

Nyamyaro Museum



Main items in the collection – a catalogue

2012



The Nyamyaro Museum in Hoima

The Nyamyaro Museum is located in the Karuziika (the royal palace of the Kings of Bunyoro). The Museum conserves, showcases and promotes the human heritage and the ancient regalia of the

Kings of Bunyoro-Kitara for education and tourism.

The main object inside the museum is the royal throne of the Omukama (King) of

Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom. The museum is also known for its focus on metallurgy in the region.

The museum is located at the Royal Palace in Hoima town. For further details, contact:

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1. Ekitebe (Runyoro) - The Royal Stool

*Nine legged stool; 73cm high 50cm
diameter; Bunyoro*

(See detailed descriptions at the end of the catalogue)



2. *Kisaatu/Ruhu y'e Ntare (Runyoro)* - Lion's Skin

Lion's skin with approximately 120 holes, 191cm length, 90cm width; Bunyoro



3. *Kisaatu/Ruhu y'e Ngo (Runyoro)* - Leopard's Skin

Leopard skin, 213cm length, 66cm width; Bunyoro



**4. Rwabusungu (Runyoro) - The
Chief Crown**

*Metal spikes, beads and colobus
monkey hide, 50 long; Bunyoro*



**5. Kasunsunkwanzi (Runyoro) –
Ceremonial crown**

*Red parrot feathers, beads, 47cm
high; Bunyoro.*



**6. Nsinga's Crown (Runyoro) -
King Nsinga's crown**

*Cowry shells, red parrot feathers and
blue beads, 50cm high; Bunyoro*



**7. Enkondo z'ekisu (Runyoro) -
Bachwezi crown**

*Brass, beads and lion's hide, 50cm high;
Bunyoro Kingdom*



8. *Entimbo* (Runyoro) - Royal drum

*Wooden drum with monitor lizard skin,
51cm high; Bunyoro*



**9. Amakondere (Runyoro) -
Royal Trumpets**

*Gourds with wooden bases,
corded with reeds, 87cm and
71cm long; Bunyoro*



**10. Ebirongo (Runyoro) -
Royal Insignia**

*Brass covered with
coloured beads, 206cm
high; Bunyoro*



11. *Busitama* (Runyoro) - Sword

*Iron sword with a wooden handle and
cover 60cm long; Bunyoro*



12. . Isanga (Runyoro) - Elephant tusk

*Elephant tusk; 110cm long; Bunyoro
Kingdom*



13. Oruga (Runyoro) - Cane

*Cane made out of a twig;
90cm long; Bunyoro*



**14. Nyamuhaibona (Runyoro) -
Copper spear**

*Copper spear with wooden
handle 227cm long; Bunyoro
Kingdom*



15. Orukanduzo (Runyoro) - Garden rake

*Metal with wooden handle; 206cm long;
with gourd in bark-cloth bag; Bunyoro.*



1. The stool symbolises the power and authority of the King, and unity among the Banyoro. The figure 9 represents luck, and according to traditional beliefs in Bunyoro, the nine legs of the stool symbolize the King's generosity. Only the King is allowed to sit on this stool during special occasions, such as coronation or coronation anniversaries, when he is leaving his palace or returning from a trip.

*Source: Nsamba Yoram,
Curator of the Museum 24. 10.2011*

2. The skin is used to decorate the floor of the throne room and symbolises power, as it originates from the fiercest wild animal. The 120 spear holes also indicate the strength of the animal. The lion is the totem of the *Babiito* (royal) clan.

Source: as above

3. The skin is used to decorate the floor of the throne room. It represents the second strongest animal in the wild and is the totem for the *Basingo* clan, whose members are known for their healing and medicinal skills. The skin represents sanctity because the Kings and priests use it during religious rituals.

Source: as above

4. The crown was introduced before the *Babiito* dynasty in Bunyoro. A king to be sworn into office puts it on and hammers a piece of metal four times to become head of metal work, a key industry of Bunyoro-Kitara through the ages.

The spikes on the top ridge represent iron-rod money used as a means of exchange. The crown is sacred; only the people referred to as *ebikwato* (group of people who crown the King) are allowed to look after the royal regalia.

Source: as above

5. Its use dates back to the Bachwezi era. It is the second crown the King wears after the chief crown during his coronation ceremony.

Source: as above

6. Nsinga was King of Bugoma annexed to Bunyoro by King Ndahura (one of the Bachwezi rulers in Bunyoro). Nsinga's crown was introduced during the reign of Ndahura when he was crowning his chiefs.

Source: as above

7. The conical crown, which is in the shape of the traditional Bunyoro house, assures the Kingdom subjects that they are protected from danger. The Lion's hide tells us that the King is expected to be as strong as the lion to protect his subjects.

Source: as above

8. The *entimbo* drum is still used today at the royal palace, especially during royal functions. It is sounded by a group of people known as the *abatimbo* when the King is in a procession, or when telling stories of the various rulers in the past. Sometimes the *abatimbo* sound the drum differently to criticize the King or tell him that he has annoyed his subjects.

Source: as above

9. The *amakondere* are blown to produce dancing music for the King's subjects. They are played in a set of seven or nine only by men from particular clans when the new moon appears, to celebrate the *Omukama* having lived to see a new moon. They are also played during *empango* (coronation) anniversary celebrations.

Source: as above

10. These royal insignia (royal twins - *Kato* and *Isingoma* - inset) of the Chwezi Dynasty date back one thousand years and are part of the King's regalia. They were used by the King to show and demarcate the battle ground during wars. They represent fertility and fecundity since the King had to guarantee fertility of the land and his subjects.

Source: as above

11. The sword was used to swear in the King. On enthronement, the King swore to defend the Kingdom and ensure justice. The two-sided blade signifies that the King should be precise and just while administering justice.

Source: as above

12. Still used today as a symbol of luck. At coronation ceremonies, the King jumps over the tusk to bring luck during his reign.

Source: as above

13. The *oruğa* is given to a King during the coronation ceremony to encourage him to give his subjects human treatment, rather than use spears to punish them.

Source: as above

14. The spear, as a sign of power, is one of the regalia given to the King during his coronation to show his authority and his duty to protect his subjects during wars.

Source: as above

15. This garden rake was used by the King to encourage his subjects to grow food; failure to do so would result in being struck by lightning. Hanging on the rake is a bark cloth bag containing a gourd with millet grains and field peas.

Source: as above

Throughout Uganda, inspired individuals, families and groups of people have established *community museums* open to the public to preserve and promote the local cultural heritage.

This catalogue, one of a series for 11 community museums across Uganda, highlights the most important items held by the Nyamyaro Museum in Hoima

It is meant to publicise and record the collection, as well as to act as a reference point, reflecting Uganda's cultural diversity.

The catalogue was produced by the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, an organisation dedicated to promoting the recognition of culture as vital for human development that responds to Uganda's national identity and diversity. As part of its cultural heritage programme, the Foundation supports community museums in Uganda.

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[www. crossculturalfoundation.or.ug](http://www.crossculturalfoundation.or.ug)

