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In 1976 Zdenka Volavka discovered the central item of a royal shrine of the Kingdom of Ngoyo among uncatalogued items in the basement of the Musée de l'Homme. It was labeled, ignominiously, a "fishing basket" even though it was made of carefully worked copper. She spent the remainder of her life studying this object and its context, and died in 1990 with a large unfinished manuscript of her lengthy and painstaking work. Fortunately, Wendy Thomas took over the project and, working from Volavka's notes, was able to bring the work to fruition. The text includes five chapters written by Volavka, and a brief introduction and final concluding chapter written by Colleen Kriger, but based in part on Volavka's notes. Its extensive appendices (pp. 235-309) include detailed technical reports on the provenance and working techniques of the metal as well as texts in Portuguese and French matters pertaining to Ngoyo's religion and the specific role of the shrine, king lists, and historical tables.

Crown and Ritual is a work with two parallel streams. One stream focused on the shrine object itself, a detailed description of its contents, studies of the metalworking that went into its composition including even sourcing the copper. Volavka did or commissioned special studies on the metal and on the methods used to work it including tools and techniques. While there were many inconclusive elements in these studies, the work did establish that the shrine was of fairly ancient construction and was the work of highly

skilled and sophisticated craftsmen using local materials. In this regard, *Crown and Ritual* is an important contribution to the study of central African metalworking technology. The second stream is a study of power and symbolism in Ngoyo, a Kikongo speaking polity that has existed since at least the early sixteenth century just north of the mouth of the Congo River in its wider context. Volavka did extensive field work, interviewing dozens of informants and visited the important sites herself. She also read carefully fieldnotes, some unpublished, of others who had studied the shrine, or similar objects and sites in Kongo. In addition to what can be learned from fieldwork and the reading of modern fieldworkers, Volavka was attentive to the nuances found in older chronicle and missionary sources, going back to Rui de Pina's account of Kongo from 1491. On the basis of this reading Volavka wrote a history of religious and political symbolism, especially that found in art, throughout what she calls "Kongoland". Although Volavka cast a wide net, Ngoyo and the Lusunzi shrine that she studied was always in the center. Perhaps it is not surprising then, that she followed her informants in identifying the region along the north bank of the Congo River centered at Boma and Noki, but including Ngoyo as the ancient center of Kongo religious life.

It is always difficult to produce a posthumous work. In part this is because the editor is often moved by respect for the dead to retain more or less as permanent sections which the author may have revised extensively had she lived, and therefore the intellectual project is frozen. Moreover, it is especially difficult to expand the unfinished chapters, or to incorporate new work and new findings. Nevertheless, both Thomas, as editor, and Kriger as a contributor to updated and interpretative introduction and conclusion have produced a commendable work of scholarship. Volavka's work was too valuable to be left unpublished.