

Dithugula tša Malefokana; Paying Libation in the Photographic Archive made by Anthropologists E.J. & J.D. Krige in 1930s Bolobedu, under Queen Modjadji III.

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

How, and in what ways, might a visually-and artistically-inclined person gain knowledge from a body of ethnographic photographic objects? I approach this question by launching an inquiry into the Balobedu of Limpopo province, South Africa as masters of myth-making, the 1930s anthropologists as masters of perception and myth transmission, the camera as a mechanical tool that has no master and the photographic image and object as a slippery abstract, or thing, that resists taming. What binds Balobedu, anthropologists and photography in this relationship is their collaboration at particular points in time in the production of the knowledge that is now Khelobedu. Khelobedu refers to all knowledge, custom, practices and culture emanating from Bolobedu and its people. To do this, I assume, or play with, the character of '*motshwara marapo*' (keeper of the bones or master of ceremonies), a versed person who officiates in ceremonies involving multiple custodies, doing so by reciting stories and enacting activities that facilitate progress within ceremonies and rituals. My engagement explores the process of pacifying a disavowed ethnographic archive using the performative aspect of the photographic object's materiality with the aim of gaining knowledge of the indigenous and colonial, using concepts with origins in both categories.

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Notes on Orthography

There is no official written form for Khelobedu. For the purpose of this study I have used Northern Sotho spelling. However, I have tried, where possible, to retain the sounds of the language as I would normally speak it. That said, there are inconsistencies in the spelling of some words, especially when I am referring to names or quoting other authors' work. For example: Modjadji is sometimes Mudjadji, or Lobedu is sometimes Lovedu.

Words in Khelobedu and Northern Sotho are in italics and an explanation of the meaning, context or concept is given, either as a footnote, or as part of the text.

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GLOSSARY

BADIMO – the ancestors, more specifically it refers to those that have passed on to the next realm and are now in the presence of God.

BALOBEDU – receivers of praise or tribute, the people from the Lobedu country in modern-day Limpopo and pledge affiliation to the Rain Queen, Modjadji.

BOGWERA – the male initiation school complex.

BOLOBEDU – the place of Balobedu.

BYALE – girls' initiation school.

DIKETO – a game played by children in which they move stones in and out of a circle while throwing a stone up in the air.

DITAOLA – diviner's divination bones (commonly referred to as the Dice in anthropology).

DITAOLA TŠA LEWATLE – diviner's divination bones which are objects and things found in the ocean, including shells, pebbles and other natural bits.

DITAOLA TŠA NAGA – diviner's divination objects found on land.

DITHUGULA – sacred historical objects of an ancestor.

HO DZOSA – to wake, but refers to waking up unceremoniously, or to disturb.

HO EMA – to stand, connoting a lack of peace, which leads to disorientation, as in pacing and being scattered.

HO LALA – to sleep. The concept revolves around peace, which is credited as being a source of happiness.

HO RETA – to praise.

HO RETWA – to be praised.

HO-PHASA – a ritual event used to placate the ancestors as a cure for the violent potential inherent in their archive. Technically it refers to the squirting out of a mixture of water with ground, sprouted grain.

INDUNA – a district head subordinate to the Queen or King; whose task is to run their district as well as to officiate and resolve disputes relating to the district.

KGAPA – translates as scooping, in this case it refers to wiping, in the sense of a cure, that is, to wipe off mucus.

KGAPAMAMILA – wiping away mucus, in this case it relates to divining bones that cure a cold (or wipe off mucus).

KHADI – the oldest sister of the inheriting brother within a family. The name alludes to “ho khala” which is to warn, cure or curb, a reference to her power to effect change within the family structure. Historically it refers to the brother’s sister whose lobola cows were used to pay for her brother’s bride’s lobola.

KHELOBEDU – refers to all knowledge, customs, practices and culture emanating from Bolobedu and its people including the religion and language spoken by Balobedu.

LELOPO – a possessing spirit.

LESUGU – snuff, in this case it refers to a genre of inherited songs commonly taught and sang during the Lobedu initiation complex and Thugula rituals.

LETSOKO – snuff.

LOBEDU (LOVEDU) – referring to people, things and concept emanating from Khelobedu.

MAKHAHA – sorghum, commonly known then as “red kafir corn”.

MALEFOKANA – name given to Eileen Jensen Krige by Balobedu. Lefoka refers to the wilderness or the bush. When directly translated the name means ‘slipping through’ or ‘trespassing on the wilderness’.

MAMILA – mucus.

MAŠHOHLA LEFOKA – name given to Jacob Daniel (Jack) Krige by Balobedu. The word šhohla means to trespass or slipping through while lefoka refers to the wilderness or the bush, ie the trespasser of the wilderness.

MELODI – a whistle, a melody or a tune. More specifically the phrase refers to a coded or agreed language reserved for kin, much like the special whistles that boys call each other with when they hunt.

MODIGWANA – mini ancestors, living god, revered elder.

MOTANUNI – diplomatic wife.

MOTSHWARA MARAPO – keeper of the bones or master of ceremonies. In this case it refers to a versed person who officiates in ceremonies involving multiple custodies. Doing so, by reciting stories and enacting activities that facilitate progress within ceremonies and rituals.

MUKHUBO – a belly button or an umbilical cord. It can be used to refer to a gathering of all the relatives, referring to genetic and political relatives.

MUPHABA – beer that is brewed by the “khadi”, made of eleusine grain, although makhaha can be used. No other grain is acceptable.

RAKGADI – father’s sister

SERETO – a praise piece.

ŠHOHLA – to trespass.

THUGULA – singular for dithugula

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Photo credits

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Visuals 1 and 3	George Mahashe
Visuals 2	Eileen Jensen & Jacob Daniel Krige (copied by George Mahashe)
<i>Imperfect librarian exhibition</i>	Raymond du Toit
<i>The Exuberance Project</i> exhibition	Ashley Walters
<i>Month of Photography 5</i>	George Mahashe & Clare Butcher
<i>Dithugula tša Malefokana</i>	Euridice Getulio Kala
<i>They Were Hungry</i>	George Mahashe & Clare Butcher
Original photographs for the installation	Eileen Jensen & Jacob Daniel Krige Krige Photographic Collection, Social History Collections copyrights Iziko Museums



Ditaola (Box 1)

Introduction

In the 1930s a husband and wife team of social anthropologists, Jacob Daniel (Jack) Krige and Eileen Jensen Krige, undertook sustained participant-observation fieldwork in the kingdom of Bolobedu, located in the north-eastern Transvaal of the then Union of South Africa (now the province of Limpopo). Their research was conducted under the rule of Queen Modjadji III, a renowned rainmaker, whose origins are traced to the legendary Karanga empires,¹ north of the Limpopo River (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 5, and Motshekga 2010: 131). The modern history of the Balobedu can be seen to start in the 17th century when they established themselves south of the Limpopo (Motshekga 2010: 131-135).

The Kriges' research culminated in a monograph, *The Realm of a Rain-Queen: A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society*, first published in 1943 with a foreword by the Prime Minister, General Jan Christian Smuts.² This monograph deals specifically with the early 20th century. The monograph was pivotal in the construction of modern Khelebedu as a field of knowledge, circulating widely within local and international academic circles as well as within the Lobedu community.³ The monograph generated a number of reprints, including an edition with a new preface published in 1980. This edition excluded the foreword by Gen. Smuts. The monograph is an evocative description of how the individual parts of Lobedu institutions work in relation to one another to form a functioning whole, supporting, and being supported by, the Rain Queen. It also dealt with the changes brought about by cultural contact amongst the established indigenous groups, as well as with incoming European groups.

The monograph has a variety of illustrations,⁴ including 31 tightly-cropped photographs.⁵ The published photographs are a mere fraction of more than 700

¹ This included the famed kingdom of Monomotapa which occupied the northeastern part of southern Africa. There are conflicting views about the extent and limits of the Monomotapa kingdom. See Motshekga (2010:81) for an overview of the debate.

² This was South Africa's second modern ethnographic monograph (after Monica Hunter Wilson's *Reaction to Conquest* (first published in 1936) which also had a foreword by Gen. Smuts). These monographs signalled a shift away from naming the monographs with typifying categories such as 'The Zulus', to more descriptive and inclusive names that acknowledge the complexities of people's culture, and away from the homogeneous, timeless ethnonyms.

³ Balobedu knew about the book as early as its publication but it became even more accessible in the 1980s with the publication of the paperback edition. The book is still available from the Tzaneen Museum, for ZAR 70.00.

⁴ The illustrations include diagrams, charts, tables, and maps.

Lobedu negatives and other photographic objects, including annotated albums, which were kept by the Kriges for private use until the 1990s, when Eileen presented them to the South African Museum (SAM) as an unaccessioned addition to the accessioned material culture collection that she had donated 20 years earlier.⁶ The Kriges did not use the photographs to illustrate the scholarly journal articles that arose from their 1930s research.⁷ Eileen did, however, re-use most of the photographs from the book to illustrate historical profiles of the Lobedu in the seventies (*Family of Man*, 1975: 1754- 1756), and made selected images available to her peers.⁸ In the 1970s, a wider selection of photographs was made available to another anthropologist who studied Lobedu material culture, Dr. Patricia Davison, and these photographs were subsequently published in *Annals of the South African Museum* (Davison 1984) as comparative illustrations alongside Lobedu photographs taken by Davison during her fieldwork in the seventies. Upon their donation to the SAM, Dr. Davison organised the recirculation of the photographs as an exhibition in Bolobedu (*Looking Back: Images from the 1930s*, 1996) and Cape Town (*The Ethnographic Lens: Images from the Realm of a Rain-Queen*, 1999). Recently the collection has been subject to an engagement by myself, manifesting as a photographic installation/performance (*Dithugula tša Malefokana: Seeing Other People's Stories, Telling Tall Tales*, 2012) that propels the photographic collection into the wider realm of heritage, artistic and curatorial interventions.

Aim

The key question and the angle of approach

My engagement with this collection of ethnographic photographic objects⁹ explores the open-ended contours of the Krige collection with the aim of locating the

⁵ The Kriges themselves cropped the photographs for the first publication, so that “each photo has been cut down to its essential...” (KCM, Krige Papers: file17).

⁶ A limited number of photographic prints in card format with annotations (by Jack) on the back were lodged at Wits University’s Anthropology museum (date unknown). I suspect they were lodged with Krige’s (Eileen) D.Lit thesis (Krige 1940). The photographs are currently filed alongside photographs from Max Gluckman, Hilda Kuper, Monica (Hunter) Wilson, and Percival Kirby and are in the care of the Wits Art Museum.

⁷ The edited collection, *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa* (Schapera 1937), did not make use of any of the photographs that Eileen Krige took in her 1930 and 1932 fieldwork. The publication used mainly photographs by Duggan-Cronin, Van Warmelo and Schapera.

⁸ This is suggested by uncatalogued correspondence from the *London Illustrated* requesting the use of her photographs (dated 23 October 1931 and 14 December 1933, loose letters in the Cambrian album, uncatalogued, SHC, Krige Photographic Collection).

⁹ Photographic negatives and prints, photographic teaching charts, print envelopes and albums.

photographs within a contemporary framework, in the hope of elucidating the nature of these objects and their influence today. Pegged against the ethics of, and debate around, the disavowed status of ethnographic photographs within a wider curatorial field, the engagement bears in mind the demands placed on the collection as archival objects, and their viability as sources for the recovery of indigenous knowledge (IKS). My project poses the question: how, and in what ways, might a visually-and artistically-inclined person gain knowledge from a body of ethnographic photographic objects?¹⁰

I approach the question by launching an inquiry into Balobedu as masters of myth-making¹¹ (Mahashe 2012), the 1930s anthropologist as master of perception and myth transmission (see Chapters 2 and 3), the camera as a mechanical tool that has no master and the photographic image and object as a slippery abstract or thing that resists taming (see the practical component). What binds Balobedu, the anthropologists and photography together, is their collaboration at particular points in the production of the knowledge that is now Khelobedu, within and beyond the disciplines of Anthropology, and now, Fine Art, as well as in Bolobedu. Khelobedu refers to all knowledge, customs, practices and culture emanating from Bolobedu and its people.¹²

In undertaking this inquiry I assume, or play with, the character of *motshwara marapo* (keeper of the bones¹³ or master of ceremonies): a versed person who officiates in ceremonies involving multiple custodies, doing so by reciting stories¹⁴ and enacting activities that facilitate progress within ceremonies and rituals.

In so doing I develop a conception of what an ancestor archive might be by framing the photographic objects as a *dithugula*, the sacred historical objects of an ancestor. In the case of these photographs, the ancestors are Malefokana (Eileen

¹⁰ The effective embargoing of ethnographic images based on their historical and discursive problems, places the knowledge inherent in the archive beyond the reach of the everyday person.

¹¹ Here I include all genres of information storage in spoken form: stories, facts, legends and so on.

¹² Khelobedu incorporates the influence that the people who live and work around the physical location of Bolobedu have in negotiating its meaning amongst themselves and the initiated inner circle who are the custodians of Khelobedu. This inner circle refers to the ruling families, represented by the office of Modjadji and the tribal authority (which include both ANC and non-ANC factions within the authority). In other words, Khelobedu does not refer to a pure concept unchanged over time, but refers to all influences and negotiation that circulate within the society and region over time.

¹³ 'Bones' in this context refers to all things that lead to a deeper understanding of the object of inquiry – the root of it all. The metaphor is taken from the Sotho concept of 'knowing the bones', which implies that you know the fact of the matter. These ideas are elucidated more fully in part 2.

¹⁴ In general, storytellers tell stories that need to be heard in order for progress to be made; they keep in their repertoire a variety of genres from songs, legends, myth and true-life stories.

Jensen Krige) and Balobedu. *Dithugula* are said to bring about happiness, peace and healing where there is trouble, uneasiness or sickness. These objects are paid libation¹⁵ to, or appeased, in the ritual complex called *ho phasa*,¹⁶ used to placate the ancestors as a cure for the violent potential inherent in their archive. *Ho phasa* involves a collaborative relationship between *ditaola*, the diviner's divination bones, and *dithugula*, historical or sacred objects possessed by a family – a relationship which, when mediated properly, opens up the knowledge housed within its archive (in this case the ancestor archive).

I conceptualise the Lobedu Queen and the 1930s ethnographers as 'keepers of the bones' because of their authority derived from intimate knowledge of their respective dominions. I attempt, through participant observation within the Krige Photographic Collection, to become versed in the photographic objects' complexities, which allows them to foster collaborative interaction and perpetuate knowledge. The (my) over-arching strategy is the establishment of myself as an initiated mediator/conductor/*motshwara marapo* who is conversant with the complexities of the Kriges' Lobedu photographic collection¹⁷. In so doing I facilitate the graduation of the photographs into an archive open for consultation.

Problem

From its announcement in 1839, photography itself was quick to develop as a practice, giving rise to multiple and ever faster photographic processes within its first 15 years. The invention of plastic-based negatives (which slowly replaced glass negatives) and roll film in the late 19th century was followed by the development of the single-lens reflex camera, epitomised by the release of the handheld medium-format Rolleiflex camera in 1928. These developments moved photography from a cumbersome activity requiring a mobile darkroom and wagonloads of equipment, knowledge of chemistry and patience, to an easy and manageable activity that could be done quickly, while busy with other activities. The move from sheet film to roll film also meant that more images could be captured in one setting, allowing the

¹⁵ Libation is usually associated with the act of pouring a drink to an ancestor or a deity. The main element hinges on the idea of paying attention. To pour a drink to an ancestor is to give him/her attention, as opposed to ignoring him/her.

¹⁶ This complex is elaborated on in Part 2.

¹⁷ Being conversant in the multiplicities of the archived photographs is key to the study, as opposed to being an expert in a particular methodology relating to the archive. For a *motshwara marapo* is not a specialist in a particular field, but is a specialist in other specialists' ways.

investigator to produce photographic sequences with ease. The medium was no longer the domain of the specialist, but one for the everyday person. Kodak's efforts to take the problematic process of the production of photographs into their own hands, had made the previously mechanical endeavor an extension of a person's arm.

In the late 19th century the use of photography in the different spheres of the colonial world meant that photographs were institutionally collected and housed in various ways. Some were collected as sources by public institutions such as museums and universities, some were donated to the institutions by private persons, while others were kept as archival records subjected to a bureaucratic culture of record-keeping. This range of conservation practices – of what is sometimes collectively referred to as the colonial archive – has drawn interest from a variety of parties, including branches of visual anthropology, administrators, tribal authorities, historians, gender studies scholars, visual studies scholars, art historical curators and artists as a site of contestation or reconciliation, and sometimes, of creative production. The drawing out of these historic objects into the public domain has led to discussion of the ethics of their production, a discussion that is sometimes, indeed often, mobilized in opposition to their engagement as objects that are able to bridge the gap of time and space.

Contestations around the status of ethnographic photographs have been stimulated by a rise in the recirculation of the ethnographic photograph in contemporary times. In recent years, curators of photography from ethnographic collections charged with the task of cataloguing and looking after the collections, as well as photo-art curators involved in writing a visual history, have facilitated the ethnographic photograph's second life through research and curatorial projects.

A survey of recent scholarship on ethnographic photography reveals four important strands of critical thinking relevant to the deposits with which this enquiry is concerned. The first and most influential in contemporary art circles is the concept of the gaze, as brought to critical attention by contemporary scholars in their analysis of the colonial encounter.¹⁸ This discourse dwells mostly on the unequal dynamics of

¹⁸ For a critical commentary on the complexities and history of the ethnographic gaze, see *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (Hartmann et al. 1998). See also *In/sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present* (Enwezor et al. 1996) on the gaze in general and *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* (Enwezor 2006). For contemporary resistance to the purchase of the concept of the gaze, see Enwezor's formulation of the concept of the gaze, derived from Bleach's (1995:43) articulation of the gaze as "The negotiated space of viewing" (Enwezor et al. 1996: 21). See also how the notion of 'poverty pornography' is recast

the power relations between the colonised and the coloniser, noting that the colonisers abused their position and imposed their standards and ideas, thus ‘othering’ the colonised subject with their cameras. This position has been contested by interventions wherein the image is re-appropriated and ‘liberated’ in ways that are concerned with naming the photographic subjects, thereby, or so the argument goes, freeing them from the grip of being signified.

This stance is associated with the curator, Okwui Enwezor, amongst others. His thoughtful exposition is often neglected in favour of a citation of his intervention, effectively making him the poster boy for politics of the gaze. He suggests that photography is, in fact, a way of resisting (Enwezor et al. 1996) and reversing (2006) the othering process. A similar perspective informs the work of Corinne Kratz (2002), as well as aspects of contemporary Visual Anthropology and Visual Studies, where taking exhibitions or historic photographs back to the source community is seen as a way of repatriating knowledge or eliciting alternative knowledge through the photographic object, or via the medium of photography. One approach posits the photographs as a resource for the community, while the other uses photographic practices (such as pinhole photography or disposable cameras) to make the medium available to the source community as a way of enabling self-representation, establishing it as a way of resisting the ‘othering’ process of colonial photography. This last intervention was reviewed in *The Colonizing Camera* (Hartmann, et al. 1998: 188-204).

The second strand, advanced mainly by Elizabeth Edwards (1992, 2001, 2004 and Edwards et al. 2009) revolves around the elevation of the subjects by means of according the subject control over time and space. Edwards’ focus is on the subject’s agency, with the subject as a self-determining actor within a given space. Edwards argues that the people being photographed retain their spatial autonomy (2001: 119),¹⁹ challenging the popular assumption that agency is vested exclusively with the

(works in similar terrain) in the genre of NGO/Aid organisation-commissioned documentary photography that use images of poverty to portray black subjects as helpless at the expense of their dignity.

¹⁹ In the essay ‘Time and Space on the Quarter Deck: Two Samoan Photographs by Captain W Acland’, Edwards (2001: 107-129) takes us through the sitting arrangements of the two Samoan parties that were being mediated by the colonial officer, Acland, on the colonial boat HMS *Miranda*. She elaborates on how the subjects arranged themselves on the boat, pointing to the fact that they actually duplicated the way they sat at their own court, citing the positions of key personalities within the group in relation to the leader. This example offsets the dominant idea that the photographer controlled the event including the sitting arrangements.

photographer, who controls the event by deciding who is placed where within the photographic frame.²⁰ Her arguments expose shortfalls in established markers of agency within the economy of the gaze.

Christard M. Geary (1988) pushes these arguments further by pointing to how the colonised themselves used knowledge of Western photographic composition to manipulate how they were represented by the camera. Edwards' (2001:107-129, Edwards et al. 2009) and Geary's (1988: 47-61) work contest the notion that the colonizer was the sole director in the image-making process (Faris 1992: 255-256), highlighting the fact that the coloniser framed his/her image within the domain of the subject. The subject thus retained some power within the ritualised encounter of the photographic moment. Amongst other things, the argument addresses assumptions about seating arrangements, clothing and body markings that resist the 'othering' process of the colonising camera.

Collaborations between and by artists and visual scholars have also led to engagements with the archive, involving the staging of interventions in the archive as well as in the source communities. Examples of this include Edwards's chapter 'Imaginary Homecoming: A Study in Re-engagement' (2001: 211-232), which looks at how art is used to disrupt the photographic archive and restore photographed subjects to their dispossessed landscape, as well as Pinney's chapter 'The Problem with Anthropology' (2011: 106-145, particularly 133-140). This is an anthropology of contemporary re-engagement practices, tracking the trajectory from basic forms of resisting the camera/archive to the use of the body as a form of subverting the gaze through reflexive art practice. This anthropology offers a wider context for Enwezor's (2006) art historical snapshot of the reflexive turn in contemporary South African photography.

The third strand is less an argument and more a methodological elaboration of the second strand. It sheds light on how one might approach the engagement with the archived photographic objects, or rather how one can open up to an expanded reading of the archived photographic objects. Prominent here is Geary, whose work highlights how the combination of an open mind and innovative research processes can lead to wider, even more accurate readings (1986). Her methodology advocates leaving prejudice behind and accepting the subject as a capable, equal partner in the process

²⁰ The assumption is based on the western tradition of placing the most important person in the middle.

of image-making. Geary's book (1988) advances the arguments put forward by Edwards beyond the contextual²¹ and introduces the photographed subject's agency as a full and permanent feature with intention towards the photograph. This opens up areas that are usually closed down by the arguments that privilege the 'imposed Gaze' (Geary 1988: 47-61). Geary's approach deploys the photographed subject's intention as a tool for accessing the photograph. In her analysis of the German colonial photographic archive holdings made in Bamum, Geary discusses King Njoya, a late 19th century king in Cameroon's Bamum, and takes the viewer through some strategies that Njoya used to propagate a constant and specific image of himself to the colonisers (Geary 1988: 16). Geary's book challenges dominant notions of ownership of the photographic image.

An example that amplifies this point is to be found in Salicki's essay 'Origins of an Image – E.W. Merrill, Tlingit and the Potlatch' (2009), which argues that the reading of an image must go beyond personal bias if one is truly to extrapolate valuable information about the rise and life of the archived image, especially for the purpose of writing history and culture. Her essay emphasises the need for researchers to know the original source of the image before they use it as fact or as evidence. From Geary's article (1986: 89-116) as well as the methodology employed by Salicki (2009) one can recommend that if one is to use an archived document, basic facts must be established: (i) when the original image was taken; (ii) by whom it was taken; (iii) by whom it was commissioned; (iv) for what purpose; (v) whether the image was cropped; (vi) whether the original negative was rephotographed, and if so locate the original full negative, or at least its history. Within these suggestions the concept of commissioning stands out, as it points to the object's genesis. Salicki (2009) takes us through the process of establishing a biography of an image taken at a Potlatch. The photograph in question was an accessioned item with the date, the photographer's name and the occasion and cultural designation of the people pictured. Upon going through the suggested research method, it was found that the image that was thought to have been an anthropological image was in fact an image commissioned by the people pictured within it. The only reason it was in the anthropological archive as an ethnographic image was because of the photographer's professional designation. In my view an incorrect reading was perpetuated because the only agency taken into

²¹ Edwards' essay advances the use of dress and space as a context controlled by subject.

consideration was that of the photographer.

A methodological strategy based on taking the ethnographic objects back to the source community democratises the reading of the image and thus opens up the alternative histories and readings otherwise lost. Some recent indigenous and feminist (here feminist encompasses all previously excluded constituencies to the dominant western institutions) methodologies push the stakes higher by asking, whose questions is the research going to answer,²² as well as, who will own this research? (Perhaps signaling the fourth strand below.) Further methodological recommendations play on the concept of the published vs. the actual image (in the Krige case, the published plates vs. the full archive). Christopher Morton (2005) draws our attention to a tendency to embark on image-led research (research based on the contents of the photograph) as opposed to object-led research (research that takes into account the production and actual materiality of the image).²³ Morton critiques Wolbert's (2000) approach²⁴ for researching the illustration (photograph) against the monograph as a reflection on the photographer (in this case the anthropologist) without accounting for the wider biography of the illustration and the monograph. Morton draws our attention to the discrepancies produced by a methodology that considers only the contents of the reproduced photograph (the cropped image in a monograph) and the mode of presentation within the publication (the photograph as an illustration) as a reflection on the photographer's method, without taking into account other dynamics surrounding the photograph's use (its biography).²⁵ This approach sees the archive as a productive space for establishing a wider context/biography, allowing for a more productive approach to Geary (1986) and Salicki's (2009) exemplary methodologies by drawing our attention to the hand of the publisher and economic circumstances.²⁶

²² See *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Denzin et al. 2008), which explores feminist, non-colonial methodologies that aim to give different readings of research data outside the dominant academic methodologies.

²³ I use 'image' to signal that a photographic image can transcend the confines of being a photograph and move to become a visual object that depends on both its content and the material presentation (see Elkins 2007 introduction on the photograph and its materiality).

²⁴ The essay explores the photograph as a neglected area of research within the theme of establishing what James Clifford (1998) terms 'Ethnographic Authority'. The essay looks at how the photograph was used to create ethnographic authority (Morton 2005: 389).

²⁵ Morton's approach is elaborated by Salicki (2009), where methodological recommendations for establishing biography (photograph, context, archive, etc.) are discussed.

²⁶ Morton shows how the economic realities of WWI caused the author to re-use the original plates (2005: 393) to illustrate a monograph while in a later stage after the death of the author and a change in publishers, the publisher made new plates by photographing the 1st edition monograph's plate because they could not get the original plates.

By comparing the cropping of the same plate in two different editions of the same monograph, Morton points to the role of the publisher in influencing the use of the photograph in the monograph. This act then challenges the standard assumption that the disciplined use of cropped photographs in the monograph tells us something about the anthropologist's attitude to photography.²⁷

The fourth strand, rooted in feminist approaches, is the result of insider as well as 'Halfie'²⁸ engagements with the colonial archive, particularly in the Canadian and Australian context. 'Halfie' anthropology refers to research into a culture to which the researcher partially belongs, collapsing the distinction between self and other. These engagements bring the source community into the colonial archive, facilitating access to archives for purposes of restoring context to the objects by correctly identifying them, as well as establishing indigenous research councils that oversee research done on the material within the archive. In most cases these engagements bridge a rather big gap in the understanding of what the nature of these objects are. They also establish parameters of access and custodianship around the different classes of objects, many of which lead to the classification of objects as sacred, reserving them for initiated members only.²⁹ These feminist methodologies advance the core question of the third strand, asking whose questions the research is going to answer, as well as who will own or control the findings of this research.³⁰ One of the leading figures exploring the potential of this strand is Jane Lydon.³¹

In conclusion, the deployment of arguments about of the 'gaze' are based on a reliance on historical facts that are seen to illuminate the reality of the colonial project. The problem with this approach lies in the way that the argument is mainly presented as an introduction to a wider history of photography in Africa and tends to

²⁷ In the case of the Krige monograph, the first edition draws attention to a negotiation between the anthropologists and the publisher, in which a different number of photographs were printed from what the anthropologist originally wanted. When the second edition was published, new plates were made (signalled by different cropping of the original photographs), but no new images were added even though economic conditions allowed.

²⁸ See Lila Abu-Lughod (1991).

²⁹ An example of these restrictions can be seen in a case cited by Pinney (2011:131) that shows an image that has been censored as a reaction to developments in modern sensibilities. The ritual depicted has been classified as sacred, thereby barring the uninitiated from seeing it.

³⁰ See Denzin et al. (2008) for more on methodologies aimed at giving different readings of research data outside the dominant academic methodologies.

³¹ See Lydon's book *Eye Contact, Photographing Indigenous Australians* (2005) for wider context on how indigenous Australians are navigating the ethnographic photographic archive. For a shorter read see also 'Photography changes who can see images of us' (Geismar 2012: 73-75).

gloss over a variety of photographic practices, pausing on anthropometric photography, which then becomes the emblem for ethnographic photography at the expense of the wider variety of ethnographic and anthropological photography. This is not as much a problem in specialised work dealing with ethnographic photography, but it has become a problem in the not-as-specialised field of contemporary photography, which uses an ethnographic approach.

On the other hand, the exemplary methodologies advanced by scholars such as Edwards, located in the field of Visual Anthropology, have done much to open up the field, but these do not address questions of how to pass all the knowledge (including indigenous knowledge) inherent in the photographs, on to the source communities, and others, in a sustainable and meaningful way. The methods advanced by the indigenous and feminist methodologies seem to offer a sustainable way forward by restoring the source community's authorship and agency. However, these gains are inhibited by the restrictions put on the objects by the indigenous research councils.³² To these effects, 'Halfie' anthropologist Christopher Pinney's 2011 publication, which plays on the hybridity and entanglement of anthropology, photography, indigenous institutions and magic, offers a starting point for the next stage in the saga of the ethnographic photographic object.

Justification for the study

This study stems from the excitement awakened by the promise of new and different kinds of knowledge – including forms of indigenous knowledge – from ethnographic photographs realized through artistic and curatorial projects presented by curator-anthropologists and administrators, capable of bridging the gap between the *then* and *now*. Carried by the sheer aesthetic and historical appeal of the materiality³³ and contents³⁴ of the photographic objects, the photographic object engaged in these ways, within contemporary practice, quickly gained prominence with wider audiences. This

³² Knowledge that would have been passed on in the form of ritual, initiation schools and other advances in the complex of information storage and retrieval is left to perish with the elders, because the young, who would have been beneficiaries of this knowledge, are often tied to other more western institutions.

³³ The material conditions include those brought out by the residual evidence of the chemical life that never stops once light is trapped on a chemically primed surface.

³⁴ Whether the content is brought to the photograph by the audience or is inherent in the photograph is not the issue – what is emphasised is that the photograph facilitates a generative space.

excitement has been dampened by the ‘tabooing’ of the material, sparked by its problematic historical conditions of production, as presented by activist academics and diasporic anti-afro-pessimism-inclined curators, effectively embargoing the ethnographic photographic objects.³⁵

Strategy/method

In the months preceding the start of my official research period (2010) and throughout the duration of the research period (2011–12), I spent time with various people who make demands on ethnographic photography, effectively practicing a form of informal participant observation with them. I regard this as a process of equipping myself with the necessary background to successfully pay libation/homage to, or to pacify, the collection. I approached the collection as a sacred object in the Lobedu conception of the *thugula* complex and thus sought to use it to gain insight into the wider contents of Khelobedu, the knowledge emanating from the Kriges’ time in Bolobedu – inscribed in the monograph as textual descriptions and visible in the photographic archive. I spent some time with people in Bolobedu establishing the scope of demand in the heritage sector for the expert handling and organization of these ethnographic materials.³⁶ At this time I was working on a project of my own, *Gae Lebowa* (2010). *Gae Lebowa* is a photo-documentary project that explored the history of my Lobedu heritage and its entanglement with the neighboring cultures, and documented ‘beer drinks’ (a formally sanctioned social event revolving around beer), held in 21st century Bolobedu.

I was struggling with the dilemma of negotiating whether to locate the *Gae Lebowa* project in the aesthetic tradition synonymous with the materiality and style of the ethnographic photograph, a move which can be seen (by contemporary curators) as perpetuating an ethnographic gaze in post-apartheid South Africa, or to locate the project within the critical discourse presented by an art historical context, which can be seen as endorsing the tabooing/moratorium on the ethnographic image. In response to this dilemma the exhibition was split into two sections, putting the two demands in

³⁵ Although the curators do not necessarily ban the ethnographic photographic object, most contemporary curators avoid it because of the negative attention it draws from activist academics.

³⁶ From my interview with Mampeule (2009) it was clear that funding for a heritage project using the old court buildings and Krige photographic material was available, but the problem was the lack of the expertise to correctly fulfil the demands of a heritage project. Mampeule was at that time the chief whip to the region’s Mayor, and senior Lobedu council member. He wrote a dissertation on the history of Balobedu (Mampeule 2000).

conversation and focusing on their overlapping areas. I regard this phase of my activity as a consultation with diviner's bones (*ditaola*) and the discovery of the problem.

After the exhibition, I spent six months at Wits University's Anthropology Department, familiarising myself with the development of South African ethnography from the 1930s to the present. I began to see that the 1930s participant-observation method of gathering data was conducive to the production of a particular type of ethnographic photograph,³⁷ which served as fertile ground for retaining aspects of indigenous knowledge, the problem was how to gain access to that knowledge ethically.³⁸ An exploration of Visual Anthropology methodologies indicated that a curatorial approach might overcome the disavowed nature of the ethnographic photographs by establishing curatorial protocols that allowed meaningful engagements with the photographic objects, without compromising the ethical dimension.³⁹

Following these developments, I registered for a Master of Art in Fine Art, through the Centre for Curating the Archive and the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative based in the anthropology department at the University of Cape Town. This allowed me to explore interdisciplinary methodologies that are problematic in the wider humanities context. During the last two years, I have spent three periods of six months engaged in literature study, beginning with a UCT-based reading group entitled *Entanglement/Hybridity*, which explored notions of entanglement, wherein the view of the colonial project as one in which the coloniser acts on the colonised was replaced by a notion of the colonial project as one fraught with entangled negotiations; unsettling concepts of agency and complicity.⁴⁰ Next, I

³⁷ This genre of photography is still widely practiced in contemporary photography – a form of active documentation where the successful documentation of a subject is dependent on a thorough sensitivity to their circumstance. The likes of Diane Arbus and Ernest Cole come to mind.

³⁸ The ethically problematic historical association of anthropology and colonisation, as well as the misuse of ethnographic research by the apartheid state, has had the discipline focus on a much-needed ethics-dominated methodology.

³⁹ Scholars (such as Elizabeth Edwards, Christard M. Geary, Jane Lydon, Christopher Pinney and Anna Grimshaw) offered alternative readings that gave breathing room to the theoretical gridlock that writers (such as Adam Sekula, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, John Tagg, Walter Benjamin and Okwui Enwezor) were being driven into by the art historical model. This was done by a fusion of exemplary anthropological approaches with the liberties exercised by artists.

⁴⁰ Entanglement is a highly contested term that has been appropriated by a variety of disciplines. The APC reading group took as its point of departure *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha 1994). Other key texts included: *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Nuttall 2009), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Gilroy 1993), *Making the Changes* (Titlestad 2004), and *On the Postcolony* (Mbembe 2001). As it pertains to the subject of this study, the concept of

audited a course on the history of anthropology⁴¹ at the University of the Western Cape, exploring early 20th century anthropology through the trajectory of ‘Halfie’ researchers – historically excluded insiders to the colonial circle, such as white women, christianised black intellectuals, jews, communists and others. Their contribution to anthropology was critically considered, establishing the period as one in which scholars were actively seeking alternative realities to the one imposed by dominant colonial discourse.⁴²

Lastly, I took a course with UCT’s Centre for African Studies, looking at the making of colonial archives. The course paid particular attention to the idea that canons produced by the colonial project were, in fact, imaginaries masquerading as facts, sanctioned by the perceived authority of the academy.⁴³

During the official research period I actively participated in Fine Art seminars and activities at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, and undertook a research visit to the Venice Biennale (2011) where I observed the use of ethnographic material in contemporary art practice. Also, throughout the research period I attended and presented my research in the form of research papers at the Archive and Public Culture (APC) Research Initiative research development workshops. The APC group was made up of scholars with varied experience, approaches and ages. The group focused on in-depth engagements with the interdisciplinary concerns surrounding archival sources. Scholars from the different disciplines offered critical advice to each other about specialist areas in each other’s research. In general, the group can be seen as an interdisciplinary think-tank.

This stage of the project can be seen as an effort to source the various tools and insights needed to confidently engage the Krige photographic objects in a productive way. At the end, I consolidated observations from these sojourns into a series of curatorial interventions presented at various institutions throughout the duration of 2012. The various versions of the performative installation *Dithugula tša*

entanglement refers to a situation whereby two narratives are bound up or intertwined in the production of a single narrative without one completely dominating the other. The situation is further complicated by the intimacy gained (Bhabha 1994) through the involved parties’ relationship, acknowledged or otherwise.

⁴¹ This course was offered by Associate Prof. Andrew Banks.

⁴² This engagement gave rise to a journal article, ‘Visualizing the Realm of a Rain-Queen: the Production and Circulation of Eileen and Jack Krige’s Lobedu Fieldwork Photographs from the 1930s’, co-authored with Dr. Patricia Davison (Davison & Mahashe 2012).

⁴³ The course covered debates around human remains (physical anthropology), gross pathology and the heritage industry’s negotiations around human remains. Associate Prof. Nick Shepherd convened the course.

Malefokana: Seeing Other People's Stories, Telling Tall Tales (2012), placed the audience in the role of the ethnographer, observed subject, and curator/museologist all at the same time (see chapter 6).

Output

My submission comprises two components: the written component introduces the collection, giving an overview of the actors (particularly the anthropologists) involved with it, their circumstances, and, in a small way, elaborating on the methods they used to produce the collection. It also introduces the experimental approach of treating the collection as a *thugula* archive; it does this by exploring my conception of an ancestor archive, conceptualised from my understanding of *dithugula* as a Lobedu archive system. This component is itself a hybrid product, combining elements of a conventional Masters thesis with some features of an ethnography, as well as aspects of vernacular knowledge forms. I make mixed use of sources and of referencing conventions. Formal citations are interspersed with summations of knowledge, ethnography-style, gleaned through participant-observation amongst academics and other interlocutors, as I deliberately entangle what are usually separated ways of knowing, interweaving oral histories, personal observations, informal interviews and academic sources. This is done to allow information that would otherwise be silenced by genre conventions to be included in the text.

The practical component explores the ideas presented in the written component, especially in Part 2, by realising them materially and through practice. Yet it should be noted that both the written and the practical components are part of the process that constitutes my project. Ultimately, the practical component presents the residues of my process as a participant-observer within the academy, a process which echoes what the Kriges did in Bolobedu. The residues take the form of an exhibition installation that invites the different constituencies with an interest in ethnographic photographic objects to interact with the ethnographic photographic object as *thugula*. The installation's function is to produce contemporary photographic objects – objects that can draw the historic photographic objects produced by the Kriges' fieldwork into the contemporary – with the hope of healing, by publicly treating the suspect status of the ethnographic photographic object.

This component is presented in the basement of UCT's Centre for Curating the Archive's print workroom (Old Medical School building) where several key

artifacts derived from engagements with ethnographic photographic archives are stored. Items visible within the room include some framed photographic ethnographic portraits by Duggan Cronin and the flooring depicting anthropometric photographs of the Khoisan that were used in Pippa Skotnes's miscast exhibition (1996).

Breakdown of the submission

The written component, or thesis, is presented in two parts. The first part is a contextual companion for the collection. It offers an account of the production of the photographic collection. This contextualising companion is presented as Part 1 of the thesis.

The second part is an imaginative leap that treats the Krige photographs as *dithugula* (sacred historical objects). This part looks particularly at Eileen Krige, the main proponent of the Lobedu research, who was given the name Malefokana by Balobedu, as an ancestor in need of placating, making the photographic objects her sacred objects (*dithugula*). Malefokana (personified by her objects) needs to be placated because her (and in some parts Jack's) work on Balobedu contains within it knowledge and insight on Khelobedu, which might affect its constituency negatively if not properly addressed.⁴⁴ This section imagines how one would go about paying libation to this kind of archive and its originating ancestors – not only Eileen but also the Balobedu. Here, taking stock of the process of paying libation allows me to review the collection with a set of conceptual tools drawn from Khelobedu (parts of which can be considered as indigenous knowledge) and bring them into conversations with those rooted in western epistemology. There is also a photographic essay (chapter 6) that presents documentation of the installation *Dithugula tša Malefokana: Seeing Other People's Stories, Telling Tall Tales* (2012).

The practical component is comprised of actual traces of pacifying and paying libation in the Krige archive. It is presented in three boxes and a leather-bound book.

Box 1, entitled *Ditaola*, presents the original body of work that identified the need for pacification and libation. It contains prints from my 2010 exhibition *Gae*

⁴⁴ The wider Krige archive (monograph, notes and papers, photographic objects) contains within it her knowledge of things that can be considered as secrets reserved only for initiated members. (In the 1960s she did, indeed, crack the genealogy, including the identity of the royal fathers and of the Lobedu queens, which are well-guarded secrets in Bolobedu. Although she did not publish this information, its basis remains in the notes and can be easily accessed through the photographs. While she does not name people in the monograph, some are named in the albums.

Lebowa, which drew critical engagements from various constituencies that pointed out the problematic nature of the ethnographic photographic genre.

Box 2, entitled *Dithugula*, presents the installation residue – sensible objects (Edwards et al. 2006: 1-31)⁴⁵ derived from the act of paying libation to Eileen’s *dithugula* (ethnographic photographic objects). These residues are in the form of blackened photographs produced through my photographic installation, *Dithugula tša Malefokana: Seeing Other People's Stories, Telling Tall Tales* (2012). The photographs enact the metaphor of ethnographic photography and the reality about the production of documentary photography in general. The blackened photographs are a glimpse of what a few people saw clearly. They are Malefokana’s *dithugula* because they are derived from her archive, and they are also my *dithugula* as I am the one that produced them and imbued them with knowledge specific to my time.

Box 3, entitled *The Ritual*, presents a digital installation invoking the process of seeing images from Krige’s ethnographic photographic collection appear from a blank sheet of paper as it develops into a darkening object. The installation gives the viewer an idea of the ritual undergone by the audience during the original installation.

The leather book, entitled *Modjadji, of Myth and Fantasy: The Imaginings of a Phantom, What Remains of a Story whose Masters have Long Ascended*, presents Balobedu as masters of myth making by tracking the stories that circulate in academic text, oral tradition, popular literature and general public memory. I explore how the Lobedu were actors in the production and perpetuation of the myth.

The thesis, entitled *Dithugula tša Malefokana; Paying Libation in the Photographic Archive Made by Anthropologists E.J. & J.D. Krige in 1930s Bolobedu under Queen Modjadji III*, presented as part of the residue, evidences my immersion

⁴⁵ The idea of sensible objects looks at historic objects as object that can be handled and sensed, meaning that the objects can and should be experienced through the senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) as opposed to read. It is taken from an analogy cited in *Sensible Objects*, (Edwards et al. 2006: 1) about an anthropologist who asks a curator (who is also an anthropologist) about a raven rattle. The anthropologist asking the question comments on the beauty of the object and proceeds to asks the curator how the object should be read. The curator responds by saying that they don’t read the rattle, they shake it, emphasizing the different approach to interacting with historically-loaded objects; that is, the difference between the approach of a ‘pure’ anthropologist against the approach of an anthropologist who is also a curator.

in the conventions of academic writing, exploring a fusion of different approaches to academic writing synthesised with the inclusion of material that would usually be excluded by academic genres.

In summary, my submission is an exploration of the process of pacifying a disavowed ethnographic archive using the performative aspect of the photographic object's materiality with the aim of gaining knowledge of the indigenous and colonial, using concepts with origins in both categories.

University of Cape Town

July, 1932.



My Tent



Daniel + his godmother.



A morala, or storage enclosure in a kraal.



View from the tent door, looking towards Doja.



Cooking beer in the morala. This beer was not for drinking, but for the merry.



Andreas + his family



Malofhana, aged 10 days, being smeared with red ochre by his grandmother. Note yard of fat in foreground.



Thanking BOY on his way to a doctor.

Part 1

Chapter 1

This chapter serves as a background to the archive in question, the Krige collection of ethnographic photographs relating to Bolobedu. It offers a snapshot of the historical context of Balobedu over the last 400 years. It provides a biographical context for the anthropologists and their careers. It includes a general overview of the results of their 1930s fieldwork, and gives a brief account of the collection and its journey from photographs in the field to an uncatalogued public resource located in a national museum.

History and legends

Although the Kriges (Eileen) only embarked on their first official field trip in 1928, their quest in relation to the realm of the Rain Queen began earlier. Lobedu legends tell of a violent thunderstorm that swept a group of young white holidaymakers off course. Exhausted and washed-out, they were rescued by some Lobedu men, who, on recognizing a girl within the party, took the group to Queen Modjadji III's court. Being a powerful rainmaker, she is said to have sent the storm their way because she had designs upon the group (Mampeule 2009). The girl in question was Cato Smuts, daughter of General J.C. Smuts. In the morning she was given an audience with Queen Modjadji III.

In reality, the group of young white holidaymakers were students, who, intrigued by the myth and legends surrounding Bolobedu's queen, set off on a quest during their university break in 1925 to see the elusive Rain Queen (interview with the Krige family 2012).⁴⁶ Among this group of students was Eileen Jensen, a young economics major. Eileen and Cato were best friends and were taking anthropology at Wits together, and it was Cato who introduced Eileen to her cousin, Jack Krige.

The group that set out to seek the Rain Queen were responding to the mythical figure of Modjadji, the famed Rain Queen of Balobedu, who up until the late 19th century was a phantom who fuelled the imagination of explorers, traders and administrators who had dared to venture into the bush of the northern Transvaal (see

⁴⁶ This trip took place around 1925 (Personal interview with the Krige family, 2012 – including Sarah Krige-Cato's daughter).

Mahashe 2012). She⁴⁷ was a legend because no white man had ever glimpsed her; she was never seen because her right to rule was bound to a tradition that imposed seclusion on the chief. It was this sacred institution that distinguished the Balobedu from their neighbors, for history tells us that the Balobedu chiefs were sacred chiefs, whose right to rule was sanctioned by the rite of the door.⁴⁸ The rightful candidate for the succession must open the door to the sacred hut, which is held shut by the spirit of the previous chief, who fulfilled tradition by committing ritual suicide in the hut. The door is held shut to all but the true heir.

Balobedu and Queen Modjadji

In this section I draw from a range of different sources and authorities to offer a background sketch of the history of Balobedu. I do not attempt to provide scholarly historical synthesis. Rather, I offer a rendition of how I understand this history after engaging with a variety of sources. I deliberately interweave the narrative logics of orators and the writers, storytellers and scholars.

The Lobedu are said to be descendants of rainmaking priests from the courts of Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe, from the Mbire Rozwi faction of the Monomotapa dynasty;⁴⁹ they are wanderers travelling the region exchanging rain for land.⁵⁰ Their modern history spans almost 400 years. The name Modjadji is a dynastic title that has been passed on from one queen to the next over the past 200 years. Before queens ruled Bolobedu, kings had ruled them for about 200 years, beginning sometime in the 1600s.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Queen Modjadji is commonly referred to as the inspiration behind the character of the female lead (Ayesha) in Rider Haggard's novel, *She* (1886). See Mahashe (2012) for more on the myth surrounding the fame of Modjadji.

⁴⁸ The rite was established after the Monomotapa kingdom split into two and the sons of the Monomotapa established themselves as independent Mambo. The Mambo Chingamira sought to distinguish himself from his counterpart and appealed to a Rozwi tradition that used the sacred hut (now called Mmalekhalo (Kalepe 2011)), as the sanctioning rite.

⁴⁹ See Motshekga (2010: 79-141) and Mashale (2009: 32-33) for more details.

⁵⁰ The comment about the wandering and exchanging of rain for land is mentioned by Thandabantu (great orator from Ga-Sekgopo) in his oration of the history of Ga-Sekgopo and the significance of the Mohale surname (informal interview with Thandabantu, 2009). It was also offered to me as an anecdote by an unnamed Lobedu who related the history of Balobedu and the mysteries of Khelobedu during the installation of my *Gae Lebowa* exhibition (2010) (interview with an unnamed man 2010).

⁵¹ The reign of the kings started sometime in the early 17th century when Mohale, son of Makhaphimo, formed an alliance with his two uncles, Mahasha and Modika, to create the state of Bolobedu, establishing Mohale (c. 1633-c. 78) as first king of the federation. The throne then moved to Malatji (c. 1678-c. 94). Upon his death the throne was usurped by his eldest son, Madatja, who ruled for a brief period before the throne was restored to Phedule, also known as Makhoba (c. 1696-c. 1725). He was succeeded by Kheale (c. 1725-c. 50), who was succeeded by Mokoto (c. 1750-c. 1800), the last king of

The modern state of Bolobedu arose out of an endogamous⁵² relationship between the Mambo⁵³ Chingamira's daughter and her uterine brother, resulting in a new polity that migrated over the Limpopo River to the southeastern part of southern Africa, where they established themselves as rainmakers for the region. They migrated⁵⁴ with the rain charms and sacred glass beads that the Mambo's wife had entrusted⁵⁵ to the daughter, Dzugudini and her infant son Makhaphimo (sometimes Makhaphele), who became the king of the migrating polity.⁵⁶ The system of ruling is tied up with the possession of the rain charms, which were entrusted to women in the times of the male rulers. The principle wife of the king was keeper of the rain charms – as the wife of the Mambo Chingamira had been before Dzugudini's group migrated over the Limpopo River (Motshekga 2010: 131). The change from kings to queens was initiated with a prophecy of change that predicted the Mfecane, as well as domination by the Western world in the region (Krige & Krige 1943: 8-9, 1980: 8-9). The union of King Mokoto⁵⁷ and his daughter (c. 1800), who became known as

Balobedu. See Krige & Krige (1943, 1980: 5-10), Motshekga (2010: 133). Notes on the dating: I use the dating provided by Motshekga (2010), which more or less correspond with the Kriges' general dates derived from oration from the 1930s. The general feeling about Motshekga's authority is that he draws on too many methodologies, which makes his authority hard to accept for some of the academics I have spoken to. Nonetheless, his contribution to the history of Balobedu is consistent with those of the Kriges, as well as most orations I have received.

⁵² This is often cited as incestuous and sensationalized. Although technically incest, the union was political rather than personal. This is discussed in relation to the Egyptian dynastic practices. See Motshekga (2010: 61-63) for more details. Krige, in her introduction, deals with the subject by noting that this act is conceptualized in Lobedu historical oration as an act that sanctifies (1943, 1980: 9). There are several variations of this concept that recur elsewhere in African mythology: see Yves (1991: 75).

⁵³ This title arose after the Monomotapa dynasty split into two separate dynasties in the early 1600s. The Mambo established a system of ascension, adopted from the Lozi's political system, which gave precedence to rain-making ability over birthright. Reference to the spirit of the deceased chief as the one who chose the successor meant that succession debates were not open to public debate and the title went to the most capable candidate.

⁵⁴ They migrated with the intent to form a new kingdom.

⁵⁵ It should be stressed that the charms were not stolen as popularly related, but were passed on from mother to daughter as was the custom. See Motshekga (2010: 131) and Dicke (1937: 58-65). The reason they are seen to have been stolen is that the polity migrated with the next rainmaker in line, effectively leaving the Mambo's domain without a rainmaker. The Mambo then sent an army to retrieve the rainmaker, not to recover the rain charms. The rain charms were bound up with the women and Mambo made rain by virtue of his wife (Dzugudini's mother). If Dzugudini had remained, she would have officiated for the succeeding Mambo as wife or ritual sister (Rakgadi) (Interview Malatji 2012). See Krige & Krige (1980: 172) on the position and power of the uterine sister.

⁵⁶ This migrating group was a fully functioning society with members of varied ranks. Among them was the noble who would later found the Mamabolo people.

⁵⁷ His prophecy warned of some black ants (probably Swati or Zulu armies) that would advance on Bolobedu without success, followed by some red ants (Europeans) whose advances would be neutralized but not overcome (Krige & Krige 1980: 9). Mokoto is sometimes spelt as Mugodu.

Modjadji I (1800–45), colloquially named Moselekwane,⁵⁸ set this in motion. The move is thought to have been a remedy for the internal conflict that had ravaged the Lobedu polity during the reign of the previous two kings, and served as a measure to restore order amidst the approaching changes (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 7-9, Motshekga 2010: 149).

Over the last 200 years, the office of Modjadji has drawn diplomats and statesmen to her court, including Jan Smuts and Nelson Mandela. Shaka and other early rulers also used to pay tribute to her by sending gifts and diplomats to her court to supplicate for rain. These tributes mainly took the form of women, who were married to the queen, who would sometimes pass them on to important headmen as diplomatic wives (*Batanuni*⁵⁹), thus fostering their relationship with the capital (Krige & Krige 1980: 172). Celibacy was the key institution for the female dynasty, and that institution extended to the royal wives. A secret consort⁶⁰ effected the heir to the throne.⁶¹ The queen was not taken as a wife, lest it undermine her authority.⁶²

During the Modjadji dynasties, the Lobedu came into conflict with the new powers that were making headway into the area. Waves of independent Tsonga-speaking refugees fleeing from the Ndwandwe warrior, Soshangane, settled in Bolobedu from the 1840s, disrupting the control Modjadji had over the area. This was followed by the expansion of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), which started

⁵⁸ Modjadji is said to mean ‘ruler of the day’. It is a title given to the reigning queen, like Modjadji Moselekwane – Modjadji being the dynastic name, while Moselekwane is the name associated with the circumstances of the accession to the throne. In this case Moselekwane denotes being naughty. Her accession to the throne was as a result of her union with her father. The move to female leadership was decided by the general community, who were all legally connected by family or political bonds. There are a few accounts of this. Krige and Krige cite it as the king passing the decree as a measure of restoring peace, but they do not elaborate at length on what led to the king’s declaration. Two separate orations of the history mention the queen mother (here representing the old women in general), suggesting that they put females as rulers because they were not prone to the same problems that plagued the later male line. It was brought before the general public for a vote and won favour. Motshekga alludes to the same process. In traditional decision-making within families (family being the smaller version of a traditional kingship), most decisions of that type are subject to the whole unit voting and agreeing. The decision does not lie in the head; the head is only responsible for constituting the process.

⁵⁹ This was a political office; the bearer of the office is commonly referred to as a diplomatic wife.

⁶⁰ John Malatji tells a story of how Eileen Krige in the 1970s cracked the genealogy of the queen’s line by figuring out who were the royal fathers (offsetting the incest stories) (Malatji 2012).

⁶¹ The Kriges, in their monograph and papers (KCM, Krige Papers), complain at length about the secrecy of the Lobedu, describing them as masters of deflecting attention from matters they did not want to disclose. This was especially so in the questions of the paternity of the queen’s children. They cited this question as one that would immediately close down any channel of communication (See KCM, Krige Papers: file 417.)

⁶² The last three queens were married; although celibacy was the key institution it was more a guideline than a fact. The wives that were married off to *induna* were those who could not cope with the celibacy institution, only the ones that could stand celibacy remained at court with the queen.

imposing taxes on the Lobedu as early as 1855. The first major conflict was initiated by Albasini, who, failing to extract taxes from Modjadji II, complained to the Boer republic. This resulted in an armed commando confiscating Modjadji's cattle and livestock as penalty in 1861 (Davison 1984: 45).

In 1868 Khašane (sometimes Khashani or Khashane) Mamatlepa junior, son of one of Modjadji's headmen with the same name, was sent to Port Elizabeth with a group of his peers to procure guns. During their travels, Khašane was introduced to the gospel, returning to Bolobedu with both the guns and the bible (Dayhoff 1999). Forced to take his father's place as a headman, Khašane deviated from tradition by marrying only one wife in accordance with Christian belief. In 1879 he met with Berlin Mission's Reverend Knothe⁶³ and requested that a mission be sent to Bolobedu. This request was granted in 1881 with the deployment of Rev. Fritz L. Reuter, who established his mission on Khašane Mamatlepa Jr.'s land, Mudubeng, naming the mission Medingen,⁶⁴ much to Modjadji's dissatisfaction.⁶⁵ The disobedience of Khašane in his capacity as Modjadji's headman and a member of the royal council led to an armed attack on the mission, which resulted in the death of Khašane Mamatlepa Jr. in 1884 (Mashale 2009: 39).

In 1886 a negotiated move by the republic to establish locations in Modjadji's area was disrupted by the move into the area of white farmers, which provoked an armed response from Modjadji II. The farmers were evicted, their homes burnt and their cattle raided. This resulted in action by commando forces to confiscate arms and to levy taxes in 1890 (Davison 1984: 45-47).⁶⁶ In 1894, conflict arising from this incident culminated in a confrontation between Modjadji II and General Joubert. The intervention by Reuter during the drought in 1894 and 1897 established Reuter as the key advisor to Modjadji II in matters relating to Europeans.⁶⁷ In 1894, in his capacity as advisor, Reuter advised Modjadji II not to go to war with Gen. Joubert, which led to a settlement between Modjadji II's diplomats and the Republic in 1894. This event

⁶³ Superintendent of the Northern Diocese Synod (Mashale, 2009: 35).

⁶⁴ Named after beneficiary Fraulein Charlotte von Meding, the current church is at Medingen. It was moved from Mudubeng in 1887 when Queen Modjadji invited Reuter back to Bolobedu after he and some converts had fled Bolobedu because of the death of Khašane (Mashale 2009: 40-41).

⁶⁵ The present site of the church is not Mudubeng, but a different location given to Reuter by Modjadji after he gained her favour. See Mashale (2009: 40-41) for more details.

⁶⁶ See Grimsehl (1955), text in Afrikaans.

⁶⁷ Note that Reuter's mission was once blamed for the 1881-82 drought (Davison 1984: 46). The drought in question was blamed on the farmers, who had built their houses using corrugated iron (Motshekga 2004; Mashale 2009: 40).

is misrepresented by Grimsehl (1955, quoted by Davison 1984: 46), who portrays the event as the Lobedu rebellion being crushed by Gen. Joubert (see Dicke 1937: 16-48 particularly 47-48 for alternative views).⁶⁸

Reuter's capacity as advisor was also derived from his compliance with the Lobedu custom of crawling on one's knees when summoned or seeking an audience with the queen, as well as his intervention on the Lobedu's part with the Republic's President Kruger. Although an advisor to Modjadji II, he never saw the queen; instead he dealt with the *induna* at Modjadji's head kraal (Mashale 2009: 41-42). After Modjadji II committed ritual suicide in 1894, the Boer republic tasked Reuter with the inauguration of Queen Modjadji III in 1896. This made Modjadji III complicit with the Boer demands, and established a foreign inauguration system as the sanctioning [enthroning] act instead of the rite of the hut, effectively breaking the seclusion tradition of the queens. The drought relief of 1897 organised by Reuter saw an increase in the membership of the church. In the same year, Reuter took a group of about 60 Lobedu men, women and children, regardless of religion, to Germany for the Transvaal exhibition.⁶⁹

In the 1920s the establishment of a railway line connecting the region with the wider industrial centers of the Transvaal increased the number of Balobedu in the migrant labour economy. In 1950 this was followed by the neutralization of malaria in the region (by using airplanes to spray pesticide), which increased the flow of white farmers to the region, further diminishing the size of arable land under Lobedu control. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, which made provision for a traditional authority that was answerable to government, placed further restrictions on Bolobedu's political independence. This act paved the way for the homelands policy that saw Bolobedu included within the Northern Sotho bantustan called Lebowa, which was declared an independent homeland in 1972 (Davison 1984: 47).

Persuaded by the missionaries not to commit ritual suicide, Modjadji III died of natural causes in 1959 (Mampeule 2000: 15) and was succeeded by a further three queens over the next 50 years. Modjadji IV was stripped of her title as queen, and officially reduced to the status of a chieftainess by the apartheid state in 1972

⁶⁸ Krige & Krige (1980: 10-11) also cite 1894 as the year of the conquest of the Lobedu. This idea of conquest should be seen in the same light as Monica Wilson's (1961: 412- footnote 2) idea of conquest, which does not include war, but a negotiated settlement or blackmail.

⁶⁹ This was part of the big Transvaal exhibition that took place in Germany in 1897. The earliest published photograph taken in Bolobedu was produced by Rev. Reuter in the late 19th century and was reproduced by Schlosser (2002).

(Vilakazi 2012: 13). The last queen, Queen Modjadji VI (Makobo)⁷⁰ lasted only two years on the throne before she died of an undisclosed illness in June 2005. Bolobedu is currently without a queen⁷¹ but has a king who is acting as regent until an heir⁷² is proclaimed. Today the Lobedu institutions are in the midst of negotiating the policies of the ANC-led government, which is converting tribal authorities into government-run municipalities.

The anthropologists

For this section I draw my information from a mixture of sources. My main published source is Hammond-Tooke's *Imperfect Interpreters* (1997). It is supported by obituaries as well as archival material in the form of the Eileen Jensen Krige Papers, the Kriges' official papers archive housed in the Campbell Collections at the Killie Campbell Africana Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. The archive was catalogued by the Kriges' granddaughter, Emily Krige. I use mainly their biographical notes, their curriculum vitae and Eileen's reflections on their early field work in Bolobedu to offer a comprehensive biographical overview of their careers.

Eileen Jensen Krige (1904–1995) and Jacob Daniel (Jack) Krige (1896–1959) were a husband-and-wife team of anthropologists who married in November 1928, having been introduced by Cato Smuts in Winifred Hoernlé's anthropology class at Wits University in 1926. (Davison & Mahashe 2012: 50; interview with the Krige family, 2012)

Jack, who was the nephew of Gen. Jan Smuts, grew up in the Cape colony, graduating with Honours in Zoology at Stellenbosch University. He received a Rhodes Scholarship to read for Honours in Jurisprudence at Oxford University in 1921. During this period he was also active with the League of Nations. Jack went on to serve on the staff of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva from 1923–24, before returning to practice as an advocate at the Pietermaritzburg Bar until 1931, when he took up anthropology at Wits University. During this period Jack also lectured in International Law at Wits University. He served as director at the

⁷⁰ Inaugurated in April 2003 as the sixth Lobedu Queen, she was popularly known as a proponent of change, and did not adhere to a traditional lifestyle. See McGregor (2007) for a comprehensive picture surrounding her reign.

⁷¹ The royal female lineage has been plagued by irregularities since the advent of government interference in the succession process.

⁷² The heir exists and is said to be off the record until she is of age (*A Country Imagined* 2010: episode 10).

University Correspondence College in Pretoria between 1993–34. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- biographical notes)

Jack and Eileen attended Malinowski's anthropology seminars at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1935, before receiving the International African Fellowship for the Lobedu research (jointly held). After this, Jack went on to occupy the Chair of Social Anthropology at Rhodes University in 1940-46, when he took up the position of Professor in Social Anthropology and Head of Department (HOD) in African Studies at the Natal University College in 1946, a position he held till his death in 1959 (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 85; KCM, Krige Papers: file 417-biographical notes). Jack was a brilliant administrator who loved the University of Natal, where Eileen later scattered his ashes (interview with the Krige family, 2012).

Eileen Krige, whom I credit as the main driver of the Lobedu research and archive, was born in Pietersburg, now Polokwane, in the Limpopo Province, less than 80km from Bolobedu. She initially studied towards a teaching degree on a teaching bursary scheme at the Johannesburg Training College while secretly taking undergraduate courses in economics at the Wits University.⁷³ (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- curriculum vitae; SHC, Davison Papers: uncatalogued tape-recording, Interview with Eileen Krige, 1990)

Eileen cut her teeth with a BA in History and Economics, graduating in 1925 with BA Honours in Economics and completing her MA in Economics in 1927. Her main area of interest was urban poor relief in Johannesburg – a topic she presented as a paper for the Johannesburg branch of the Economic Society (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417). She attended some classes on Anthropology in her third year (1924), and in 1926 also took Anthropology as a subject, this time with Winifred Hoernlé, who had recently started the Anthropology Department at Wits University (Argyle 1995a: 92). Hoernlé had been heavily influenced by structural functionalism and taught other luminaries, such as Max Gluckman, Monica Hunter (later Wilson) and Hilda Kuper.

In 1928 Eileen received a scholarship from Wits to do some fieldwork in the Northern Transvaal, which she used to begin her work among the Lobedu of the North-Eastern Transvaal She received a follow-up grant, which she held jointly with Jack, in 1930. She completed her Honours degree in social anthropology in 1930 with

⁷³ She secretly took the classes because her funding was meant for a teaching degree. In terms of the contract she was required to be a teacher after the degree, for her to study economics was a deviation from the contract as it meant she was changing careers.

a library-source-based thesis, *The Social System of the Zulus*, which was reworked and published as a book in 1936. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- curriculum vitae)

In 1932, when culture contact and change became a popular research area in Anthropology, Eileen began comparative work, tracking culture contact and change in urban areas, focusing particularly on a group of *Oorlams*⁷⁴ who she used as a control for the research she was doing on urban-raised ‘natives’ (photographs from this period are also included in the Lobedu collection).⁷⁵ (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- curriculum vitae A.)

In 1935 she was sent to Malinowski’s seminar with a scholarship organised by Hoernlé, returning in 1936 to embark on her major fieldwork among the Lobedu. During the period before and after the major Lobedu fieldwork, Eileen deputized for Hoernlé and Schapera as a lecturer. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- curriculum vitae A.)

After completing the Lobedu fieldwork, she accompanied Jack to Grahamstown, where she started the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Rhodes University in 1942 (she held the position of HOD until 1944 when her family responsibilities took priority), emphasizing an anthropological approach to sociology. During her time in Grahamstown she continued her work on urban poor relief, investigating living conditions in the local urban locations and recommending minimum wage standards for the surrounding towns to the Wage Board. She also gave evidence for the so-called Fagan commission. She was active in a number of organisations involved in social relief efforts, working with soup kitchens, crèches and health-related programs. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417- curriculum vitae A.).

When Jack moved to Natal University College in 1946 to take up the position of Chair of Social Anthropology, Eileen went back to her research, furthering her work on Zulu female coming of age (puberty) (*ukwemula*) ceremonies, becoming the first White woman to be allowed to witness the Zulu female initiation school (Dell 2002: 24). She also went back to her Lobedu research. Her work from this time includes a comprehensive report on the Lobedu for the HSRC (KCM, Krige Papers: file 229).

⁷⁴ The word *Oorlams* refers to a Black community descended from ‘derelict orphans’, adopted as apprentices by the Boers during the native wars and raised by the Boers; they had no experience of ‘tribal’ life.

⁷⁵ Her excursions into urban anthropology include: Skoolplaas in Marabastad Pretoria (1932), Lady Selborne locations (1933-34) and Fingo locations in Grahamstown (1940).

Eileen was then offered a lectureship in social anthropology at the University of Natal in 1948 (and later a senior lectureship in 1953), working closely with Jack, as well as supervising the work of the research fellows. During this time she also investigated 'native' attitudes in healthcare, which led to the appointment of the first hospital social worker at King Edward VIII hospital. Upon Jack's death in 1959, Eileen succeeded Jack as Professor of Social Anthropology and as HOD of African Studies. She was awarded a Doctor of Social Science degree by the University in 1977. For more details on the Kriges' careers see Hammond-Tooke (1997: 85-87); Dell (2002: 22-24) and KCM, Krige Papers (: file 417- curriculum vitae, A., B., includes a motivational letter and biographical notes-c. 1959)

After her children had grown up, Eileen continued her work among Balobedu, engaging in fieldwork excursions well into her later years,⁷⁶ observing culture contact and change in Bolobedu and producing numerous colour slides between 1964 and 65. Her last trip to Bolobedu was in 1993, when she went to Simeon Modjadji's funeral. Upon her death, a contingent of her Lobedu peers went to Durban to pay their respects to her. Her ashes were taken to Bolobedu by her children and scattered on the cycad hill (interview with the Krige family, 2012).

The monograph

The Realm of a Rain-Queen – A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society (1943, 1980) was the second major functionalist monograph to appear after Monica Hunter's *Reaction to Conquest* (1936). Although credited with some creative interventions to the standard monograph genre,⁷⁷ it was criticised by Argyle (1995b: 112-15) for not being anthropological, as it did not interact or deal with any of the anthropological theories of the time. (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 86) Instead it offered a generalised pictorial evocation of the Kriges' experience of culture in 1930s Bolobedu. Indeed, the Kriges stated that they had planned the monograph to act as a picture from which conclusions about the Lobedu could be drawn, noting that the gap created by this move would be filled by scholarly papers that would appeal to specialists (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: xiii). This was an advance signal of what was to come in the move

⁷⁶ Most younger people in Bolobedu (age 30-50) refer to her as a doctor who helped Balobedu with TB. The older people remember her as their peer.

⁷⁷ Argyle and Preston-White (1978) are quoted by Hammond-Tooke (1997: 87) as describing the monograph as not reading like an inventory of facts nor overwhelming the reader with detail. Hammond-Tooke goes on to quote Smuts's observation in the foreword, describing the monograph as one that paints a picture.

from thick monographs to the technical journal articles mentioned by Hammond-Tooke (1997: 3) in his description of the trends in South African social anthropology in the 1960s.

Another influence on the monograph was that of the Personality and Culture School in Anthropology, particularly the 1934 publication, *Patterns of Culture*, by Ruth Benedict (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 86). This school emanates from the American approach to cultural anthropology as set forth by Franz Boas, whose cultural relativism is the American equivalent of Malinowski's functionalism. The school sought to explain culture in terms of socialization instead of biology, focusing particularly on how children's experiences influence the personality of adults, which in turn influences the culture.⁷⁸ This approach is evident in the monograph, – subtitled *A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society* and organised along the lines of the Personality and Culture School – and explains some of the deviations from the Malinowskian tradition, as suggested by Adam Kuper (1987: 73).

The monograph is a collaboration between Eileen and her husband Jack, with the work separated between the researchers along gender lines. Jack dealt with the traditionally masculine topics of tribal history, subsistence, co-operation, social grouping, politics, law, marriage and witchcraft, while Eileen dealt with 'newer' topics such as family, early training, fertility (initiation), the drum cult, rain cult, the Rain Queen, as well as providing the evocatively written descriptions of scenes of everyday life and the maps (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 86), a breakdown which begins to establish Eileen as the more visual of the two.

The monograph is mainly illustrated with photographs made during the 1936–37 field trips (few from the other periods are included). The images are presented in sets of two related and complementary images, illustrating an aspect of the study being discussed. The Kriges used four images to illustrate some chapter, except in the chapter dealing with the *Bogwera*, which has 3 images, one of which occupies a whole plate. The chapters on co-operation and exchange, cogs in the political machinery, witchcraft and sorcery, the rain cult and culture contact are all illustrated with tables and/or graphs. The chapters on family ties and the roles of the ancestors have no illustrations. Those on marriage and social structure and some social groupings are illustrated with both tables or diagrams and photographs. The rest of the

⁷⁸ University of Alabama, anthropology department resource. Online: Available <http://anthropology.ua.edu/cultures/cultures.php?culture=Diffusionism%20and%20Acculturation>

chapters are illustrated with photographs. The cropping of the plates in the 1943 publication differs from the 1980 reprint.

The images in the monograph perform as disciplined illustrations of the written text, cropped of any distracting detail by the researchers themselves.

The collection

In the late 1980s, due to the efforts of Dr. Patricia Davison,⁷⁹ who had worked on the collection of Lobedu material culture that Eileen had donated to the South African Museum in 1969, the Krige photographic collection was presented to the South African Museum (later incorporated into Iziko Museums of Cape Town) as a complementary collection. The conservation of the negatives and photographs was undertaken at the South African Museum (SAM) with funding from the American Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Dr. Christard M. Geary from the Smithsonian Museum gave advice on the project and Dr. Davison oversaw the project.⁸⁰

Paul Grendon and Chris Ledochowski were contracted to produce sets of working transparency copies onto transparency safety film and two sets of contact sheets.⁸¹ The negatives were photographed onto safety film because the celluloid nitrate film that the original negatives are on is known to be highly flammable and conducive to self-combustion.⁸² Although advised to destroy the original negatives after the copy work was done, Davison opted to keep the original negatives under controlled environmental conditions. (Davison: personal communication)

⁷⁹ Davison had earlier suggested to Eileen Krige that the photographs complemented the material culture collection that had been donated to the SAM (SHC, Krige Photographs). At that time, Krige was reluctant to part with the photographic collection, as she was still publishing. In the late 1980s, when Krige was being moved from her house to an old age home, she invited Davison to Durban to collect the collection in person (official records exist, including a recording of the interview conducted by Davison during that visit (SHC, Davison Papers)). Davison explains that in the 1960s Krige had hoped to give the material culture collection to a museum closer to the Lobedu people, but only the SAM responded positively to the offer of donation.

⁸⁰ Reports and correspondence on this project are on record in Davison's Lobedu work (SHC, Davison Papers: uncatalogued correspondence).

⁸¹ A process whereby the original negative is placed directly onto photosensitive paper and exposed to light to produce an image that is the same size as the negative. These are used as basic viewing materials during editing, and allow the viewer to check focus and viability of the negative for printing.

⁸² Although all celluloid nitrate-based film is highly flammable, self-combustion is common with cinema film, which is usually stored, tightly wound, in a tin can with no ventilation. When the negatives are stored in paper sleeves in a ventilated cardboard box the risk is greatly reduced.

June Hosford catalogued the 1930s collection, sorting the different photographic objects, placing them individually in acid-free paper and archiving them in acid-free boxes. The negatives were neatly cut, individually placed into acid-free tracing paper and housed in an acid-free box in the cool basement in the old African studies department at the SAM. Hosford also typed all the hand-written lists into contemporary word processing software and made multiple printed copies of the lists. (Davison: personal communication)

All the accompanying negative sleeves and original envelopes carrying the negatives and prints were kept. Some of these envelopes have notes and dates relating to where the film was developed, as well as details of who sent them in. Some envelopes contain pictures of the popular cameras from the period and other photographic information of historical value. The cut-offs of the negatives (left when the negatives were reorganised) have also been kept, allowing for reconstruction of the original sequence of the roll film, which could indicate the chronology of the photographs in one roll of film.

These conservation efforts added a new layer to the Krige collection by adding more objects to it. These objects also included a considerable amount of out-of-date photographic paper left behind from the conservation efforts, which I used in my engagement with the archive. In addition to the original Krige collection and the archive produced by the conservation process, there is correspondence and photographic and non-photographic materials that form part of Dr. Davison's Lobedu archive (SHC, Davison Papers). The latter are inseparable from the Krige archive because they are the result of an interaction with the Krige photographic archive, and because they have been housed together (this includes the tape recordings made when Eileen handed the collection over to the museum).

Also aligned with this archive are the Krige papers donated by Eileen, on her retirement, to the Campbell Collections at the University of Natal, where she served as Emeritus Professor in Anthropology until that time. The Krige papers were organised and archived by her granddaughter, Emily Krige, who is a senior archivist at Campbell Collections. These papers contain reflections by Eileen written in the 1980s, and several drafts of preparatory notes for a lecture on her fieldwork experiences. Also present are letters from Eileen's late 1930s and 1960s field informant, Simeon Modjadji, as well as some from Andreas Matatanya and John

Malatji,⁸³ written in Khelobedu. However, the original notes that accompany the 1930s archive are not present as they were lost in the 1970s, when Eileen took them with her to Bolobedu to prepare for a comparative study between the 1930s and the 1970s. These were lost on her return from the field due to a misunderstanding (interview with the Krige family, 2012).

The photographs

The Krige photographic collection consists mainly of images relevant to generic ethnographic themes (1930s), i.e. dealing with everyday life, material culture, medicine, technology, fauna and flora (mainly flora), landscapes, homestead, architecture, food production, ritual, ceremonials, religion, initiation, social institutions, leisure activity, agricultural activity, portraits and domestic activity. Within these themes, the photographs show a sensitivity and consistency that is unusual within the dominant genres of anthropological photography (uncatalogued collection inventory, available with the collection).

In my experience, there is a randomness within many ethnographic images produced by different anthropologists of the period, which gives a sense of the photograph as an afterthought or a stolen moment. Within the dominant models, the sitters usually fall into expected poses and there appears to be great effort on the part of the person being photographed to hold a pose. In the Kriges' images – particularly the portraits and the images of children – there is a constant ease, giving a sense that the people being photographed were on casual terms with the photographers, as if they were being photographed by a trusted insider and were not concerned with how they would be represented, because they had trust in the photographer, or were very confident of their presentation. This sense of trust is seldom found in photographs of

⁸³ Malatji succeeded Simeon Modjadji (Molokwane) as Eileen's fieldwork assistant in the Sixties. John's interaction with the Krige family started with his assigned task (as a teenager) to look after the Krige boys during the elder Kriges' fieldwork (circa 1962). He was later given a Berlin Mission scholarship for his high school. His university fees were facilitated by the Malefokana Scholarship, after E. F. Potgieter – who studied with Eileen – threatened to expel Malatji from the University of the North (now University of Limpopo). Malatji had impressed Eileen as an assistant, especially after discovering that he was the son of Dora Makobo (a daughter in the inner circle of Modjadji III), who was one of Eileen's fieldwork assistant in the 1930s and had facilitated Eileen's access to women in the royal inner circle (Malatji 2012). Malatji has served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at University of Limpopo, and also served as Director-General of the Limpopo Region, (McGregor 2007: 24) and as Chief Counsellor to the Lobedu tribal authority. He is currently the *motshwara marapo* (conducts all the ceremonials as orator of history) to the royal family. Malatji is the most referred to man in Bolobedu at the moment, succeeding Motshekga as historical reference and dealing with all enquiries about Balobedu. He is also very knowledgeable about settler history.

this genre. There are also some images where Eileen and her husband, Jack, are in the photographs.⁸⁴

The practice of participant observation of that period treated the camera as a recording tool, or an extension of the ethnographer's eye; it was not intended to produce photographs for theorization, as photography had done before. Because of this, the camera was trusted to do its job. The ethnographer did not feel a need to exercise undue control over the process, which might explain the relaxed and candid nature of these photographs.

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⁸⁴ These serve as further proof that the Kriges were really there, as opposed to using travellers and missionaries as field researchers to provide photographs for 'armchair anthropology'.

Chapter 2

This chapter looks at the practice of social anthropology (particularly in South Africa) in relation to the period of the Kriges' fieldwork. It takes as its main reference Hammond-Tooke's account (1997) of the period, and its actors and consequences, supplemented by Adam Kuper's (1987) writing on the South African anthropologists who came out of the British tradition of social anthropology in the 1930s. I also draw on contemporary critiques of the nature of fieldwork as advanced by Kuklick (2011) and Schumaker (2001), dealing with the wider implications and history of the act of fieldwork.

The chapter gives a brief account of the Kriges' experience in the field and highlights the sources that helped them with their fieldwork. It also deals with the question of who commissioned what during their fieldwork. Insights into their fieldwork experience are gleaned from their paper archives, notably the Eileen Jensen Krige Papers, Campbell Collections, which is housed in the Killie Campbell Africana Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban.⁸⁵ This chapter also addresses my position as one in which I not only acted as a participant-observer in the academy, but also sought to steep myself in the circumstances of the making of photographs as well as in the Kriges' fieldwork more generally, and in Balobedu understandings, views and memories of the fieldwork.

Anthropology in the 1930s

David Hammond-Tooke's book *Imperfect Interpreters* (1997) tracks the rise of social anthropology in South Africa. He defines the wider discipline of anthropology as the study of what it is to be human, and of all things created by man within the rubric of culture and society. Distinguishing cultural (American school) and social (British school) anthropology from the disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology (commonly referred to as anthropology proper in relation to ethnography (Broeckmann (quoting Topinard) 2008: 144) within the wider frame of

⁸⁵ Note on the referencing: the Eileen Jensen Krige Papers are a collection of loose papers. They compose a mix of neatly typed-out texts, some of which have direct reference numbers, and some which only have file references. Where possible I give a direct reference, otherwise I give the name of the file where the document was found.

anthropology,⁸⁶ Hammond-Tooke describes social anthropology as being concerned with the nature of human societies and their cultures (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 1).

Before the advent of social anthropology in South Africa, the field was dominated by two theories: evolutionism sought to explain humanity in terms of stages of evolution, from barbarian to civilised literate man, with the barbarian stage the equivalent of a child and the civilized stage that of an experienced adult (Roodenburg 2002: 15). Diffusionism, the other dominant theory, sought to explain the efforts of man in terms of the ancients – early, highly-advanced civilisations (including aliens from outer space) who left the benefit of their civilisation to the lesser, younger cultures (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 9).

Neither of these theories was useful for the administration of colonies like South Africa (Hammond Tooke 1997: 9-10). What were useful for the administration of the colonies were the travelogues and ethnographies being produced by missionaries and administrators, based on their practical experience. One such character was Swiss missionary, Henre Alexandra Junod, who produced the first pre-social anthropology ethnographic monograph, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1913). However, it was only with the establishment and appointment of Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) to the Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town in 1921 that modern South African anthropology began.

Radcliffe-Brown promoted a more positivist,⁸⁷ classical and sociological approach to anthropology (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 70), establishing a structural functionalism that emphasized a sociologically-inclined comparative and analytical approach to fieldwork. This approach entailed the gathering of information from informants and the use of analysis to synthesise the material into an anthropological presentation.⁸⁸

However, the discipline really kicked off in South Africa when Agnes Winifred Hoernlé (1885–1960) took up a position in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand in 1924. Although Hoernlé shared Radcliffe-Brown's views on structural functionalism⁸⁹ and was criticised as an unsuccessful fieldworker, she is praised as a great teacher (Krige & Krige 1943:

⁸⁶ Roodenburg (2002: 15) extends this category to include biologists, zoologists, paleontologists, geographers, historians, ethnologists and linguists.

⁸⁷ Radcliffe-Brown was influenced by the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 23).

⁸⁸ Eileen's 1930 BA Honours thesis used this method of anthropology.

⁸⁹ Both were greatly influenced by Durkheim.

preface)⁹⁰ whose teaching approach provisioned for a wider methodology than the one she subscribed to – a point reflected in her securing scholarships for her students to study at the London School of Economics (LSE) in the early 1930s. The students that are seen as the bearers of South African social anthropology's 'golden age' (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 1-2) emerged from her class.

The 'golden age' of South African social anthropology is described as one dominated by extended fieldwork, thick descriptive monographs and the study of small parts of culture that make a whole (structural functionalism). The 'golden age' is seen by Hammond-Tooke to have started in the 1920s and lasted into the 1950s,⁹¹ establishing those years as the most productive in the history of South African social anthropology (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 1-2). The period was characterised by laborious work in the pursuit of the investigators' vision.

The idea of fieldwork as definitive of this branch of anthropology is rooted in the concept of participant (ethnographic or personal) observation, founded by W.H.R. Rivers (1864–1922) (Kuklick 2011: 1, 18) and refined by his two protégés, Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski (1884–1942)⁹² and Radcliffe-Brown (whose form of fieldwork relied on interpreters and synthesis) (Hammond-Tooke: 23).

Malinowski is commonly seen as the champion of the participant observation method of study, a position attributed to his international reach, which was at least partly a consequence of the flock of sponsored⁹³ students who attended his London School of Economics (LSE) seminar in the 1930s. The Malinowskian method of *participant observation* is seen as a process whereby the researchers immerse

⁹⁰ The monograph is dedicated to Hoernlé.

⁹¹ The 1950s saw the advent of urban studies led by Phillip Meyer and feverishly opposed by Bernard Magubane, followed by student retention problems caused mainly by the perceived death of anthropology; the rise of Volkunde and the Department of Native Affairs; scholars not returning after study abroad; the anti-apartheid embargo; distrust in culture as a theory and, finally, difficulties in accessing rural areas as field sites. The 1960s saw the advent of Marxist theories, the rejection of the snapshot view of the 1930s and the rejection of culture and race as determining factors (primordialism). The 1970s saw the rise of developmental studies (mainly characterised as 'exposé anthropology'), the reaction to the demands imposed by the conditions of apartheid, the study of poverty and a quest for mechanisms to counter it, and the noble ideal of giving a voice to the powerless and promoting local interests (Hammond-Tooke 1997: 2-8).

⁹² Malinowski was a Polish-born anthropologist who studied physics, mathematics, chemistry and philosophy at the Jagiellonian University. He received his Doctorate with the highest honours accorded. He then entered the London School of Economics in 1910, having as his mentors A.C. Haddon, W.H.R. Rivers and C.G. Seligmann (all veterans of the 1888/9 Torres Strait Expedition). His popularity as the proponent of the fieldwork methodology was based on his innovations (and his self-marketing abilities) in the method of extended fieldwork (Young 1998: 3).

⁹³ The Rockefeller Foundation was reported to be the biggest funder, giving direct fellowships or funding individuals through the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (Kuper 1983: 71).

themselves for an extended period of time in their field site and in the way of life of the people being studied. They were expected to take part in the daily aspects of life, including domestic and ritual life, and to be able to converse with the subject in their own language, so that the researchers were placed as close as possible to their subject's world view – knowing every character and their relation to the social system. Kuklick (2011:1) elaborates that, for Rivers and Malinowski, proper fieldwork meant using the researcher's body as an instrument (not the assistant's body or experience) and entailed understanding both the anthropologist's body and the research subject's body as energy systems. This symmetry facilitated a relativist perspective. In my mind, this testifies to the specific and temporary nature of knowledge and its production.

In this model, fieldwork emerges as the specific work done in a specific location, resulting in a unique knowledge of that location at a given time. This knowledge is sensitive to the conditions of the field site. It includes the dependency the researcher develops on the community (personal and professional) and vice versa, as well as the networks of production and the agency of the actors (subject, assistant and researcher alike).⁹⁴

Schumaker's (2001) definition of fieldwork as the action of specific individuals in a specific place, privy to specific knowledge, highlights the fact that the method of participant observation was not unique to social anthropologists, but was shared with missionaries and administrators (Schumaker 2001: 6), who also lived and worked among their charges. The significant concept here is that, methodologically speaking, participant observation differentiated the social anthropologist from their academic counterparts, who preferred the laboratory and library to the field. And it is this distinction that establishes this particular genre of anthropology.

This method of fieldwork also emphasised a move away from dependence on an interpreter or assistant to gather information, in favour of the researcher gathering information from his or her own experience.⁹⁵ This was the interpretation of participant observation that the Kriges used to produce their 1943 monograph.

The Malinowskian seminar

⁹⁴ This includes living arrangements, domestic assistance, technical assistance and language skills.

⁹⁵ The idea of doing one's own work rather than an assistant doing it was to ensure that you were not misled, or that the information being translated was not lost or misinterpreted.

To place the Kriges within the genre of 1930s anthropology, Adam Kuper (1983: 71) makes a strategic distinction between the first students and the first class in the history of South African social anthropology, establishing Eileen Krige as part of the first students of South African anthropology, while Wilson, Gluckman and the rest of the 'gang' are presented as the first class, who went on to attend Malinowski's seminar at the LSE seminar in 1930. Eileen, who already had a Master's degree in economics, stayed behind to prepare for her second fieldwork trip. During this period she helped Hoernlé establish the support structure that became the backbone of modern South African social anthropology.⁹⁶ Eileen, together with her husband Jack, only attended Malinowski's seminar in 1935.

The approach favoured by participants in the Malinowskian seminar is described as having been characterised by the idea of extensive participant observation fieldwork, but, most importantly, by the thickly descriptive monograph, which privileged family life, economic activities and magic, showing a shifting focus away from kinship systems, politics and religion. It was also accompanied by a bibliography. These distinctive features of the Malinowskian monograph were not fully reproduced in that of the Kriges'. Specifically, their monograph did not contain a bibliography⁹⁷ and did include religion and politics. The seminar is further described as having been a place for marginal characters (women, Jews, etc.) (Kuper 1983: 70). Kuper (1987: 69) notes that the seminar was open to any and all, including amateurs and missionaries on leave from their mission, and that Malinowski, unlike Radcliffe-Brown, valued difference of opinion, commending the seminar as a place of exchange rather than learning.

The Kriges' anthropology and their fieldwork among Balobedu

In July of 1928, Eileen, who at that time was still unmarried and using her maiden surname of Jensen, embarked on her first official field trip to Bolobedu. The field trip, which lasted three weeks, was commissioned and organised by her supervisor, Hoernlé (with the help of her husband Prof A.W. Hoernlé, who wrote a letter to Reuter in German), who sent Eileen to fill a gap in knowledge about 'tribes' in the

⁹⁶ This committee is the successor to the Union Advisory Committee on African Studies and Research, whose funding was discontinued in 1931 (see Hammond-Tooke (1997: 45-46). Hoernlé was the representative for Wits University.

⁹⁷ The lack of a bibliography in the 1943 text was alleviated by a compensatory bibliography in the 1980 reprint. The bibliography is mainly for the new preface.

Northern Transvaal. The trip was facilitated by the Witwatersrand University Research Grant Board. Having been to Bolobedu before, Eileen chose to do her fieldwork in the Northern Transvaal among the Lobedu (mainly the Christian village of Medingen). (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418)

At this stage Eileen had no fieldwork experience. She had prepared for her fieldwork by spending a few hours taking tea with Hoernlé to learn from the latter's insights, citing in her 1980s recollections (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418) the lesson about keeping one's interpreter at hand at all times and taking sweets to the field to attract the children, who would, in turn, bring their parents to the table.⁹⁸ This was a practice she extended by giving gifts of beer and snuff. (Indeed, Eileen is often criticised for this by some locals and Lobedu academics (I have often encountered this criticism in my fieldwork), who discredit her authority as based on the ramblings of drunken old men!)

Hoernlé arranged for Eileen to conduct her fieldwork at the Berlin Mission with the help of Rev. Reuter's daughter, Mrs. Marie Krause (wife to Rev. Krause), who was born and raised in Bolobedu and spoke Khelobedu fluently. The fieldwork was conducted by means of formal interviews, using a method referred to by Clifford (1990) as transcription – a question and answer method where the ethnographer, sitting on the porch (or in the garden, in Eileen's case) asks questions he or she has prepared and the informant (interviewed subject) answers the question (from their personal experience), while the ethnographer takes notes (Clifford 1990: 51).⁹⁹ The Berlin Mission provided interview subjects for Eileen,¹⁰⁰ while Mrs. Krause interpreted for her. It was within this context that Eileen met Andreas Matatanya,¹⁰¹ who would become her key assistant for the next two field trips.

Hoernlé had arranged that, together with the formal interviews, Eileen was to also go on eight full-day visits (six in Medingen and two in the Lobedu area proper)

⁹⁸ The practice of gift-giving is standard among Balobedu, in fact, the name Balobedu is commonly translated as 'receivers of tribute/gifts'.

⁹⁹ Clifford notes that this method of doing anthropology was the very method Malinowski tried to stamp out in favour of participant observation.

¹⁰⁰ Eileen mentions in her notes that the informants were old and only converted to Christianity later in life, as a way of strengthening their qualification to give her information on traditional institutions. (KCM, Krige papers: file 418).

¹⁰¹ A mission-educated man (he received teachers training in Botshabelo), he was the principal of the junior school at the capital. He had a good knowledge of English and Eileen describes him as pivotal to the research, as well as tactful, wise and sympathetic. See KCM, Krige Papers: file 370.

to a village, which Matatanya organised and acted as interpreter for.¹⁰² It was during this phase (the daylong visits) of her fieldwork that Eileen became acquainted with the benefits of what she later learnt was participant observation. Reflecting on the experience, she commended such visits for allowing one to discover aspects of the culture that could never be provisioned for in an interview (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418).

Mrs. Krause formally introduced Eileen to the queen during the course of this fieldtrip. There were no photographs taken during this fieldwork – instead drawings of observed material culture were made. On this first field trip Eileen inquired about a range of subjects, including kingship terminologies, ceremonial rites and agriculture cycles. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418- notes typed from handwritten notes in file 363)

For her second field trip, Eileen was accompanied by her new husband, Jack. The visit was supported by Wits University's Bantu Studies research fund. Jack, who was a barrister at the Johannesburg bar, had become worried by the discrepancies in Western conceptions of law as applied to 'the native'. After realising that the natives had their own conceptions of law, Jack took up anthropology to further his understanding of 'the native' law system. In accompanying Eileen on the field trip he hoped to investigate the discrepancies between the Western and 'native' systems of law. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418)

Thus began a partnership that alleviated some of the criticism that is often leveled at researchers of the previous generations, who were sometimes dismissed as old men who sat at court, recording things that only concern men. This was a husband-and-wife team who could simultaneously investigate aspects of society that would otherwise only be accessible to one gender, allowing them to exchange notes and observe interrelated trends that would otherwise escape the single gender team. For this field trip the Kriges had decided to live among the Balobedu, and to this effect Matatanya selected a site in Bogone (Bokoni), an area under Mokope, a woman of high birth who had been a *Motanuni* (diplomatic wife) of the queen. Mokope is pictured and named in the album (SHC, Krige Photographic Collection: photograph K387). Matatanya had chosen this site because it was near the home of an elderly oral historian and the Kriges could interview him (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418).

The method of fieldwork at this stage was a mixture of informal interviews and

¹⁰² In her recollections (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418), Eileen recalls that she learned many things through Matatanya, including how to greet and approach a homestead when you are a first-time visitor.

environmental observations. In her reflections, Eileen constantly refers to the experience as picturesque, citing the magnificent view commanded by their tent as well as the picturesque scene of women winnowing millet. During this visit they watched various activities and recorded accounts of current events from various points of view.¹⁰³ However, they also suffered their first deception by Balobedu when they asked to measure the size of a reaped field and the people deliberately misled them about the whereabouts and identity of the owner of the field as a way of preventing them from measuring it.¹⁰⁴

The Kriges (Eileen) used a camera to document their time there and produced a body of 103 photographs, which are all mounted and annotated in their album (Krige Photographic Collection: Cambrian No. 24). The scope of the activities documented in this leg of fieldwork are numerous and include architectural structures, domestic activities, agricultural activities, technology, child rearing, drum cult, beer drinks, doctors and religious activities (shrines). Some of the areas studied during this leg of fieldwork led to the publication of journal articles. However, the Kriges did not illustrate these articles with the photographs they had produced during this period.

The Kriges' third visit to Bolobedu was somehow unusual. Matatanya, who was their field assistant, invited Eileen to Bolobedu (probably reacting to Eileen's expression of interest). He called Eileen on the telephone one afternoon in July of 1932, informing her that there was a *byale* (girls' initiation school) in progress in Bolobedu and he could get her in to the event. If she was interested, she was to arrive at Duiwelskloof the following Saturday, when Matatanya would be in town and could transport her and her camping gear on a donkey wagon.¹⁰⁵ (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418)

Eileen took the opportunity and arrived in Duiwelskloof as planned. Reflecting on the wagon ride, Eileen tells of how Matatanya had strapped a kitchen chair to the middle of the donkey wagon for her to sit on. This special treatment was pointed out

¹⁰³ She cited the case of a wedding where they collected accounts of the events from both the boys' and the girls' perspectives. (KCM, Krige Papers: file 418)

¹⁰⁴ Although the Kriges were accepted as researchers of history and culture by Balobedu, I suspect they were misled because the Balobedu were aware of the effects of making certain kinds of information available to researchers associated with formal institutions. Traders and other institutions had already been trying to collect taxes in Bolobedu on behalf of the ZAR government as early as 1854 (Davison: 55, also see Dicke 1937 on traders, taxes and methods used to avoid payment). Information on wealth could be used to determine tax liability.

¹⁰⁵ Matatanya was in town to get some supplies and to pick up the wife of the chief who had granted permission to Eileen to observe the Byale.

by a four-year-old child, who proceeded to call Eileen her *Rakgadi* (father's sister), testifying to the special treatment such women enjoyed in the family ritual complex (another testimony to personal observation).

During this fieldwork trip Eileen camped by herself at Lekhwareni, where she observed the *byale* and witnessed the final stages of the masquerade performance of the *bogwera*, the male initiation school complex. By chance she witnessed the three-day-long initiation of a young woman into the cult of spirit possession, which she attended and photographed. This trip, although short in comparison to the others, is perhaps the most important in terms of the light it sheds on the relationship enjoyed by the Kriges with Balobedu. Eileen produced a small number of photographs, 33 in total, which are annotated and mounted in the album. The photographs from this period only depict the initiation schools, the spirit possessions cult and a few studies of architectural structures.

The main visit, which resulted in their monograph, was facilitated by a fellowship of the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IIALC), which they held jointly during the period 1936–1939, when the Kriges spent a total of sixteen and a half months in Bolobedu. They were there from April to July 1936, November 1936 to October 1937 (save for August 1937) and May to August 1938, with a brief visit in 1939 to witness a ritual that had last occurred in 1905 (Krige and Krige 1943, 1980: xiii).

In preparation for this period of intensive fieldwork, the couple spent a year in Malinowski's seminar at the LSE in order to bring themselves up to date with the latest methods in anthropology. At the LSE there were other anthropologists at various stages of fieldwork and writing up of monographs, and Eileen describes this atmosphere as very mentally stimulating (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417). It was at this seminar that their newly-acquired taste for participant observation was given structure. Their 1936–38 field trips can be seen in many ways as an interpretation of the Malinowskian model of participant-observation-based fieldwork.

To this effect, Eileen, in her reflections on the fieldwork, comments at length on the difficulty incurred in moving from a reliance on the assistant for all their needs, to having to do it themselves, citing the language as particularly problematic because the Lobedu language was not a written language. It was a spoken language that was in one respect a mixture of North Sotho and Venda and, in another respect, a language in its own right. She noted that the course she had done in Basotholand Sotho did not

help at all. This obstacle was overcome a year later after they spent a lot of time listening to and interacting with the Lobedu, with Eileen listening to tales and conversations among women and Jack listening to court cases (with interpreters on hand to confirm their observations).

During this time they also tried to teach a few Lobedu men how to write, using the recommended symbols prescribed by the International Institute of African Languages and Culture, so that they could keep diaries that the Kriges could use as a way of grasping the more complex formulas of the language. Only one fellow succeeded, Simeon Modjadji, who had just returned from migrant labour in Johannesburg. He excelled at transcribing folk tales, topics of ethnographic interest and, later, in writing on subjects that interested him personally. Simeon also kept a diary of court proceedings for Eileen in the later years (1960s).

Simeon and Eileen kept in contact until his death in 1993 (Argyle 1995a: 95). There is a substantial body of Lobedu texts in the Krige Papers at the Killie Campbell Africana Library (KCM) that arose out of this association (KCM, Krige Papers: file 38–45). Simeon became Eileen's key assistant during the 1936–38 fieldwork. At this stage, the Kriges still used interpreters, but only as far as having them act as secondary researchers. They also complained about the quality of the assistance in comparison with their first assistant, Matatanya (KCM, Krige papers: file 418- Nitty gritties).

When they arrived in Bolobedu for their major fieldwork (1936–38), the Kriges lived in a tent at Lekhwareni (the same area as the 1932 trip). In accordance with the Malinowskian idea of getting into the position of the research subject they approached the queen to let them build a hut, which would be hers at the end of the fieldwork. The general public met this idea with suspicion, as people were afraid this move would mean that the Kriges would become permanent residents, entitled to land and eventually able to ask for a farm and become farmers. Despite this, the hut was built and the Kriges lived in it and continued their fieldwork (KCM, Krige Papers: file 370-klm 01/4/370/03: 7).¹⁰⁶

During this period the Kriges investigated the issue of the sacred beads (the famed Lobedu and Venda 'beads of the water' for Van Riet Lowe and the 'heirloom

¹⁰⁶ The site of the hut has been converted into a post office. Many people still refer to it as Malefokana's home. In her later fieldwork (in the 1960s) she did not live in the hut, but camped in the school hall at the capital.

beads' for Davison and Clark, 1976)¹⁰⁷ in order to determine whether the Lobedu beads were the same as the ones found at Rhodesia's (now Zimbabwe) Dhlo Dhlo and C17 sites. Eileen gave up her beads (these beads could only be obtained from the queen and were mainly used in the *thugula* complex as a sacred object or shrine) for chemical testing, and, in an article published by Davison and Clark (1976), they were shown to be consistent with the Zimbabwean ones. There is no explanation as to why Eileen had these sacred beads.¹⁰⁸

The Kriges were also encouraged to collect material culture by government ethnologist, Van Warmelo,¹⁰⁹ who provided storage for the objects (now currently part of the SAM material culture collection). They also investigated the local fauna and flora at the request of Dr. Fox (Wits Medical School) and the Botany Department's Dr. Pole-Evans (University of Pretoria), and Dr. Brandwyk Breyer (Wits), to whom they sent samples of specimens that had medicinal and economic value. As a result, the Botany Department identified and classified 300 species of local fauna and flora. The Kriges also sent them 36 types of local spinaches and relish and other animal foods (including edible termites, ants and other 'ancient' foods like purple sesamum) to identify their nutritional value (KCM, Krige papers: file 370- klm 01/4/370/03: 7).

Commercially, they investigated the cause of bunions for the Clarks shoe company,¹¹⁰ using photography and footprints, made by dipping the feet into mud and making impressions on paper.

In addition to making an ethnography of the Lobedu, the Kriges also had a mandate to do a survey of the surrounding areas.¹¹¹ In June and July 1937, after Jack had found his conclusions about Lobedu law to be troubling (he had deduced that Lobedu law was corrupt and inconsistent, and could not understand why Lobedu people still had more faith in it than they did in Western courts), the couple embarked on a survey of the area around Bolobedu, covering 28 areas outside of Modjadji's

¹⁰⁷ There was great interest in the circulation of beads in the area. Beads were being traded by the new Europeans in the area and were also brought in by the earlier Portuguese traders; some beads were in high demand and fetched a higher price. See Dicke (1937: 143-190, 225) for more on the quality of the beads and the demand the local black population placed on their supply.

¹⁰⁸ It is conceivable that she might have asked the queen for them, who would have obliged her if she had indeed undergone the initiation.

¹⁰⁹ Van Warmelo also advised on the orthography for Khelobedu, recommending North Sotho vowels and Venda consonants.

¹¹⁰ Cato Smuts had married into the Clark family that owned Clarks shoes.

¹¹¹ In a letter asking for funding they proposed that they would also do a survey of the wider region (KCM, Krige Papers: file 417).

jurisdiction. (KCM, Krige papers: file 370- klm 01/4/370/03: 8-9)

Jack's dilemma regarding the Lobedu legal system was solved during this trip, when he realised that the trend he had observed in the Lobedu legal system was widespread in the area. He realised that the problem he had found with the Lobedu was not because of the Lobedu, but because of his own bias and expectations, wherein he assumed that the objective of Lobedu law was the same as that of Western law. He concluded that whereas a Western legal system was concerned with administering the law as a fixed measure used to mete out punishment, Lobedu law was a fluid law that was concerned with reconciling people who relied on one other (KCM, Krige papers: file 370- klm 01/4/370/03: 8).

This particular trip was well-documented photographically and boasts some of the more aesthetically-pleasing photographs of their 1930s corpus. These were placed in an album and annotated by Jack. The Lobedu photographs taken during the 1936–39 period (223 of which are pasted into the Cambrian album (Krige Photographic Collection)) are drastically different from the ones taken on the three earlier field trips. Those are not as well composed, containing erratic exposures, perhaps signaling the amateur state of the Kriges' photography at that stage. The later photographs are better composed and include portraits as well as other categories that were not present during the other trips.

Overall, the first three field trips were in line with pre-Malinowskian ideas of fieldwork, drawing more on Radcliffe-Brown's notion of fieldwork while showing signs of an awareness of the new Malinowskian approaches. The Kriges' last and main fieldwork period definitely shows the most influence by Malinowski. It can be said that although Hoernlé was more inclined towards Radcliffe-Brown's version of fieldwork, her wide approach allowed Eileen, and Jack to discover participant observation on their own before learning its methodology with Malinowski in 1935 at the LSE.

From anthropologists to Balobedu

From their first field trip in 1930, when they camped north of Modjadji's capital in the picturesque Molototse Valley overlooking the Lowveld, the Kriges were drawn into relations that went beyond observer and observed. Their camping placed them in a process of becoming Lobedu: because of the act of occupying a piece of land (no

matter how temporarily) the Kriges were named, and thus became part of a system of signification within the Lobedu scheme of representation.

Dicke, in his book *The Bush Speaks* (1937), draws our attention to the fact that for the people of the Northern Transvaal, naming was the prerogative of others (1937: 34), and this naming was based on the person's character, derived from observation of personality traits. So it was not unusual when Eileen was named *Malefokana*. The name is derived from her husband Jack's Lobedu name: *Mašhohla lefoka*. The word *šhohla* means to trespass while *lefoka* refers to the wilderness or the bush. When directly translated the name means 'slipping through' or 'trespassing on the wilderness'. Thus Eileen, being Jack's wife, was called *Ma-lefoka*, (with *ma* indicating small or subordinate), which is 'Mrs. Wilderness/trespasser'.

The names mark the event and condition of their entry into the Lobedu country, which was seen by most people as trespassing. On another level, the Kriges' new names also suggest an uninhibitedness, that is, being fearless (Davison: personal communication), in the way they were able to brave uncharted territory in those times. The *šhohla* component in some part also testifies to some of the comments about what most of their Lobedu peers referred to as 'stoutness' (naughtiness, from Afrikaans *stout*), highlighting the point that they were always trying to gain entry into rituals where they were not permitted, particularly Eileen, who was not initiated. My inquiries about Eileen to some of the older generation of Lobedu community members usually elicited responses that instantiated her as one of their peers, with someone even going so far as to say that she was one of their mini-ancestors, *modigwana*, here denoting revered elders (Morwasehla 2011).¹¹² Those interviewed also distinguished the Kriges from other anthropologists and researchers who have come to Bolobedu, on the basis that Eileen and Jack lived in Bolobedu long enough to see things progress.

As much as *Malefokana* is revered, some older women have challenged her authority in relation to the *byale* work discussed in the Kriges' monograph, on the basis that she was denied access to the event because she was not initiated. There are also others who hold the view that during the 1932 visit, when Andreas invited Eileen to observe the *byale*, she was allowed into the school despite her age and underwent the full initiation (including the surgical procedure which she describes in detail in the

¹¹² Morwasehla said '*Mašhohla le Malefokana ebe ele Balobedu, ke badwinwana barena*': 'Eileen and Jack were Lobedu, they are our demi-gods.' Morwasehla (2011).

monograph). Eileen's status was therefore elevated from uninitiated to an initiated member of the Lobedu community, making her privy to all information relevant to the level of her initiation.

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Chapter 3

This chapter aims to contextualize the Krige photographic collection by looking at changes in the use of photography by anthropology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The chapter concludes that early 20th century ethnographic photography was a deliberate move away from the anthropometric photography genre, which emphasized measuring, towards a method that emphasized visualization of the object of study. This approach was more about seeing; the anthropologist actually looking and comprehending what was in front of them, making things visible – including the visibility of the anthropologist as having been in the field, as having seen. This was deployed to attest to the authority of their ethnography presented as a descriptive monograph. The move from treating photography as a primary research tool for observation, to photography as a companion of the researcher, whose body is now the primary research tool for observation, is briefly discussed.

Photography in anthropology

The use of photography by the Kriges in the 1930s was not unusual. From the invention of photography in 1839 it was clear that the use of the technology was infinite and its application was not restricted to one area or group of specialists, but was applicable to many areas. Different kinds of practitioners – missionaries, explorers, artists, scientists, administrators, businessmen, publishers of gentleman's relish (pornography) and the middle class – all scrambled for a piece of the new technology and applied it to their various interests. A variety of photographic objects were produced in various styles and presentations. People experimented with a seemingly infinite form of sharing photographs, which gave rise to objects like photo-postcards, decorated albums, photo-pocket cases, journal photo-essays, stereoscopes, framed prints, card-mounted prints, photo-books, slides, etc. As the application of the technology across the many areas increased, so did the thirst for the circulation of different photographs across all areas using the technology.

The opening up of the wider world facilitated by the reach of the colonial project meant that the circulating photographs were not just of the local, but also of the exotic. Photographs from the colonial world quickly made their way to the living

rooms, galleries, museums and saloons of the colonizing world. It is within this circuit that the modern use of photography in the service of science/anthropology took off.¹¹³

True sciences and disciplined cameras

At the beginning of photography's incorporation into the discipline of anthropology,¹¹⁴ armchair anthropology – which has become the generic name for anthropology that is library or laboratory based – was dominated by physical anthropologists located in the natural sciences of zoology, botany, biology departments, etc. These anthropologists, in their quest to validate popular theories, enlisted the use of third-party¹¹⁵ photographs to secure photographic data for analysis.

Frustrated by the unreliability and poor quality of photographic data produced by third-party photographers, the armchair anthropologist developed guidelines for the production of reliable photographic data that could be used in comparative analysis.¹¹⁶ They recommended the use of grid-marked backdrops, which facilitated the accurate measurements of proportions, or bland backdrops so that the backdrop would not to interfere with the visibility of the subjects' anatomy. The subjects were photographed naked, showing a frontal view as well as two profile views, framed to show both full body and half body (medium portrait). These photographs were sometimes accompanied by a ruler within the image frame, as well as measurements of the subject's body proportions taken during the course of the photographic sitting. What resulted was the realization of a specialized genre of scientific photography that was designed to produce photographs that could be used to prove or disprove racial assumptions on the basis of physical characteristics.

Although this practice has come to stand for anthropological photography, it is not representative of anthropological photography (Roodenburg 2002: 15).

Anthropology in the late 19th century was mainly focused on the human body and the charting, based on levels of technology, of culture along evolutionary lines. This

¹¹³ Photography was applied to science from the beginning; the anthropological use of photography became distinct a few decades after the invention of photography. See Govignon (2004: 48-49).

¹¹⁴ Anthropology in the early 19th century was a vague discipline that brought under its umbrella diverse practitioners such as biologists, zoologists, paleontologists, archaeologists, geographers, historians, linguists and ethnographers (Roodenburg 2002: 15).

¹¹⁵ Photographs produced by "man on the spot", a person (not the one doing the research) on the ground in the area being studied, usually missionaries, administrators, military men and general explorers. (Pinney 2011: 15, 52)

¹¹⁶ See *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* first published in 1874.

inclination in anthropology developed in line with the popular concerns of anthropology at that time (circa 1850–1910), which drew the basis of its theories (often misinterpreted) from evolutionist theorists (Roodenburg 2002: 15). Evolutionist-inclined anthropologists believed that comparative measuring of human beings (and their technology) could lead to an accurate classification of people and societies along the evolutionary scale. Together with textual data recorded from actual human bodies, or body parts, that were acquired legally and illegally, the photographic image – perceived as an objective record from which reliable data could be obtained – provided the evidence needed to promote late 19th colonial century policies.¹¹⁷ Around the same time another kind of photography emerged from the public studios that depicted subjects (colonized and sometimes European subjects) photographed against textured backdrops, both naked as well as clothed in their traditional dress, so as to cater for both academic and popular audiences, indicating a wider appeal for the anthropometric composition model as a basis for aesthetic photography (Roodenburg 2002: 16).

From natural science to social science

The Krige photographs belong to a genre of ethnographic photography based in a participant observation-fieldwork method that took the camera to the field. Forerunners who took the camera into the field and practiced photography in a genre that has come to be associated with ‘being there’¹¹⁸ include Franz Boas and Jeff Mooney in 1888. The emblematic moment of the fieldwork expedition is signified by the 1888 Torres Strait expedition headed by Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940), a marine biologist who had embarked on a field trip to the area by himself in the same year.¹¹⁹ The methodological developments made during the Torres Strait expedition of 1888–89 emphasized the need for the scientist to be in the field, recording the object of study directly, actively theorizing as they collected the data. Although the expedition had broken with armchair anthropology, their project was still very much more about measurement than observation. They recorded all sorts of data, including

¹¹⁷ See *The Colonising Camera* (Hartmann et al. 1998) for a wider overview of this practice in southern Africa and *An Eloquent Picture Gallery* (Dietrich & Bank 2008: particularly part 2, essay 3) for a more technical elaboration on physical anthropology’s use of photography.

¹¹⁸ See Watson (1999) for a historical and contemporary account of the concept, as well as Borneman & Hammoudi (2009) for an argument of its relevance today.

¹¹⁹ Members of the expedition included Alfred Cort Haddon, W.H.R. Rivers, C.G. Seligman, Charles Myers, William MacDougall, Sydney Ray and Antony Wilkin.

the human body, using a variety of measuring devices. During this period they used photography as a measuring apparatus¹²⁰ among many scientific apparatuses, whose data (converted into numerical or graphic data and other scientific data code), could be read like a graph and used quantitatively to arrive at a scientifically objective conclusion (see Elkins (2011) on the other uses of photography in science and the academy). During this expedition a professional photographer was enlisted as a specialist within a team of other specialists (botanists, linguists, geographers, etc.) to produce accurate photographs on the instruction of the expedition leaders. What resulted was the collection of a vast amount of high-quality photographs for later study. At this time the researchers also became aware of the limitations of the photograph as an object that could adequately describe all the qualities of a specimen,¹²¹ as well as the problems inherent in the photograph as an evidentiary object. The limitation of the photograph as an object that is able to show complex networks was highlighted by the development of the kinship chart. The chart was a visual diagram that was capable of visually representing vast number of relations on a two-dimensional surface, signaling a move towards a visual study of variation. It was within this context that anthropology shifted away from the natural sciences and embarked on a more holistic approach. (Pinney 2011; Grimshaw 2001)

The descriptive school

Malinowski refined fieldwork-based anthropology when he answered the call for extended fieldwork by a trained investigator (Young 1998: 2).¹²² As a result of the breakout of World War I (WWI), Malinowski was held (in the form of travel restrictions) as an ‘enemy alien’ by the Australian authorities because of his Polish nationality (Young (1998:3) portrays this as a myth used to bolster his authority). By chance, he spent an extended two-year period in Papua New Guinea, where he undertook research during the course of WWI.¹²³ Being stranded in a place with limited technologies, his necessity-led innovations introduced key methodological

¹²⁰ Photography was used among other scientific technologies such as barometers, plant presses, chemical tests, cartography, etc. Also included in the arsenal was the newly developed moving film camera and the phonogram.

¹²¹ Freedburg (2002: 275-304), referring to the 16th century Prince Federico Ceci’s dilemma, ascribes the failure of pictures to the fact that a picture shows too much to the detriment of order.

¹²² The call was issued by A.C. Haddon, W.H.R. Rivers and C.G. Seligman, all veterans of the Torres Strait expedition (Young 1998: 2).

¹²³ Radcliffe-Brown was also in Australia but was allowed to leave because his British nationality made him an ally.

precedents, some of which include the use of the investigator's body and person as the chief instrument of research, the propagation of living among the people being studied and speaking their language. In this model of fieldwork, the fieldworker became the key measuring apparatus, measuring by personal observation the activities of the object of their study. Restricted as he was to the islands, Malinowski was able to repeatedly investigate a topic over time, as well as having enough time to photograph repeatedly without it interfering with his participant observation.¹²⁴ Indeed, photography became an intrinsic part of the methodology.¹²⁵

Fieldwork-based participant observation, led by the emerging ideas of the time,¹²⁶ increasingly migrated away from the focus on the body as a research subject, focusing instead on culture and other observable institutions, which were seen to shed light on the nature of the society, as well as how these institutions related to one another to form a whole.

As used in participant observation during this period, photography served two purposes.¹²⁷ Firstly it acted as a data-capturing tool. Mostly referred to as visual notes, these notes were used to isolate areas that needed clarification,¹²⁸ done by taking the images back to the informant and asking additional questions, with the photograph as an elicitation device.¹²⁹ Secondly, it was used as a method of establishing authority to the anthropologist's peers, as the photographs proved that the anthropologist was in fact in the field.¹³⁰ There was thus a move away from the camera as a central measuring apparatus that produced graphic data, by embracing its qualities as a visual

¹²⁴ There is considerable ethnographic literature on the camera as a facilitator, which neutralizes the idea of the camera as a disruptor of participant observation. See Ann Grimshaw's work (2001) for more on this topic

¹²⁵ Although photographic technology had advanced greatly at this point, Malinowski still relied on the older photographic processes, which still had many challenges and led to him becoming obsessive about photography. See Young (1998: 5).

¹²⁶ These included functionalism, as eventually practiced by the British school, and cultural relativism (this included culture and personality school), as practiced by the American school of anthropology.

¹²⁷ Malinowski had planned to outsource the photography to his artist friend, Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, who actually began the journey with him. They parted ways after a quarrel, which led Witkiewicz to turn back to fight for his tsar. (Young 1998: 13)

¹²⁸ This was practiced as early as 1888, when Haddon took some photographs he had taken earlier in the year back to the Torres Strait Island.

¹²⁹ The use of the camera was rather new for the field anthropologist, so the methodology at that point was not yet well-established. What is clear is that the camera was an aid to memory as well as a diary, in some cases used to refocus their informant's responses when the informants avoided certain questions by pretending not to understand the question (see Collier and Collier 1986 for more). Note: the Kriges never showed their photographs to their Lobedu informants (Davison: personal correspondence)

¹³⁰ As opposed to the armchair anthropologist who theorised on the basis of images collected from travellers.

notebook that facilitated reflection and vision (seeing what is happening in all senses of the word).

Effectively, the Malinowskian model had collapsed the third party photographer, interviewed subject (informant) and analyst into one person/investigator who used his body and person as a measuring/research/investigation tool. Pinney (2011) describes this modern investigator as a lone man with nothing but a pen and a notebook, signaling the dropping of scientific apparatus in favor of taking notes. In essence, the Malinowskian fieldwork project was a tripartite configuration that consisted of the investigator's body and person as the chief research instrument (modeled after the camera), supplemented by empirical notes to document the research and a personal diary that reflected a personal account of the experience. The investigator as the chief research instrument, modeled after the camera, is invoked in the idea of the process of making a photograph. Citing the work of David Tomas on the parallels of fieldwork and photography, Pinney (2011: 61) uses a highly emotive metaphor in which the ethnographer is likened to the camera's light sensitive film, which is exposed to the light of the field site. Having captured and developed this light, the ethnographer, who is now the negative (represented by his/her field notes and diaries), is reproduced into a positive (the monograph), which becomes the object that is presented to the audience (performing the position of the photograph). If at first the Malinowskian model appears to be a move away from photography, then this metaphor indicates a move even closer to photography. The age-old definition of photography is based on the concept of 'writing with light': being able to perceive or transcribe something by controlling light.¹³¹ The move to place the investigator within a camera (field) – a vessel that is able to channel light onto a perceptible surface, from which the ethnographer (personified as a light sensitive film) could trace (by way of describing) and produce a document that can share what the ethnographer saw, is not a move away from photography but a move beyond the classical photographic object. Klaus-

¹³¹ The camera obscura, also known as camera lucida, is a device that renders things visible. It is perhaps most famous as a tracing device used in the 1500s by artists as a way of getting exact perspectives in the pursuit of perspectively correct paintings. Its genesis is better expressed by the concept of a pinhole camera. A pinhole camera is basically a darkened room with only a small pinhole to let light in. Consequently, the content of the scene outside of the pinhole appears upside down on the opposite wall within the darkened room. It is recorded recorded to have been used by an Arab priest as a way of observing a solar eclipse sometime in the 12th century. Aristotle is also recorded to have described the pinhole principles (Gernsheim & Gernsheim 1965: 10).

Peter Köpping, in his book *Shattering Frames: Transgression and Transformations in Anthropological Discourse and Practice* (2002: 55-70) points us to the fact that the project of Malinowskian ethnography was to see (in the sense of Berger's "seeing comes before words" (Berger 1972: 7)),¹³² highlighted by the ethnographer's compulsion to emulate the camera of the third party photographers (the photographer becomes the camera) so that all doubt about the quality of the data produced is removed. Photography's primary role here was to show that the ethnographer has seen (been in the field). Secondly, the wider practice of photography in the field contributed to the training of the ethnographer's eye (his or her ability to see),¹³³ as well as functioned as a control to what the ethnographer was seeing. To this effect Pinney (2011: 56) offers us an explanation which flows from Walter Benjamin's idea of the optical unconsciousness, which places photography as a tool for perceiving the things visible to us but rendered unconscious. This evokes the idea of the camera as a device that records all in its path without discrimination, allowing us to recapture what we overlooked or missed.

The other pressing issue of the Malinowskian project was the debate about how research should be presented, invoking the 16th century dilemma that pondered the question of whether to illustrate or to describe observations (Freedberg 2002: part V). Having been transformed by the light of the field site, the ethnographer was faced with the task of sharing this light, which up till now had been stored in empirical notes, visual diaries, diagrams and personal diaries. To this effect the Malinowskian model opted for description, settling on evocative pictorial descriptions, which Young (1998) ascribes to Malinowski's literary background. This choice for the descriptive mode meant that illustrations had simply to convey basic information and were designed in such a way that they did not offer alternative readings, but assisted the viewer in imagining a scene otherwise inconceivable to their mind.

Photography in Malinowskian participant-observation-based fieldwork was there to facilitate vision, whether in helping the ethnographer see what was in front of them, as a visual diary and aid to memory in their personal archive, as disciplined illustrations in a monograph, or as unbounded archived photographs. This vision was not restricted to diagrams and photographs, but extended to the text as well.

¹³² Pinney is also quite explicit on this issue.

¹³³ Pinney (2011) cites several examples of the obsession the anthropologist had with making photographs, including Malinowski's diary entries that illustrate his compulsion with photography. Young (1998: 5-6) also cites this issue.

Malefokana being seen, as seeing

The opening page (image on Box 2, *Dithugula* reproduced from an unnumbered page in the Cambrian album no.25 in the Krige photographic collection) of the 1932 field trip that Eileen undertook by herself is a perfect example of the project of 1930s anthropology.¹³⁴ Eileen presents her proof of having been there with a composition of eight photographs. In the center is a photograph captioned “Daniel and his god-mother”. It is a photograph of Eileen holding a Black child, and the child is indeed her god-child. Daniel (named after Jack, Eileen’s husband) is the son of her first assistant, Matatanya, pictured with his whole family in the photograph on the bottom right corner. Below the image of Eileen and Daniel is an image of a child being smeared in ochre; the child is identified as Malefokana. The photographs show that Eileen has not only been drawn into Khelobedu by being named by Balobedu, but that both her (Malefokana) and Jack’s names have been inscribed into Bolobedu by passing them on to the next generation. The album also has two photographs that establish her stay in the Lobedu country through the form of her tent; one is photographed from a distance, showing the surroundings, and is complemented by the second photograph, which depicts the view from her tent doorway. Eileen also provides three photographs that show the areas she researched. The 1932 field trip is a significant moment, not only because it shows her to have seen, but because it establishes her as a Molobedu whose name has been maintained in the area.

The album composition might not offer us much proof about what really happened during that field trip, but it certainly impresses upon me her entanglement in Bolobedu. This page not only attests to her authority as an anthropologist, but also establishes her authority as an ancestor of Bolobedu, constituting her photographic objects as *dithugula tša Malefokana*.

¹³⁴ Proof of having been in the field was submitted in the form of photographic documentation. The album was one of the main forms of transmitting this proof, the first page of these albums (sometimes the second, after the scenery) used mainly as proof of the investigators’ having actually ‘been there’.



The Ritual (Box 3)

Part 2

Chapter 4

Dithugula tša Malefokana

This chapter introduces my notion of the *thugula* complex as a generative space for acquiring knowledge. It paints my conception of what an ancestor archive might be, and sets the basis for treating the Krige collection as an ancestor archive. I do this by exploring the complex of *ho phasa*, which is a ritual event used to placate the ancestors as a cure for the violent potential inherent in their archive.¹³⁵ I invoke *ho phasa* as a collaboration between *ditaola* (diviner's divination bones) and *dithugula* (historical or sacred object possessed by a family), a collaboration in need of mediation or conducting whose aim is to circulate knowledge from the ancestor archive. I introduce the idea of the Krige collection as *dithugula tša Malefokana*, framing the photographs as sacred objects of the Kriges and Balobedu, whom I see as the common ancestors to the knowledge inherent in this archive. I carve out a space for the introduction of *motshwara marapo*; that character who conducts the space in-between.

Dithugula as part of the ho phasa complex

It is my intention to frame the ethnographic photographic archive made by the Kriges in Bolobedu as *dithugula*. *Dithugula* (singular *thugula*) are objects or things that form part of the *ho phasa* ritual, which I have come to understand as one of the central rituals in a complex I shall establish as the ancestor archive.¹³⁶ To recognize and present *dithugula* as an archive, especially an ancestor archive, it is important to formulate their position within the complex by putting them in relation to various

¹³⁵ This archive entails things that are deemed important enough to commit to a system of retrieval. See Harris (2012: 6-7) for the status of memory as archive and for how an archive must hold objects deemed worthy of preservation. In the case of the said archive (which I am deeming as such), I include the Krige photographic objects (SHC); Krige Papers (KCM); oral histories circulating in Bolobedu and elsewhere through people connected to Eileen Krige; Lobedu knowledge circulating through practice and inscribed into knowledge institutions through the circulation of *The Realm of a Rain-Queen* (Krige & Krige, 1943,1980); Lobedu myth circulating through various academic texts (*Modjadji, of Myth and Fantasy* (Mahashe, 2012)) and popular platforms. In general, it refers to all archival material emanating from Khelobedu that is subject to some form of preservatory activity.

¹³⁶ While all archives are ancestor archives as they deal with things left behind by those who have passed on, or by those who have passed a certain stage in social life. See Harris (2012) for in-depth treatment of a similar concept. In this paper, I mobilise the concept of 'ancestor archive' to focus attention on what is regarded as the unofficial archive in a space dominated by 'institutional' archives that are state-funded.

institutions in which they operate. *Dithugula* work in relation to *ditaola* (divination bones),¹³⁷ in a collaboration that revolves between the family concerned and the diviner (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 226-230, 232-233; Makwala, informal interview, 2011¹³⁸).

As explained by Makwala (informal interview, 2011), *ditaola* are diagnostic tools that depend on the person seeking assistance to provide a vision or dream for interpretation. The Kriges themselves give examples of this, explaining that in the Lobedu religious complex, dreams or visions form the basis of the need to see a diviner (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 232-233). Makwala's description emphasizes that *ditaola* are found objects or things, which upon being found are imbued with meaning by the diviner.¹³⁹

This repertoire of objects and things can be classified as follows. The first category may be seen as natural or skeletal, meaning they are made up of naturally occurring materials in various stages of decay that form the basic skeleton of the natural world – exoskeletons, land shells, twigs, pieces of skin, flesh and bones, particularly joints and cartilage, and so on. This subcategory is classified as *ditaola tša naga* – objects found on land. In the same category are also *ditaola tša lewatle*, natural objects and things found in the ocean, which include shell, pebbles and other natural bits. The second category includes all the found objects and things that can be seen as having utility and that are man-made. They can be bottle shards, caps, dice, pins, indeed any object that the diviner might identify as a possible interpretive tool. There is an emphasis on the physical shape of the object, because the interpretation depends on the way the object falls. The surface that the objects are thrown onto is also quite specific as it controls how the objects falls and how they are read, controlling the spatial relation that the objects are read against.

Because these objects are imbued with meaning, every one of them has an associated area that they speak to. So, if a pig's knucklebone represents family on the father's side, and this object falls skew during the divination, then it is deduced that something is not going straight on the father's side of the family. When this is

¹³⁷ See Krige & Krige (1943,1980: 223-230) for a more detailed account of divination practices among Balobedu in the 1930s.

¹³⁸ Interview June 2011, field notebook 1, no audio.

¹³⁹ Between 2005 and 2008 an acquaintance of mine was undergoing his training to become a diviner. Towards the end of his training he began to collect objects and things that would become his divination bones, and his criterion was that the things had to speak to him. The objects ranged from things he picked up on the side of the road to items he collected from people.

established by the objects, or “dice” as *ditaola* are commonly referred to by anthropologists, the diviner will recommend a ritual or steps to set the matter straight. Such steps can be as simple as getting an ointment for your skin, or as complex as an elaborate ritual.

***Ditaola* in contemporary literature**

The concept of *ditaola* has been manifesting itself in another way outside the process described above. A few Northern Sotho literature books have focused on *ditaola* in an accessible way, including *Ditaola tša Bopheho* (Makwala 1996), *Ke tšeo Ditaola Kgaphamamila* (Phala & Molepo 2006) and *Rutang Bana Ditaola* (Lekgoro & Makwela, 1960). What these books have in common is their deployment of poetry and song, exploring them as metaphors for *ditaola*.

Makwala's book (1996), whose title translates as ‘divining bones of life’, highlights that now is a time to prosper and be praised, as well as a time to love and praise; this is said in a context of peacefulness. In the introductory poem (Makwala 1996: *Ketapele*), he paints a picture of himself beating a drum, explaining that he beats the drum so that we may hear the rhythm and remember the words, so that we can dance together in harmony and not step on each other’s toes. But most importantly he begins his introduction with an idiom, *Bana ba Kgwale ba bitšana ka melodi*, which directly translates as ‘children of a partridge¹⁴⁰ call to each other in song’. *Melodi* can be described as a whistle, a melody or a tune. More specifically the phrase refers to a coded or agreed language reserved for kin, much like the special whistles with which boys call each other when they hunt.

He speaks of *ho reta* (to praise) and *ho retwa* (to be praised). The word *reta* is not restricted to praise in the form of flattery but has deeper historical resonance. It alludes to historical knowledge, because you cannot praise someone with out knowing his or her historical context or genesis. To be praised refers to someone imparting to you your history, but most importantly *ho reta* also allows language the luxury of uttering concepts or words that would not be comfortably spoken in normal conversation, because these words or concepts often qualify as blasphemy and lead to

¹⁴⁰ A game bird of the genus *Perdix*. It is worth noting that the same bird occurs in Greek mythology and is said to be named after a character who was pushed off a cliff by his uncle, who was bitter that the nephew, in his apprenticeship, by accident or chance, had invented the saw and the compass. The nephew was saved by Athena, who turned him into a bird. See *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology* (Smith 1967: 189)

contradictions. These concepts can only exist in song and poetry as expressed in *sereto* (a praise piece). When *ho reta* is placed in the context of *ditaola* it serves a function that allows the diviner to facilitate diagnosis. This concept will be dealt with later.

Phala and Molepo's book title¹⁴¹ also offers us another insight into the function of *ditaola*'s diagnostic function within the *dithugula* complex. The title translates as 'there are the divining bones that grow children (or rather that cure a cold)', but its metaphor is much richer than that. Its potency is found in the concept of *kgapamamila*. *Mamila* is mucus and to *kgapa* is to wipe in the sense of a cure, that is, to wipe off mucus. The title, in effect, can be directly translated as divining bones that cure a cold (or wipe off mucus). When in the vicinity of children of a playing age, one might notice that mucus is a permanent fixture of most children, whose budding physical and mental maturity is signaled by a child's awareness of the mucus as undesirable and their ability or willingness to wipe away their own mucus. At the same time the concept of curing a cold offers another more physical dimension to what *ditaola* are supposed to do. The book consists of children's games, songs and praises that teach basic knowledge accumulated over generations. In my mind, the games that the book teaches play a role in helping the development of physical resilience and learning of one's gifts.¹⁴²

This is emphasized by Lekgoro and Makwela's book, whose title¹⁴³ comes from a wider idiom, *Batswadi rutang bana ditaola, le seke la ya natšo lebitleng* (Rakoma 1995: 240), which translates as 'parents, teach the children the divining bones, do not take them to your grave'. This saying becomes an umbrella that contextualizes the reviewed books and their use of the concept of *ditaola*, foregrounding *ditaola* as a key to the archive embodied in *dithugula*. That is to say, ignorance of one's heritage, and in turn, the archive of accumulated knowledge, is the key problem. To take that to the grave means not putting them up for updating and upgrading,¹⁴⁴ because the teaching of songs, poems, games, etc. allows the new generations to learn from and expand on the imparted formulations. To take the

¹⁴¹ *Ke tšeo Ditaola Kgaphamamila*

¹⁴² The book talks about games such as *diketo*, where the children move stones in and out of a circle while throwing another stone up in the air.

¹⁴³ *Rutang Bana Ditaola*

¹⁴⁴ Not teaching the children *ditaola* does not mean the archive is lost, it simply illustrates that the *ditaola* and *dithugula* become history and cease to circulate in the present tense, which put them at risk of being irrelevant. Relevance is the key, not preservation.

divining bones to the grave is to withhold opportunities and diagnostic tools from the future generations, with which they might have been able to discover the deeper meaning of the accumulated archive, as well as its fruits. The other key concept that this saying brings out is that of ignorance: in effect the saying suggests that parents should not punish their children with ignorance. There is a saying that goes *hlogo ye tšhweu lapeng ke lehumo*,¹⁴⁵ which translates as ‘a white head in the family is wealth’ the white head being an elderly person. To have this advantage in a family without benefiting from its offerings is seen as a curse.

Ignorance and knowledge in Khelobedu

With regards to Khelobedu, I am beginning to understand that not knowing something is seen as a big problem within society and such ignorance is regarded as the source of one’s misfortune. This ignorance is not because of a lack of access to knowledge, but signals a kind of illiteracy. Literacy in this context means the ability to interpret and relate. From my experience and several conversations with family and other older informants, the ancestor archive is everywhere and its content is known and available to all that live within its proximity. It is taught to all children and continues to be learned throughout a person’s life. As the Kriges themselves noted, the Lobedu prize learning and the pursuit of knowledge as a lifetime endeavor. Learning is seen as a continuous process that does not end (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 124), but it is also important to understand that learning is not something that happens only in a prescribed institution. Knowledge, as Thandabathu (2009) once emphasized to me, is derived from living and going through the motions of life, doing what children do when you are a child and doing what men or old men do when you are at that stage, but most importantly, following your instinct.

The idea of instinct as dealt with in standard dictionaries conjures up words like typical, fixed impulse, inclination, tendency, aptitude, and gift. The words refer to ideas of natural behavior and are usually associated with animalism as well as learned or inherited behavior. When we follow the Latin genealogy of instinct, words like inspiration, instigation, roused, fired, infuriate come up. The words I would like to draw out here are ‘gift’ and ‘inspiration’. A gift is something that is given to one willingly at no cost. The person receiving it also has no power to decide what she/he

¹⁴⁵ Often cited by the older generation during family events, I personally came to understand it after Bishop Moilla elaborated on it during my marriage counselling (April 2011).

is getting and thus is dependent on the giver's discretion or judgment. In the same breath a gift also puts the person receiving it in the person giving it's debt linking them in a reciprocal relationship. 'Gift' is also used to refer to something that one has that needs to be harnessed. Inspiration, on the other hand, implies being prompted, an act of breathing – something that is automated by a special key. It also refers to a source of creativity: an impulse to produce or a moment that sanctions an opportunity. With these suggestive definitions in mind we can talk of instinct and gaining knowledge as creatively benefiting from an inspired opportunity. All that is required is consciously to take advantage of the opportunity, meaning that you are in the present tense when the opportunity arises. Thandabathu believes that we all have gifts and it is our goal to go through life learning our gift, harnessing its potential and discovering its limits, as well as its creative possibilities.

Instinct, knowledge and appetite

Before we go on to look at the *thugula* part of the equation I would also like to introduce the idea of appetite as experienced by the trickster character, not just Eshu the African trickster, but all ideas of trickster as they have appeared over time.¹⁴⁶ The trickster concept within the archive (ancestor archive and "official" archive) is relevant because its main function is to disturb the status quo of the archive, thus opening up room for change.

Lewis Hyde's book (2008) notes that tricksters by nature are banished from a world of plenty, or they leave for a world that does not have much. Realizing this discrepancy, the trickster goes on to acquire, or steal, from the land of plenty to furnish the land of not-so-plenty (or the other way around). So the fundamental idea is that he moves between worlds, literally trafficking knowledge, for trickster does not just steal things from one place, he also invents their knowledge elsewhere.

According to Hyde (2008:17-38), the basic genesis of trickster, is born of appetite: the need to master, control and benefit from one's appetite, making one aware of the relationship between lies and intelligence.

¹⁴⁶ Hyde's book (2008) illustrate to us that the trickster complex is vast and cuts across many cultures. In Greek mythology we find Prometheus, who, not content with being mortal, forgoes his earthly appetite in favour of a more spiritual appetite (being a god) by eating the sacrificial meat (that the gods inhale) rather than the meat he had stolen from his brother. While the Indian trickster, which is embodied by the raven illustrates how the trickster story is often used to explain how the world came to be. From these varied incarnations it becomes clear that trickster is present in all cultures and through all times. The key question becomes: what shape is the trickster taking at the moment?

Hyde explains that all truths are lies that have been told over and over again, and that the trickster, as that dumb character whose appetite goads him into all sorts of situations, stumbles upon ideas that often shake the very basis of the truth of our learned lies. What makes this seemingly dumb character such a powerful force in all societies is his faculty for learning. The trickster, by nature, is a character who falls victim to all sorts of misfortunes (whether by his doing or another's), but somehow, unlike most of the characters around him, learns from it and, again somehow, manages to find a way to turn his misfortune into fortune. Hyde explains this concept by expanding on the idea of instinct beyond just nature's pre-set state, illustrating that where others are content with mimicking their evolved nature, the trickster seeks more by learning to manipulate his evolving nature. Hyde tells a story about the octopus, who can change its body colour to match the colour of the rock it is sitting on to disguise itself so as to catch prey. Hyde notes that, in a time when the prey is getting cleverer, such a strategy will become futile and lead to hunger. He adds that it would be clever if the octopus could learn to use that trick to its maximum potential, using its intelligence to conceptualize changing to a colour contrary to the expected colour, thereby utilising the prey's curiosity as a hunting tool.

Within the instinct-appetite nexus, Hyde establishes tricksters as those who have mastered their appetites by modifying their hunger, and who have learned from ignoring the circular meaning of instinct in favour of the deeper context of instinct. The trickster is thus the master of tricks and loopholes in that he discovers, by way of being open to experiences, what instinct would otherwise have prevented him from experiencing. In this, Hyde highlights the idea that by most animal standards (the trickster is mostly portrayed as a male animal) the trickster has no instinct, because he does not have any heritage to keep him from falling into misfortune. His lack of heritage is a form of heritage in itself; his instinct is to evolve and that is what keeps him in the game.

Here, instinct is taken deep into the domain of the 'gift' and 'inspiration' and, although it does not keep you in the game forever, it does give you a slightly longer shelf life, allowing you to tend to your appetite while you figure out the next ruse, until the next lie that sheds light on the truth. In summary, instinct as a learned faculty reliant only on fixed evolution that stubbornly sticks to the same patterns is liable to lead to extinction, but learning to draw on inspiration and harness one's gift, even when it seems contrary to instinct, is a higher form of instinct. This, for me, elevates

the power of learning through interpretation – rather than stubbornly accepting a lie made true only by repetition – opening the way for a lie that may lead to an alternative reality. *Ditaola* as an interpretive tool is pivotal to the ancestor archive as a source of constantly and intelligently evolving instinct.

***Dithugula* and the archive**

To introduce the *thugula* side of the equation I would like to keep in mind the idea elaborated by Mbembe (2002: 19-25) regarding archives in general. He establishes the archives as those potent bits of remains that cannot be totally destroyed, but that need to be kept. In his treatment of the concept of archive, Mbembe first and foremost sees the archive as confined to a structure and a physical form (Mbembe 2002: 19). In my mind I think of these remains as needing to be put in to a coffin but not necessarily confined to a grave. In effect, an archive is a deteriorating artifact that needs sheltering. He also emphasizes the need for sheltering by noting the archive's potential for violence and its tendency to wreak havoc if not sheltered correctly (Mbembe 2002: 19). He addresses the method of sheltering, the act of silencing by way of public declaration that can lead to economic prosperity through the heritage economy (Mbembe 2002: 24).

With this in mind I move my attention to review Krige and Krige (1943, 1980: chapter 13) and give a snapshot account of their conception on the subject of *dithugula tša Balobedu*. They explain them as

Certain objects which were once in the possession of the ancestor used in religious ceremonials and are thought to have special powers of protection and healing. These objects, consisting of ancient beads or native worked iron... are handed down in the family and carefully cherished. ... Such charms are called *Thugula* (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 233).

In summary, they describe *dithugula* as religious objects that heal and protect. Put in relation with *ditaola*, *dithugula* immediately take up their place in the complex as the vehicle for enacting the diagnosis. The Kriges remark that when there is illness in the family, such objects are given attention in a ceremony called *ho phasa*, which happen in the presence of the ill, in conjunction with prayer, and while scolding the spirits (of the ancestors) and asking for health. The objects, which in this case are beads, are then worn by the ill until she/he is well. The key concept in this statement

is the idea of ‘giving attention’ in the presence of the person affected. To illustrate this concept one must pay attention to the complex of *ho phasa* as a cure.

To effect a cure, one must identify the source of the illness in order to understand the nature of the sickness. The Kriges describe *ho phasa* in the ancestor complex in relation to the concept of *ho lala*,¹⁴⁷ which translates as ‘to sleep’. They explain that the concept revolves around peace, which is credited as being a source of happiness. To sleep means peace, as opposed to *ho ema*, which translate as ‘to stand’ which connotes lack of peace and leads to disorientation, as in pacing and being scattered. The concept also incorporates the idea of *ho dzosa*, which means ‘to wake’ but refers to waking up unceremoniously, or to disturb,¹⁴⁸ thus stirring up trouble, as opposed to *ho phasa*, which is tied up with appeasing the ancestors and making them sleep. This establishes the complex of the ancestors as able to affect their subject’s peace and positions *ho phasa* as the remedy that affects the ancestor’s happiness and results in the ancestor’s sleep, so that they do not need to cause trouble. The illness in this case is the restlessness of the ancestors, who embody the archive. But how does an archive stir up trouble?

The Kriges explain that in Khelobedu the ancestors complain and are expected to complain so that they can be appeased.¹⁴⁹ The complaint, as already established in the *ditaola* section, comes as a vision or dream. This communication between the ancestors and the people is direct. There is no intermediary. The diviner using the bones only does the interpretation, he is not the channel. Therefore, the complaint affects the subject directly. In the complaining, there is no definite reason given nor is one required, it is enough that a complaint is there. The complaint of neglect can be seen as having more to do with an ancestor’s desire to be remembered, to have a goat or beast dedicated and named after him/her, for his/her shrine to get a libation or

¹⁴⁷ *Ho lala* can be traced to the second king of Balobedu in the early 1600s, called Maladji (modern Malatši or Malatji), who got his name from the nature of his rule, where rain and happiness were plentiful. As a result, people slept or were at peace, and the name refers to ‘one who makes us sleep’ (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 6). Therefore, it can be assumed that happiness (personified by sleep) leads to peace.

¹⁴⁸ Note the concept of disturbance as a preface for change.

¹⁴⁹ Again the concept of disturbance as linked to the opening up of change, which is appeased by the acquiring of a specific type of knowledge. I begin to ask myself whether the ancestors can be seen as the trickster –the ancestors, personified by the archive they have left behind, tend to disrupt the natural flow of things, the contents of their archive stir emotion and prompts us to behave in particular ways. According to Hyde (2008), the whole basis of trickster is premised on the act of disturbing the flow of things, during which one discovers something that had gone unnoticed or forgotten. The ancestor archive tends to have the same effect: when it is absent people tend to want to invent it; when it is present we tend to want to manipulate it, or destroy it. What is constant is that the ancestor archive springs us to action, and action breeds knowledge.

his/her beads to be worn (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 233). So the archive, here embodied by the ancestor, complains by virtue of the subject knowing of its existence and its neglect and the effects this has on the general well-being. And it is this knowledge that effects the dis-ease, courting the appetite for the ritual of acquiring knowledge as a cure.

Mbembe, in his treatment of the archive, illuminates the fact that those potent bits (the potentially violent archive) cannot be ignored or silenced by force, but that silence can only be achieved by incorporating them into the public consciousness (Mbembe 2002: 23-24). To my mind, this means that the object that is to be buried becomes a visible fixture in the present and thus its use or knowledge is perpetuated. To wear an ancestor's beads is to install them into the present¹⁵⁰ and give them an opportunity to breed new life. By wearing them, one is placing the beads in public where they can be admired, court anecdotes and start new trends.

The concept of *dithugula* is not restricted to inanimate objects. Living *dithugula* exist in the form of goats and bulls, plants and trees, as well as in the form of beer and praises.¹⁵¹ To attest to the randomness of the *thugula*, the Kriges cite a case where a Boer gun was requested as a *thugula* (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 233). They also mention that the object does not have to have been in the possession of the complaining ancestor for it to qualify. The diviner's 'dice' determine the *thugula* as it is requested by the ancestor through the vision and as interpreted by the dice (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 233). They conclude that this means that the objects in question are said to be lost or misplaced. Therefore steps are taken to procure the items and restore them to the ancestor, citing that one can also go to the queen or a third party and ask for the missing object, as the person in question might have many. It is then mentioned in the prayer,¹⁵² "Here are the lost beads, we are replacing them" (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 233). This introduces the concept of adding to the archive, as prompted by the awareness of the missing and crucial artifacts, essential for effecting the general well-being of the affected subject.

It is also common that all categories of the *dithugula* be used at once; that is, the inanimate object or living thing attached to the shrine (*dithugula* are often

¹⁵⁰ See Hamilton (2002) on the concepts of fluidity and conceptions of the present in dealing with oral archives.

¹⁵¹ See Krige and Krige (1943, 1980: 233 and chapter 13 in general) for a more detailed account.

¹⁵² Khelobedu is also a religion, of which prayer is part of the ritual.

associated with a shrine),¹⁵³ the dedicated animal, as well as the beer. The combination of use is determined by the diviner's diagnosis. The diviner in his/her diagnosis of the vision or dream can order a *mukhubo*,¹⁵⁴ which is a religious gathering of all the relatives. It is further elaborated that it is not normal to *phasa* by yourself. The ritual always requires an officiator and for all stake holders to be present. In the case of the *mukhubo*, the event is officiated by the *khadi* (*rakhadi* or *rakgadi*) of the family. *Khadi* is the oldest sister of the inheriting brother within a family. The name alludes to *ho khala* which is to warn, cure or curb, symbolizing her power to effect change within the family structure. She is the complementary power to the male head of the family and serves as an alternative source of justice within the family.

In the Kriges' description of *ho phasa* they note that the *thugula* works in conjunction with prayer (Krige & Krige 1943,1980: 233,235). In the officiating of the ritual (in this case the queen's *thugula* ceremony) the *khadi* leads a prayer, which is performed in public, but only the *khadi* and the children take part in the prayer, with the rest of the people a bit far off so that the formulas are heard only by her and the children (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 236). This is accompanied by the singing of the *lesugu*¹⁵⁵ songs. There is also talk of beer that is brewed by the *khadi*, which is called *muphaba* and is made of eleusine grain, although *makhaha*, which was commonly known as 'red kafir corn' can be used, no other grain is acceptable. The beer is poured on the shrine (while reciting a prayer) that is in existence,¹⁵⁶ which in most cases will be symbolized¹⁵⁷ by a small mound of earth with the *thugula* object partly visible. The dedicated animal also takes part in this ritual by drinking the beer brewed for the occasion. Makwala (2011) elaborated in discussing with me that the animal is dedicated from birth and is of the male sex. The animal is treated like a human being and is not tamed, but allowed to come and go as it pleases. It is named after the

¹⁵³ In an interview, Malatji (2012) explained to me that every family (before the missionaries' arrival) had a *thugula* shrine, and that the shrine was just a visual symbol of a much deeper vault below the family homestead that housed the actual objects of significance.

¹⁵⁴ *Mukhubo* is the Lobedu name for umbilical cord. This can be interpreted as the relatives of genetic or political affiliation, depending of context.

¹⁵⁵ *Lesugu* is the Lobedu word for snuff. I am still in the process of understanding the genre, but it has something to do with specific inherited songs commonly taught and sung at the initiation complex.

¹⁵⁶ If a shrine does not exist, there are rituals and procedures connected with *ho phasa* and *dithugula* complex that the diviner would recommend for establishing one. See Krige and Krige (1943: 233-234, 238) for more details.

¹⁵⁷ The shrine can go deep into the ground, depending on what is in it. The mound serves to give it an exterior manifestation (Malatji 2012). An imbued (particularly chosen by family/ not random) plant is sometimes planted on top of the mound.

ancestor it is dedicated to and is a special animal, so no illness may befall it. It is stressed, however, that celibacy is key in the *thugula* animal's case.¹⁵⁸ No random mating is permitted and its mate is selected when the need arises.

In the prayers relating to *dithugula* the words “drink and tell all the others” recur, or “why do you rise up on my account? If it is I, I say, let them give me such and such a thing... and you gods do not ‘be after’ it...” (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 240) occur. The Kriges highlight the fact that the Lobedu pray man to man, as opposed to subjects praying to an ‘omnipotent god’, hence scolding and reminding the gods of their duties to their subjects (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 239). The concept of praying man to man in my mind opens the space for negotiation, meaning that the person you are praying to can understand reason, as they too have had experience of life – as opposed to God, who can be seen as knowing nothing of being human. Hence you talk to *badimo* (in conjunction with direct prayers to God) so that they can advise God on matters he is unfamiliar with. The Kriges also introduced the concept that an elderly person is regarded as a living god or godhead (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: 124, 240), conjuring the concept of a white head as a blessing within a family. They emphasize that the length of time the elderly persons have lived qualifies them to the title, and this is tied to the experience and knowledge they have accumulated as well as their ability to exert influence on matters of importance. This implies that the god status is associated with the accumulation of knowledge and the ability to doctor or, perhaps more accurately, curate, the effects of the knowledge. I have already expressed the idea that ignorance is the most dangerous quality. The Kriges (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980: chapter 13) identify the concept of paying libations to *dithugula* as a way of averting ignorance and neglect.

On the subject of benefit, the Kriges elaborate that the privilege of the *khadi* and elders is sanctioned by the gods, but that the gods are not upholders of good, because gods help everyone, good and evil people alike; in death we are all due the same fate, signaling the indiscriminating nature of knowledge. The chief concern of the gods is to look after their own interests. The gods are also keepers of old traditions and in their placating, European objects are seldom used. This perpetuates the production of indigenous arts, that is, art practiced by the resident community, and this art is not restricted to ancient ‘pure’ Lobedu arts, but includes all

¹⁵⁸ Krige and Krige (1943, 1980) also go into detail about the process of dedication in chapter 13, see note 162.

modern/contemporary arts that have been introduced to the group by various interactions; the main criteria is that they are practiced independently within their domain.¹⁵⁹ There is also a pattern of reciprocity within the ancestor complex in a prayer at the end of *ho phasa*. The Krige cite the queen as closing the prayer by saying “he who gives to the gods may not remain hungry” (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 236).

The concept of the archive as an economic source is also key to understanding its function, for any knowledge derived from the process of placating the gods can be applied to daily life and, as most elders will tell you, the only wealth is in serving. The concept of serving others is not just about being a good Samaritan, but rather about practicing arts that are relevant to the locals as a way of serving the community. This can be seen as using the arts as an economic strategy.

Another concept highlighted by the Kriges is the foregrounding of action over belief in Lobedu religion (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 241). The Kriges also note that Lobedu religion is not distinct from magic. The very terminology of the two is identical: *thugula* is a shrine, dedicated animal, or a sacred object once in the possession of the ancestor, but it is also any charm of bone or herb concocted by a doctor.

Talking about possession, they note that once one is possessed the doctor comes, not to exorcise the possessing spirit, but to officiate in relation to the possessing spirit, to help state their issues through an official channel. The possessing spirit is seen as an ancestor who has come to make something known or to disclose some form of information that has been lost or ignored. This is often delivered in song and dance, attracting a crowd and linking this practice to the concept of *dithugula*. Balobedu do not practice possession by foreign spirits, but only internal ancestors can possess. This makes the possession in much the same league as *dithugula*, for *lelopo* (possessing spirit) is often seen as coming to play with others (Krige & Krige 1943, 1980: 243), and, as a result, bringing happiness.

In summary, I ask myself again, what does it mean to the ancestor to have their beads worn or to have a libation paid to their shrine? In the case of a libation, what does the process of making the specific kind of beer required for the libation do to or teach, the person taking it on? As for the beads, what sort of history do they

¹⁵⁹ Sometimes this concept manifests as things that are exclusively of Lobedu origin, but I suspect that this is more related to independence in its curation and operation than to its physical origins.

carry and how does one gain access to that history and what effect does going to the queen or third party to procure an object have within this process? What does it mean for an animal to be dedicated to an ancestor? Why is the animal treated with such specific care to a point that it totally reverses its status as an animal? What does the behavior of the animal do to the person charged with its care? What does it mean to say that those who placate the gods must not go hungry? How does giving to the gods make one full or tend to their appetite? And finally, what is the substance of the process of *ho phasa*; does its success rest in the object, or does it rest in the convening and interaction of the crowds?

It is the last question that begin to bring us to the ancestor archive as a particular kind of archive. *Dithugula* are those particular sacred objects that are dedicated by the family as a shield from misfortune. This is achieved by maintaining a level of awareness by the family concerned, an awareness of the dangers inherent in ignorance. The objects take the form of beads, goats, bulls, an iron hoe, lilies, special brew beers – even a Boer gun qualifies. The main emphasis is that *dithugula* are dedicated by the family as a unit (together) and each *thugula* is unique to that specific family. Furthermore, no tampering or sickness must befall the dedicated objects. But most importantly, they must be used regularly. The utmost care must be taken in their keep and there should be no sparing in their procurement and maintenance. In Morwasehla's words "*Dithugula* are Balobedu's source of happiness, they are good things indeed" (informal interview 2011). I understand this happiness to come from living in the present, that is, living with the future in front of me and the past in the back of my head, all of this with the knowledge that both the past and the future reside in the present. This past and future are connected in time and space and they both deserve my attention (libation). What does practice in the case of the archive do? How might we conceptualize practicing archive rather than reading the archive? The objective seems to be the acquisition of skill rather than the theorizing or understanding of skill. This being so, it does not mean that there is no theorizing; it acknowledges that theory is born out of practice rather than practice born out of theory.

Chapter 5

Explication of the Project

My entry into photography was not surprising at all. I began photography as an assistant to the local roaming photographer, practicing in the style of what has come to be called vernacular photography.¹⁶⁰ I got my first camera, a Fuji Powershot, at eleven and immediately started catering to my peers' various photographic requests. My awareness of professional photography was sparked by the popular magazines of the day, facilitated mainly by the exotic fashion spreads photographed on remote islands. I joined the art club at school and pursued photography thereafter, graduating in 2004 with a B.Tech in Commercial Photography.

From fashion photographer to exhibiting photographer

An early difficulty I encountered with the photographic genre occurred when I attempted to register for a Masters programme in photography. In my proposal I had identified a photograph (Arbus, *untitled* (4) (1970–71)) and a quote by Diane Arbus¹⁶¹ as a model for the direction I wanted to take.¹⁶² The quote read:

I do feel I have some slight corner on something about the quality of things. I mean it's very subtle and a little embarrassing to me, but I really believe there are things which nobody would see unless I photographed them. (Arbus quoted in Govignon 2004: 205)

I had further identified Balobedu as my research interest for the photography project and I wanted to document in the spirit expressed by Arbus's quote.

The problem came with my use of the term 'documentary' in my description of the proposed photography project. The art school pointed out that if documentary was my interest, then Bruce Davison, the Farm Security Administration photographers or any of the other documentary greats, like Ernest Cole or Eugène

¹⁶⁰ Photography in Ga-Kgapane and Bolobedu was widely popular – in Ga-Kgapane alone I knew more than a dozen vernacular photographers. The profession was rather profitable and highly competitive. Some of the more popular photographers had a permanent clientele who organized their events according to the photographers' schedules.

¹⁶¹ Arbus was one of three photographers chosen by John Szarkowski for the *New Documents* exhibition at MoMA in 1967. Weiss's essay (2002: 6-25) proposes that Szarkowski presented Arbus as the new face of documentary photography, courting strong opposition from canonisers such as Susan Sontag (1977: 27-48).

¹⁶² See *The Abrams Encyclopedia of Photography* (Govignon 2004: 205).

Atget, would be a better-suited model to adopt. The issue lay with the definition of documentary photography and the act of documenting. The prevailing definition was rooted within what I later understood to be Grierson's definition,¹⁶³ which Solomon-Godeau (1991) elaborates as the act of documenting with the aim of drawing someone's attention to a particular situation to prompt him or her to change the situation.¹⁶⁴ I, on the other hand, was not interested in documenting for the sake of showing or alerting someone's attention to Balobedu or effecting a change. I was interested in the act of seeing Balobedu for myself. I wanted to photograph Balobedu because, growing up, I was always fascinated by the women and men that I encountered. I had often wondered where they were going, all dressed up in their colourful finery, going in the opposite direction to the Lutheran church, which most of us were heading to every Sunday.

The matter of genre became an issue again through my commercial work. The fashion photography fraternity felt that my work was too "reportage", while the photojournalism and documentary photography fraternity felt that my work was too 'fashionable', so I was not entirely welcome on either side. The problem lay in my approach. When solicited to do fashion projects, I would abandon the studio, preferring instead to hang around the chosen location for a few days. Then I would assemble a team, hire a kombi and drive around the location until I found a scene that appealed to me. I would spring everyone into action and capture the shot within minutes, with as little interference in the found scene as possible. For the documentary clients, my photographs conveyed the message, but my colourful and aesthetic approach was too pretty and undermined the 'seriousness' required of real documentary photography.

I found refuge in historic anthropological photographs. Ethnographic photographs appealed to me because on one level they showed what appeared to be found and random scenes, preserved and available for us to see – echoing Arbus's idea about things that no one would see unless she photographed them. On another level the photographs were aesthetically appealing. This beauty was enhanced by their

¹⁶³ See *Grierson on Documentary* with an introduction by Hardy (Grierson 1979) for a wider history of the origins of the word and its early associations.

¹⁶⁴ Also see *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Stott 1986: 12-17) for an elaboration that distinguishes between a strand of documentary photography that informs the intellect, as well as a strand that informs emotion. The book presents an overview of the relationship between ethnographic photographs produced through participant observation in the social sciences, and social documentary photography practiced by professional photographers.

objecthood, rooted in their production in the analogue photographic tradition – a tradition that lends itself well to some rather spectacular aging qualities, expressed by the yellowing tones and the slight mirroring induced by the oxidizing silver compounds in the emulsion, or the mould and scratches accumulated through handling, making them visually engaging objects. This beauty is also found in the formal qualities of their compositions and style, testifying to a much longer history of image-making, which predated photography. Even the anthropometric photograph had an aesthetic quality to it when considered independently of its production context.

In 2006, accepting the limitations of commercial photography, I decided to face my photography in the direction of exhibition-making, which, from a distance, appeared to allow more room to experiment with different approaches.

The first critique

My first impulse in my quest to make an exhibition was to find the right equipment. I settled on a 4x5 inch Sinar P large format camera, one of those old style cameras with which you view the scene being photographed upside down on a ground glass, with a cloth over your head. For film I chose Polaroid Type 55, an instant film that produced both a 4x5 inch print and a 4x5 inch negative simultaneously.¹⁶⁵ The chemistry from the developing process left aesthetic marks on the edges of the negative, giving a similar effect to old-style photographs. With this equipment I spent the better part of 2006 and early 2007 driving around Venda, Giyani, Polokwane and Bolobedu, photographing people that best captured my memory of childhood encounters, while emphasizing the quirks of contemporary changes.

I used these photographs to lobby for exhibition space and funding for the production of a full-scale exhibition. When I approached the contemporary art curator Khwezi Gule, of the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), for exhibition space, he indicated he was reluctant to take on the proposed exhibition. In so doing he alerted me to the problem of producing the type of images I was producing without dealing with the discourse around them, and he pointed me in the direction of the debates raised by the politics of the gaze. Then he passed me on to the Curator for Traditional Southern African Collections (Nessa Leibhammer), since the photographic work was seen as ‘ethnographic’ and not ‘contemporary’. Leibhammer elaborated on the

¹⁶⁵ I chose Type 55 film because it allowed me immediately to provide a print for the people I photographed.

concerns that had been raised by Gule, citing the problems produced by anthropology's abuse of power in its formative years. While there was an awareness of a problem, they could not adequately explain to me what the problem with ethnographic photographs was.

During this period I realised that there were no ethnographic photographs of Balobedu in circulation in contemporary public life. Duggan-Cronin, who presented a comprehensive but idealised photographic survey of South African 'tribes' in the 1930s, did not have a corpus on Balobedu. The only mention of Balobedu was in a general comment by W. Eiselen (1931) in the introduction, designating Balobedu (mainly referring to the language) as an inconsequential group that would be absorbed into Bapedi. It was then that Jeremane Makwala, a Northern Sotho author and retired academic, pointed me in the direction of *Realm of a Rain-Queen* (Krige & Krige, 1943, 1980).

***Gae Lebowa* exhibition, 2010**

I began shooting the second leg of the project in 2009, two years after the initial start. I had spent the two years getting acquainted with the issues surrounding ethnographic photography, using *The Colonizing Camera* (Hartmann et al. 1998) and *Images from Bamum* (Geary 1988) as my main sources. Other informal sources – mentors and older photographers – had suggested I abandon black and white in favour of colour photography¹⁶⁶ as a way of limiting the undesired association with anthropology.¹⁶⁷ Other interventions included identifying the sitters by name to save them from the anonymity of the 'observed other'. As the opening drew near I grew dissatisfied with the arguments presented by the critiques on ethnographic photography. I went on to present the exhibition using a limited number of the black and white photographs, presented in a separate room with contextualising wall text and a video foregrounding my insider position as a Molobedu. The colour photographs were presented in an adjoining room with only captions as a source of information.

In a talk, *POVERTY PORNOGRAPHY? A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Photographic Practice in Africa*, held in conjunction with the group exhibition *New African Photography* (Gallery Momo 2010), Achille Mbembe pointed to an inability

¹⁶⁶ In doing this, I drew on the observations of Zwelethu Mthetwa on the ability of colour photography to overcome the look of poverty.

¹⁶⁷ At this point I also looked at *Malinowski's Kiriwina* (Young 1998), but I did not have the background to understand fully its offerings.

in all languages, photography included, to talk without clichés and mimicry.¹⁶⁸

Concluding that to be free of clichés, one must start by saying what one means even if it risks blasphemy, Mbembe made the point that it is more important to say what one wants to say than let oneself be possessed by other people's demons (referring to discourse).

Staging of the exhibition

During the making of the final *Gae Lebowa* exhibition I also conducted parallel research with my family and the general public around Bolobedu, including some local academics, as a way of understanding what I was dealing with. The *Gae Lebowa* exhibition was hung by a Lobedu man on the staff at the JAG. Excited by the exhibition, he invited an acquaintance who was well-versed in Khelobedu to talk to me. During our many conversations the man presented me with a list of items that I would need if I was to successfully elicit information from a Lobedu elder.¹⁶⁹ He gave me a list of items, but, for the most part, I had no idea what some of these objects were. I asked my grandparents and still could not grasp what the objects were. Later, in 2010, while going through Davison's (1984) book on Lobedu material culture, my grandmother pointed to an item and identified it as one of the items I had enquired about and proceeded to tell me about its consequences. I had taken the Kriges' book to Bolobedu but had not recognized what showing the plates in the monograph to people could do, and had been doing. This interaction revealed to me the photographs' potential as a tool for soliciting indigenous knowledge.

In Bolobedu, the book's authority was indisputable. Even when people challenged its authority it was only done because an outsider had produced this valued work, and even so, the most critical challengers expressed sadness that such work was not undertaken anymore. When I took my own photographs to Bolobedu (while preparing the exhibition captions), the photographs were met with the same

¹⁶⁸ Video documentation of the talk is available online. URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csUW0T9vb-E> as well as on URL: http://wn.com/ayana_jackson

¹⁶⁹ At this stage I was still enquiring about the origins of Balobedu and the significance of salt (the pre-history of the ancestors of Balobedu is related to a group that travelled from their home looking for salt, eventually establishing a satellite city. Salt is still mined and produced in Bolobedu today.) Among the recommended things was *letsoko*, or snuff, around which I had already observed and documented processes, because my great-grandmother was the local snuff dealer and people came from far to purchase it. This man also recommended the book, *Marema ka Dika* (Rakoma 1995), which I obtained from Makwala, and *khethêba* (a form of calabash – see Davison 1984: 152, fig. 90). He provided me with the metaphoric name for salt and referred me to an idiom in the book as further context for my questions.

enthusiasm as had been shown for the Kriges' photographs. Many people urged me to take up the work started by the Kriges so that the next generation could perhaps get a glimpse of Khelobedu as it exists now, emphasizing that it is important for such things to be done by insiders, as opposed to the fly-by-night researchers that come for a weekend and expect to write a book about Balobedu.

Disavowed: the status of the Lobedu ethnographic photographic archive

It is undisputable that some communities consider the ethnographic photographic object as suspect. But I now know that this was not the case for many people in Bolobedu. Indeed, most did not feel this disavowal. Many of the Balobedu to whom I spoke were aware of problems inherent in the production of the Krige materials (including the ethnographic photographic objects), and had made peace with its history in favour of reaping the benefits provided by the materials today. As I immersed myself in my Lobedu respondents' positions on the Krige materials, I began to try to understand the structures of feeling and thinking that had enabled them to come to terms with the Krige materials. It seemed to me that they had, so to speak, done their rituals, purifying the Krige materials for Bolobedu's purpose, thereby allowing the materials to function as productive objects.

It was the academics who had not come to terms with the disavowed status of the ethnographic photographic objects. On the face of it, theirs seemed to be the informed position, in contrast to my apparently naïve Bolobedu respondents. Their ability to judge is based on their academic understanding of how colonial, and later apartheid, power functioned. But my Lobedu respondents are far from innocent of knowledge of how such power operated. Nor are they unaware of the effects of the colonial and apartheid archives on their lives. My respondents are also aware of their own power, as well as the fluidity of archival or documentary material, and have, over time, manipulated it to their benefit (see *Modjadji, of Myth and Fantasy* (Mahashe, 2012)). Is it the case that the academics, confident as they are of their academic authority and academic ways of thinking, were failing to recognise other forms of authority, and other ways of thinking about problematic inheritances, which exist simultaneously with theirs? Is it because of this confidence that they have not moved beyond the ethnographic photographic archive's immediate consequences?

At this point I was alerted to a problem, an ailment or a troublesome legacy. I had begun to think about whether the disavowal or the rejection of the photographs

was adequate; I then began to wonder what it would take to restore the ethnographic photographic objects' sociality, their publicness. I realised that Khelobedu offered a suggestive possibility for the redemption of the ethnographic photographic objects, and their restoration to active public life. I had the ailment. The *ditaola* – the photographs on the *Gae Lebowa* exhibition – had done the necessary divination work. It was at this point that I resolved to treat the photographic objects as *dithugula*. This framework invited me to focus my attention next on locating the *dithugula*. If I was to understand and try to cure the ethnographic photographic archive (at least the Krige one) I was to go where the problem was, and perform the curing act there.

Locating the collection

I had initially been captivated by the ethnographic photographic archive symbolised by the 13 plates printed in the monograph. I began looking for the archive in late 2009. Each stage in the journey allowed me to gain knowledge of the *dithugula*, the object of my quest. I found a few photographs in Museum Africa's archives (mostly attributed to Duggan-Cronin) and a little bit of digging led me to Wits University. After a few weeks rumbling through the various Wits archives, I was led to the Wits Art Museum where a body of about 200 Krige photographs were kept, having been moved from the Anthropology Museum on the basis of the museum's inability to care for them properly, as well as to make them accessible to the public.¹⁷⁰

A telephone conversation with Professor Anitra Nettleton of Wits' History of Art department, directed me to the Johannesburg Art Gallery Library and subsequently to Davison's MA thesis on Lobedu material culture, establishing Iziko Museum as the location for the photographic material. After the exhibition, I attended an Archive and Public Culture (APC) seminar at the University of Cape Town. I used this opportunity to get in touch with Davison, who confirmed the location of the Krige photographs at the SAM. However, the collection was not available because it was in transit from the SAM to the newly acquired Social History building. Davison explained to me that the photographs were not yet constituted as a public resource and were not readily accessible. They were seen as a research collection that complemented the material culture collection. Access at that point was only granted to

¹⁷⁰ The Wits photographs have been digitised and are freely available to the public. The drawback was that they only had small prints mounted on card with annotations; they did not have any negatives in their collection.

researchers who either worked there or had some institutionally-sanctioned academic interest in the collection.

We exchanged contacts and Davison expressed an interest in picking up her research on the Krige material when she retired the following year, and invited me to join her as an interlocutor. Just as Eileen Krige would have realised that initiation would open the doors of Khelobedu to her, I recognised that I needed academic induction. I expressed an interest in pursuing a Masters degree with the APC group (based in anthropology) and I was advised to take up some courses in anthropology as preparation. I took these at Wits during the last half of 2010. A few months later I received a call for applications to University of Cape Town initiative, ARC: the Visual University and its Columbarium,¹⁷¹ from Davison and the APC mailing list, which I pursued successfully. The Krige collection was kept at the SAM, awaiting my engagement under the supervision of Davison.

I had located the *dithugula* and had undergone a variety of processes that both prepared me for, and earned me access to, the objects of my enquiry. I was mindful of how my process of doing fieldwork in the institutions mirrored aspects of the Kriges' entry into the field in Bolobedu.

Constituting the archive as *dithugula tša Malefokana*

As I began working with the Krige collection as a participant observer in a Masters programme, I discovered that the collection had been little described or organised. My training in commercial photography, instead of the social sciences, history or photo conservation, meant that I was not equipped with the methodological expertise required formally to constitute the collection as a standard archive by writing its history and cataloguing it in preparation for public access. Indeed, my interest in the collection's photographic materiality meant that I was better suited for a different kind of engagement that would constitute the collection as an archive through my use of it as a resource for an art intervention. The degree was thus registered with the Michaelis School of Fine Art and linked to the Centre for Curating the Archive, and the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative instead of the Centre for African Studies (the other possibility) and registered as an MA(FA) instead of an M(FA). This would allow me to undertake in-depth research on the collection's history, even

¹⁷¹ See www.arc.uct.ac.za.

though my intended output was a curatorial exhibition, as well as giving me the space to explore the terrain without restriction to the disciplinary methodologies of art.

Accessing the collection

Because the collection was neither accessioned nor constituted as an archive with stipulated regimes of custody and care, my access was subject to being overseen by Davison. Although it was possible to arrange for UCT temporarily to request the collection from Iziko, Davison was preferred as an interlocutor because of her in-depth knowledge of the collection and its many uncatalogued aspects. The work that had been done to make the collection accessible for research was also outdated; safety film tends to get milky after a few years, while contact sheets only allowed so much engagement, leaving only the original negatives. Efforts to digitise the collection were blocked by the institutional boundaries as well as by copyrights issues, while outsourcing the digitisation to a private company proved too costly. In the end, I was permitted to make low-resolution scans using my own equipment for the purpose of research. The location of the collection within the old African Studies wing of the SAM offered access to a fully-equipped darkroom (all the equipment was labeled obsolete with instruction not to move it to the new building).

Understand the collection

My next step was to invest time and effort coming to understand the *dithugula*. An important move was my induction into the necessary areas of academic knowledge. This involved three six-month long sojourns in various academic set-ups. I joined the APC's 'Entanglement and Hybridity' reading group, aimed at understanding the colonial encounter and its subsequent entanglements produced by the various actors' mutual engagements. This was followed by a course at UWC's history department on the History of Anthropology with Andrew Bank, looking particularly at the practice of participant-observation-based fieldwork.

During the same period I registered for the African Studies Archive course under Nick Shepherd (African Studies, UCT), looking at imaginaries within the colonial institutions, particularly African Studies. The course aimed to explore how these forms of imaginaries are challenged today, paying particular attention to oral tradition and forms of self archiving through story-telling (this led to the production of *Modjadji, of Myth and Fantasy* (Mahashe, 2012)).

Throughout the duration of the first year of the degree I attended the Fine Art reading group with Colin Richards, which focused particularly on how the arts use various forms of archival sources as a way of porting information from one mode of storage to another, as well as raising critical awareness around the possibilities of archives. This culminated with a trip to the Venice Biennale in October 2011, where I paid particular attention to the use of archival material in the production of art, which formed the basis for my photographic installation with the Krige photographs. The induction that stands out the most in my process of understanding the field came through Carolyn Hamilton's Archive and Public Culture initiative,¹⁷² which brings academics and artists from a variety of disciplines together at one table, allowing interdisciplinary conversations that would not be possible within the standard university seminar.

In the first half of 2012 Andrew Banks invited myself and Davison to write a journal article (Davison & Mahashe 2012) for the journal *Kronos: Southern African Histories*' special issue on documentary photography, establishing the conditions around the making of the Krige photographs and looking at the albums against the monograph. In preparation for the exercise, I spent a period of one week going through the Eileen Jensen Krige Papers at the Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban, paying particular attention to Eileen's reflections on the 1930s fieldwork, as well as interviewing the Kriges' descendants. I also spent a week in Bolobedu interviewing the children of Simion Modjadji (Krige's assistant, 1936–37) and collecting stories about Eileen and the monograph, as well as interviewing Eileen's later assistant, John Malatji, who informed me that Eileen had undergone the full Lobedu female initiation ritual.

Consulting with the specialist

Although the official courses, literature and seminars did a lot to fill the gaps in my knowledge, some things still eluded me, with rumours and things off the record prompting many queries. For this, I conducted informal interviews with several scholars and thinkers within the ethnographic photographic field, drawing them in as interlocutors. These included, amongst others, Michael Godby; Patricia Hayes; Jeremane Makwala; African Studies librarians with their constant anecdotes about

¹⁷² The group meets three times a year for a three-day intensive workshop.

everything and everyone; David Cohen, who constantly challenged and pushed my conception of participant observation; Nick Shepherd for highlighting the notion of desire within the wider economy of photography and anthropology; Lewis Hyde's *Trickster Makes This World* (2008) for illuminating the shifting character of the trickster, and John Malatji, who presented me with unofficial information that helped me understand Khelobedu within the contemporary landscape better.

I began to see that the problem around ethnographic photographs emerged as one produced by a general reading of the discourse surrounding the ethnographic photograph. At the same time, participant-observation emerged as a methodology that resisted the traps of documentary photography. As Michael Godby (2001: 20) observed, in their photography the Kriges were not interested in creating types or idealised others composed from preconceived images. Instead, their interest in reflecting reality allowed them to reveal something about Balobedu that escaped photographers like Duggan-Cronin, who were interested in presenting an idealised other. Ultimately, participant-observation was about seeing first and showing second, and I began to understand that it was this impulse to see, as opposed to show, that makes 1930s ethnographic photographic documents unique.

Hayes also alerted me to a tendency within the curatorial field to present a non-united front, expressed through the various actors' institutional affiliations, urging me to transgress these boundaries and learn from as many people as possible in order to understand what is really going on in the field. My consultation with the specialists enabled me to reach a diagnosis of the problem that I understood to beset the photographs.

As for the trickster, I never could fix the trickster. Was it myself, Balobedu, the anthropologist, photography, or was it the various interlocutors? In the end it does not matter, Hyde's (2008) point is clear: the trickster is whoever opens up the way when it is blocked; the space occupied by the trickster is a temporary one, which opens and closes as it is needed.

Call a crowd and pay libation to *dithugula*

I was now ready to attempt to cure the ethnographic photographic objects of their disavowed state. The response to the suspect state of the ethnographic photograph had been to ban the photographs from circulation. Activist academics attacked institutions that put up such images, using discourse as a way to intimidate them into compliance.

Although the images were banned, the very same academics continued to circulate the photographs through networks of journal papers and critical publications, leaving the general public ignorant of the nature of the objects. The photographic objects became illustrations and were stripped of their objecthood as photographs.

The installation, which I then undertook, aimed publicly to settle the disturbed and disturbing ancestors, by recognising these suspect disavowed ethnographic photographs as difficult, but, valuable inherited objects. I focused on their objecthood by presenting them as chemically unstable photographic objects. This was facilitated by presenting, and inviting the audience to develop pre-exposed sheets of expired photographic paper, which were printed with randomly selected images from the Krige archive. These photographic objects were presented in a specially-built darkroom, hidden within the gallery space. The darkroom was fitted with safe-lights (filtered light)¹⁷³ so as to give the illusion of a proper darkroom. A bath of developer,¹⁷⁴ with no stop bath¹⁷⁵ or fixative,¹⁷⁶ was placed in the room, with gloves and trays for handling the wet, developed photograph. Captions, in Eileen Krige's handwriting, printed on to trace paper, were incorporated into the wall, effectively betraying the lightproof status of the darkroom by letting un-safe light (unfiltered light) into the room.

I was present in the room, imparting stories – factual and mythical – about anthropology, Khelobedu and photography, and I engaged in various conversations with the people who entered the room. Exhibition-goers either made or watched the images emerge from the photographic paper, becoming clearly visible, and then going black due to the lack of stop bath, as well as from the light coming in through the captions. The makers were then instructed to place the photographic object into a tray and take it outside into the public part of the space and hang it on the wall. People who did not realise there was an additional room, or who were not curious enough to

¹⁷³ The photographic paper is not sensitive to light on the red end of the spectrum. Specially made filters ranging from yellow-green to red are used in darkrooms to filter the light that falls outside of the safe part of the light spectrum.

¹⁷⁴ Developer is the chemistry that reacts with the exposed photographic emulsion causing the latent image to become visible: the chemistry develops the latent image from an invisible image to a completely blackened image, depending on how long you leave it in the bath. The image will continue to be light sensitive if not fixed.

¹⁷⁵ Stop bath is the chemistry used to neutralise the developer, effectively stopping the developer from developing the image further.

¹⁷⁶ Fixer is the chemistry used to fix the developed image 'permanently', so that its process of oxidization is slowed down considerably: the fixer stops [reduces] the light sensitive compounds in the photograph from being light sensitive.

enter the room, only got to see the blackened photographs. This process constituted the collection as an archive by making it publicly accessible to those who pursued knowledge.

The constitution of the collection as a *thugula* archive was based on the photographic object's ability to constitute a crowd, as well as in the ethnographic photographic objects' ability to effect closure and quell unrest brought about by the photographs' suspected disavowed state. The public performance of the installation functioned, for those interested and willing, as a graduating ceremony that revealed to them an obscured insight about the nature of ethnographic photographic objects.

I wanted the curated photographic objects to constitute a restorative space, which, when viewed with an open mind, allowed for the audience to ask questions repeatedly over time as their knowledge of what they could ask of the image grew. Building a secluded darkroom within the gallery space functioned as a physical think-space, which gave myself and the audience a sense of safety and clarity.

Secluded and insulated from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the gallery space, with the dim safe-lights and drugged smell of the developer, the room gave one a feeling of being somewhere else, a sense of time stopping; as if in a remote village, somewhere in the middle of a dense forest. The pace of the story-telling, and the randomness of the conversation sparked by the photographs and the stories told back by the audience, allowed for a much deeper engagement. On a metaphoric level the room functioned as a mental break from the demand for criticality by contemporary art practice. It was a break from the 'white cube',¹⁷⁷ a private space where people were allowed to be themselves and, only if they so chose, participate in the process – indeed, a ritual – I had conjured into being.

The conception of the photograph as a mute object that requires animation might be true, but it does nothing to open up the field or to effect peace within the archives.

We have eyes and are capable of seeing. If the project of 1930s anthropology was about seeing then, maybe, I thought, we needed to go back to seeing. It is good to have asked such critical questions of the ethnographic photographic objects, leading them with our questions, but perhaps it was time for us to be led by them; interacting with them on their own terms.

¹⁷⁷ The contemporary gallery has come to be called the white cube because of its minimal architecture, which gives it a sanitised look, meant only for serious contemplation.

If you speak to conservators they will tell you how alive the photographic objects are, constantly evolving and changing on a microscopic level. The limitations presented by the infancy of the Krige photographic collection as a research resource has opened up the field for me, by allowing me to recognise that the photographic objects are active and not merely dead library-like sources of information. They are materially sensible objects that allow one to defy the passing of time without fully invalidating time.

My interest in photographing Balobedu, and in the Lobedu ethnographic archive, might have associations with some dark past of anthropology, but after all the years possessed by discourse I resort to Diane Arbus. In a grant proposal to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1963 (Arbus 2003), Arbus proposes:

I want to photograph the considerable ceremonies of our present because we tend while living here now to perceive only what is random and barren and formless about it. While we regret that the present is not like the past and despair of its ever becoming the future, its innumerable inscrutable habits lie in wait for their meaning. I want to gather them, like somebody's grandmother putting up preserves, because they will have been so beautiful... (2003: 41)

Arbus was talking about ceremonies, about those events that make us human. She wanted to document them by seeing and capturing them through her camera, and guard them against time to be seen when the bitter taste of reality has subsided, like memories of childhood that forget the beatings that may have accompanied it. Like Arbus, the anthropologists of the 1930s were interested in gathering, and like the grandmother who pickles fruits, they took the time to gather and preserve them.

As much as the documentary impulse is inevitable in photography, a realization that the true function of a photograph is judged by its first intended use, and judged against its subsequent uses over time, opens our understanding of the event. The 1930s anthropologists used photography because they wanted to see and, subsequently, to be seen as seeing. Seeing was the first use of this photography; any subsequent use is contingent.

We owe it to ourselves to see these photographs for ourselves and discern their meaning. *Dithugula tša Malefokana* are begging for our real attention, but not attention to be preserved as metaphors. They are begging to be given a second life by

being treated as photographs, as sensible objects (Edwards et al. 2006: 1-31), and it is my engagement with this body that enacts this process.

The dilemma, indeed, the impossibility of producing a satisfactory text that reflects the varieties inherent in the ethnographic photographic object for the research MA weighs heavily on me. This is highlighted by the fact that the conventional thesis format can only show what is provable by facts and argued for, with facts using an established language I am not versed in, nor inclined, here, to command. Sight, on the other hand, allows one to perceive things that are not so easily described and invites more actors than those fluent in the dominant language of the academy. Through my processes as *motshwara marapo* I have immersed myself in the curatorial field, and to that effect I have mediated my part. The rest I commit to the silence of the archive. For my part I confess that I do not have an argument, I only have desire.

University of Cape Town



Dithugula tša Malefokana: Seeing other people's stories, telling tall tales,
a photographic installation by George Mahashe



Imperfect librarian exhibition
Michaelis Gallery



Imperfect librarian exhibition
Michaelis Gallery



The Exuberance Project exhibition
Rhodes Mandela gallery, Cape Town



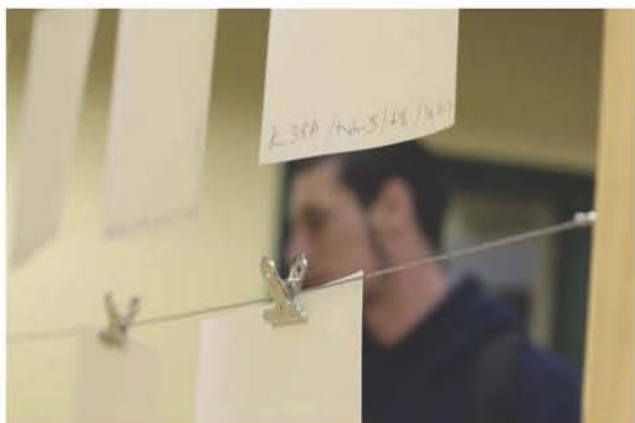
Dithugula tša Malefokana
Parking Gallery project presentation, Johannesburg



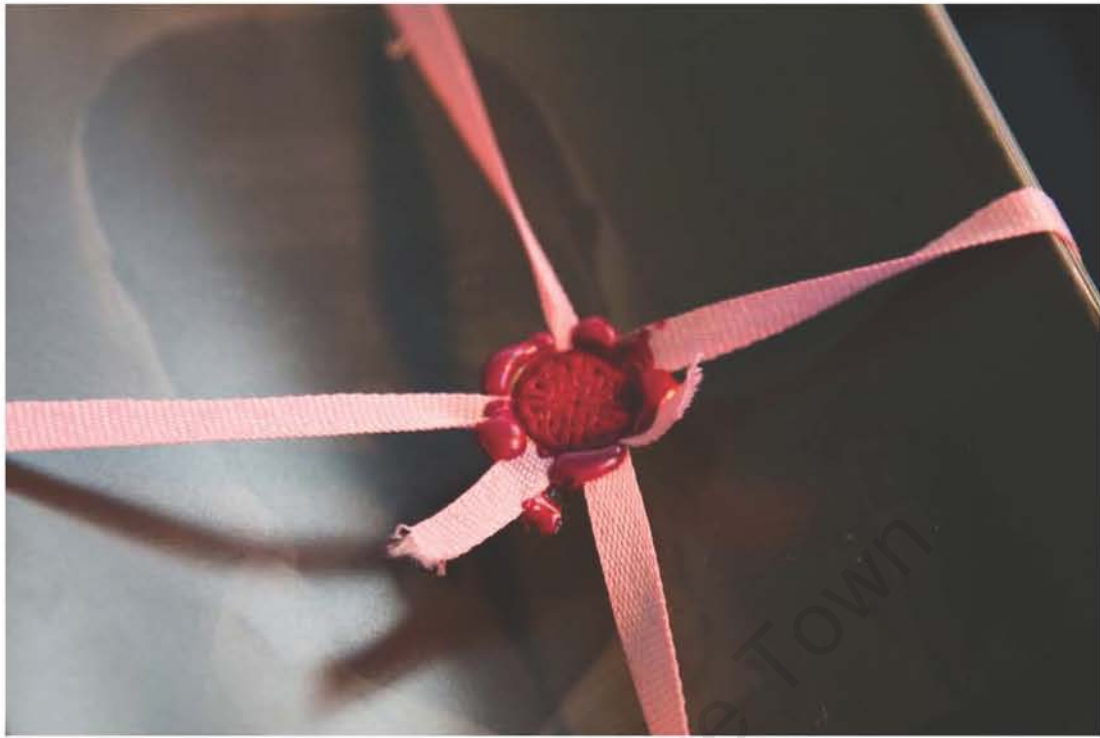
Dithugula tša Malefokana
Parking Gallery project presentation, Johannesburg



Dithugula tša Malefokana
Parking Gallery project presentation, Johannesburg



Dithugula tša Malefokana
Parking Gallery project presentation, Johannesburg



They Were Hungry ('Neither Nor' - residues of a four-year obsession with Balobedu)
Evil Son, Cape Town

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Accession No. KCM 01/4.

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Collection status: un-catalogued and un-accessioned.

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