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Revisiting Pwo

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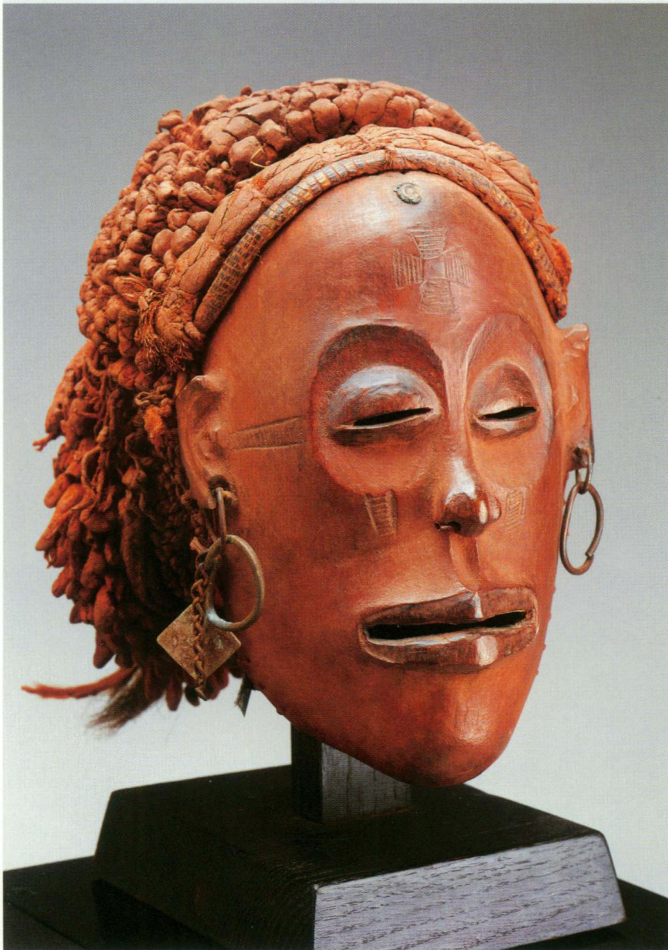
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## REVISING

## Pwo

MANUEL JORDÁN



GARY MORTENSEN, COURTESY OF THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

*Opposite page:*

1. Pwo mask. Chokwe, early 20th century. Wood, fibers, metal, shell, pigment; 25.4cm (10"). The University of Iowa Museum of Art, Stanley Collection, 1986.545.

This mask exhibits Chokwe stylistic traits such as the half-closed, almond-shaped eyes within concave eye orbits, filed teeth, and C-shaped ears. Its fine coiffure is partially carved in wood as an extension of the mask. The metal tacks and shell are meant to beautify and honor the female ancestor represented.

*This page:*

2. Pwo mask. Chokwe, late 19th/early 20th century, field collected by Frobenius. Wood, clay, fibers, metal, pigment, fur, snakeskin, and other materials; 21cm (8.3"). Collection of Mr. Helmut F. Stern.

This elegant and expressive mask successfully blends stylized and naturalistic facial features. The forehead displays an unusual version of the *chingelyengelye* cross motif, a scarification design commonly interpreted in the literature as a version of the imported Portuguese Cross of the Order of Christ. Cross motifs have been found in rock engravings and paintings in Angolan archaeological sites.

*Chikufwinda tuhu mwosi nchawa.*  
"It is smoking but there is no firewood."

**A**nthropologist Victor Turner documented this Lunda-Ndembu proverb in Zambia, and with the aid of an interpreter he provided the following explanation: "Often a lot of smoke comes from a kitchen, but on inspection there are no more than one or two pieces of firewood; one must not be deceived by imposing external appearances, for in reality there may be little substance behind them."<sup>1</sup>

Since the 1930s the systematic documentation of various aspects of the life and culture of Chokwe, Lwena (Luvale), Lunda, and other related peoples of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia has greatly increased, thanks to the efforts of scholars such as Hermann Baumann (1935), José Redinha (1965, 1974), Charles M. N. White (1961), Marie-Louise Bastin

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The Editors





(1961, 1982), Victor Turner (1967), Gerhard Kubik (1971), and Manuel L. Rodrigues de Areia (1985).<sup>2</sup> Recent fieldwork pursued by anthropologists and art historians including Filip de Boek (1991), Manuela Palmeirim (1994), Elisabeth Cameron (1995), Boris Wastiau (1997), Sonia Silva (1998), and this author (Jordán 1996) has added to the body of knowledge established in previous generations. All of us have benefited from the rich accounts provided by explorers and ethnographers such as Hermenegildo Capelo and Robert Ivens (1881), Serpa Pinto (1881), Verney L. Cameron (1877), Henrique A. Dias de Carvalho (1890), Fonseca Cardoso (1919), Dugald Campbell (1922), and others who tra-

versed the lands of these central African peoples more than one hundred years ago.

In all, there is a significant amount of ethnographic material and a number of excellent anthropological studies that range in focus from the economy of the region to its ritual practices and cosmological views. However, in many ways the study of its arts is in its infancy. To return to the proverb at the beginning of this essay, in terms of Chokwe and related peoples, the only pieces of firewood in the art historical kitchen were placed there by one dedicated scholar, Marie-Louise Bastin, whose oeuvre remains the main source for any consideration of Chokwe art.<sup>3</sup> Her postulated



Opposite page:

3. Thirty Pwo masks on display at the Museu do Dundo. From Fontinha 1997:29, fig. 49.

Dundo is a town in northeastern Angola near the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Chokwe and other related peoples share similar mask-making traditions on both sides of the border.

This page:

4. Pwo mask. Lwena or Luvale, early 20th century. Wood, fiber, pigment; 20.3cm (8"). Private U.S. collection.

Probably of Lwena manufacture, this mask combines Chokwe and Lwena stylistic tendencies. This style of Pwo, with its particular treatment of the hair, is favored in areas of western and northwestern Zambia, where the Lwena are known as Luvale.

styles of Chokwe sculpture (Bastin 1976, 1982) and the sculpture of the Lwena, Songo, Ovimbundu, Ngangela, and others (Bastin 1971) have given us a solid basis for attributing to these peoples countless works of art in private and museum collections.<sup>4</sup> Bastin's numerous scholarly contributions provide a core theoretical (art historical) model that invites further analysis. These arts are so diverse and complex that even some of the more well-known forms remain vastly understudied or misunderstood.<sup>5</sup>

To illustrate this point, this article will focus on Pwo ("woman"), a popular ancestral mask character, or *akishi*, for Chokwe, Lwena (known as Luvale in areas of western Zambia),

Lunda, and their neighbors.<sup>6</sup> Pwo is a familiar face in most museum and private collections (Fig. 1).

### Pwo, Dundo Style

The most discernible elements of a Chokwe style of wooden mask carving have been well defined. Bastin describes their Pwo masks (Figs. 2, Cover):

In the wooden masks, the eyes are usually elliptical or almond-shaped and generally half-closed. The swollen eyelids are prolonged down to the center of the concave eye-sockets. Sometimes the eyes are globular and have horizontal slits. Occasionally the forehead has a carved head-band. The ears are nearly always curved or else semi-circular with the tragus shown. The traditional scarifications are usually engraved, cut away, incrustated or carved in relief.

(Bastin 1982:90)

To this list of elements one may also add the sharply defined mouth, partially open, its protruding flattened lips framing filed triangular teeth.<sup>7</sup> Bastin's close observation of numerous Pwo mask examples at the Museu do Dundo in Angola, as illustrated in her book *Art decoratif tshokwe* (1961), helped her reaffirm what she called Chokwe "traditional canons" that reflect the "collective concept of ancestral spirits" (Bastin 1982:90).<sup>8</sup> The study of art styles found in a Portuguese-sponsored museum located in Chokwe territory<sup>9</sup> brings forth several issues that are relevant to this contemplation of Pwo masks.

One important Dundo museum photograph (Fig. 3) shows 30 Pwo masks displayed on glass shelves in the Sala da Crença Animista, or "Room of Animist Belief." They are part of a collection that in the 1950s included 110 wooden masks, including numerous Pwo examples, and 67 fiber-and-resin masks of various types (Porto 1999:104–5).<sup>10</sup> The masks illustrated in this photograph confirm the general accuracy of Bastin's description of this style for the Chokwe: all of them share similarities in the stylization of the eyes, in the formal treatment of the mouth, nose, and ears, and, in most cases, in facial scarification details.<sup>11</sup>

However, there are obvious differences in the conception of these masks. Some tend toward naturalism, while others exhibit varying degrees of stylization, particularly in the eyes and mouth as well as in the overall contours of the face, which may be oval, angular, or elongated. Even if one allows for individual artistic creativity as an influence in this variation (Bastin 1982:90), the fact remains that not all the masks in the Dundo photograph are "purely" Chokwe. In fact, some are catalogued as Shinji (western neighbors of the Chokwe in northeastern Angola), and others are similar to masks documented among the Songo in central Angola, though they may not necessarily carry that attribution (Jordán et al. 1998: fig. 60).<sup>12</sup> A couple of other masks in the photograph show Upper Zambezi stylistic tendencies: they suggest a transitional style between stereotypical Chokwe and Lwena/Luvale styles, an exchange of influences acknowledged by José Redinha (1965:36–37), who collected most of the Museu do Dundo's pieces (Fig. 4).

Bastin explains that a Lwena style of carving (related to that of the Chokwe) is distinguished by the "gentleness of its lines," a tendency toward naturalism, and a taste for round and full

forms (1969:49).<sup>13</sup> Lwena Pwo masks sometimes incorporate tall, rounded coiffures (Figs. 5–7). Although not shown in the Dundo photograph, at least a couple of Pwo examples in the museum accurately fit the Lwena style description (Bastin 1961: figs. 261, 262). However, a large number of Dundo masks depart from an essentially Chokwe stylistic canon and inconclusively hint at other attributions.

Most of the masks were originally collected under Redinha's direction, and others were acquired by Hermann Baumann; both men pursued independent collecting campaigns through parts of central, eastern, and northeastern Angola from the 1930s to the 1950s (Areia 1995:11–18).<sup>14</sup> To some extent the stylistic variation evident in the photograph may be attributed to a combination of elements, but it most probably reflects a sampling of styles and substyles favored in different areas. Because Bastin gained access to the Dundo collection in the 1950s, when all these Pwo masks were in the context of a Chokwe stronghold, she never approached the pieces in their diversity but rather saw them through the eyes of local Chokwe informants. As familiar as these masks may seem, we still do not have a grasp on the stylis-

tic complexities of the region, a problem compounded by the lack of documentation for these and many other collected masks.<sup>15</sup>

Carvalho's early (1890) illustration of a Chokwe mask performer (Fig. 8) is relevant to this argument. The performer wears a face mask (identified as Pwo in Bastin 1982:90) that does not clearly fit within the described canons of a Chokwe style. Its subtly conceived anthropomorphic face has open, round eyes and mouth<sup>16</sup> and is devoid of scarification details.<sup>17</sup> This mask actually has more in common with Lwena/Luvale and Luchazi examples documented in eastern Angola and western and northwestern Zambia (Fig. 9; see also Jordán et al. 1998: figs. 64, 66, 67; Félix & Jordán 1998) than it does with most of the masks collected for the Dundo museum and attributed to the Chokwe.<sup>18</sup>

Carvalho's illustration supports the idea that in the late nineteenth century at least two clearly discernible stylistic approaches or trends in the manufacture of Pwo masks were established in Angola. In addition to the more elaborate tendency that remains close to Bastin's definition of a Chokwe style, as seen in the most of the masks in the Dundo collection, there was a more



minimalistic but equally refined and expressive style.<sup>19</sup> The latter is depicted in Carvalho's illustration and found in numerous Pwo examples collected in eastern and southeastern Angola, as well as in western and northwestern Zambia. Efforts to distinguish Congolese (D.R.C.), Angolan, and Zambian Pwo styles are beside the point. People, like good ideas, cross all boundaries, and similar Pwo styles are commonly found on both sides of the political borders of this region.<sup>20</sup>

A generalization that may have some validity supports two major (northern and southern) stylistic zones. One lies north and northeast of Muzamba, the Chokwe "country of origin" in northeastern Angola (Bastin 1982:246), where Chokwe and their Minungu, Songo, and Shinji neighbors continue to create versions of Pwo that depart from a Chokwe stylistic canon (Félix 1997:105–11). The second is south and east/southeast of Moxico (in central-eastern Angola), where the Lwena/Luvale and Luchazi probably sowed their own stylistic seeds that may have developed separately or in combination with the often distinct and subtle southern styles of the southern Lunda, Mbunda, Mbwela, and Ngangela (Fig. 10; Félix & Jordán 1998; Kubik 1993:25, 98–99).



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DICK BEAULIEUX

*Opposite page:*

5. Pwo mask. Lwena or Luvale, early 20th century. Wood, metal, string, pigment; 27.9cm (11"). The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The John R. Van Derlip Fund, 89.15.

The tall, rounded coiffure with incised lines probably indicates the high status of the female ancestor represented. Pwo, or "woman," is a generic term for such masks, but specific masked ancestral spirits may be addressed using the actual name of the woman/ancestor meant to be honored by the community or by the family hosting an initiation camp.

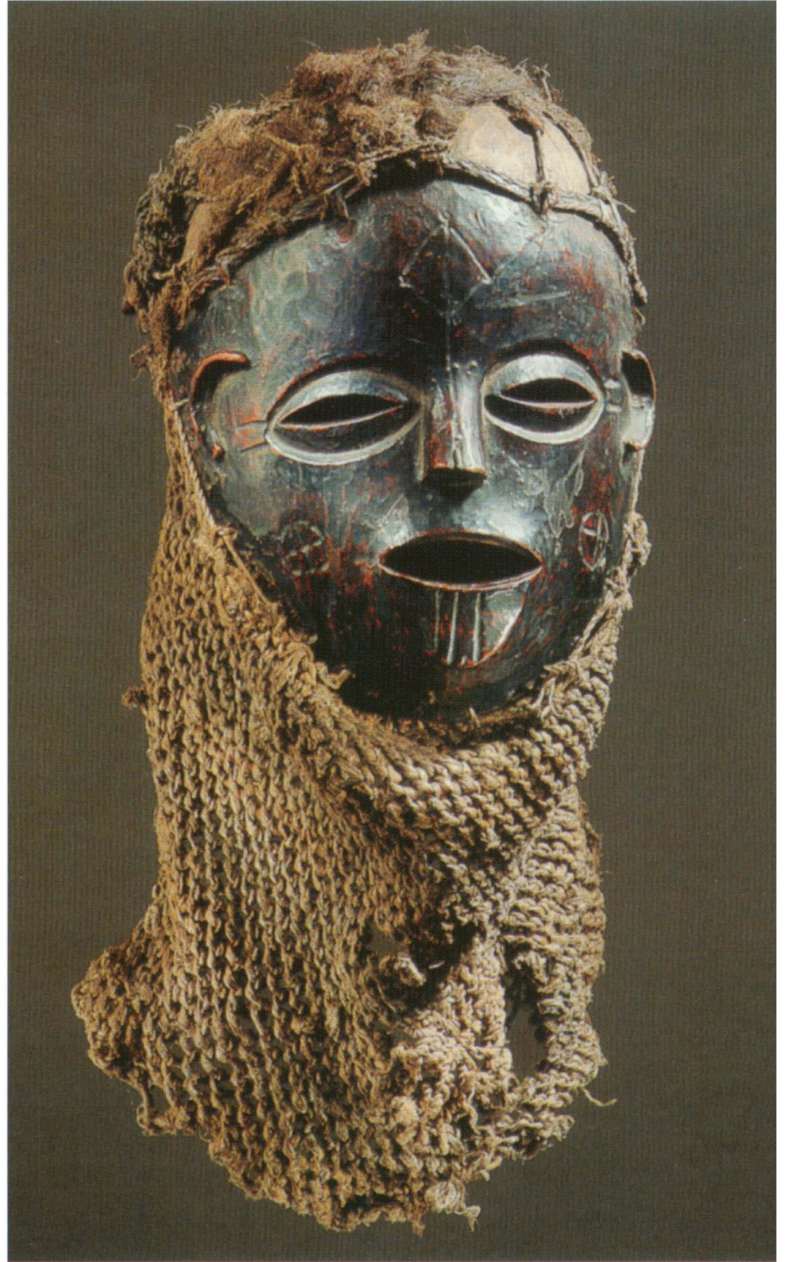
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Left: 6. Pwevo/Pwo mask. Luvale or Luchazi, mid-20th century. Wood, fibers, pigment; 20.3cm (8"). Private U.S. collection.

In Zambia, where this mask was probably collected, the Luvale and Luchazi name for Pwo is Pwevo. Luvale and Luchazi mask-carving styles are closely related. In the case of masks such as this one, it is almost impossible to make a distinction.

Right: 7. Pwo mask. Lwena, early 20th century. Wood, feathers, fiber, metal, leather, pigment; 31.1cm (12.3"). Private European collection.

This example conforms to a defined Lwena style that is distinguished by gentle lines, a tendency toward naturalism, and a taste for round, full forms. In 1997 I showed a photo of this mask to various Zambian friends (Luvale, Lunda, and Chokwe), who said the mask represented a female chief. Its elaborate coiffure, feathered headdress, and overall elegance were key to this interpretation.



GEORGE MEISTER

Within these predominant northern and southern styles, specific group attributions are often possible, but without concrete field documentation such an exercise would remain highly speculative.

Considerable ethnic integration (marriages, alliances, clans, shared territories, shared initiation camps) occurs in all these neighboring areas, and commissioning masks from one carver in one or another style is not uncommon (Félix & Jordán 1998). In the case of the Dundo museum collection, it is also significant that the Pwo masks were available to performers who wore them in dances held in the context of a Dundo “cultural village,” where Portuguese and other European visitors constituted the main audience (see Areia 1995; Porto 1999). Most important, a number of carvers in museum-sponsored “crafts” workshops created wooden sculptures, including various versions of Pwo masks, “inspired” by pieces in the Dundo collection that had been collected in widely dispersed regions of Angola (Areia 1995:174–75).<sup>21</sup> In that context, the institution became a new source for the imitation of stylistic canons, a development that must have affected the natural flow of ideas; masks created in and around the town may reflect styles more common in other areas of Angola. In many ways the Museu do Dundo was a supermarket of regional art forms divorced from most of their original cultural framework.

Ironically, the most common form of Pwo mask among Chokwe and related peoples is a nonwooden version made from pitch or tar over a framework of bent branches to which facial details are applied in bands of white and red cloth or paper.

*This page:*

*Left:* 8. This illustration of an Angolan Pwo performer was published by Portuguese explorer Henrique Carvalho (1890:245). The mask is similar to examples found among Lwena and Luchazi in Angola south and east of the town of Moxico in Angola and in areas of western and northwestern Zambia.

*Right:* 9. Pwevo/Pwo mask. Luchazi, early 20th century. Wood, fibers, pigment; 20.3cm (8”). Molly and Walter Bareiss Family Collection.

This mask, probably a Zambian or Angolan Luchazi example, resembles the one illustrated by Carvalho in its rounded facial contours and open eyes and mouth. Elements of a Chokwe Pwo carving style are still evident, but the treatment of forms reflects a different aesthetic. The style is less idiosyncratic but equally expressive and dramatic.

*Opposite page:*

10. Pwevo/Pwo mask. Luchazi, mid-20th century. Wood, fibers, beads, pigment; 17cm (6.8”). Private European collection.

This well-documented mask was collected in a Luchazi village in northwestern Zambia. When it was photographed in the field in 1971 (Kubik 1993), it wore a different coiffure and beaded hair decorations. Pwo/Pwevo hair and hair ornaments are often replaced. Wooden masks are well kept and sometimes inherited through generations.





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Until recently (Jordán 1993; Félix & Jordán 1998) it was not given proper attention. Bastin did not have access to such types, probably because the collectors for the Dundo museum were not interested in masks made from ephemeral materials. That led her to note that “very few Pwo masks in resin are known,” although she provided an accurate description of the type: “...the features are standardized but less pronounced. A sort of rectangular domino in red cloth normally covers the eyes and nose. The mouth is small” (1982:90). That description generally applies to such masks representing male and female characters. Even today they far outnumber similar characters in wood.<sup>22</sup>

The failure to recognize the complexities of Chokwe and related art styles has in my opinion resulted in shortcomings in the established canon. These are easily matched by those in the documented descriptions of the context for *akishi* masquerades and their attributed meaning or meanings.

### Understanding Pwo

The importance or sociocultural relevance of Chokwe and related masquerades has consistently been dismissed by scholars, who usually treat the subject as peripheral to what they deem to be more important ritual processes or symbolic structures.<sup>23</sup> C. M. N. White (1948:13) most clearly expresses his lack of interest in what he seems to see as evidence of the “degeneration” of the culture of a distant past.<sup>24</sup> White comments on Lunda and Luvale masquerades in Zambia:

The circumcision ceremonies of the Lunda and Luvale tribes are characterized by the *makishi* dancers—mask dancers who vary from tribe to tribe. It is impossible to describe them in any detail here, and it must suffice to say that they usually wear fiber costumes covering the whole body and have distinctive head-dresses, often very elaborate. To some extent they have to-day degenerated to become itinerant clowns and lost their original status, and this particularly refers to the *mwana-pwevo*.<sup>25</sup>

Recent fieldwork focusing on the role of masquerades in Zambia (Cameron 1995; Jordán 1993, 1996) provides an alternative view, documenting how *akishi* (*makishi* in Zambia) masquerades represent aspects of the shared cosmologies of Chokwe, Lunda, Lwena/Luvale, and related peoples. Within a large repertoire of mask character types, Pwo (Pwevo in Zambia)—the “woman” or female ancestor—and Mwana Pwo (Mwana Pwevo in Zambia; Fig. 11)—“the young woman”—actually perform a crucial role in transmitting culturally relevant information, mainly in the context of the *mukanda* male initiation.<sup>26</sup> The “woman” and “young woman” masks represent ideal and comparable models for a “fulfilled” versus a “potential” woman (Cameron 1998a, 1998b; Jordán 1998). Such associative elements are further developed by these peoples’ creation of other female mask types, including an “immature woman,” a mother, an old woman (Fig. 12), and a female chief (Jordán 1998; Félix & Jordán 1998).

The identification of some masks as representing female chiefs (or female ancestors perceived as bearers of royal lineages) is based on the recent field documentation of one Chokwe fiber-and-resin mask representing Lweji, the first Lunda female chief (Jordán 1993:50, 2000:90), together with the field identification (based on photographs of specific masks) of various Pwo-related masks with exceptionally elaborate coiffures (Figs. 7, 13). Some of the hairstyles include consecutive arched diadems that resemble the crowns worn by male and female chiefs in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia (Jordán et al. 1998: fig. 65; Félix & Jordán 1998:176–77, 180–81).<sup>27</sup>

*Akishi* masquerades, like many other art forms created by the peoples concerned here, evoke cosmological precepts and serve to present and represent principles of social and political organiza-

tion, history, philosophy, religion, and morality (Jordán 1998:67). These principles are shared but also distinct in that they may respond to local interpretations of broader regional or overarching cultural models. Further studies of regional art styles and types will probably better reflect these peoples' sociocultural and political complexities, because intended modes of representation give shape to defined (shared or distinct) values or norms.

This article is a brief initial reflection on the established body of knowledge regarding the arts of Chokwe and related peoples. Strong field documentation will be crucial in corroborating or reconsidering theories. By revisiting Pwo, a familiar and celebrated mask, I have been able to outline issues that I will continue to address in future publications. □

*Notes, page 92*





*Opposite page:*

11. A Luvale Mwana Pwevo ("young woman") mask performing during confirmatory ceremonies honoring Luvale Paramount Chief Ndungu. Zambia, 1997. Photo Manuel Jordán.

A fiber-and-resin mask representing a more immature young woman, Chiwigi, is visible at right. The masks share the positive influences of the ancestral spirits with the community and show contrasting or comparable social and moral values.

*This page:*

*Left:* 12. Pwo/Pwevo mask with partial costume, mid-20th century. Luchazi or Luvale. Wood, fibers, pigment. Private European collection.

Masks representing "old women" are mentioned in the literature pertaining to Chokwe and related peoples, but none were identified and illustrated as such until recently. Zambian field consultants identified this Luvale or Luchazi mask (retaining part of its original body covering) as an old woman, called Kashinakaji.

*Right:* 13. Pwo/Pwevo mask. Luvale, early 20th century. Wood, pigment; 21.6cm (8.5"). Private European collection.

This Zambian example has a rather stoic expression, elaborate scarification details, and consecutive arched elements above the forehead that resemble the crowns worn by male and female chiefs. This version of a mature and accomplished woman was created to honor a female chief or a woman in a royal lineage.

edge of Lake Chad. Zoomorphic items were produced from the 2nd century B.C. onwards; however it is only in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. that large numbers of terracotta anthropomorphic and zoomorphic sculptures, measuring between 1.5 cm and 35 cm high, were produced. These statuettes were found alongside copper alloy items, small human figurines, and more especially many items of jewelry, sometimes adorned with small-scale human heads or animal forms.

A number of these human representations are heavily stylized, such as cylindrical busts with eyes perforated through the clay, and a mouth marked by an incision. A special feature is the horned excrescence on top of the head. Other busts support a simple, flat oval head.

Another group of sculptures, which include zoomorphic representations, stylized busts and figurative human statuettes, are characterized by eyes made up of a sphere slit horizontally, and chevron incisions. The

shaven heads of the figurative statuettes are tiny, whereas the lips and chin are prominent. The short arms of the statuettes carry sashes crossed over the bust, and jewelry. Other sculptures are hybrid, being made up of a cylindrical body mounted by an animal head. Some isolated heads have their faces engraved with circle motifs.

#### *The Urgency of the Situation*

Most of the objects came to light during official excavations and were placed in the custody of Musée National du Tchad at N'jamena. However, a part of this collection was scattered in 1979 at a time of political crisis.

Since then, looting has also taken place at the site of the archaeological excavations themselves. The cultural authorities reacted by setting up an emergency plan to inform the population about the need to protect their heritage. There has been a special effort to promote the construction of museums by the inhabitants in the regions affected. □

## books *Continued from page 15*

rations of the term Barnumism create much-needed intellectual space for the seamy side of "serious" educational displays, subtexts that are fraught with irony, play, voyeurism, and the unexpected distortions of often rigid or conventionalized content. Erlmann's essay on the African Choir begins with compelling issues of how nonwhite colonial subjects may seek an imagined, almost talismanic connection with a global ecumene in a politically and culturally disconnected world. He ends, however, with too little said about the choir itself, made up of young black South African men and women who toured Britain and Europe, or about the meanings that can be reasonably inferred from their dress and dramaturgy.

Two essays, thematic vignettes from longer biographical works, focus on the activities of exceptional individuals. Peacock's contribution on the Great Farini (born William Leonard Hunt) focuses on how differently the showman conceptualized his display of Zulus, his first foray into African entertainment genres, compared to the more sedate and educational exhibitions of San people that he produced later in his long and wide-ranging career. Peacock emphasizes the extraordinary life and persona of Farini himself, how he recruited performers and learned about Africa by traveling there, and his role in popularizing images of the Zulu and San with American audiences. Gordon's essay, by contrast, looks at Donald Bain's pet objective: setting up a "Bushman Reserve" from the public impetus he hoped to gain from the exhibition of San people in Johannesburg's Imperial Exhibition. This failed philanthropic project reflects the changed intellectual climate surrounding the display of colonial subjects in the years leading up to the Second World War.

The remaining three essays deal with a more difficult and less studied subject: how the African performers lived through and respond-

ed to the remarkable experience of being people on show. The essays by Green on the six imper-turbable "pygmies" who visited the Queen and Westminster, and lived for a time in Yorkshire; by Killingray and Henderson on the public masquerade and private homosexuality of LoBagola/Lee; and by Parsons on the cross-Atlantic epiphany of a brutalized Taaibosch as "Clicko, the Dancing Bushman" are works of careful scholarship. More important, they present a rather tricky premise in extremely politically correct times: that within the exploitative structure of the shows, these individuals in their travels may have fueled their own intellectual curiosity and even experienced personal growth. Greene makes this point subtly and provides abundant documentary evidence to support his argument that the six diminutive African men and women had an extremely varied impact on the considerable number of people whom they met and performed for over a number of years, and that in certain circles of both elite and ordinary Britons, they were very well regarded. Parsons makes a similar point in a more candid fashion within the context of Taaibosch's otherwise very brutal life. His description of Taaibosch's later years as a "sideshow artiste" with Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus cogently makes room for an alternate voice of "Clicko" as shaman, even within the overlay of structures of imperialism, racist paternalism, and ethnic stereotypes. The case of LoBagola is unique and research is still in progress, but the authors make it very clear that LoBagola's invention of his African persona enabled him to earn a living while enjoying a colorful and cosmopolitan life that would otherwise have been impossible for an American black man in the United States and Britain. These three essays are important and innovative works that balance the discourse on the display of exotic peoples, so that the impact is felt on either side of the stage and the disjuncture of the experience of modernity is shared. □

## notes

*Notes, from page 25*

[This article was accepted for publication in October 2000.]

1. Victor Turner, undated and unpublished manuscript, the University of Zambia.
2. Research by historians such as Joseph Miller (1969), archaeologists including Carlos Ervedosa (1980), and others has also contributed to the body of documentation relevant to the peoples discussed here.
3. Although José Redinha in particular (1965, 1974) made major contributions to art history in the region, he focused mainly on collecting and cataloguing pieces, and to some extent describing them. Bastin was concerned with analyzing art styles and types, and identifying specific symbols that she interpreted with the aid of assistants.
4. Besides generally addressing style distinctions among these peoples, Bastin (1982:246-87) discusses a "style of the country of origin" and an "expansion style" meant to distinguish nineteenth-century court art styles, mainly in figurative sculpture.
5. If one were to survey a number of museum and private collections, and published exhibition catalogues, it would appear that Chokwe and related peoples created only a handful of mask types. In fact they have a large repertoire of ancestral mask characters, most of which remain underdocumented. This situation is due in part to collectors' taste for wooden (vs. fiber and resin) examples. Wood is used in a selected number of character types including Pwo, Chihongo (male chiefly ancestor), and a few animals. Similarly, nineteenth-century royal figures have been the subject of several articles, although there is little or no documentation to explain their actual context and use. The more schematized *hamba* ancestral figures, another example, remain grossly understudied.
6. Some Lunda call the female character Mubanda, which also means "woman." Other names are also used.
7. The teeth recall the practice of teeth filing that was favored by the Chokwe.
8. Throughout her career, which spanned more than forty years, Mme. Bastin visited and studied a great number of museum collections, and almost everything Chokwe-related was in one way or another brought to her attention. I focus on her Dundo study here because it solidified the definitions of Pwo styles and meanings that still shape our approach to such masks.
9. For an excellent study of the Dundo museum-Portuguese colonial campaign in Angola, see Porto (1999). Dundo was established by the former Portuguese Companhia de Diamantes de Angola (Portuguese Diamond Company of Angola).
10. The sixty-seven fiber and resin masks apparently did not include any versions of Pwo made in those materials.
11. This defined style is applicable to other Chokwe anthropomorphic wooden masks such as Chihongo, the male counterpart of Pwo.
12. It is impossible to ascertain whether the Songo-collected example is actually Songo. It may very well have been carved by a Chokwe artist and bought by a Songo client. The opposite alternative is also possible, because masks in the same style have been documented among the Chokwe as well as the Songo.
13. Here Bastin applies an earlier definition of a Lunda style of carving (which she considers nonexistent) to the Lwena.
14. Baumann collected a number of pieces that he meant to take to Germany, but because of exportation restrictions they were left at the Dundo museum. He had earlier collected other excellent pieces that are now in Berlin.
15. A zoomorphic wooden sculpture (in my opinion a mask made to be placed atop the head as opposed to the face), excavated in central Angola and (carbon-14) dated to over 1,000 years ago, indicates an artistic tradition that predates the presence of Chokwe-related peoples in the same locale. The fact that zoomorphic masks, documented in the region since the nineteenth century, exhibit similar stylistic traits suggests a continuity that can be traced to an ancient, local model. That Chokwe became the dominant art emissaries does not mean they were the originators of particular art forms, types, and styles.
16. It may be argued that the image represents the illustrator's general or interpreted version of what the mask or mask performer actually looked like. However, given the large number of illustrations published by Carvalho, and the degree of detail in all the objects and scenes illustrated, I believe that the illustration is probably accurate.
17. Not all masks show scarification details. None or few scarifications often indicate that the character portrayed is a young person—in this case a young woman, or Mwana Pwo.
18. I base this observation on numerous examples I have seen in field performances in Zambia as well as on my study of over two hundred masks (several well documented, in private and museum collections) that are from the mentioned regions and display similar stylistic traits (Félix & Jordán 1998).
19. This point is significant because it refutes the idea that more subtle styles are decadent or artistically less accomplished versions of an older "classic" canon.
20. It certainly is important to document Chokwe styles in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as they may relate to those of neighbors such as the Mbangani, Luluwa, Pende, and others.
21. A selection of these pieces, made by master carvers for

export, is now housed at the Coimbra University in Portugal.

22. Wooden masks are commissioned from professional carvers at great cost. The fiber and resin, or soft, versions of masks may be constructed by any person who learns the skills in an initiation camp. They are therefore more common because they are relatively inexpensive, yet equally functional as forms that relate to ancestral representation.

23. In fact masquerades bring forth similarly important cosmological principles.

24. I do not mean to detract from White's immense contributions to the study of these related peoples in Zambia. The fact remains, however, that he, like other scholars, did not carefully consider the role of masks in the context of *mukanda* initiations.

25. The word "clown" or "clowns" relates to aspects of *akishi/makishi* performances that are highly entertaining. Nevertheless the performances are very complex, and the demeanor of these characters changes according to specific ritual requirements.

26. These masks also perform during political rallies, chiefs' investitures or confirmatory ceremonies, and on other occasions.

27. The Lwena/Luvale and Lunda (in Zambia) in particular have had very prominent female chiefs. Some, like Southern Lunda female chief Nyakulenga in northwestern Zambia, continue to rule today with political powers that are equal to those of other male chiefs.

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#### NETTLETON: Notes, from page 39

[This article was accepted for publication in December 1998.]

The research for this article was generously funded through a scholarship from the Standard Bank Foundation of African Art. A condensed version was presented at the College Art Association conference in Toronto in April 1997.

1. Some of the debates provoked by the exhibition appeared in newspaper reviews and subsequently in catalogue articles (Powell 1985, 1986; Richards 1990; Dell 1989). The show later toured Germany.
2. See Richards (1990) and Powell (1989) for critiques of this search for an African identity. This was not a new phenomenon in South African art circles: the Amadlozi group put together by Egon Günther comprised artists (including one black artist, Sydney Kumalo) whose works were considered to display specifically "African" qualities. Most of them worked in very formal modernist styles. See Berman (1974:25-27) and Lissos (1996:49-52) for brief outlines.
3. The unequal access to art training in South Africa has been frequently documented since Steven Sack's 1988 publication (see Rankin 1991), but most of this research has concentrated on urban or mission-based institutions. Most schools for blacks still do not provide any training in the visual arts, and even those black artists with a primary-school education have not had this most basic exposure to contemporary "Western" concepts of art.
4. The confusion over classifying rural artists is evident in Gavin Young's *Art of the South African Townships* (1988), which includes many artists who live and work in rural areas and have limited contact with the townships.
5. The Northern Province, part of what was previously the Transvaal, includes the white farmlands from Louis Trichardt to Warmbaths and the homeland of Venda, and parts of the old homelands of Lebowa and Gazankulu, the rest of which are included in Mpumalanga Province. While the homelands were ethnically defined and often territorially fragmented, the new provinces are ostensibly not drawn on ethnic lines, although the recent struggles by residents of Acornhoek to be included in Mpumalanga have been suggested to be ethnically based.
6. See Nettleton (1992), Klopper (1992), Friedman (1992), and Schneider (1986) for a discussion of the ways in which "traditional" material culture was used as an element of identity formation and reinforcement in the ethnic separation of peoples in South Africa.
7. Here I disagree with Rankin's suggestion (1990b:38) that only some works by these artists should be placed in a category separate from those produced by black (or other?) artists working within the mainstream. The works by individual artists cannot be separated from each other, and the fact remains that none of these rural artists has much theoretical underpinning to their production of objects.
8. This much debated topic has generally concentrated on early-twentieth-century primitivism in Europe (Torgovnick

1990; Price 1989; Rubin 1985; Miller 1991; Shiner 1994), but it remains a trope firmly embedded not only in a contemporary global consciousness of Africa's supposed backwardness but also any search for a "roots" alternative to those of Western civilization. See, for example, Honour's discussion of European fascination with things Chinese (1961:5-29), which he traces back to Roman times.

9. See Nettleton (1989c) for a discussion of the attitude of the colonial powers in South Africa, both past and present, toward the development of artistic skills among black South Africans.

10. This, Mukhuba asserted, was done by "the government," but he refused to elaborate any further on the issue. Other members of the community interviewed at Tshakuma in 1979-80 claimed that there had been some complaints that Mukhuba was betraying local custom by selling these sculptures, something that remained an issue for him until his death.

11. His concern with notions of authenticity was further evidenced in his founding of a troupe which performed "traditional" dance and music; it was one of a few commissioned to play at the "Independence" celebrations of the then Venda homeland in 1981. He also formed a number of *Marabi* dance bands and recorded "seven-singles" for the local Venda market. His wife made "traditional" beadwork for band members to wear at performances.

12. In fieldwork conducted in the late 1970s to mid-1980s, I often found that older men in Venda and Gazankulu improved of the homelands in principle. They saw them as a means of safeguarding their cultures against the Sotho-speakers, who were numerically dominant in the region, and as a bastion against encroachment by Western cultures. This view, then, was not held only by chiefs and others with a vested interest in maintaining traditional political structures. Younger people, however—both men and women—were less sure of the value of such ethnic traditionalism, seeing it not only as enmeshed in a system which restricted their chances in life but increasingly as belonging to an imposed set of regulations in the apartheid state.

13. Venda-speakers tend to link conspicuous success with the use of nefarious methods, and one had to be careful not to challenge the authority or status of the nobility through an overly public display of wealth. Witchcraft accusations continue to surface in the Northern Province and have been the subject of much media coverage in recent years (Dell 1989:49).

14. David Rossouw worked for Ditike in Venda in 1986-89. He suggests that this mistrust was occasioned by Mukhuba's experience with a Johannesburg-based art dealer who took some of his works to exhibit in New York but did not pay him (personal communication, April 23, 1998).

15. He also killed his wife and one child and set light to the storeroom in which he kept most of his works. His elder son, Gazland, was away from home at the time. Now also a practicing sculptor, he has been selling his father's works singly to individuals and institutions, not through agents or galleries.

16. In fact, the officials of Ditike defied the ethnic parameters of the Venda Development Corporation and spread its net wider to include artists from other ethnic groups and homelands (Duncan 1994:72; David Rossouw, personal communication, April 23, 1998).

17. An example of this is seen in Kendell Geers's plea for subsidies or sponsorships for artists on the cutting edge of contemporary art but whose work is difficult to sell (personal communication, April 22, 1998). Geers, who wears the hats of both artist and art critic (for the *Sunday Times* in Johannesburg), might be situated in the avant-garde of contemporary South African art, and he is also a consultant for Gencor Gallery. He believes that the art market system in South Africa (and beyond) encourages artists to produce works which are repetitive, and he disallows any distinction between the ways rural artists and avant-garde urban artists are cannibalized by the market (personal communication, April 22, 1998). Elsewhere, however, he has suggested that "Venda" carvers' works should be returned to the "craft" or "folk art" category (Geers 1997); he does not regard them in the same light as works by artists such as Durant Sihlali or Robert Hodgins.

18. Siebritz, who worked for Trent Read in 1993-95, estimates that Read must have bought 200-300 individual works from artists in the area, the majority from Owen and Goldwin Ndou, Paul Tavhana, Freddie Ramabulana, Noria Mabasa, and Johannes Maswanganyi. Duncan (1994:82-86) discusses the intervention of Read Contemporary and Trent Read, but her version differs slightly from those offered by other actors on the scene. Among rural artists' works exported by Everard Read Gallery in 1995 were pieces by Mabasa and by Owen and Goldwin Ndou, in which two strains could be distinguished: large-scale pieces calling on indigenous traditions for their subject matter, and single figures with a heavily satirical bent, as in the pieces by the Ndous.

19. The practice of showing wood carving and clay modeling by local artists in agricultural shows has a long history in rural South Africa. A number of artists came to the attention of government officials through this forum (e.g., see the discussion of Asmon Mzila in Miles 1997:49).

20. Dell (1989:51) has discussed the difficulty of attributing to Mabasa any political imperative in producing these images. See Duncan (1994:43) for Linda Givon's explanation of the process of turning Mabasa's works into a political statement.