

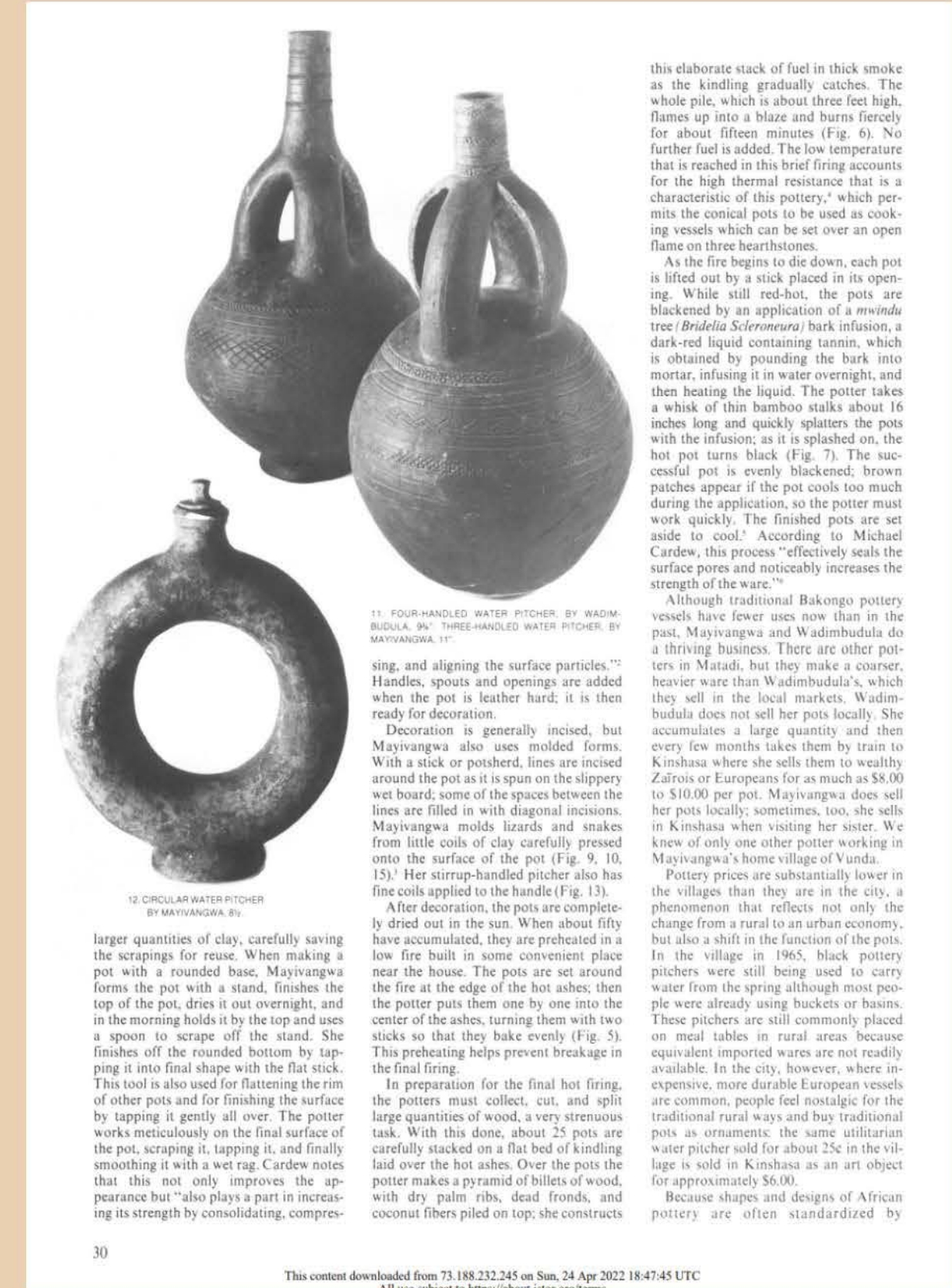
Bryn Mawr College Special Collections

A PRESENTATION BY SOFIA MONDRAGON

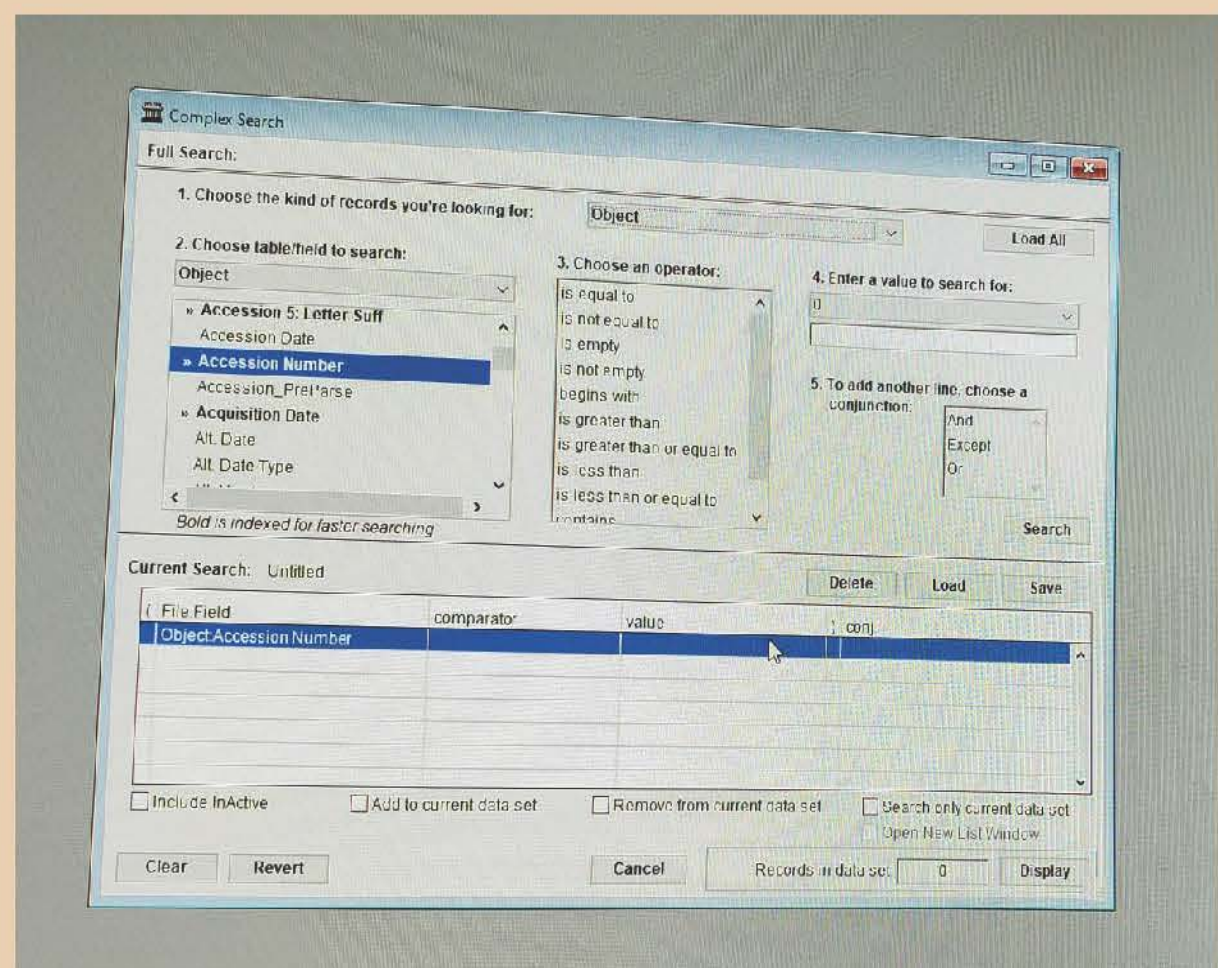
Field Supervisor: Marianne Weldon
Museum Studies PRAXIS Seminar

Background on the Collection

- From 1965 to 1970, Wyatt MacGaffey (Professor of Emeritus, Haverford College) and Janet MacGaffey (Ph.D., 1981, Bryn Mawr College) conducted anthropological research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo & collected Congolese art
- In January 2022, Bryn Mawr College received a donation from Wyatt MacGaffey of 12 Congolese ceramics (mainly water pitchers), some ethnographic photographs, and one article that was written about the ceramics. These materials became the Congolese ceramics collection that I worked on
- These ceramics were purchased and created in Vunda, DRC
- The MacGaffeys had personal connections to the two artists, Wadimbudula Esther and Mayivangwa Thérèse, that created the ceramics



An image of the article showing two of the water pitchers I worked on



An image showing the EmBARK database

What I Did

- I worked with Marianne Weldon, Bryn Mawr College's Collections Manager on the Congolese ceramics collection
- I cataloged the collection and input the accession numbers into EmBARK Collections Manager, the collections database Special Collections use to manage their fine arts
 - I photographed and rehoused the collection
- I conducted comparanda research on the collection to answer the following questions:
 1. Why do the water pitchers have the shapes that they do?
 2. What do the engraved motifs communicate?
 3. Are there any secondary uses for these water pitchers?

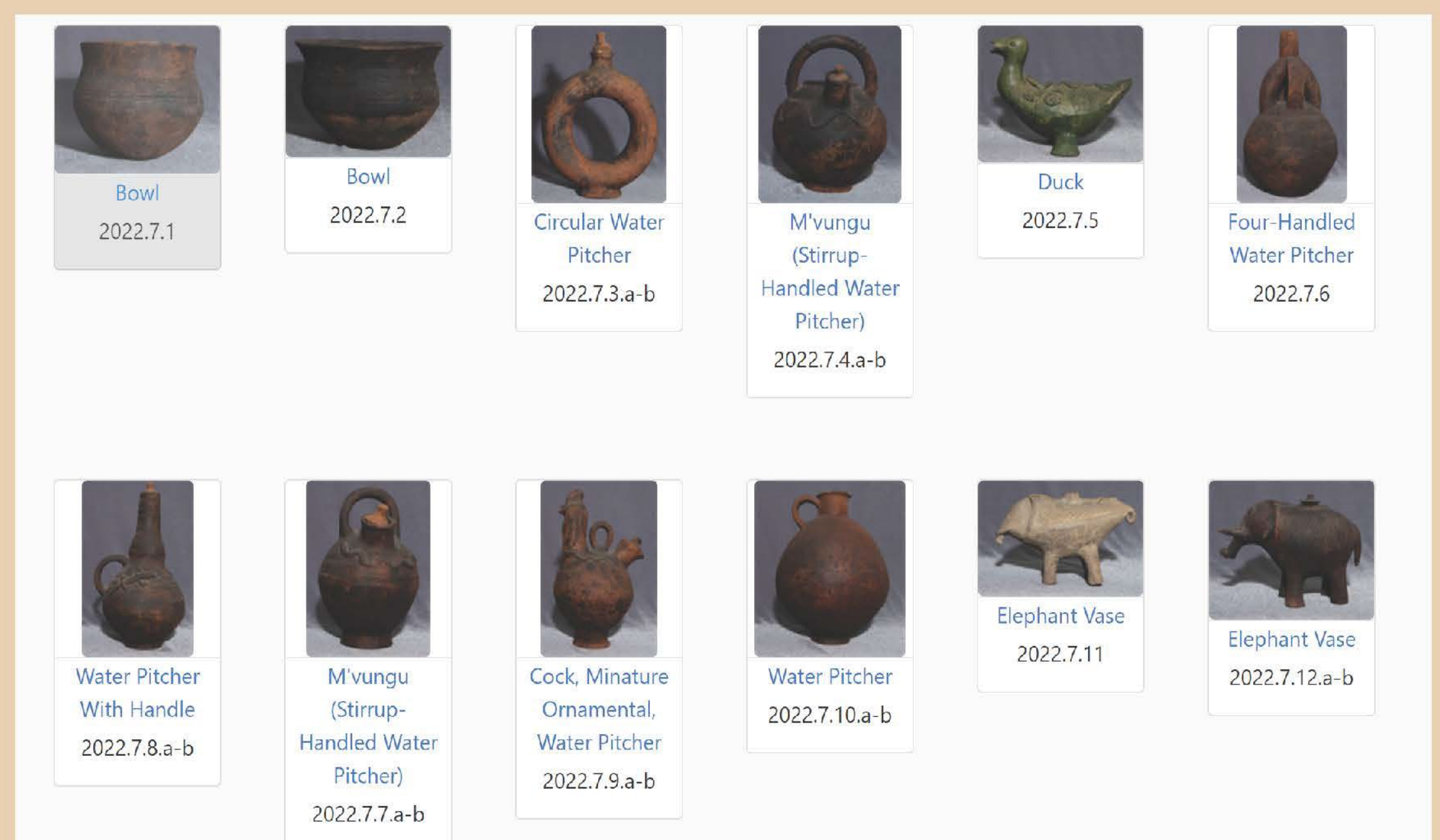
What I Learned

On the Collection:

- The water pitcher shapes come from the Kakongo region in the DRC. The Kakongo region is named after the Kakongo Kingdom, which no longer exists
- The engraved motifs on the water pitchers made by Mayivangwa Thérèse depict traditional Kakongo motifs. Most notably the snake motifs represent life and water. This snake motif is seen in many of the water pitchers in this collection.
- Congolese water pitchers have historically been used in funerary practices

Overall:

- I learned a lot in this internship! I learned how all of the art history theories I have studied can and do apply to the work I did in Special Collections
- I learned how to manage an African art collection and how to handle fine art
- I learned how to do intense comparanda research to learn more about this collection



An image showing the collection on TriArte