enhance their public profile, occasionally with catastrophic results: I am thinking of the debates that raged around the cleaning of the Brancacci Chapel and the Sistine Ceiling, in particular.[24] On a much smaller scale, the De Beers Company, which was described in the early part of this story as 'a fairy god-mother' for providing the building for the original Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery,[25] has acted as 'anchor funder of

21 M. Godby, 'African Contrasts' in *Lines of Sight: Perspectives on South African Photography* (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 2001), 18-33.

22 Mandela's endorsement of the project to restore the Duggan-Cronin collection is quoted by Zak Debedu and Nick Segal in the Introduction to *Thandabantu: A Photographic Journey through Southern Africa*.

23 I obtained access to the correspondence through the African Studies Library at UCT in 2009. A footnote to this story is provided by the exhibition 'Shared Legacies', curated by Siona O'Connell and Dale Washkansky at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, in 2009. The exhibition displayed scans of Duggan-Cronin's work – apparently unaware that the originals were lurking in storage at the university – alongside work by Edward Curtis. The two projects were interrogated visually by such devices as printing the images on mirrors overlaid with extracts from Barthes, Fanon and others, and diaphanous screens, and by turning several of them with their face to the wall, but there was no attempt to put either set of images in historical context: because of this, the exhibition, like *Miscast*, was more of an artwork in itself than a critical appraisal of an historical body of work.

24 See J. Beck with M. Daley, *Art Restoration: The Culture, the Business and the Scandal* (London: John Murray, 1993).

25 Humphreys, 'The Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery', 73.

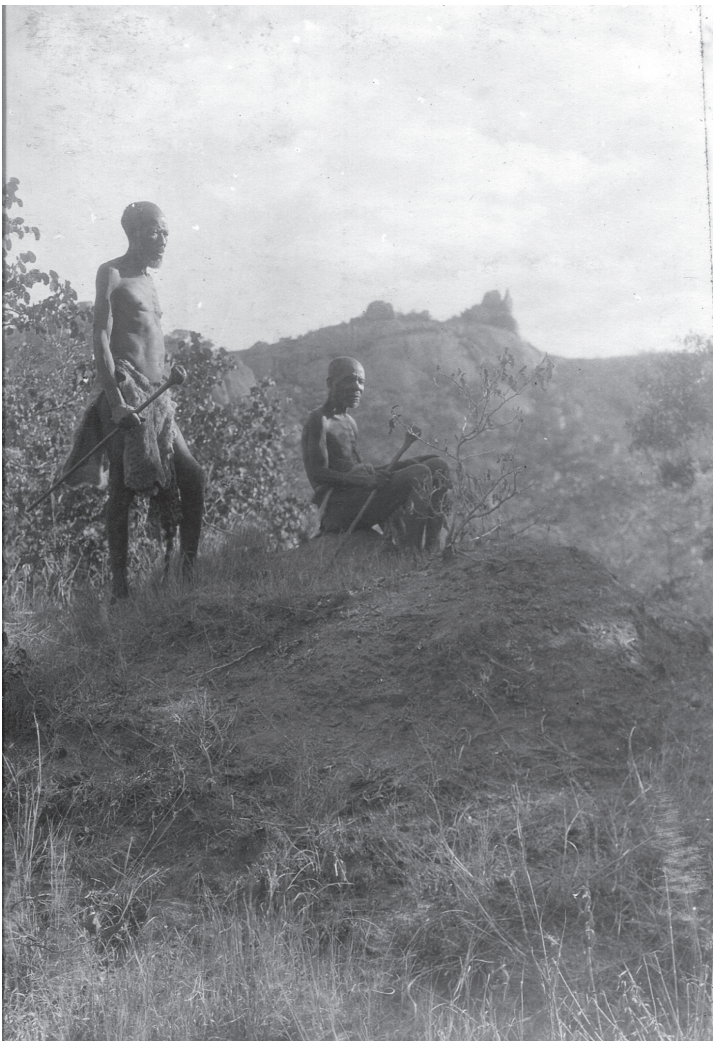


Figure 18: 'Matabele men in the Matopos' or 'Sentinels at the grave of Cecil John Rhodes', McGregor Museum, Kimberley, 3016a.

the conservation effort' to begin the restoration of the Duggan-Cronin collection to which Nelson Mandela gave his blessing. De Beers has also used the opportunity of funding the opening of the exhibition, *Thandabantu, A Photographic Journey through Southern Africa, 1919 to 1939*, to publicise its association with a patently African project at a time of huge political change. Moreover, the use of the name the Matabele gave Duggan-Cronin, meaning 'He who loves people', for the exhibition title is a transparent attempt to position the project on the right side of history. A similar adjustment of the original enterprise to changed political circumstances is apparent in the convenient oversight that the two 'Matabele men in the Matopos, Zimbabwe', illustrated on page 26 of the *Thandabantu* catalogue, are actually sentries guarding the grave of that arch-imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes (Figure 18): this self-evidently elegiac photograph, which has been arbitrarily cropped in the catalogue, is the first visual documentation of that iconic perfor-

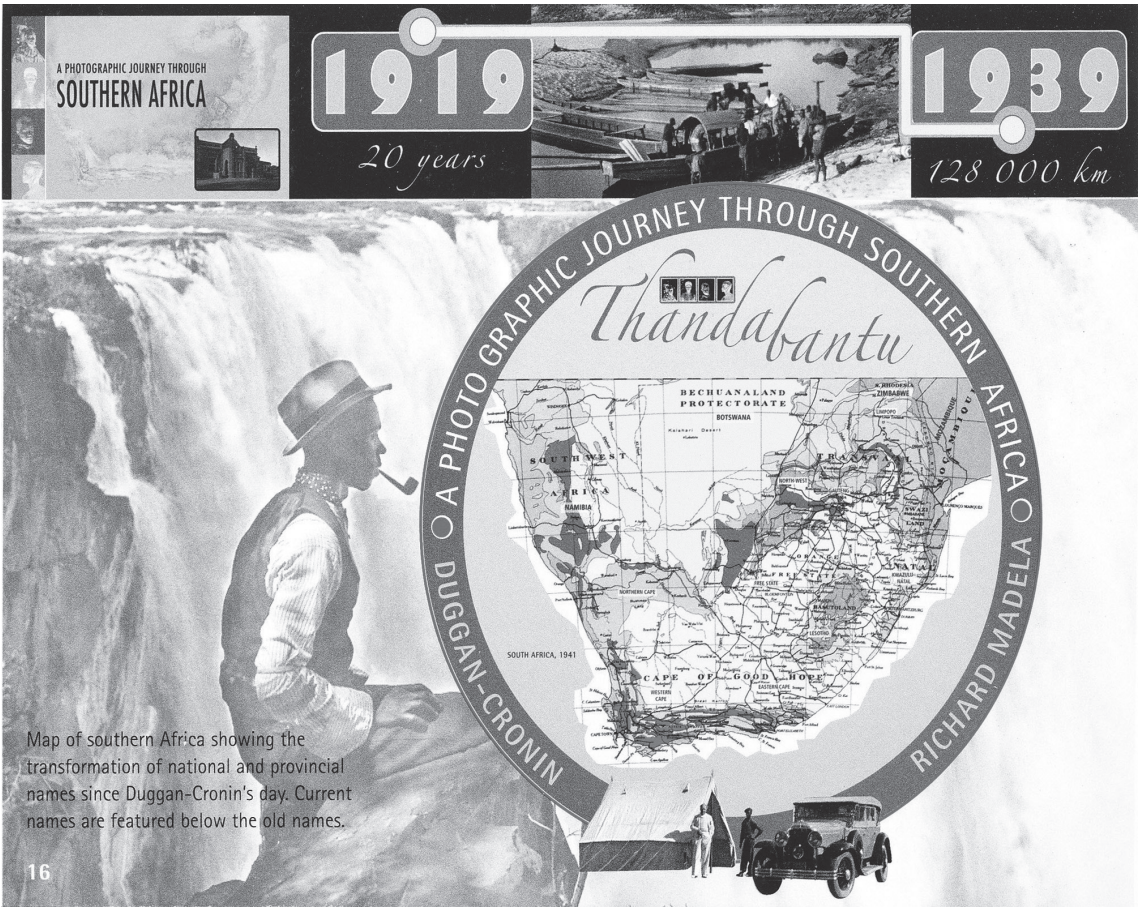


Figure 19: *Thandabantu* exhibition logo, *Thandabantu*, 16.

mance.[26] And the new space given to Duggan-Cronin's African assistant, Richard Madela, obviously serves similar ideological ends. Described by Duggan-Cronin himself as his 'native servant',[27] and now appearing in the exhibition catalogue as his employee, Madela has long been known to have assisted the photographer in various ways both in Kimberley and, from 1930, in the field: he acted as interpreter and, on occasion, persuaded reluctant sitters to submit to the camera; he certainly took the photograph of the infant Sabata, Chief of the Upper Tembu, who would not let any white man near him,[28] and he probably also took the photographs of Duggan-Cronin in the field. The two men are recorded to have become friends but Madela left Duggan-Cronin's employment at some point and moved to Cape Town where his death notice of 1952 described him as a 'labourer'. Whatever their personal relationship, it is surely to exaggerate Madela's role in the project to include no less than six photographs of him in the catalogue (as against three of Duggan-Cronin himself), and to devise a logo for the exhibition that effectively assigns equal responsibility to the two men (Figure 19). As the tide of history has turned in

26 *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, November 1934.
27 Duggan-Cronin, 'Kimberley's Monument to a Vanishing Culture'.
28 *Cape Argus*, September 1940.

South Africa, corporations and universities have learned to use art in their efforts to re-position themselves in the new dispensation. In the case of Duggan-Cronin, evidently, it is more important that a crude, general sense of alignment be communicated than the contradictory complexity of the original project. In the process, of course, Duggan-Cronin's project is flattened, South Africa's history is flattened – and a vital part of South Africa's heritage is impoverished.