

Heritage(s) of Portuguese Influence: History, Processes, and Aftereffects

ABSTRACT: Portugal was a late decolonizer (1975). The “winds of change” had a delayed impact on Portuguese colonial territories. The authoritarian nature of empire and resilient forms of imperial nationalism fostered imperial permanence, and the transformative energies of global decolonization were mostly refused. Since the 1950s, a modernizing momentum occurred, transforming urban and rural colonial landscapes and multiplying infrastructures, from railways to ports, dams, and numerous public facilities. This momentum coexisted with the beginning of the colonial wars, from 1961 onward. The colonial attempts of heritagization were severely constrained by these factors. The same happened in the post-independence period, characterized by civil wars and political and economic disarray in most territories of former Portuguese Africa. Heritage discourses and policies hardly had space to emerge. Only in the 1990s were they embraced by governments, in a reticent manner and more in theory than in practice. This text addresses these issues, touching upon some examples and arguing that the study of the historical intersections between trajectories of decolonization, heritage discourses and repertoires, and international and local dynamics is crucial to a much-needed critical history of heritagization.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese decolonization, development, heritage, Africa

RESUMO: Portugal foi um descolonizador tardio (1975). Os “ventos da mudança” tiveram um impacto moroso nos territórios coloniais portugueses. A natureza autoritária do império e as formas resilientes de nacionalismo imperial promoveram a permanência imperial. As energias transformadoras da descolonização global foram majoritariamente recusadas. A partir da década de 1950 ocorre um impulso modernizador, transformando as paisagens coloniais, urbanas e rurais, e multiplicando as infraestruturas, desde ferrovias a portos, barragens e inúmeros equipamentos públicos. Esse ímpeto coexistiu com o início das guerras coloniais, desde 1961. As tentativas coloniais de patrimonialização foram severamente restringidas por esses fatores. O mesmo aconteceu no momento pós-independência, caracterizado, na maior parte dos territórios da ex-África

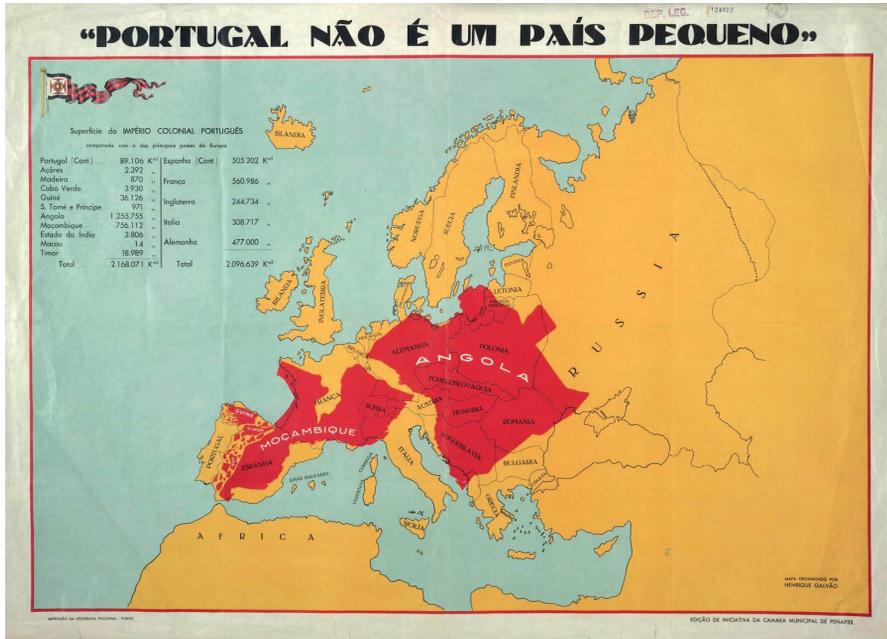
portuguesa, por guerras civis e desordem política e económica. Discursos e políticas de património dificilmente tiveram espaço para emergir, e só na década de 1990 foram adotadas pelos governos, de forma reticente, mais na teoria do que na prática. Este texto trata dessas questões, abordando alguns exemplos e argumentando que o estudo das intersecções históricas entre trajetórias de descolonização, discursos e repertórios patrimoniais, e dinâmicas locais e internacionais, é crucial para uma muito necessária história crítica da patrimonialização.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: descolonização portuguesa, desenvolvimento, património, África

Winds of (Imperial) Permanence

Portugal was a late decolonizer. The anticolonial “winds of change” had a delayed impact on Portuguese colonial territories, which were not ceded until 1975. Characterized by a racialized, exclusionary politics of difference, despite the widespread rhetoric that promoted assimilation and integration, the authoritarian nature of empire favored imperial resilience in many ways. Publicizing the existence of a “multiracial, pluricontinental nation,” the authorities repeatedly pushed back against the transformative energies of global decolonization and strove to monitor and control the growing international intervention in their political and cultural internal affairs. Since the 1950s, combined policies of ethnic (white) colonization and socioeconomic developmentalism had reigned, with the addition of enhanced social and military control connected to the liberation wars in 1961. Changes aimed at preserving Portugal’s status as a colonial power were actively promoted in many areas, with different consequences but with a similar rationale.

The late colonial period (1945–1975) was characterized by a tentative enhancement of colonial rule, consisting of political, economic, and, to a lesser extent, sociocultural integration and managed transformation. The Constitutional Revision of 1951 brought the end of “empire” and the birth of “overseas provinces,” enabling a “semantic decolonization.” In 1961, the creation of the “Portuguese economic space” (*espaço económico português*) occurred, with a single market and a common currency, the Escudo Area, aiming at economic integration of the metropole and its overseas provinces. The longstanding “colonial pact” of no direct metropolitan investment in the colonies was abandoned. Portuguese



Henrique Galvão, *Portugal não é um país pequeno* (Portugal is not a small country).
(Penafiel: Municipality of Penafiel, 1934).

capital transfers and investments rose, trade liberalization ensued, and foreign investment (e.g., the Point Four Program, associated with the Marshall Plan and fostered by the United States) was partially allowed.

At the same time, discourses and institutions of imperial and colonial change emerged. The idea of colonial planning became common currency, a process that was in some ways similar to the direction followed by other European colonial empires. The need to cope with the wanted and unwanted dynamics of urbanization and “detribalization,” to foster rural development, to promote social welfare, and, of course, to perfect colonial extractivism and productivism led to the expansion of the “imperialism of knowledge” (Cooper 1997, 64). Diverse epistemic communities of experts and areas of expertise, including the fields of rural and urban development, multiplied. These dynamics also led to the enlargement of the colonial state, at least on paper. In a sense, an administrative revolution took place: the plethora of bureaucracy was evident. This expansion included several agencies with a mandate of socioeconomic development.



Beira Airport tower (Mozambique). Built in 1958.



Port of Luanda (Angola). Building process since the 1940s.

The spatialization of state power grew significantly. In some areas, this occurred for the first time. In a related development, new forms of population politics became crucial: ethnic (white) colonization was sponsored; urban and rural reorganization was tentatively enacted; surveys designed to promote and demonstrate an alleged shared “lusotropical” identity were disseminated (Anderson, Roque, and Santos 2019); and initiatives of population transfer and villagization emerged, both dictated by political-securitarian and economic goals. Repressive developmentalism was characteristic of this period, merging developmental and security-oriented rationales and dynamics (Jerónimo 2018). These are some of the most important processes that defined the transformative politics of imperial permanence, the set of policies and related institutional frameworks set forth by the Portuguese empire-state with a view to consolidating the existing colonial empire and reacting to the evolving internal and external pressures toward decolonization.²

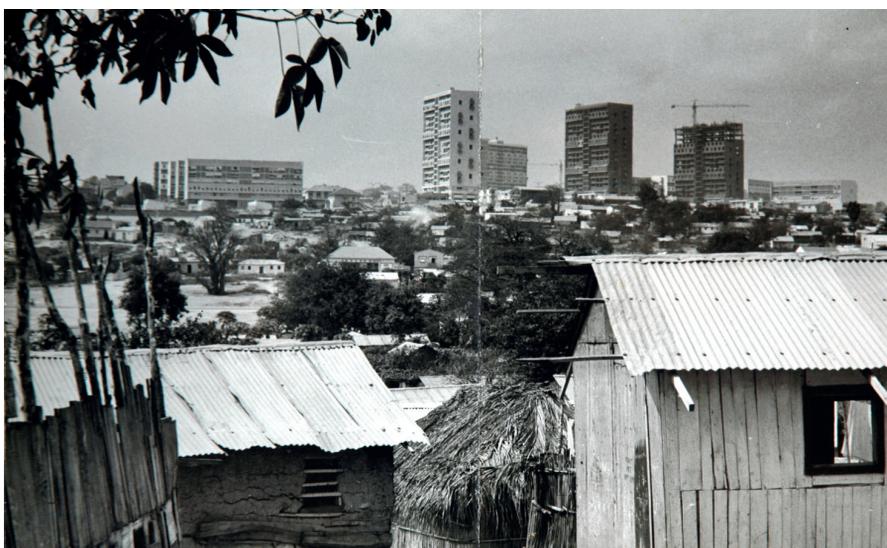
A Modernizing Empire?

Since the 1950s, combined dynamics of population politics, socioeconomic developmentalism, and administrative governance prevailed in Portuguese colonial policy; in addition, 1961 brought the advent of enhanced social control and military intervention. A modernizing momentum, also related to the strategies of imperial relegitimation, was evident at home and abroad. From 1953 onward, various “development plans” (*planos de fomento*) were implemented, with significant impact on many aspects of the colonial societies, such as territorial scientific knowledge (e.g., cartography and various sciences); the use of resources (water supply and agriculture, forestry and livestock development, fishery, energy, and extractive and transformative industries); transportation and communication (roads, railways, ports, airports, and telecommunications); education, health, and social assistance (e.g., building and refurbishment of schools and hospitals); and various other areas such as housing, urbanization, and sanitation. These plans were connected to grand infrastructure projects (e.g., ports and railways), settlement plans, and dams and irrigation projects (Jerónimo and Pinto 2015; Castelo 2014). The sociopolitical and spatial consequences of these dynamics were clear, transforming both urban and rural colonial landscapes.

Plans or projects of white settlements, such as Cela in Angola and Limpopo in Mozambique, coexisted with (forced) native settlements. The former were “utopias of Portugueseness” (Castelo 2016), as evidenced by their transposition of



Dam of Cahora Bassa on the Zambeze River (Mozambique). Built 1969-1974.



Prenda Neighborhood within Luanda's *mussekas* (shanty-towns in Kimbundo language). Built over the 1960s.

architectural models from Portugal, while the latter were spaces of proto-urban population concentration and control (Jerónimo 2017; Curto, Cruz, and Furtado 2016).

The Estado Novo's African developmentalism entailed the expansion of infrastructures, however limited, from railways to ports, dams, and numerous public facilities. Incipient industrialization produced new urban and rural problems, and new policies arose in response to these challenges. Alongside the promotion of urban concentration and outsized dominance of the capital cities, the related administration of ethnic and racial difference became urgent; the case of the contrast between the shanty-town peripheral belt of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique and the so-called "cement city" (the urban core) was exemplary of these new problems. The preservation of a segregated white city and widespread adoption of modernist architecture and urbanism went hand in hand, both as an aesthetic declaration and a political statement.³ Its postcolonial aftereffects are manifest, although they are clearly understudied.

A Central Aspect: International Dynamics

All the factors outlined above relate more or less to inter and transnational political and economic dynamics. The "modernizing empire" engaged variously with international organizations, participating in different ways in the global spread of "international development."⁴ While the relation with the International Labor Organization proved instrumental (Monteiro 2018), the relationship with the United Nations (since Portugal joined it in 1955) and with UNESCO was far more problematic, before and after the country's formal admission to the latter in 1965. In 1966, UNESCO's Resolution 11 gave permission to the Director-General to impede any kind of technical assistance to the Portuguese due to the colonial situation. In 1972, the year in which the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was approved, Portugal left the organization. While UNESCO countries were ratifying the Convention, the Portuguese were dealing with strenuous wars in Africa and the third colonial Development Plan (1967–73) was on its way.⁵

The third plan significantly reinforced existing socioeconomic projects. While the criticism of the Modern Movement in architecture and the institutionalization of cultural-heritage agendas gained momentum in developed countries, Portugal and its then-colonies in Africa and Asia dealt with violent decolonization and, in Africa, with long-lasting civil wars. Heritage discourses and policies hardly had space to take root or gain any kind of centrality in policy making.

Portugal returned to UNESCO after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, which led to the definitive decolonization in 1975, and it ratified the convention in June 1979. The first set of Portuguese assets was inscribed in the World Heritage List (WHL) in 1983. Only in the 1990s were the principles of the convention embraced by the governments of the new Lusophone nation-states, and in a reticent manner at that, more in theory than in practice and under difficult conditions.

The history of the heritages of Portuguese influence is a revealing example of the rewards resulting from pursuing analytical intersections between trajectories of decolonization, heritage discourses and repertoires, and international and local dynamics, which can be particularly fruitful in the rethinking of the global histories of heritagization. In fact, without the proper study of these intersections, many of them still to be fully apprehended, the history of the heritages of Portuguese influence and its aftereffects can hardly be understood.

The Heritage during Colonial Rule

Twentieth-century colonial modernizing momentum transformed the urban and rural landscapes of Portuguese colonies significantly. Naturally, so did the wars that had shaped the last years of the colonial empire since 1961. The building of roads and other infrastructures associated with the war effort was one example. These dynamics fostered initiatives of cultural-heritage preservation. It is impossible to describe their comprehensive track record here, but two significant moments can be highlighted.

In 1940, the Estado Novo promoted its first great centenary commemoration cycle, dedicated to the “foundation” of Portugal in 1140 and the Restoration of Independence in 1640. The main event was the Exhibition of the Portuguese World, in Lisbon, which addressed a wide assortment of cultural expressions (*Os anos 40* 1982). In the metropole, a substantial program of building restoration was implemented, all of it chronologically and programmatically related to the foundation of “Portugueseness” (*portugalidade*). From the 1940s until the commemoration, in 1960, of the fifth centenary of Henry the Navigator’s death—a second and last great cycle of commemorations, which were promoted as being more scientific and cultural (that is, doctrinal) than their precedents—similar actions addressed the colonial territories, partially connected to the developmental drive described above. For instance, the systematic survey and listing of colonial cultural heritage assets began to be composed. Survey missions and conservation projects were devised in order to monumentalize the colonies.

A program aiming at the erection of new monuments, such as statues, obelisks, and totems, ensued. The repercussions of these initiatives were severely constrained by the start of the colonial war in Angola and also by the emancipatory events in Goa, Daman, and Diu in India, both of which occurred in 1961. The winds of permanence started to be slightly restrained, both from within in the colonies and from the outside, internationally.

Notwithstanding this increasingly unfavorable context, the developmental momentum continued to foster initiatives of cultural-heritage protection. Despite the Estado Novo's ambivalent relationship with UNESCO, the Portuguese authorities did not ignore the organization's norms and practices on cultural heritage. By 1968, a commission to promote the "valorization, defense, and preservation of the monumental, artistic, and cultural heritage of the overseas provinces" (Mariz 2016, 187), including sites of archeological and historical relevance, was created, exactly a decade after a decree that aimed to concentrate the inventory, classification, and restoration of the monuments of national interest at the Overseas Ministry. A 1958 decree aimed to unify norms and practices across the overseas provinces. A decade later, one of the commission's first proposals was to send works published by UNESCO to the colonies (including their translations into Portuguese) in order to establish a modicum of regulation internationally recognized as good practice in heritage preservation. Documents about similar contexts, such as Rhodesia, were also sent to the colonies. However, circumstances shaped by the escalating colonial wars and the marginal international support for the Portuguese colonial persistence meant the marked politicization of heritage, in which political assessments tended to prevail over technical rationales. While development was generally fertilized by security-driven rationales and goals, heritagization tended to be shaped by discourses of identity, political visions, and propagandistic aims. The demonstration of Portugueseness of all colonial territories was seen as fundamental, one of the ways in which the political concept of a so-called pluricontinental nation could persevere.

In December 1973, the Provincial Secretary of Public Works of Angola, António Guedes de Campos, synthesized the political perspective on the policies of heritage: "Today, when battles are fought with ideas as they are with guns, and when victories are ephemeral if not based on principles sustained by historical continuity, it is indispensable to make an effort to preserve and improve our monuments in Angola, symbols of a secular presence and of the values of

the race, with a view to revitalizing them for the present” (Mariz 2016, 409).⁶ However, the norms and guidelines emanating from the metropole were mostly ignored locally, given the lack of human and material resources. The available resources were frequently directed toward more pressing needs. The traditional divergences between central and local authorities, between the metropole and the overseas provinces, surely shaped these dynamics. Centralized governance was rarely a reality, for many reasons. As a consequence, for instance, interventions targeting specific monuments were often performed without the authorization of those in charge, in the metropole but also locally. Moreover, specialized personnel was scarce, failing to match the ambitious nationalist rhetoric. In 1972, for Mozambique and Angola, the law only determined the existence, in the service of the colonial state, of one architect who was an expert in restoration. The situation in other overseas provinces was even more dramatic. Despite references to the guidelines defined by the Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (1964) or to the debates that occurred at the 15th meeting of UNESCO (Paris, 1968), the overall picture was grim (Mariz 2016, 191–92, 196).

Aftereffects

The end of the small Portuguese colonies in South Asia in December 1961, and the protracted recognition of their integration into the Republic of India by the Portuguese (which did not happen until 1974), led to the suspension of official cultural relations between the two countries. Contrary to what happened in former Portuguese Africa, where the Portuguese language was the shared communicational currency, in the former Portuguese settlements in India, English and native languages (Konkani, Marathi, Indi) thrived. In the new African countries, post-independence dynamics were not homogeneous. Pacific transition processes (Cabo Verde) coexisted with long and devastating civil wars (Angola and Mozambique) and with some coups d'état and civil turbulence (in São Tomé and Príncipe and, to a greater extent, in Guinea-Bissau). The engagement of the new states with the Portuguese colonial cultural legacy has also been diverse (Chabal 1996, 2002). It is not possible to summarize this diversity here, but four illustrations can be provided to highlight some important aspects. These cases share a common feature: they are all inscribed in the WHL. They also demonstrate the efforts of post-independence authorities to preserve and promote colonial cultural heritage as tokens of their own identity and unity.

The first example is Goa, a small and recently formed Islamic town when it was conquered by the Portuguese in 1510. It became the center of Portuguese action in the East in the 1530s, and Catholic churches and convents were erected around the city. However, Goa barely supported its role as capital city, especially due to sanitary issues. The population slowly started to abandon the place. A plan to move the capital to another location appeared in the last decade of the seventeenth century, but the resistance of the Church and the shift of the Portuguese colonial focus to Brazil made it impossible. This changed with the liberal revolution of 1820 in Portugal and the associated expulsion of religious orders in 1834; a new capital, Panjim, was designated in 1843. From then on, Goa—now called Old Goa—was neglected. The reuse of building materials became organized and systematic. The main religious complexes prevailed and shared the landscape with coconut trees. However, the shrine to Saint Francis Xavier at Bom Jesus church remains the focus of Catholic devotion in Asia. With antecedents that go back to the beginning of the Portuguese Republic (1910), colonial authorities strove to monumentalize Old Goa in the late 1950s. A new plan that obliterated the previous urban structure was devised. The integration of the territory in the Republic of India, in 1961, only delayed the obliteration, as Indian authorities went on to execute the plan. What we see in Old Goa today is the result of that project. Indian authorities proposed listing the “Churches and Convents of Goa” in the country’s first application to the WHL, which was recognized by UNESCO in 1986. Their description on the WHL website states that they “illustrate the evangelization of Asia.”

The second example is the Island of Mozambique, which, since the beginning of the Portuguese presence in the East, was a mandatory pit stop for all the vessels of *Carreira da Índia*.⁷ It also became crucial to the provision of slaves to Brazil. As a consequence, it turned into a multiethnic trade outpost at the Swahili coast under Portuguese dominance. After the independence of Brazil in 1822 and the ensuing Portuguese project of creating “new Brazils in Africa,” the island became the capital of Mozambique. Local dynamics, including competition with other colonial powers, led to the selection of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) as the new capital, 1,500 kilometers to the south, and the island lost its territorial and strategic relevance. But it remained as the main territorial reference of unity for all Mozambicans, even during the Civil War (1977–1992). The authorities applied for its inclusion in the WHL, which was granted in 1991. It is still the only Mozambican WHL site.

The third example is Ribeira Grande, now Cidade Velha (Old City), on Santiago Island, Cabo Verde, which was the first human settlement in the archipelago in 1462 (Pires 2007). It was the colony's capital until 1757, the year it was replaced by Praia, founded in the sixteenth century on the same island but in a more ideal location. Ribeira Grande has never been a large town, as its topography prevents the formation of a regular urban pattern. Nonetheless, it has the oldest and some of the most valuable examples of built heritage in Cabo Verde, despite decades of extreme poverty, reinforced by its neglect by the Estado Novo regime. The developmental drive never truly reached the archipelago, while emigration continued to be a crucial, structural reality in the country. In the past, however, Cabo Verde had played an important role in Atlantic transcontinental connections as a stopover and also a warehouse for the slave trade. Following the heritage preservation actions of the 1960s, the inventory of heritage was concluded in 1971. In 1980, five years after Cabo Verde's independence, UNESCO sent an expert to evaluate the archipelagos's heritage. In the 1990s, the government started the process that led to the inclusion of Ribeira Grande in the WHL in 2009. Cabo Verde's circulatory centrality in the Atlantic, as a platform in the transcontinental slave trade, was key to the success of the application, more so than the site's material and architectural dimensions. Ribeira Grande remains Cabo Verde's only WHL site.

The fourth example is Mbanza Kongo, the political and religious capital of the Kingdom of Kongo, and the oldest inhabited African city south of the equator.⁸ During the colonial period, it was renamed by the Portuguese as São Salvador, one of the measures that aimed at the Christianization of the area and its elites. After Angola's independence, the city returned to its secular name. Angolan authorities applied for its inclusion in the WHL, which was granted in 2017 under the name of "Mbanza Kongo, Vestiges of the Capital of the former Kingdom of Kongo." The WHL website states that Mbanza Kongo "illustrates, more than anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa, the profound changes caused by the introduction of Christianity and the arrival of the Portuguese into Central Africa." It is the only Angolan WHL site.

With the relative exception of Mbanza Kongo, all these sites are former colonial capitals. And this shared feature is significant because it shows clearly how the new independent states have valued and promoted such sites as their most expressive material cultural heritage.



Clube Ferroviário da Beira (Railroad Club of Beira, Mozambique) Swimming Pool. Built in 1970.



Building for Companhia Universal de Seguros (Universal Insurances Company, Lobito, Angola). Built in 1967.

Conclusions

As noted above, the Portuguese empire's late colonial moment was marked by a "second colonial occupation" (Low and Lonsdale 1976, 12), which had noticeable consequences for the urban and rural landscapes of colonial societies, generating new dynamics with long-lasting effects on, for example, the quantity and quality of infrastructures and edified heritage, from public buildings to private, multinational undertakings. Unfortunately, the historical context of the emergence of these objects and structures; the social, political, and economic dimensions of their uses; and, as importantly, the historical dynamics of their preservation, readaptation, or destruction after independence, continue to be understudied phenomena. Without this analytical move, our understanding of the crucial historical intersections between late colonialism, trajectories of decolonization, heritage discourses and repertoires, and respective international and local dynamics is significantly compromised. Moreover, in the spaces of "Portuguese influence," the violent imperial disengagement and the post-independence civil wars impeded an immediate and more or less systematic engagement with the issues of cultural heritage, from infrastructural and edified to natural and cultural.

The questioning or redefinition of colonial practices of heritage or the reenactment of networks of expertise or of institutions devoted to the topic proved impossible for decades and has begun to take place only recently. At the same time, despite the growing post-independence engagement with international organizations, the difficult economic circumstances and the political disarray that marked respective societies entailed other priorities. This meant that the heritagization of spaces of Portuguese influence was a protracted and turbulent process. Signs of change are emerging, but there is still much to consider and do in response to the issue. Even the touristification of the past, colonial or not—a process so crucial to the rebuilding of epistemic communities and institutions devoted to the study and development of heritage discourses and practices—is a recent phenomenon. These are perhaps the most important aspects that help us to understand the feeble and erratic nature of the engagement with heritage preservation in the Portuguese-speaking world, in addition to the ambivalent uses of the colonial past in the process.

NOTES

1. For all these points and more, see Jerónimo and Pinto (2015). For a comparative assessment of decolonization, see Thomas, Moore, and Butler (2008). On colonial architecture, see Milheiro (2012) and Tostões (2014).
2. For a recent summary of the Portuguese process of decolonization, see (MacQueen 2018).
3. For a more comprehensive account of this issue, see Rossa (2016).
4. For an excellent overview of the intersection between developmentalism and international organizations, see Unger (2018). See also Frey, Kunkel, and Unger (2014).
5. For more on the 1972 UNESCO Convention, see Cleere (2011). For the geographical expansion of the convention, see Cleere (2003).
6. This and all other translations from Portuguese are by the authors.
7. On the Island of Mozambique, see Ilha de Moçambique (1985) and Lobato (1945). For related heritage issues, see Rossa, Lopes, and Gonçalves (2018).
8. On Mbanza Kongo, see Thornton (2000). For the Kingdom of Kongo, see Bostoen and Brinkman (2018).

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