University of Cambridge

African Collections Futures

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This report includes racist language reflecting the periods of the sources, references to colonial violence and the collecting of human/ancestral remains.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Collections Connections Communities
Using collections to answer the big questions of our time

Summary

Produced over fifteen months of research, *African Collections Futures* introduces African collections across the University of Cambridge's museums (eight museums and the Botanic Garden), its University Library, and other departments and institutions. A summary version of this report is available here.

There are an estimated 350,000 artefacts from across Africa in the University, which includes 193,000 manuscript fragments found in Egypt now housed at the University Library, an estimated 110,000 archaeological artefacts and 27,300 anthropological items in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, with 17,400 ancient Egyptian and Sudanese artefacts at The Fitzwilliam Museum. Over 140,000 specimens of animals, rocks, fossils and plants from Africa are spread across the natural history museums. The modern countries with the greatest representation in terms of numbers, visibility, and research exposure in the University collections include Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, and Kenya.

Cambridge's African collections are broadly colonial collections, and this is reflected by the period when most materials arrived from Africa (late 1800s–1960s), by the networks and professions of people involved in the acquisition and extraction of materials, and by the ideologies behind some of the collecting practices, display and curation.

African contributions to the collections in the form of creative, intellectual and physical labour are largely hidden or overlooked.

Digital access to the collections through searchable online catalogues and images varies widely, with greater digitisation and many more photographs in the cultural collections than natural history collections, and limited access to museum archival materials.

There are several well-documented examples of African artefacts that were looted, including those related to events that have been the focus of ongoing or complete repatriation requests at other institutions in Europe and the United States.

Nonetheless, there have been very few formal repatriation requests made to the University for the return of African artefacts, and only one completed African repatriation by a University of Cambridge museum, in 1962 to Uganda. The high profile 2021 repatriation of the Benin Cockerel to Nigeria was completed by Jesus College, one of Cambridge's 31 colleges. The colleges are outside the scope of this research project.

Recommendations informed by the findings of this research offer ways forward in the areas of hiring, research, documentation, teaching, collaborations, and public access to collections. A key theme is ensuring that African people are centred in these recommendations as experts and communities of origin to begin addressing the historical lack of access to so much of the African material at the University.

The report is structured around four major categories: Category A: artefacts made by African people; Category B: natural history specimens; Category C: materials that significantly reference or depict African people or Africa; Category D: artefacts made with material from Africa. The report also includes a chapter on human/ancestral remains cared for at the University of Cambridge.

Contents

Introduction

Mapping African collections at Cambridge

The *African Collections Futures* project seeks to develop a better sense of where Africa-related objects and materials are present across the University of Cambridge, how they were acquired, and what forms of engagements researchers, African research and heritage institutions, and African diaspora and communities of origin have with these objects, and what more can be done. The scope covers the nine institutions (eight museums and the Botanic Garden) that make up the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM), the University Library, and less well-known collections such as those in various university departments and affiliated institutions. The Cambridge colleges' collections are not within the scope of this initial project.

The museums at Cambridge date back to the eighteenth century, with a cluster of collections founded and museums opened in the nineteenth century (University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge: 1814, The Fitzwilliam Museum: 1816, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology: 1884, Museum of Classical Archaeology: 1884) during the boom in the foundation of European museums. In a discussion of the history of African collections in European museums, George Okello Abungu and Webber Ndoro wrote: 'Western museums and academic institutions have not only been beneficiaries of the colonial project of illegal appropriation of African heritage but were an active part of it'.[1] Regarding the University of Cambridge museums, most of the African artefacts were acquired during the period of British colonisation, using a variety of methods ranging from gifting to purchase, commissioning, excavation, and violent extraction including theft, confiscation and looting. Plant, animal, and mineral specimens were often acquired through collecting or scientific expeditions during the British colonial period. Some of these excavations and expeditions were funded by the University, its colleges, and the museums. Further, the museums include materials donated or sold by individuals who were colonial administrators or otherwise closely connected to colonial governments, with some also being former Cambridge academics. In exploring Cambridge's African collections, *African Collections Futures* is thus situated within recent work at the University of Cambridge Museums tackling wider questions of the museums' relationships to colonisation and enslavement, including the Legacies of Empire and Enslavement programme, and two exhibitions at

[1] George Okello Abungu and Webber Ndoro, *Cultural Heritage Management in Africa: the Heritage of the Colonized* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), pp. 6–7. The same argument was made by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy among others: 'The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics', trans. by Drew S. Burk, Report 2018-26 (Paris: Seuil, 2018). https://www.about-africa.de/images/sonstiges/2018/sarr_savoy_en.pdf (pdf), 252 pp. [accessed 19 November 2024].

the Fitzwilliam Museum.[2] That work is itself in conversation with University and college initiatives exploring legacies of slavery and empire.[3]

This research project is part of Collections-Connections-Communities (CCC), a University of Cambridge Strategic Research Initiative. CCC provides a convening space for researchers in Cambridge and beyond to amplify innovative, impactful and interdisciplinary collections-based research that benefits our communities and contributes to their resilience and wellbeing. With research encompassing all the countries and island nations of Africa, throughout the human story from our origins as a species to the present, *African Collections Futures* covers many tens of thousands of artefacts, plant, animal and mineral specimens, and hundreds of thousands of pages of archival papers, photographs, maps, and a range of other materials. As such, this report is an introduction, not a comprehensive directory, to African collections at Cambridge, and an invitation to pursue further research, collaboration, and community engagement.

Mapping African collections elsewhere

In November 2018, Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy launched the *Report on the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics*. Commissioned by the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and focused on Francophone Africa, the Sarr-Savoy report offered a detailed exploration of restitution (the return of cultural artefacts to their original owners), the many ways in which French museums benefitted from colonial administration, and recommendations to facilitate the return of African material culture to Africa.[4] The report had a seismic impact on the heritage sector, re-energizing and amplifying calls for restitution to Africa and elsewhere that had been simmering for decades, and became a popular text in discussions on the place and future of African artefacts in Western institutions. In the last five years, there has been a marked increase in work in UK, European, and American museums focused on African collections in their care. Examples include 'Rethinking Relationships,' a collaborative project between Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, the Horniman Museum in London, the World Museum in Liverpool and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge; the Cameroon-Germany collaboration 'Reversed History of Collections;' the 'Making African Connections' project at Sussex and Kent museums; work at the Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the London Science Museum, and the National Museums Scotland, and the collaboration announced in December 2023 between French and German institutions of €2.3 million in funding over three years supporting projects on provenance

[2] University of Cambridge Museums, 'Exploring the Legacies of Empire and Enslavement', *UCM Blog* (blog), 22 July 2020. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/07/22/exploring-the-legacies-of-empire-and-enslavement/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; University of Cambridge Museums, 'Power & Memory', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden* (website), 2022–2024. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/theme/power-and-memory [accessed 14 October 2024]; Jessica Keating, 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance', (archived exhibition), 21 September 2023. https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/black-atlantic [accessed 19 November 2024].

[3] Sabine Cadeau and Nicolas Bell-Romero, 'University of Cambridge Advisory Group on Legacies of Enslavement Final Report' (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2022). https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/history/legacies-of-enslavement [accessed 18 November 2024]. A forthcoming exhibition continuing on from 'Black Atlantic', called 'Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition,' will open at The Fitzwilliam Museum in February 2025.

[4] Savoy and Sarr, 'Restitution of African Cultural Heritage'.

research for African collections.[5] Such African collections projects have resulted in more detailed provenance information, new research on collections contexts, greater engagements with communities of origin, richer digital and visual representations of the African objects concerned, and in a few cases, the return of artefacts to Africa.

With significant proportions of collections originating during the colonial period of various European nations, recent projects on African collections have produced new research to demonstrate the myriad ways in which European museums benefitted from the extractive nature and wide networks of empire. For example, the 2020–2023 Cameroonian-German research project 'Reversed History of Collections' focused on Cameroonian artefacts distributed across museums in Germany, using a critical reading of museum inventories to reveal obscured and at times exploitative collections contexts, including the difficult conditions under which Cameroonian men, women, and children worked as porters to physically carry their cultural heritage – including looted objects – to the coast for transport to Germany.[6]

The Cambridge colleges

This report does not include the collections held by Cambridge's thirty-one colleges, though these offer significant scope for research. The colleges are independent charities that are not part of the University, though they host University students, and their fellows contribute to University teaching, research and other activities. College masters and fellows have a long history of developing college

[5] Pitt Rivers Museum and others, 'Rethinking Relationships and Building Trust around African Collections', *Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford* (website), November 2020. https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-relationships [accessed 18 November 2024]; Technische Universität Berlin, 'Reversed History of Collections. Cameroon's Cultural Heritage in German Museums', *Modern Art History, Technische Universität Berlin* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.tu.berlin/en/kuk/research/projects/current-research-projects/umgekehrte-sammlungsgeschichten-mapping-kamerun-in-deutschen-museen [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Making African Connections Digital Archive* (website), [n.d.]. https://makingafricanconnections.org/s/archive/page/index [accessed 18 November 2024]; Carlee S. Forbes, Kate Anderson, Marci Jefcoat Burton, and Erica P. Jones, 'African Objects, Colonial Collecting, and Materiality', *Fowler Museum at UCLA* (website), 22 July 2021. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/660b8081472248abb3e5be597a5d46aa [accessed 19 November 2024]; Wellcome Collection, 'The Colonial Roots of our Collections, and our Response', *Wellcome Collection, London Science Museum* (website), 4 June 2021. https://works.wellcomecollection.org/about-us/the-colonial-roots-of-our-collections--and-our-response [accessed 19 November 2024]; National Museums Scotland, 'Reveal and Connect: African and Caribbean Collections in Scottish Museums', *National Museums Scotland* (website), 20 September 2023. https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections/departments/global-arts-cultures-design/projects/reveal-and-connect [accessed 18 November 2024]; Centre Mark Bloch, 'Launch-Event of the Franco-German Fund on the Provenance of Cultural Objects from sub-Saharan Africa', *Centre Mark Bloch* (website), 21 January 2024. https://cmb.hu-berlin.de/zentrum/neuigkeit/launch-event-of-the-franco-german-fund-on-the-provenance-of-cultural-obejcts-from-sub-saharan-africa [accessed 18 November 2024].

[6] Sebastian-Manès Sprute, '"Trägerkalamitäten". Kulturgutentzug und die Vernichtung von Arbeitskraft', in *Atlas der Abwesenheit: Kameruns Kulturerbe in Deutschland/Atlas of Absence Cameroon's Cultural Heritage in Germany*, ed. Mikaél Assilkinga and others (Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net-ART-Books, 2023), pp. 44–56. doi: 10.11588/arthistoricum.1219. Open access translations in French and English (generated by DeepL) are available here: https://www.tu.berlin/en/kuk/research/projects/current-research-projects/umgekehrte-sammlungsgeschichten-mapping-kamerun-in-deutschen-museen/atlas-der-abwesenheit [accessed 18 November 2024].

collections,[7] for example, Pembroke College donated almost one hundred Egyptian archaeological objects to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology around 1960 (one Archaic Egyptian object that the Pembroke College Master and Fellows donated, a limestone dummy vase, was reportedly found in a college attic in 1958).[8] There are also African objects housed in some of Cambridge's colleges today though the total number, regional representation, and type is currently not publicly known. The most well-known example, the looted Okukor, or cockerel, from the Kingdom of Benin that had been in Jesus College since 1905 was repatriated to representatives of the Oba of Benin and Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments in 2021.[9] Aside from artefacts, many colleges hold archival material detailing members' activities in Africa, with African institutions, scientific work on the continent, or correspondence with those in Africa, including individuals that donated objects to the University's museums. This material would be useful in developing deeper provenance research of objects in the University's museums in addition to supporting teaching, research, and community engagement with wider Cambridge collections. Where an individual in this report had a college affiliation, this is included in brackets after their name.

Collections-focused study of Africa at Cambridge

Students and staff research various aspects of Africa in disciplines across the University, ranging from clinical sciences to development studies, the archaeology of the continent, to = a Master's degree in African Studies. The Centre of African Studies was founded in 1965, providing a locus for university-based and visiting scholars researching Africa across disciplines, and administers the African Studies MPhil degree.[10] African collections are used in the teaching of individual modules within degrees, particularly those most closely associated with the museums; for example, curators at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are involved in collections-based teaching in the Department of Archaeology and the Department of Social Anthropology. The Olduvai Gorge collections from Tanzania, for example, play a pivotal role in first-year handling sessions for undergraduate archaeology students. These sessions provide a unique, hands-on learning experience, allowing students to directly engage with artefacts that are central to understanding human evolution. Undergraduate and MPhil students taking the Archaeology of Africa paper are also required to undertake a detailed object-based study as part of their assessment for the paper.

However, larger and more sustained study is usually driven by the individual interests of postgraduate students, curators or researchers. Christ's College hosts the four-year Lady Wallis

[7] One of the few publicly available resources to explore a Cambridge college collection of material culture as well as written work is the Jesus College Collections website: *Jesus College Cambridge Collections.* https://collegecollections.jesus.cam.ac.uk/index.php/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[8] *Limestone dummy vase*. [Pottery] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1960.164 A https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/414499/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Annual Report of the Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology on the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 1959–60', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (report), 1960. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/files/media/ar1959-60-76th.pdf (pdf), 5 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024].

[9] Jesus College, Cambridge, 'Jesus College Returns Benin Bronze in World First', *Jesus College, University of Cambridge* (website), 27 October 2021. https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/jesus-college-returns-benin-bronze-world-first [accessed 18 November 2024].https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/jesus-college-returns-benin-bronze-world-first

[10] *Centre of African Studies* (website). https://www.african.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 14 October 2024].

Budge Junior Research Fellowship in Egyptology for scholars with PhDs, but this fellowship is not specifically aligned to a focus on the museum collections.[11] There are several routes specifically for African scholars that could fund their research on the collections at Cambridge. The Cambridge-Africa programme funds research collaborations between African researchers and Cambridge and has facilitated collections-focused research, while the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is the largest university-wide funding body specifically for African Master's students, and is intended to have funded five hundred students by 2030.[12] Of the individual fellowships across university institutions and colleges that support African researchers, the McDonald Institute for Archaeology has developed a network of postgraduate African archaeologists and visiting fellows, including through the twelve-month Research Fellowship in Black Heritage or Identity, introduced in 2022. The Smuts Memorial Fund also offers opportunities for both short-term and longer (3–4 years) fellowships for scholars from African Commonwealth countries to spend time in Cambridge, and this has enabled some scholars in past years to work on African collections and archives. Such funding provides opportunities for scholars to develop their research at Cambridge, however, there is currently no fellowship specifically for the study of the African collections at the University.

What is Africa? Who is African?

This project focuses on the entire African continent and its islands today. With much of the material collected during the colonial period, country names and borders do not always match those we use today; in general, an effort has been made to use both the names of places as recorded in historic documentation in addition to those used today. Looking at Africa as a whole, including Egypt, which is often considered separate from the rest of the continent (see Category A), creates opportunities of thinking of Africa as part of the wider world in earlier periods, in particular, the Roman and Greek empires, and the early modern Islamic world. For example, in The Fitzwilliam Museum there are objects from what in modern political and geographical terms are the countries of Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Algeria but were part of city-states, states, colonies or empires and were thus not conceptualised as 'Africa' in ancient times, nor in the modern teaching of the ancient world, but rather as part of the 'Greek and Roman' world. Material includes pottery that was produced in Africa, but not necessarily made by African people. An example is material from Naukratis, a seventh century BCE port city in Egypt where, according to recent re-examinations of older research, Egyptians lived alongside Greeks, Cypriots, and people from elsewhere.[13] One of a handful of artefacts from ancient Egypt at the University Library is a wooden mummy label with Greek text incised into the wood on one side, and on the other side are two lines of text written in ink in

[11] Christ's College Cambridge, 'Lady Wallis Budge Junior Research Fellowship in Egyptology', *Christ's College, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/lady-wallis-budge-junior-research-fellowship-egyptology [accessed 14 October 2024].

[12] Cambridge-Africa ALBORADA Research Fund, 'Funded Projects 2023/24', *Cambridge-Africa* (website), 2023/2024. https://www.cambridge-africa.cam.ac.uk/initiatives/the-alborada-research-fund/funded-projects-2023/ [accessed 7 November 2024]; University of Cambridge, 'Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program', *University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.mastercardfoundation.fund.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 14 October 2024].

[13] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Naukratis Egypt', *The Fitzwilliam Museum Collection*. https://collection.beta.fitz.ms/id/terminology/term-111311 [accessed 14 October 2024]; Villing, Alexandra, and others, 'Naukratis – Greeks in Egypt', *British Museum* (website), January 2004–March 2024. https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/projects/naukratis-greeks-egypt [accessed 14 October 2024].

Demotic Egyptian, an ancient Egyptian language.[14] Both the Museum of Classical Archaeology and The Fitzwilliam Museum hold ancient sculptures and ceramics depicting people with dark or black skin and features associated with Black and/or African people today, but neither the concept of race as we understand it today, nor the political geography of Africa existed in the time of the creation of these materials.[15] In a brief video for Museum Remix, a 2020 UCM experiment with museum storytelling, Sade Ojelade, Museum and Collections Assistant at the Museum of Classical Archaeology, described a 3cm figurine head excavated at Naukratis, using it to challenge assumptions of ancient Greek and Roman peoples as white, while also questioning the use of the term 'African' which is a modern descriptor.[16] In short, 'Africa' and African identity were not static concepts, though the majority of the material covered in this report originates in what is understood today as the continent of Africa.

[14] *Wooden mummy label*. *c*. 210 CE. At: Cambridge University Library. MS Ostracon.141. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-OSTRACON-00141/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[15] One recent and extensive survey of modern/ancient ideas of race and geography in Ancient Greece and Rome, including in museum displays is Sarah F Derbew, *Untangling Blackness in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[16] University of Cambridge Museums, 'Museum Remix', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/museumremix [accessed 14 October 2024]; University of Cambridge Museums, 'Museum Remix: Unheard - Figurine from Naukratis', *YouTube* (video), 21 July 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGfRjPKp_zU [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Terracotta figure*. *c*. 100 BCE–100 CE. [Sculpture] At: Museum of Classical Archaeology. NA566.

Image 1: *Terracotta figure, male head from Naukratis, Egypt*. First century BCE to first century CE. Museum of Classical Archaeology. NA566. Photograph: British Museum. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

This report does not focus on objects made by African people outside of the continent. Such work would include artefacts made by enslaved African people in the Americas and the Caribbean. Projects like the 2023–24, 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance' exhibition at The Fitzwilliam Museum have highlighted examples of both the materials produced, and the intellectual and physical labour of enslaved Africans in the Americas and Caribbean in their collection and curation.[17] Art created by Africans in the diaspora is of a fairly limited amount in the University of Cambridge Museums collections, though the current focus of The Fitzwilliam Museum collections development has led to a number of acquisitions by high profile artists in the African diaspora including a piece by Kenyan-British ceramist, Magdalene Odundo DBE, that joined an acquisition from decades earlier,

[17] Victoria Avery and Jake Subryan Richards, eds, *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023).

both of which were part of a 2021–2022 Fitzwilliam Museum exhibition, 'Magdalene Odundo in Cambridge'.[18]

Method

The development of this report was supported by a twelve-member Advisory Group representing different university collections, the Centre of African Studies, archaeology and heritage specialists, including individuals from the History of Science Museum at the University of Oxford, National Museums of Kenya, Iziko Museums of South Africa, and the Cambridge African Network. The Advisory Group helped shape the focus of the research, read and commented on drafts, and provided connections to practitioners with interests and expertise in this research. Research processes included surveys sent to the museums and across all the departments in the University which provided an indication of where major collections were, the regional representation, and research potential. Visits to all the museums, the University Library's Special Collections, and departments with major Africa-related materials developed an informal network of staff including curators, archivists, and collections managers who work closely with these materials. They were able to provide invaluable information for this report, including highlighting items not yet catalogued or available to search online. Documentation backlogs across the collections means there is material relevant to this report that cannot be covered here. A review of museum information online, including online catalogues, virtual exhibitions, and recorded talks gave a sense of the overall digital representation and accessibility of the collections. Analysis of published and archival material concerning the history and development of the museums, key figures in their histories, and related academic disciplines situated these collections in their historical context. More recent literature on inclusive and decolonial museum practice provided critical approaches to exploring these collections today. Findings from this project were presented at seminars, informal internal institutional talks, and conferences – both in-person and virtual – to a range of audiences including students, academics, museum staff, and the wider public in Cambridge, Oxford, Nairobi, and Kampala. Feedback and questions from these activities informed the final report. Finally, the report was peer reviewed by experts in the field of African material culture and museum practice.

Structure of the report

The report is structured around four major categories, chosen for ease of research, though collectors sometimes built collections that now span multiple museums, and there are objects that could be placed in more than one category. These are: Category A: artefacts made by African people; Category B: natural history specimens; Category C: materials that significantly reference or depict African people or Africa; Category D: artefacts made with material from Africa. The report also covers the human/ancestral remains at the University of Cambridge. A final chapter focuses on restitution and repatriation, and particularly returns to Africa from the University, with the report concluding with a set of recommendations for future priorities.

[18] The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Magdalene Odundo in Cambridge', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (archived exhibition), 2021. https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/magdalene-odundo-in-cambridge [accessed 18 November 2024].

The University of Cambridge Collections

Overview

The eight museums and Botanic Garden that make up the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) all include material from Africa. While most of the African archaeological and ethnographic material is at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and The Fitzwilliam Museum, and the natural history specimens in the Museum of Zoology and the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, the other museums also have materials from the continent, though it is quite limited in comparison. Three further university collections are part of the wider University collections network and within the scope of this project: the University Library, the Cambridge University Herbarium, and the Duckworth Laboratory. The Duckworth Laboratory will be discussed separately and in-depth in the chapter on human/ancestral remains. What follows is a very brief overview of these institutions, including the types of material cared for in these collections, the geographic strengths either in terms of the large size or significance of the collections, and links with further information on the respective institutions' histories and collections. This section is organized roughly in order of the institutions with the most to those with the least material from Africa.

University of Cambridge collections founding dates

- University Library: 1416
- The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences: 1728
- Cambridge University Herbarium: 1761
- Cambridge University Botanic Garden: 1762
- University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge: 1814
- The Fitzwilliam Museum: 1816
- Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology: 1884
- Museum of Classical Archaeology: 1884
- The Polar Museum: 1920
- Whipple Museum of the History of Science: 1944
- Kettle's Yard: 1957

Estimated size of the collections today

- University Library: 10,000,000
- Museum of Zoology: 2,000,000
- Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences: 1,200,000
- Cambridge University Herbarium: 1,100,000
- Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology: 1,000,000
- The Fitzwilliam Museum: 500,000
- Museum of Classical Archaeology: 15,000
- Cambridge University Botanic Garden: 14,000

- Whipple Museum of the History of Science: 7,000
- The Polar Museum: 5,000
- Kettle's Yard: 1,600

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology[1]

Materials: Artefacts made by people in most parts of the world, covering two million years of human history. Examples include ceramics, weapons, personal adornment, tools, spiritual artefacts, textiles, sculptures. Major collection of ethnographic photographs. Significant collections of modern and contemporary art by Indigenous artists and from various regions across the Global South.

Geographic Strengths: Cambridgeshire, Oceania.

Major sources of collection: The museum was formed with four founding gifts, three of which featured material from the Pacific. The collection was developed through donations and purchases from Cambridge academics, students, and their wider networks, with colleges also depositing their materials. Acquisitions continue today.

Teaching: The museum forms part of the Department of Social Anthropology and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department as well as in the Department of Archaeology.

Online catalogue: collections.maa.cam.ac.uk Searchable by country or region, name of ethnic group, collector, and other categories. Includes photographs for over 80,000 catalogue records

Website: maa.cam.ac.uk/about/

The Fitzwilliam Museum

Materials: Artefacts made by people in Europe, North Africa, and Asia, dating from 10,000 BCE to the present. Examples include paintings, works on paper, ceramics, sculptures, textiles, coins and medals, furniture.

Geographic Strengths: Europe, Egypt and the Mediterranean, Iran, India, China, Japan, Korea.

Teaching: Academic members of The Fitzwilliam Museum's staff use the collections for teaching in courses including archaeology, art history, English, and museum studies.

Major sources of collection: Following a major founding collection bequeathed by Richard Fitzwilliam in 1816, the 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam Merrion (Trinity Hall College), and a large sum of money to support the foundation of a museum, the collection was developed through donations and purchases, which continue today. A large part of Fitzwilliam's wealth came from his grandfather, Sir William Decker, who amassed this wealth in part through the transatlantic trade of enslaved African

[1] The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology was founded as the Museum of General and Local Archaeology and changed name several times in the following decades until it settled on its current name in 1978.

people. That legacy was part of the impetus for the 2023/24 exhibition at the museum, 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance'.[2]

Online catalogue: fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explore-our-collection. Advanced search filters allow for refinement of results by department, maker, date, among other categories. Includes photographs for many catalogue records.

Website: fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/ https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/about-us/our-history

University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge[3]

Materials: Animal skins, bones, shells, insects, and specimens preserved in spirit.

Geographic Strengths: UK specimens and those from countries that were formerly part of the British Empire.

Major sources of collection: The collections were mainly developed through donations of materials collected by individuals, by gift/exchange with other institutions and though scientific expeditions, including those funded by Cambridge University, and through donations and purchases from private collectors. While collecting continues today, most of the collections were acquired during the peak period of these expeditions, between 1865–1915.

Teaching: The museum is part of the Department of Zoology and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department.

Online catalogue: museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/collection/online Searchable by Western scientific name, common name, location, collector, and other categories. Includes very few photographs.

Website: museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences[4]

Materials: Rocks, minerals, fossils, and building stones.

Geographic Strengths: UK (particularly around Cambridgeshire) and Western Europe, though there are specimens from around the world.

Major sources of collection: The collections were developed primarily through donations and purchases from private collectors, the deposits of geological surveys, Cambridge students and researchers, which continue today.

Teaching: The museum is part of the Department of Earth Sciences and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department.

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[2] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Founding the Fitzwilliam', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/about-us/founding-the-fitzwilliam [accessed 14 October 2024].
[3] The Museum began with its earliest collections being acquired in 1814, as the 'Museum of Comparative Anatomy' and opened at its current location in 1865 as the 'Museum of Comparative Anatomy and Zoology'.
[4] Founded in 1728 as the Woodwardian Museum, the Museum was renamed the Sedgwick Memorial Museum when it opened on its present site in 1904.

Online catalogue: Over 7,000 of the Sedgwick's British type fossils are available to view (some with 3D scans) as part of the external GB3D Type Fossils Online project, however, the rest of the museum's collections are not currently available to search online.[5]

Website: https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/about-us/our-historysedgwickmuseum.cam.ac.uk

Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Materials: Living plants, dried plants and a seed bank. The CUBG is the only Cambridge institution with a collection made up of living organic material, and the plants in the Botanic Garden are known as its 'living collections.'

Geographic Strengths: Mainly Western European species, in addition to those from places with similar temperate climates including in North America, China, Japan, South Africa, Western Australia and New Zealand.

Major sources of collection: These collections were developed primarily through exchanges with other botanic gardens, and some species from collecting expeditions including those undertaken by Cambridge researchers. Collecting continues today.

Teaching: The CUBG is part of the Department of Plant Sciences and academic members of the Botanic Garden's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department.

Online catalogue: botanic.cam.ac.uk/collections/collectionsportal/ Searchable by Western scientific name, conservation status (i.e., level of vulnerability of species), provenance (i.e., origin in a botanic garden or in the wild), and other categories, with a guide to scientific terms. Includes very few photographs.

Website: botanic.cam.ac.uk

Museum of Classical Archaeology

Materials: plaster casts of ancient Greek and Roman statues, sherds (small fragments of broken pottery and other materials), paper imprints (called 'squeezes').

Geographic Strengths: Mediterranean and Northern Africa.

Teaching: The museum is part of the Faculty of Classics and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department and those in art and archaeology.

Major sources of collection: The casts were mainly donated by individuals and purchased over forty years as part of The Fitzwilliam Museum's acquisitions before becoming a separate museum.

[5] JISC GB3D Type Fossils Online project partners, *GB3D Type Fossils Online*. https://www.3d-fossils.ac.uk/ [accessed 14 October 2024]; Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, 'Research Enquiries', *Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://sedgwickmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/research-enquiries [accessed 14 October 2024].

Online catalogue: museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/collections/casts Includes photographs of all the casts and most of the sherds.

Website: museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/home[6]

The Whipple Museum of the History of Science

Materials: Scientific instruments which cover fields from astronomy to mathematics, early scientific texts, models and photographs.

Geographic Strengths: England, Western Europe.

Teaching: The museum is part of the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science, and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department.

Major sources of collection: A founding collection of Robert Stewart Whipple was developed further through loans and transfers of historic scientific instruments from Cambridge departments and colleges, and through purchases and donations.

Online catalogue: collections.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/objects/ Searchable by maker, country of origin, material, and other categories. Includes photographs of most objects.

Website: whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/

Kettle's Yard

Materials: Modern and contemporary art.

Geographic Strengths: Europe.

Teaching: Academic members of Kettle's Yard staff use the collections for teaching in the Department of History of Art.

Major sources of collection: Kettle's Yard was the home of collector and curator Jim Ede and his wife Helen, who donated the house with their collection of artworks and furniture to the University in 1966.

Online catalogue: kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk/collections/ Searchable by artist name, medium, and title. Includes photographs of most objects.

Website: kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk

[6] For more on the history of the MOCA, see: Susanne Turner, [uncredited], 'Museum History', *Museum of Classical Archaeology, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum/about-us/museum-history [accessed 14 October 2024].

The Polar Museum

Materials: Objects belonging to 19th and 20th century Western explorers of the Arctic and Antarctic, those concerning contemporary Polar science (with a focus on climate change), and works created by the Indigenous communities of the Arctic Circle.

Geographic Strengths: Arctic, Antarctic.

Teaching: The museum is part of the Scott Polar Research Institute (within the Department of Geography) and academic members of the museum's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department.

Major sources of collection: Donations and purchases.

Online catalogue: spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/catalogue/ Includes photographs of most objects.

Website: spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/

University Library

Materials: Almost 10 million printed books, maps, manuscripts (handwritten works), photographs, and archives, in over 2,000 languages

Geographic Strengths: Europe, and wider global representation.

Teaching: In addition to department libraries which are all under the umbrella of the UL, the UL houses literature and Special Collections across all disciplines taught at Cambridge.

Major sources of collection: The UL has been acquiring by gift and purchase since the 15th century, with the earliest accession of Asian and African materials dating to 1632. In addition, as one of six Legal Deposit Libraries in the UK and Ireland, since 1710 the UL has been entitled to request a copy of every publication in the UK and Ireland.

Online catalogue: idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk; cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/

Website: lib.cam.ac.uk/

Cambridge University Herbarium

Materials: 1.1 million pressed and dried plant specimens, botanic illustrations

Geographic Strengths: British Isles, Mainland Europe.

Teaching: The Herbarium is part of the Department of Plant Sciences and academic members of the herbarium's staff use the collections for teaching courses in that department and in the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science.

Major sources of collection: Developed from its eighteenth-century origins by Cambridge botanists and larger collections and wider networks that shared and traded plant specimens. Collecting continues today, with the Herbarium receiving specimens collected by the CUBG.

Online catalogue: The Herbarium team is in the process of developing an online portal and digitising specimens to allow access to its collections online.[7]

Website: herbarium.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/

[7] Loesch, Sally, 'Help Digitise the Collections at Cambridge University Herbarium', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 23 April 2024. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2024/04/23/help-digitise-the-collections-at-cambridge-university-herbarium/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Category A: Objects made by African people

Overview

The African artefacts at the University of Cambridge span the whole continent and millennia of human history. From a seven-ton granite sarcophagus lid made around 1200 BCE in Pharaonic Egypt at The Fitzwilliam Museum to prints of body maps created by people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa in 2003 at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), African artefacts from everyday life share a home with ceremonial and royal objects.[1] Among the first African artefacts accessioned at the University were manuscripts in an important collection formed by Dutch scholar and printer Thomas Van Erpe that was donated to the University Library in 1632. Several of these are on display at the University Library as part of the September 2024–February 2025 exhibition, 'Endless Stories: Manuscripts, knowledge and translation in the 17th century', curated by Dr Majid Daneshgar.[2]

Most of the artefacts from Africa now at the University were made by African people, but there are exceptions, for example, manuscript fragments in the Cairo Genizah collection at the University Library from other parts of the Mediterranean, or archaeological artefacts from Egypt that were produced by Greek or Persian immigrants. MAA is home to the largest and most diverse collection of African artefacts and is the focus of this chapter. In a 2024 article on the history of documentation at MAA, written by Lucie Carreau and Imogen Gunn, the pair of collections managers reflected on the origins of the material: 'As with the world archaeology collections, the anthropology collections grew with and through the British Empire'.[3] With most of the African artefacts across Cambridge collected during the period of British colonisation, specifically from the late nineteenth–mid-twentieth century, these are colonial collections. Cambridge museums acquired these artefacts through the international connections of curators, fellows, and students with colonial administrators, academics, and missionaries that made up a global imperial network, one rooted in the evolving intellectual thought of that period. A defining feature that cuts across large and small collections of African material alike is a lack of named African makers, and hidden collection contexts. Many objects have never been researched or put on display, though the contributions of visiting researchers and engagements with communities of origin and African diaspora communities have created much-needed opportunities to learn more about these artefacts. Some of the African material at the University – not just in the museums – was acquired in violent circumstances,

[1] *Granite sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III*. *c*. 1200 BC. [Sculpture] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. E.1.1823 https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/49037 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Multiple named makers. *Body maps*. *c*. 2003. At: The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/?query=body+map [accessed 18 November 2024] – The latter were commissioned by MAA.

[2] Cambridge University Library, 'Endless Stories: Manuscripts, Knowledge and Translation in the 17th Century', *Cambridge University Library* (archived exhibition), 13 August 2024. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/endlessstories [accessed 18 November 2024]; Vicky Westmore and Stuart Roberts, 'Endless Stories', *University of Cambridge* (website), 2024. https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/endless-stories-rare-manuscripts [accessed 18 November 2024].

[3] Lucie Carreau and Imogen Gunn, 'Moving On: Rethinking Practice and Transforming Data at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge', *Collections* 20.1 (2024), 8–26, at 11–12. doi: 10.1177/15501906241234943.

whether in the aftermath of physical violence or in wider exploitative contexts, and there is likely more of this material than can currently be described.

Estimated Figures

There are an estimated 350,000 individual artefacts made or found in Africa at Cambridge. This number includes over 193,000 manuscript fragments from the Taylor-Schechter Cairo Genizah Collection at the University Library and up to 27,300 ethnographic artefacts and 110,000 African archaeological materials at MAA. Both the figures at MAA, particularly the archaeology estimate, could be larger with further documentation. Archaeological material includes very small objects including beads, sherds (broken fragments of ceramics) and lithics (stone tools, cores and manufacturing debris). The list below gives a sense of the African artefacts spread across the University, with a focus on the largest collections. There are handfuls of artefacts across the University, for example: three scientific instruments at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science; two dog whips and a model of a ship all from South Africa at The Polar Museum, several ancient Egyptian artefacts at the University Library, and a pair of ivory elephant tusks with bound silver from Ethiopia at Old Schools, the building now housing central University administration. There are other artefacts in numbers that are currently difficult to quantify and would require further research to do so, for example, the numbers of African manuscripts in the Near and Middle Eastern collections at the University Library or the ancient North African coins at The Fitzwilliam Museum.

Artefacts made or found in Africa across Cambridge collections

c. 350,000 artefacts

- 193,000 Cairo Genizah manuscript fragments at the University Library (includes many not produced in Africa)
- 110,000 artefacts in Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's archaeology collection
- 27,300 artefacts in Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's anthropology collection
- 17,400 ancient Egyptian and Sudanese artefacts at The Fitzwilliam Museum
- Over1,000 artefacts at the Museum of Classical Archaeology, almost all sherds
- Fewer than 300 works of modern and contemporary art at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
- Fewer than 200 modern coins and banknotes at The Fitzwilliam Museum
- 73 Ethiopic manuscripts at the University Library
- 30 artefacts at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide
- 15 artefacts in the University Library's Royal Commonwealth Society collection
- 12 works of art at the Centre of African Studies
- 12 artefacts at Kettle's Yard

Egypt in Africa

Egypt is the best represented African country in the University of Cambridge collections – both in terms of numbers of objects, research undertaken, and public display of the artefacts. Thousands of catalogue records (representing many more individual objects) of Egyptian archaeological material are spread across the University museums today, with most at The Fitzwilliam Museum and the

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and a small collection of sherds at the Museum of Classical Archaeology. In addition to the Cairo Genizah collection (see below) and the archives of Egyptologists, the University Library also has around 1,700 texts written on papyrus in the Michaelides Collection that are mainly Egyptian in origin.[4] Since the late nineteenth century, these museum objects and manuscripts have been the focus of intensive study and have held a high public profile both in the museums and library, and in related academic disciplines. Ancient Egyptian material is on prominent permanent display at The Fitzwilliam Museum.[5] One of the first and most important Egyptian objects at The Fitzwilliam Museum is also likely one of the African objects accessioned (registered) earliest at a University of Cambridge museum: a granite sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III, donated in 1823 by Italian Egyptologist Giovanni Battista Belzoni, a donation that predates the construction of the museum itself.[6]

Image 2: Egyptian Gallery, The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge ©David Valinsky

Significant names in the field of Egyptology were among the major sources for the museums, most notably Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie, who is the source of collections at The Fitzwilliam Museum and Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the oldest objects at the University

[4] Suzanne Paul, 'Papyrus Collections', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 5 August 2017. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/papyrus-collections [accessed 18 November 2024]; 'Michaelides Fragments', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/michaelides/1 [accessed 4 November 2024].

[5] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Egypt', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/about-us/collections/egypt [accessed 15 October 2024].

[6] *Granite sarcophagus lid of Ramesses* III; Ernest Alfred Wallace Budge, *A Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, Cambridge Library Collection (Cambridge: University Press, 2009), pp. 1–3.

Library – a pair of predynastic drinking vessels Petrie gave to Egyptologist Herbert Thompson (Trinity College) in 1895.[7] The Duckworth Laboratory also cares for a significant number of Egyptian remains collected by Petrie. While the Herbert Thompson Endowment for Egyptology was only founded in 1941, the study of Egypt was well established at Cambridge long before then.[8] Today, Egyptology is taught at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in the Department of Archaeology.[9] Prominent Egyptian scholars studied at Cambridge, including Professor Mohammed Abdel Halim Nur al-Din, who became head of the Egyptian government Antiquities Organisation in 1988 and again in the 1990s.[10]

The study of ancient Egypt has long been defined by its supposed exceptionalism, separate in space and time from the rest of Africa (including modern Egypt), and this was reflected in the collection and display of this material in museums worldwide.[11] Napoleon Bonaparte's 1798 invasion of Egypt and resulting excavation of ancient Egyptian material sparked the beginning of the European discipline of Egyptology, and the study of this material posed many questions for European scholars, one of which forms a significant basis for this exceptionalism. With ancient Egypt now proposed by French scholars as the beginning of Western civilisation – predating both the Greek and Roman empires – how could scholars and the clergy reconcile this example of an African people capable of high art, architecture and complex society with the prevailing ideas of Africans as an inferior or sub-human race, ideas used to justify the transatlantic slave trade?[12] In 1969, historian Edith Sanders explained the development of a popular theory in European religious and secular scholarship, the 'Hamitic hypothesis,' from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, which took an important new direction with the birth of Egyptology in the late eighteenth century. Simply put, the Hamitic hypothesis contended that, 'everything of value ever found in Africa was brought there by the Hamites, allegedly a branch of the Caucasian race'.[13] According to Sanders, 'Many of these works [in early Egyptology] seemed to have had as their main purpose an attempt to prove in some way that the Egyptians were not Negroes'.[14] Egypt may have been *in* Africa, but ancient Egypt and its people were not like the rest of Africa. Beyond Egyptology, the categorisation of African people into superior 'Hamitic', or Hamitic-descendant, and inferior, non-Hamitic linguistic or ethnic groups created

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[7] *Predynastic Egyptian drinking vessels. c*. 3,900–3,650 BCE. [Pottery] At: Cambridge University Library. MS Thompson/HT110. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-THOMPSON-HT-00110/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[8] Catherine Ansorge, 'The Accidental Linguist: Herbert Thompson's Contribution to Egyptian Language Studies Traced through His Archive', in *Life-Writing in the History of Archaeology*, ed. Clare Lewis and Gabriel Moshenska, Critical Perspectives (London: UCL Press, 2023), pp. 183–212, at 184. doi: 10.2307/j.ctv37mk2fp.13.

[9] Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, 'Egyptology at Cambridge', *University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/about-us/egyptology [accessed 15 October 2024].

[10] Salima Ikram and Amr Omar, 'Egypt', in *A History of World Egyptology*, ed. Aidan Dodson, Andrew Bednarski, and Salima Ikram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 25–67, at 63. doi: 10.1017/9781107477360.004.

[11] Alice Stevenson, *Egyptian Archaeology and the Twenty-First Century Museum*, Cambridge Elements in Ancient Egypt in Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022). doi: 10.1017/9781009070348.

[12] Edith R. Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis: its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective', *The Journal of African History* 10.4 (1969), 521–32, at 524–26; Philippe Mainterot, 'France', in *A History of World Egyptology*, ed. Aidan Dodson, Andrew Bednarski, and Salima Ikram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 68–90, at 79. doi: 10.1017/9781107477360.005.

[13] Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis', p. 521.

[14] Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis', p. 525.

hierarchies of African peoples in fields including anthropology that continued well into the mid-twentieth century and influenced colonial policy.[15] While all African people were 'Other', some were 'othered' even further. There have been many initiatives to challenge the Eurocentric reading of Egypt, including important contributions by African scholars, particularly Cheikh Anta Diop, between the 1950s and 1980s.[16]

In the last 20 years, The Fitzwilliam Museum has produced exhibitions and public engagement activities that attempt to reintegrate ancient Egypt into Africa. Examples include a 2005/6 Africa-focused redisplay of the ancient Egypt galleries; public workshops in 2008 with Black African and American scholars; and a 2009 virtual exhibition, 'Black to Kemet: Placing Egypt in Africa', which used one of the names ancient inhabitants used for Egypt – Kemet – to interrogate whether ancient Egyptians were Black as understood in modern Britain.[17] In another example, building on research in the ongoing Egyptian Coffins project, in February 2023 Fitzwilliam Museum staff travelled to Gharb Soheil, close to Aswan in southern Egypt, and produced a dedicated pop-up museum for this community, during which they talked to Nubian people displaced by the flooding of the Lake Nasser reservoir about their lives and their aspirations for the display of their cultural heritage in museums.[18] The key message from the community was that Nubian artefacts should not be integrated into displays of Egyptian heritage but should be given their own dedicated space, including information about the current Nubian context.[19]

The Fitzwilliam Museum also has a small collection of artefacts from Nubia, which in modern geography stretched from Aswan in southern Egypt into Khartoum in Sudan. Nubia has historically been treated as inferior to or dependent on Egypt in research, and in the way museum collections

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[15] Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis', pp. 529–30; Charles Gabriel Seligman, *Races of Africa*, Home University Library of Modern Knowledge (London: Butterworth, 1930). https://ia601207.us.archive.org/13/items/RacesOfAfrica/Races-of-Africa.pdf (pdf), 262 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024].

[16] Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture: de l'antiquité nègre égyptienne aux problème culturels de l'Afrique noire d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1954); Cheikh Anta Diop, 'Origins of the Ancient Egyptians', in *General History of Africa*, II*: Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, ed. Gamal Mokhtar (Paris: UNESCO/Heineman, 1981), pp. 27–57. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000184265 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Laurent De Saint Perier, 'Cheikh Anta Diop, the Man Who Gave the Pharaohs Back to Africa', *The Africa Report.com* (website), 18 February 2023. https://www.theafricareport.com/282654/cheikh-anta-diop-the-man-who-gave-the-pharaohs-back-to-africa/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[17] Kemet is also the name used by some scholars, particularly those of African heritage, pursuing an Africa-centred approach to the study of ancient Egypt. See: Sally-Ann Ashton, in *Egypt in Its African Context: Proceedings of the Conference Held at The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, 2–4 October 2009*, ed. Karen Exell (Oxford: BAR, 2011), pp. 105–14. doi: 10.30861/9781407307602; Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Black to Kemet: Placing Egypt in Africa', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (archived exhibition), 2009. https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/research/online-resources/black-to-kemet-placing-egypt-in-africa [accessed 15 October 2024]; Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Kemet: Ancient Egypt, Africa Workshops', *University of Cambridge Streaming Media Service*. https://www.sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/1162793 [accessed 15 October 2024].
See other chapters in this edited volume for more: Karen Exell, ed., *Egypt in Its African Context: Proceedings of the Conference Held at The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, 2-4 October 2009* (Oxford: BAR, 2011). doi: 10.30861/9781407307602.

[18] Helen Strudwick, 'Visit to Nubian Communities in Gharb Soheil and New Aniba', *The Fitzwilliam Museum Egyptian Coffins Project* (website), 10 February 2023. https://egyptiancoffins.org/news/NubianCommunities [accessed 18 November 2024].

[19] Correspondence with Senior Curator, Ancient Nile Valley, The Fitzwilliam Museum, 30 October 2024.

were presented, even those from Sudanese Nubia.[20] In *Untangling Blackness in Greek Antiquity*, as Sarah F. Derbew described the display of Nubian material in several UK museums (with a focus on the British Museum) – particularly how it was often subordinate to ancient Egyptian material – she noted the placement of the Nubian artefacts at The Fitzwilliam Museum in the 'Rome and Ancient Sudan' gallery on a lower ground floor near the toilets.[21] Cambridge has played a role in training generations of Sudanese archaeologists, including Abdelrahman Adam, one of the first Sudanese professionals of the Sudan Antiquities Service following the country's independence in 1956, or the recently deceased Director General of the National Corporation of Antiquities & Museums, Ibrahim Musa.[22] Archaeologists at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, which in 2018 hosted the Sudan Studies Research Conference, are among the scholars challenging Egyptocentric work on Nubia and Sudan in archaeology.[23] Within The Fitzwilliam Museum, research on Nubian material included a 2010 interview project in southern Egypt and northern Sudan, with members of the Nubian community and museum professionals discussing Nubian identity, and a related photography exhibition.[24]

African collections at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

With around 20% of the collections at MAA originating in Africa, MAA has by far the largest proportion of African material across Cambridge's museums. In January 1998, MAA put its catalogue online.[25] Around 96% of objects at MAA are catalogued and accessible online, now including 186,000 records, over 104,000 (56%) with digital images.[26] There are over 36,000 catalogue records for objects from Africa on MAA's database. Each record may include one or multiple objects, particularly when cataloguing archaeological materials (e.g., stone tools or pottery sherds). The number of individual objects is estimated at up to 137,000: approximately 27,000 ethnographic and 110,000 archaeological. Due to restrictions on space, over 99% of all MAA collections is not on display, including the majority of the African material.[27] Most of the African objects were acquired by the

[20] Rennan Lemos and Samantha Tipper, 'Sudanese and Nubian Archaeology: Scholarship Past and Present', in *Current Perspectives in Sudanese and Nubian Archaeology. A Collection of Papers Presented at the 2018 Sudan Studies Research Conference, Cambridge*, ed. Rennan Lemos and Samantha Tipper (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2021), pp. 1–12, at 1–4. https://www.archaeopress.com/Archaeopress/Products/9781789698978 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[21] In a footnote, she wrote: 'The Fitzwilliam Museum pays scant attention to Nubia in its "Rome and Ancient Sudan" exhibit (Room 24) on the lower ground floor next to the toilets, whose pungent odours wafted into the space during my visit in October 2016'. Derbew, *Untangling Blackness in Greek Antiquity*, p. 52; Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Gallery 24: Rome & Ancient Sudan', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/galleries/gallery-24 [accessed 15 October 2024].

[22] Neelain University, 'Deepest condolences for the death of Professor Ibrahim Moussa Mohammed', 15 January 2024, https://neelain.edu.sd/UNewsDetails/635 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[23] Lemos and Tipper, 'Sudanese and Nubian Archaeology'.

[24] The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Kemet: Ancient Egypt, Africa Workshops'; 'Nubia: Past and Present', The Fitzwilliam Museum, https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/research/online-resources/nubia-past-and-present [accessed 18 November 2024].

[25] Mark Elliott, 'A History of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Part 2: 1950–2020' (unpublished internal report, University of Cambridge, August 2020), p. 35.

[26] MAA collections database: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk, figures as of 9 July 2024.

[27] Figure as of 9 July 2024; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Researching and Curating African Collections at MAA | Devolving Restitution #4', *YouTube* (video), 5 April 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGPLPvWJAVI [accessed 18 November 2024].

museum during the British colonial period, including material accessioned later, with much of the material arriving at MAA in the early-mid twentieth century. The MAA is home to a collection of modern and contemporary art which is currently curated within the anthropology department, and includes works acquired more recently through collaborative engagement with producing communities, purchases and commissions, as well as donations.[28] Between 2011–13, with funding from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation via the Art fund, and private donors, MAA conducted an acquisition project to collect modern and contemporary works on paper by indigenous artists from Australia, Canada, and South Africa. MAA purchased over 200 prints by South African artists created using different techniques; each print in the online catalogue includes the name of the artist and their biography. Some of these prints were featured in a 2015 exhibition at The Fitzwilliam Museum titled, 'The Power of Paper: 50 years of printmaking from Australia, Canada and South Africa'.[29] Four of the South African prints were part of a 2023 display at The Fitzwilliam Museum: 'Bearing Witness? Violence and Trauma on Paper'.[30] Significant works of contemporary art at MAA by African artists include 'The Beggar' (1944) by one of East Africa's most important sculptors, Professor Gregory Maloba, who also designed Uganda's Independence Monument sculpture.[31]

Archaeology

While the African ethnography collections have been comprehensively inventoried and photographed between 2020 and 2024 as part of a collections move project supported by the University, the archaeology collections have not undergone similar documentation.[32] Consequently, the archaeology collections remain significantly less known and less accessible. The archaeological material includes many examples of lithics or stone tools, ceramics, beads, and funerary objects. While the geographic origin of much of the material is recorded, only around a third of catalogue records include images. The archaeology collection at MAA contains a significant amount of material from Egypt, though an estimated figure is currently not possible due to limited documentation.[33] The collections include material of high research significance, including the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit

[28] Carreau and Gunn, 'Moving On', p. 11.
[29] Helen A. Alderson, 'The Power of Paper: 50 Years of Printmaking from Australia, Canada and South Africa (14 February – 6 December 2015)', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology* (archived exhibition). https://maa.cam.ac.uk/power-paper-50-years-printmaking-australia-canada-and-south-africa [accessed 31 October 2024].
[30] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Bearing Witness? Violence and Trauma on Paper', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (archived exhibition), 2023. https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/bearing-witness-violence-and-trauma-on-paper [accessed 18 November 2024].
[31] Gregory Maloba. 'Beggar'. 1941. [Sculpture] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 2024.1, https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/584374/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Gregory Maloba, Jonathan Kingdon, and Rajat Neogy, 'Gregory Maloba Talks About His Childhood and His Growth as a Sculptor', *Transition* 11 (1963), 20–22. doi: 10.2307/2934074.
[32] Lucie Carreau and Mark Elliot, 'Transforming Collections and Ourselves: Introducing the MAA Stores Move - Cambridge University Museums', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Gardens* (blog), 13 August 2021. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2021/08/13/transforming-collections-and-ourselves-introducing-the-maa-stores-move/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[33] Correspondence with World Archaeology team, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 3 September 2024.

material, critical for the understanding of early pharaonic kingship.[34] During the 1920s, significant materials from Gurob, Sedment, and Lahun were added, including a substantial collection of organic remains, such as winnowing spoons, basketry, and nets. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, MAA expanded its collection with smaller acquisitions from Tell el Amarna, which included sculptural pieces from the Great Palace. Notably, due to subscriptions to Egyptologist Guy Brunton's excavations, some of the most significant objects came from Matmar in the early 1930s. Following the Second World War, MAA witnessed a substantial influx of privately owned materials.[35] The British Museum, British School of Archaeology in Egypt, Egypt Exploration Fund, and Egyptian Research Account collections, which frequently come with detailed site reports, offer valuable insights into the distribution of artefacts and the various collecting networks.[36] These collections are particularly noteworthy for researchers studying the intricate processes and networks involved in the acquisition and distribution of archaeological finds.[37] Other significant sites include Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, one of the most crucial locations globally for advancing our understanding of human evolution. The acquisition of new archaeological material reduced from the mid-twentieth century, with most new accessions since then being local to the Cambridgeshire area.[38]

The main sources for the collections were:

- Excavations
    - Including by individuals that shaped their respective archaeological fields, e.g., Flinders Petrie (Egypt), and St John's College, Cambridge graduate Louis S. B. Leakey (various sites in Kenya, Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania).
    - Through excavations funded in part by the museum, colleges, and curators, e.g., the British School of Archaeology in Egypt,[39] the Egypt Exploration Fund,[40] and Egyptian Research Account. The latter two were also sources for material at The Fitzwilliam Museum.
- Private Collectors
    - For example, the collection of 'chemical experimenter' Joseph John Acworth (Egypt).[41]

[34] Griffith Institute, University of Oxford, *Artefacts of Excavation: British Excavations in Egypt 1880–1980* (website), 2015. https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/ [accessed 6 February 2024].
[35] Correspondence with Senior Curator in World Archaeology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 11 July 2024.
[36] See Griffith Institute, University of Oxford, *Artefacts of Excavation* for more details. A 2022–2024 project at National Museums Scotland is exploring British archaeologists' involvement in the buying and selling of artefacts on the antiquities market in Egypt and Sudan. National Museums Scotland, 'Buying Power: British Archaeology and the Antiquities Market in Egypt and Sudan 1880–1939', *National Museums Scotland* (website), 28 July 2022. https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections/departments/global-arts-cultures-design/projects/buying-power [accessed 15 November 2024].
[37] Correspondence with Senior Curator in World Archaeology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 11 July 2024.
[38] Carreau and Gunn, 'Moving On', p. 11.
[39] 'British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE), 1905–1954', *Artefacts of Excavation: British Excavations in Egypt 1880–1980*. https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/resources/british-school-archaeology-egypt-bsae-1905%E2%80%931954 [accessed 24 October 2024].
[40] 'Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF)', *Artefacts of Excavation: British Excavations in Egypt 1880–1980*. https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/resources/egypt-exploration-fund-eef [accessed 24 October 2024].
[41] Eleanor Wilkinson, 'The Chemical Experimenter', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 3 March 2021. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2021/03/03/the-chemical-experimenter/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Archaeological excavations were made possible with the participation of people who lived near the sites; these individuals provided local knowledge, physical labour, and analysis of materials. In *Hidden Hands: Egyptian workforces in Petrie excavation archives, 1880–1924*, Stephen Quirke reviewed Petrie's published and unpublished papers and photographs from his excavations to reveal the names and faces of the many Egyptians that worked on these sites.[42] Quirke includes several chapters naming individual Egyptians and the artefacts they found or sites they worked on.

Anthropology

As the collections were acquired during decades of changing colonial borders, some from groups of people that lived across borders, or were nomadic, the map below is simply a representation of parts of the continent where ethnographic objects originated, as currently understood by MAA. An individual catalogue record may have more than one object in it, for example, a model boat and its six paddles.

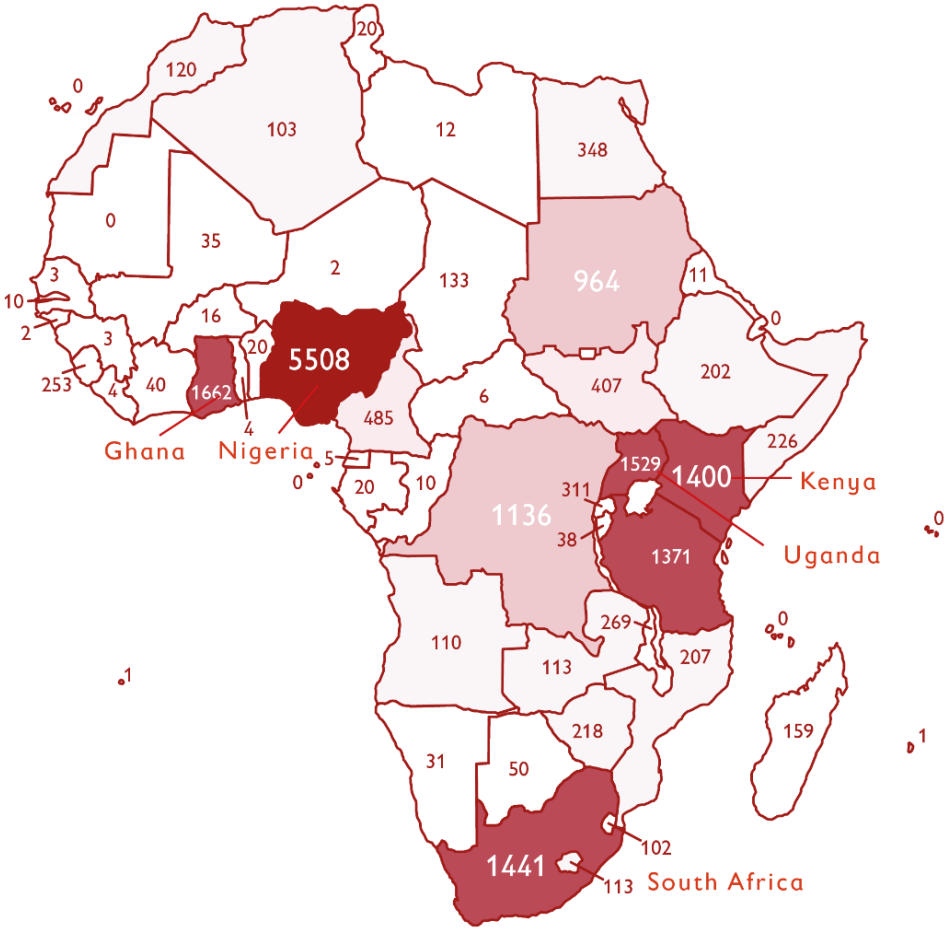

Figure 1: Map of Africa with numbers of anthropology catalogue records at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, November 2024

[42] Stephen Quirke, *Hidden Hands: Egyptian Workforces in Petrie Excavation Archives, 1880–1924*, Duckworth Egyptology (London: Duckworth, 2010).

The ethnographic objects are a wide range of material including clothing, weaponry (both ceremonial and practical), ceramics, personal adornment, items with spiritual purposes, musical instruments, and tools for cooking, farming and fishing. As a result of MAA's ongoing Stores Move (2020–2025), during which artefacts are being moved to a new storage facility, around 90% of the African ethnographic material has been photographed and catalogue records reviewed.[43] Broadly, there is a high level of documentation on the country of origin of African objects, while many have information about specific areas and ethnic groups. However, there remains uncertainty over the origin of some objects, particularly those from Central Africa, and those from communities that lived near or across borders.

African collections at MAA come from over 700 named collectors, donors, or vendors. The majority donated a handful of objects, while a few donated larger collections. Those that donated the larger, and indeed largest collections often had a direct connection to the University. Provenance information – specifically, the history of an object's ownership – is limited, and very few objects have named makers. In cases where indigenous names for objects were provided, either with the original material, or later through research or community engagements, these are added to the online catalogue.[44]

The single largest source of African ethnographic objects – indeed, one of the largest collections of objects from a single collector across the entire MAA collection – was the collection assembly by Northcote Whitridge Thomas (Trinity College). According to a 2021 MAA report on the collection by Katrina Dring, Thomas was appointed the first 'Government Anthropologist for Nigeria' by the British Colonial Office and conducted anthropological surveys in Southern Nigeria and Sierra Leone between 1909–1915.[45] Though not a colonial administrator himself, Thomas gathered anthropological data that was disseminated to colonial officials and policy makers to support their governance practices.[46] Based on museum correspondence, Dring concluded that most of the objects were bought at markets or commissioned by Thomas directly.[47] MAA provided grants to Thomas for two further tours to Nigeria, and Thomas donated material from a Sierra Leone tour directly to the museum. Today, the collection includes over 3,600 objects (almost 200 objects from Sierra Leone, the rest from Nigeria) and 9,483 photographs (around 7,850 of these are unique images and the others are duplicate prints or prints that MAA also has negatives for).[48]

Many of these objects have been researched in focused projects. This includes 'The Northcote W. Thomas Project' of 2012–13, funded by the Cambridge-Africa Alborada Fund, in which Dr Ohioma Pogoson, Associate Professor at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria focused on material from the Edo State in Southern Nigeria; the research is accessible on dedicated

[43] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Anthropology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Carreau and Elliot, 'Transforming Collections and Ourselves'; Carreau and Gunn, 'Moving On'.
[44] Carreau and Gunn, 'Moving On', pp. 22–3.
[45] Katrina Dring, 'Northcote Whitridge Thomas Collection' (unpublished report, MAA, University of Cambridge, 11 June 2021), p. 1.
[46] *[Re:]Entanglements* (website), [n.d.]. https://re-entanglements.net/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[47] Dring, 'Northcote Whitridge Thomas Collection', p. 1.
[48] Figures as of 24 October 2024; Correspondence with Manager of Photographic Collections, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 20 October 2024.

webpages.[49] 'Museum Affordances' (2018–21) was a major project led by Professor Paul Basu (Curator, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford) with Dr George Emeka Agbo (University of Nigeria, Nsukka) working as a postdoctoral researcher, which explored the collection Thomas assembled as a whole, across MAA, the British Library Sound Archive, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the UK National Archives. The project included a website, the return of photographs and sound recordings to communities in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and culminated in a major exhibition – '[Re:]Entanglements: Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times' held at MAA from 2021–22.[50] Other outputs included audio, a podcast, and video.[51] In August 2024, Basu won the Curatorial Excellence Award at the Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA) Triennial Conference in Chicago for this exhibition.[52]

[49] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'The Northcote W. Thomas Project', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 1 April 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/collections/anthropology/northcote-w-thomas-project [accessed 18 November 2024].
[50] [Re:]Entanglements, 'About', *[Re:]Entanglements* (website), [n.d.]. https://re-entanglements.net/about/ [accessed 30 October 2024].
[51] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, '[Re:] Entanglements: Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (archived exhibition), 16 June 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/events/re-entanglements-colonial-collections-decolonial-times [accessed 18 November 2024].
[52] School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnology, University of Oxford, 'Paul Basu Receives Curatorial Excellence Award', *School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnology, University of Oxford* (website), 2024. https://www.anthro.ox.ac.uk/article/paul-basu-receives-curatorial-excellence-award [accessed 18 November 2024].

Image 3: *Chief's hat with long brown feathers mounted on a leather and cloth cap.* From Edo State, Nigeria. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Z 12588.[53]

Collectors and donors of African ethnographic material broadly fell into the following categories:

Cambridge academics and students[54]

- Interest in the study of anthropology in Africa at Cambridge developed from the early 1920s, as a network of scholars expanded the museum collections with material from West Africa and East

[53] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/530161/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[54] For more on the role of academics and students in developing the MAA collections, see: Victoria Ebin and D. A. Swallow, *"The Proper Study of Mankind- ": Great Anthropological Collections in Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University MAA, 1984), pp. 34–5. http://archive.org/details/properstudyofman0000unse [accessed 18 November 2024].

Africa, often while combining anthropological study and colonial service.[55] This includes important figures in the development of the fields of archaeology and anthropology. Examples include Professor Meyer Fortes who was the William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge from 1950 until the early 1970s.[56] Fortes donated over twenty objects from Ghana in the mid-1950s and his field records are in the University Library, while his field photographs from Ghana are at MAA.[57] Sir Jack Goody (St John's College), donated almost one hundred Ghanian objects from his 1951 fieldwork and succeeded Fortes as the Wyse Professor in 1973.[58]

- The Crowther-Beynon Grant has supported student collecting since the 1950s, with almost 390 ethnographic objects from Africa funded with this grant to date.[59]

Colonial Administrators

- One example, Ernest Balfour Haddon (son of influential Cambridge anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon, a graduate of Christ's College) was appointed Assistant Collector in Uganda in 1905, studied for the Anthropology Diploma at Cambridge (Christ's College) in 1912 and spent twenty-five years in colonial administration in Uganda, retiring as Provincial Commissioner in 1929. He returned to Cambridge and was instrumental in organizing a course for colonial officers in training.[60] He donated the second largest number of Ugandan objects to MAA.
- Between 1946–1962, Cambridge offered British government-funded courses for trainee colonial administrators (along with the University of Oxford and University of London), which included lectures in anthropology.[61] A reconfigured course on development continued at Cambridge from the 1960s, modified to reflect the increased intake of students from African and Asian countries.

Missionaries

- Objects from the Democratic Republic of Congo (and perhaps other Central African countries as yet unconfirmed) were mainly acquired by a network of Baptist missionaries and Belgian colonial officials in the early period of Belgian colonisation.[62] One of the largest African ethnographic collections at MAA, of over 800 objects from Uganda, came from Church Missionary Society

[55] Ebin and Swallow, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, p. 37.
[56] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'The Museum's History', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 8 February 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/about/museums-history [accessed 18 November 2024]; Susan Drucker-Brown, 'Obituary: Professor Meyer Fortes', *RAIN* 56 (1983), 15.
[57] Meyer Fortes archival collections at the University Library: 'Fortes, Meyer, 1906–1983 (anthropologist)', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/agents/people/8791 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[58] Isidore Lobnibe, 'Jack Goody: Early Fieldwork and the Passing of an Era of Cambridge Anthropology in Northern Ghana', *Ghana Studies* 21 (2018), 3–23; Alan Macfarlane, 'Sir Jack Goody, F.B.A', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Obituaries* (website), 2015. https://www.therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/obituaries/jack-goody [accessed 18 November 2024].
[59] Figures as of 31 October 2024.
[60] Ebin and Swallow, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, p. 37.
[61] Sarah Stockwell, *The British End of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 93–141. doi: 10.1017/9781107707382.004; Pamela Jane Smith, *A 'Splendid Idiosyncrasy': Prehistory at Cambridge, 1915–50*, BAR British Series 485 (Oxford: BAR, 2009), pp. 18–19.
[62] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Anthropology Department Internal Collection Brief: Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2022.

missionary and ethnographer Reverend John Roscoe, collected in the first half of the twentieth century; Cambridge awarded him an honorary degree in recognition of his research in Uganda.[63]

- The University of Cambridge itself has a long missionary tradition, and with Africa specifically, Cambridge missionary work there began in earnest when Cambridge joined Oxford, Durham, and Trinity College Dublin to form the Universities' Mission to Central Africa in 1858, in response to an appeal by missionary and explorer David Livingstone at Cambridge in 1857.[64] In the twentieth century, dozens of student members of the Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union travelled to Africa, particularly East and Central Africa.[65]

Military Officers

- One of the largest donors of African material was Major Arthur John Newman Tremearne (Christ's College), an Australian soldier and police officer deployed in British military campaigns in South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana from around 1899–1910. Tremearne was also a lecturer in Hausa at Cambridge.[66] He donated over 380 objects from Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia, and Morocco. Among the objects from Ghana may be those taken from the Kingdom of Asante during the Yaa Asantewaa War or War of the Golden Stool (1900), in which Tremearne was deployed.[67]

African Donors

A handful of African people are recorded as having donated archaeological and ethnographic material directly to the museum. MAA cares for a small collection of archaeological material excavated by Kenyan archaeologist and Cambridge graduate, Professor George Okello Abungu (Darwin College), excavated in 1987 during his PhD studies. A world-renowned expert in African heritage, Abungu is an Emeritus Director-General of the National Museums of Kenya and was Special Advisor to the Director General of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).[68] Of the donors of ethnographic collections, the individual with the fullest biography available to date is Sir Apolo Kaggwa, the Katikiro (Prime Minister) of the Buganda Kingdom from 1890–1926. Kaggwa was an ethnographer of Buganda in his own right, publishing influential work in Luganda that was later translated into English.[69] He also

[63] Ebin and Swallow, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, p. 34.
[64] A. E. M. Anderson-Morshead, *The History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa 1859–1909* (London: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1909); David Livingstone and Adam Sedgwick, *Dr Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures: together with a Prefatory Letter by the Rev. Professor Sedgwick* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1858).
[65] Ian M. Randall, *The Cambridge Seventy: a Missionary Movement in Twentieth-Century Britain*, Occasional Paper Series 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, 2016), pp. 18–25. Of the student missionary group the 'Cambridge Seventy', which was comprised of graduates of the class of 1955, eighty-one members of the University travelled abroad, including fifty-three to parts of Africa. The most popular countries were: Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania. The average length of service was 12.36 years: Randall, *The Cambridge Seventy*, p. 25.
[66] [n.a.], 'Casualties In The Medical Services', *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2859 (1915), 585–86.
[67] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Anthropology Department Internal Collection Brief: Ghana, 2021
[68] Note: Abungu is listed as 'G. Abungu' in the MAA catalogue.
[69] Two examples are: Apolo Kaggwa, *Bassekabaka be Buganda*, trans. as *The Kings of Buganda* by Semakula Kiwanuka (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971 [1901]) and Apolo Kaggwa, *Ekitabo Kye Mpisa Za Baganda*, trans. as *The Book of the Customs of Buganda,* by Ernest B. Kalibala, ed. by May Mandelbaum Ede (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934 [1905]).

facilitated the collection of objects from Uganda alongside Rev. John Roscoe and influenced Roscoe's own work on the Baganda. Kaggwa donated sixteen objects to MAA himself in 1904 (mainly religious in nature) after he visited the UK in 1903 to attend King Edward VII's coronation.[70] Kaggwa and his secretary Hamu Mukasa spent three days in Cambridge and later wrote about this trip to England.[71] Kaggwa is also one of the few named African people in the extensive collections of photographs across Cambridge (see Category C).[72]

Image 4: *Penannular brass necklet worn by royal bodyguard when in king's presence*. From Buganda Kingdom (Uganda). At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. E 1903.466.[73]

Two individuals, both Ghanaian, donated dozens of abrammo or Asante goldweights to MAA, according to ongoing research by Benjamina Efua Dadzie, currently a PhD student at the University of East Anglia. [74] The earlier of the two, William Assah-Kisseadoo, was alternately recorded as a student

[70] Rachel Hand, 'Brass Necklet, Uganda', in *Trophies, Relics and Curios?: Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles, and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone, 2015), pp. 75–77. https://www.sidestone.com/books/trophies-relics-and-curios [accessed 18 November 2024]; Alison Bennett, 'Diplomatic Gifts: Rethinking Colonial Politics in Uganda through Objects', *History in Africa* 45 (2018), 193–220. Kaggwa also donated objects to the British Museum and to King Edward VII: Bennett, 'Diplomatic Gifts', p. 210.
[71] Hamu Mukasa and Taban lo Liyong, *Sir Apolo Kaggwa Discovers Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1975).
[72] 'Sir Apolo Kagwa (d. 1927), Principal Minister (1914–1926), formerly Regent of Buganda', *c*. 1900–1927, Church Missionary Society glass negatives and lantern slides (CMS), Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, CMS 29/7, https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PH-CMS-00001/500 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[73] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/524740 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[74] Benjamina Efua Dadzie, 'Akan Goldweights and Their Significance: Some Examples from the MAA Collection', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden* (public lecture), 19 October 2022.

and trader on passenger lists of a steamship from Liverpool to Accra in February 1916 and the return journey in May 1916, and had Cambridge and London addresses. He donated a set of thirty-three brass abrammo to MAA in 1915, as noted in the annual report, in addition to a stone chisel.[75] Dr Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen was an anthropologist, trained in Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, and Durham University in the UK, and completed his PhD at the University of Oxford in 1966.[76] In 1952, Kyerematen became the founder and director of the Kumasi Centre for National Culture, a centre for Asante culture which included a museum, library, and a zoo. Kyerematen's network included Asante royalty, influential Ghanaian figures, and British scholars.[77] He spent some time living in Cambridge in the early 1970s as he prepared to turn his PhD thesis into a book and appears to have known several MAA curators. Kyerematen collected five of the abrammo at MAA; these were donated to the museum by MAA's Assistant Curator Mary Cra'ster in 1970, though it is unclear if these were a personal gift to Cra'ster or to the museum.[78]

Museum research visitors

MAA's annual reports include details of research visitors to the museum, and from the 1980s, the collections they visited too. On the archaeology side, British collections were overwhelmingly the most accessed, often more popular than visitors accessing collections from the rest of the regions combined, while in anthropology, the Asia and Oceania collections were the first and second most requested.[79] According to the annual reports, the African anthropology collections were among the least requested in the museum.[80] Examples of African visitors – though already based elsewhere at Cambridge – include the five visiting fellows (Pogoson among them) in the 2012–2013 Cambridge/Africa Collaborative Research Programme, Art and Museums in Africa, from Sudan, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. These researchers worked with the collections and added information to the catalogues.[81] Managed by the Centre of African Studies (CAS), the programme included a seminar series in Cambridge, and a conference at the University of Ghana in September 2013. The Fitzwilliam Museum has developed longstanding relationships with over a dozen Egyptian museums and universities, and with Egyptologists and other researchers in Egypt, most recently with the ongoing Egyptian Coffins project, which involves colleagues from the Egyptian

https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/events/black-presences-cambridge-william-assah-kisseadoo-and-akan-goldweights [accessed 18 November 2024].

[75] Antiquarian Committee of the Museum of Archaeology and of Ethnography, 'Thirty-First Annual Report of the Antiquarian Committee to the Senate', Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge (report), 1916. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/files/media/ar1915-31st.pdf (pdf), 14 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 8.

[76] Benjamina Efua Dadzie and Barima Asumadu Sakyi, 'Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen and Akan Goldweights at MAA', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 10 January 2022. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2022/01/10/alexander-atta-yaw-kyerematen-and-akan-goldweights-at-maa/ [accessed 18 November 2024] .

[77] *Ibid*.

[78] Dadzie, 'Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen and Akan Goldweights'.

[79] Elliot, 'A History of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Part 2', p. 38.

[80] *Ibid*. p. 39.

[81] Faculty Board of Human, Social and Political Science, '125th Annual Report of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, for the Academical year 2012–2013', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (report), 2013. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/files/media/annualreport12-13_0.pdf (pdf), 29 pp. [accessed 26 November 2024], p. 3.

Museum in Cairo, Kom Aushim Museum in Faiyum, Explore Fayoum, and staff from the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities.[82]

Other collections

The Fitzwilliam Museum cares for a collection of over 250,000 coins, medals, and currency from around the world. Of these, over 1,000 coins, banknotes and a few tokens from African countries are part of the 'modern' collection that mostly date from the late nineteenth-century period of colonisation into the twenty-first century.[83] Colonial currency was largely produced in the colonising country, and this was the case for most African countries. In general, many newly independent African nations continued to have their bank notes produced overseas, often by makers in the former colonial country, thus private and government mints in the UK and France make up most of the manufacturers for the modern African currency in this collection.[84] As a result, of the over 1,000 modern coins, banknotes and tokens, under 200 were manufactured in African countries, and those only in a handful of countries including Egypt, Morocco, and Ethiopia. South Africa and Zimbabwe have the largest number of materials produced in mints and manufacturers in-country, with those from Zimbabwe including the high-denomination notes printed during the period of hyperinflation which peaked in 2008, resulting in a 100 trillion Zimbabwe Dollar banknote.[85] There is also a small number of ancient coins mainly produced in North Africa (modern Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania) and from parts of the Greek and Roman empires in Africa, particularly Egypt.[86]

There are a few other non-Egyptian or Sudanese objects created by African makers, mainly based in the diaspora, at The Fitzwilliam Museum, including four mid-twentieth century ceramics from Nigerian Ladi Kwali, prints from 2013 by Ghanaian artist, art historian and curator Atta Kwami and his wife Pamela Clarkson, and a 2023 painting by artist Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, who was born in Botswana.[87]

While most African artefacts are at The Fitzwilliam Museum and MAA, there is a small number of objects in other parts of the University. The Museum of Classical Archaeology (MOCA) houses around 1,000 sherds, mainly from Naukratis, a seventh-century BCE port city in Egypt where

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[82] Fitzwilliam Museum Egyptian Coffins Project, *Fitzwilliam Ancient Coffins* (website), 2016. https://egyptiancoffins.org/ [accessed 31 October 2024].

[83] Report from Senior Curator, Medieval and Modern Money, Fitzwilliam Museum, 1 July 2024

[84] Report from Senior Curator, Medieval and Modern Money, Fitzwilliam Museum, 1 July 2024

[85] *Zimbabwe, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 100 trillion dollars*. (2008). [Currency.] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. CM.685-2010. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/246036 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[86] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Ancient Coins, Fitzwilliam Museum.

[87] Ladi Kwali. *Cup and cover.* 1954-1984. [Ceramics] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. C.365 & A-2016. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/208011 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Ladi Kwali. *Jar.* c. 1950-1960. [Ceramics] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. C.108 & A-1992. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/71280 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Ladi Kwali. *Jar.* 1957. [Ceramics] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. C.364-2016. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/208010 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Ladi Kwali. *Mug.* 1971. [Ceramics] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. C.4-2008. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/158397 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Atta Kwami and Pamela Clarkson. *Drawing Combs: Davunu / 'Afe Nutata*/. 2013. [Set of 12 linocuts on paper (nos. 1 to 6 by Kwami, and 7 to 12 by Clarkson), from an edition of 9] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. P.573-2013; Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum. *The Dream II (mae)*. 2023. [Painting] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. PD.21-2023.

Egyptians lived alongside Greeks, Cypriots, and people from elsewhere.[88] A further twenty-six figurines are also mainly Greco-Egyptian, though many have unknown provenance.

Aside from the three museums above, most other institutions have under fifty African artefacts, few fully catalogued or with named makers. The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide has significant archival material relevant to this project which falls under Category B, and around thirty objects believed to be from several countries in East Africa collected by two Cambridge graduates and members of the Church Missionary Society in the early/mid-twentieth century.[89] Kettle's Yard has around a dozen objects, mainly pieces of furniture from Morocco, reflecting founder Jim and Helen Ede's life in Tangier from 1936–1952.[90] A Moroccan qattara (a distillation device) of unknown age is one of three African objects at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science.[91]

In July 1924, Ras Taffari Makonnen, Ethiopia's Prince Regent, travelled to England as part of a state visit to Europe. At Cambridge, he presented the University with a gift, currently in the University's Old Schools, a building now housing central university administration. The gift is a pair of elephant tusks bound with silver, on one tusk the date and purpose of the visit is engraved, making this one of the few examples of an African artefact with documented provenance or given by an African leader directly to the University.

The University Library (UL) houses the Royal Commonwealth Society Library (covered below, in Category C), which includes a collection of around fifteen objects from across Africa (and a handful more from across the Commonwealth) that are the result of an abandoned attempt to establish a museum for the Royal Colonial Institute.[92] As noted in the online catalogue: 'Very little is known of the provenance of some objects'.[93] Three of the African objects were photographed and displayed in the 2016–2017 exhibition at the UL, 'Curious Objects,' which also included a virtual exhibition.[94] The CAS has around a dozen objects on display; the largest group is from eight lots, including ceremonial hats, ceramics, basketry, and textiles made by people in South Africa, Botswana, and Tanzania, donated to the CAS in 2002 by the chairman of the South African-British diamond company, De Beers.[95] The CAS also has on display a canvas painting by Atta Kwami. He donated it to the Centre in 2013 at the end of his time as a Visiting Fellow with the CAS's 2012–2013 Cambridge/Africa Collaborative Research Programme.[96] The CAS hosted an exhibition of paintings by Kwami and

[88] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Museum of Classical Archaeology, Appendix.
[89] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide Archive; Several objects were transferred to the MAA and accessioned in 2019, for example: *String of charms to be worn around the neck of a baby*. (twentieth century). At. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 2019.26. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/571103/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[90] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Kettle's Yard.
[91] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Whipple Museum of the History of Science; *Qattara (distillation apparatus).* At: Whipple Museum of the History of Science. 1235. https://collections.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/objects/12789/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[92] 'Royal Commonwealth Society Artefacts Collection, 2500 BCE–1970. Cambridge University Library, GBR/0115/RCS/ORCS', ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/103 [accessed 31 October 2024].
[93] 'Royal Commonwealth Society Artefacts Collection'.
[94] 'Curious Objects', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/curiousobjects [accessed 31 October 2024].
[95] Correspondence with Administrator for Centre of African Studies, 22 April 2024.
[96] The CAS Library has documented another piece, an Ethiopian painting of unknown maker and provenance: Ben Carson, 'From the Archives: Re-Discovering "A Year of Farming in Gojjam, Ethiopia"', *Cambridge Centre of*

Pamela Clarkson from 2012–2013 titled 'Grace'.[97] As part of the fellowship, Kwami travelled to Ghana with MAA's Senior Curator for World Archaeology, Chris Wingfield, for a final project workshop.[98] In September 2024 The Fitzwilliam Museum purchased nine maquettes (scale models of sculptures) that Kwami created for sculptures at the Creative Folkestone Triennial 2021.

Teaching for schools

African archaeological and ethnographic objects are used in teaching school groups that visit the museums, with handling collections meaning students can touch and experience some of these objects. Museum learning teams have created resources for schools with a focus on African materials, for example, The Fitzwilliam Museum offers on-site museum-teacher led sessions for primary schools on Egyptian material in The Fitzwilliam Museum,[99] and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology created digital resources to support secondary school teaching about the Kingdoms of Benin, Oyo, and Dahomey.[100]

Written materials

Many of the handwritten materials – often manuscripts – produced in Africa by African people in the Cambridge collections are religious in nature. While African manuscripts are found at MAA and the Fitzwilliam, the bulk of this material is in the UL, which holds manuscripts and other handwritten material from Africa as part of its Special Collections. The UL's holdings include over 3,500 manuscripts in Arabic script, including a small number from North and West Africa.[101] The first African manuscripts at the UL arrived in 1632 and several of these manuscripts produced in North Africa feature in a September 2024–February 2025 exhibition, 'Endless Stories: Manuscripts, knowledge and translation in the 17th century'.[102]

African Studies Library Blog (blog), 24 April 2024. https://asclibraryblog.wordpress.com/2023/11/17/from-the-archives-re-discovering-a-year-of-farming-in-gojjam-ethiopia/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[97] Art at the Alison Richard Building, 'Grace: an Exhibition of Paintings by Atta Kwami and Pamela Clarkson', *Art at the Alison Richard Building* (archived exhibition), 10 October 2012. https://arbart.crassh.cam.ac.uk/2012/10/10/atta-kwami-and-pamela-clarkson/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[98] Atta Kwami and Chris Wingfield, 'Interview: Atta Kwami and Chris Wingfield', in *Trophies, Relics and Curios?: Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific,* ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles, and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone, 2015), pp. 191–96.

[99] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Ancient Egyptians Archives', *Schools at the Fitz* (website), [n.d.]. https://schools.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/subject/ancient-egyptians/ [accessed 31 October 2024].

[100] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'African Collections – Schools Resources', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 9 February 2023. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/schools/resources/african-collections-schools-resources [accessed 18 November 2024].

[101] Cambridge University Library, 'History of the Collections – Near and Middle Eastern Department', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 10 April 2015. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/near-and-middle-eastern-department/history-collections [accessed 18 November 2024]; Catherine Ansorge and Josephine Warrior, *Faith & Fable: Islamic Manuscripts from Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: University Library, 2011).

[102] Cambridge University Library, 'Endless Stories'.

Image 5: 'Grammatical work,' North Africa, *c*. 1613–1615, Arabic; paper. Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge. CUL MS Ff.5.11 (1). Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

The holdings also include one of the largest collections of Ethiopic manuscripts (manuscripts written in the classical Ethiopian language that only exists today in liturgical works) in the UK, with seventy-three manuscripts dating from the fourteenth–twentieth centuries.[103] These are primarily religious texts, reflecting the production of manuscripts in monasteries and churches (see more below). Eleven Ethiopian manuscripts are digitized and available on the Cambridge Digital Library, including those in the Ethiopic language of Ge'ez and those in Amharic.[104] The Bible Society was founded in 1804 (as the British and Foreign Bible Society) with the aim of disseminating affordable Bibles and New Testaments around the world in languages people could understand.[105] The Bible Society's Library, which has been on deposit at the UL since 1984 (and thus is not owned by the University) includes over 39,000 volumes in over 2,000 languages including printed scripture, manuscripts, archival material, and reference books. Over 500 manuscripts (Bibles, Qur'ans, Psalters,

[103] Correspondence with Head of World Collections, Cambridge University Libraries, 13 September 2024; 'Ethiopian Manuscripts', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/ethiopianmanuscripts/1 [accessed 31 October 2024].
[104] 'Ethiopian Manuscripts', *Cambridge Digital Library*.
[105] 'Bible Society's Library', *Cambridge University Library*. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/bible-societys-library [accessed 18 November 2024].

etc.) in 184 languages are included in a 1983 catalogue.[106] In some cases, the provenance is provided, including the names of the presumed owners as written in the individual manuscripts. Many African languages feature, and the largest section in the entire collection is of Ethiopic manuscripts, totalling over thirty-five in the Ge'ez language (and a further ten in Amharic), with the oldest dating back to the 1400s.[107] These have received less attention than those in the Near and Middle Eastern collections at the UL.

The Taylor-Schechter Cairo Genizah Collection is the largest and most important single collection of mediaeval Jewish manuscripts in the world, built up over 1,000 years in the genizah (a sacred storeroom) of Ben Ezra Synagogue of Fastut (Old Cairo). The Jewish community of Egypt gave permission for the removal of the materials to Cambridge at the end of the nineteenth century, where they now form a collection of over 193,000 manuscript fragments.[108] The family of Egyptian businessman Jacques Mosseri deposited a 7,000-fragment genizah collection he had recovered from the same synagogue at the University Library in 2006 on a 20-year loan.[109] Images of manuscripts in these two collections are among the over 30,000 digitized in the Cairo Genizah section of the Cambridge Digital Library.[110] This material has attracted significant scholarly interest, and has been featured in University Library exhibitions, for example 'Recipes, Prescriptions and Drugs from Medieval Cairo', and 'Discarded History: The Genizah of Medieval Cairo', both in 2017.[111] A new book about the collection, *The Illustrated Cairo Genizah*, by Nick Posegay and Melonie Schmierer-Lee, was released in October 2024.[112]

[106] M. Rosaria Falivene, *Historical Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Bible House Library*, ed. Alan F. Jesson (London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1982).
[107] Falivene, *Historical Catalogue*, pp. 66–121.
[108] Cambridge University Library, 'Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 24 April 2015. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit [accessed 18 November 2024]; Rebecca Jefferson, *The Cairo Genizah and the Age of Discovery in Egypt: the History and Provenance of a Jewish Archive* (London: Tauris, 2021).
[109] 'Jacques Mosseri Genizah Collection', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 19 May 2015, https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/jacques-mosseri-genizah-collection [accessed 18 November 2024].
[110] 'Cairo Genizah', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/genizah/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[111] 'Recipes, Prescriptions and Drugs from Medieval Egypt', Cambridge University Library (archived exhibition), 2017. https://exhibitions.lib.cam.ac.uk/medicinegenizah/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; University of Cambridge, 'Discarded History Exhibition Lifts the Lid on 1,000 Years of Medieval History', *University of Cambridge* (website), 27 April 2017. https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/discarded-history-exhibition-lifts-the-lid-on-1000-years-of-medieval-history [accessed 18 November 2024].
[112] Nick Posegay and Melonie Schmierer-Lee, *The Illustrated Cairo Genizah* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2024).

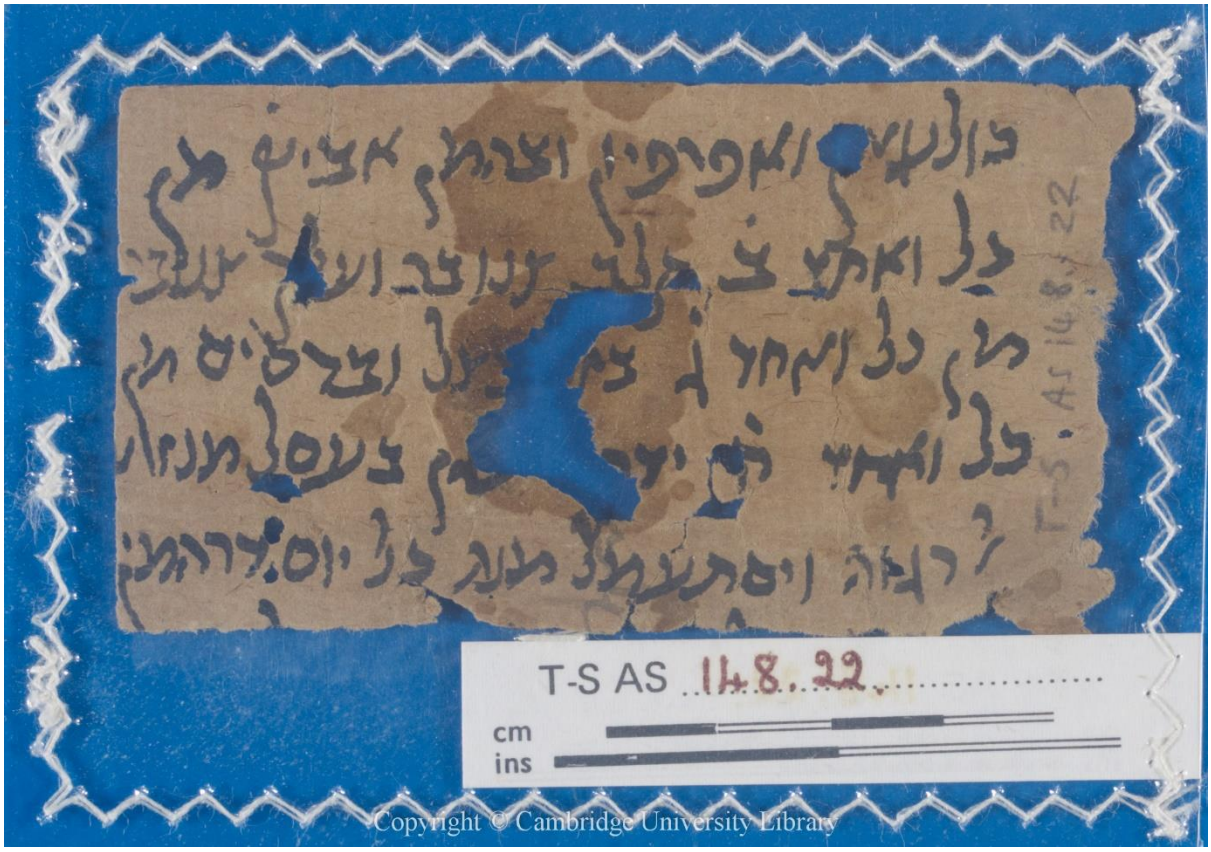

Image 6: 'A mediaeval narcotic cough syrup,' manuscript fragment. Paper; Egypt; 10th–13th century; Judaeo-Arabic. Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge. T-S AS 148.22. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.[113]

The Centre of African Studies Library has the largest concentration of material published in Africa.[114] The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide Library which is both a research and vocational institution has a specialisation in material from Africa, with successive directors of the Centre having expertise and interest in the Church in Africa.[115] As a result, up to a third of the content in the library is related to Africa; this includes publications from the continent.

Exhibitions and permanent displays

The scale of The Fitzwilliam and MAA collections mean that most of the African material is in storage, not on display. The Fitzwilliam Museum's two ancient Egypt galleries include 1,175 objects on permanent display while at MAA around 358 objects (split almost evenly between the archaeology and ethnographic collections) – or just under 1% of the African collections – are on display in the permanent galleries.[116] Though Africa is the worst represented continent at MAA, this is only by a

[113] Link to online catalogue record: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-AS-00148-00022/1 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Cambridge University Library, 'Recipes, Prescriptions and Drugs'.
[114] Cambridge's central university library search system, iDiscover, allows searching by individual library: https://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[115] African Collections Futures Survey 2023 – Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide Library.
[116] Correspondence with Senior Curator in Anthropology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 4 July 2024.

small margin; the best represented continent, Europe, has just under 1.8% of the collections at MAA on display. Fifty of the fifty-four nations in Africa are represented in the collections but artefacts from only eight of these countries are on display. While African artefacts have been on display both in the permanent galleries and in temporary exhibitions throughout MAA's history, the lack of an archivist and resulting inaccessibility of museum records make it difficult to establish the specific context of earlier displays and the stories these objects were used to tell. Temporary exhibitions are an opportunity for African objects to be put on display, often resulting in greater community engagement, while researchers and curators enhance the material available for objects in these exhibitions, including through new or additional photography, and (with the input of community members) increasing or improving information about the provenance, names, use, and date of the object on the catalogue. Label interventions are a means of engaging with artefacts in new ways, and the 2020 pilot project, 'RePresent' was one example, a collaboration between MAA and the Cambridge Africa Network in which a workshop with African people in Cambridge resulted in a series of bright pink labels with their personal interpretations and memories added to African artefacts on display.[117]

At The Fitzwilliam Museum, exhibitions centring African materials in the last 20 years include: 'Death on the Nile: Uncovering the Afterlife of Ancient Egypt' (2016),[118] 'Origins of the Afro Comb: 6,000 Years of Culture, Politics, and Identity' (2014) which included an installation at MAA,[119] 'Triumph, Protection and Dreams: East African Headrests in Context' (2011–2012).[120] All three drew heavily from the Egyptian collection at The Fitzwilliam Museum, while the earlier two also included material loaned from MAA as well as other museums and private collections. The 2021–2022 exhibition by Magdalene Odundo, and a case display of recently acquired work by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, highlighted the artwork by these two British artists with African heritage: Odundo was born in Kenya and Yiadom-Boakye was born in Britain to Ghanaian parents.[121] The 2023–2024 exhibition 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance' featured African material from across the University's collections; a second part, 'Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition' is due to open in February 2025.[122] 'Black Atlantic' was also a source of several recent acquisitions at The Fitzwilliam by Black British and American artists which centre people with African heritage (see Category C).

[117] Danika Parikh, Korantema Anyimadu, and Tara Okeke, 'RePresent', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Gardens, Collections in Action* (blog), 11 November 2020. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/11/11/represent/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[118] Helen Strudwick and others, *Death on the Nile: Uncovering the Afterlife of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2016); The Fitzwilliam Museum Egyptian Coffins Project, 'Death on the Nile', *Fitzwilliam Ancient Coffins* (website), 2016. https://egyptiancoffins.org/deathonthenile [accessed 31 October 2024].
[119] Sally-Ann Ashton, ed., *Origins of the Afro Comb: 6,000 Years of Culture, Politics and Identity* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 2013); The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Origins of the Afro comb', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (website), 2014. https://afrocombs.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[120] Jean-Michel Massing and Sally-Ann Ashton, *Triumph, Protection & Dreams: East African Headrests in Context* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 2011).
[121] Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Magdalene Odundo in Cambridge'; The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Turning Heads: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye – Rembrandt van Rijn – Anthony van Dyck', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (archived exhibition), 2021–2022. https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/turning-heads-lynette-yiadom-boakye-rembrandt-van-rijn-anthony-van-dyck [accessed 31 October 2024].
[122] Avery and Richards, eds, *Black Atlantic*.

At MAA, the '[Re:]Entanglements' exhibition discussed above was one of the largest exhibitions focused on African material.[123] The exhibition juxtaposed the early twentieth century colonial collection that Northcote Thomas assembled with perspectives from contemporary artists and community members. Earlier exhibitions include 'Carriers of Culture: Women, Food and Power from the Congo Basin' (2016–2017),[124] 'Currency in Africa' (2005–2006),[125] and 'Metal in Africa' (1996–1998).[126] The 'Carriers of Culture' exhibition was co-curated by Senior Curator in World Archaeology Dr Chris Wingfeld and members of the London-based Congo Great Lakes Initiative (CGLI).[127] The CGLI worked with MAA staff to review around 250 images from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, many of which were associated with the Baptist Missionary Society.

Violence in the Cambridge African collections

There are some African objects in Cambridge collections that have a recorded history of violent acquisition. The most well-known are the Benin Bronzes at MAA, which have been documented extensively.[128] With 116 objects, MAA houses one of the UK's largest collections of objects linked to the British-led punitive campaign and looting of the Benin Kingdom in 1897.[129] Artefacts at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are included in the 'Digital Benin' project, which is a major initiative that digitally reconnects these dispersed, looted artefacts, includes oral histories, historical photographs, and learning resources.[130] MAA is currently in a process of repatriating some of these artefacts (see 'Chapter: Returns'). Beyond Benin, there are other examples, including many that require further investigation. Several artefacts from Ghana have recorded links to British military campaigns in Ghana, for example, two drums, an atumpan (talking drum) and a domo (women's drum) recorded as having been taken from the palace or possession of the Asantehene, Nana Kwaku Dua III, popularly known as Prempeh II, during the 1894–1901 Yaa Asantewaa War.[131] The objects came to the museum from separate donors who were not directly involved in the campaign and in

[123] *[Re:]Entanglements;* Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, '[Re:] Entanglements: Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times'.
[124] Co-curated Dr Chris Wingfeld and members of the Congo Great Lakes Initiative.
[125] Curated by David Phillipson and Mark Elliot.
[126] Alison McKeating and D. W. Phillipson, *Metal in Africa*, Cambridge Africana 1 (Cambridge: University African Studies Centre, 1996).
[127] University of Cambridge, 'Museum Archive Reconnects a London-Based Congolese Community with Its Heritage', *University of Cambridge* (website), 10 March 2017. https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/museum-archive-reconnects-a-london-based-congolese-community-with-its-heritage [accessed 18 November 2024].
[128] Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: the Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto, 2021), doi: 10.2307/j.ctv18msmcr; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Our Approach to the Return of Museum Objects', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 10 February 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/about/our-approach-return-museum-objects [accessed 18 November 2024].
[129] Hicks, *Brutish Museums*, pp. 243–44.
[130] 'Digital Benin', https://digitalbenin.org/institutions/28 [accessed 18 November 2024]
[131] *Atumpan.* At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. E 1910.59. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/495322/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Domo*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1926.580.1-2. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/535354/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Researching and Curating African Collections at MAA | Devolving Restitution #4', *YouTube* (video), 5 April 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGPLPvWJAVI [accessed 18 November 2024].

both cases the full provenance is missing. According to research by Dr Mary-Ann Middelkoop at the Pitt Rivers Museum, a gold necklace at MAA today (1918.83) was likely looted from Asantehene Kofi Karikari's palace during the Third Anglo-Asante War of 1873–1874, sold at an official auction in London, and purchased by a graduate of the then women's-only college, Girton College, Cambridge, whose family donated it to the museum in 1918 after her death.[132]

Image 7: *Gold cast necklace, composed of 60 ornate discs, 25 'V' shaped beads and thirteen pendants representing lunitella shells all strung onto a length of red cotton. Looted from King Prempeh's Treasure House, Kumasi*. From: Asante Kingdom (Ghana). At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. 1918.83.[133]

The Cambridge collections include a number of objects associated with the 1868 British punitive expedition to the mountain fortress of Maqdala (also spelled Magdala) in Ethiopia. This military expedition occurred following a breakdown of diplomatic relations with Emperor Tewodros II of Abyssinia (Ethiopia and Eritrea today) who had taken around forty European diplomats and

[132] See Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Researching and Curating African Collections at MAA | Devolving Restitution #4', Mary-Ann Middelkoop, from 30:07.
[133] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/535336 [accessed 18 November 2024].

missionaries hostage.[134] The British army of between 13,000–16,000 soldiers (comprising British and Indian troops) was joined by thousands of civilians, including journalists and members of scientific societies; among them was Richard Rivington-Holmes, an archaeologist from the British Museum, sent to conduct excavations in the area.[135] The fighting itself was brief, lasting only a weekend in April, and the British won decisively; Emperor Tewodros II died by suicide as the British soldiers reached the fort gates.[136] In the most comprehensive recent work on the Maqdala Expedition, Andrew Heavens described a chaotic scene as soldiers ransacked the Maqdala fortress, including its church, of objects of value, as well as the body of the Emperor Tewodros II himself, ripping off blood-stained scraps of his clothing and cutting off his hair to keep as souvenirs.[137] British military officials ordered the soldiers to hand over anything they had taken, and according to British military practice at this time, looted cultural artefacts and religious manuscripts were sold in auction and the funds used to reward soldiers, while wealthier soldiers and civilians – including the British Museum staffer, who had first choice of the most coveted artefacts – purchased artefacts in the auction.[138] Soldiers also took objects themselves, bypassing the official looting or '"regulated" plunder,' as described by historians Lucia Patrizio Gunning and Debbie Challis.[139] Emperor Tewodros II had been preparing to build a church dedicated to Madhane Alam, 'Saviour of the World', and had spent years amassing hundreds of manuscripts, religious artefacts, and other treasures from across Ethiopia at Maqdala in preparation.[140] As Eyob Derillo noted in an article about a 2018 British Library exhibition, 'African Scribes: Manuscript Culture of Ethiopia' that he curated, 'we can certainly say that the Madhane Alam church had possibly the largest collection of books in the country'.[141] The looting of the Maqdala fortress was thus the looting on a truly national scale of a significant cultural and religious heritage.

According to a 1961 catalogue, there are two sources for the collection of sixty-nine of the Ethiopian manuscripts in UL's Near and Middle Eastern collections: some were purchased from those brought back by 'individual members of the British Expedition to Ethiopia in 1867/8,' and others donated by the widow of Amharic scholar and British colonial officer, C. H. Armbruster (King's

[134] Andrew Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder: How Britain Took One Small Boy and Hundreds of Treasures from Ethiopia* (Cheltenham: History Press, 2023), pp. 30–33, 47.
[135] Lucia Patrizio Gunning and Debbie Challis, 'Planned Plunder, the British Museum, and the 1868 Maqdala Expedition', *The Historical Journal* 66.3 (2023), 550–72, at 561. doi: 10.1017/S0018246X2200036X; Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 47.
[136] Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 562; Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 67.
[137] A lock of Emperor Tewodros II's hair was put on display in a bookshop window in Plymouth, in southwest England weeks after the well-publicised battle. Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, pp. 59–61, 208–11; Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 564.
[138] Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 75; Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 566; Henrietta Lidchi and Stuart Allan, 'Introduction: Dividing the Spoils', in *Dividing the Spoils: Perspectives on Military Collections and the British Empire*, ed. Henrietta Lidchi and Stuart Allan, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 1–16, at 2.
[139] Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 75; Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 566; Edward M. Spiers, 'Spoils of War: Custom and Practice', in *Dividing the Spoils: Perspectives on Military Collections and the British Empire*, ed. Henrietta Lidchi and Stuart Allen, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 19–28, at 19–24.
[140] Rita Pankhurst, 'The Library of Emperor Tewodros II at Mäqdäla (Magdala)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 36.1 (1973), 15–42, at 15.
[141] Eyob Derillo, 'Exhibiting the Maqdala Manuscripts: African Scribes: Manuscript Culture of Ethiopia', *African Research and Documentation* 135: *Special Issue: Archives and Collections for/in Ethiopian Studies* (2019), 102–16, at 103. doi: 10.1017/S0305862X0002392X.

College).[142] Four of the eleven Ethiopian manuscripts digitised and available on the Cambridge Digital Library have documented connections to the Battle of Maqdala, and this is noted in the acquisition section of each manuscript record online.[143] Two of these were not in the 1961 catalogue, including one that, according to a note on the inside cover (see below): 'was taken from Theodores' camp under Magdala 14 April 1868. Presented to M. Garbios [?], with kind regards, by this finder. 9 Feb 1870'. Another of the four (Add. 1570) that was donated to the University by Armbruster has a note that reads: 'Abyssinian Bible. Taken from King Theodore at the storming of Magdala by the officers of H.M. Madras engineers and presented by them to Captain Sotham [?] of H.M.H. transport "Middlesex" June 1868'.[144] Images of two further manuscripts in this collection linked to the Battle of Maqdala are scheduled to be released online.[145] Academic and campaigner for the restitution of Ethiopian artefacts, Rita Pankhurst, concluded in a 1973 article that ten of the Ethiopian manuscripts were certainly or highly likely from the Maqdala fortress (including the two digitised manuscripts described above), and up to forty-seven possibly from the same source.[146] Of the Bible Society Ethiopic manuscripts, provenance information is limited. One (BFBS MSS 192), is a parchment scroll with prayers, catalogued along with the details of a typed note that accompanied it. According to the note, it was originally purchased 'either in 1870 or 1871 off a soldier who had picked it up on a battlefield in Abyssinia where he was in his regiment during the war there and it is deeply stained with blood'.[147] According to Heavens, soldiers had been allowed to keep objects taken off enemies during active combat.[148] The scroll has dark stains still visible today, however, without further analysis it is not possible to say with certainty that this is human blood.

[142] Edward Ullendorff and Stephen Wright, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. viii, http://archive.org/details/catalogueofethio0000ulle [accessed 18 November 2024]; Anaïs Woin, Claire Bosc-Tiesse, and Marie-Laure Derat, 'Cambridge', *Ménestrel* (website), 20 December 2017. https://www.menestrel.fr/?-Cambridge- [accessed 18 November 2024].
[143] Cambridge Digital Library direct link: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/search/advanced/results?FacetCollection=Ethiopian%20Manuscripts&author=&excludeText=&fullText=&keyword=magdala&language=&location=&page=1&place=&shelfLocator=&subject=&textJoin=and&title=&yearEnd=&yearStart= [accessed 18 November 2024]. The six manuscripts are: Add. 1570, Add. 3682, Or. 2122, Or. 2269, Add.1861, and Add. 2916.
[144] Old Testament (Add. 1570), late 16th century. Cambridge University Library. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01570/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[145] One is Add.1861 (late 18th century) Amharic, K'alä Haymanot: A'madä Mest'ir, which is described as having been 'acquired at a sale in 1878 and assumed to have come from the Napier expedition'. And the Second is Add. 2916 (17th century) Ge'ez homilies, which was 'Brought to England from India, where it had been taken by a member of Napier's expedition'.
[146] Pankhurst, 'The Library of Emperor Tewodros II', pp. 25, 40.
[147] Falivene, *Historical Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Bible House Library*, p. 110.
[148] Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 75.

Image 8: 'Gospel of John.' 'A personal copy containing ትምሕርተ ፡ ጎቡዓት (Mystagogia), ወንጌል ፡ ዘዮሐንስ (the Gospel of John), and various prayers and hymns'. Ethiopia, 18th Century. Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge. Or. 2269. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.[149]

Two decorated silk kabba at MAA likely belonged to Queen Woyzaro Tiruwork Wube (also spelled Terunesh or Tirunesh), the second wife of Emperor Tewodros II.[150] These had been sent to England with her other personal possessions soon after her death in 1868, to the Secretary of State for India in London; he gave them to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A).[151] These royal objects, together with two other heavily decorated Ethiopian cloaks were transferred from the V&A to MAA in 1934.[152] Two further Ethiopian objects from this group from Maqdala described as 'Drawers, Silk Damask' and ' Robe with sleeves' identified as missing within the collection at MAA for over a decade

[149] Link to digitised manuscript: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-OR-02269/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[150] *Queen Woyzaro Terunesh's blue cotton cloak with hood*. From Abyssinia (Ethiopia). (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Z 19184. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/510742/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Queen Woyzaro Terunesh's kabba*. (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Z 19188 https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/510744 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[151] Nicola Stylianou, 'The Empress's Old Clothes: Biographies of African Dress at the Victoria And Albert Museum', in *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas and Annabella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 81–96.

[152] Stylianou, 'The Empress's Old Clothes', p. 91; *Hooded blue silk cloak with gold silk lining.* (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Z 19185. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/510743 [accessed 18 November 2024].

were recently relocated among the collections as they had been marked as being from Myanmar.[153] The V&A continues to house more of Queen Tiruwork Wube's personal belongings, including her jewellery, embroidered dresses, and a shamma (shawl).[154] On Emperor Tewodros II's request, his wife and six or seven-year-old son, Prince Alamayu,[155] had been taken from Maqdala into the care of the British army to accompany them to her home province, as the emperor feared attacks from his local enemies.[156] An account of the expedition by senior officers described an incident that occurred soon after the battle, while Queen Tiruwork Wube and Prince Alamayu had 'taken refuge' in the hut of Hormzud Rassam, a political agent for the British diplomatic service: 'A sentry was placed at the door, but nevertheless some soldiers were allowed to get in and grossly insult her. Luckily Mr. Rassam and an English officer came in time to save her from further outrage'.[157] The account continues with a description of the 26-year-old Queen Tiruwork Wube's physical appearance: 'a handsome, delicate-looking woman, with beautiful hair, thin lips, and fine features, and not darker than an Italian brunette'.[158] No further details are provided so it is unclear what form the 'insult' took, and secondary sources are only speculative in nature. Queen Tiruwork Wube died of a lung condition a month after the battle, and –reportedly on his father's wishes – Prince Alamayu was taken by British soldiers to England; he died there age 18, and was buried at St George's Chapel in Windsor.[159] Patrizio Gunning and Challis were also unsure what form the 'insult' took, but concluded: 'the fact of her death on the journey and subsequent removal and collection of her personal belongings suggest a sexualized possession'.[160]

[153] *Shirt of red silk damask with gold embroidery, to be worn with Z 19189 B*. (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Z 19189 A. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/498531/ [accessed 18 November 2024] and *Trousers of red silk damask with gold embroidery, to be worn with Z 19189 A.* (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Z 19189 B. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/566790/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[154] Stylianou, 'The Empress's Old Clothes'; *Kamis*. (*c*. 1860.) [Clothing.] At: Victoria and Albert Museum. 399-1869. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O69064/kamis-unknown/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Kamis*. (*c*. 1830–1868.) [Clothing.] At: Victoria and Albert Museum. 400-1869. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O143065/kamis-kamis-unknown/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Shamma*. (*c*. 1860.) [Clothing.] At: Victoria and Albert Museum. 401-1869. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O143073/shawl-shamma-unknown/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; John Mellors, 'Queen Tirunesh's Embroidered Dresses at the V&A', *The Prince and the Plunder* (blog), 6 March 2023. https://www.theprinceandtheplunder.com/2023/03/06/queen-tiruneshs-embroidered-dresses-at-the-va/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[155] Different anglicised spellings of his name are used, including Alemayehu. The young prince signed his name 'Alamayu'. Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. ix.

[156] Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 564.

[157] Clements Markham and William Francis Prideaux, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 361.

[158] Markham and Prideaux, *History of the Abyssinian Expedition*, pp. 361–62.

[159] Markham and Prideaux, *History of the Abyssinian Expedition*, p. 362; Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 565; Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 85. Requests from Ethiopian organisations to return Prince Alamayu's remains have so far been unsuccessful. For more on Prince Alamayu's life in England see Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*.

[160] Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 564.

Image 9: *Queen Woyzaro Terunesh's blue cotton cloak with hood*. From Abyssinia (Ethiopia). (*c*. 19th Century.) [Clothing.] At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Z 19184.[161]

[161] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/510742 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Some items are so special or personal that it is unlikely they were given freely, this is particularly the case with weapons, intimate clothing, and personal adornments. For example, many items at MAA from South Africa are recorded as having been collected as part of the Anglo-Zulu Wars (1879–1896) and Eastern Cape Wars of Dispossession (1779–1879). However, apart from four assegais (spears) recorded as having been surrendered to the British and taken by the High Commissioner for Southern Africa between 1877 and 1878 after the final of the Eastern Cape Wars of Dispossession, wider provenance information is limited.[162] The involvement of communities of origin is very important in helping to deepen research and reveal exploitative collections contexts. In 2020 a group of Maasai elders from Kenya and Tanzania visited Cambridge to view the 180 objects identified as 'Maasai' at MAA as part of the Living Cultures initiative, which was spearheaded by Samwel Nangiria, a Maasai socio-environmental scientist and human rights defender.[163] Supported by indigenous peoples' self-representation NGO, InsightShare, the group initially focused on artefacts at the Pitt Rivers Museum but expanded their scope to similar ones at MAA and the Horniman Museum in London. Among the Maasai artefacts at MAA are six orkataar (also spelled orkatar), or armlets, that have been at MAA since 1920. These orkataar are passed down from father to son and would never have been taken off, sold, or given away. Maasai leaders said that each represented a Maasai man who had died, and a family that had been suffering for generations since due to the absence of this artefact. The orkataar were donated to MAA by Sir Frederick John Jackson (Jesus College), a colonial administrator that worked in Kenya and Uganda. Researchers speculate that he may have taken them from the bodies himself or acquired them from colleagues in the aftermath of several punitive expeditions against Maasai in the late nineteenth century.[164] In October 2024, in the concluding phase of the Living Cultures initiative, a delegation of Masaai representatives visiting the Pitt Rivers Museum announced that, following extensive deliberations and the advice of their spiritual leader, they had decided that five culturally sensitive Masaai artefacts at Pitt Rivers, which include one orkataar, should remain there.[165] The delegates noted that the artefacts were considered warriors and in Masaai tradition those who died in battle were buried on the battlefield rather than being taken home. Satisfied that the artefacts were well cared for at Pitt Rivers, the delegation, which included representatives of five families whose artefacts had been taken, decided that that museum served as a suitable final resting place.

Research by other Western institutions in the last five years has revealed new evidence of looted objects and those taken within exploitative circumstances. With the movement of objects

[162] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Anthropology Department Internal Collection Brief: South Africa, 2021; South African History Online, 'Eastern Cape Wars of Dispossession 1779-1878', *SAHO* (website), 29 June 2018. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/eastern-cape-wars-dispossession-1779-1878 [accessed 31 October]; *Assegai*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. E 1912.112. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/533884/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[163] Mark Elliot, 'Knowing What Is Important: Rethinking Collections with Maasai Cultural Leaders', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 20 July 2020. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/07/20/knowing-what-is-important-rethinking-collections-with-maasai-cultural-leaders/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Geraldine Kendall Adams, 'A New Approach to Repatriation', *Museums Association, Museums Journal* (blog), 2 November 2020. https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/features/2020/11/a-new-approach-to-repatriation/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Pitt Rivers Museum, 'Decolonising Cultural Spaces: Maasai Living Cultures', *Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/maasai-living-cultures [accessed 15 November 2024].

[164] *Orkatar*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1921.942 A. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/534014 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[165] Pitt Rivers Museum, 'Decolonising Cultural Spaces: Maasai Living Cultures'.

between museums, a review of that research could reveal connections with artefacts in Cambridge or provide deeper understandings of objects with known violent acquisition histories. Nonetheless, with huge collections and relatively limited information on their origins, many more stories of violence and exploitation in Cambridge collections remain hidden.

Category B: Specimens from the Natural World

Overview

Estimating Figures

According to curators at the respective museums, there are an estimated 100,000 African specimens at the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge (UMZC) and 41,500 African rocks, minerals and fossils in the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences.[1] The Cambridge University Botanic Garden (CUBG) has around 1,095 plants endemic to Africa in its collection.[2] These are comparatively small numbers in these natural history collections, and represent less than 5% of the material in these large collections, but include specimens of international significance. Most of the continent is represented in the museums and garden, including islands of scientific significance (e.g., Madagascar and Mauritius), with the exception only of the Sahel, a semi-arid region that stretches from Mauritania on the coast of West Africa, to Chad in Central Africa. The Cambridge University Herbarium includes a largely under-researched 'World' collection that could include an estimated 10–50,000 African specimens.[3]

Colonial Collecting

Much of the Zoology and Sedgwick museums' African material, particularly the most significant collections, was acquired during the peak of international British scientific collecting expeditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with more material from British colonies than other parts of the continent. The museums benefitted from the personal and professional networks of colonial administrators, soldiers, merchants, and settlers, and the freedom of movement, the ease of collecting and shipping material from British colonies, and the British government's interest in surveying and exploiting colonies' natural resources.[4]

Catalogues

The entire Living Collection (i.e., living plants) of the CUBG is catalogued and searchable online, though it is not currently possible to search by country or region.[5] Just under 40% of the African specimens at the Sedgwick are catalogued digitally. These datasets are not currently available online,

[1] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge; African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences.
[2] Correspondence with Assistant Curator of Living Collections, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 9 October 2024.
[3] Cambridge University Herbarium, 'Our Collections', *Cambridge University Herbarium*. https://www.herbarium.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/our-collections [accessed 18 November 2024]; African Collections Futures Survey 2023 – Cambridge University Herbarium.
[4] Jack Ashby and Rebecca Machin, 'Legacies of Colonial Violence in Natural History Collections', *Journal of Natural Science Collections* 8 (2021), 44–54, at 44. https://www.natsca.org/sites/default/files/publications/JoNSC-Vol8-Ashby_and_Machin_2021_0.pdf (pdf) [accessed 26 November 2024].
[5] Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 'Living Collections Portal', *Cambridge University Botanic Garden*. https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/collections/collectionsportal/ [accessed 23 October 2024].

but museum staff provide access on request.[6] At UMZC, up to 10% of the African collections is catalogued digitally and is searchable on the online catalogue.[7] Only a small number of the specimens across the two museums and garden have been photographed, in keeping with wider trends in natural history museums.

Key Collections

University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge

The University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge (UMZC) contains specimens – including mammals, insects, fish, fossils, and birds – from across most of Africa, offering the greatest regional representation of the three natural history institutions. This museum includes some of the smallest specimens from Africa, such as millimetre-scale marine molluscs, up to the largest African object in the entire University collection – a complete African elephant skeleton. The estimated 100,000 specimens are dominated by invertebrates (animals without spines, e.g., worms). The material was acquired through private collections by individuals, gifts or exchanges with other institutions, colonial governments, and by scientific expedition.

Image 10: African elephant. Addo Bush, Cape Colony (today, Eastern Cape), South Africa, 1884. At: University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge. UMZC H.4451. Note: The rhino horns in this photo are replicas. Nathan Pitt © University of Cambridge.

[6] Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, 'Research Enquiries', *Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://sedgwickmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/research-enquiries [accessed 14 October 2024].

[7] *University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge Collections Database*. https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/collection/online [accessed 23 October 2024].

Among these are collections of particular significance. The museum contains the skeleton of a dodo, a flightless bird endemic to Mauritius that has been extinct since the seventeenth century, assembled with bones that the museum acquired through the brother of Alfred Newton (Magdalene College), who became the University's first Professor for Zoology and Comparative Anatomy in 1866. Newton's brother Edward (Magdalene College) was a colonial administrator in Mauritius from 1859–1877 and facilitated the museum's acquisition of rare and extinct birds from Mauritius, Reunion and Rodrigues, including type specimens (individual specimens recognised as new to science and designated to represent the species as a whole).[8] The UMZC has many hundreds of dodo bones in one of the largest dodo collections outside of Mauritius.

Image 11: Dodo. Mauritius. At: Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge. UMZC 415.H. © University of Cambridge/Julieta Sarmiento Photography.

[8] University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, 'Birds', *University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/birds [accessed 23 October 2024]; John James Wilson, 'What's a Type? A Guide to Type Specimens', *National Museums Liverpool* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/whats-type-guide-type-specimens [accessed 18 November 2024].

The collection from the 1905 Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Indian Ocean (part funded by the University of Cambridge), includes important insects and corals from the Seychelles and is extremely type-rich, i.e., includes many type specimens.[9] Important fossil collections from Tanzania and South Africa include those collected by vertebrate palaeontologist Francis Rex Parrington (Sidney Sussex College) who spent over forty years working at the museum and zoology department from 1927.[10] There is a very large collection of insects in the museum, but these are kept in taxonomic order, so it is difficult to discern without a dedicated survey project which originated in African countries. Insects of importance for the study of human health and agriculture (e.g., mosquitos and crop pests) are present from across the continent, including collections contributed to by influential entomologists Guy Marshall and Sheffield A. Neave, both former directors of the Imperial Institute of Entomology (now the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International)[11] through the first half of the twentieth century. [12] A collection of over 200,000 molluscs donated by ship merchant and marine dredger Robert MacAndrew to the museum in 1873 includes molluscs that were obtained by dredging operations in the Red Sea, before the final cut through of the Suez Canal. These offer a snapshot of the invertebrate fauna before mixing between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea occurred. UMZC also acquired specimens from various collectors, including from hunters of big game in east and southern Africa.[13]

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

The approximately 41,500 African specimens in the Sedgwick Museum fall into four major categories: palaeontology (fossils), petrology (rocks), minerals, and economic geology collections, including building stones. The palaeontology collection was mostly acquired through the activities of petroleum companies and geological surveys, and some Cambridge expeditions, museum transfers, and individual donors. The biggest single contributor by far is the Somaliland Petroleum Company/British Somaliland Petroleum Company, which accounts for almost half of the catalogue records.[14] Most of this material, which includes fish and invertebrates, was acquired in 1930 and is associated with additional material from Somaliland donated by petroleum geologist William Archibald Macfadyen (St John's College), who worked for Somaliland Petroleum Company.[15] In a 1933 publication, *The Geology of British Somaliland,* Macfadyen described the activities: 'A general reconnaissance was made of a large part of the Protectorate [of British Somaliland], and the area

[9] J. Stanley Gardiner and C. Forster Cooper, 'The Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Indian Ocean in 1905, Under the Leadership of Mr. J. Stanley Gardiner. No. I.—Description of The Expedition', *Transactions of the Linnean Society of London*, 2nd ser., *Zoology* 12.1 (1907), 1–56, at 10. doi: 10.1111/j.1096-3642.1907.tb00507.x.

[10] A. J. Charig, 'Francis Rex Parrington, 20 February 1905 - 17 April 1981', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 36 (1997), 359–78. doi: 10.1098/rsbm.1990.0036.

[11] CABI, 'Our History: over a century of scientific endeavour', *CABI.org* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.cabi.org/about-cabi/our-history/ [accessed 23 October 2024].

[12] Guy Marshall, Sheffield A. Neave, and S. Lall, 'Imperial Institute of Entomology', *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 33.2 (1942), 145. doi: 10.1017/S0007485300026407.

[13] A company in Kenya that sent cases of trophies rejected by game hunters in 1908 still exists in Kenya today as a luxury tour operator.

[14] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences.

[15] Macfadyen, William Archibald, 'The Papers of William Archibald Macfadyen', *Archives Hub*. http://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb590-mcfn [accessed 6 November 2024]; William Archibald Macfadyen, 'The Late Geological History of British Somaliland', *Nature* 130, no. 3281 (1932), 433–34. doi: 10.1038/130433a0.

round the oil-bearing district of Dagah Shabell was studied in considerable detail'.[16] His team collected fossils and rocks weighing around three quarters of a ton in total, and deposited them between the Sedgwick and the British Museum where they could be studied further by various geologists. This 1933 text was published by the British colonial government of the Protectorate and is one example of the links between scientific research, imperial governance, and resource extraction.

The petrological material was collected mostly from several East African Rift countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda), an area attracting a focus of interest as the site where the African continental plate is splitting apart. The collection includes rare fragments of the Earth's mantle ('xenoliths') which are important in understanding the formation of the Earth's crust. Two major collectors of this material were geologists Arthur Holmes and Arthur Delmar Combe, who collected mainly from the volcanic fields of the East African Rift of south-west Uganda, in the 1930s and 1940s. Other important material comes from the South African Bushveld Igneous Complex, a vast suite of igneous rocks which contain some of the richest ore deposits on Earth, particularly platinum-group metals. These materials are used extensively by researchers active in the Department of Earth Sciences, who carry out geochemical and other analyses on the specimens.

The mineral collection is dominated by material from South Africa, including diamonds and gold ore, many dating from the 1890s, and the gemstone collection gemmologist Michael O'Donoghue (Selwyn College) donated to the museum in 2006. Cements, building stones, and decorative stones – mainly cut into 4 ½ inch cubes (11.43cm) – are displayed in historic showcases in the museum's open social space for students and researchers, the John Watson Building Stone Gallery. Rebekah Hodgkinson explored the colonial histories of this collection as part of research for the University of Cambridge Museums' Legacies of Empire and Enslavement programme and used stones from South Africa as one of the case studies.[17] John Watson worked in the cement manufacturing industry and started donating building stones to the museum from around 1905, several years before he retired; he published two catalogues of the material before his death in 1918; a third was published posthumously.[18] The earlier catalogues are available online.[19] The collection is formed of over 2,500 stones, including those Watson was given by his own employer and those he 'bought or obtained' in the nineteenth and early twentieth century from across the UK, British colonies, and other parts of the world.[20] Labels on the stones include their common name, geological information including the stratigraphic position or petrological designation, quarry of origin, and

[16] William Archibald Macfadyen, *The Geology of British Somaliland*, The Geology and Palaeontology of British Somaliland 1 ([s.l.]: Government of the Somaliland Protectorate, 1933), p. 5.
[17] Rebekah Hodgkinson, 'Turning Stones Over', *MAA Digital Lab* (blog), 25 June 2024. https://www.maadigitallab.org/blog/2024/06/25/turning-stones-over/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[18] Katherine J. Andrew, 'John Watson and the Cambridge Building Stone Collection', *Geological Curator* 5.8 (1994), 303–10, at 304; J. Watson, *British and Foreign Building Stones, a Descriptive Catalogue of the Specimens in the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911); J. Watson, *British and Foreign Marbles and Other Ornamental Stones, a Descriptive Catalogue of the Specimens in the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916); J. Watson, *Cements and Artificial Stone, a Descriptive Catalogue of the Specimens in the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge*, ed. R. H. Rastall (Cambridge: Heffer, 1922).
[19] Watson, *British and Foreign Building Stones*, https://archive.org/details/britishforeignbu00watsrich/page/n1/mode/2up [accessed 18 November 2024]; Watson, *British and Foreign Marbles*, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015064552287 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[20] Andrew, 'John Watson and the Cambridge Building Stone Collection', p. 304.

donor.[21] According to the 1911 catalogue, building stones were acquired from individuals including quarry owners and architects.[22] The African material is from quarries across Africa, with more from Egypt and South Africa.[23] The stones were often donated by colonial governments, mercantile companies, Central African material from the Universities Mission to Central Africa, and individual donors, in addition to stones Watson purchased himself.[24] Watson described the use of the stones, often naming individual buildings, and in many cases those in the collection from African countries were used in the construction of colonial administrative buildings and large infrastructure, or Christian churches. The exception is Egypt, where Watson wrote at length about the different types of stones from quarries that supplied the materials used in construction in ancient Egypt.[25]

Image 12: John Watson Building Stone Gallery, Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge © Mike Cameron Photography.

The Sedgwick also holds forty-six geological specimens collected by Charles Darwin at the Cape of Good Hope in May/June 1836 during his trip around the world on the HMS Beagle, and referenced in his notebooks and diaries, which are available online.[26]

[21] The labels without donor names were donated by Watson himself. Watson, *British and Foreign Building Stones*, p. 2.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Hodgkinson, 'Turning Stones Over'.
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] This is across several sections of the book, e.g., Watson, *British and Foreign Building Stones*, pp. 220–23.
[26] John van Wyhe, ed., *The Complete Work of Charles Darwin Online* (website), 2002–. https://darwin-online.org.uk/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Image 13: Sandstone. Collected 'on road between Simons Bay and Cape Town', June 1836. Cape of Good Hope, Cape Colony (today, South Africa). Beagle Collection: 3649. At: Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge. 112877. © Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences.

Cambridge University Botanic Garden

The CUBG Living Collection of 8,000 plant species comes from around the world, with mainly Western European species, in addition to those from places with similar temperate climates including in North America, China, Japan, South Africa, Western Australia, and New Zealand.[27] Around 65% of the CUBG's Living Collection is of 'garden origin' meaning these plants were acquired from other botanic gardens, while 20% were sourced directly from the wild.[28] Only 24% of the Living Collections have provenance information (country of origin), and 98% of that provenance information comprises accessions that are wild in origin.[29] The further a plant is from collection in the wild, the harder it is to determine its provenance as information can be lost each time plants or their seeds move to a new institution. This means that the collections contexts of the CUBG Living

[27] Samuel Brockington, 'Cambridge University Botanic Garden Living Collections Strategy: 2020–2030' (Cambridge: CUBG, 2019). https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/assets.botanic.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final_CUBG_Living_Collections_Strategy_2020-30.pdf (pdf), 84 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 12.
[28] *Ibid*. p. 30.
[29] *Ibid*. p. 31.

Collections are harder to investigate than those of the Sedgwick and UMZC. The CUBG's 2020–2030 Living Collections Strategy notes that the value of its living collections declines from the point of acquisition in the wild, and the quality of plants cultivated in gardens continues to reduce for a number of reasons including less genetic variability and exposure to different growing conditions to those found in the wild.[30] As such, the CUBG is prioritising increasing the proportion of wild collected species from 20% to 40% as one of its acquisition goals in its strategic plan.[31]

Looking at plants that are only found in Africa, the representation from the continent across both the Living Collection and the CUBG Herbarium (the latter holding 14,000 accessions) is limited. Around 1,095 of the CUBG plants are endemic to African countries – i.e., these are species that are only found in these countries and most of the living plants are found in the glasshouses. This figure includes plants of an unknown provenance, but which are known to be endemic to Africa.[32] Examples include succulents from Namibia and Morocco, critically endangered *Tahina spectabilis* (a gigantic palm also known as the 'self-destructive palm' because it dies after blooming just once) and critically endangered *Adansonia grandidieri* (a giant baobab tree) both endemic to Madagascar. The *Tahina spectabilis* was received from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew after the CUBG donated their larger specimen to the Eden Project in Cornwall in July 2024, where it has more room to grow, and the *Adansonia grandidieri* was received from the Millennium Seed Bank, Kew in 2016, eight years after it was collected in the wild.[33] South Africa is the best represented country on the continent, a reflection of the focus on collecting from temperate regions of the world. South Africa is one of the countries where the CUBG is focusing future collecting as part of a larger strategy targeting four temperate hotspots.[34] This includes though collecting expeditions which continue today. Fieldwork in 2018 to the Richtersveld desert on the west coast of South Africa featured CUBG staff, joined by colleagues from Kew Gardens and the Richtersveld National Park Nursery; this biodiversity hotspot is home to over 1,900 species of plant currently not found anywhere else on Earth but is under threat from climate change, poachers and over-grazing.[35] Activities included sourcing wild plants and seeds for the CUBG glasshouses, with permission from the South African government. Of the taxa categorised as 'threatened' according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), i.e., those that are either extinct, extinct in the wild, critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable, in March 2024 there were 251 taxa at CUBG that fit this criterion.[36] Of these, six are considered 'extinct in the wild'. Of the 251 threatened taxa, thirty-five are endemic to Africa and one,

[30] *Ibid.* p. 30.
[31] *Ibid*. p. 62.
[32] The percentage of Living Collections and Herbarium accessions with a distribution that includes African countries is approximately 19%. However, this figure does not necessarily mean that the given plant was collected on the African continent or derived from plants of African origin. For example, *Molinia caerulea* (purple moor grass) has a distribution range that spans parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. As this report is primarily focused on material from Africa, the lower percentage of specimens that are endemic to the continent was used.
[33] Correspondence with Assistant Curator of Living Collections, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 9 October 2024.
[34] Brockington, 'Cambridge University Botanic Garden Living Collections Strategy', pp. 62, 65.
[35] Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 'Succulents from the Richtersveld (2018)', *Cambridge University Botanic Garden*. https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/collections/collecting-expeditions/collecting-expedition-to-south-africa/ [accessed 23 October 2024]; Louise Walsh, 'Call of the Wild Collector', University of Cambridge (website), 28 August 2020. https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/wildcollector [accessed 18 November 2024].
[36] Correspondence with Assistant Curator of Living Collections, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 7 March 2024.

Nymphaea thermarum, was listed as 'extinct in the wild' until March 2024 when it was reassessed as 'critically endangered' (see more below).[37]

Image 14*: Aloe buhrii.* Endemic to Cape Provinces (today, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western Cape), South Africa. At: Arid House, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, University of Cambridge. 19850451.[38] Margeaux Apple, Cambridge University Botanic Garden.

Provenance in natural history collections

In 2018, Subhadra Das of the University College London Sciences Collection and Miranda Lowe of the Natural History Museum (Invertebrate Division) published an important contribution to decolonial museum practice in natural history museums.[39] Das and Lowe traced the historical relationship between European science, transatlantic chattel slavery, empire, and museums in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how the legacies of this period endure in museum collections and interpretation today. They highlighted several examples of the unacknowledged roles in scientific

[37] Correspondence with Assistant Curator of Living Collections, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 7 March 2024.
[38] Link to online catalogue record: https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/collections/collectionsportal/plant-details?accession_number=19850451 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[39] Subhadra Das and Miranda Lowe, 'Nature Read in Black and White: Decolonial Approaches to Interpreting Natural History Collections', *Journal of Natural Science Collections* 6 (2018), 4–14. https://www.natsca.org/sites/default/files/publications/JoNSC-Vol6-DasandLowe2018.pdf (pdf) [accessed 18 November 2024].

collecting of Black people, including those who were enslaved, and of indigenous peoples. For Das and Lowe, defaulting to an uncritical rationality of the 'hard sciences' was unacceptable, and a failure to acknowledge the racism, erasure, and colonial exploitation underpinning natural history collections in museums today perpetuated racism, while this institutional silence was noticed by the People of Colour who visit and work in these spaces. At Cambridge, two examples demonstrate ways that scholars are responding to this wider call to root museums' natural history collections in their historical context.

A 2021 study by UMZC curator Jack Ashby and Rebecca Machin from the Leeds Discovery Centre focused on two zoological specimens in their museums, including a taxidermy specimen of a springhare at UMZC.[40] Ashby posted a photo of the springhare for an unrelated purpose on X (formerly Twitter) and a member of the public looked up the specimen in the museum's online catalogue and responded that the recorded collection location – 'Vredefort Road, Orange River Colony' – was a Boer War concentration camp, and the dates matched the Second Boer War (1899–1902).[41]

Image 15: Springhare. Collected 1901, Vredefort Road, Orange River Colony (today, Free State, South Africa). At: University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge. UMZC E.1441 © University of Cambridge.

[40] Ashby and Machin, 'Legacies of Colonial Violence'.
[41] *Ibid*. pp. 51–52.

The British established these camps to house women, children, and men not of fighting age who were forced out of their homes because of the British military strategy of destroying dwellings and burning crops, making areas of land uninhabitable.[42] The curators conducted research in the museum archive and wider research on the period of collection and the biography of the collector to understand the context in which this specimen was collected. This springhare was collected by a British captain, Gerald Edwin Hamilton Barrett-Hamilton (Trinity College), in January 1901 from a camp that held an estimated 1,000 Black people and over 160 white people. Conditions were difficult, and food and water limited.[43] According to Ashby and Machin, it was just one of many specimens Barrett-Hamilton donated to several museums during his Boer War deployment, including over 1,000 birds to the Natural History Museums, with 300 from this same camp.[44] The authors wrote: 'Looking at collection records, it appears that that he was using his military deployment in the war to make a major scientific collection'.[45] UMZC was aware of the military source of this collection, as evidenced by notes in the accession register.[46] For the authors, this example demonstrated both the benefits of accessible online collections, and served as a reminder of the sensitivities around using colonial place names transcribed from historical records.[47]

A 2022 article by Alice Rose Whitehead on the collection of John Woodward began as research for the UCM's Legacies of Empire and Enslavement project.[48] Whitehead explored the collections context of the Woodward Collection, the founding collection of the Sedgwick Museum, which includes fossil, rock and mineral specimens that Woodward developed from the late 1680s until his death in 1728. The Woodward Collection is one of the oldest of its kind and is of significant historical importance in the field of geology. Of the over 9,400 specimens, around 2,600 of them were from outside England. Woodward never left Europe, but his collection includes material from North and West Africa, the Caribbean, North America and South America, the Middle East, and Asia.[49] According to Whitehead, Woodward developed a global network of 'merchants, plantation owners, and colonial officials' to develop his collection, taking advantage of rapidly expanding infrastructure that facilitated transatlantic slavery and British imperial expansion.[50]

One African example is gold dust from Guinea that Woodward received from a contact that worked with the Royal African Company (RAC). The RAC was an important organisation in the history of the transatlantic slave trade as it held a royal monopoly trafficking enslaved people across the Atlantic between 1662–1692 and exported African ivory and gold from the 1680s, focusing on West

[42] *Ibid*. p. 50.
[43] Boer Concentration Camp Project, 'Vredefort Road', *British Concentration Camps of the South African War 1900–1902* (website), [n.d.]. https://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/bccd/Histories/Vredefort_Road/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[44] Ashby and Machin, 'Legacies of Colonial Violence', pp. 50–51.
[45] *Ibid*. p. 50.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] *Ibid*. p. 52.
[48] Alice Rose Whitehead, '"Found in All Parts of the Known World": Global Connections in the Collection of John Woodward (1665-1728)', *The Geological Curator* 11.6 (2022), 387–99. Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, 'Woodwardian Collection', *Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://sedgwickmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/our-collections/woodwardian-collection [accessed 18 November 2024].
[49] Whitehead, 'Found in All Parts', p. 387.
[50] *Ibid*. pp. 387–89.

African gold exports after losing this monopoly.[51] The gold dust was just one example of material Woodward received from people who were actively participating in the slave trade in the Americas, Africa, and the Caribbean, including individuals that owned enslaved men, women, and children. Repeating a similar pattern across these collections, Woodward's four catalogues of foreign specimens include less detailed information about the donors compared to his eight catalogues of English specimens, though Whitehead gives examples of unnamed indigenous and enslaved collectors from the Americas.[52] Woodward had a scholarly preoccupation with race, according to Whitehead, and included a series of instructions for his contacts to follow along with their collecting, ranging from observations on the colour of indigenous peoples' skin to the proportions of their bodies, their spiritual beliefs, and forms of government.[53] Woodward was also not only interested in natural history specimens, he requested that collectors send a range of objects from 'the East or West Indians, or any other of the less civilized Nations'.[54] The Woodwardian Collection then is not just an important collection in the history of geology, as Whitehead concluded, but 'provides an important lens through which historians can analyse the multifarious institutions and events that gave form to early British imperialism'.[55]

Unacknowledged African labour

There is only limited information captured in museum reporting about the African people who were part of collecting and acquisition activities. African people tracked and hunted animals, worked as translators, negotiated meetings with local communities, preserved and packed specimens for travel, provided information about the medicinal use of plants or remedies for animal bites, carried equipment and supplies, and protected camps, among many other activities. Exploring the articles, reports, photographs, and other archival material from the individuals named as collectors reveals the ways in which African people were an integral though often hidden part of the collections process. The collection developed by zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson (Trinity College) includes vertebrates from Cameroon, Cuba, Haiti, and the Greater Antilles, among them scientifically significant and rare smaller mammals.[56] In November 1934, Sanderson presented a paper at the Royal Geographical Society about the 1932–1933 expedition he led (part-funded by Cambridge bodies including UMZC)[57] to the Mamfe Basin in southwest Cameroon. His team collected 7,000 specimens including mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates, over 700 of which are in UMZC today.[58] Sanderson's paper was as much about the people as it was the zoological findings. He began by

[51] *Ibid*. p. 390.
[52] *Ibid.* pp. 395–96.
[53] *Ibid*. p. 394.
[54] *Ibid*. pp. 394–95.
[55] *Ibid*. p. 398.
[56] University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, 'Recent Vertebrates', *University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/recent-vertebrates [accessed 23 October 2024].
[57] Ivan T. Sanderson, 'An Expedition to the British Cameroons', *The Geographical Journal* 85.2 (1935), 113–40, at 134. doi: 10.2307/1785988.
[58] Sanderson, 'Expedition to the British Cameroons', p. 135; Correspondence with Manager of Invertebrate Collections, University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge , 21 June 2024.

describing his team, naming his two British colleagues, then describing a group of five individuals he never names:

> 'I should like to include under the title of personnel at least the five literate African boys whom we trained as taxidermists, collectors, and scientific assistants. When they came to us their only qualifications were the broad grin of the West African, some desire to work, a certain knowledge of writing, and, to a very limited extent, spelling. By the end of the expedition they were expert taxidermists and collectors, well versed in the use of alcoholometer hygrometers, and other instruments presenting equally insurmountable difficulties to their untrained minds; but they still retained their spontaneous sense of humour. These boys were responsible for the bulk of the routine work and much of the successful collecting'.[59]

Though he details the specific scientific activities of his African collaborators, in not naming the five Cameroonian individuals in the paper as he did his British counterparts, Sanderson renders them obscured.

[59] Sanderson, 'Expedition to the British Cameroons', p. 113.

Image 16: *Rana occipitalis.*[60] Collected March–June 1933, Mamfe British Cameroons (today, Cameroon). At: University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, University of Cambridge. UMZC R.17821-R.17840. Nathan Pitt © University of Cambridge.

Sanderson acknowledged porters as another key element of the expedition, describing a line that sometimes included over a hundred porters who carried camp equipment long distances on foot. A dozen of these became a permanent part of the crew because of their ability to collect specimens, including by '[laying] on their stomachs for hours on end in the forest, filling little tubes

[60] Sanderson described an incident around the collection of this species in *Animal Treasure*, in which the frogs escaped and the household staff had to help recapture them in the night. Ivan T. Sanderson, *Animal Treasure* (New York: Viking, 1937), pp. 36–37.

with spiders and small snails'.[61] Sanderson valued this work: 'Coming to know them all by name, I instituted a book in which all they found was entered, so that they could be paid once a month'.[62] Throughout the paper, he names several men who were particularly skilled – Dambaike who caught nearly 100 Podogona spiders, Eti-Yaw who was the fastest of the porters – and more are referenced in his popular account of the expedition, *Animal Treasure,* published in 1937.[63] Written for a broad audience, the book provides more insight into the extent of local labour behind scientific expeditions. Sanderson describes scores of African people collecting and preserving specimens, keeping the camp, local people who showed him where animals were, or brought animals to him for sale. A close reading of these texts, combined with Sanderson's other personal papers concerning this expedition could result in connecting individual UMZC specimens or groups of specimens to named African collaborators, or at the very least, expanding museum storytelling to include the specific ways in which the people of Mamfe were instrumental in bringing their local wildlife and knowledge about it to Cambridge.

Modern questions

A rare African plant at the CUBG is the *Nymphaea thermarum*, which is endemic to Rwanda and was assessed as 'extinct in the wild' from 2010 to 2024.[64] The plant is on display in the Tropical Wetlands House in the Glasshouse Range of the Botanic Garden. Recent reporting around this plant provides an insight into modern concerns around the contributions of African scientists and communities in research and the scientific language of 'discovery'.

[61] Sanderson, 'Expedition to the British Cameroons', pp. 120–21.
[62] *Ibid*. p. 120.
[63] Sanderson, *Animal Treasure*.
[64] Thomas Abeli, Sarah Marie Müller, and Siegmar Seidel, 'Rediscovery of the Waterlily Nymphaea Thermarum Eb. Fisch. in Rwanda', *Oryx* (2024), 1–3, at 1. doi: 10.1017/S0030605323001837; Michael B. Thomas, Pascal Sibomana, and Bonny Dumbo, 'Plant News: Celebrating an "Extinct in the Wild" Waterlily Rescue in Rwanda', *Water Garden Journal* 39.1 (2024), 6–9, at 6.

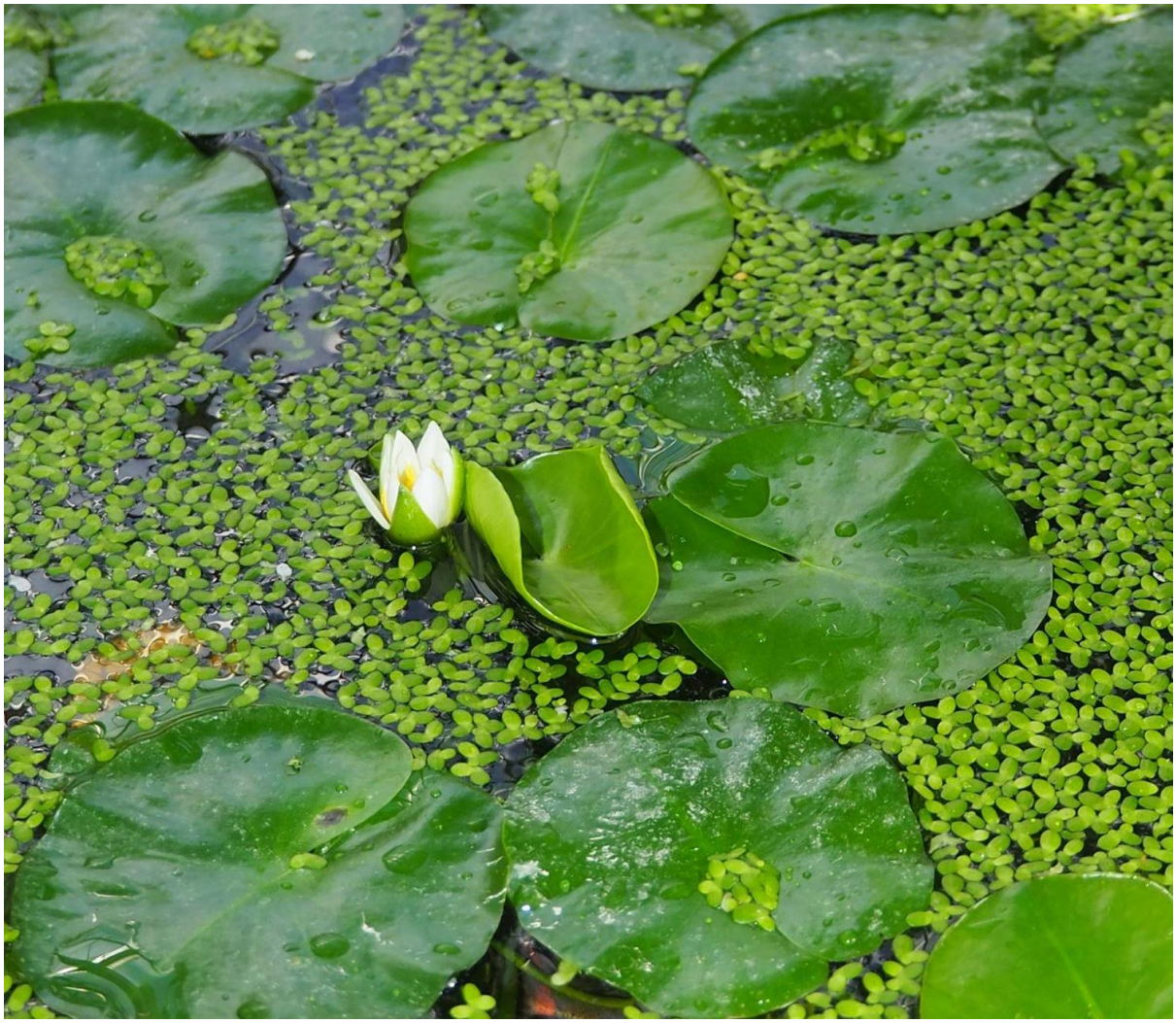

Image 17: *Nymphaea Thermarum*, wild-derived. At: Cambridge University Botanic Garden. 20200906.[65] Kate Dawson, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, University of Cambridge.

Nymphaea thermarum is the smallest known water lily and forms rosettes of pads measuring 10-20cm across, with pads as small as 1cm wide.[66] The CUBG plants were received in 2020 from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London. Kew Gardens had received theirs from the Bonn Botanic Gardens in Germany, who received theirs from a collection by Eberhard Fischer, the first European to describe this plant in 1987 in a hot spring in southwest Rwanda.[67] The full scientific name of the plant is '*Nymphaea thermarum Eb. Fisch*.' as a result. The plant was reportedly last seen in the wild in 2008 and categorised as 'extinct in the wild' from 2010 due to over-exploitation of the stream that fed the

[65] Link to online catalogue record: https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/collections/collectionsportal/plant-details?accession_number=20200906 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[66] Royal Botanic Gardens, 'Nymphaea Thermarum', *Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.kew.org/plants/nympaea-thermarum [accessed 16 May 2024].
[67] Correspondence with Assistant Curator of Living Collections, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 7 March 024; *Nymphaea thermarum* accession number: 20200906; Eberhard Fischer and Carlos Magdalena Rodriguez, '690. Nymphaea Thermarum', *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* 27.4 (2010), 318–27. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8748.2010.01711.x.

hot spring.[68] By 2023, the plants could sell for up to £430 per plant on the horticultural market.[69] In a press release of 25 August 2023, the National Herbarium of Rwanda announced that a team of American, Rwandese, and Congolese botanists from the herbarium and the University of Rwanda had 'rediscovered' a new population of the water lily near its original location.[70]

In an April 2024 article, Michael B. Thomas, Pascal Sibomana, and Bonny Dumbo described how they worked alongside local villagers to explore the area in the summer of 2023, that villagers provided three names for the plants – amarebe, imposha, and gutwikumwe – and described its common uses.[71] Local villagers also told the team that, 'the plant has always been present in the area – since time immemorial'.[72] The authors noted that Rwandan biologists with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) had recorded observations and photographs of the plant since at least 2015 as part of routine botanic surveys in the area, but had declined to share this information widely due in part, the authors wrote, to 'the past history of parachute science and the lack of inclusivity without appropriately acknowledging the importance of the local research infrastructure and expertise'.[73] This in addition to worries about potential exploitation through unofficial research by foreign scientists, and illegal collecting. The habitat is threatened by a number of factors, including commercial interests and tourism.[74] The authors reported successful cultivation of the *Nymphaea thermarum* seedlings *ex situ* (outside of its natural habitat) using seeds from this new wild population, marking a milestone for botanists in Rwanda who had been unable to repatriate seeds or live plants from the twenty-three institutions they contacted that had *Nymphaea thermarum*.[75] In a February 2024 journal article, three European researchers wrote that they had located a new source of *Nymphaea thermarum* near the original site in late July 2023, which would have been around the same time as the Rwanda-based team (it is unclear which team reached the site first).[76] A Rwandan colleague, Jean Marie Habiyakare, is acknowledged and thanked for having facilitated communication with local community members, as are the local community members themselves who provided 'information and assistance that led to the rediscovery of *N. thermarum*'.[77] This example demonstrates the extent to which African scientists and communities continue to be an important source of knowledge and labour, and the continuing risk of erasure or exclusion.

[68] Thomas Abeli, '*Nymphaea Thermarum*', *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2024*: e.T185459A249717119. https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/185459/249717119 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[69] The April 2024 article cites a sum of €500. Abeli, Müller, and Seidel, 'Rediscovery of the Waterlily Nymphaea Thermarum', p. 1.
[70] Center of Excellence in Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management and the National Herbarium of Rwanda, 'Press Release', 25 August 2023. https://www.rwandaherbarium.net/press-release/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[71] Thomas, Sibomana, and Dumbo, 'Plant News: Celebrating an "Extinct in the Wild" Waterlily Rescue', p. 6.
[72] *Ibid*. p. 7.
[73] *Ibid*. p. 6.
[74] *Ibid*. pp. 6–7; Abeli, Müller, and Seidel, 'Rediscovery of the Waterlily Nymphaea Thermarum', pp. 1–2.
[75] Thomas, Sibomana, and Dumbo, 'Plant News: Celebrating an "Extinct in the Wild" Waterlily Rescue', p. 8.
[76] Abeli, Müller, and Seidel, 'Rediscovery of the Waterlily Nymphaea Thermarum', p. 1.
[77] *Ibid*. p. 2.

Covert collection: Cambridge University Herbarium

At the Cambridge University Herbarium (international herbarium code 'CGE'), only around 2% of this collection of around 1.1 million pressed and dried plant specimens is imaged and catalogued digitally (mostly UK material, or material of historical importance) so information about and access to the collection is currently limited.[78] Apart from the type specimens, and the collection of Charles Darwin, the CGE collections have received limited study, and many of the specimens have never been researched or even documented since they were collected.[79] A 2024 project with the Cambridge Digital Library, with the international biodiversity data aggregator Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) which provides opportunities for people around the world to volunteer to digitise collections, means that data should start to become available online in 2024.[80] The African specimens at the CGE are likely to be in the 'World' collections which are even more under-researched. The CGE does not currently have any partnerships with African institutions or researchers actively using collections from Africa. As part of the Mellon Foundation funded African Plants Initiative, in 2007, 148 type specimens at the CGE – mainly from Africa – were digitised and can be accessed on JSTOR Global Plants.[81] These remain the only specimens across the CGE's collection that are fully published online. The curatorial team estimates between 10–50,000 specimens of their collection relate to Africa, with more expected to be in the backlog of an estimated 50,000 specimens. According to the curators, the nineteenth-century specimens – which are a strength of the collection – are likely to contain significant specimens (and numbers of specimens) from African countries with British colonial histories and connections, such as South Africa and Madagascar, coastal regions which may have been stopping points for British explorers and voyagers (including to India, Australia, South America), and maritime scientific expeditions, for example those in astronomy and deep-sea exploration.

[78] Sally Loesch, 'Our Collections', *Cambridge University Herbarium* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.herbarium.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/our-collections [accessed 23 October 2024].
[79] Lauren Maria Gardiner, 'Cambridge University Herbarium: Rediscovering a Botanical Treasure Trove', *Journal of Natural Science Collections* 6 (2018), 31–47, at 31.
[80] Sally Loesch, 'Help Digitise the Collections at Cambridge University Herbarium', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 23 April 2024. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2024/04/23/help-digitise-the-collections-at-cambridge-university-herbarium/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[81] Global Plants, 'Cambridge University Herbarium', *Global Plants on JSTOR*. https://plants.jstor.org/partner/CGE [accessed 23 October 2024].

Category C: Materials that significantly depict or reference African people or Africa

Overview

This category includes the largest number of the University's collections relating to Africa, covering probably several hundreds of thousands of pages of archival material, photographs, maps, paintings, master's and doctoral theses, and other items. Archives in general are the most important repository in this category, with much of the Cambridge University Library (UL) holdings searchable through the ArchiveSearch system.[1] While ArchiveSearch includes material housed in different departments and some colleges across Cambridge, a number of the colleges with large collections use their own stand-alone archival management systems. Museum archives offer an important opportunity to conduct provenance research and to understand both collections' contexts and the lives of objects once they reached the university museums. However, these have varying degrees of accessibility and much of this material is not currently available on ArchiveSearch. Due to the wide scope of material in this category, this chapter will focus on three types of materials that provide an insight into what Cambridge holds: images of African people, images of places, and sound archives. The vast breadth of this category, spanning museums, libraries and departments, makes it difficult to track the use of individual collections in teaching or research.

Archives

The University Library has a significant amount of Africa-related material. This includes the large Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) Library, broadly covering the period between 1860 and as late as 1990.[2] Originally named the Colonial Society when established in 1868 and founded as a meeting place for gentlemen with interests in the British colonies, the African countries represented in the RCS collection today, are thus largely from former British colonies.[3] The RCS Library has 300,000 printed items (including monographs, pamphlets, periodicals, and official publications), over 900 archival collections (including manuscript diaries, correspondence, pictures, cine films, scrapbooks, and newspaper cuttings) and over 125,000 photographs (albums, loose prints, slides, glass plate negatives, and lantern slides). The RSC Library is well documented and the archival materials are accessible to search online via ArchiveSearch.[4] The RCS archive includes the Church Missionary Society (CMS) photograph collection (almost 700 images digitised) with a significant focus on African countries, while the entire RCS Library collection features large amounts of material detailing the

[1] *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[2] 'Royal Commonwealth Society Artefacts Collection, 2500 BCE–1970. Cambridge University Library, GBR/0115/RCS/ORCS', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/103 [accessed 31 October 2024].
[3] Sally Kent, 'History of the Collection', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 29 April 2024. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/rcs/history-collection [accessed 18 November 2024].
[4] 'Royal Commonwealth Society Artefacts Collection'.

spread of Christianity across Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth century.[5] Around 19,000 RCS images are currently accessible online via the Cambridge Digital Library (CUDL) (including the CMS images mentioned above), with over 3,000 of these categorised as related to Africa.[6] A collection of twenty-four short films (all under thirteen minutes) made between the 1920s–1950s across the Commonwealth include eighteen attributed to Sir Frederick Tymms, a civil aviation administrator.[7] The earliest in the Tymms collection is an eleven-minute film likely made in 1925 in Northern Uganda.[8] A further nine of the twenty-four were filmed in Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, and Algeria, including three not in the Tymms collection which were made in 1955–1956, documenting twelve young British people traveling around the Gold Coast (today, Ghana) and Nigeria.[9]

'Re-entangling the visual archive' was a collaboration between the UL, the Centre of African Studies (CAS), and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) in July 2024.[10] The project aimed to explore new ways of engaging with library and archive material and grew out of an earlier fellowship at the University research network, Cambridge Visual Culture.[11] Funding from the University's Collections-Connections-Communities (CCC) Strategic Research Initiative supported a short visit from three Zambian-based visual artists and one Cambridge-based practitioner to work with material relating to Zambia held in the collections of the RCS and the CAS. The outcome was a series of creative responses to the collections alongside a staff workshop to encourage different ways of working with and thinking about problematic colonial-era collections.[12]

The CUDL includes a separate collection of over 7,000 digital images of RCS material about Southern Africa co-curated as part of the research project 'Creating new connections: shared digital curation of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) southern African collections at Cambridge

[5] Church Missionary Society, 'Church Missionary Society Photograph Collection, 1881–1973. Cambridge University Library, GBR/0115/RCS/CMS', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/95 [accessed 1 November 2024].
[6] Cambridge Digital Library, 'Royal Commonwealth Society Collection', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/rcs/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[7] Detailed shot lists are available on the RCS catalogue notes. Royal Commonwealth Society Film Collection, 'Video & Audio: "Royal Commonwealth Society Film Collection"', *University of Cambridge Streaming Media Service*, 5 August 2013. https://www.sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/1532657 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[8] Royal Commonwealth Society Film Collection, 'Video & Audio: "Tymms Collection on Civil Aviation Film 12"', *University of Cambridge Streaming Media Service*, 5 September 2013. https://www.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1550048 [accessed 18 November 2024]. A list of shots in the video is available at: https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/184069 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[9] Royal Commonwealth Society Film Collection, 'Video & Audio: "South African Aid to Britain Fund Film 1"', *University of Cambridge Streaming Media Service*, 4 September 2013. https://www.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1549874 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[10] Sally Kent, 'Zambia in Cambridge: Creative Interventions in the Archive', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 28 August 2024. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/stories/archival-creative-interventions [accessed 18 November 2024].
[11] CVC – Cambridge Visual Culture, 'An Exhibition That Nobody Will See: a collaborative intervention', *CVC – Cambridge Visual Culture* (website), 21 December 2022. https://www.cvc.cam.ac.uk/research/an-exhibition-that-nobody-will-see/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[12] Eleanor Parmenter, 'Re-Entangling the Visual Archive', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 11 June 2024. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/re-entangling-the-visual-archive [accessed 18 November 2024].

University Library', funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York. [13] The 2021–2023 project digitised a range of written and visual materials, including print and pamphlets in vernacular languages. As part of the Project, RCS Library staff worked with groups including photography students at the Cambridge School of Art, Anglia Ruskin University, and Zambia-based ARU colleagues.[14]

Outside of the RCS collection, other collections at the UL available on ArchiveSearch include material related to Africa. One example is the archive of the Bible Society, which is on deposit and not owned by the University, and includes written and visual materials, including 750 lantern slides, and catalogue records for almost 5,600 twentieth-century photographs (many records containing more than one photograph) depicting the work of the Bible Society – translating texts, images of bibles, church activities, in addition to general scenes from life in those countries.[15] The latter includes hundreds of photographs catalogued with African country names (Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo are top of the list, accounting for over 170 records each) and those in general 'Africa' categories (e.g., 'East Africa,' 'Africa'), and likely additional photographs among the almost 700 untitled photographs. The archives of the Royal Greenwich Observatory include the papers of the Cape Observatory in South Africa from 1820–1978.[16]

Papers of Africa-related groups and individuals who travelled, worked, or otherwise had an interest in parts of Africa are found throughout the UL's collections, including personal papers, photo albums, and official documents.[17] Some of this material may have been produced by African people. There is additional relevant material that is currently not yet documented or not accessible using online searches. A recent acquisition at the UL is the archive of the British Home Council of the Africa Inland Mission, an inter-denominational Christian missionary organisation founded at the end of the nineteenth century; the materials span 1906–2003 and covers East and Central Africa.[18] Another notable example is the archive (field notes, photographs, manuscripts) of influential archaeologist

[13] Eleanor Parmenter, 'Creating New Connections: Shared Digital Curation of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) Southern African Collections at Cambridge University Library', *Cambridge University Library* (website), 19 September 2023, https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/creatingnewconnections [accessed 18 November 2024].
[14] Sally Kent, 'Decolonising Photographic Practices: the Outcomes of Collaboration between the Cambridge School of Art and the Royal Commonwealth Society Collection', *Cambridge University Library Special Collections* (blog), 17 February 2023. https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=24482 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Sally Kent, 'Cutting up the Archive: Reflections on the CVC Fellowship', *Cambridge University Library Special Collections* (blog), 5 February 2024. https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=27155 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[15] Bible Society, 'BFBS Photographs. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0374/BFBS/Photographs', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/1173 [accessed 18 November 2024] .
[16] Royal Greenwich Observatory, 'Royal Greenwich Observatory Archives. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0180/RGO', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/88 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[17] For example, Donald Herbert Simpson, John Milner Gray, and Harold Beken Thomas, 'Dictionary of East African biography. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0115/RCS/RCMS 155', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/240 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Cambridge University Explorers' and Travellers' Club, 'Records of the Cambridge University Explorers' and Travellers' Club, 1954–1985. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0265/UA/SOC.75', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/11301 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[18] Africa Inland Mission, 'Records of the British Home Council of the Africa Inland Mission. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0012/MS Add.10421', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/14146 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Charles Thurstan Shaw (Sidney Sussex College) who worked in Nigeria and Ghana from the 1950s and helped establish the Ghana National Museum and Department of Archaeology at the University of Ghana, and was instrumental in the founding of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.[19] Through funding from the Cambridge-Africa Alborada research fund, a team from Cambridge's McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research is working with the British Museum, Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on a project to give copies of some of these archival materials to the communities around the archaeological site of Igbo-Ukwu in southeast Nigeria. Thurstan Shaw initiated excavations at Igbo-Ukwu, which dates to the ninth century CE, in the 1960s (excavations continue today) and the project will digitise archival material and create 3D digital models and replicas of some of the objects from these excavations, introducing some objects to members of the local community for the first time, decades after they were excavated.[20]

The Centre of African Studies archive includes a wide range of material, including over 120 MPhil and PhD dissertations, sound and film reels, microfiche, photographs, maps, around 28,000 official publications, the Centre's own administrative documents and almost 500 fragile books.[21] Special collections include the papers of anthropologist and CAS founder Audrey Richards (Newnham College), who donated almost forty mainly Zambian objects to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and Eridadi Medadi Kasirye Mulira, the leading Muganda/Ugandan Protestant constitutional thinker in the second half of the twentieth century. [22] The latter includes digitised materials.[23] The archive holds twenty film and eleven sound reels; these are currently uncatalogued but are likely recordings of seminars held at the Centre in previous years. The CAS Library website also has a list of Africa-related archival material across the University.[24]

The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide archive has a large collection of material focused on Africa, though significant quantities of the archival material are copies, transcribed and/or photocopied from originals.[25] An estimated 30% of the entire archive, which has a twentieth- and twenty-first-century focus, relates to Africa, with the greatest representation from Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.[26] This archive is not available on ArchiveSearch but catalogues covering most

[19] Charles Thurstan Shaw, 'Correspondence and Papers. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0012/MS Add.9534', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/10 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[20] For the 3D models, see: Factum Foundation, 'Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes. 3D models', *SketchFab* (website), 2024. https://sketchfab.com/FactumFoundation/collections/igbo-ukwu-bronzes-d9ebb96ddf004a6282fe9e6cf607bffa [accessed 18 November 2024].
[21] Centre of African Studies Library archive catalogue, January 2024.
[22] Jenni Skinner, 'African Studies Library: Archives, Special Collections & Oral History', *LibGuides, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/africanstudies/archives-special-collections-oral-history [accessed 6 November 2024].
[23] Eridadi M. K. Mulira, 'Eridadi M. K. Mulira Papers', *Apollo, University of Cambridge Repository*. https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/collections/974fa19f-6d55-4e24-83fd-1f77f7299012 [accessed 6 November 2024].
[24] Skinner, 'African Studies Library: Archives, Special Collections & Oral History'.
[25] *Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide* (website), 2024. https://www.cccw.cam.ac.uk/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[26] African Collections Futures Survey Response - Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide archive.

of the collections – often the papers of missionaries from the late nineteenth to late twentieth centuries – are available on the CCCW website.[27]

Museum archives

Some museum-related papers are in the University Library, particularly administrative records relating to the early years of operation, and papers relating to key individuals or curators.[28] Two volumes that document a crucial period in the development of the Cambridge museums in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are digitised and available on CUDL.[29] These set out the vision for the New Museums Site, in the heart of Cambridge, where new natural history collections would provide the taxonomic collections for teaching and research. The Museum of Zoology, Cambridge is still located on this site.

Archival material in the museums has received varying amounts of attention. Much of this material is not available (and thus not searchable) on ArchiveSearch, though some material is on Archives Hub, an online resource that describes archives held in repositories across the UK.[30] For example, half of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden archive, covering the years 1856–2002, is at the University Library and searchable on ArchiveSearch, the other half still at the Botanic Garden is not available to search online and the CUBG does not currently have a full-time archivist.[31]As well as being important research resources in their own right, archives are also useful in providing wider context for the collections in the institutions, and for important figures in their history. In a June 2020 web story, curators at Kettle's Yard explored the life of founders Jim and Helen Ede in Tangier, Morocco, where they lived between 1936–1952.[32] In a lifelong tradition of open houses, the Edes offered weekend retreats for soldiers stationed at Gibraltar at their home in Tangier.[33] Though the visiting British soldiers – over 400 between 1946–1947 alone – are well-documented in the Edes'

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[27] Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, 'Archive Catalogue', *Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide* (website), 2024. https://www.cccw.cam.ac.uk/archives/archive-catalogue/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[28] For example, the records of the Cambridge Philosophical Society – the Society formed one part of the Museum of Zoology, Cambridge's founding collection and counted two significant individuals in museums histories as its founding members: Adam Sedgwick (Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences), and John Stevens Henslow (Cambridge University Botanic Gardens). Cambridge Philosophical Society, 'Repository of the Cambridge Philosophical Society', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/23 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[29] Cambridge University Archives, 'History of New Museums. Volume 1, 1716–1867', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk//view/MS-UA-HISTORY-OF-NEW-MUSEUMS-00001/29 [accessed 1 November 2024].

[30] 'Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge', *Archives Hub*. https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/locations/b1bdb973-dd66-386f-8e17-33342584624d [accessed 6 November 2024].

[31] Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 'Archives of the Botanic Garden, 1856–2002. Cambridge University Library. GBR/0265/UA/BG', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/7916 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[32] Andrew Nairne and Eliza Spindel, 'Tangier Days', *Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge* (website), 20 June 2020. https://www.kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk/stories/tangier-days/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[33] Andrew Nairne and Eliza Spindel, 'Tangier Days: Part One', *Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge* (website), 20 June 2020. https://www.kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk/stories/tangier-days-part-one/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

photographs and Jim's written material from this time, Mohamed al Rifi, who worked with the Edes in their house and garden while they were in Morocco is a peripheral figure.[34] In June 2024 an archive display titled 'The Gardens of Ede' focused on the gardens at the Edes' homes in Morocco, France, and England.[35]

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences has six collections available on ArchiveSearch, mainly covering European research and the papers of geologist Adam Sedgwick and the Sedgwick Club.[36] These are among the twenty-eight collections described on Archives Hub, largely the papers of individuals.[37] However, the Sedgwick Museum archive itself is much larger than what is currently available online, including material that reflects the diversity of the specimens in the museum itself. The museum archivist provided a list of almost 70 records of archival material related to Africa, with papers including geological surveys, field notebooks, maps, lists of specimens, and correspondence, which is largely focused on the Horn of Africa, East Africa, and South Africa.[38] Of note is material in the collection of Sir Vivian Fuchs (St John's College), which features on Archives Hub, including records of specimens collected, maps, and field notebooks relating to scientific expeditions including the Cambridge Expedition to the East African Lakes in 1930–1931 and the Cambridge Lake Rudolf (today, Lake Turkana) Rift Valley Expedition in 1934. [39] Fuchs spent around a decade working in East, Central and West Africa (including Kenya, Tanzania and what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo) and later joined expeditions to the Antarctic; the geological, ethnographic, and archaeological collections he made, and his personal papers, span the Sedgwick Museum, MAA, and The Polar Museum.

The University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge (UMZC) houses the archive of zoologist Hugh Cott (Selwyn College), a former lecturer in zoology and Strickland Curator of Birds at the museum, who had interests in reptiles and amphibians. The archive contains papers and photographs from his time in East Africa as well as his work, including material related to books *Uganda in Black and White* (1959) and *Looking at Animals: a Zoologist in Africa* (1975). The collection is currently housed in approximately forty-one store boxes, which contain inventory lists but have otherwise not been researched.[40] The museum also houses hundreds of letters that make up Hugh Strickland's 1847–

[34] Nairne and Spindel, 'Tangier Days'; Kettle's Yard, 'The Gardens of Ede', *University of Cambridge, Kettle's Yard* (archived exhibition), 24 June 2024. https://www.kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk/stories/the-gardens-of-ede/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[35] Kettle's Yard, 'The Gardens of Ede'.
[36] Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, 'Repository of the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/26 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[37] Figures as of 6 November 2024, 'Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge'.
[38] Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences archive catalogue list, received 08 December 2023.
[39] Vivian Fuchs, 'The Papers of Sir Vivian Fuchs, 1931–1948. Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge. GB 590 FCHS', *Archives Hub*. http://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb590-fchs [accessed 6 November 2024].
[40] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge.

1850 correspondence in preparation for his 1848 book on the dodo – this collection has been digitized.[41] Some of the UMZC archival material is available to explore on Archives Hub.[42]

The MAA's archive, which predates the founding of the museum, and both social anthropology and archaeology as academic disciplines, includes important documentation on collections' history and acquisition, and correspondence between collectors and museum staff.[43] This is the most important archive at Cambridge regarding African material culture. However, the museum has never had a full-time archivist, and only parts of the materials are catalogued.[44] The correspondence archive, for example, is boxed by year but otherwise uncatalogued.[45] A 2021–2022 pilot project photographed and transcribed hundreds of letters relating to Africa, providing information on the provenance of African collections between 1883 and 1922.[46] Just over 3,800 documents from the archive are searchable on the online catalogue, 200 with photographs.[47] In total, over 370 documents have some relation to Africa, under twenty with images online.[48] Notable examples include: the archive of archaeologist Louis S. B. Leakey (St John's College) on his work and material from East Africa; the Horace Beck archive, belonging to a collector of beads from across the world and Assistant Keeper at The Fitzwilliam Museum associated with nearly 1,000 beads from Africa, of which 750 are classed as archaeology.[49] In the anthropology collection, archival papers include documents and catalogue lists related to the major collections developed by Northcote Thomas and Rev. John Roscoe (see 'Category A' and 'Returns').[50]

Images of people

Photographs

There are thousands of photographs made in Africa in the Cambridge museum collections. These include photographs made and/or used for teaching or research, images documenting expeditions,

[41] Hugh Edwin Strickland, 'The Dodo Book of Hugh E. Strickland, 1847–1850. Museum of Zoology Archives, University of Cambridge. GB 433 STRICKLAND DODO', *Archives Hub*. http://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb433-stricklanddodo [accessed 6 November 2024].
[42] 'Museum of Zoology Archives, University of Cambridge', *Archives Hub*. https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/locations/a2c82e31-0de5-3785-9781-0fa9e0681128 [accessed 6 November 2024].
[43] Elliot, 'A History of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Part 2', p. 29.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*. p. 25.
[46] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Anthropology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
[47] Figures as of 18 November 2024, *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Documents' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/documents/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[48] *Ibid*., figures as of 18 November 2024.
[49] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Archaeology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
[50] For example, Northcote Thomas, 'Thomas Coll. 1st Catalogue. Nigeria. *c.* 1913', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Documents' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/documents/11199/ [accessed 18 November 2024], and John Roscoe, 'Document - 35 pages of hand written lists of material from tribes in Uganda. 1903–1920.
AA4/5/13', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Documents' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/documents/7607/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

and personal photographs that are usually part of larger personal archives.[51] The photography collection at MAA includes over 170,000 items (including glass plate negatives, lantern slides, print photographs, and some duplicates of these images); more than 140,000 items in the photograph collection records have images online.[52] Of the collection, more than 30,000 photographs have 'Africa' listed as a location, with the ten most popular African countries listed in the table below, and additional photos related to that country but not yet catalogued included in brackets. Around 8,888 of the Nigeria photos are from the collection assembled by Northcote Thomas (this figure includes around 5,720 unique images in addition to duplicate loose prints and photo albums that Thomas created for the British government).[53] In addition to images of people and the environment, the collection at MAA includes photographs of artefacts, with many examples from Nigeria in the collection assembled by Northcote Thomas. [54]

Country	**Number of Photographs**
Nigeria	15,305 (+ 156 uncatalogued)
Ghana	5,469 (+ 73 uncatalogued)
Uganda	4,111 (+ 70 uncatalogued)
Ethiopia	2,012 (+ 457 uncatalogued)
Egypt	1,497 (+ 630 uncatalogued)
Sudan	1,319 (+ 600 uncatalogued)
Sierra Leone	1,262
South Africa	1,223
Kenya	818 (+ 2,181 uncatalogued)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	687 (+ 682 uncatalogued)

Table 1: Top ten African countries and number of related photographs in collection at MAA, October 2024.[55]

[51] These include images of artefacts staged near the location in which they originated and some at MAA. An example from the collection by Northcote Thomas, '2536 location: Obu; artefacts: basket; artefacts: pot. Nigeria. April–May, 1911. N.78401.NWT', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photgraphs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/371672/ [accessed 18 November 2024], and John Roscoe, 'Documentary photograph of a Royal Drum. ?1884–1907. LS.139257.TC1', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/432525/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[52] Figures as of 18 November 2024: *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[53] Correspondence with Manager of Photographic Collections, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 29 October 2024.

[54] Paul Basu, '110 Years of Photographing N. W. Thomas Collections', *[Re:]Entanglements* (blog), 9 August 2019. https://re-entanglements.net/photographing-thomas-collections/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[55] Data provided by Manager of Photographic Collections, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 20 October 2024.

The photographs feature a wide range of imagery, including landscapes, village life, urban scenes, buildings, and bodies of water. Some images feature European collectors and almost always unnamed African support staff.[56] The images of people include groups and individuals, some posed, others less-so. People were photographed engaged in a variety of activities: preparing food, constructing buildings, fishing, caring for their children, at festivals, funerals, performing ceremonies, attending markets etc. Based on current documentation, the earliest images of African people at MAA are estimated to have been made in the late 1860s.

Image 18: 'Tlemcen. Women returning from the cemetery.' [Unnamed photographer's annotation] Tlemcen, Algeria. *c*. 1880s. Print, black and white. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. P.51301.[57]

Applying the same methodologies as natural scientists, anthropologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on the idea of 'types', of people, collecting data on the physical appearances of different races and groups.[58] Anthropometric photography and physical type

[56] For example, an unnamed man with Ernest Balfour Haddon in Uganda: Earnest Balfour Haddon, '80. Tusks. Short EBH. E Africa, Uganda. *c.* 1905. N.59174.EBH', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/352445/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[57] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/344573/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[58] Paul Basu, 'Physical Type Photographs', *[Re:]Entanglements* (blog), 4 August 2021. https://re-entanglements.net/physical-types/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

photography developed as a means of capturing this data in visual form.[59] The British Association for the Advancement of Science's 1899 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology' was a popular guide to fieldwork that established a set of methods that standardised anthropometric measurements in writing, illustration, and photography.[60] In November 1869, biologist Thomas Huxley, president of the Ethnological Society, sent a circular to Britain's Colonial Governors requesting photographs of the different races of the British Empire to support scientific research.[61] The circular contained detailed instructions on how the naked subjects should be posed full-length next to a measuring tape or stick, in front of blank backgrounds, with the intention of creating standardised images that could be used to conduct comparative research between races. Some colonial administrators expressed difficulty gaining consent from people to be photographed in the nude.[62] Only around forty sets of images matched Huxley's exacting specifications, and according to visual and historical anthropologist, Professor Elizabeth Edwards: 'These photographs are the most overtly and oppressively scientific, dehumanising, producing a passive object of study'.[63] One set was a series made in Breakwater Jail in Cape Town, South Africa in 1871, featuring San, Khoekhoe, and Nama people who were incarcerated there. Copies of thirty-eight of these photographs, which were part of a larger encounter between European scholars and San inmates that became the well-known Bleek-Lloyd archive, are on the MAA online catalogue and were part of the teaching collection through the first half of the twentieth century.[64]

While the most clinical Huxley-anthropometric photographs were rarer, physical type photography and images clearly influenced by physical type photography were far more common, including images with a distinctive style we associate with prison photographs or mugshots today – portrait photographs of individuals posed facing the camera and then in profile.[65] There are many such photographs of African people across the collection at MAA.[66] The '[Re:]Entanglements:

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[59] Anthropometry focused on measuring parts of the whole body including facial features, hair texture, limbs, skin colour, eye colour etc.

[60] Basu, 'Physical Type Photographs'; John George Garson and Charles Hercules Read, eds, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, edited for the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: Anthropological Institute, 1899). http://archive.org/details/notesandqueries00sciegoog [accessed 18 November 2024].

[61] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, Materializing Culture (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 131–55.

[62] Edwards, *Raw Histories*, pp. 140–41.

[63] *Ibid*. p. 139.

[64] Search 'Breakwater Jail' in advanced search location category at *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Ciraj Rassool, 'Review: Beyond the Cult of "Salvation" and "Remarkable Equality": a New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection', *Kronos* 32 (2006), 244–51. Llarec, Centre for Curating the Archive, Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*. http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/index.html [accessed 18 November 2024].

[65] A notable use of this method of photography is at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science, on anthropological wall charts of races from around the world, produced around 1935 in Nazi Germany. *Three Rassen der Erde anthropological wall charts, "Races of the Earth", by Bruno K. Schultz, German. c*. 1935. At: Whipple Museum of the History of Science. 6558. https://collections.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/objects/15268/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[66] For example from: Sudan (Charles Gabriel S. Seligman, 'Shilluk. 59.SH.9. LIII.Shilluk 9. Shilluk man: front & side: aristocratic type, fairly common type. NE Africa, Sudan. 1911–1912. LS.135763.TC1', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/429031/ [accessed 18 November 2014]); Nigeria (Northcote Whitridge Thomas, '1405 location: Ajeyube; artefacts: physical type. W Africa, Nigeria. *c*. 9 January 1909–16 April 1910. P.117419.NWT', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue).

Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times' project from 2021–2022 project that focused on the collection acquired by Northcote Thomas included an exploration of the thousands of type photographs he and his team made, copies of some of which are at MAA.[67] As part of the project, copies of some of these portraits were returned to descendants of those photographed in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.[68]

In *Trophies, Relics and Curios* (2015), Jocelyne Dudding, Manager of Photographic Collections at MAA, wrote about a series of ethnographic photographs of people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, made between 1904–1905 by missionary Rev. Kenred Smith, and the related correspondence by founding curator Baron Anatole von Hügel (Trinity College) in which the curator solicited more formal anthropometric photographs.[69] Of particular interest to von Hügel were traditional anthropometric photographs of Congolese people, and not images where they were wearing the European cloth some had started to wear on conversion to Christianity. Dudding posits that Smith was not comfortable taking photographs of the newly converted unclothed, and instead sent less 'scientific' group photos and photographs of clothed individuals. According to Dudding, 'Von Hügel's response was to either crop evidence of European influence from Smith's photographs, or to reject such images entirely, even when they provided the anthropometrical information he sought, such as in a photograph of a woman wearing a lip plug.'[70]

Contemporary paintings and drawings

Visual depictions of African people, or Black people more generally, across Cambridge collections in books, drawings, prints, sculptures, and paintings have often included crude and racist imagery. Several recent acquisitions at The Fitzwilliam Museum which are part of a broadening acquisition strategy are introducing more thoughtful and meaningful depictions of Black people, including African, Afro-Caribbean, and African American people, to the collections. Works by Black British artists Joy Labinjo and Barbara Walker, and Black American artist Kerry James Marshall, are all

https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/410689/ [accessed 18 November 2024]); Zimbabwe (then, Rhodesia) ('S. Bantu. AF.V.85. B XLIV. S. Bantu. 29 45.28, 29/2 ♂ 1/2 length, sitting. 1. Mankwanga. front & side. Rhodesia. *c*. 1905. LS.139132.TC1', , *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/432400/ [accessed 18 November 2024]).

[67] Basu, 'Physical Type Photographs'.

[68] [Re:]Entanglements, 'Fieldwork', *[Re:]Entanglements* (website), [n.d.]. https://re-entanglements.net/fieldwork/ [accessed 6 November 2024].

[69] Jocelyne Dudding, 'Photograph, Democratic Republic of Congo', in *Trophies, Relics and Curios?: Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific*, ed. Karen Jacobs, Chantal Knowles, and Chris Wingfield (Leiden: Sidestone, 2015), pp. 175–78. https://www.sidestone.com/books/trophies-relics-and-curios [accessed 18 November 2024]. Photographs from the book chapter: Kenred Smith, 'Women carrying loads. N. Congo. *c*. 1895–1914. N.35281.VH', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/328553/ [accessed 18 November 2014]; Kenred Smith, 'Woman with distended lip for ornament. N Congo. Basoko. *c*. 1895–1914. P.7201.ACH1', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Photographs' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/300473/ [accessed 18 November 2014].

[70] Dudding, 'Photograph, Democratic Republic of Congo', p. 175; image referenced: Smith, 'Woman with distended lip for ornament'.

currently on display as part of a 2024 rehang of the five main painting galleries.[71] Labinjo's 'An 18th-century Family' (2022) is an imagined family portrait of eighteenth century writer, abolitionist and Cambridge resident, Olaudah Equiano, and his mixed-race family.[72] Equiano was enslaved in what is now Nigeria as a child, and two decades after he purchased his freedom, published his life story, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Written by Himself* in 1789, which was a hugely influential text in the abolition movement.[73] Marshall's 2020 portrait of literary critic, historian and filmmaker, Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Clare College) was only the second Marshall work to join the collection of a public institution in the UK.[74] Walker's 'Zipporah' (2002) is part of a larger series titled 'Private Face', created between 1998–2002 that focused on her Afro-Caribbean community in Birmingham and features a young Black woman doing her hair.[75] Another piece by Walker, 'Vanishing Point 29 (Duyster)' (2021), also part of a larger series, is a reinterpretation of a seventeenth century painting of a white Dutch family, effectively erasing everyone else in the image while emphasising the lone Black individual – this was the lead image for the 2023–2024 exhibition, 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance'.[76]

[71] The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Exciting New Redisplay Set to Reopen in Our Recently Refurbished Galleries', *The Fitzwilliam Museum* (website), 2024. https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/news/exciting-new-redisplay-set-to-reopen-in-our-recently-refurbished-galleries [accessed 18 November 2024].
[72] Joy Labinjo, *An 18th-century Family.* 2022. [Painting] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. PD.74-2022. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/311590 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[73] Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself* (London: [n.pub.], 1789).
[74] Kerry James Marshall. *Henry Louis Gates*. 2020. [Painting.] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. PD.22-2023. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/313332 [accessed 18 November 2024]; University of Cambridge, 'Kerry James Marshall Donates Portrait of Henry Louis "Skip" Gates Jr to the University of Cambridge', *University of Cambridge* (website), 3 October 2023. https://www.cam.ac.uk/news/kerry-james-marshall-donates-portrait-of-henry-louis-skip-gates-jr-to-the-university-of-cambridge [accessed 18 November 2024].
[75] Barbara Walker. *Zipporah*. 2002. [Painting] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. PD.1-2024. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/313778 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[76] Barbara Walker. *Vanishing Point 29 (Duyster)*. 2021. [Painting.] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. PD.75-2022 https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/311591 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Habda Rashid, 'Barbara Walker's "Vanishing Point" and "Marking the Moment" Series', in *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, ed. Jake Subryan Richards and Victoria Avery (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pp. 119–24.

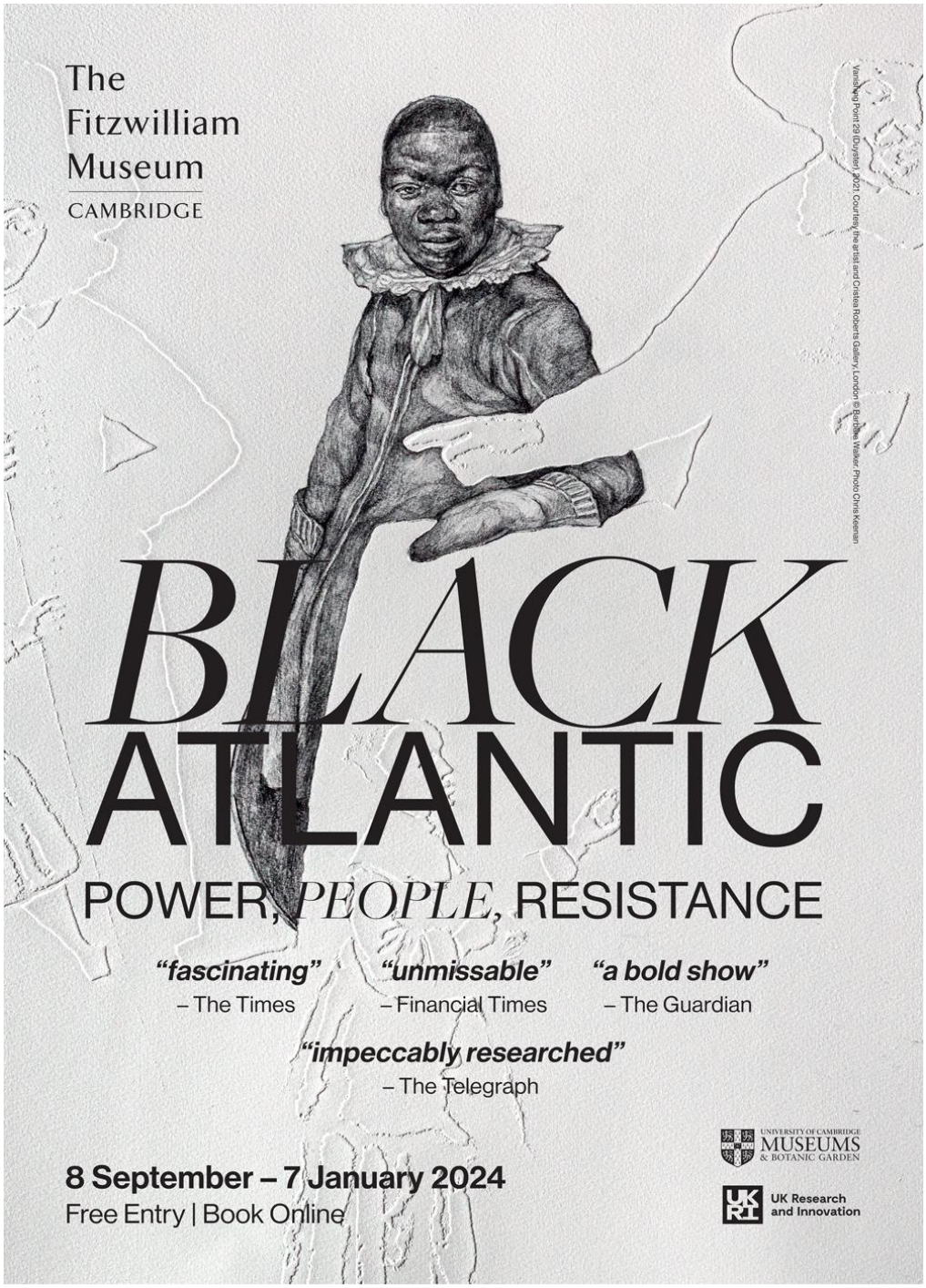

Image 19: Poster for 'Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance' exhibition, 2024. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

Images of places

Depictions of the geography and natural world of Africa are found across the museum collections and libraries. Maps are one major category, with significant examples featuring Africa and parts of Africa in the University Library Map Department, the Geography Department Library, and the Earth

Sciences Library.[77] The Map Department holds most of the UL's approximately 1.5 million maps and 60,000 atlases and books on cartography. Most of these are only findable via the physical card catalogue in the Map Department Reading Room itself, though more recently catalogued items can be found via iDiscover and ArchiveSearch.[78] The maps date from the late 1400s to the present, and those depicting Africa include maps and atlases from (mostly) the early/mid-seventeenth century onwards, reflecting the development of European cartographic knowledge of Africa as explorers documented more of the continent, with some early maps illustrated with allegorical representations of Africa.[79] The 'Black Atlantic' exhibition featured one such map, a navigational chart produced by John Seller, then Royal Hydrographer to King Charles II in 1677 of Europe, West Africa, and the east coast of Brazil which illustrates the slave-trading Royal African Company's (RAC) 1672 charter and includes allegorical representations of Africa which also formed part of the RAC's crest.[80] A small quantity of the UL Map Department maps (mostly manuscript maps) are digitised and available on the Cambridge Digital Library; while almost all are maps of Cambridge, two feature parts of Africa.[81] A roughly estimated 100,000 of the maps in this collection feature Africa or parts of Africa.[82]

A collection of over 900 artworks made by polar explorer, physician, and zoologist, Edward Adrian Wilson (Gonville and Caius College) are at The Polar Museum, with 150 digitized on the museum website.[83] Wilson died alongside one of Britain's most famous polar explorers, Captain

[77] For more on map collections at Cambridge and beyond, see the UL Map Department guide Information Sheets 2A and 2B: Map Department, Cambridge University Library, 'Information sheets', *Cambridge University Library* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/maps/information-sheets [accessed 18 November 2024].

[78] See: Map Department, Cambridge University Library, 'Finding maps', *Cambridge University Library* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/maps/finding-maps [accessed 18 November 2024].

[79] Allegorical representations of Africa are also found on other objects, for example, porcelain figures at The Fitzwilliam Museum depicting Africa as a child which were produced by the Derby Porcelain Factory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see: Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Agents: Details for Derby Porcelain Factory', *Fitzwilliam Museum Collection*. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/agent/agent-35888?page=2 [accessed 18 November 2024] [accessed 18 November 2024].

[80] Eleanor Stephenson, 'Maps, Instruments and Maritime Power', in *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, ed. Jake Subryan Richards and Victoria Avery (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pp. 88–90, at 89; John Seller, *The English Pilot, the Third Book. Describing the Sea-Coasts, Capes, Headlands, Straits, Soundings, Sands, Shoals, Rocks and Dangers. The Islands, Bays, Roads, Harbors and Ports in the Oriental Navigation* (London: [n.pub.], 1675). A version of this map is accessible on Wikimedia Commons: BNF at Wikimedia Commons, 'A chart of the seacoasts from the landsend of England to cape Bona Esperanca / by J. Seller, W. Fisher, J. Colson, J. Atkinson', *Wikimedia Commons*, 17 August 2022. https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_chart_of_the_seacoasts_from_the_landsend_of_England_to_cape_Bona_Esperanca_-_by_J._Seller,_W._Fisher,_J._Colson,_J._Atkinson_-_btv1b8595160z.jpg [accessed 18 November 2024].

[81] [Plan showing the frontier between Zambia and Zimbabwe as proposed by Mr Bartissol on the 28th February 1891, and the actual boundary line as of August 20th]'. University Library, Maps.Ms.Plans.1080, https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MAPS-MS-PLANS-01080/1 [accessed 18 November 2024]; 'The Khami atlas of the world / [drawn by Daniel Rowe English]'. University Library, Maps.Ms.Plans.b.41, https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MAPS-MS-PLANS-B-00041/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[82] Meeting with University Library Map Department, 6 December 2023.#

[83] The Polar Museum, 'Items by Artist, Wilson, Edward Adrian, Museum Catalogue: Polar Art Collection', *The Polar Museum Catalogue, SPRI, University of Cambridge*. https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/catalogue/bpa/artists/wilson%2c+edward+adrian/ [accessed 6 November 2024]; The Polar Museum, 'Wilson, Edward Adrian', *The Polar Museum, SPRI, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/shackleton/biographies/Wilson,_Edward_Adrian/ [accessed 6 November 2024].

Robert Falcon Scott in 1912 in the Antarctic; the deaths of this expedition party inspired the founding of the Scott Polar Research Institute which is home of The Polar Museum.[84] Wilson made watercolours, pencil and chalk sketches while on expeditions to the Antarctic in the early twentieth century, and these include six depicting South Africa. Four of these are landscapes of False Bay, two of Table Mountain, all made in October 1901 with one final False Bay watercolour made in 1910.[85] The Scott Polar Research Institute archive holds Wilson's papers covering the two Antarctic expeditions on which he travelled, including the journals he wrote documenting his time on the British National Antarctic Expedition of 1901–1904, when he made most of the South Africa watercolours.[86] While in Cape Town in early October on the outward journey, Wilson described a visit to the estate of Cecil Rhodes (Rhodes was away) and to a nearby prison where he saw 'one of the true little Boschmen'.[87] Boschmen or Bosjesmen (or the English spelling, Bushmen) were terms used to refer to San peoples from Southern Africa, groups of people whose language and physical appearance was the object of European fascination and scholarship from the nineteenth century; even among other Black African peoples, scholars placed the San people at the bottom of the hierarchy of races.[88]

The Whipple Museum of the History of Science has a large collection of globes dating back to the seventeenth century on permanent display in the Upper Gallery.[89] These were used for teaching children, for navigation by sailors, and as gentlemen's status symbols, and are explored in an online resource on the Whipple Museum website.[90] One globe, estimated to have been produced in 1875 in Germany by Charles Kapp and exported to England, has once again become the subject of teaching and public education at the Whipple Museum.[91] The twenty-two jigsaw puzzle piece globe (below) was used as an education toy to teach geography to children in the nineteenth century, and features illustrations of people from the various continents, with Europe as the centre of learning and culture. This was the first object to be explicitly labelled as 'racist' in the Whipple Museum collection and features in the Uncomfortable Cambridge tours at the Museum.[92]

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[84] Henrietta Hammant and Charlotte Connelly, 'A Centenary of Polar Research', *Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge Museums* (archived exhibition), 2021. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/story/a-century-of-polar-research [accessed 6 November 2024].

[85] The Polar Museum, '"False Bay" - Museum Catalogue Search', *The Polar Museum Catalogue, SPRI, University of Cambridge*. https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/catalogue/bpa/search/?q=false+bay [accessed 6 November 2024].

[86] Scott Polar Research Institute, 'Thomas H Manning Polar Archive', *Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge*. https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/archives/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[87] Edward Adrian Wilson, MS 715/1/1, p. 52, Scott Polar Research Institute Thomas H Manning Polar Archives (note: Wilson uses racist terms to refer to Black people throughout this work).

[88] Seligman, *Races of Africa*, pp. 24–33.

[89] James Livesey, '"Globes". Explore Whipple Collections', *Whipple Museum of the History of Science* (website), 8 January 2019. https://www.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/explore-whipple-collections/globes [accessed 18 November 2024].

[90] Livesey, 'Globes'.

[91] Alison Giles, 'Science, Exploration and Empire', *University of Cambridge Museums Blog* (blog), 9 January 2024. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2024/01/09/science-exploration-and-empire/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Katie Taylor, '"A Jigsaw Puzzle Globe", Explore Whipple Collections', *Whipple Museum of the History of Science* (website), 2009. https://www.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/explore-whipple-collections/globes [accessed 18 November 2024].

[92] Giles, 'Science, Exploration and Empire'; Annie Tomkins, *This Globe Is Broken* (audio), Museum Remix, University of Cambridge Museums, 2023. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/magic/globe-broken [accessed 18

Image 20: Charles Kapp. *5-inch terrestrial jigsaw puzzle globe, in pieces, assembles in layers. c*.1875. At: Whipple Museum of the History of Science, University of Cambridge. Wh.4608.[93]

November 2024]; Uncomfortable Cities, *Uncomfortable Cambridge Walking Tours* (website), 2023. https://www.uncomfortablecambridgetours.com/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[93] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/objects/9430/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Audio collections

Sound recordings of African people, including people speaking, singing, or telling stories, appear in a fairly limited capacity at Cambridge. MAA once housed the Cambridge Anthropology Sound Archive which included copies of sound recordings made by field anthropologists from the University. However, after years of limited use, the archive was closed in around 2020, with copies returned to the researchers when possible before then.[94] Some important material in the MAA archive had been transferred to the British Library Sound Archive decades earlier, most notably, the 1898 recordings of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait Islands, which are the earliest known recordings made in Oceania.[95] MAA still hosts audio and visual recordings of oral literature online, including storytelling, songs, and chants from around the world, available through the 2009–2013 World Oral Literature Project. The project, which was established by the University of Cambridge and co-located at Yale University from 2011, worked with local communities to document their oral literatures, and focused on Asia and the Pacific.[96] Some of the material hosted by the World Oral Literature Project was collected through anthropology fieldwork or as part of other research projects. Several African languages feature, including Efik from Nigeria, Ewe from Ghana, Karamojong from Uganda, Swahili from Tanzania and Zanzibar, Maninkakan from Mali, Arabic from Egypt, Bemba from Zambia, and Limba from Sierra Leone.[97] The Efik recordings are ten tracks made on shellac records of Ibibio musicians and singers performing, and are the earliest of the recordings in the entire collection, made in the 1920s likely in southeast Nigeria.[98]

The University Library's Music Department does not currently have music published in Africa, but does have recordings of African music from different parts of the continent within larger world music compilations.[99] Among the holdings of the Centre of African Studies archive is a box of sixty shellac recordings of Anglican hymns and readings from Uganda in a range of local languages, made in 1953.[100] In what was likely the first such analysis of this material, Music undergraduate student Medomfo Owusu (Selwyn College) reviewed the recordings and related written materials as part of her coursework, developing notated scores for hymns in three languages (Luganda, Acholi, Lugisu) that incorporated both the indigenous Ugandan context and British colonial encounter in a study of the development of revivalist Anglican Christianity in Uganda.[101]

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[94] Correspondence with former staff member of Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge , 30 May 2024.
[95] Rebekah Hayes, 'True Echoes: Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait Islands, 1898', *British Library, Sound and vision* (blog), 21 June 2021. https://blogs.bl.uk/sound-and-vision/2021/06/true-echoes-cambridge-expedition-to-the-torres-strait-islands-1898.html [accessed 18 November 2024].
[96] University of Cambridge; Yale, *World Oral Literature Project* (website), 15 September 2015. https://www.oralliterature.org/ [accessed 6 November 2024].
[97] University of Cambridge; Yale, 'Our Collections', *World Oral Literature Project* (website), 24 May 2013. https://www.oralliterature.org/collections/collections.html [accessed 6 November 2024].
[98] 'Daniel Morgan: Ibibio Odeon Shellac Recordings', *World Oral Literature Project, University of Cambridge; Yale*. https://www.oralliterature.org/collections/danielmorgan001.html [accessed 6 November 2024].
[99] Correspondence with Music Collections Supervisor, Music Department, University Library, 1 July 2024
[100] 'Ugandan Shellac Recordings *c*. 1953. Centre of African Studies', *University of Cambridge Streaming Media Service*. https://sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/4788092 [accessed 30 October 2024]; Medomfo Owusu, 'Mapping Sonic Legacies: Ugandan Anglican Music in the 1950s in the Light of Colonialism and Indigenous Traditions' (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2024), p. 4.
[101] Owusu developed her own notation system and applied it to the hymns, in addition to using a Western staff notation.

Category D: Objects made with African materials

Overview

The is the broadest category and offers many opportunities for further research. Items in this category may not be directly related to Africa, but can provide means of exploring histories of trade, movements of people, and the development of African technologies and artistry among a range of ideas. Some materials – gold and ivory for example – are well researched, while others like the goat leather that is the focus of this chapter, are less-so. Other materials not covered here but of note include woods like the guarea that British sculptor Barbara Hepworth received in a large shipment from Nigeria in the early 1950s and used to make 'Fugue', which is part of The Fitzwilliam Museum collection today, or the seventeenth-century ebony that was only imported from tropical areas in Southeast Asia and Africa at the time, and was used to make cabinets similar to the one by Elias Boscher, also at The Fitzwilliam Museum.[1] While we know the geographic origin of the guarea in the Hepworth sculpture, further research would be necessary to determine whether the ebony of the Boscher cabinet is African – likely Madagascan or Mauritian – in origin.

Materials originating in Africa may have been used to create art, scientific instruments, or furniture, or to bind manuscripts, while African labour and artistry is an often under-researched part of the journey of these materials into Europe. Objects that may appear tangential to Africa could be inroads into research revealing new and more meaningful ways that African people were connected to others elsewhere in the world. More research can also provide new ways of looking at objects long housed in Cambridge collections.

Gold and ivory

In the mediaeval period West Africa was among the largest exporters of gold and ivory around the world, via trade routes across the Sahara Desert.[2] Research on this trade in gold and ivory between

[1] Barbara Hepworth. *Fugue*. 1956. [Sculpture] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. M.61-1984. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/30040 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Sophie Bowness, 'Barbara Hepworth - Biography', *Barbara Hepworth* (website). https://barbarahepworth.org.uk/biography/ [accessed 6 November 2024]; Elias Boscher. *Table Cabinet. c*. 1660. [Furniture] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. M.9-2014. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/200918 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Delyn Stephenson and Katherine Feldkamp, 'The Global Renaissance and the Impact of the Ebony Trade', *Saint Louis Art Museum* (blog), 25 October 2022. https://www.slam.org/blog/the-global-renaissance-and-the-impact-of-the-ebony-trade/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Elias Boscher, 'An Exceptional Augsburg 17th Century Silver-Gilt Mounted Ebony Table Cabinet with Florentine Pietre Dure Plaques from the Grand Ducal Workshops by Elias Boscher, circa 1660', *Bonhams* (archived auction), 5 December 2014. https://www.bonhams.com/auction/21712/lot/20/an-exceptional-augsburg-17th-century-silver-gilt-mounted-ebony-table-cabinet-with-florentine-pietre-dure-plaques-from-the-grand-ducal-workshops-by-elias-boscher-circa-1660/ [accessed 6 November 2024].

[2] Sarah M. Guérin, 'Exchange of Sacrifices: West Africa in the Medieval World of Goods', *The Medieval Globe* 3.2 (2017), 97–123; Sam Nixon, 'Trans-Saharan Gold Trade in Pre-Modern Times: Available Evidence and Research Agendas', in *Trade in the Ancient Sahara and Beyond*, ed. A. Cuénod and others, Trans-Saharan Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 156–88. doi: 10.1017/9781108161091.007.

West Africa and England in the Middle Ages is ongoing at the British Museum.[3] African gold and ivory were important trading commodities with Europe, especially during the transatlantic slave trade, and both the Gold Coast (Ghana today) and Côte d'Ivoire were named for these resources. While knowledge of the production date and production area of materials in the collections can inform suggestions of the African provenance of particular materials, it is difficult to determine the geographic origin of any given material. Regarding ivory, there are over 500 objects at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science with ivory as one of the listed materials, and over 1,000 at The Fitzwilliam Museum; information about the source of that ivory – most likely African or Asian elephants – is not recorded in the catalogues.[4] At The Fitzwilliam Museum, research is ongoing on ivory carvings made by Huguenot (French Protestant) craftspeople that are known to have used West African ivory. One such object, a carved ivory portrait made by David Le Marchand in 1700, has been identified as African ivory and was featured in the 'Black Atlantic' exhibition as an illustration of the British consumption of the commodities associated with the transatlantic slave trade and the labour of enslaved African people.[5]

[3] de Beer, Lloyd, 'The Age of Copper, Ivory and Gold', *The British Museum* (website), January 2022–. https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/projects/age-copper-ivory-and-gold [accessed 18 November 2024].
[4] African Collections Futures Survey, 2023 – Applied Arts, Fitzwilliam Museum.
[5] David Le Marchand. *c*. 1659-1705 CE. *Portrait Medallion of Elizabeth Eyre*. [Sculpture] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. M.12-1946. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/31630 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Victoria Avery and Jake Subryan Richards, eds, 'Enslavement and Fashion', in *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, ed. Jake Subryan Richards and Victoria Avery (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pp. 124–27.

Image 21: David Le Marchand. *Portrait Medallion of Elizabeth Eyre (1659–1705*). 1700. [Sculpture] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. M.12-1946. Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

Almost 1,500 objects have gold as a listed material at The Fitzwilliam Museum, most in the coins and medals department. These include coins struck at the Royal Mint in London using gold that was mined by enslaved people in West Africa through the Royal African Company (RAC), which were also included in the Black Atlantic exhibition.[6] As discussed in Category B, the RAC held a royal monopoly trafficking enslaved people across the Atlantic between 1662–1692 and exported African ivory and gold from the 1680s, focusing on West African gold exports after losing this monopoly.[7] The three guineas are from 1676, 1687, and 1699, covering three different monarchies, and feature the RAC's logo, an elephant-and-castle, below the monarch's head.[8]

[6] William Pettigrew, 'The Royal African Company', in *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, ed. Jake Subryan Richards and Victoria Avery (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pp. 70–71.
[7] Whitehead, 'Found in All Parts', p. 390.
[8] Pettigrew, 'The Royal African Company', p. 71; *Guinea (coin)*. *c*. 1676 CE. [Coin] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. CM.YG.3606-R. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/312927 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Image 22: *Guinea* (coin), *c*. 1676 CE. [Coin] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. CM.YG.3629-R. Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

Morocco and niger morocco goatskins

A type of goat leather known as 'morocco,' spelled with a lowercase M to differentiate it from the country name, known for its distinctive red colour and grain, flexibility, and durability was used primarily to bind books, and make other leather goods in England from the late sixteenth century.[9] Despite its status as a prized material, and presence on rare books in libraries around the world, the origins of authentic morocco and its journey into Europe are significantly under-researched, especially within the rich body of scholarship on bookbinding. Of those who write about morocco's pre-European origins, most scholars state that this leather was produced, processed and imported directly from Morocco, which is known for leather tanneries and trade, and a smaller number that it

[9] Nat Cutter, 'Morocco Leather in Early Modern Britain: towards a Transcultural History of Fine Leather Bookbindings', *Parergon* 41.2 (2024) [Forthcoming]; Nat Cutter, 'Morocco Leather and Material Understandings of the Maghreb in Early Modern Britain', *MEMOs – Medieval and Early Modern Orients* (website), 14 November 2022. https://memorients.com/articles/morocco-leather-and-material-understandings-of-the-maghreb-in-early-modern-britain [accessed 18 November 2024].

originated in Northern Nigeria, and was traded across the Sahara by Moroccan traders (hence the name) who then exported it to Europe.[10] Forthcoming work by historian Nat Cutter at the University of Melbourne explores the ambiguities of the term 'morocco' and the status of this material in early modern Britain, including a new account of the trade in goatskins (later, morocco) from Morocco into Britain.[11] To add further confusion, 'turkey leather,' a high quality goatskin, was imported from the Ottoman Empire (today, Turkey, though the empire stretched from North Africa to West Asia) and the Levant into England from the eighteenth century, but this too was later called 'morocco'.[12] As in the case of morocco, whether or not turkey leather originated in Turkey remains a topic of scholarly debate, and Cutter makes the case that turkey leather may also have originated in North Africa.[13] What is apparent even amid this ambiguity is that morocco leather had some roots in Africa. From the mid-eighteenth century, imitation morocco spread, produced in Britain and elsewhere, and became visually indistinguishable from the earlier goatskins imported from Morocco; today, it is difficult to determine the origin of a particular leather, especially that on materials produced in the nineteenth century and beyond, and the term 'morocco' is used more broadly to refer to goatskin.[14] A 1905 report by the Royal Society of Arts on the leather used in bookbinding found that red morocco dating between the sixteenth to towards the end of the eighteenth century was the most hardwearing of all the leathers observed, retaining its flexibility and colour 'to a remarkable extent'.[15]

On the potential Nigerian origins of morocco leather, scholars Akanmu Gafari Adebayo and Ghislaine Lydon have written about the Northern Nigerian leather industry, detailing the long history of leather production and trade, and techniques used to dry and dye the skins, primarily in the cities of Kano and Sokoto.[16] Both wrote that the trade through Morocco into Europe was the reason for the Nigerian hides and skins being referred to as 'morocco,' and deemed this a mistake.[17] From the early twentieth century, British colonial policies and European firms reduced the trade of Nigerian hides and skins with Europe, but the market with America opened up from the 1920s.[18] Though they are still referred to as morocco, Northern Nigerian goatskins, particularly those of the Red Sokoto Goat continue to be prized today, and are used by high-end bookbinders, including the Cambridge University Press, which uses Nigerian goatskins finished in the UK to bind bibles.[19] Kano remains a

[10] Cutter, 'Morocco Leather and Material Understandings'.
[11] Cutter, 'Morocco Leather in Early Modern Britain'.
[12] Cutter, 'Morocco Leather in Early Modern Britain; Language of Bindings Thesaurus (LoB), 'Turkey Leather', *Language of Bindings* (website), 2020. https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/index.php/concept/1691 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[13] Cutter, 'Morocco Leather in Early Modern Britain'.
[14] Cutter, 'Morocco Leather and Material Understandings'.
[15] Charles George Lyttleton and Henry Trueman Wood, eds, *Report of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding* (London: Bell & Sons, 1905). http://archive.org/details/reportofcommitte00roya [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 23.
[16] A. G. Adebayo, 'The Production and Export of Hides and Skins in Colonial Northern Nigeria, 1900-1945', *The Journal of African History* 33.2 (1992), 273–300; Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 62–63. doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511575457.004.
[17] Adebayo, 'The Production and Export of Hides and Skins', p. 276; Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, p. 62.
[18] Adebayo, 'The Production and Export of Hides and Skins', p. 281.
[19] Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 'Goatskin', *Cambridge University Press & Assessment* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.cambridge.org/bibles/about/leather-binding-materials/goatskin [accessed 15 October 2024]; Daryll Forde and Richenda Scott, *The Native Economics of Nigeria*, ed. Margery Perham, The Economics of a Tropical Dependency 1 (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), p. 285, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.499271/mode/2up [accessed 18 November 2024].

source of high quality leather today, and has been the focus of spikes in popular interest in Nigeria and abroad in the last few years due to social media posts and articles about tanneries there that supply major European luxury brands with leather and the Nigerian makers trying to receive credit for this work.[20]

In addition to 'morocco,' the terms 'niger morocco' or 'niger' goatskin are also used to describe some book bindings in the University Library. Based on the Royal Society of the Arts report, and a similar study inspired by that report in the United States, the use of 'niger' appears to refer specifically to goatskins that originated in Nigeria in the twentieth century, which, like morocco, scored very favourably as a bookbinding material.[21] According to Marianne Tidcombe's history of women bookbinders, the Earl of Scarborough, Frank Karslake claimed to have first introduced what became known as 'native-dyed niger' to England at the end of the nineteenth century; the women binders of the Chiswick Art Workers Guild may have been the first to use it and sent it to Karslake for sale.[22] Karslake sold these under the name of the Guild of Women Binders which he had started in 1898. The women of the Chiswick Art Workers Guild developed a technique for binding with niger leather that they became known for, one Karslake called the 'Niger Binding' and advertised it as such.[23] Some of the records on the iDiscover catalogue include details of the binding style and material used, allowing for a basic scoping of books, manuscripts, and musical scores at the UL and other libraries across the University. It is important to note, however, that many books at Cambridge were bound or rebound many years or even centuries after publication, often as conservation practice, so what is listed as a binding may not have been the original binding.[24] There is likely a significant number of books bound in African morocco at the UL, but an estimated figure is currently not possible as the binding material is not recorded on the catalogue in most cases. Around twenty-four books at The Fitzwilliam Museum Founder's Library are described in iDiscover as having niger morocco bindings, almost all published or rebound in the twentieth century. Five musical scores are listed as having been rebound in niger morocco, all between 1979–1981; three are listed as rebound in 'red native niger morocco' by the same bindery.[25]

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[20] Chinazam Ikechi-Uko, 'Made in Italy or Made in Nigeria: the Ruse behind Italian Leather', *49thstreet* (website), 23 July 2024. https://the49thstreet.com/made-in-italy-or-made-in-nigeria-the-ruse-behind-italian-leather/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Adedoyin Adeniji, 'Can Made in Africa Transform the Continent's Leather Industry?', *Vogue Business* (website), 21 January 2021. https://www.voguebusiness.com/fashion/can-made-in-africa-transform-the-continents-leather-industry [accessed 18 November 2024].

[21] Lyttleton and Wood, *Report of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding*, p. 71; Cedric Chivers, 'Bookbinding', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 73, no. 3807 (1925), 1077–96.

[22] Marianne Tidcombe, *Women Bookbinders, 1880-1920* (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1996), pp. 96, 118.

[23] *Ibid*. p. 118.

[24] For an example of rebinding at the University Library, see: Shaun Thompson, 'Rebinding the Red Book of Thorney', *Cambridge University Library Special Collections* (blog), 8 December 2017. https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=14283 [accessed 18 November 2024]. *Red Book of Thorney*, I (Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3020). https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-03020/1 [accessed 18 November 2024]. For more on binding in the city of Cambridge, see: David Pearson, 'Cambridge Bookbindings', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/cambridgebindings/1 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[25] *[Collection of vocal music]*, Fitzwilliam Museum. Manuscript. MU.MS.177 ; no. 0 (England]: England, 1700); Nicolò Jommelli, *Miserere/musica del celebre Maestro Don Nicola Jommelli; Poesia del Dottor Don Severio Mattei.* ([Italy]: [Italy], 1768); Cockerell Bindery, 'Jommelli, *Confirma Hoc,* Deus [Italy], 1793. DC6615, February 1981', *iDiscover*. https://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/t9gok8/44CAM_ALMA21456649230003606 [accessed 26 November 2024].

Based on the research currently available, it is likely that twentieth-century niger morocco was from Nigeria, while morocco could have any number of origins, including Morocco and Nigeria. 'morocco' in a range of colours is listed as the material on book bindings across the University Library, college libraries, and other objects in several of the museums, with some objects dating from the fifteenth century, and others well into the twentieth century.[26] More research would be required to ascertain whether any given morocco is the most authentic material, including the date of production, materials analysis, and history of the binders, in addition to review by conservators experienced in discerning the difference in these materials.

The Fitzwilliam Museum Founder's Library cares for a range of texts bound in part or wholly in morocco and niger morocco, including some that have been identified by the Conservator of Manuscripts and Printed Books as likely authentic African goatskins. One is a copy of poems written by William Wordsworth published in 1902 that was bound by self-taught bookbinder Sybil Pye.[27] Pye, who worked exclusively with goatskins from 1925, bound the book in what is described as 'niger morocco with inlays of red, black, green and brown niger and gold tooled with geometric designs' around 1937.[28]

[26] For college libraries, see, for example, St John's College Library Special Collections, 'Book bindings', *St John's College, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/provenance/bindings/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Queens' College Old Library, 'Keyword search: "binding"', *Queens' Old Library* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.queensoldlibrary.org/keyword/n-PTczGM/binding/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[27] Tidcombe, *Women Bookbinders*, pp. 147–55.
[28] *Ibid*. p. 149.

Image 23: William Wordsworth, *Poems from Wordsworth,* Printed at the Ballantyne Press under the supervision of Charles Ricketts, 1902–1937. Binder: Sybil Pye. At: The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. PB 17-1993.[29] © Estate of Sybil Pye.

[29] Catalogue record: https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/222820 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Carrying cases made with morocco are recorded at The Fitzwilliam Museum and Whipple Museum of the History of Science. At the Whipple Museum, around twenty scientific instruments are documented as having morocco-covered cases or morocco on the instrument itself, most dating from the early/mid-nineteenth century and thus within the period that imitation morocco was popular. One example is a prospect glass or spyglass made between 1750–1800 that belonged to museum founder Robert Steward Whipple, with the morocco on the smaller brown cylinder.

Image 24: *Spyglass/prospect glass. c*. 1750–1800. [Scientific instrument] Materials: 'metal (brass); hide (morocco leather); fishskin (shagreen); glass; organic (horn); wood.' At: The Whipple Museum of the History of Science, University of Cambridge. Wh.0258.[30]

[30] Catalogue record: https://collections.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/objects/11273/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Human/Ancestral Remains at Cambridge

A short history of collecting human/ancestral remains at Cambridge

Different cultures and communities have their own relationships to their dead. Inside and outside academia, some people use the term 'human remains' while others use 'ancestors' or 'ancestral remains.' This chapter uses 'human/ancestral remains' to reflect these different perspectives. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, alongside cultural artefacts and natural history specimens, human/ancestral remains were collected for scientific research, used in the development of disciplines including medicine, anthropology and archaeology, collected as battle trophies, and for museum display.[1] The University of Cambridge's significant collections of human/ancestral remains developed along these lines, as at other universities and museums. In general, major collectors of human/ancestral remains included doctors (particularly army and ships' surgeons), soldiers and naval officers, diplomats, and missionaries.[2] Human/ancestral remains collected between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries from within the UK were often those of prisoners that had been executed, or the poorest individuals, sold to doctors or anatomy schools for dissection.[3] Scientific racism was an important driver of the collecting, study, and display of human/ancestral remains (especially skulls) at Cambridge as elsewhere in Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth–mid-twentieth centuries, particularly those of people who were disabled, Indigenous peoples, and those convicted of crimes.[4] Human/ancestral remains were often collected without the consent or approval of local communities.[5]

Established in 1945, the Duckworth Laboratory, named after anatomist Wynfrid Lawrence Henry Duckworth (Jesus College), cares for almost all the known historic human/ancestral remains currently at Cambridge, but the collecting of human/ancestral remains at the University predates its foundation by almost 150 years.[6] The University's formal collection of human/ancestral remains began in 1804 when the University received the anatomy collection of Thomas Lawrence, who had been Anatomy Lecturer at the University of Oxford between 1745–1750.[7] The majority of the

[1] Trish Biers, 'Engaging with Death in Museums and Collections', in *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Heritage, and Death*, ed. Trish Biers and Katie Stringer Clary, Routledge Handbooks on Museums, Galleries and Heritage (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 78–92, at 79, 83–84; Katie Stringer Clary, 'Historical Contexts of Bodies, Display and Spectacle', in *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Heritage, and Death*, ed. Trish Biers and Katie Stringer Clary, Routledge Handbooks on Museums, Galleries and Heritage (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 11–25, at 19.

[2] Margaret Clegg, *Human Remains: Curation, Reburial and Repatriation*, Cambridge Texts in Human Bioarchaeology and Osteoarchaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 12–20.

[3] *Ibid*. pp. 18–20.

[4] Clary, 'Historical Contexts of Bodies, Display and Spectacle', p. 19; Shane McCorristine, 'The Dark Value of Criminal Bodies: Context, Consent, and the Disturbing Sale of John Parker's Skull', *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 13.1 (2015), art. 2. doi: 10.5334/jcms.1021220.

[5] Clegg, *Human Remains*, p. 24.

[6] Alexandra Ion, 'Introduction to the Virtual Museum', *Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience, University of Cambridge* (website), 8 March 2017. https://www.pdn.cam.ac.uk/research/groups/human-anatomy-centre/human-anatomy-virtual-museum/introduction-to-the-virtual-museum [accessed 18 November 2024].

[7] Duckworth Laboratory 'Appendix I. Timeline of the formation history of the anatomical and archaeological collections at Cambridge that forms the collections of the Duckworth Laboratory', (unpublished internal report) [n.d.].

human/ancestral remains at the Duckworth Laboratory today are of individuals who died more than one hundred years ago.[8] The remains of an estimated 18,000 humans (mainly British people) are cared for at the Duckworth Laboratory, making this one of the largest such collections in the world; the British government Natural History Museum in London cares for the remains of an estimated 25,000 individuals.[9] The Duckworth Laboratory uses the definition of 'human remains' set out by the British Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in a 2005 policy concerning museums and other institutions. This defines human remains as parts of bodies of once living people including whole or partial skeletons, fragments or whole bones and teeth, soft tissue (including organs and skin), embryos, and slide preparations of human tissue.[10] Human hair and nails do not fall under the DCMS definition, but the Duckworth treats human hair using the same principles. The Duckworth Laboratory includes human/ancestral remains that fall into seven main categories, including skeletal remains and mummified remains.[11]

[8] Human remains less than one hundred years old in the UK are governed under the Human Tissue Act 2004. *Human Tissue Act, 2004*. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents [accessed 18 November 2024].

[9] The Duckworth Laboratory also includes thousands of remains of non-human primates, fossil casts, and tissue collections. Natural History Museum, 'Human Comparative Collection', *Natural History Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/services/collections/palaeontology/human-comparative.html [accessed 1 November 2024]; in what is likely the largest collection in the world, the remains of an estimated 33,000 individuals are spread across the Smithsonian Institution of twenty-one museums in the United States, with around 12,000 individuals at the National Museum of Natural History: Smithsonian Institution, 'Reckoning with Human Remains in the Smithsonian Collection', *Smithsonian* (website), 21 February 2024. https://www.si.edu/collections/human-remains [accessed 1 November 2024]; American Museum of Natural History and Sean Decatur, 'Human Remains Stewardship', *American Museum of Natural History* (website), 12 October 2023. https://www.amnh.org/about/human-remains-stewardship [accessed 18 November 2024].

[10] Specifically, Homo Sapiens defined as individuals who fall within the range of anatomical variation of living and recent human beings. Duckworth Laboratory, 'The Duckworth Laboratory Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remains', *University of Cambridge* (website), October 2022. https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/files/duckworth_laboratory_human_remains_policy_october_2022.pdf (pdf), 8 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 2; UK Government DCMS, 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums', *GOV.UK* (website), October 2005. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-the-care-of-human-remains-in-museums [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 9.

[11] These are: '1) osteological remains, i.e. the skeleton or part of the skeleton of individuals, cremated remains. These form the vast majority of the Collection's holdings.
(2) dried soft tissue remains, i.e. the desiccated remains of skin, muscle or other soft tissues of a small number of individuals, usually attached to the bones they were attached to in life.
(3) mummified remains, i.e. intentionally preserved or desiccated body, or part of a body, of a person, of a small number of individuals.
(4) human skeletal remains modified intentionally after death, including decorated bones and skulls, or the transformation of a human bone into a cultural implement.
(5) thin sections of human bones and teeth, some of which are mounted in slides for microscopic observation; and samples of dental calculus.
(6) blood samples obtained as part of the British Biological Survey (BBS) in the mid-20th century.
(7) hair, collected mostly during the first half of the 20th century. Although not considered human remains under the DCMS guidelines (2005), many of the same issues regarding care, curation, and repatriation apply, therefore it is covered in this policy.'
Duckworth Laboratory, 'Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remains', p. 3.

Race science and collecting human/ancestral remains

In a 2010 book chapter, 'Race, empire, and biology before Darwinism,' historian Professor Sujit Sivasundaram (Gonville and Caius College) explored the development of the science of race in Britain and other parts of the world, including the United States, and places around the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, tracing networks of ideas worked and reworked as science and Christianity were alternately cast as companions and opponents.[12] Empire and slavery were two driving factors behind the development of theories around race, as European scholars tried to understand the new peoples encountered in the colonies and justify or criticise the subjugation of Black African enslaved people.[13] Ultimately, the development of scientific ideas of race was accompanied by the classification and hierarchy of races, and when hierarchies of race were developed in Western academia from the eighteenth century, Black African people were invariably positioned towards the bottom.[14] A range of disciplines focused on the science of the human body and human racial difference emerged in this period, using data gathered from large groups of human/ancestral remains and particularly human skulls. Three described below lie at the heart of race science: phrenology, craniology, and eugenics. Considered 'pseudoscience' today, these disciplines were broadly discredited within mainstream science in the early twentieth century and more emphatically disavowed following the Second World War and the devastating application of race science in Nazi Germany.[15] The Whipple Museum of the History of Science has a large collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scientific instruments, literature, and sculptural busts of human heads relating to phrenology, craniometry, eugenics, and anthropometric measurement; this material has been the subject of previous exhibitions and was explored as part of the 2022 University of Cambridge Museums Legacies of Enslavement and Empire project.[16]

In the nineteenth century, phrenologists developed the theory that the brain was the organ of the mind, composed of different sections that determined an individual's temperament and that could be studied based on the human skull.[17] Phrenologists examined and measured human skulls to develop theories about individuals' characteristics, intelligence, and the races of man in a discipline that was popular with scientists and lay people alike around the world in Europe, the USA, Asia, Australia, and South Africa.[18] Some European phrenologists in the nineteenth century applied a

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[12] Sujit Sivasundaram, 'Race, Empire, and Biology before Darwinism', in *Biology and Ideology from Descartes to Dawkins*, ed. Denis R. Alexander and Ronald L. Numbers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 114–38.

[13] *Ibid*. pp. 122–23.

[14] These hierarchies continued even within Black African groups, most notably in the influential text by Seligman, *Races of Africa*; Sivasundaram, 'Race, Empire, and Biology', pp. 117–19.

[15] Paul Weindling, 'Genetics, Eugenics, and the Holocaust', in *Biology and Ideology from Descartes to Dawkins*, ed. Denis R. Alexander and Ronald L. Numbers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 192–214.

[16] Whipple Library, 'Phrenology Collection: Joseph Millott Severn', *Whipple Library, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge* (website), 14 July 2016. https://www.whipplelib.hps.cam.ac.uk/special/exhibitions-and-displays/exhibitions-archive/reserve-gallery/reserve-severn [accessed 18 November 2024]; University of Cambridge, 'Skulls in Print: Scientific Racism in the Transatlantic World', *University of Cambridge* (website), 19 March 2014. https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/skulls-in-print-scientific-racism-in-the-transatlantic-world [accessed 18 November 2024].

[17] James Poskett, *Materials of the Mind: Phrenology, Race, and the Global History of Science, 1815–1920*, Chicago Scholarship Online (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), pp. 1–18.

[18] See Poskett, *Materials of the Mind*, pp. 51–57 for more on phrenologists in France, Britain and the United States and their study of African people, the ensuing debates around abolition in the 1830s, and discourse around the plaster cast of the head of Eustache Belin, a formerly enslaved Haitian man.

colonial distinction between 'civilised' ancient Egyptians and 'savage' modern Egyptians in their study of Egyptian skulls, using their research to further ideas of an ancient Egyptian Caucasian race.[19] Craniology was also the comparative study of the skull to determine race, among other characteristics, while craniometry was a method concerned with the weight and measurement of skulls. While both phrenology and craniology were studies of the skull, craniologists' focus on what were deemed biological categories like race and sex set them apart from phrenologists as a more empirical discipline.[20]

The Duckworth houses the papers of one of England's most influential eugenicists, statistician Karl Pearson (King's College), who spent most of his academic career from the late nineteenth into the twentieth century at University College, London (UCL).[21] Pearson's mentor was Francis Galton (Trinity College), a 'gentleman scholar' (a wealthy academic without institutional affiliation) who, according to historian Edward Larson, 'believed that some people are born smart, others are born stupid, and the roots of all such hereditary traits reach deep into one's ancestry'.[22] Inspired in part by his travels through southwest Africa, and influenced by the work of his cousin, Charles Darwin, Galton coined the term 'eugenics' in 1883 – the study and process of selective human reproduction intended to improve the human species.[23] Pearson and Galton had strong professional and personal relationships with Flinders Petrie from the early 1880s, and the Egyptologist sent back 'thousands' of skulls and other skeletal remains from his excavations to UCL where the Galton Laboratory was located (named for its financial donor), supporting their work as he published his own eugenicist work.[24] These human/ancestral remains were later transferred to the Duckworth Laboratory.[25] In one demonstration of the popularity of these theories, between 1884–1904, the Cambridge Anthropometric Committee collected anthropometric measurements, family histories, and birthplaces of students using apparatus Galton designed, developing a collection of 9,000 cards (now housed at the Cambridge Philosophical Society) with this documentation, which in 1924 was loaned to Pearson for his research.[26]

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[19] Poskett, *Materials of the Mind*, pp. 32–41.

[20] Clegg, *Human Remains*, pp. 20–21.

[21] Tom Fearn, 'Our Early History', *Department of Statistical Science, UCL* (website), October 2020. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/statistics/our-early-history-1 [accessed 18 November 2024]; President & Provost, UCL, 'Inquiry into the History of Eugenics at UCL', *UCL* (website), 27 February 2020. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/provost/inquiry-history-eugenics-ucl [accessed 18 November 2024]; Debbie Challis, 'Skull Triangles: Flinders Petrie, Race Theory and Biometrics', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 26.1 (2016), art. 5. doi: 10.5334/bha-556, p. 7.

[22] Edward L. Larson, 'Biology and the Emergence of the Anglo-American Eugenics Movement', in *Biology and Ideology from Descartes to Dawkins*, ed. Denis R. Alexander and Ronald L. Numbers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 165–91, at 165; Subhadra Das and Amy Arthur, 'Subhadra Das on the History of Scientific Racism', *BBC Science Focus* (web magazine), 29 June 2020. https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/subhadra-das-on-the-history-of-scientific-racism [accessed 18 November 2024].

[23] Larson, 'Biology and the Emergence of the Anglo-American Eugenics Movement', p. 166.

[24] Kathleen L. Sheppard, 'Flinders Petrie and Eugenics at UCL', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 20.1 (2010), 16–29, at 17, 23–29. doi: 10.5334/bha.20103.

[25] Duckworth Laboratory 'Appendix I. Timeline of the formation history of the anatomical and archaeological collections at Cambridge that forms the collections of the Duckworth Laboratory,' (unpublished internal report) [n.d.].

[26] Cambridge Anthropometric Committee, 'Anthropometric Committee Record Cards, 1884–1909. GBR/0279/CPS 12/1', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/23/archival_objects/355495 [accessed 18 November 2024]. Some of these cards were featured in an exhibition to mark 200 years since the foundation of the Cambridge Philosophical Society: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 'Discovery: 200 Years of the Cambridge Philosophical

The Museum of Human Anatomy

From around 1834 to the late 1930s, the University had a purpose-built Museum of Human Anatomy to support teaching and research, though human/ancestral remains had been on display before this period.[27] The 1862 *Catalogue of the Osteological Portions of Specimens Contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge* describes three human skulls of African people among the 128 specimens from humans in the larger collection of almost 1,300 animal specimens.[28] These were donated by medical doctor George Budd (Gonville and Caius College) likely around 1838.[29] According to Budd's accompanying notes, the skulls belonged to three men who died in his care at the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital in London, which treated seafaring people from around the world.[30] One was a 21-year-old man named Robin, from the Rio Pongo in modern day Guinea; the second, a 37-year-old from the Congo named Tomes Martins, was part of the crew of a Portuguese slave ship. Budd had misplaced his notes on the third individual, but believed he was from Guinea.[31]

According to an 1893 article about the museum in the medical journal, *Lancet*, it comprised of 'the main museum, the gallery of models, the gallery of soft preparations, and the bone-room'.[32] In a 1904 volume on the research from the Museum of Human Anatomy, Duckworth introduced the anthropological collection in the museum as occupying a large room with ten cases in which human/ancestral remains were on display, including bones, skeletons, and – most importantly for researchers – human skulls.[33] The collection numbered 'thousands' of human/ancestral remains by 1904, according to Duckworth.[34] The skulls from peoples around the world – including those from ancient as well as contemporary peoples – were arranged in cases organised by region. Duckworth

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Society' (archived exhibition catalogue), 2019. https://www.cambridgephilosophicalsociety.org/files/exhibition/discovery-exhibition-catalogue.pdf (pdf), 48 pp. [accessed 29 November 2024], pp. 27–29.

[27] Cambridge University Archives, 'History of New Museums. Volume 1, 1716–1867', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk//view/MS-UA-HISTORY-OF-NEW-MUSEUMS-00001/29 [accessed 1 November 2024]; Alexander Macalister, 'An Address On The History Of Anatomy In Cambridge', *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 1574 (1891), 449–52; Humphrey Davy Rolleston, *The Cambridge Medical School: a Biographical History*, Cambridge Library Collection (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 50–54. A virtual museum including images of some of Cambridge's historic anatomy collections is under construction at the Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience: Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience, 'Human anatomy visual museum', *University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.pdn.cam.ac.uk/research/groups/human-anatomy-centre/human-anatomy-virtual-museum [accessed 18 November 2024].

[28] William Clark, *Catalogue of the Osteological Portions of Specimens Contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge*, Cambridge Library Collection (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1862). doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511703546.

[29] L. C. Rookmaaker, *Calendar of The Historical Correspondence of The University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge: 1819 to 1911* (Cambridge: UMZC, 2004), p. 21.

[30] Clark, *Catalogue of the Osteological Portions*, pp. 106–7; Royal Museums Greenwich. 'HMS NHS: The Nautical Health Service Transcription Project', *Royal Museums Greenwich* (website), 24 February 2024.. https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/hms-nhs-nautical-health-service-transcription-project [accessed 1 November 2024].

[31] Clark, *Catalogue of the Osteological Portions*, pp. 106–7.

[32] [n.a.], 'Museum of Human Anatomy at Cambridge', *The Lancet* 142, no. 3668 (1893), 1532–33. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(01)97599-3.

[33] W. L. H. Duckworth, ed., *Studies from the Anthropological Laboratory, the Anatomy School, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), p. 1.

[34] Duckworth, *Studies from the Anthropological Laboratory*, p. 8.

described some of the notable skulls, including examples from people in Northern Europe, Oceania, Southeast Asia, North America, and of the African skulls on display he said:

> 'The African skulls will be found on the aspect of this case (No. 3), furthest removed from the door and comprise examples of "West Coast" negroes, of Kaffirs, of the Bush and Hottentot races of the Cape (ref. 5, 6, 7 [referencing published material]), of Central African negroes and the interesting specimens from the battlefield of Tel-el-Kebir'.[35]

This was in addition to a large group of ancient and contemporaneous Egyptian skulls which filled up the entire case 4, with more in case 6, accompanied by three skulls from Madagascar.[36] In the *Lancet* article, the number of Egyptian skulls, which were brought to the collection through Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge (Christ's College)[37] stood out, described as 'a splendid series of Egyptian heads, nearly 500 in number... and some of these are in such a good state of preservation that they show the peculiarities of feature and coiffure which these Egyptians presented several thousand years ago'.[38] Two skeletons 'of individuals of the Bush race of South Africa' were of an origin that was 'not exactly known, but they present features not altogether typical of that race', and in general Duckworth named the collectors of various human/ancestral remains but did not give details of the method of acquisition.[39] The 1862 catalogue describes two skeletons, one each of a male and female 'Bosjesman', the Dutch for 'Bushmen' (terms that were used to refer to San people), one recorded as purchased and the other donated, both from named individuals, but with no further information on their acquisition.[40] Papers published using the human/ancestral remains Duckworth described give only limited insight into how they were collected. For example, in an 1897 paper on three skulls from Madagascar, Duckworth wrote: 'The donor of the first writes to say that he obtained the specimen himself from the east coast, at some risk, for the natives venerate the dead'.[41]

Founding the Duckworth Laboratory

The Duckworth Laboratory of Physical Anthropology was established in 1945 as Duckworth himself amalgamated the University's collections of human/ancestral remains in one place. Major sources included collections from individuals that were then housed at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), the Museum of Zoology, Cambridge (UMZC), and the Department of Anatomy Collection which included its museum. Duckworth also donated his personal collection.[42] Several

[35] *Ibid*. p. 4. The Battle of Tel-el-Kebir took place in Egypt in September 1882, as part of the Anglo-Egyptian War.
[36] Duckworth, *Studies from the Anthropological Laboratory*, pp. 4–5.
[37] Wallis Budge's bequest to his alma mater in memory of his wife has funded an Egyptology fellowship from the late 1930s that continues today: see Christ's College Cambridge, 'Lady Wallis Budge Junior Research Fellowship in Egyptology'.
[38] [n.a.], 'Museum of Human Anatomy at Cambridge'.
[39] Duckworth, *Studies from the Anthropological Laboratory*, p. 6.
[40] Clark, *Catalogue of the Osteological Portions*, p. 106.
[41] W. L. H. Duckworth, 'An Account of Skulls from Madagascar in the Anatomical Museum of Cambridge University', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 26 (1897), 285–93. doi: 10.2307/2842357.
[42] Duckworth Laboratory, 'The Duckworth Collections – Source Collections and Series' ', (unpublished internal report) [n.d.]. The UMZC's early documentation includes the names and addresses of donors and animal specimens the museum received between 1819–1911; human remains are included alongside these animal

major collectors and donors from MAA had personal assemblages of human/ancestral remains including founding curator Baron Anatole von Hügel (South Pacific), anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon (Torres Straits), archaeologist Louis S. B. Leakey (Taita Hills, Kenya), and Petrie (Egypt). Von Hügel donated cultural artefacts that span collections at MAA, The Fitzwilliam Museum, and the human/ancestral remains at the Duckworth, a reminder that research on the collections at Cambridge must be cross-collection to truly understand the relevant history and context. By 1950, the Duckworth had the largest collection of human skeletal material in Britain.[43]

According to the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology's (later, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) annual report covering 1939–1945 and 1945–1946, and published in 1947, among the human/ancestral remains destined for the new Duckworth Laboratory were those awaiting shipment from Nairobi, Kenya which included: 'The skulls and other bones of seventy male Somali, collected from various localities in British and Italian Somaliland during 1941 and added to later', and 'The skeletons of sixty-eight male and female Haya, recovered from the burial caves on Rusings [Rusinga] Island, Lake Victoria, in 1943'.[44] These were to be transported back by physical anthropologist Jack Carrick Trevor who had been appointed the first director of the Duckworth Laboratory. Trevor had earlier conducted research at the Galton Laboratory and was a fellow of and published research for the Eugenics Society, though he appears to have been fairly disengaged with the Society's opposition to 'race crossing' (i.e., interracial relationships).[45] In 1951, Trevor was among the academics (all from European and American institutions) that signed a significant UNESCO document: 'Statement on the nature of race and race difference', which asserted that there was no scientific evidence to believe that races differed in their innate capacity for intellectual and emotional development.[46]

In the 1947 annual report, Trevor is reported to have spent the years 1940–1944 in the British Army in East Africa using his periods of leave for, 'collecting archaeological, ethnographical, and skeletal specimens for the Museum, taking cinematograph films of the Ituri pygmies and Tutsi in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda, and carrying out an anthropometric study of the Sandawe and Nyaturu tribes of Central Tanganyika'.[47] In the same MAA annual report of 1947, the MAA recorded four articles published that were based on research in part or wholly undertaken in the newly formed Duckworth Laboratory between 1941–1943. Two of these articles were published in *The Eugenics Review* by Kenneth Little, a lecturer in physical anthropology at Cambridge at the time, and focused on the mixing between races in Britain and the British Commonwealth.[48] One was a

specimens, mainly of Indigenous people from the United States, Australia, and Aotearoa. Rookmaaker, *Calendar of The Historical Correspondence of The University Museum of Zoology*.

[43] Denston, Charles Bernard, 'From the Fronds. Duckworth Laboratory of Physical Anthropology, 1938–2008, GBR/0012/MS Add.10248/1', *ArchiveSearch, University of Cambridge*. https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/2/archival_objects/650107 [accessed 1 November 2024].

[44] Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Annual Report of the Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology on the Museum of Archaeology and of Ethnology, 1939–45 and 1945–46', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (report), 1947. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/files/media/ar1939-46-55th-62nd.pdf (pdf), 7 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 4.

[45] Peter Aspinall with Chamion Caballero, 'JC Trevor Investigates "Race Crossing" for the Eugenics Society', *The Mixed Museum* (blog), 2021. https://mixedmuseum.org.uk/main-exhibition/1936-jc-trevor-investigates-race-crossing-for-the-eugenics-society/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; [n.a.], 'The Galton Lecture, 1949', *The Eugenics Review* 41.1 (1949), 28–31.

[46] UNESCO, *Four Statements on the Race Question*, UNESCO and Its Programme, COM.69/II.27/A (Paris: UNESCO, 1969). https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000122962 [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 42.

[47] Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Annual Report of the Faculty Board', p. 4.

[48] Little published early work under his first two initials. K. L. Little, 'The Study of Racial Mixture in the British Commonwealth: Some Anthropological Preliminaries', *The Eugenics Review* 32.4 (1941), 114; K. L. Little, 'Racial

comparative study of the anthropometric measurements of living mixed-race and white children in Cardiff, Wales. After leaving Cambridge, Little published a landmark interdisciplinary study, *Negroes in Britain: a Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (1947), which focused on Black and mixed-race communities in Cardiff and the racial discrimination they experienced, one of the early works in the new field of 'race relations' in the UK.[49]

The Duckworth Laboratory today

The Duckworth Laboratory is now within the Department of Archaeology. The work of the Duckworth Laboratory is guided by UK government and university policies, most importantly, the UK Government's 2005 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums', which was itself a response to wider changes in the academy and calls for repatriation of the human/ancestral remains of Indigenous people, and the Human Tissue Act 2004.[50] The policies and the guidelines of the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology (BABAO) also inform practice at the Duckworth Laboratory today, as does the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[51] According to the October 2022 'Duckworth Laboratory Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remain' (which is based on the policies above), the Duckworth houses 'archaeological and anatomical human remains, non-human primate remains, fossil casts, blood, brain and hair collections, anatomical models and instruments, and an archive'.[52] The human/ancestral remains of around 18,000 individuals are at Duckworth Laboratory today, primarily from the archaeological collections curated at MAA and predominately from British sites, often from scholars on fieldwork who sent collections back to Cambridge.

Commercial excavations and private donations (with no suspicion of illicit trade) are the main sources of the small number of human/ancestral remains added to the Duckworth Laboratory today.[53] The Duckworth team plans to develop a stronger digital presence for the institution, including a searchable database following the completion of an inventory of the collection. The database will only include details of human/ancestral remains cleared following community-by-community consultation with the different groups represented. The first will be those from Britain and Egypt. Due to the sensitive nature of its collection, access to the Duckworth Laboratory is

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Mixture in Great Britain: Some Anthropological Characteristics of the Anglo-Negroid Cross', *The Eugenics Review* 33.4 (1942), 112–20. The other two articles were: K. L. Little, 'A Study of a Series of Human Skulls from Castle Hill, Scarborough', *Biometrika* 33.1 (1943), 25–35. doi: 10.1093/biomet/33.1.25; M. L. Tildesley and N. Datta-Majumder, 'Cranial Capacity: Comparative Data on the Techniques of Macdonell and Breitinger', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 2.3 (1944), 233–49. doi: 10.1002/ajpa.1330020302.

[49] K. L. Little, *Negroes in Britain: a Study of Racial Relations in English Society*, International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1947). https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781315007069/negroes-britain-little [accessed 18 November 2024]; David Mills, *Difficult Folk? A Political History of Social Anthropology*, Methodology in History and Anthropology 19 (New York: Berghahn, 2010), pp. 129–38. doi: 10.2307/j.ctv8mdn66.12.

[50] Clegg, *Human Remains*, pp. 104–6; Duckworth Laboratory, 'Duckworth Laboratory Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remains', p. 2.

[51] BABAO, *BABAO – British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology* (website), https://babao.org.uk/ [accessed 1 November 2024]; United Nations, 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', *United Nations, Division for Inclusive Social Development* (website), 2024. https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples [accessed 1 November 2024].

[52] Duckworth Laboratory, 'Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remains', p. 2.

[53] Duckworth Laboratory, 'Policy on the Curation and Conservation of Human Remains', p. 6.

restricted. Anyone wanting to access the Duckworth for research purposes must submit a written application with their research proposal and pay between £20–£80 in bench fees; students require a reference letter from their supervisors.[54] These fees are not collected from descendent communities who visit the Laboratory. The Duckworth Laboratory archive contains papers and letters associated with the administration of the collection, as well as maps, medical slides, X-rays, photographs, and site reports. Among the archival material is a collection of ethnographic and anatomic photographs from Nigeria that may be moving to MAA. The University Library houses the papers of Charles Bernard Denston who worked at the Duckworth Laboratory for over forty years, retiring in 1986.[55]

The study of human/ancestral remains is important to the research of human evolution, disease, diet, the movement of peoples, how people in the past lived, how they died, and how people of different cultures approached burial and death.[56] Research focused on Africa at Cambridge today includes Ng'ipalajem, a collaborative research project to investigate the evolution of modern humans in Africa with partners including the National Museums of Kenya and the Turkana Basin Institute.[57] In a separate project published in a May 2024 article, researchers found that two ancient Egyptian skulls housed in the Duckworth Laboratory showed signs of what could have been surgical attempts to treat cancer.[58]

African human/ancestral remains at the Duckworth Laboratory

The African human/ancestral remains at the Duckworth are mainly from ancient Egypt. In 1898, Petrie presented nineteen boxes of skulls and bones from his excavations in Hierakonpolis – a significant site for understanding the emergence of the pharaonic state – which may have made this one of the largest collections of Egyptian remains in Europe at that time.[59] Of the 18,000 individuals at the Duckworth Laboratory today, an estimated 4,800 individuals are from Egypt and 1,200 from Sudan.[60] Those from Egypt were from: Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Naqada, Qau, Badari, Hawara, Tarkhan, Qurneh, Gizeh, and Sedment. And from Sudan: Jebel Moya, Kerma, and El Hesa. The rest of Africa is represented by approximately 750 individuals, though these are estimations, and the Duckworth team continue to document remains regularly when re-boxing or opening storage boxes. The African countries represented include those below, roughly in order from those with the greatest numbers to those with the least:

- Egypt
- Sudan
- Tanzania

[54] Department of Archaeology, 'Research Ethics in the Department of Archaeology', *University of Cambridge* (website), 11 September 2019. https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-department-archaeology [accessed 18 November 2024].
[55] Denston, 'From the Fronds'.
[56] Clegg, *Human Remains*, pp. 30–40.
[57] PalaeoTrails, 'Ng'ipalajem: the evolutionary landscape of modern human origins in Africa', *PalaeoTrails* (website), 2024. https://palaeotrails.org/current-projects/ngipalajem/ [accessed 1 November 2024].
[58] Tatiana Tondini, Albert Isidro, and Edgard Camarós, 'Case Report: Boundaries of Oncological and Traumatological Medical Care in Ancient Egypt: New Palaeopathological Insights from Two Human Skulls', *Frontiers in Medicine* 11, no. 1371645 (2024). doi: 10.3389/fmed.2024.1371645.
[59] Rolleston, *The Cambridge Medical School*, p. 53.
[60] African Collections Futures Survey 2024 – Duckworth Laboratory.

- Somalia
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Ghana
- Libya
- Namibia
- South Africa
- DRC
- Madagascar
- Uganda
- Cote d'Ivoire/Mali border
- Mozambique
- Guinea
- Algeria
- Angola
- Lesotho
- Senegal
- Zimbabwe

Beyond those collected in Egypt, which include the large deposits from Petrie, information about the context in which these human/ancestral remains were collected is limited. From Kenya, in addition to skeletons from Naishi River in Kenya and Ngorongoro in Tanzania, Louis Leakey collected 143 skulls from ancestral shrines in rock shelters in Taita Hills in Kenya, where skulls were interred until 1945 as part of traditional burial practice.[61] In a 2013 appraisal of human skeletal remains from southern Africa at the Natural History Museum, Duckworth Laboratory, and University of Edinburgh's Department of Anatomy, Alan Morris and Yvette Scholtz provided some context for the Duckworth collection.[62] They note that the collection includes around 50 African skulls collected by Pearson, including from his personal collection and thirty that were part of the older eighteenth and nineteenth century collection at the University. [63] While many of the human/ancestral remains appear to have been collected as part of archaeological expeditions, Morris and Scholtz note three skulls from 'Bushmen' in South Africa and southern Africa that may have been trophies or were taken 'as fresh specimens from newly deceased individuals'.[64] Based on collection methods documented elsewhere, it is likely that many of the African human/ancestral remains were removed (excavated or simply taken) from where they were buried, others taken as trophies after battle, individuals killed, or remains exchanged from African communities.[65]

[61] Alan G. Morris and Yvette Scholtz, 'An Historical Note and Preliminary Assessment of the Human Skeletal Remains from Southern Africa Stored in the United Kingdom', *Goodwin Series* 11 (2013), 21–26, at 24; KBC Channel 1, 'My Culture: Taita Skull Cave', *YouTube* (video), 18 March 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0iSkoyz5_sI [accessed 18 November].
[62] Morris and Scholtz, 'Historical Note and Preliminary Assessment'.
[63] *Ibid*. p. 24.
[64] *Ibid*. p. 24.
[65] Simon J. Harrison, 'Skulls and Scientific Collecting in the Victorian Military: Keeping the Enemy Dead in British Frontier Warfare', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50.1 (2008), 285–303; Pearl Lamptey and Wazi Apoh, 'The Restitution Debate and Return of Human Remains: Implications for Bioarchaeological Research and Cultural Ethics in Africa', *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 7.1 (2020), 97–115, at 99–100. doi: 10.4314/contjas.v7i1.7; Denver A. Webb, 'War, Racism, and the Taking of Heads: Revisiting Military Conflict in

African human/ancestral remains elsewhere at the University of Cambridge

While almost all the known historic human/ancestral remains at Cambridge are now in the Duckworth, other museums and institutions at the University continue to care for human/ancestral remains in various forms. The Fitzwilliam Museum cares for the complete remains of a Roman-era mummified man with a painted portrait, wrapped in a heavily decorated linen shroud. Dating to the first century CE, and currently on display in the Egyptian Gallery, he was excavated at El Hiba in Egypt in 1903 in an Egyptian Exploration Fund expedition led by Bernard Pyne Grenfell.[66] As part of research in the Egyptian Coffins project, a CT scan revealed that the man was likely in his early twenties when he died, and around 174 cm tall.[67] Girton College is also home to the mummified remains of a Roman-era woman with a painted portrait, from an excavation led by Petrie in Hawara, Egypt in 1911, and also dating to the first century CE.[68] The Fitzwilliam Museum cares for fewer than twenty human/ancestral remains from Egypt, none but the El Hiba man being on display. Those that are not displayed include fragments of hair and bone, a mummified head and skull, and a miniature coffin with the body of a foetus inside.[69] Images of the above are available on The Fitzwilliam Museum online catalogue. Discussions around the display of Egyptian mummified remains in Western institutions are ongoing across the heritage sector and in Egypt itself, with greater emphasis on engaging directly with the perspectives of Egyptian people today.[70]

MAA cares for a small number of human/ancestral remains, primarily from archaeological expeditions. Those from Africa include skulls and fragments of skulls from Prehistoric, Late Stone Age, and Neolithic periods found in Madagascar, Kenya (from Leakey) and Niger respectively.[71] There

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the Cape Colony and Western Xhosaland in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of African History* 56.1 (2015), 37–55.

[66] *Human mummy. c.* 100–150 CE. At: Fitzwilliam Museum. E.63.1903. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/50667 [accessed 18 November 2024]; 'Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF)', *Artefacts of Excavation: British Excavations in Egypt 1880–1980*. https://egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk/resources/egypt-exploration-fund-eef [accessed 24 October 2024], pp. 46–7.

[67] The Fitzwilliam Museum Egyptian Coffins Project, 'Red Shroud Mummy', *Fitzwilliam Ancient Coffins* (website), 2016. https://egyptiancoffins.org/mummy-portraits/red-shroud-mummy/ [accessed 31 October 2024].

[68] Girton College, University of Cambridge. 'The Lawrence Room', *Girton College, University of Cambridge* (website), [n.d.]. http://www.girton.cam.ac.uk/about-girton/art-artefacts/lawrence-room [accessed 1 November 2024].

[69] *Human mummy*. At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. E.GA.1463.1947 https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/61484 [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Mummy mask*. At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. E.GA.3007.1943. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/57437 [accessed 18 November 2024]; *Coffin*. At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. E.43.1907. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/50977 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Correspondence with Senior Curator, Ancient Nile Valley, The Fitzwilliam Museum, 14 August 2024.

[70] Heba Abd el-Gawad and Alice Stevenson, 'Egyptian Mummified Remains: Communities of Descent and Practice', in *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Heritage, and Death*, ed. Trish Biers and Katie Stringer Clary, Routledge Handbooks on Museums, Galleries and Heritage (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 238–58.

[71] See under the following accession numbers at *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Objects' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/ [accessed 18 November 2024]: Madagascar: 1923.1037; Kenya: MAA: D 1931.5.4-11; Niger: 1976.1312. At the University of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, the counterpart to Cambridge's MAA, Pitt Rivers staff have created a website with lists of human/ancestral remains at that museum. Those from Africa total over 260, including skulls, bones, human hair, and tissue, and artefacts made with human/ancestral remains: Pitt Rivers Museum, 'Human Remains at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford', *Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford* (website), [n.d.].

were also several African skulls among a collection of around a dozen skulls and casts of skulls that were transferred from the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital Museum and accessioned in 1935; these were all then transferred from MAA to the Duckworth but remain on the MAA online catalogue.[72] MAA also has objects made with human/ancestral remains, with those from Africa including objects made with human teeth and bones.[73] Other examples include headdresses made using human hair from Turkana communities in northwest Kenya and Acholi in northern Uganda.[74] Photographs featuring human/ancestral remains are restricted on the MAA website, available only on request. In June 2024, MAA returned the sacred remains of seven people that had been stolen from a shrine in the early twentieth century to the Uganda Museum (see 'Returns', below).

Repatriation

The repatriation of human/ancestral remains at the University of Cambridge is managed under central University policy. In July 2024 the University Council approved the 'Procedure for handling claims for the transfer of stewardship of human remains', with minor changes from the earlier December 2008 procedure.[75] While the 2008 procedure required a submission in writing to a postal address, the 2024 process allows for making an enquiry or a claim via email: registrary@admin.cam.ac.uk.[76] According to the 2008 procedures, the University pursued 'resolution by informal means' first as the primary method of addressing claims for repatriation, before allowing a formal claim for repatriation to move ahead if this was unsuccessful – the 2024 version removes this first step to ensure that all claims are treated formally, equally, and ethically. As with the earlier version, the 2024 procedure details the information requested to support a repatriation claim: broadly the identity of those making the claim, their connection to the human/ancestral remains, and their reason for making the claim. A Human Remains Advisory Panel gives advice and makes recommendations that are reported to the University Council, the latter then making the decision on the claim. A broader change to the use of the term 'claims' rather that 'requests' reflects the development of discussions around the repatriation of human/ancestral remains since the 2008 iteration. According to the 2024 and 2008 procedures, 'The vast majority of claims that have been

https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/human-remains-pitt-rivers-museum-university-oxford [accessed 18 November 2024].

[72] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology accession numbers: 1935.1282, 1935.1276/Record 2, 1935.1289, 1935.1286.

[73] Examples include: *Necklace or pendant of 96 human and animal teeth*. From Central Africa, DRC. At: The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1927.394. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/526688/ [accessed 29 November 2024].

[74] For example: *Headdress made from human hair and clay*. *c.* 1934. From Kenya. At: The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1935.683. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/528888/ [accessed 29 November 2024]; *Etok or headdress made from human hair and decorated with beads*. *c*. 1914–1932. From: Uganda. At: The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1937.925. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/525104/ [accessed 29 November 2024].

[75] University of Cambridge, 'Procedure for Handling Claims for the Transfer of Stewardship of Human Remains', *Cambridge University Reporter* 154.39/no. 6749 (17 July 2024). https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2023-24/weekly/6749/section1.shtml#heading2-8 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[76] University of Cambridge, 'Procedure for Handling Claims for the Transfer of Stewardship of Human Remains: Notice', *Cambridge University Reporter*, no. 6131 (3 December 2008). https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2008-09/weekly/6131/6.html [accessed 18 November 2024].

made for return have concerned the remains of overseas people who died within the last 100 to 300 years'.[77]

The University of Cambridge has repatriated the remains of individuals to their communities of origin – mainly indigenous communities in the United States and Australia – and there are several ongoing claims. Once the University Registrar informs the Duckworth Laboratory of a claim, an initial report is produced based on inventories and preliminary archival searches to be sent to the claimant community. If they decide to pursue the repatriation, then a full report is written by Duckworth staff including skeletal inventories, archival copies and images, and if agreed to by the receiving communities, osteobiographies (life stories developed based on analysis of human bones) of each individual, and micro-CT scans are completed for both osteological information and insurance purposes. [78] Based on the community's preferences, the collections staff arrange a time to schedule a ceremony of transfer. Most recently, in February 2020 the University returned the Iwi Kūpuna (ancestral remains) of twenty-one native Hawai'ians from the Duckworth Laboratory, that had been collected in the mid/late nineteenth century.[79] The University has received one claim for the return of human/ancestral remains to an African community, from Zimbabwe.[80] For decades, Zimbabwean leaders have been calling for the return of the remains of leaders that resisted colonial rule in the late nineteenth century, most notably Mbuya Nehanda, who was hanged and beheaded in 1897, her head taken to the UK as a trophy.[81] In October 2022, a delegation from Zimbabwe met with the Natural History Museum and Duckworth Laboratory and both agreed to repatriate the Zimbabwean remains in their institutions.[82] In public statements, however, both museums, stated that the remains (of eleven people at the Natural History Museum and one at the Duckworth Laboratory) did not include those of Nehanda or the other most famous colonial resistance fighters. The team from Zimbabwe has not yet located the remains of Nehanda. The Duckworth Laboratory completed the

[77] University of Cambridge, 'Procedure for Handling Claims for the Transfer of Stewardship of Human Remains', (2008).

[78] An example of osteobiographies developed at Cambridge is the 'After the Plague Project': Fred Lewsey, '"Bone Biographies" Reveal Life and Times of Medieval England's Common People', University of Cambridge, 1 December 2023, https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/after-the-plague [accessed 18 November 2024].

[79] Laure Bonner, 'Hawaiian Ancestors Begin Their Journey Home', *Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge* (website), 2 March 2020. https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/news/hawaiian-ancestors-begin-their-journey-home [accessed 18 November 2024].

[80] Communication with Duckworth Laboratory, 24 September 2024.

[81] Njabulo Chipangura, Farai Chabata, and Lennon Mhishi, 'Where Are Nehanda's Remains? A Zimbabwean Search in the Context of Shifting Museum Politics', in *Fifteen Colonial Thefts: A Guide to Looted African Heritage in Museums*, ed. Sela K. Adjei and Yann LeGall (London: Pluto, 2024), pp. 188–99; Returning Heritage, 'Where is the Skull of Zimbabwe Hero Mbuya Nehanda?', *Returning Heritage* (website), 10 March 2022. https://www.returningheritage.com/where-is-the-skull-of-mbuya-nehanda [accessed 18 November 2024]; Kieron Monks, 'UK: Zimbabwean Human Remains Campaigners Chase UK Museums for Mbuya Nehanda's Bones, Appeal to King Charles III', *NewZimbabwe.com* (website), 30 April 2023. https://www.newzimbabwe.com/https-www-newzimbabwe-com-uk-zimbabwean-human-remains-campaigners-chase-uk-museums-for-mbuya-nehandas-bones-appeal-to-king-charles-iii/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Lamptey and Apoh, 'The Restitution Debate', p. 99.

[82] Damian Zane, 'UK Museums Willing to Return Skulls to Zimbabwe', *BBC News, sec. Africa* (website), 30 October 2022. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-63171981 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Bella Shorrock, 'University Pledges to Return Zimbabwe Warrior Skulls "Taken as Trophies"', *Varsity Online* (website), 25 November 2022. https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/24660 [accessed 18 November 2024]. In an earlier July 2022 trip, the team visited the NHM, the British Museum, Duckworth Laboratory, the Pitt Rivers Museum, and the Manchester University Museum. Chipangura, Chabata, and Mhishi, 'Where Are Nehanda's Remains?', p. 193.

documentation for repatriation in June 2023, the University Council approved the claim in July 2024 and sent correspondence to the Zimbabwe government and is awaiting a response.[83]

[83] Correspondence with Curator, Duckworth Laboratory, 24 September 2024.

Returns

Overview

The University of Cambridge Museums' (UCM) formal statement on the return of museum objects asserts a commitment 'to an open and responsive approach to questions around the future care, circulation and destination of objects'.[1] While all objects in the care of the individual museums are the legal possessions of the University, each UCM institution has a governing body responsible for managing loans and deaccessions (the permanent removal of objects from a museum collection). The UCM institutions have developed relevant policies based on their collections, including policies on repatriation. The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA)'s official guidance on returns acknowledges that 'some artefacts, in common with those in similar museums, were acquired in a manner that was not considered legitimate or appropriate at the time, or would not be considered legitimate or appropriate today', and asserts that it will 'engage with claimants and potential claimants in an open and respectful way'.[2] However in a review of past claims and returns from across the global collections, the MAA states: 'Over the last twenty years, the Museum has received only a few claims for the return of artefacts'.[3] In June 2024, MAA returned thirty-two artefacts and the sacred remains of seven people to the Uganda Museum on a renewable three-year loan.[4] This was the first major return of African artefacts by a University of Cambridge Museum since MAA repatriated relics to Uganda in 1962. Although the 2024 return is a loan, there is an expectation that a permanent return could be one result. This chapter will provide an overview of repatriation, return and restitution, African approaches to these issues, and it will document completed and ongoing discussions and instances of returns relating to African artefacts in Cambridge.

Repatriation/restitution/return?

The terms repatriation, restitution, and return are often used interchangeably to refer to the various processes of material culture and human/ancestral remains being returned to their places of origin, however, they do not all have the same meaning.[5] Broadly, repatriation is a term to describe the permanent return of an artefact or human/ancestral remains to a country or place of origin, while

[1] University of Cambridge Museums, 'Our Approach to the Return of Museum Objects', *University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/returns [accessed 6 November 2024].

[2] MAA's official guidance on returns outlines the procedure to make claims and the criteria with which they will be assessed, with final decisions made by the University, the technical owner of the collection at MAA. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Our Approach to the Return of Museum Objects', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 10 February 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/about/our-approach-return-museum-objects [accessed 18 November 2024].

[3] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Our Approach to the Return of Museum Objects'.

[4] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, '"Repositioning the Uganda Museum" Project to Repatriate Objects from MAA Cambridge to Kampala, Uganda', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 23 September 2024. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/news/repositioning-the-uganda-museum [accessed 18 November 2024].

[5] George Okello Abungu, 'Victims or Victors: Universal Museums and the Debate on Return and Restitution, Africa's Perspective', in *The Oxford Handbook of Museum Archaeology*, ed. Alice Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 248–268, at 252. doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198847526.013.35.

restitution describes the permanent return of an artefact to the original owners.[6] In their most complete sense, both repatriation and restitution include transfer of legal title of ownership from the holding institution to the receiving institution.[7] Restitution is also used more widely to discuss justice work and an acknowledgement of harm around the extraction of the artefacts.[8] In the UK, current legislation makes it very difficult for the national museums (chief among them, the British Museum, which has one of the largest collections in the world and has been the subject of most major repatriation requests featuring African artefacts in the UK) to repatriate artefacts.[9] Return is a broader term that encompasses repatriation, restitution, and loans. Loans of artefacts back to museums in countries of origin, particularly short-term loans of a few years, have often been the most common types of return from Britain to Africa, especially of groups of artefacts or of artefacts from the UK's national museums.[10] Loans of this kind mean that the lending institution retains ownership of the artefacts while it is the borrowing institution that has responsibility for maintaining standards of safety and security of objects. These standards are set by the lender. In the case of loans of African artefacts, the costs are often borne by the lender through external donors. In a 2022 book chapter, archaeologist George Okello Abungu (Darwin College) posited a forward-looking approach: '[Restitution] should be about creating new, transparent partnerships with equal voices and equal interests. It should involve a partnership that promotes equal participation in co-research, co-curation, co-exhibition, and co-conservation of objects, especially those that have found a home in the north and are now part of the heritage of such places'.[11]

Repatriation and restitution are often multi-year, complicated processes due to a range of factors including laws and institutional regulations that favour the holding institutions, difficult conditions placed on countries or communities requesting the return of objects, disagreements about the receiving group or institution, and a historic resistance by Western institutions to the return of artefacts.[12] The popularity of galleries concerning ancient Egypt in museums and the high demand for ancient Egyptian material on the art market means repatriation in this context is often framed within more contemporary concerns around antiquities trafficking, particularly of artefacts procured after a landmark 1970 UNESCO Convention, rather than the colonial encounters that define

[6] Arts Council England with the Institute of Art and Law, 'Restitution and Repatriation: a Practical Guide for Museums in England', *Arts Council England* (report), September 2023. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/restitution-and-repatriation-practical-guide-museums-england [accessed 18 November 2024], p. 2.
[7] A change of legal ownership does not necessarily mean that the artefacts themselves will be physically returned to the country or community of origin. Arts Council England with the Institute of Art and Law, 'Restitution and Repatriation', p. 19.
[8] Savoy and Sarr, 'The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage', p. 29; Abungu, 'Victims or Victors', p. 252.
[9] Lauren Bursey, 'Colonial-Looted Cultural Objects in England', *Santander Art and Culture Law Review* 8.2 (2022), 341–54, at 343–45; British Museum, 'Contested Objects from the Collection', *British Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/contested-objects-collection [accessed 6 November 2024].
[10] Kwame Opoku, 'Cambridge Museum Loans Ugandan Artefacts To Uganda. Will Loans Be The Future Status Of African Artefacts In Western Museums?', *Modern Ghana* (website), 7 July 2024. https://www.modernghana.com/news/1325310/cambridge-museum-loans-ugandan-artefacts-to-uganda.html [accessed 18 November 2024].
[11] Abungu, 'Victims or Victors', p. 249.
[12] *Ibid*.

the debate elsewhere in Africa.[13] In another divergence, specific artefacts that are the focus of major repatriation requests from the Egyptian public and government are iconic objects on permanent display, most notably, the Rosetta Stone at the British Museum, which has been on display since it arrived there in 1802 and is on their 'must-see' list, or the Bust of Queen Nefertiti at the Neues Museum in Berlin, Germany which, according to the museum's own website, is 'the undisputed star of the Neues Museum'.[14] While human/ancestral remains and artefacts made by people are the focus of most repatriation and restitution claims, there have been examples of requests for the return of natural history specimens. Around 2017, Tanzanian members of parliament made an appeal for the return of a skeleton of the *Brachiosaurus brancai*, the tallest skeleton mounted dinosaur in the world, currently at the Natural History Museum in Berlin, Germany. However, other Tanzanian government officials said the country lacked the capacity to care for the fossil, and the state did not pursue the return further at the time.[15] The April 2024 repatriation of a Jamaican Giant Galliwasp specimen from the University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum in Scotland to the University of West Indies in Jamaica was a rare example of a repatriation of a natural history specimen.[16]

The Sarr-Savoy report

While African leaders and communities have been calling for the return of their cultural heritage from western institutions with limited success since the independence-era of the 1960s, in November 2018, Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy's *Report on the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: toward a New Relational Ethics*, reinvigorated and amplified debates around restitution. Commissioned by the French president, Emmanuel Macron, as part of his renewed engagement with

[13] BBC News, 'New York Met Museum Returns Stolen Ancient Egyptian Coffin', *BBC News, sec. Middle East* (website), 26 September 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49837860 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Simrit Hans, 'Egypt vs. Christie's: the Struggle Between the Art Market and Efforts of Cultural Repatriation', *Washington Journal of Law, Technology & Arts* (blog), 24 November 2019. https://wjlta.com/2019/11/24/egypt-vs-christies-the-struggle-between-the-art-market-and-efforts-of-cultural-repatriation/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Alice Stevenson, *Scattered Finds: Archaeology, Egyptology and Museums* (London: UCL, 2019), pp. 223–30.

[14] Nadda Osman, 'Five Relics Egypt Wants Back from Foreign Museums', *Middle East Eye* (website), 2 November 2022. https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/egypt-five-relics-want-back-foreign-museums [accessed 18 November 2024]; British Museum, 'Explore the Rosetta Stone', *British Museum* (website), [n.d.]. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/egypt/explore-rosetta-stone [accessed 6 November 2024]; British Museum, '14 Things Not to Miss at the British Museum', *British Museum* (blog), 24 August 2020. https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/14-things-not-miss-british-museum [accessed 6 November 2024].

[15] Josephine Christopher, 'Tanzania "Natural Treasure" Draws Crowds Far from Home', *The Citizen* (website), 31 October 2023. https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tanzania-natural-treasure-draws-crowds-far-from-home-2692252 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Philip Sandner, 'Germany Fails to Face Colonial Legacy in Tanzania', *DW (Deutscher Welle)* (website), 14 June 2023. https://www.dw.com/en/germany-fails-to-fully-confront-colonial-legacy-in-tanzania/a-65862738 [accessed 18 November 2024].

[16] The return was pursued as part of a wider partnership between the two universities, fostering collaboration and addressing the University of Glasgow's historical legacies of colonialism. The Jamaican Giant Galliwasp, which was endemic to Jamaica, is now considered to be extinct, and the specimen that was returned had been in the University's collection since 1888, transferred from another shuttered Scottish museum. University of the West Indies Global Campus, 'The UWI and University of Glasgow Partner to Repatriate 170-Year-Old Jamaican Giant Galliwasp Specimen', *UWI Global Campus* (website), 18 April 2024. https://global.uwi.edu/media/news/uwi-and-university-glasgow-partner-repatriate-170-year-old-jamaican-giant-galliwasp [accessed 18 November 2024].

Francophone Africa, the report has had an impact far beyond Francophone Africa and France, though these areas were the focus of the report.[17] The global turn of the #BlackLivesMatter movement in mid-2020 also created new impetus for Western institutions to investigate historical injustices faced by Black communities.[18] Sarr and Savoy explored the many specific ways in which French public museums benefitted from the colonial system, and outlined three major ways that material was extracted from Africa before independence. First, through military expeditions and the spoils of war; second, through ethnographic and scientific expeditions; and third, through private collections accrued by the growing numbers of colonial administrators and traders and donated to museums, sometimes after spending generations in families' possession.[19] While the case for restitution of artefacts from the first category is clearest due to the proximity to violence, Sarr and Savoy noted that evidence of coercion and exploitation in the purchase of artefacts during expeditions, and difficulties determining the original collections contexts of artefacts long held in private collections meant that all three acquisitions histories should be acceptable grounds for French museums to agree to restitution claims. Overall, the inherent exploitation of the colonial period challenged the issue of consent, i.e., could colonised people willingly give or sell their treasured possessions to colonial agents?[20] The October 2023 report of the UK Government All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations on restitution of looted artefacts and human/ancestral remains also raised issues of consent. A case study included Kenyan Kipsigis and Talai peoples forced to sell their possessions between 1895 and 1963 as a result of British colonial government land clearances; some of these artefacts had been identified in UK museums and heritage collections.[21] The Cambridge collections broadly follow the pattern Sarr and Savoy described – significant booms in collecting African material during the period of British colonisation and from the regions under British control, major donations by colonial administrators and private donors, and large collections acquired through scientific and ethnographic expeditions, including those funded by the University, museums and colleges.

The question of consent has been critiqued by scholars and museum professionals who cite a lack of space in Sarr and Savoy's analysis for African agency and diplomatic manoeuvring in colonial

[17] Savoy and Sarr, 'The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage', pp. 17–18; Office of the President of France, 'Emmanuel Macron's Speech at the University of Ouagadougou', *élysée.fr* (speech and transcript), 28 November 2017. https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2017/11/28/emmanuel-macrons-speech-at-the-university-of-ouagadougou [accessed 18 November 2024].

[18] Wazi Apoh and Andreas Mehler, 'Introduction: Issues of Restitution and Repatriation of Looted and Illegally Acquired African Objects in European Museums', *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 7.1 (2020), ix–xii. doi: 10.10520/ejc-inafstud1-v7-n1-a2.

[19] Savoy and Sarr, 'The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage', pp. 49–59.

[20] *Ibid*. pp. 56–7. In a 2020 collection on African restitution, Apoh and Mehler warned of a complete reliance on European collectors' acquisition accounts: 'When these texts are taken on face value in provenance research, they have the potency of glossing over the self-centeredness and biased perspectives of some of these accounts'. Wazi Apoh and Andreas Mehler, 'Mainstreaming the Discourse on Restitution and Repatriation within African History, Heritage Studies and Political Science', *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 7.1 (2020), 1–16, at 8. doi: 10.4314/contjas.v7i1.1.

[21] All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations, 'Hearings on the Restitution of Stolen African Artefacts and Ancestral Remains: Summary Report', *APPG for Afrikan Reparations* (report), 18 October 2023. https://www.appg-ar.org/news/appg-for-afrikan-reparations-hearings-on-restitution-of-stolen-artefacts-and-remains [accessed 18 November 2024]. This research was conducted at the Horniman Museum during the 'Rethinking relationships and building trust around African collections' project, which also includes the MAA, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the World Museum in Liverpool. See: Pitt Rivers Museum and others, 'Rethinking Relationships and Building Trust around African Collections', *Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford* (website), November 2020. https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-relationships [accessed 18 November 2024].

encounters.[22] At Cambridge, the donations to MAA by the Buganda Kingdom Katikiro (Prime Minister) Apolo Kaggwa – a powerful man who deftly navigated both Baganda and British upper-class society – and his collaborations with Rev. John Roscoe offer an important opportunity to consider questions of power and agency. The artefacts Kaggwa donated to MAA and the diplomatic context in which he gifted them have already been the subject of study, and the July 2024 return to Uganda of some of these could result in further research along these themes.[23]

African voices in restitution

Open Restitution Africa, an African-led initiative to research and disseminate information about African restitution, published a report, 'Reclaiming Restitution' in September 2022.[24] Among the insights was that while the academic literature on African heritage restitution has increased by 300% since 2016, in 2020, non-Africans were seventeen times more likely to be referenced or interviewed than Africans, or to author articles on the subject.[25] African heritage practitioners have been critiquing the roadblocks to restitution for virtually as long as African leaders have been calling for the return of artefacts and human/ancestral remains extracted from the countries they govern.[26] In a 2020 edited volume on African restitution and repatriation, editors Wazi Apoh and Andreas Mehler summarized the main challenges to restitution, and addressed them in one paragraph:

> 'Requests for the return of such objects from state and private museums in Europe are, time and again, rebuffed with paternalist, imperialist, self-centred and racialized statements such as "the treasures are better protected in Europe"; "the treasures are seen by more persons in Europe than if they were to be returned to Africa"; "scholars still need to work on them"; "manuscripts are too old to travel"; "African museums do not have the security and environmental conditions that European museums have"; "legal difficulties around deaccessioning"; and many more. These reasons are the stumbling blocks to requests. They are also invoked to create processual stalemates and promote the continuing bid of European museums to erase and deny African agency. Such essentialist positions could be countered with varied points. These include the fact that the "African owners were looted by Europeans in the first place", "African art objects have been spoiled and poisoned in European depots", "returned objects are not in the same condition as when they were looted", and also "European ethnographic museums had their high time in the colonial

[22] Tristram Hunt, Artmut Dorgerloh, and Nicholas Thomas, 'Restitution Report: Museum Directors Respond', *The Art Newspaper* (website), 27 November 2018. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2018/11/27/restitution-report-museum-directors-respond [accessed 18 November 2024].
[23] Bennett, 'Diplomatic Gifts'.
[24] Molemo Moiloa, for Africa No Filter, 'Reclaiming Restitution: Centring and Contextualizing the African Narrative', *Open Restitution Africa* (report), 1 September 2022. https://openrestitution.africa/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ANF-Report-Main-Report.pdf (pdf), 40 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024].
[25] Moiloa, 'Reclaiming Restitution'.
[26] Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, 'A Plea for the Return of an Irreplaceable Cultural Heritage to Those Who Created It: an Appeal by Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of UNESCO', *The UNESCO Courier* 31.7 (1978), 4–5. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000046054 [accessed 18 November 2024].

> period, but this time has gone" and "it is time for African scholars and community museums to acquire and work on them now".'[27]

Concluding a 2023 volume by African heritage practitioners, *Cultural Heritage in Africa: the Heritage of the Colonized,* editors Webber Ndoro and George Okello Abungu were similarly forthright:

> 'some queried the concept of museum and insist it must change to meet the needs of the African peoples and the conditions being cited are irrelevant as these items were not taken because there were no such facilities. It was pure theft and as such African owners of the heritage have a right to do whatever they want with the heritage.'[28]

Since 2021, the African Union has been developing the 'Draft Common African Position Paper on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage' as part of a plan to formalise a continent-wide position on restitution.[29] African scholars and practitioners have held multiple conferences to discuss advocacy and facilitation of the return of cultural heritage and most recently, the 2023 African Studies Association – Africa biennial conference in Lumumbashi, DRC was themed 'Repatriating Africa: Old Challenges and Critical Insights', with participants invited to respond to the four key areas: restitution, reparation, restoration, and repatriation. Many conference papers focused on how these themes apply to the field of cultural heritage.[30]

In 2024, Cambridge benefitted from connections with African heritage professionals working on the future of African museums. Archaeologist Dr Catherine Namono was a Newton Trust Visiting Fellow of the Centre of African Studies, developing her work on rock art in Uganda and South Africa; Namono is also a museum professional at the University of Witwatersrand with a decolonial practice.[31] Dr Gertrude Aba M. Eyifa-Dzidzienyo, also an archaeologist and museum professional, presented two papers at Cambridge in January and June 2024, focused on recent developments around restitution in Ghana (see below), and has written about the ways Ghana can create an enabling environment for the return of their artefacts.[32] Through the Cambridge-Africa Alborada Fund 2023/24, Eyifa-Dzidzienyo is collaborating with Dr Lorna Dillon of Cambridge's Centre of Latin American Studies on an African textiles project using the University's museum collections.[33] Both

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[27] Apoh and Mehler, 'Introduction: Issues of Restitution and Repatriation', p. 10; Kwame Opoku, 'Some Have Waited For 100 Years; Others Are Tired After Few Months: Time In Restitution Matters', *Modern Ghana* (website), 21 November 2019. https://www.modernghana.com/news/968851/some-have-waited-for-100-years-others-are-tired.html [accessed 28 June 2024].

[28] Webber Ndoro and George Okello Abungu, *Cultural Heritage Management in Africa: the Heritage of the Colonized* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), p. 277.

[29] African Union, 'The Continental Experts' Workshop on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage Holds at the Museum of Black Civilization in Dakar, Senegal', *African Union* (press release), 2 December 2021. https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20211202/continental-experts-workshop-restitution-cultural-property-and-heritage-holds [accessed 18 November 2024].

[30] African Studies Association of Africa Annual Conference, Lubumbashi, 25–28 October 2023. https://2023conference.as-aa.org/en/programme [accessed 18 November 2024].

[31] Catherine Namono, 'Curation as Engagement: Boulder Exhibits at the Origins Centre, South Africa', *Critical Arts* 35.4 (2021), 22–43. doi: 10.1080/02560046.2021.1995455.

[32] Gertrude Aba M. Eyifa-Dzidzienyo and Samuel N. Nkumbaan, 'Looted and Illegally Acquired African Objects in European Museums: Issues of Restitution and Repatriation in Ghana', *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 7.1 (2020), 84–96. doi: 10.4314/contjas.v7i1.6.

[33] Cambridge-Africa ALBORADA Research Fund, 'Funded Projects 2023/24', *Cambridge-Africa* (website), 2023/2024. https://www.cambridge-africa.cam.ac.uk/initiatives/the-alborada-research-fund/funded-projects-2023/ [accessed 7 November 2024].

Namono and Eyifa-Dzidzienyo were the first women archaeologists to hold PhDs in their respective countries of Uganda and Ghana.[34]

Earlier African repatriations from the University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge Museums have successfully completed one repatriation to an African country: to Uganda in 1962.[35] According to letters in the MAA archive, in November 1961, Abubakar K. Mayanja (King's College [1953]), the Minister for Education in the Kingdom of Buganda, wrote on behalf of the Kabaka (King) of Buganda to the University of Cambridge Vice Chancellor requesting the return – permanently or on loan – of the relics of the 18th century Muganda war god, Kibuuka (anglicised spelling: 'Kibuka'), which included a leopard skin, two shields, a wooden stool, and sacred ancestral remains in cases embroidered with cowrie shells.[36] Choosing not to dispute Cambridge's legal ownership of the relics and expressing gratitude that the University had preserved them, Mayanja wrote:

> 'Our request is rather that your University will consider sympathetically our great interest in these things especially now that Uganda is about to regain her Independence. We do not have many such things as these which portray our cultural past and hence our anxiety, if possible, to get back what you are keeping.'[37]

Uganda's independence was scheduled for the 9th October 1962, and Mayanja added that the Uganda Museum – a national museum founded in 1908 in Uganda's capital of Kampala (itself within the Buganda Kingdom) – had the necessary facilities to house these relics safely and make them accessible for researchers. The relics had been at MAA since 1904, donated by Church Missionary Society missionary and major MAA donor, Rev. John Roscoe. In a May 1904 letter to the Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge, William Ridgeway (Gonville and Caius College) about how he acquired the relics, Roscoe wrote: 'my man found [the priest of Kibuuka's shrine] and slowly made friends with him and at the end of five months secured Kibuka for a small sum of money.'[38] The

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[34] Frank Mugabi, 'Catherine Namono: Uganda's First Female Archaeologist', *New Vision* (website), 8 July 2011. https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1008556/catherine-namono-uganda-eur-female-archaeologist [accessed 18 November 2024]; Gertrude Aba M. Eyifa-Dzidzienyo and Benjamin Kankpeyeng, 'Gender in Archaeology: a Ghanaian Perspective', in *Current Perspectives in the Archaeology of Ghana*, ed. James Anquandah (Oxford: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2014), pp. 110–22.

[35] Nelson A. Abiti, 'The Uganda Museum's Tribal Representation: Colonial Repositories and Community Reconciliation in Uganda', *Boasblogs* (blog), 13 September 2022. https://boasblogs.org/dcntr/the-uganda-museums/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[36] Abu K. Mayanja to Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, 2 November 1961: see 'Document: Correspondence relating to repatriation of material between P. C. Melville, esq. and Dr J. R. Goody. AA4/5/15', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 'Documents' (catalogue). https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/documents/7609/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; John Roscoe, '95. Kibuka, the War God of the Baganda.', *Man* 7 (1907), 161–66. doi: 10.2307/2788113.

[37] Mayanja to Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

[38] John Roscoe to William Ridgeway, 3 May 1904, Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 19040503_Roscoe_to_Ridgeway. Note: in his 1907 article about the Kibuuka relics, Roscoe does not mention the five months of negotiations ahead of the purchase of the relics and instead describes a terrified priest, who 'Upon being assured that no indignity would ever happen to the deity, that he would be housed, and would be kept in safety, and also that no one should ever know who it was who had parted with the god, the man began

University agreed to a repatriation, noting that 'the return of certain unique or particularly sacred objects, such as the relics of Kibuka, would be difficult to resist.'[39] Of note, per Mayanja's request, the relics that were taken from a shrine belonging to the Buganda Kingdom were returned to a national museum housing artefacts from the whole of Uganda, in July 1962. Though there was speculation in Uganda as to whether the relics would remain at the Uganda Museum or be transferred to a shrine according to Buganda custom, and despite protests from some in the Buganda Kingdom, the relics remain on display in the Uganda Museum today.[40]

Outside of the University-owned collections, the other complete repatriation to an African country was by Jesus College, which in October 2021 transferred ownership of a Benin Bronze, an Ọkporhu (also spelled Okukor), or cockerel, to the Nigerian government's National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), with representatives from the Royal Court of Benin present.[41] The Nigerian government handed over the Ọkporhu to the Kingdom of Benin in February 2022, along with a second bronze repatriated from the University of Aberdeen, and the two are in the Oba's palace, but it is unclear whether the NCMM transferred ownership to the Kingdom.[42] According to research by the Jesus College's Legacy of Slavery Working Party, the statue had been looted in 1897 as part of the punitive British expedition to Benin and given to the college – which has three cockerels in its crest – by the father of a student in 1905.[43] The Ọkporhu had been on display in the Jesus College dining hall for decades until it was permanently removed in 2016 following a vote to repatriate it to Nigeria by the college's student body, the culmination of a lengthy campaign by students, staff and academics, and requests from the Royal Court of Benin.[44] The 2021 handover

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to consider the question; he was very much pressed by debt, and at length, after naming what seemed to him a great sum, he consented to come to terms'. Roscoe, '95. Kibuka', p. 163.

[39] P. C. Melville to J. R. Goody, 11 December 1961: see 'Document: Correspondence relating to repatriation of material between P. C. Melville, esq. and Dr J. R. Goody. AA4/5/15'.

[40] F. B. Welbourn, 'Kibuuka Comes Home', *Transition* 5 (1962), 15–20; Conan Businge, 'Buganda Activists Storm Museum', *New Vision* (website), 20 November 2007. https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1215001/buganda-activists-storm-museum [accessed 18 November 2024].

[41] Jesus College, Cambridge, 'Jesus College Returns Benin Bronze in World First', *Jesus College, University of Cambridge* (website), 27 October 2021. https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/jesus-college-returns-benin-bronze-world-first [accessed 18 November 2024] ; Digital Benin, ' Okukor, Benin Bronze Cockerel (Information from Jesus College, Cambridge University)', *Digital Benin.* https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/36_OkukorBeninBronzeCockerelInformationfromJesusCollegeCambridgeUniversity [accessed 18 November 2024].

[42] Noah Anthony Enahoro, 'Nigeria Debates the Fate of Returning Benin Bronzes', *New Lines* (magazine), 2 April 2024. https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/nigeria-debates-the-fate-of-returning-benin-bronzes/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Reuters in Benin City, 'Two of Nigeria's Looted Benin Bronzes Returned to Traditional Palace', *The Guardian*, sec. World news (website), 19 February 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/19/nigerias-looted-benin-bronzes-returned-to-traditional-palace [accessed 18 November 2024].

[43] Jesus College, Cambridge, 'Legacy of Slavery Working Party Recommendations', *Jesus College, University of Cambridge* (website), 27 November 2019. https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/legacy-slavery-working-party-recommendations [accessed 18 November 2024]; Nadia Khomami, 'Cambridge College to Be First in UK to Return Looted Benin Bronze', *The Guardian* (website), 15 October 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/oct/15/cambridge-college-to-be-first-uk-return-looted-benin-bronze [accessed 18 November 2024].

[44] Daniel Gayne, 'Jesus under Renewed Pressure to Return Looted Bronze Cockerel', *Varsity Online* (website), 9 October 2016. https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/10882 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Ore Ogunbiyi, 'When University Campaigns to Repatriate Stolen Art Take a Toll', *The Republic* (blog), 8 December 2022.

ceremony at Jesus College included representatives from NCMM and the Benin Kingdom.[45] There could be more artefacts that are known or likely to have been looted from across Africa within the colleges, but those currently remain unknown. As colleges are independent legal entities, repatriation or restitution claims must be negotiated with each directly.

Ongoing returns

Benin Bronzes

Since 2017, MAA has been working towards the repatriation of Benin Kingdom artefacts to Nigeria.[46] In that year, MAA hosted the re-established Benin Dialogue Group, a group first formed in 2007 and comprising representatives from European museums, the NCMM, the Edo State Government (home of Benin City), the new Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in Edo State, and the Royal Court of Benin (though not the Oba himself).[47] Focused on the Benin artefacts looted in 1897, the Benin Dialogue Group advocated for the foundation of a museum in Benin City to house loaned Benin artefacts.[48] MAA participated in research trips to Benin City in 2018 and 2019 and met with the Oba of Benin; in 2021, the Benin Dialogue Group visited Cambridge. [49] In January 2022, MAA received a formal restitution claim from the NCMM and MAA staff identified 116 artefacts that had been looted during the 1897 British punitive expedition of a total 464 Benin artefacts, the majority collected by Northcote W. Thomas in 1909 (see 'Category A').[50] Some of these artefacts set to return are currently on display at MAA. By December 2022, various University of Cambridge bodies including the General Board Museums Committee and the University Council, and the UK Government Charity Commission had agreed to transfer legal ownership of the items from the University to the NCMM and the

https://republic.com.ng/december-22-january-23/when-cambridge-university-returned-okukor/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[45] Jesus College, Cambridge, 'Benin Bronze Restitution Ceremony', *YouTube* (video), 27 October 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh3DKiCqjKY [accessed 18 November 2024].

[46] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Our Approach to the Return of Benin Bronzes', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 29 March 2021. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/our-approach-return-benin-bronzes [accessed 18 November 2024].

[47] Jos Van Beurden, *Inconvenient Heritage: Colonial Collections and Restitution in the Netherlands and Belgium* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), pp. 161–73. doi: 10.2307/j.ctv2pnjvmx; Simon Stephens, 'Funding Secured to Store Benin Bronzes in Nigeria', *Museums Association, Museums Journal* (blog), 10 March 2023. https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2023/03/funding-secured-to-store-benin-bronzes-in-nigeria/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[48] MARKK, '8th Benin Dialogue Group Meeting at the MARKK in Hamburg', *MARKK* (website), 7 March 2023. https://markk-hamburg.de/8th-benin-dialogue-group-meeting-at-the-markk-in-hamburg/ [accessed 18 November 2024]; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 'Benin Dialogue Group Consolidates Plans for a Museum in Nigeria', *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* (website), 25 July 2019. https://www.smb.museum/en/whats-new/detail/in-cooperation-with-the-ethnologisches-museum-the-benin-dialogue-group-consolidates-plans-for-a-museum-in-nigeria/ [accessed 18 November 2024] ; Kate Brown, 'Europe's Largest Museums Will Loan Looted Benin Bronzes to Nigeria's Planned Royal Museum', *Artnet News* (website), 22 October 2018. https://news.artnet.com/art-world-archives/benin-dialogue-group-ocotober-2018-1376824 [accessed 18 November 2024]; Kwame Opoku, 'Benin Dialogue Group Removes Restitution Of Benin Artefacts From Its Agenda', *Modern Ghana* (website), 2 April 2019. https://www.modernghana.com/news/924239/benin-dialogue-group-removes-restitution-of-benin-artefacts.html [accessed 18 November 2024].

[49] University of Cambridge, 'Cambridge to Return Benin Artefacts', *University of Cambridge* (website), 2 February 2023. https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/beninreturn [accessed 18 November 2024].

[50] *Ibid*.

repatriation was expected to take place in 2023. Reflecting the complexities of the repatriation of artefacts taken from kingdoms and returning to nation-states, members of the Benin Dialogue Group have proposed different locations that the returned artefacts should be housed in – MOWAA, which counts the Edo State government and British Museum as partners, and the Oba's own Benin Royal Museum.[51]

In March 2023, in the final weeks of his presidency, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari issued a declaration recognizing the Oba of Benin as the legal owner of all Benin Bronzes, responsible for the custody and management of all places where the artefacts are or would be kept.[52] The new president, Bola Tinubu was sworn into office in late May and his predecessor's declaration remains in effect. With the repatriation agreement drawn up between the University and the NCMM, the repatriation of Benin artefacts from MAA remains on hold. In comments to the media, both MAA leadership and the University asserted that they remain in ongoing talks with representatives from Nigeria to complete the return of the Benin Bronzes.[53] A scheduled May 2024 meeting of the Benin Dialogue Group, set to take place in Sweden, has been postponed to 2025.[54] MAA has signed an accord with MOWAA and will be the first international lender to MOWAA's exhibitions, opening in mid-2025.[55]

[51] Enahoro, 'Nigeria Debates the Fate of Returning Benin Bronzes'. *Museum of West African Art – MOWAA* (website), [n.d.]. https://wearemowaa.org/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[52] Barnaby Phillips, 'Nigeria Benin Bronzes: Buhari declaration "blindsides" museum officials', *BBC News* (website), 10 May 2023. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-65531736 [accessed 29 November 2024]; Adeyinka Adedipe, 'Repatriated Artefacts Belong to Benin Kingdom, Oba Ewuare II Tells Envoy', *Punch Newspapers* (blog), 23 April 2023. https://punchng.com/repatriated-artefacts-belong-to-benin-kingdom-oba-ewuare-ii-tells-envoy/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[53] Cameron McIntyre, 'Cambridge 'duped' into returning Benin Bronzes', *Varsity*, 5 February 2024. https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/27016 [accessed 18 November 2024].
[54] Barnaby Phillips, 'Ghana, Nigeria and the Quest for UK Looted Treasure', *BBC News* (website), 12 May 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd1353v5p5xo [accessed 18 November 2024].
[55] Yinka Olatunbosun, 'MOWAA Announces Partnership with Cambridge University to Enhance Access to Archives, Collections,' *This Day*, 27 October 2024. https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2024/10/27/mowaa-announces-partnership-with-cambridge-university-to-enhance-access-to-archives-collections-2/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Image 25: *Uhunmwu-elao. Lost-wax cast commemorative head of an Oba, used to support a tusk on an ancestral altar*. From Kingdom of Benin (Nigeria). At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. E 1900.98.2.[56]

[56] Link to online catalogue record: https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/532528/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

Uganda

The 'Repositioning the Uganda Museum' project began in 2019 between the Uganda Museum and MAA, with funding from the Mellon Foundation through collaboration with the University of Michigan. The project included the June 2024 return on a renewable three-year loan of thirty-two artefacts and the sacred remains of seven people, the latter held in decorated cases and previously described as artefacts.[57] The Uganda Museum team chose the group of artefacts from across Uganda from over 1,500 Ugandan ethnographic artefacts at MAA, following a 2022 visit to Cambridge, and as part of preparations for a planned exhibition at the Uganda Museum in 2025/2026. Items include spears, drums, pottery, shields, headdresses, and objects used for spiritual practices. According to MAA records, these artefacts were acquired through a range of methods including theft, confiscation, conversion, purchase, and gifting, though histories of individual objects were often scarce. Roscoe, MAA's largest donor of Ugandan artefacts, was the largest source of the returned artefacts, followed by gifts to the Museum from Katikiro Apolo Kaggwa, while other sources include British colonial administrators and missionaries. The artefacts were acquired between the late 1800s and the 1930s; almost all had never been on display and spent most of their life at Cambridge in museum storage.

The Government of Uganda is approaching the loan as a move towards permanent ownership of these artefacts, and in a press release of 5 June 2024 the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities stated: 'this marks a significant step towards the repatriation of historical objects wrongly acquired during British colonial rule'.[58] Jackline Nyiracyiza, the Ugandan government Commissioner in Charge of Museums and Monuments told journalists a week later, 'we are working now with the Cambridge team to ... see that we talk to other museums and be able to repatriate others maybe next year or within the near future'.[59] On arrival in Uganda, the Uganda Museum team joined representatives from MAA, The Fitzwilliam Museum, and the University of Michigan, whose Professor Derek Peterson had secured funding for the project, to complete the condition check of the artefacts. The process entails inspecting each of the objects and its associated written and photographic documentation (made prior to packing) to determine whether the artefact has arrived in the same condition as it was before it travelled. In a collaborative process, Uganda Museum colleagues provided new insights into the names, origins, use, materials, and possible acquisition contexts of objects that have been at Cambridge for over one hundred years. This new information was added to the MAA catalogue records for the individual artefacts.

[57] A list of the artefacts that were returned is available on the MAA website: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Repositioning the Uganda Museum', *Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge* (website), 29 November 2024. https://maa.cam.ac.uk/repositioning-uganda-museum [accessed 2 December 2024].

[58] Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Government of Uganda, 'Important Cultural Artefacts Returned to Uganda', *Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Government of Uganda* (website), 5 June 2024. https://www.tourism.go.ug/single-post/important-cultural-artefacts-returned-to-uganda [accessed 18 November 2024].

[59] Rodney Muhumuza, 'The University of Cambridge Returns 39 Traditional Artifacts to Uganda in a Major Act of Restitution', *AP News* (website), 13 June 2024. https://apnews.com/article/uganda-cambridge-university-artifacts-return-b5e2eb50e56477872fd2afff8c0a3055 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Image 26: Uganda Museum and MAA colleagues check condition of a glass bead headband (E 1907.222), 10 June 2024, Uganda Museum.[60] Image by author.

The sacred remains were handled separately from the artefacts. These are balongo, relics of ba Ssekabaka (fomer kings) and members of their royal households, which are believed to be extensions of the individuals (abalongo means twins in Luganda) and are sacred to the Baganda. On their acquisition, according to a February 1903 letter from Roscoe to Ridgeway, Roscoe wrote: 'Between ourselves, though it must not be known to the public, a man robbed them from one of the houses in which the kings are kept that is the relics, the jaw bones and these bits of the umbilical cords. There has been a row about them and I had great difficulty in clearing the man who did the deed, he was tried and lied like a trouper, and even then would have been put into prison but I sent to the chief of the Katikiro, and cleared the man by saying I was the culprit and the man was innocent'.[61] Roscoe was under no illusions as to what taking the balongo meant to the Baganda and said as much in his letter: 'Such a thing as the removal of Balongo from their house is beyond the imagination of the Baganda and they are being eagerly hunted by the princesses who live out there'.[62] He asked Ridgeway to keep the news to himself: 'there is no European who knows about

[60] *Headband of glass beads.* At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. E 1907.222. https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/objects/524872/ [accessed 18 November 2024].
[61] John Roscoe to William Ridgeway, 11 February 1903, Cambridge, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 19030211_Roscoe_to_Ridgeway.
[62] *Ibid*.

these things I have kept it a profound secret lest the natives should discover where their treasures are gone'.[63]

The sacred nature of the balongo means the Uganda Museum does not plan to keep them but is instead preparing to transfer them to Wamala Tombs in Kampala, which is managed by the Kingdom of Buganda, where the traditional keepers can care for them according to Baganda custom.[64] The Uganda Museum organised for the Wamala Tombs Keepers to visit the balongo on 13 June 2024 in a private ceremony that marked the beginning of the process that will lead to their reinterment at the Wamala Tombs shrine.

Image 27: Group photo featuring Keepers of Wamala Tombs, Uganda Museum staff, University of Cambridge staff, University of Michigan staff, Uganda Museum, 13 June 2024.

Future Cambridge returns?

At Cambridge, there are a range of artefacts related to complete or ongoing repatriation or restitution claims in other Western institutions, particularly materials from Ghana and Ethiopia. In January 2024, the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum (a national museum) and the British Museum

[63] *Ibid*.
[64] Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Government of Uganda, 'Important Cultural Artefacts Returned'.

announced the six-year loan of thirty-two gold and silver items of royal regalia belonging to the Asante Royal Court (seventeen from the V&A and fifteen from the British Museum) to the Manhyia Palace Museum – former residence of the Asantehene or Asante King – in Kumasi, capital of the Asante Region.[65] Many of the artefacts were looted by British soldiers during the third Anglo-Asante War of 1874, according to the two British museums, and some 'formed part of a British indemnity payment forcibly extracted from the Asantehene at the time, while many others were sold at auction and later dispersed among museums and private collectors worldwide, including the British Museum and the V&A'.[66] The regalia have been put on display at the Manhyia Palace Museum since May 2024 as part of an exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the 1874 war, one hundred years since the Asantehene Prempeh I returned from exile in the Seychelles, and the silver jubilee of the current Asantehene Osei Tutu II.[67] The following month, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)'s Fowler Museum repatriated seven items of royal regalia to the Asantehene at the Manhyia Palace Museum, which were also loot and indemnity payments from the 1874 Anglo-Asante War.[68] In both the British and American cases, the agreement was with the Asante Kingdom rather than the Ghanaian government. At MAA, a gold necklace and two drums currently not on display have so far been identified as looted from the Asentehene's palace during the Anglo-Asante Wars and have been the subject of virtual public presentations; the collections context is noted in their respective online catalogue records.[69] MAA reported that as of November 2024, there had not yet been an official request for the return of Asante artefacts currently at their institution.

In 2019, the National Army Museum in London handed over a lock of Emperor Tewodros II's hair to the Ethiopian government; the lock had been taken off his dead body by soldiers in the British army shortly after his death in a well-documented scramble for bloody souvenirs.[70] Despite repeated requests for a repatriation, the body of his son, Prince Alamayu, remains buried in Windsor.[71]

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[65] Angus Patterson, 'Homecoming – Exhibition of Asante Gold Regalia at Manhiya Palace Museum, Kumasi • V&A Blog', *V&A Blog* (blog), 2 May 2024. https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/news/homecoming-exhibition-of-asante-gold-regalia-at-manhiya-palace-museum-kumasi [accessed 18 November 2024].

[66] British Museum, V&A, and Manhyia Palace Museum, 'Asante Regalia to Be Displayed in Ghana for the First Time in 150 Years through a Significant Cultural Partnership between Manhyia Palace Museum, the V&A and the British Museum', *British Museum* (press release), 25 January 2024. https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/Asante_regalia_to_be_displayed_in_Ghana_for_first_time_in_150_years.pdf (pdf), 3 pp. [accessed 18 November 2024].

[67] *Ibid*.; Fred Dzakpata, 'PICTURES: Asantehene Takes a Tour of Manhyia Museum', *Asaase Radio* (blog), 3 May 2024. https://www.asaaseradio.com/pictures-asantehene-takes-a-tour-of-manhyia-museum/ [accessed 18 November 2024].

[68] Sean Arenas, 'Fowler Museum at UCLA Permanently Returns Objects to Asante Kingdom in Ghana', *UCLA* (website), 5 February 2024, https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-fowler-museum-returns-objects-to-ghana [accessed 18 November 2024].

[69] See Category A, 'Violence in Cambridge African collections'; *Atumpan*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. E 1910.59; *Domo*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1926.580.1-2; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 'Researching and Curating African Collections at MAA | Devolving Restitution #4', *YouTube* (video), 5 April 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGPLPvWJAVI [accessed 18 November 2024], Mark Elliot at 14.22 and Mary-Ann Middelkoop at 30.07; *Gold cast necklace*. At: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. 1918.83.

[70] A lock of Emperor Tewodros II's hair was put on display in a bookshop window in Plymouth, in southwest England, weeks after the well-publicised battle. Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, pp. 59–61, 208–11; Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 564.

[71] Patrizio Gunning and Challis, 'Planned Plunder', p. 565; Heavens, *The Prince and the Plunder*, p. 85.

Discussions between MAA and the Ethiopian government to return the clothes of Queen Woyzaro Tiruwork Wube, who died shortly after the Maqdala siege, stalled following the start of the Tigray conflict in 2020. The most significant subjects of cultural restitution claims are the religious manuscripts looted from Maqdala, now housed in institutions across Europe and the United States. In 2024, media reported on ongoing claims for the return of sacred tabots (inscribed tablets and their containers) from the British Museum and Westminster Abbey that had been looted from Maqdala. These objects are considered so sacred that they cannot be displayed to the public or photographed, and can be only viewed by Ethiopian Orthodox priests.[72] The University Library has received two repatriation requests concerning manuscripts associated with the Battle of Maqdala, in 2002 and 2008.[73] The 2002 request from advocacy group, the Association for the Return of the Maqdala Ethiopian Treasures (AFROMET), did not move forward, and in the 2008 request from the then Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, the University Library offered digital images of manuscripts, which were accepted.[74] At least six manuscripts at the University Library have documented connections to the Battle of Maqdala, as noted in the acquisition section of each of those that are digitised and available online.[75]

In 2006, the Egyptian government requested the return of a limestone door piece excavated at Giza which is at The Fitzwilliam Museum (accession number E.SS.77), and the Egyptian government believed had been acquired by The museum in 1977, during a period in which Egyptian antiquities with poor provenance were widely sold.[76] The Fitzwilliam Museum was able to demonstrate that it had been in the collection since before 1947, and the Egyptian government withdrew their repatriation request.

As noted in Category A, there are artefacts at MAA from Kenya/Tanzania and South Africa that were acquired in violent circumstances, and based on the geographic breadth of the collection and concentration of artefacts from the British colonial period, there are likely others at MAA and elsewhere in the UCM that were looted or otherwise violently taken. Beyond those artefacts acquired in the context of physical violence or theft, there are likely other artefacts in the Cambridge collections of significant cultural value that could be subjects of restitution claims. Increased use of available online catalogues and museum visits where possible, in addition to direct contact and collaboration with the Cambridge collections, could result in more information about such artefacts being recovered. While this report is only a high-level exploration of the African collections at

[72] Gareth Harris, 'Westminster Abbey Decides "in Principle" to Return Ethiopian Tabot', *The Art Newspaper* (website), 13 February 2024. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/02/13/westminster-abbey-decides-in-principle-to-return-ethiopian-tabot [accessed 18 November 2024]; Returning Heritage, 'British Museum Faces Investigation over Sacred Tabots', *Returning Heritage* (website), 31 March 2024. https://www.returningheritage.com/british-museum-faces-investigation-by-information-commissioners-office-over-sacred-tabots [accessed 18 November 2024].
[73] Correspondence with Head of World Collections, Cambridge University Libraries, 10 September 2024.
[74] Correspondence with Head of World Collections, Cambridge University Libraries, 8 November 2024.
[75] Keyword search 'magdala', 'Ethiopian Manuscripts', *Cambridge Digital Library, University of Cambridge*. https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/ethiopianmanuscripts/1 [accessed 31 October 2024]. The four digitised manuscripts are: Add. 1570, Add. 3682, Or. 2122 and Or. 2269. And the other two: Add.1861 and Add. 2916.
[76] Correspondence with Senior Curator, Ancient Nile Valley, The Fitzwilliam Museum, 14 August 2024; *Limestone door jamb*. *c*. 2504 BCE–2347 BCE. [Architectural element] At: The Fitzwilliam Museum. E.SS.77. https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/63448 [accessed 18 November 2024].

Cambridge, perhaps it can serve as a starting point for those interested to ask questions about the enormous and under-researched African materials at the University of Cambridge.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the recommendations below provide some suggested ways forward. These are areas of opportunity that the University could explore to deepen understanding of the collections and history of acquisition, and to further research, teaching, and public engagement. To partly address the historic inaccessibility of much of the African material, the University should pursue, as much as possible, collaborations with African researchers and communities of origin, and enable opportunities for African people to engage directly with the collections.

People

Priority areas for staff expertise include:

- African Collections Curator, with a focus on the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- African Collections Provenance Curator/Researcher.
- Archivist at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Visiting Fellowships for African GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) Professionals.
- Community Researchers based in African countries.

Research

- Allocate more resources for provenance and collections research.
- Encourage and facilitate college research on their respective African collections, and related archival materials, through sharing frameworks developed by the African Collections Future project.

Documentation

- Review documentation and cataloguing backlogs of African material across the collections and prioritise areas for development.
- Where possible, include indigenous names of African artefacts, plants, and animal specimens on physical labels, in publications and in online catalogues.

Teaching

- Encourage wider use of African materials in undergraduate teaching across disciplines, both in practical classes and for undergraduate dissertations and project reports.
- Review the African Studies Master's curriculum and assess opportunities to include collections research in core course.
- Encourage PhD research on the African collections, including through Collaborative Doctoral Programme studentships.

- Develop a digital resource to introduce more Cambridge students, across humanities and science disciplines, to the African collections.
- Review existing and expanding African scholarship funding streams and advocate ring-fencing a number for collections-based Master's degrees or PhDs in African collections research or conservation.

Collaborations

- Pursue development of formal relationships with African heritage institutions, universities and libraries in countries with a strong representation in the collections, beyond existing projects.
- Explore opportunities to develop new research partnerships with the University's natural history museums, herbarium, and counterparts across Africa.
- Encourage more cross-collections activities focused on African collections, bringing together cultural and natural history collections to draw out connections and exchange knowledge.
- Support opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students from African countries to pursue fellowships in the museums, conducting focused work on individual objects or collections.
- Facilitate opportunities for artistic engagements with the collections, encouraging practitioners with African heritage to draw upon the collections to inform creative practice.

Access

- Museums, departments and libraries should ensure they have a current repatriation policy and point of contact for enquiries.
- Develop a digital or online exhibition featuring the African collections to create awareness and increase visibility of these collections to a larger audience.
- Ensure there is updated information online about materials that are only available through offline searches or direct queries.
- Organise more events for Cambridge's African diaspora groups centred on the African materials across the University's collections.
- Create search resources for using the online catalogues.
- Publish information on the origin and period of acquisition of African human/ancestral remains currently at Cambridge.
- Develop opportunities for Cambridge diaspora communities to explore the wide approaches to wellbeing represented across the collections, from traditional medicinal practices through the botanic collections to sound and music healing through the cultural collections.

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