

WORKS OF ART  
BY THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, II



IMISEBENZI YOBUCIKO  
BEZIZWE YASE MZANSU AFRIKA

PUCKER GALLERY

What began as a minor art adventure some two years ago has grown into a wonderful journey into a unique time and place. With the thoughtful and energetic collecting of Mynhardt Bester and Susan Ward we are pleased to share an expanded and enriched collection of art works by the peoples of Southern Africa (Zambia, South Africa).

With these recent acquisitions we remain excited by the singularity of spirit shared by these utilitarian objects. They represent a combination of pleasing, engaging form and real function. The Japanese phrase "Yo No Bi" - "the beauty of the use" better captures the joy of sharing these works.

We invite you to join with us in celebrating an aspect of human spirit.

Bernie & Sue Pucker  
November 1994, Boston



1. Chisakulo, Zambian Comb (left to right)  
2½" wide x 7¼" long, Wood, D36 / 2½" wide x 7¼" long, Wood, E3 / 2¾" wide x 9½" long, Wood with Metal, D32

#### FRONT COVER

- Left: a) Amasumpa: Zulu Beerpot, 9¼ x 11½", Clay, 11  
b) Amasumpa: Zulu Beerpot, 8½ x 10½", Clay, A-46  
c) Zulu Beer Pot, 10¼ x 11¼", Clay, C-3  
Middle: e) Mulondo Zambian Water Pot, with cover, Clay, A-21  
Right: f) Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, 12 x 14¼", Clay, A-135  
g) Zulu Beer Pot, 10 x 11¼", Clay, C32  
h) Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, 7¼ x 9¼", Clay, C33

## ZAMBIAN FIELD TRIP: JUNE - JULY 1994

No single language will carry one further than three days travel upstream along the Zambezi, from the Victoria Falls into the heart of Lozi country. Of the sixty six languages spoken in Zambia, over twenty can be heard in the Western and North Western provinces alone. The locals speak usually three or four dialects and making our journey through these areas was one constant hilarity and confusion as even our interpreters were not always understood.

Even in the dry season, the only time when the muddy tracks are passable by a four-wheel drive, much of our travel is accomplished by a four-meter long, hollowed out tree trunk canoe, hip width, with Zambian river men standing aloft and using a single flat ended paddle to manoeuvre through the rice paddles to and fro across the rivers, ferrying the locals and their wares. Our Lozi interpreters, Inoch and Victor accompany us on our entire trip. Every day takes us through miles and miles of grassy plains with our vehicle winding through reeds higher than its roof as we move in and out of thick forests. Our trip is painstakingly slow. As the last of the old generation dies out, with them their treasured artifacts which are burnt or buried go with them. Any piece over forty years old, especially vessels which are too fragile and often used as a preserve of cool water in temperatures roaring over 44 degrees Celsius, is a rare find indeed.

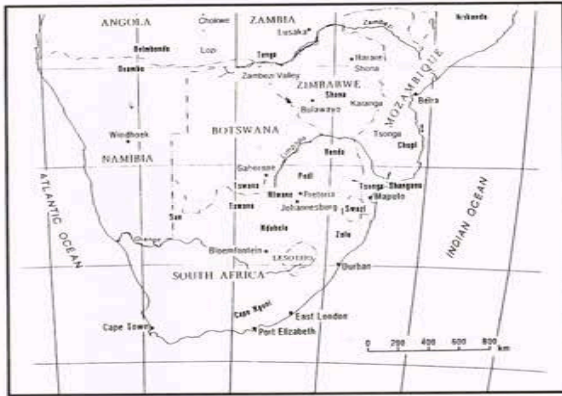
It takes us four days to reach the Zambian border from Capetown and once through, 2 days to travel the first 100 kilometers of the worst roads imaginable (once tarred but now a mine of potholes the size of bathtubs stretched every other meter right across the road). When at last we hit the dust track, there are a great many cheers and a day later we arrive among the first Lozi. Throughout Northwestern and Western Zambia, the only means of crossing the multitude of rivers with a vehicle is by a hand driven pantoon, which costs R120 cash only in foreign currency per trip (Kwacha are not accepted for cars with foreign registrations), five trips totalling more cash than we are allowed to take out of South Africa, a true "Catch 22" situation!

The Zambian kwacha constitutes about 20% of the locals means of trade in these remote areas, where once every two weeks a bus hurdles along the main road, only if the roads are passable, to centers like Mongia, constituting the sole means of travel. In these capitals, the two or three shops are seldom patronized as they contain perhaps 5 bottles of exorbitantly expensive Lebanese whiskey, two dresses and rows and rows of empty shelves as their sole wares. The main activity is out on the dusty streets weaving between the multitude of traditional wattle and daub homesteads, where everything desirable (tea, sugar, maize, rice (their staple) relish leaves, roots, herbs, horns, meat and most abundantly dried fish) is sold out of expensively large woven baskets by the cupful. In addition, tables full of good quality second-hand clothes shipped from Europe can be purchased for as little as 250 kwacha (about R1.25) for a pair of Levis jeans.

Apart from the Lozi people who have their own different king and a distinctly different material culture and traditional territory to their compatriots further North, the tribal lands of the people of Western Zambia is so intermingled that within one village, Mbunda, Luchazi, Lunda, Nkoya and Chowke families may coexist. The Luvale and Chowke women are distinguished by the brightly dyed green and maroon incisions on their foreheads and cheeks, evident also on the Mwanampwewo representations on masks, combs, thumb pianos and vessels.

Despite Western appearance in the lack of traditional dress, we found the Western Zambian cultures among the most strangely rooted in tradition and ancestral allegiances that we have come upon. There was an absolute harmony existing between the secular activities, new found Christian beliefs and the traditional religion of the peoples, not confined to the ceremonies and feasts so prolific in the region.

Mynhardt Bester  
Susan Ward



E13R, E13L: Lunda: Luchazi. (fig. 3). Firelighters consist of a container and flint housed in a white stone and raw cotton. Friction of the metal flint and stone produce the spark to light the cotton and these were the sole means of firemaking in the last century. E13R: If one looks at the intricacy of the design of the casket (similar to A30, fig. 59) and the copper work of the flint, it

indicates that the piece is much older than E13L. The use of copper wire as a decorative technique on carved wooden pieces permeates many artifacts (spears, axes, staffs) made at the turn of the century. E14L and E14R: both Chokwe (found in N.W. Zambia) are fine examples of how the use of even the simplest utilitarian objects was transformed into a ritual. E14R would be held by hand while a variety of dried leaves would be pounded to tobacco, whereas E14L would be placed in the ground for grinding.



2. Tobacco Grinder -  
E14-R 16" long (left) / E14-L 16" long (right)



3. African Fire Starters (Flints), wood and metal (left to right)  
E13R 5 1/4" metal 3/2" wood, E13L 5" metal 3 1/2" wood



4. Uggoko, Meat Tray - Zulu,  
Wood 22 1/2" (front view), MT-101



5. Uggoko, Meat Tray - Zulu,  
Wood 11 1/2" x 22", F38



6. Mikeke: Relish Bowl: Lozi, Wood, 6 1/4" x 8 3/8", R-173



7. Lozi Sitting Stool, Zambia, Wood, 8 1/4" high x 9 1/2", F5



8. Lozi Sitting Stool, Zambia, Wood, 8 1/4" x 10 1/4", F13



9. Lozi Sitting Stool, Zambia, Wood, 8 1/4" high x 11 1/4", F14



10. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 9", ST-3



11. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 10", ST-4



12. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 9 1/2", ST-8



13. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", ST-9



14. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 9", ST-13



15. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 10", ST-14

Zambian sitting stools are quite distinct from those of the Zimbabwean Tonga people and much rarer. We find only five or six wooden stools a trip and in the most unexpected areas. Stools used today are the leather topped variety originating with the Lozi and spreading North, the Lozi having no purely wooden sitting stools. Among the few wooden stools found none are contemporary: F13 (fig. 8) was found in a Luchazi area and F5 (fig. 7) and F14 (fig. 9) in a Mbunda area, all of unknown origin.



17. Mpanda: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", ST-8a



18. Chiuno: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", ST-69



16. Mpanda: Tonga Sitting Stool, Wood, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", ST-77

The small cooking vessels are placed directly in the fire and used in relish preparation amongst the Lunda, Luvale, Chokwe and Luchazi, only the Lozi having the wooden serving relish bowls. If one looks at the shape and attention to detail of B22 (fig. 19), the greater age of this piece can be seen over more contemporary relish bowls like B26 (fig 23).



19. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 5 1/4" high x 14 1/2" long, B22



23. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 10 1/4" x 16", B26

Grey waterpots were made using a coil technique similar to the Zulu. After firing and cooling, the vessels are reheated and splashed with the sap of tree leaves crushed in a pounder to give the variegated coloration.



20. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 9" x 10 1/2", B24



24. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 7" x 12", B28



27. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Lozi, Wood, 9 1/4" x 9 1/16", R-119



21. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 7 1/4" x 9 1/2", B25



25. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 7" x 9 1/2", B31



28. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Lozi, Wood, 8 1/2" x 9", R-120



22. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Zambia, Wood, 7" x 11", B27



26. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Lozi, Wood, 8 1/4" x 8 7/16", R-117



29. Mikeke: Relish Bowl, Lozi, Wood, 8 3/4" x 9", R-121



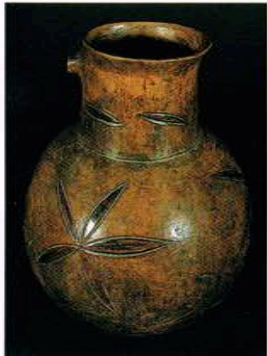
30. *Isigqiki*: Headrest, Zulu, Wood, 6¼" x 16½", F20



31. *Isigqiki*: Headrest, Zulu, Wood, 5¼" x 18", F23



32. *Mutsago*: Ndaui Headrest, Wood, 5¾" x 11½", F36



33. Lozi Water Container, Clay, 9½" x 8", B14

The water vessels found in these areas are the remains of a died-out tradition and are extremely hard to procure. As calabashes are more abundant and lighter, they are hence more functional for unceremonial purposes. In a remote village near Lukulu in Western Zambia, the light colored clay vessels with the plant-dyed red designs (Catalogue B6 - 14, fig. 34 - 35) are still produced today for community use. Only members of one extended family occupying this village, constituting of a cluster of perhaps 20 homesteads, produce these vessels following a design handed down over generations within the family and produced by some sons more proficiently than others. B6, the tortoise design, is a more contemporary interpretation.



34. Lozi Water Container, Clay, 17" x 13½", B13



35. Lozi Water Container, Zambia, Clay, 13" x 11", B6



36. *Ithunga*, Milkpail, Wood, 12½" x 8¼", M-16



37. *Ithunga*, Milkpail: Zulu, Wood, 13½" x 7", M-21



38. *Ithunga*, Milkpail: Zulu, Wood, 11¼" x 6½", M-22



39. *Ithunga*, Milkpail: Zulu, Wood, 14¼" x 5½", M-25



40. *Mbiya*, Tonga Pot, Clay, 16" x 18", B-109



41. *Mbiya*, Tonga Pot, Clay, 13½" x 14½", B-112





42. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 8½" x 7¼", D8



43. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 10" x 9½", A14



44. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 11¼" x 10", A22



45. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 13½" x 12", A3



46. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 14½" x 12", A4



47. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 13" x 10½", A5

48. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 11" x 9½", A16



We have found that the older the vessel, the more embellished and intricate the designs - Although utilitarian, the vessels have spiritual significance. They were part of the secular/ancestral tapestry of the tribe which cemented their values and distinguished their clan from their neighbors. A potter producing over his life-span would achieve perfection only in the later years, after much practice and effort and the best vessels are almost invariably from this period. If one takes A30 (fig. 59) as an example, we have ascertained that pieces such as these are extremely old, evident in the harmony of shape, intricacy and significance of design. The same spirit applies to A5, A12, A17 and A25 (fig. 47, 49 - 51). In particular, the vessels with handles and spouts produced during the early colonial era, circa 1920 and earlier. A vessel like A21 (front cover - center piece) would have of course belonged to an important figure in the community as it is one of the finest pieces found.



49. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 12" x 9¾", A12



50. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 11½" x 8¼", A17



51. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 8¾" x 8½", A25



52. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 13¾" x 11", B1



53. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 14¾" x 11¼", B3



54. Cooking Pot, Zambian, Clay, 6½" x 4½", A33



55. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 9¾" x 9½", A10



56. Cooking Pot, Zambian, Clay, 5¼" x 6", A36



57. Cooking Pot, Zambian, Clay, 6" x 8", A31



58. Cooking Pot, Zambian, Clay, 6" x 8½", A29



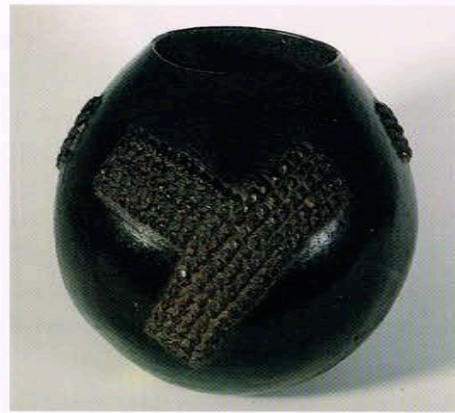
59. Cooking Pot, Zambian, Clay, 4¼" x 6¼", A30



60. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 11½" x 12", A-217



61. Beerpot, Zulu, Clay, 8¾" x 10", C35



62. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 7½" x 9½", C6



63. Beerpot, Zulu, Clay, 9½" x 10", C11



64. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 12" x 15", A-213



65. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 6½" x 8¼", A-132



66. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Wood, 9½" x 12¾", A33



67. Amasumpa, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 11½" x 15½", 1M



68. Uphiso, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 14½" x 12", C14



69. Uphiso, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 15¾" x 14½", C20



70. Uphiso, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 14¾" x 16", C21



71. Uphiso, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 15" x 13½", U-117



72. Scratch Design, Zulu Beerpot, Clay, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 8", S-134



73. Brewing/Storage Vessel, Shona Karanga, Wood, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 14F



74. Amabhaxa, Mat Rack, Zulu, Wood, 30" x 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", G17



75. Grain Basket - Zambia, Woven Grass, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 10" diameter, G4

Of the woven baskets G4 (fig. 75) is the oldest, evident in the fineness of its weave, zig-zag pattern and foot piece. These baskets are not made from reeds but from tree root fiber, a very time-consuming process taking four days or more to make a piece and are cross-cultural amongst the Chowke, Luvale, Lunda, Luchazi. The making of all artifacts in Zambia has and always has been the dominion of the men, including basketry and the making of vessels.



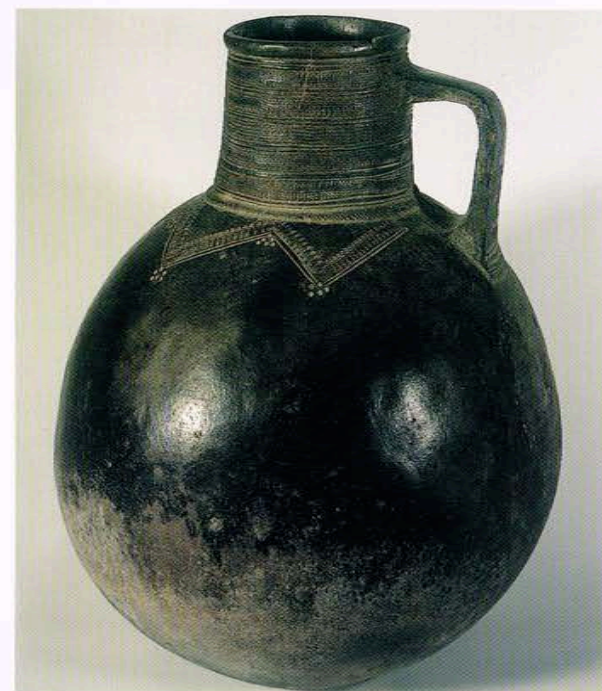
76. Grain Basket - Zambia, Woven Grass, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter, G9



77. Grain Basket - Zambia, Woven Grass, 11" x 13" diameter, G11



78. Grain Basket - Zambia, Woven Grass, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter, G12



79. Mulondo Water Pot, Zambian, Clay, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", B3



80. Medicine Pot, Zambia, Clay, 9" x 6 1/4", D9

Figurative pieces like D9 (fig. 80) are extremely hard to find. D9 was found in a North Western province Luchazi village. The owner told us it was made for decoration. It does not have traditional Mwanamprewo features (which represent the mother spirit) but as in most home-

steads, a pile of rocks, a stick with rags or figurative carvings are placed in the home as "protector" and D9 could have been used as such an icon. One Luchazi ceremonial mask and suit represents the "Ndono" spirit, which literally means fat stomach, so D9 could very well be Ndono.

Please appreciate the vagueness of some tribal derivations. The similarity in culture, traditions and language, especially between the Luchazi, Luvale, Lunda and Chokwe people of this region where intermarriage and sharing the same territory often means that an artifact could be made by a man of Chokwe origin and kept in a Luvale speaking village for generations. We always give the tribal derivation of a piece as that of the maker, if it is known, otherwise of the present owner. Museums and literature use the umbrella name Chokwe to describe any artifacts from the region (apart from Mbunda and Lozi which are distinct), covering the following subgroups: Lunda, Luchazi, Luvale, Lynwa, Makoma, Mwenyi, Nyengo, Ndundulu, Masaba, Kwangwa, Kwandi, Luyana, Ndemba, Sumau etc. However, when we discussed the subject with the locals, we were informed that this is wrong. The Chokwe are a distinct group and to call a Kwangwa man Chokwe is incorrect.

We carry all our food with us and two large water tanks which must last five people at least a week. Every six hundred kilometers or so one finds a hand-operated petrol pump, two out of three of which have no supply, and on one occasion, because of lack of reliable maps and buried tracks, we found ourselves entirely lost and out of petrol, and had to haul the tanks on foot the remaining kilometers up a river to the next pump and back for our tally. We keep our personal supplies to a minimum to leave room for the pieces which we wrap and box and leave at homesteads along the way and collect on our return. Of course no trailer can be taken on roads which were never mapped but are simply the remains of tracks left by missionary vehicles or foot-paths. But the will of the pieces to survive has meant that not one vessel has ever been broken on our trips.

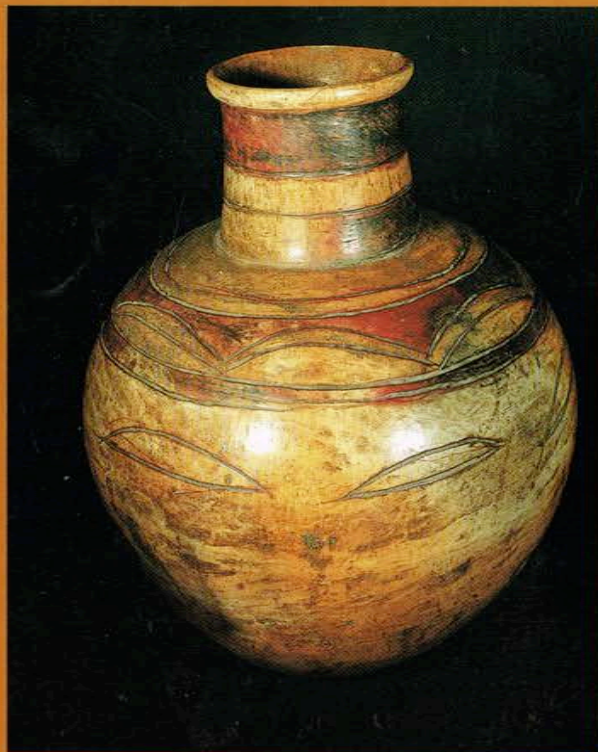
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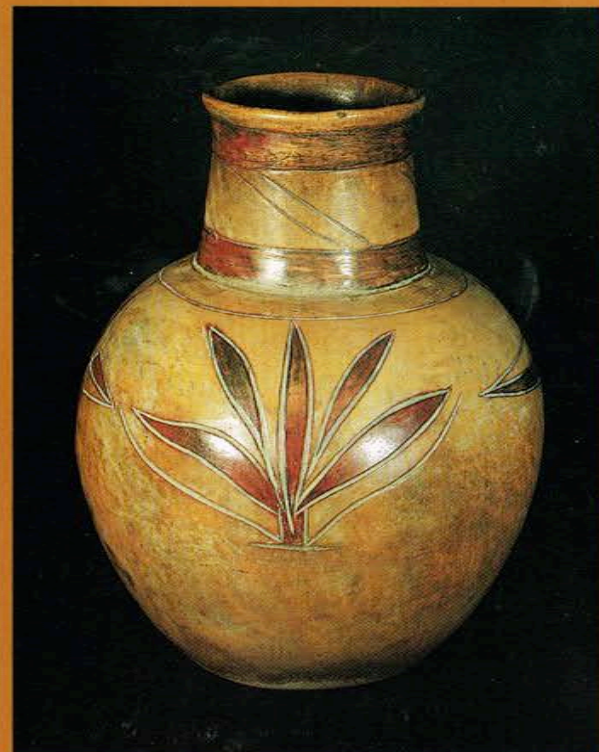
A donation based on the sales from this Collection will be made to READ in honor of Mrs. Irene Menell.



81. Lozi Water Container, Zambia, Clay, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", B9



82. Lozi Water Container, Zambia, Clay, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", B11



83. Lozi Water Container, Clay, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12", B12

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