

Uganda Martyrs University Museum



Main items in the collection – a catalogue

2012



The Uganda Martyrs University Museum at Nkozi

In many parts of Uganda, community museum owners, supporters and managers, passionate about culture and heritage, have collected artefacts, oral history and other elements of the local culture. Community museums also link past and future through their collections, which are accessible to schools, local residents and those from farther away.

The Uganda Martyrs University Museum was established in 1996 as a small collection of indigenous cultural artefacts and sculptures from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is motivated by the desire to preserve and promote African Culture, as well as to facilitate research on its significance in the present African and world development contexts.

The Museum is housed by the African Research and Documentation Centre Library and serves students from various University faculties, as well as other local and international visitors and researchers.



The museum is located at the University campus at Nkozi, 84 km along Kampala-Masaka road, which is also a major tourist route. For further information, contact:

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1. Embatso (Lukonzo) - Axe

*Axe with wooden handle 36cm; metal
blade 26cm; Kasese district*

(See detailed descriptions at the end of the catalogue)



2. Ekyagi (Luganda) - Granary

Granary; twigs and reeds smeared with cow dung; height 54cm, diameter 53cm; Central Uganda.



3. Ensumbi (Luganda) - Pot

Clay pot; 60cm high; Central Uganda



4. Endeku (Luganda) - Gourd

*Gourd with lid and handle;
31 cm length; Central Uganda*



5. Ebide (Luganda) - Hunting bells

*Metal bells; various sizes and
cowry shells; Central Uganda*



6. Engabo (Luganda) - Shield

*Shield, wood and plant fibres,
55cm length; Central Uganda*



**7. Omuggo gw'ekikungu
(Luganda) - Ceremonial stick**

*Blackwood (African ebony tree)
- 102cm long; carved with round
handle; Central Uganda*



8. Engoma (Luganda) - Drum

*Drum; 40cm length, wood and cow's
skin; Central Uganda*



9. Muliiti (Luganda) - Twins' ring

A sisal ring joined by white cowry shells attached to two equal sized parcels of bark clothe secured with sisal string and cowry shells; Central Uganda; 30cm long



**10. *Ensawo y'amayembe*
(Luganda) - Bag for spirits**

*Goat skin and bark-cloth; 40cmx29-
cm; Central Uganda*



**11. Effumu Iya Kiwanuka (Luganda)
- Spear for Kiwanuka spirit**

*V-shaped spear; copper with
a sharp pointed handle; 70cm long;
Central Uganda*



**12. Ejjembe Iya Nambaga
(Luganda) - Horn for Nambaga**

*Horn; 25cm; decorated with
white and black beads;
Central Uganda*



13. Amutengu (Karamojong) - Ceremonial head dress

Head gear; human hair and animal skin decorated with ostrich feathers; North - eastern Uganda



14. *Etimata* (Karamojong) - Animal trap

Traps made from porcupine spikes; 29cm and 23cm diameter respectively; North eastern region, Uganda



**15. Elowu (Karamojong) - Skirt
for young girl**

*Girl's skirt - 35cm long Sewn
with cow's skin patches; North
eastern region, Uganda*



**16. Luba statue (Luba-Kasai) -
Female fertility statute**

*Wooden female figure; 45cm
long; South-eastern Democratic
Republic of Congo*



**17. Lengola statue (Lengola) -
Fertility and protection statute**

*Lengola statue; 60cm long;
Democratic Republic of Congo*



18. Nkisi (Luba-Kasai) - female figure

Nkisi figure; 60cm long; South-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo



**19. Kifwebe (Luba) –
'Faces of God' mask**

*Wooden face mask, 46cm high;
decorated with cowry-shells,
beads, snail shells and chicken
feathers. Eastern Democratic
Republic of Congo*



**20. Kakunga Mask (Yaka) -
Initiation mask.**

*Wooden face mask; South-
western Democratic Republic
of Congo; 34cm high*



1. Axe used to cut and carve wood, such as for canoes, mortars and other kitchen utensils. It was owned and used by the head of family.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.7*

2. Traditionally, Baganda preserved food grains in granaries, especially after a bumper harvest. Food so preserved could not be retrieved without the approval of the head of the family.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.41*

3. This unusually large pot was used for cooking, fetching water and preserving local beer at different times. Sometimes, it was also used to preserve grains such as maize, beans, sim-sim.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.1.41*

4. Gourd used to keep and drink local beer (*tonto*) made of fermented banana juice or occasionally to keep herbal medicine.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.1.23b*

5. These bells would be tied around the neck of a hunting dog, to scare the prey into a trap. The bells were kept by the head of a family and only worn by hunting dogs commonly known as *Namaaso* ("double-eyed" dogs)

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago

Source: Leonard Kawuki,

Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011

Accession number: 2000.1.13

6. Shields were used to protect oneself against spears and arrows during civil wars and expansion wars between kingdoms or chiefdoms. According to Buganda oral tradition, the shield signifies the presence of *Kibuuka*, the god of war. The shield is also used during family succession rituals where an heir is handed a shield and a spear to protect the family against dangers.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago

Source: Leonard Kawuki,

Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011

Accession number: 2000.1.10

7. The *omuggo gwo'ekikungu* stick is believed to have protective powers and is used by diviners to represent absent family members. The stick is not handled by women or children.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago

Source: Leonard Kawuki,

Museum Caretaker, 30.9.2011

Accession number: 2000.1.37

8. The drum is used as a music instrument and communication tool, especially to raise an alarm. In the early days of Christianity, the drum beat was also used to mobilise church goers. In Buganda, the drum beat called *sagala agalamidde* ('I do not want to see idle people') was a call for community work. In shrines, the drum is still sounded to invoke ancestral spirits.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago

Source: Leonard Kawuki,

Museum Caretaker, 30.9.2011

Accession number: 2000.1.45

9. This ring was used to preserve the umbilical cords of twins. 'Tying the twins' was popular among the Baganda to celebrate the birth of twins in a home, until the introduction of Christianity. It was a must to present the twins' ring at any ceremony concerning them, such as naming, initiation, marriage and death. At no point was the twins' ring disposed of, since this was regarded as neglect of the twins.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.9.2011
Accession number: 2001.1.5*

10. Traditionally, the Baganda kept valuable objects and money in their homes. Bags of this nature were used for safekeeping and attached to spirits to keep away thieves.

*Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.9.2011
Accession number: 2000.1.33*

11. The V-shaped spear signifies the presence of *Kiwanuka*, the god of the sky. The spear was placed in gardens or fields to control "bad rains" (hailstorms). It is also said to act as a natural lightening conductor.

*Donated by Brother Anatoli Wasswa
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.1.11*

12. *Ejjembe lya Nambaga* was used to signify the presence of the *Nambaga* deity, the patron of women in labour and child birth. It was believed to have healing powers.

Donated by Brother Anatoli Wasswa
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.1.12

13. The head gear is used by Karamojong elders, especially during traditional functions, including court sessions.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.9.2011
Accession number: 1997.1.2

14. These traps are used to catch small animals. The spikes in the centre of the trap are loose, piercing and clutching an animal's leg once it steps into the trap

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 1997.1.1

15. Female's skirt that was in use by young girls in North-eastern Uganda.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 30.8.2011
Accession number: 1997.1.7

16. This female statue is associated with the god of fertility among the Luba (Baluba) of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is used during fertility rituals, such as *Bwanga Bwa Chibola*, a ritual performed when a woman loses successive children through miscarriages or early post natal deaths.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.36

17. During the pre-colonial period, this figure was worshipped by males as god of fertility. Its role was to ward off evils and ensure stability in society and to represent the spirits of the *Lengola* during the circumcision ceremonies of boys.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.37

18. Luba ritual specialists used this figure for divination, healing, initiation, and litigation. Others used it to catch thieves or retrieve lost articles. The *Nkisi* figure also represented the role women used to play in society as diviners and traditional healers.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.38

19. The mask exhibits 'different faces or eyes' of God, reflecting his omnipotence and ability to see in all directions simultaneously.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.39

20. This mask is used during initiation ceremonies such as circumcision for the youth. The most important event in the Yaka ceremonial cycle is the initiation of young boys into adulthood. To mark the end of the initiation period, festivities are held in which the initiates perform dances adorning newly carved masks. At these festivities the most startling masks and spectacular dances are showcased.

Collected by Prof. Peter Kanyandago
Source: Leonard Kawuki,
Museum Caretaker, 29.8.2011
Accession number: 2000.2.40

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 Uganda Martyrs University Museum, Nkozi.

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 the country'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)

