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CHOKWE THRONES

REINHILD KAUFHOVEN-JANZEN

The Museum of Anthropology at the University of Kansas houses fourteen carved Chokwe thrones and three carved rung fragments collected between 1908 and 1915 by Claude D. Brown, an American engineer involved in the diamond trade in northeastern Angola. Immediately after his return from Angola in 1915, Brown, an alumnus of the University of Kansas, donated his collection of these thrones and an array of objects representative of Chokwe material culture to the university's Museum of Natural History.¹ With 1915 as the date *ante quem*, these thrones are among the oldest dated Chokwe chairs in North American museum collections. They also represent a wide range in size and in degree of sculptural elaboration, manifesting artistic skill as well as the finely differentiated social positions of the thrones' former owners.

This collection—whose scope is unique in this country—affords a comparative analysis not only of the motifs employed on the rungs and splats of joined stools and chairs, but also of their placement within the overall configuration of a given chair. The question of whether and how the motifs are related to each other to express a particular theme has not been addressed in a detailed analysis, and this consideration will challenge some of the traditional interpretations of Chokwe thrones.² The counsel of Kamanda Sa-Tshingumba, a Chokwe from Zaire who was a scholarship student at the University of Kansas in 1978-79, provided an invaluable resource for the interpretation of the carved motifs.

To this day the most comprehensive source for the study of traditional Chokwe art remains Hermann Baumann's *Lunda* (1935).³ Based on field observation in 1930, his study reports that many carvings on utilitarian objects are done by laymen, but that chairs are carved on commission by professional woodcarvers, *songi*, who also produce cult objects. Not every village has such a carver; a good *songi*'s reputation is far reaching. What are possibly the only, and certainly the oldest, photographic records of a *songi* at work were taken by Claude Brown prior to 1915. Figure 1 shows narrative scenes and caryatid ancestor figures on three chair supports that have been roughed out with the adze, ready to be finished with the knife. The carvings are identical to those on two thrones in the Brown collection, so it may be assumed that he bought them from the chiefs who had commissioned them or directly from the carver.⁴ (Parts of the throne in Fig. 7 appear in Fig. 1.)

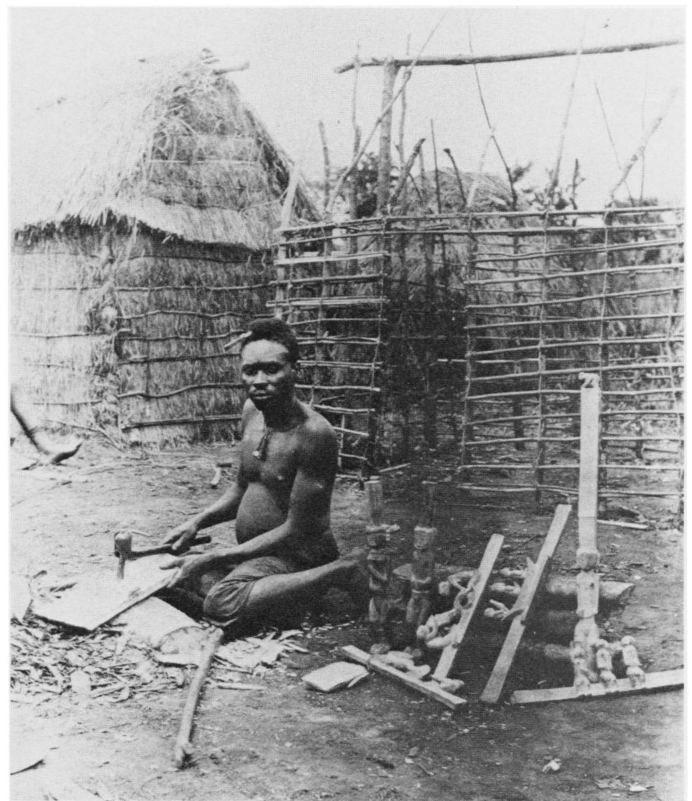
The term "throne" is commonly used to speak of carved Chokwe chairs and joined square stools because they express the power and prestige of their owners, the keepers of social order. Thrones in themselves are concretizations of order and power. In Western Christian art, the image of the empty throne of Christ, symbolically supporting signs of His Majesty, may be compared to Chokwe thrones in symbolic function: ". . . a throne on which no one sat, but clearly designated as the throne of Christ by the dove which hovered above it, by the cross, or by the book with the seven seals . . ." (Lowrie 1965:86, pls. 32a-c). The primary function of a Chokwe throne is not so much that of an elaborate piece of furniture or status

symbol, but rather that of an icon of authority advocating order and speaking of supreme spiritual power.

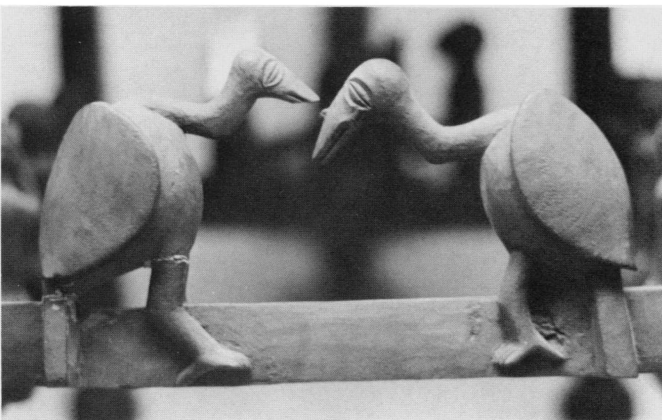
This idea is verified both by the Chokwe term for the thrones and by their use in the owner's house and in public situations demanding the restitution of social and spiritual balance. An everyday stool is called *shiki*, meaning a short trunk of wood upon which anybody may sit; the ordinary European-type chair, after which the thrones are modeled, is called *citwamo*. When referring to a carved stool or chair that belongs to a chief, headman or important elder, the term *ngunja*, "throne," is chosen to express proper respect for the influential rank of its owner as well as for the message of its carved references. In a formal situation a good Chokwe orator will say, "Manenu, thambwe, anuanjile ngunja" ("Wait, o lion, they are bringing a throne for you").

A third verse of a contemporary Chokwe children's hymn actually speaks of Christ enthroned as "Yesu ha ngunja," the throne from which he will give royal council upon his resurrection in glory.⁵ This transference of the term *ngunja* to the Christian context reflects its usage and meaning in traditional Chokwe society.

Kamanda remembers having seen thrones twice in a context significantly different from that described by Crowley, who



1. CHOKWE PROFESSIONAL WOODCARVER, SONGI. PHOTOGRAPHED BY CLAUDE D. BROWN BEFORE 1915.



states that “. . . small thrones . . . are often carried around for the occasional use of a chief when walking through a village or visiting a market” (1972:32). In the large village of Shatambwe near Kahemba, the very old and most respected chief of the area attended a lawsuit. He sat on an animal skin while occasionally leaning against his *ngunja* in a reflective pose. In the second instance, at Shambamvu in Bandundu province, the chief, who was also a healer, treated a sick young woman in the presence of his *ngunja*. The throne was to remind the patient of a once powerful ancestor whose memory had been neglected and whose spirit needed to be appeased before he could influence her healing process. According to Baumann, the divination basket of the Luimbi (the Chokwe’s southwest neighbors, who are also part of the Lunda cluster) contains a miniature chair made of bones, which is divined to mean that the ancestor(s) should be called to the hut of the living and settle there so that the evil will vanish (Baumann 1935:170). That the empty throne is thought to be powerful is illustrated by another of Kamanda’s recollections. One of Chief Mwamushiko’s nephews had told him that he was always afraid to be alone in his uncle’s room in which the *ngunja* was kept. The nephew thought the *ngunja* was full of miracles, *yipupu*, because the carvings on it represented *tutumua* men who could be sent magically to fight the chief’s enemies and to strengthen his power. Traditionally Chief Mwamushiko, now a spiritual leader in the Kahemba region, sits on a lion skin or leopard skin, but the *ngunja* in his house symbolizes his reign. These symbolic uses of Chokwe thrones, in contexts of crucial mediation between the living and the ancestors, indicate eloquently that they are more than objects of rank and prestige.

The only known photographs of Chokwe thrones in a functional context were taken during Baumann’s Angola expedition in 1930. One shows the chief circumciser of the boys’ initiation, *mukanda*, seated on his *ngunja* at the closing festivities, and the other pictures King Mwatiavue of Luma in his meeting house.⁶ While his attendants sit on the dirt floor, the king is elevated above them on his *ngunja*. At the time of Baumann’s expedition, the elaborately carved, high-backed thrones had already become rare. When the people discovered the chair Baumann had purchased from Chief Kakoma among the baggage, they became enormously excited, begging for it to be released for general viewing and admiration. “Then the old men, women and children sat in front of the chair and discussed the carvings most animatedly” (Baumann 1935:170).

The frequently narrative scenes on the splats, rungs, and legs of Chokwe thrones have commonly been described and classified as genre art (Crowley 1972:33; Bastin 1967:43, fig. 6; Larsson n.d.:11). This Western art historical term denotes the “representations of scenes from every day life for their own sake” (Hartt 1976:499; Janson 1977:744). By definition, the term cannot apply to thrones whose iconography combines the sacred and the mundane as complementary opposites. “Genre” became attached to the discussion of Chokwe thrones because the imagery on each rung or carved back was interpreted separately. However, when a throne is viewed as a comprehensive statement on a dominant theme, its purpose as a symbolic Gestalt becomes apparent.

Baumann, who devoted most of his chapter on art to Chokwe thrones, grasped their complex significance when he

DETAILS OF FIGURE 6. TOP TO BOTTOM: 2. MAN AND WOMAN IN CONVERSATION. WOMAN HOLDING A BASKET ON HER HEAD. 3. WOMAN SMOKING A GOURD PIPE. WOMAN EATING. MAN DRINKING FROM A CALABASH. 4. TWO MEN PLAYING THE SLIT DRUM. CIKUVU. 5. TWO BIRDS FACING EACH OTHER. THEIR BEAKS TOUCHED BEFORE ONE WAS DAMAGED.

wrote that “. . . the most important phases of the life of the Chokwe . . . all crucial events, beginning with birth, initiation, marriage, illness, hunt, divination and death are shown . . .” (1935:27, 225). Even the most simple backless throne in the Brown collection reveals a symbolic function: tied under the seat is a seed-pod rattle, *lusango* (pl., *sangu*), which one sees tied to the legs of dancing *mukanda* novices and masked dancers. Healers and chiefs use this seed pod to ward off disease and other forms of evil. Women may tie it to their heads as a measure against headaches. One also finds *lusango* attached to doors as a fertility charm.⁷ The throne with the seed pod advocates the central, twin concern of Chokwe traditional culture: health and fertility. Other thrones in the Brown collection carry at least eleven different carved motifs found in diviners’ baskets and various cults and shrines, combined in arrangements with representations of the three main masks—Mwana Pwo, Chikunzu, and Chihongo—and with narrative scenes of Chokwe life. Together, these thrones represent the Chokwe universe of integrative religious symbols.

With this thesis in mind, let us examine two thrones in the Brown collection. The first, E-574, has a seat covered with antelope fur, a sensuous textural contrast to the four smoothly carved rungs that form a complex circle of support (Fig. 6). This throne has no back and therefore would have belonged to a dignitary of lesser rank than chief. A backless chair does not lend itself to a hierarchical sequence of decorations; each carved rung assumes equal emphasis. Rung A features a man in conversation with a woman, next to whom sits another woman balancing a basket on her head (Fig. 2). Both women bear the favorite pubic scarification design *mikonda*, which forms two joined double arches. Their torsos are also decorated with scarification patterns *kakone* and *mahenga*, intended to heighten sexual stimulation.⁸ A variety of hairstyles is discernible; the most popular are *matota*, the diamond pattern, and *lenge*, braiding in parallel lines (Bastin 1961:145-46). On the opposite side of the throne, Rung C shows a woman smoking a gourd pipe,⁹ another woman eating, and a man drinking from a cup and holding a calabash with beer (Fig. 3).

On both rungs, two of the three persons face each other, sharing conversation and the pleasures of smoking, drinking, and eating. The scenes express states of well-being, of generosity between men and women, husbands and wives. These two rungs could well be marriage portraits, for a person of rank was expected to have more than one wife.¹⁰

Rung B shows two men seated on either side of a slit drum, *cikuvu*, which is positioned obliquely and which the men beat with short sticks whose tips are wrapped with balls of gum, the *mikakala* (Fig. 4). Their beards identify them as elders, and their carefully detailed coiffures lend them individuality. The motif of the *cikuvu* drum appears frequently on Chokwe thrones, and it is always held in this slanted position. Kamanda could not remember ever having seen a *cikuvu* being played in this manner, and Marie-Louise Bastin writes that the *cikuvu* is fixed horizontally in the village square (1961:367); Baumann, however, published three photographs of *cikuvu* being played in the same manner as is pictured on this throne. Of greater significance are the specific situations in which Baumann shows *cikuvu* being played. In two photos it appears at exorcism rituals in the bush, and in the third it is seen at a women’s dance in the village square (Baumann 1935:pls. 40, 41, 46). Between events the drum is kept in an unmarried man’s house or suspended in its own shed, and it is almost always property of the village or the clan. *Cikuvu* is also played at communal dances, on the eve of the boys’ circumcision camp, when the masks come out to dance. It is beaten to arouse

ecstasy during divination and to drown out the cries of the novices’ pain during circumcision, the time of the ritual death of the novice (Baumann 1931:4; Turner 1967:216). The drum is also played to signal the location of the village to one lost in the forest, to announce readiness for war to the enemy, and to announce a death in the village and the subsequent days of mourning.¹¹ A miniature *cikuvu* is part of the contents of the divination basket (Baumann 1935:169, fig. 60g). The *cikuvu* on a Chokwe throne is an ambivalent symbol, signaling both joy and grief, celebration and danger. It may be said to be a metaphor for community.

Rung D, opposite B, presents two *ngungu* birds facing each other with their characteristic thick bodies and long necks (Fig. 5). The *ngungu*, the largest bird known to the Chokwe, is believed to be a hunter; to sight it is a good omen for success in the hunt and therefore a sign of power.¹² Like the magical bird *kapokulu*, this bird is instrumental in fertility magic. It is, in addition, mediator between the spiritual and temporal worlds, and as such is often displayed with chiefly symbols, representing power and transcendence of the mundane world. Similar heraldic bird motifs appear frequently on the top rung of backs of thrones as well as on staffs and combs.¹³

The artist of this throne used the *ngungu* bird on another chair bought by Mr. Brown (Fig. 7). One can recognize the motif in its rough state in the photograph of the carver at work (Fig. 1). The hunter with his gun takes aim at the bird, whose beak is caught in a trap. Kamanda explained this scene: “One day the bird went to the diviner to ask him how he could best hunt grasshoppers, and the diviner asked the bird to wait a moment, for at the same time a hunter had come to the diviner to ask how he could best hunt and kill the bird. The diviner said, ‘I will divine for both of you.’ He told hunter-man how to burn grass to trap grasshoppers which would entice *ngungu* to come and eat grasshoppers. At that very moment, man could kill the bird. And man did as the diviner had told him. But after he had eaten the dead bird’s meat, man himself died.” Kamanda explained that *ngungu* is taboo for hunters.



6. CHOKWE THRONE. COLLECTED BY CLAUDE D. BROWN BETWEEN 1908 and 1915.

The bird, like the drum, is an ambivalent symbol, a sign of either good or evil; as Kamanda said, "If someone sees that bird, he must wonder why he sees it, what it could mean, what he has done that might bring about ill fate."¹⁴

The drum and the bird are compelling signs of the necessity of transcendence from the mundane to the spiritual, from the polluted to the pure. They are placed opposite each other on throne E-574, their symbolic density complemented by the simple message on rungs A and C, forming a circle of imagery that is neither "haphazard" (Crowley 1972:32) in its selection of motifs nor genre in character. The scenes of eating, drinking, smoking, and conversation are not depicted for their own sake. When viewed alongside symbols evoking conflict and danger on rungs B and D, the well-being and generosity seen in rungs A and C reflect ideal states of being. The message of the throne as a whole is that social harmony, and with it continuity, is possible only through recognition and control of destructive forces. Indeed, the carved decoration expresses a concern central to Chokwe life: it is the responsibility of the chief or elder, the owners of such thrones, to control destructive forces and safeguard the continuity of the clan.

The formal balance of the four carved rungs underscores the thematic emphasis of the throne: rungs with three figures (A and C) are placed opposite each other and linked by those of a more symmetrical design (B and D) so that the whole becomes a visual rhythm of balanced opposites. The heraldic motifs of the *ngungu* birds and the *cikuvu* drum players introduce a degree of formality through their symmetrical alignment, which is commonly reserved for the upper splats of back rests of thrones. Symmetry is one of the key characteristics of art related to leadership throughout Africa; indeed, it is equated with leaders (Fraser & Cole 1972:316).

This throne bears the properties of a ritual symbol as defined by Turner: "It is a compromise formation between two opposing tendencies. It is a compromise between the need for social control and certain innate and universal human drives whose complete gratification would result in a breakdown of that control . . . symbols refer to the basic needs of social existence and to shared values on which communal life depends" (1967:37). The *cikuvu* drum symbolizes the "need for social control," and the *ngungu* bird suggests the potential breakdown of that control if human drives are permitted total gratification. The bird as a protector of hunting and the *cikuvu* drum as a symbol of order guarantee "the basic needs of social existence," material and social survival. The images of eating, drinking, and conversation refer to "shared values," such as generosity, hospitality, and comradeship, "on which communal life depends."

In contrast to the backless throne, the second throne (E-581) in the Brown collection to be discussed here has a back rest,

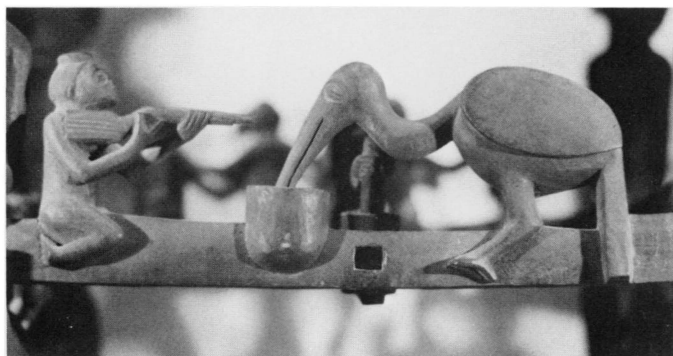
which suggests through its shape and accentuated frontality a hierarchy of motifs (Fig. 11). The topmost rung of the back announces the dominant theme to which images on the lower rungs are subordinated (Fig. 8). It illustrates the Chokwe origin myth. According to legend, the Lunda kingdom was ruled in the 16th century by Yala Mwaku, who had two sons and a daughter named Lweji. The two sons quarreled over who was to succeed to the throne, and Yala Mwaku delegated authority to Lweji. The scene on the top rung shows Lweji's struggle against her brothers, which resulted in their leaving and Lweji's eventual marriage to a stranger, the great hunter Ilunga, who taught the Chokwe people to hunt.¹⁵

I know of no other Chokwe throne that refers to the myth of origin on the top rung of its back; this position is most commonly decorated with the *mukanda* masks called *kalelwa* and *chihongo*. The origin-myth motif, however, appears with only minimal variation from this example on the lower rungs of at least four other thrones reproduced in the literature, although it is never interpreted as such.¹⁶ In terms of the centrality and frontality of the leader figure (Lweji) and the strict symmetry of the design, it is comparable to the motif of a chief flanked by two leopards, from the Cameroon Grasslands, and to the leopard-flanked royal images from Benin; thus it may be added to the index of leader images in African art (Fraser & Cole 1972:316-17, figs. 15.3, 15.4).

The Lweji motif occurs in a more schematic variation as the decorative design called *ulombo mutu* (man, person). It takes shape as a severely geometricized human figure and appears as such on rungs of thrones or as forehead tattoos (Bastin 1961:132, pl. 188a, b; Baumann 1935:39, fig. 22a).

The importance of Lweji as the supreme matriarchal ancestor is emphasized on this throne not only by its dominant position but also by the three brass nails driven in a triangular arrangement into the wood immediately beneath her womb. This motif, called *majiko*, signifies three cooking stones and, by implication, hearth and fire (Bastin 1961:175-76). The design of the crosspiece upon which the Lweji motif is fixed further underlines and elaborates its symbolic importance; the wood is incised with fields of parallel lines meeting at varied angles. These are variations on the decorative motifs *mikala* (line, row of houses, trees) and *ana y yikanga* (literally, "children of the mats"); the mat called *cikanga* is a very important furnishing in a Chokwe traditional home.¹⁷ This irregular incised design is in turn overlaid by a double chevron line of brass nails that underscores the symmetry of the origin myth or leadership motif above it.

In view of the significance of the paramount symbol of the Chokwe founder, this throne's imagery cannot be dismissed as "French postcard effects" (Crowley 1972:33). The back lower rung B displays a man and a woman joined in coitus (Fig. 9); similar small carvings, *yikoyi*, are always included in the divination basket to give the inquirer a promise of offspring (Baumann 1935:169, fig. 60a).¹⁸ Here the couple is threatened by a woman—possibly a co-wife—who holds a knife or axe in her right hand, intending to injure her rival; the man attempts to restrain the attacker with his one free hand. At this highly dramatic moment, another woman has come upon the scene. That she is coming from the field or going to the market is indicated by the filled *mutonga* basket balanced on her head (Baumann 1935: pls. 56-4, 5). With her right hand she covers her mouth in astonishment, a gesture that also testifies to her obligation to silence. A small carving displaying this gesture, *seisimu*, is part of the divination basket. It represents the startled or shocked one, or the thoughtful one, and it signifies that such knowledge should not be proliferated (Baumann



7. DETAIL OF A THRONE COLLECTED BY CLAUDE D. BROWN BETWEEN 1908 AND 1915. THIS RUNG CAN BE SEEN IN A ROUGHED-OUT STATE IN FIGURE 1.



8. LWEJI, FOUNDER OF THE CHOKWE, STRUGGLES WITH HER BROTHERS WHO CONTEST HER INHERITANCE OF POWER.



9. COITUS IS COMPLICATED BY THE PRESENCE OF ANGER, JEALOUSY, AND A WITNESS.



10. THE NOVICE IS HELD IMMOBILE BY THE CIRCUMCISER'S APPRENTICE.

1935:165, fig 60d). The scene alludes not only to the central importance of coitus in the continuation of the Chokwe people, but also to its social and moral ramifications. The message of this particular scene is that a husband should avoid quarrels of jealousy between his wives, or that he must not commit adultery; furthermore, family problems must not leave the boundaries of the compound. This scene is positioned below the origin-myth motif, as if to acknowledge that the continuity of the Chokwe is guaranteed only through the good will of the ancestors.

The reason for featuring coitus in a situation containing a moral lesson becomes evident when one analyzes rung C (Fig. 10). It illustrates a circumcision with the same concentration on

realistic detail and expression as is displayed in rungs A and B, matching exactly the accounts of the operation by Holdredge, Young, and Turner.¹⁹ The novice, stripped and completely shaven, is clasped from behind by the apprentice of the circumciser, *chihungu*, who immobilizes the boy by holding his arms and legs. The circumciser is seated in front of the initiate as he executes his cuts—at most three—holding the circumcision knife in his right hand. At this point the drums would play loudly to drown out the cries of the novice as he is ritually “killed” by the circumciser. The scene represents the most crucial moment of the *mukanda* initiation camp, which, with its time of seclusion for healing and learning, is the most important event in the life of a Chokwe man, and is of central significance for the community.

How, then, does this circumcision scene relate thematically to that portraying coitus? From beginning to end the symbolic acts and objects employed in the *mukanda* episodes have overriding sexual components. All medicines used before and after the operation and during the time in the bush camp are prepared to ensure a strong penis; impotence is the great fear (Turner 1967:191, 201, 207, 208, 223). On the eve of the *mukanda* the circumcisers' dance mimes copulation, and at the close of the *mukanda*, after the novices have performed their newly learned dances in the late afternoon, their fathers indicate to them the place they have arranged for a woman to instruct



11. CHOKWE THRONE, COLLECTED BY CLAUDE D. BROWN BETWEEN 1980 AND 1915.

FORTHCOMING LOBI EXHIBITION



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them in sexual intercourse (Baumann 1935:34). During the period of healing in the bush camp, the novices have been verbally instructed in matters of tradition and in social as well as sexual relationships by the official leaders and guardians of the boys and by "... other elders from near and far who decide to visit the lodge. They are enjoined not to swear, to refrain from adultery when they leave *mukanda*, not to steal, not to lie, to be brisk in performing tasks given them by senior men, to be hospitable, not to jeer at the aged, but to laugh and be affable with their peers. They are told to be brave, like lions, when they go hunting" (Turner 1967:236). In effect, the *mukanda* is pervaded by the sexual-phallic content and allusions of the dances, medicines, and ritual behavior. Since the ancestors ultimately determine the measure of fertility, the institution of the *mukanda* and the circumcision operation are an integral part of the veneration of the ancestors.

Thus the rung displaying complicating social aspects of a sexual relationship (Fig. 9) and that displaying circumcision (Fig. 10) represent the climactic beginning and the end of *mukanda*: ritual death of the novice, and rebirth as a vital member of society. The visual juxtaposition of complementary opposites in rungs B and C literally and symbolically uphold the honorific ancestral image at the top of the throne.

What was shown to be a formal characteristic of the sculptural program of the backless throne in Figure 6 prevails here as well: the rungs with visually active motifs are placed opposite those of a more symmetrical, if not heraldic, alignment. Both rung D and rung E show two men seated facing each other. One seems to beat a large iron double gong with a rhythm stick while the other holds a sizeable clay pot (Fig. 11). At the time of Baumann's expedition twenty to thirty years

after this throne had been made, these iron double gongs, *lupembe*, were extremely rare. Baumann was unable to buy one because its owner, a chief, would not part with it for any price (Baumann 1935:215-16). He said that in "better times" he had used it to call together his council. Baumann found similar double gongs at the memorial place of a famous diviner together with the man's divination basket. It was suggested to me that this object might not represent a double gong but rather a particular form of *ngombo*, divination instrument, and that the large pot contained some form of payment.²⁰ Kamanda had no explanation—not even a guess—for this particular scene, nor did sources such as Baumann and Lima yield any leads toward a conclusive interpretation. Still, whether the motif represents the call of an iron gong or a divining process, it is evocative of ambivalent apprehension and in this sense may be compared to the rungs with the *cikuvu* drum players and the two *ngungu* birds in Figure 6.

The seemingly eclectic profusion of carved motifs on Chokwe thrones follows a comprehensive program with a didactic purpose. It expresses a concept of life to which the artistic concept of genre, which separates the realms of the secular and the sacred, is alien; one that effects a dynamic visual and symbolic equilibrium through the recognition of opposites.

These observations are not unique to the two thrones analyzed in this essay but also hold true for the other examples in the Brown collection at the University of Kansas. The program of each throne integrates crucial aspects of Chokwe life with the acknowledgment of the ancestors. Within this wider frame of reference, each throne has a particular focus that becomes apparent only when the motifs on the individual rungs are considered in the context of the total composition. □

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 32-42 Photographs: Robert Wallace
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KAUENHOVEN-JANZEN, *Notes from page 74*

I wish to thank Professor Alfred Johnson, Director of the University of Kansas Museum of Anthropology, for his encouragement and for graciously facilitating the writing of this article. I also wish to thank Kamanda, who gave generously of his time and of his knowledge in teaching me to understand the visual vocabulary of Chokwe throne carvings. All photographs are courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Kansas.

My orthography of Chichokwe is based on Marie-Louise Bastin, *L'Art Décoratif Tschokwe*, 1961; and Hermann Baumann, *Lunda*, 1935.

1. The Claude D. Brown collection of Chokwe art and material culture also comprises ethnographically valuable photographs, none fully identified. Place names are misspelled in many cases. Pencil notes found between his unidentified photographs from Angola mention the posts of Camaxillo and Canzar, the rivers Louvua and Loumania, and the region between the 9th and 11th southern latitudes. In addition to the stools and chairs (thrones) Mr. Brown also brought bows and arrows from the Kasai River area between the 10th and 11th southern latitudes, a spear and staff of a chief, a mukanda mask, a beaded chief's head-dress, a variety of household baskets including a sifter for manioc flour, a blacksmith's bellows with carved decoration, carved snuff boxes, a variety of tsizazi, numerous pipes, hoes with carvings, axes, whistles, knives, a neck-rest, an ancestor figure, a ladle, headbands, a comb, raffia cloths, and ropes. In all, the collection is a rather complete representation of Chokwe ritual and material culture prior to 1915.
2. The question of whether the sculptural decorations of a given throne follow a program to express a dominant theme brought to mind the pioneering study by Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral* (New York, 1964). The author has shown that the sculptural decorations of the cathedral's three facades, seemingly of indiscriminate variety, had been based upon a consummate plan whose theological message integrates the multiplicity of forms. Zdenka Volavka, in *Hidden Treasures from Central Africa* (1973), suggested that a complex iconographical program exists for Chokwe sculpture.
3. In this book Baumann published the findings of his Angola expedition undertaken in 1930 for the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.
4. Thrones E-582 (Fig. 7) and E-574 (Figs. 2-6) of the Brown collection were carved by the artist photographed by Mr. Brown. See Fig. 1 for the artist's portrait, technique and style.
5. Kamanda, personal communication, May and June 1979. The Chokwe descriptions of thrones in Bastin (1961) use the term *ciitwamo*. Only once does the term *ngunja* appear. Kamanda cited the third verse of hymn 86, *Nguluzeze longeso lia Yesu*, published in the late 1960s in *Miaso ya Pangu ni Zango*, Boma, Vila Luzo, Angola. The verso is as follows: *Longeso lia Yesu ha ngunja | Upite moilu wahiana | Longeso lia wanangana | Meza kwizu ni uhienja*.
6. The photograph of the chief circumciser seated on his *ngunja* was first published by Baumann in his article "Die Mannbarkeitsfeiern bei den Tsokwe" (1932:15-16, Abb. 23). The photo of King Mwatiaue on his *ngunja* was published in Baumann 1935, plate 17. All film footage taken during Baumann's expedition, including mukanda dances, was destroyed during World War II.
7. See Throne E-571 of the Brown collection: height 16.5 cm., width 18.5 cm.; references to *lusungo* in Baumann 1935:181, 182, 214, fig. 76f, k.
8. On basket types such as *mikonda* see Bastin 1961:141, and Baumann 1935:37. For *kakone* and for *mahenga* see, respectively, Bastin 1961:107 and 1961:95.
9. See photograph of a gourd pipe in Bastin 1961, pl. 106.
10. Claude D. Brown in a letter of Dec. 2, 1915: "... the chiefs especially have numerous slave wives . . ."; see also the photograph of a chief walking with two wives in Baumann, *Lunda*, 1935.
11. Kamanda, personal communication, February 1979; letter by Claude D. Brown, Dec. 2, 1915: "... When there is a death in the village there is beating of drums, usually in the morning but it continues intermittently for several days. They have a certain way of beating the drum for that purpose so that the natives in other villages know by the sound that there is death."
12. Kamanda, personal communication, February 1979.
13. Reference to *kapokulu* in Baumann 1935:185, 187. Reference to the *ngungu* bird in the divination basket of the Luimbi in Baumann 1935:173, divined as a harbinger of terrible events. For similar heraldic bird motifs compare Baumann 1935, pls. 49, 2 and 49, 3, and 63, 3; and Bastin 1961, pls. 192, 1c; 198, 1c; 198, 1c; 64; 143.
14. Kamanda, personal communication, February 1979.
15. For a complete rendition of this myth see the narration by chief Mwilunga to Mesquitela Lima, published in Lima 1971: 42-47. See also Baumann 1935:138-40.
16. For example, compare Bastin 1961, pls. 192, 1b; 181, 1b and p. 20 in Larsson (n.d.). The Lweji or origin-myth motif also appears on throne E-580 of the Brown collection (height 52 cm., width 29.5 cm.). It seems to be by the same carver who made the throne illustrated in Bastin on plate

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181. Not only are the stylistic characteristics identical, but the same motifs occur on both chairs. Only the sequence of motifs differs. Bastin, however, describes the origin-myth motif as a genre scene: "Une femme irritée refuse les avances de deux homes qui la saisissent aux seins, *mela*, en les repoussant énergiquement des deux mains et des deux pieds. Sur l'abdomen de la femme figurent des tatouages *tupwito* et *mikonda*" (Bastin 1961:343).
 17. Bastin explains the decorative motif *mikala* (1961:98, 99) and that called *ana* y *yikanga* (p. 161).
 18. Throne E-578 of the Brown collection has a *yikoyi* carved on one of its rungs exactly as it appears in the divination basket.
 19. Baumann relied on Holdredge and Young's account of the operation of circumcision because he had been unable to observe it first hand. But he did witness all other phases and aspects of *mukanda* initiation (1931:33; see also Turner 1967:193-94).
 20. Stanley Yoder, personal communication, June 1979.
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