

The 17th Triennial Symposium on African Art, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. August 7-12, 2017. Chair of a panel entitled *Indigenous, Imported and Innovated Heraldry in Africa*. Paper presented: *Fusion, Transformation and Assertion in Kenyan Heraldry*

Abstract:When the Europeans invaded Africa south of the Sahara, they could not help but notice that the kingdoms of the West African Coast had their own well developed heraldic systems. Later, the British also imposed their heraldic system on the rest of their colonies. In East Africa, the heraldic systems of acephalous societies were barely noticed much less recognized, studied or described by government, missionaries or social scientists. This is especially true of the traditions of pastoral peoples with the exception of warriors' shields. Even where bits and pieces of heraldic systems were mentioned in the literature and records, they were not acknowledged or named as heraldic. Because of the absence of written records for the East African interior prior to the 19th century, it may never be possible to discover heraldic iconography for earlier people. We can, however, identify, describe and analyze the imposed, imported and innovated heraldry of post-colonial Kenya. Of special interest and concern is the recently developed body of heraldic devices designed by the counties, schools and businesses.