

RUMBLE MUSEUM'S AFRICAN ARTEFACTS

with poetry by
Natty Mark Samuels

Rumbie Museum

Made possible with Heritage Fund

INTRODUCTION

In December 2020, the Rumble Museum was privileged to receive the gift of a wide and varied collection of artefacts from a number of different sub-Saharan African countries. The collection included a range of everyday items, for cooking, performing music, wearing and using in daily life.

In the past year, we have been working with local expert and poet Natty Mark Samuels and the Cheney School community in order to find out more about this beautiful collection, and to find a space and way of displaying it at the school.

Students, staff, parents and visitors have all engaged with and contributed to our knowledge of these objects. Natty has also composed poems about many of the objects, which give a sense of the wider context of each item, with a wealth of fascinating information embedded in each poem.

This booklet contains photographs and information about our collection, alongside the poems which Natty has written for us.



Natty Mark Samuels is the founder of the African School and African Library in Blackbird Leys. This booklet is designed by Dr Lorna Robinson, director of the Rumble Museum, as part of wider project to create resources and displays around our African collection, It is generously funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We hope you enjoy exploring our objects.

You can book to visit and see them through our website at www.rumblemuseum.org.uk

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NANKASA DRUM

The Baganda people of Uganda have a special relationship with ngoma (a word for both the drums, and the music they produce with the drums), The ngoma is used for communication, celebration, storytelling, and is associated with royalty.

The drums are made of wood and covered with cow skin, which is pegged on both ends. They are usually played in an ensemble of seven drums. Each of these drums has a specific name. The largest drum is the bakisimba. It makes a loud bass sound. The empuunya is a bit smaller and makes a higher-pitched bass sound.

The drum in the Rumble Museum's collection is a nankasa. It is a small drum played with sticks and makes a very high-pitched sound. Like the larger drums, it is covered with cow skin on the top and bottom using an intricate lacing system. The final drum in the ensemble is the engalabi, which has a lizard-skin head attached with small wooden pegs.

Throughout Central and Southern Africa, ngoma ceremonies are used to help with healing during ceremonies. The rituals involve rhythmic music and dance. Ngoma often has the role of bonding the tribe, and is involved in key ceremonies such as marriage and life transitions. It is also seen as a way to communicate with spirits.

The nankasa is usually played with two sticks.

PLAY EMBUUTU FOR ME

1st Voice: Cow
2nd Voice: Snake
3rd Voice: Zebra
4th Voice: Antelope
1st Voice: Goat
2nd Voice: Monkey
3rd Voice: Crocodile
4th Voice: Buffalo
Voices (chanted):

Over in Uganda,
They have embuutu drum.
Ganda, Ganda,
Ganda man:
Come play embuutu for me.

1st Voice: Chief's investiture
2nd Voice: Wedding party
3rd Voice: Divination ritual
4th Voice: Healing ceremony
1st Voice: Harvest thanksgiving
2nd Voice: Adult initiation
3rd Voice: New Moon festival
4th Voice: Ancestral celebration
Voices (chanted):

Over in Nigeria,
They have talking drum.
Yoruba, Yoruba,
Yoruba man:
Come play talking drum for me.

1st Voice: Lenge
2nd Voice: Bush Mango
3rd Voice: Gele
4th Voice: Iroko
1st Voice: Jala
2nd Voice: Sigrili
3rd Voice: Ebe
4th Voice: Mahogany
Voices (chanted):

Over in Mali, They have jembe drum.
Mandinka, Mandinka,
Mandinka man:
Come play jembe for me.



1st Voice: Zimbabwe
2nd Voice: Kenya
3rd Voice: Senegal
4th Voice: Rwanda
1st Voice: Lesotho
2nd Voice: Zambia
3rd Voice: Congo
4th Voice: Tanzania
Voices (chanted):

Over in Ethiopia,
They have kebero drum.
Amhara, Amhara,
Amhara man:
Come play kebero for me.

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This piece celebrates the drumming traditions of sub-Saharan Africa. The first verse looks at drum skin options: sheep, leopard and giraffe were also used. The second verse informs the reader of some of the events where drumming was heard. Verse three tells of tree choices – others were used - for drum construction, using the regional names. And finally, some of the other countries with a rich membranophone history.



AGASEKE BASKET

Agaseke is a type of traditional Rwandese woven basket. It has a flat, round base, and a conical fitted lid. It is made of native natural fibres with patterns in purple, green, black, yellow, and red. There are many different patterns that can be displayed on the sides of the agaseke.

These baskets are used for holding gifts and food when visiting friends or attending a wedding. Because of this, they have become a symbol of peace and goodwill amongst friends and families.

They are lidded, and incredibly tightly woven, which protects against pests and weather.

They take a long time to make, and are made by women. Being able to make them shows great dedication to friends and family, and attention to detail. They are often given to brides to wish them good luck.

They have become symbols of feminine power, and are therefore often used in women's traditional dances . The dancers proudly show their baskets to the audience.

SONGS OF AGASEKE

As the world turns pink and orange,
Sprinkling silence over Lake Muhazi,
I think of the past;
Wishing goodnight to the green-headed sunbird
And the yellow-fronted canary.

Thinking of the hands of my ancestor,
Expert in the creation of beauty.
Time of sisal and papyrus,
Evening assembly of women,
The eminent ones of basketry.

Weaved, beaded, embroidered,
In their sunset solidarity;
While the musician in the corner,
Playing the inanga strings,
Presented a backdrop of melody.

They used what Imana gave them,
Collected in the hills and valleys.
Sweet grass and banana flower,
For mats and partionings,
And the making of tapestries.

Those baskets could hold milk,
Because she wove them so tightly.
Skills learnt from her mother,
Which she passed to her daughter,
The expertise of centuries.

Known throughout the hills,
In the time of Ruganzu Ndori.
She sings to me now,
As I lay my head,
Songs of my ancestry.

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Sisal – plant **Papyrus** – plant **Inanga** – Traditional Rwandan harp **Imana** – Rwandan word for the Creator/God Ruganzu **Ndori** – founding king of the Nyiginya Kingdom **Agaseke** – Traditional Tutsi basket

AKOGO



The Akogo, also known as the thumb piano, is a very popular instrument from Uganda.

It is made up of a series of flexible metal tongues of different lengths. It makes its sound by pairing these vibrating membranes with a small wooden chamber made of kiaat wood. Kiaat is a small tree with yellow flowers that is native to southern Africa.

Musicians play the akogo with two hands. They use their thumbs to pluck the upturned end of the metal tongues, which they usually tune to the diatonic scale of G major.

In Uganda, the instrument is usually played by solo musicians. Some musicians add small metal wraps to the tongues, which makes a rattle effect as they play.

The akogo is classified by musicians as a type of instrument called a "lamellaphone" or "idiophone". There are many variations of these types of instruments across Africa.

In Zimbabwe, the instrument of the Shona peoples is the "mbira", which is another type of lamellaphone. The Pitt Rivers Museum website hosts a video of a conversation with Thabo Muleya who explains how the instrument was used in celebrations and community events such as harvests, rain dances, weddings and funerals, as well as being used by spiritual seers and traditional healers. When the country was colonised, he says that the playing of the mbira "went underground", resurfacing as a source of inspiration during the Zimbabwean struggle for independence up to 1980.

MR THUMB PIANO MAN

In Zimbabwe,
It's known as mbira.
I'm waiting for the melody man,
At the intersection of wood and metal.

In Cameroon,
They call it mabila.
I see him now,
Coming from Matonjeni Shrine.

In the Congo,
It's known as likembe.
Come Mr Thumb Piano Man,
With your Thumb and Index Duet.

In Kenya,
They call it kalimba.
Wake me gently in the morning
And lay me softly to sleep at night.

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AKOGO

I've seen you Ganda man,
Crying under the fig tree,
Playing akogo.
Melody of Try Again,
From the Rhythm of Never Give Up:
Song for the woman who said ''no.''

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Ganda - Largest ethnicity in Uganda, founders of the Buganda kingdom

Akogo – Ugandan Thumb Piano



HEADREST



African headrests support the head by cradling it along the jawline, and lifting it from the ground. In some regions of central and southern Africa, headrests can be associated with dreaming and divination.

They protect intricately prepared hairstyles from dust or from becoming flattened. Hairstyles can take a very long time to create, and they indicate the wearer's social status, age, rank, and gender.

They can retain traces of their owners and use. For example, some headrests in museum collections have a dark sheen on the upper platform and sides, which happens because the wood becomes imbued with butter-based hair dressings and other materials used to create the hairstyle.

Men in East Africa use headrests when looking after animals at night. They are sometimes carried during the day as a sign of their status.

There is a great deal of variety of design in African headrests. Sometimes, they show the original forms of the tree trunks or branches which they were carved from.

Usually, the head support is a slightly curved rectangle. The legs and decorations show the cultural style and artistry of the individual craftsperson.

HEADREST

I am a woman of the Luba,
And I live in Kikondja:
I cannot lay my head on the ground.

My hair took fifty hours,
In the style that's called Cascade:
I cannot lay my head on the ground.

It will last me for months,
If I keep my head raised:
I cannot lay my head on the ground.

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All over sub-Saharan Africa, there is the usage of headrests, for practicality as well as prestige. The Luba founded one of the great pre-colonial kingdoms of Central Africa, in the Congo region. During the 19th century, the Cascade hairstyle was popular amongst the wealthier Luba. And a sculptor, famed for carving headrests in that coiffure styling, lived in Kikondja.





FLYWHISK

In much of Africa, flywhisks are carried as prestige decoration items. They are used to emphasize gestures and speech.

They are often made of items that suggest status. Our flywhisk from Ethiopia is made of dyed horsehair. The horse is connected to military success.

The lettering on the whisk is in Ethiopian flag colours (also used by Rastifarians) and is likely to be Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia).

The ceremonial flywhisk has been part of the regalia of the Christian Ethiopian church for many centuries. They were often used by a member of the clergy or the royalty.

Amongst the Kongo of Angola and the Shona of Zimbabwe, as with other peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, it is also an essential item in the healing process.

NGANGA

Take it away from here, nganga,
Remove the unwanted visitor.
With every sweep of your fly whisk,
A little more of the uninvited,
Is erased from expulsion corner.

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Nganga – Healer/diviner

In Ethiopia, the flywhisk, especially of horsehair, is an item of prestige.

Amongst the Kongo of Angola and the Shona of Zimbabwe, as with other peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, it is an essential item in the healing process



HEADRING



The is a doughnut ring from Gambia, which is used by women to carry water on their heads.

With a ring of cloth or other material, people are able to support loads on their heads equal to their weight. It is an essential way of carrying items when there is not much access to vehicles. Sometimes children also carry items on their heads in this way.

It is also well-suited as a method of carrying items like buckets of water over rough and rocky ground.

In some cities, women migrate to work as porters using their heads to carry items around. Evidence to date suggests that it is not a harmful practice to support weights in this way, although it can leave a permanent groove in the forehead. Researchers think that many years of training help with this practice.

In some west African cultures, head-carrying has been incorporated into traditional dances. African-American women continued to practice carrying items on their heads until cars became more widespread.

DOUGHNUTS

An African Woman talks with European Children

1st Voice: Jam

2nd Voice: Apple

3rd Voice: Caramel

4th Voice: You eat yours, little ones, while I utilise mine. Yours is made of flour, mine is made of cloth. I place it on my head, to carry a pot of water.

1st Voice: Chocolate

2nd Voice: Cinnamon

3rd Voice: Vanilla

4th Voice: Yours is a sometimes treat, mine is of everyday usage.
So I give thanks for the head ring, the doughnut of my choice.
I place it on my head, to carry a calabash of herbs.

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ETHIOPIAN RUG

The handwoven rug from Ethiopia in our collection is made of goat's wool. The rug has an image of a large lion in its centre. This lion represents the Lion of Judah.

The Lion of Judah is a Jewish symbol, traditionally viewed as the symbol of the Israelite tribe of Judah. According to the Torah, the tribe consists of the descendants of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. The association between Judah and the lion can first be found in the blessing given by Jacob to his son Judah in the Book of Genesis.

Aspects of Ethiopia's history are recorded in a 13th-century document, the Kebre Negest. It tells how a group of Israelites returned with Makeda, the Queen of Sheba from her visit to King Solomon in Jerusalem. Through him, she conceived the Solomonic dynasty's founder Menelik I.

The Lion of Judah featured prominently on the old imperial flag, currency, stamps, and other items as a national symbol of Ethiopia.

The Lion of Judah is an important symbol in the Rastafari movement. It represents Emperor Haile Selassie and is also a symbol of strength, kingship, pride and African sovereignty. Rastafari believe that the mention of "The Lion of Judah" in Genesis 49:9 and Revelation 5:5 in the Bible refer to Emperor Haile Selassie I.

A HILLSIDE CONVERSATION

Passing the Rasta camp, he is once again enchanted by their music: of the Bingi drum and the Judah chant. So, because time is on his side, he sits awhile and listens. There's no where else he'd rather be right now, than on that green hillside, as voice plus drum equals beauty.

Taking a break from their offerings to God, one of them steps out of the camp. Curious to know more, Leroy, bowing to the grey-bearded one while holding his hand on his chest, says ''I love to hear the drumming and chanting, but please elder, who or what is Judah?''

Smiling, sitting on a log, then taking a Bible from the bag he has over his shoulder, he turns to the first book of the sacred compilation; to chapter forty nine, verse nine and reads...

'Judah is a young lion, my son, you return from the prey. Like a lion he crouches and lies down; like a lioness, who dares to rouse him?'

''This is the story of old man Jacob, blessings his sons: Judah was the fourth of his twelve sons.' The father sensed his potential and saw his destiny: knew he'd become a symbol of strength. So going on from there, young man, Jerusalem became the capital of the kingdom of Judah. And the lion became a symbol of that tribe and even now, The Emblem of Jerusalem, the flag of that ancient city, has a lion as the central feature. The city was founded by King David, father of Solomon, both of the tribe of Judah: Jesus also comes from that tribe. Now, remember in the Bible, there is the telling of that encounter with King Solomon and Queen Sheba?'

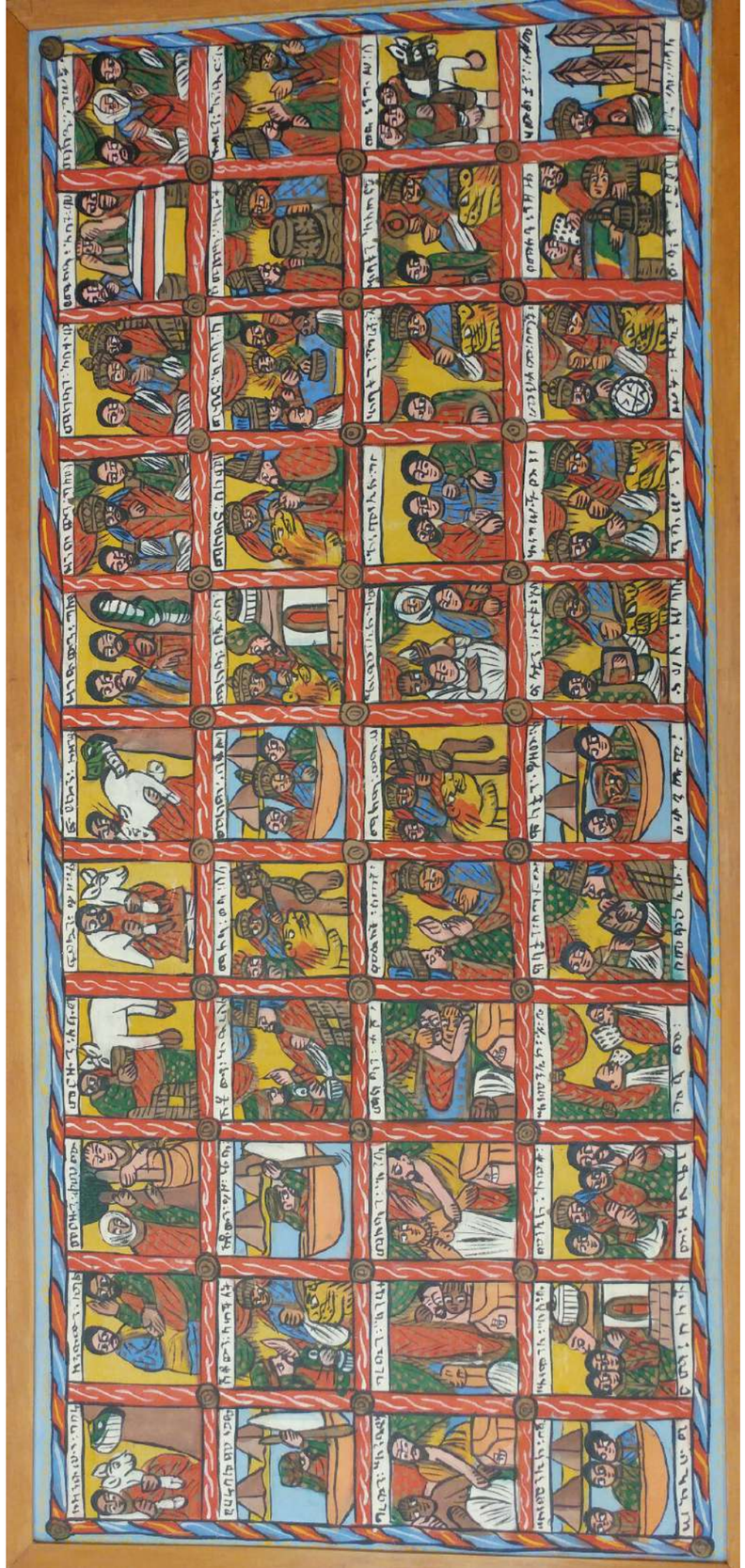
''Yes, I remember it'' ''Well, we believe as the Ethiopians do, that the child from their relationship, became the first king of Ethiopia: Menelik I. So apart from the interlude of the Zagwe dynasty, all the kings of Ethiopia trace descent from Menelik, what is called the Solomonic lineage. King Yekuna Amlak re-introduced the Solomonic lineage to the Ethiopian throne, in the 13th century. And the lion became a national symbol in Ethiopia, formerly seen on the flag, as well as the coat of arms. So every negus, meaning king, from Yekuna Amlak to the last monarch of the Solomonic line, Ras Tafari, who took the royal name Haile Selassie – Power of the Trinity – has carried the royal titles, '' King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God. So, do you see the connection?''

''Yes I understand now, why Rasta always chant the Lion of Judah; it has a deep historical connection, rooted in the Bible.''

''Yes. And we want to make sweet music, like King David, for the praising of God and for our individual uplifting: David was a master musician. And we hope that our minds will carry wisdom, like the head of King Solomon. As the people of Judah suffered persecution, so have we and like them, we shall keep going: strong as a lion. We strive for dignity, my friend and work towards peace. Anytime you want to come into the camp, step in. Tell them Ras Benji said so. May your days overflow with blessings: Ras Tafari''

''Thank you elder, for taking the time to explain. I hope God continues to watch over you'' They bow to each other, holding a hand across their respective chests; one returns to the place of praise, while the other continues to be enchanted.

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ETHIOPIAN ART

The story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, a traditional subject of Ethiopian art, appears in this rendition by Janbaru Wandemu, painted in the 1950s. Recorded in the Kebra Nagast (Glory of Kings), a literary work preserved in manuscripts from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century CE, the story may have existed as early as the sixth century CE. It tells of the descent of the the Ethiopian monarchs from Solomon and Makeda (Queen of Sheba) and of the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia.

The 44 panels, laid out according to a traditional format, progress along the horizontal rows from upper left to lower right. The story begins (panel 1) with Wainaba, the snake dragon at upper right, ruling Ethiopia. The people agree to make Angabo king if he kills this monster (2). Angabo mixes a poison (3), feeds it to his goat (4) and feeds his goat to Wainaba (6). This kills Wainaba (7), and Angabo becomes king (8–9). When Angabo dies (10), his daughter Makedda becomes queen (11). A merchant takes perfume from Queen Makedda to King Solomon and Makedda travels to Jerusalem. King Solomon sleeps with Queen Mekadda's maid and Makedda. He gives Makedda a ring as a token of faith. Queen Makedda gives birth to a son called Menilek. He grows up and travels to Jerusalem to see his father. Menilek brings the Ark of the Covenant back from Jerusalem and his mother crowns him and gives him the royal seal. Queen Makedda dies and Menilek sets up monuments to her in Aksum.

It was donated to the Rumble Museum by Professor Judith McKenzie from the University of Oxford.

THE SOLITARY GUARDIAN

He never leaves that place - the chapel and the small fenced courtyard surrounding it: he never leaves there. And he will remain there, till the saints call him; embracing him, thanking him for his decades of guardianship.

According to the Kebra Negast (Glory of the Kings), the Ethiopian national epic written in the 14th century, the Art of the Covenant was taken from Jerusalem by Menelik I, son of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba and the first king of Ethiopia. Known to them as Makeda, they believe the Queen of Sheba to be of Ethiopian birth and that it was their country that she departed from, to meet the famous king, in the Biblical telling of their encounter. It is this item, the Ark of the Covenant, the paramount relic of Jewish faith, that the monk watches over. They believe it is in Axum, making this ancient city, the most important site of Ethiopian Christianity.

In the 4th century, alongside Armenia, Ethiopia was the one of the first countries to adopt Christianity as its national faith; and the first to depict a Christian symbol on its currency: the Cross.

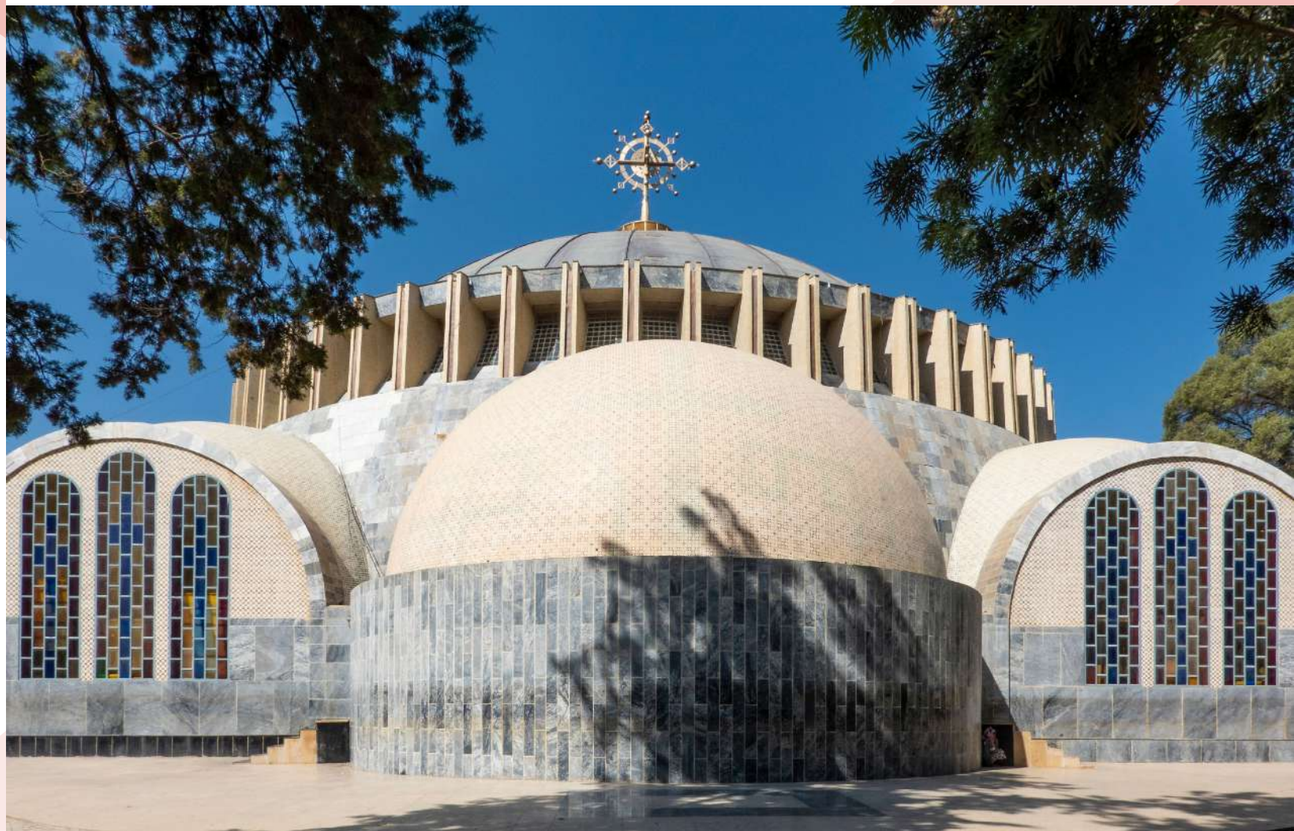
As well as a place of pilgrimage, Axum was also a great commercial hub, trading in the Red Sea and across the Indian Ocean, exporting items such as gold, ivory and frankincense. This is documented in a first century publication, entitled 'Periplus of the Erythean Sea,' where Axum is seen as one of the four super-powers of ancient trade, alongside Rome, China and Persia.

In one of the most beautiful stories of inter-faith interaction, Aksum was also the state that gave refuge to the first Muslim refugees; a Christian country, offering asylum to the first followers of Islam.

He sits there amongst all this history, but is apart from it all. He spends his days and nights fasting and praying. On days when tiredness hits harder, does the conversing with God, offer solace? When insomnia visits and won't go away, do the angels sing, an early morning lullaby?

In the Chapel of the Tablet, next to Our Lady of Zion Church, in the city of Axum, a monk watches over a relic, that no one will ever see. One day, the holy ones will call him and he will go, while someone else takes on the role of the Solitary Guardian.

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STOOLS

We have two African stools in our collection.

The one at the top is from Zimbabwe from a Ndbele village. Ndebele people are an ethnic group in southern Africa.

Small wooden stools like this are used in everyday life. This one has a simple and elegant design and is carved from local wood.

Some of the more complex ones, are supported by figures representing ancestors, and were originally symbols of authority for the elders. These ones were not used as stools.

Stools which have a post in the middle are connected to Batonga mythology. The Tonga people are a group of people from Zambia and Zimbabwe. The seat of the stool represents heaven, the base represents the earth, and the post represents a tree, which links heaven and earth.

The triangular stool is the traditional style of stool made in Pemba, using goat skins. Pemba is an island off the coast of East Africa.

The wood is painted ochre (red) black and white in Swahili style.

The Swahili speakers live along the coast of Kenya and Tanzania.

THE POOR MAN AND THE STOOL

I've been out in the fields all day,
So my family can eat isitshala.
I've tended to the corn,
Cucumber and papaya:
Now I'm devoid of zest.

I do not have much,
Numbered amongst the poorer.
Sometimes we cook locusts,
To eat with peanut butter:
Life always sends a test.

But I'm glad to have this stool,
When the working day is over.
To sit and ease out,
Around the evening fire:
When Mwari says its time to rest.

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Isitshwala – staple of the Ndebele people, made from corn.

Mwari – The Shona/Ndebele name for the Creator/God





ZANZIBAR DOORFRAME

"All over sub-Saharan Africa, those expert in the fashioning of wood, have put that high skill level, to the embellishment of doors.

Zanzibar and Lamu, were two of the East African city states, trading across the Indian Ocean, renowned for their door sculpting. Remembering that Swahili comes from the Arabic word ''sahil,'' meaning coast, so like the food and the language, the door embellishment was influenced by the people the Bantu encountered on the Indian Ocean, such as the Omani Arabs and the Gujarati Indians.

Popular motifs included the lotus flower, the rosette and the palm and frankincense trees. These doors were for the wealthier residents, teak often being imported for their use. The poorer citizen would use the wood of the mango tree. A great example of Swahili door sculpture is the House of Wonders, Zanzibar.

The two lions above the door, resemble an image from a coat of arms and the door is framed by a geometric design of diamonds.

When I think of words like ornamentation and ornate, I think of the adornments to be found on the doors and chairs of Zanzibar and Lamu."

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ITEMS OF A KARAMOJONG WARRIOR

These artefacts are essential everyday items of a Karamojong warrior.

They include from top left clockwise to bottom left:

a bangle in brass which is probably made from an ammunition case, wrist knife, a snuff bottle on cotton tie, a hair comb possibly made from bicycle spokes, and a smoking pipe from western Uganda made of soapstone.

The Karamojong live in north-east Uganda, occupying an area equivalent to one tenth of the country. The name Karamojong comes from the phrase "ekar ngimojong", meaning "the old men can walk no farther".

Their main livelihood is herding livestock. Crop cultivation is a secondary activity, undertaken only in areas where it is possible.

The availability of food and water is a challenge, affecting the Karamojong's interaction with other ethnic groups. The Karamojong are in frequent conflict with their neighbours in Uganda,Sudan and Kenya as a result of cattle raids.

This is because cattle are a key element in the negotiations for a bride. Young men use the raids both as a rite of passage and a way of increasing their herds to gain more status.

THE TOBACCO MAN

1st Voice

Time to ease out,
Karamojong Man;
The hours of alertness have passed.
The animals are safe in their stockade,
And the leopards are roaming elsewhere.

2nd Voice

Seated,
He removes from his scrota bag,
The horn of a goat
And a portion of plant.
As the fire burns,
And the children begin to sleep,
The Crucial Warrior,
Becomes the Tobacco Man.

2nd Voice

Time to sail away,
Karamojong Man;
You have fulfilled your task today.
As the village begins to yawn,
And Peace bids the people "goodnight."

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ETHIOPIAN JEWELLERY

The Beta Israel are a Jewish community that developed and lived for centuries in the area of the Kingdom of Aksum and the Ethiopian Empire, Most of the Beta Israel community emigrated to Israel in the late 20th century. They became well-known for their skill as silversmiths.

The Beta Israel lived in northern and northwestern Ethiopia, in small villages spread over a wide territory, alongside Muslims and Christians.

They suffered religious persecution and a large number were forced into Christianity during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Beta Israel made contact with other Jewish communities in the twentieth century. The Israeli government decided in 1977 that the Israeli Law of Return was to be applied to the Beta Israel.

At the end of 2019, there were 155,300 people of Ethiopian descent in Israel., more than half of whom had been born in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel is mostly composed of Beta Israel.

THE CHANT OF THE SILVERSMITH

1st Voice (chanted)

Some call us Falasha,

Others Beta Israel:

I'm an Ethiopian Jew.

I live in the mountains,

The region called Tigray:

My name is Yosef Alemu.

2nd Voice (spoken)

He makes the Star of David, as well as prayer beads: ornaments to adorn the hair.

1st Voice (chanted)

My wife is the potter,

I am the silversmith:

We work and we travel together.

We will go to Zion,

So until we get there:

We'll continue to praise the Creator.

2nd Voice (spoken)

Ankle chains and earrings, bracelets and finger rings: we have performed this work for centuries.

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QUIVER

This quiver is from Uganda, and it is made of cowhide and wood. It probably belonged to the Karamojong people.

The arrows they used for hunting were often poisoned with a particular root.



RED DUIKER

This skin from a red duiker was found in a remote cave in Karamoja district of Uganda in the late 1960s.

Skins would have many uses, including the making of leather objects and floor mats. These antelopes are not found in Uganda now but normally live in southern Tanzania and south in wooded dry country.

Red forest duikers tend to roam alone or in pairs.

The cry of red forest duikers is very distinctive. It is loud and piercing, sounding like something between a snort and a whistle.

CHANT OF THE BLUE DUIKER

I thank the Creator,
For skills of the hunter,
The skin of the duiker,
That now covers my drum.

Drought didn't come this year, so we know of abundance. My father helped to clear the field, my mother was amongst the women who sowed it; so everyone can count, the blessings of yam and cassava.

(chanted)
Nja, Nja,
Chanting Nja, Nja:
Our annual harvest festival.

Ate fresh forest litter,
Consumer of flowers,
A digger of tubers:
She now covers my drum.

In the courtyard of the palace and in the market square across from it, people have come to dance and celebrate, the coming of millet and peanuts. We are the Bamum of western Cameroon.

(chanted)
Nja, Nja,
Chanting Nja, Nja:
Our annual harvest festival.

The green panorama,
Under forest cover,
Genus Philantomba:
Her soul covers my drum

All roads lead to Fumban, our capital city. We pay homage to the ancestors, celebrate King Njoya and give thanks for each other. While playing the drum, I think of a little antelope, so I chant of the blue duiker.

(chanted)
Nja, Nja,
Chanting Nja, Nja:
Our annual harvest festival.

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WARI GAME BOARD

This is the board from a sowing game known as "Wari", "Oware" and "Ouri".

It has been played throughout Africa for many hundreds of years.

The board consists of a row of pits for each player, and often (though not in this case) includes a larger pit, called a "store", for each player to place their captured seeds.

COME SIT ACROSS FROM ME

Some call it mancala,
Others say bao,
We've always known it as wari.
Come, Let us do battle,
On this board with stones:
Come sit across from me.

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FLUTES:
YANKASA MELODIES

1st Voice: Some call us Fulani.

2nd Voice: Others say Fula.

3rd Voice: Many use Peul.

4th Voice: Someone said Fulbe.

There is a vine waiting for you, resident on the Niger River. It's got your name on it Fulani man, waiting for you there by the river bank, but be careful of the snake nestling there. Tambin knows you will give thanks for cutting it; that after the three holes are put in it, the vine will be used to sweeten and soothe the lives of the people, who traverse the Sahel and the savannah, caring for their bovine companions. The flute of The Zebu Ballads, Sagas of the Red Sokoto and of the Yankasa Melodies.

1st Voice: Across Mauritania and Mali

2nd Voice: Through Senegal and Guinea

3rd Voice: Burkina Faso and Niger

4th Voice: Nigeria and Cameroon.

Fulani - As well as being the great herders of West Africa, the Fulani have also produced great scholars and goldsmiths.

Tambin - The traditional flute of the Fulani.

Zebu – species of cattle **Red Sokoto** - species of goat

Yankasa – species of sheep



CUPPING HORN

This horn from Uganda was used for the technique of cupping to a patient.

Cupping uses instruments such as animal horns or artefacts made for the purpose, and involves drawing blood to the surface of the body.

The therapist puts special cups on the skin to create suction. The cup causes the tissue underneath the cup to be drawn up and then swell, causing an increase in blood flow to the affected area.

Cupping has been practiced across the world, and there are different methods of carrying out the procedure, such as wet cupping and dry cupping.

It is classed as an alternative medicine, because there is no scientific evidence that it works, and it can potentially cause harm.



COOKING KNIFE: GIHANGA

When I see a knife made in Africa, my mind invariably goes to the central region of the continent, where iron working seems to have reached its apogee, with the making of the throwing knives.

In the lands of raffia,

And the ingots of copper.

And with iron, came the hero: the culture hero. Such figures as Mbidi Kiluwe of the Luba, Chibindi Ilunga of the Chokwe and Gihanga of the Tutsi: Congo, Angola and Rwanda. Amongst other pioneering aspects associated with this iconic triumvirate, is new methodology in iron working and hunting.

Along the Congo River,

Kasai and Lualaba.

The Mangbetu kingdom of northern Congo and the Kuba kingdom in the south, were both renowned for these items of war and hunting. Apparently, the name Kuba, meaning lightning, was given to them by their neighbours the Luba, in recognition of their skills with the knives

Yam, sorghum and banana,

Millet, beans and cassava.

Raffia – species of palm tree **Copper ingots** – currency and gifts

Kasai – Congo tributary **Lualaba** – Congo tributary

Yam – indigenous tuber **Sorghum**– indigenous grain



SOAPSTONE CROCODILE: COME WITH ME TO TABAKA

Come with me to Tabaka,
Those hills of south west Kenya.
Where the men mine and carve,
Women sand and polish,
In the land of the Kisii:
Kingdom of Soapstone Wonders.
A man wields a panga,
And breaks a rock.
Come with me to Tabaka,
The region called Nyanza,
Where wonders do not cease.
You can have a lampshade,
Or a candle holder,
In the kingdom of masters,
Where carvers still wear the crown.
A man moves a chisel,
And beauty breaks out.

Kisii: people of south-west Kenya. The soapstone in the area, is named after them: Kisii stone. **Panga** – a machete









BASKETS & MAT: COCOS NUCIFERA

In the making of the dhows,
They don't need nails or tacks:
Swahili use coconut fibre.
For lampshades and table mats,
Picture frames and mattresses:
Using coconut fibre.
Mombasa and Pemba,
Kenya and Tanzania:
Expert with Cocos nucifera.

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Mombasa and Pemba were two of the medieval East African city states – from Somalia to Mozambique - that traded across the Indian Ocean.

This booklet was designed and produced by the Rumble Museum about its African Artefact Collection. All poetry is by Natty Mark Samuels, founder of the Oxford African School.

The Rumble Museum is the first fully accredited museum spread across the site of a busy, diverse and vibrant state school. Find out more at www.rumblemuseum.org.uk

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