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# African Agency in the Archive:

The South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961

**VOLUME I**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

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January 2019

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the British Museum's South Africa collections to 1961, here treated as archive, in order to recuperate traces of African agency in their formation. It uncovers information regarding named African individuals whose identity can be, in certain cases, once again reunited with objects, thereby countering the depersonalisation and dehistoricisation typical of 'ethnographic' collections. In addressing the issue of African agency, this study asks: how and why may the collections be treated as archive?; how does such treatment help reframe collections bound up in their colonial and ethnographised pasts?

The chosen methodological and theoretical approach looks at the collections through the prism of archive, consequently necessitating the examination of material held in various archives within and beyond the Museum. Rather than being a 'utopian space of comprehensive knowledge' (Richards 1993: 11) as formerly envisaged, the archive is understood as utopian in so far as the 'archival affordances' (Basu and de Jong 2016: 6) or 'archival potential' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 416) it offers in the present, which facilitates the uncovering of hitherto silenced voices and narratives. Here, the archive, its formation and development, is engaged with critically in order to better understand it. Simultaneously, this study further develops a useful extension of the notion of 'object biography', namely that of 'backstory' (an object's pre-museum life story) and 'biography' (its museum life story) based on ideas proposed by Carolyn Hamilton (2011) and further developed by herself and Nessa Leibhammer (2016b).

Spanning arguably the most significant tranche of the South Africa collections at the British Museum, this study provides a broad survey and also discusses a number of detailed, major case studies. It is the first of its kind to examine such a large part of these collections and the first expressly with the intention of uncovering traces of African agency.

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## **List of Contents**

### **VOLUME I**

<b>Abstract</b>	1
<b>List of Contents</b>	2
<b>List of Figures</b>	7
<b>List of Tables etc</b>	13
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	14
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	18
<b>Introduction</b>	20

#### ***Part I***

##### ***An introductory vignette***

1. Moshoeshoe's presentation	20
1.1 Pre-British Museum life story/backstory	20
1.2 Museum life story/biography	21
1.3 Pre-Museum life story/backstory...continued	23
1.4 Moshoeshoe's agency	24

#### ***Part II***

##### ***Introducing the South Africa collections as archive and African agency***

2. What is this research about?	26
2.1 Research questions	28
3. Where did the (field) research take place?	28
3.1 Discussion	32
4. Stretching/sketching borders: what is meant by 'the South Africa collections at the British Museum'?	33
4.1 Why this period?	34
4.2 Which collections?	35
4.3 Why exclude archaeology?	35
4.4 Why include Lesotho and eSwatini/Swaziland?	36
4.5 Why the South Africa collections? Why this study?	37
4.6 Why the British Museum?	38
5. Sketching histories: British colonisation, conflict and influence in South Africa, Lesotho and eSwatini/Swaziland	39
6. Chapter outline	42

## **Section 1: The Context**

### **Chapter 1. Archive as form: the museum (collection) as archive, and towards**

<b>African agency in the archive</b>	45
1. Apropos museums and archives	45
2. The 'archival turn'	49
3. The 'museum-as-archive turn'	54
4. Interventions in the archive: theoretical framework and key critical concepts	57
5. Towards African agency: chasing ghosts?	61
5.1 Makers	62
5.1.1 Made by Hlunuzaan/ Mhlophekazi (d.1897)?	63
5.1.2 Monikers and identifiable 'hands'	65
5.1.3 Fantastic (and other) South Sotho creatures	66
5.2 'Users and sellers'	67
5.3 Tracing agency	71

### **Chapter 2. Ethnography and 'ethnographisation': colonial collecting at the British**

<b>Museum</b>	78
1. Ethnography: towards a definition, or the problem defined	79
2. Shifting curatorial responsibility and the archons of ethnography	81
2.1 A.W. Franks & C.H. Read: the colossi of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, the long nineteenth century and WWI	82
2.2 H.J. Braunholtz et al: the inter-war, WWII and post-war periods	84
3. Policy, strategy and advising: collecting and the growth of the ethnographical collections	85
3.1 'Ad Hoc' collecting: 'salvaging objects of scientific interest for the nation'	85
3.2 Strategy: 'specimens', 'series', 'duplicates'... and 'gaps'	88
3.3 A note on <i>Notes and Queries on Anthropology</i>	91
4. 'Arranging and cataloguing': archiving the ethnography collections	98
4.1 Cataloguing the collections and a (brief) note on numbering	100
4.2 Arranging the collections: displaying and storing 'the vast assemblage of scientific data'	102
4.2.1 Display	102
4.2.2 Storage	107

<b>Chapter 3. Collecting South Africa at the British Museum to 1961</b>	109
1. '[T]he story of ethnography in the British Museum': H.J. Braunholtz's chronicles and the growth of the South Africa collections	111
2. Towards backstories: 'compiled from the most varied sources' – 'collectors and contributors' to the British Museum South Africa collections	122
2.1 Colonial administrators and officials, and some objects 'not, in the ordinary sense "collected"'	123
2.1.1 Cunynghame	127
2.1.2 Gisborne	128
2.1.3 Smyth	128
2.1.4 Damon	129
2.1.5 Green	130
2.1.6 The Anglo-Zulu War (1879)	130
2.1.7 Not all trophies?	132
2.2 Christian 'missionary collectors': 'our collections...have been...rather poorly supported by people like yourself'	133
2.2.1 The French (-speaking) connection: Ellenberger	134
2.2.2 Christian society collections: the London Missionary Society and the Methodist Missionary Society	136
2.2.3 Missionary and clerical sources: Colenso(s), Wood, Sparrow Simpson, Higgs, Wansbrough and Cornner	137
2.3 Museums and exhibitions	138
2.3.1 'Museums, both foreign and colonial'	139
2.3.2 International and colonial exhibitions: (often) 'large & extremely interesting native exhibit[s]'	143
2.3.2.1 The 1862 International Exhibition	144
2.3.2.2 The Paris International Exposition, 1867	146
2.3.2.3 'Colindies', 1886	148
2.3.2.4 Other exhibitions: South African Products, 1907 and Wembley, 1924	152
2.3.2.5 Exhibitionary thinking	155
2.4 Anthropologists: 'naturally not a numerous body'	155
2.5 Collectors: '[a]n important group'	157
2.5.1 Women collectors	160
3. (?)African collectors, towards agency	161

## **Section 2: Case Studies**

### **Chapter 4. Collected by a colonial administrator and an official: the Wolseley and Newnham collections** 163

#### ***Part I***

- 1. Af1917,1103.1-10 The Wolseley Collection: (in) the presence of Cetshwayo's treasures 164
  - 1.1 Biography and backstory 164
  - 1.2 Wolseley and Cetshwayo kaMpande 165
  - 1.3 (?) Interrupted African agency 169

#### ***Part II***

- 2. Af1945,04. The Newnham Collection: Sibedula's, and (?) the blacksmith's wife's, necklaces 176
  - 2.1 Biography and backstory 177
  - 2.2 Newnham and the Transvaal Native Location Commission 179
  - 2.3 Regarding the archive 186
- Conclusion 188

### **Chapter 5. (?) Anthropological collecting: The Braunholtz and Powell-Cotton collections** 189

#### ***Part I***

- 1. Af1930,0128. The Sinthumule presentation and the British Museum's H.J. Braunholtz 189
  - 1.1 The British Association for the Advancement of Science's South African Meeting, 1929: H.J. Braunholtz visits South Africa 190
  - 1.2 The collection/archive 192
  - 1.3 Senthumule, Senthumula, Senthimula... Sinthumule 196
  - 1.4 H.J. Braunholtz the curator 198
  - 1.5 H.J. Braunholtz the collector 200

#### ***Part II***

- 2. Af1936,0316.1-61 Re(con)figuring the archive: the Powell-Cotton Northern Zululand Collection, 1935 208
  - 2.1 The collection/archive at the British Museum 209
  - 2.2 'Miss Tony': Antoinette Powell-Cotton (1913–1997) and the Zululand expedition, 1935 211
  - 2.3 In and around the Mkuzi and Hluhluwe game reserves, Northern Zululand 216
  - 2.4 Locating locations ('native' and otherwise), agents and agency 221

2.5 Lost in translation: curating the archive	232
Conclusion	234
<b>Conclusion</b>	236
<b>Bibliography</b>	243

## VOLUME II

<b>Figures</b>	265
<b>Tables etc</b>	349
<b>Appendix A</b> Af1933,0609. 'Jubilee' beadwork from the Eastern Cape: The (?)Tsolo/St Cuthbert's Mission/Frank Cornner Collection	357
<b>Appendix B</b> Af1933,0109. 'Pedi' pots: The Ivon S. Wansbrough/Sekukuniland Mission Collection	373



**List of Figures<sup>1</sup>** (see Volume II: 265—348)

**Fig. 1** King Moshoeshoe I (c.1786—1870), (Thompson 1975: xvii)

**Fig. 2** The ‘Moshoeshoe’ wearing blanket (British Museum 2013,2009.1), (author)

**Fig. 3** Some of Moshoeshoe’s presentation objects for the 1862 International Exhibition (British Museum), (author)

**Fig. 4** Breast-plate (British Museum Af.304), (author)

**Fig. 5** Shield (British Museum Af.538), (author; British Museum 1910: 215)

**Fig. 6** Map of South Africa, Lesotho & eSwatini/Swaziland, (author)

**Fig. 7** British Museum façade, (author)

**Fig. 8** Unobadula’s carvings? Various woodcarvings (British Museum Af.1181[.a-c] depicted in AM2006,Drg.72, registration slip for Af.1560[.a-b], Af.4876 & Af.4875, & Af1979,01.2800) and ‘View in the Natal Court’, highlighting a carved wooden vessel (*Illustrated London News* 05/07/1862: 21), (British Museum; *Illustrated London News*, Senate House Library, London)

**Fig. 9** ‘Unobadula, the wood-carver’?, Dr R.J. Mann (Campbell Collections a74-006, University of KwaZulu-Natal)

**Fig. 10** Muhlati’s? spoon (British Museum Af1903,1215.3), (author; British Museum)

**Fig. 11** Made by Hlunuzaan/Mhlophekazi? (British Museum Af1939,36.1-6.a-b), (author)

**Fig. 12** Mhlophekazi (d.1897), (Haggard 2001: 114)

**Fig. 13** Lidded-pot (KwaZulu-Natal Museum 2628B, Pietermaritzburg), (author)

**Fig. 14** ‘Baboon Master’ maternity figure staff (British Museum Af1954,+23.1337), (author)

---

<sup>1</sup> See figure captions (Volume II) for further details.

**Fig. 15** Fantastic South Sotho creatures (British Museum Af1931,0716.5-6 & Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History ET.35/235, Pretoria), (author)

**Fig. 16** Chifissa's? divination bowl (British Museum Af1946,04.1.a-y), (author; Peter Williams)

**Fig. 17** 'Portering': *I Start for the Mutwalumi*, (Campbell Collections WCP 932, University of KwaZulu-Natal)

**Fig. 18** *Inkatha* rings (KwaZulu-Natal Museum 2781A & 2781B, Pietermaritzburg), (author)

**Fig. 19** 'Fingo, Basuto & Tembu' beadwork (British Museum Af,B80.3), (author)

**Fig. 20** Examples of British Museum labels, (author)

**Fig. 21** 1753 Sloane bequeath leg-ornament (British Museum Af,SLMisc.246) and catalogue entry, (author)

**Fig. 22** Famous 'Zulu' figure (British Museum Af1954,+23.3567), (author)

**Fig. 23** Hintsa's arm-ornament (British Museum Af1936,1218.19), another (British Museum Af1936,1218.20) and a portrait photograph of Hintsa (British Museum Af,B82.4), (author)

**Fig. 24** Sandile's staff? (British Museum Af1936,1218.4) and a portrait photograph of Sandile, (author; Wikipedia)

**Fig. 25** Cetshwayo's staff? (British Museum Af1950,18.1), (author)

**Fig. 26** Child figures (British Museum Af.6143 & Af.6144), (author)

**Fig. 27** From Miss Harriette E. Colenso (British Museum Af.3327 & Af.3369), (author)

**Fig. 28** Male figure (British Museum Af,+5308.a), (author)

**Fig. 29** 'From Kimberley Museum' (British Museum Af1930,0120.24), (author)

**Fig. 30** From the Great Exhibition of 1851 via Kew (British Museum Af1960,20.127), (author)

**Fig. 31** 1862 International Exhibition (British Museum 1913,0331.155; *Illustrated London News* 05/07/1862: 21), (British Museum; Senate House Library, London)

**Fig. 32** Some items from the Paris International Exposition, 1867 (British Museum Af.4591.a-b, Af.4589 & Af.4656), (author)

**Fig. 33** Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886 and the *abakweta*, (Peter Williams; author)

**Fig. 34** An item purchased at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886 (British Museum Af1905,-.74), (author)

**Fig. 35** South African Products Exhibition, 1907, (author)

**Fig. 36** ‘See South Africa at Wembley’ (British Empire Exhibition, 1924), (author)

**Fig. 37** Venda xylophone players (British Museum Af,B37.12 & Af,B32.1), (author)

**Fig. 38** Pair of figures (British Museum Af,+.6190 & Af,+.6191.a), (British Museum; Distant 1892: 114)

**Fig. 39** From Bethnal Green Museum (given by Mrs Newberry) (British Museum Af1953,14.1-4), (author)

**Fig. 40** The Wolseley Collection (British Museum Af1917,1103.1-10), (author)

**Fig. 41** Field Marshal Viscount Garnet Joseph Wolseley (1833—1913), (National Portrait Gallery 1789; monument to Wolseley, Horse Guards Parade, London), (National Portrait Gallery, London; author)

**Fig. 42** King Cetshwayo kaMpande (c.1826–1884), (National Portrait Gallery x96403), (National Portrait Gallery, London)

**Fig. 43** Cetshwayo’s treasures, (How 1893: 180; Wolseley Collection, Hove Library, scrapbook vol. 15 [1922], unpaginated), (How; author)

**Fig. 44** Treasure hunting, (*Illustrated London News* 11/10/1879: 328; *Graphic* 11/10/1879: 365), (*Illustrated London News*; *Graphic*)

**Fig. 45** Cetshwayo's crown etc., Campbell Collections C66/046 & no number, University of KwaZulu-Natal, (Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal; author)

**Fig. 46** Sibedula's necklace (British Museum Af1945,04.24), (author)

**Fig. 47a** A selection of objects from the Newnham Collection (British Museum Af1945,04.), (author)

**Fig. 47b** Accessions register entry for the Newnham Collection, British Museum, (author)

**Fig. 48** Sibedula and his necklace?, (British Museum Af,B32.33 & necklace Af1945,04.24), (author)

**Fig. 49** Necklace (Brighton Museum and Art Gallery R2778/292; illustration in Distant 1892: facing page 102), (author; Distant)

**Fig. 50** The blacksmith's wife and art (British Museum Af,B32.17 & Af,B32.12), (author)

**Fig. 51** Hermann Justus Braunholtz (1888—1963), (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17), (*Times*)

**Fig. 52** Views inside Chief Sinthumule's location, near Louis Trichardt (British Museum Af.B92.18 & Af.B92.22), (author)

**Fig. 53** Postcard from H.J. Braunholtz to T.A. Joyce, British Museum, (author)

**Fig. 54** The Braunholtz Collection (British Museum Af1930,0128.), (author)

**Fig. 55** Photographs of a *khoro* gathering with Chief Sinthumule Ramabulana (c.1870—1931) (British Museum Af,A1.45-48); 'Old BaVenda man' (British Museum Af,A1: 13 detail), (author)

**Fig. 56** Some of Braunholtz's *Africa Album 1* captions and photographs, British Museum, (author)

**Fig. 57** 'S'.s wife & children, presenting gourd & baskets to the B.M' (British Museum unnumbered photograph) and three British Museum objects, (author)

**Fig. 58** Made by Makiliebin? (British Museum Af1936,0314.15), (author)

**Fig. 59** 'BaVenda. Senthimula's locn. 9.m. w. [9 miles west] of Louis Trichardt' (British Museum unnumbered photograph), (author)

**Fig. 60** Dzata Ruins (British Museum Af,B36.28; Trevor 1930: Plate XI Fig. 2, unpaginated; British Museum Af,B32.23, (author; Trevor; author)

**Fig. 61** Mukharu's divination bowl (British Museum cast CRS.74 thereof and photographs of the original, British Museum Af,B81.12 & Af,B81.11), (author)

**Fig. 62** Sinthumule 'with two wives and some of his councillors', (Stayt 1931: Plate XXXIV), (Stayt)

**Fig. 63** 'War dances' and xylophone playing at a Johannesburg mine compound (British Museum Af,A1.29-32), (author)

**Fig. 64** Antoinette Powell-Cotton (1913–1997) (British Museum Af,B41.9) and her father, Major Percy Horace Gordon Powell-Cotton (1866—1940) (Powell Cotton Museum Z.II 18), (author)

**Fig. 65** A selection of objects from the Powell-Cotton Collection (British Museum Af1936,0316.), (author)

**Fig. 66** British Museum Eth Doc 74 (first page), (author)

**Fig. 67** Carbon Book: Antoinette Powell-Cotton's notebook, Powell Cotton Museum, (author)

**Fig. 68** 'Checking [and Ticketing] Curios' (Powell Cotton Museum photographs and British Museum hairpin Af1936,0316.13), (author)

**Fig. 69** Diary: Antoinette Powell-Cotton's notes, Powell Cotton Museum, (author)

**Fig. 70** Loscoche, the Game Guard's daughter (British Museum Af,B41.30; Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41: 16), (author)

**Fig. 71** 'Buying Curios' (Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41; British Museum Af.B41.9), (author)

**Fig. 72** Jesse's brother, the carver (British Museum Af,B41.29), (author)

**Fig. 73** Wedding at 'M'pupuma' (Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41: 56; British Museum Af,B41.23), (author)

**Fig. 74** David (possibly David Gomo Zulu) wearing a velvet snuff-bag, (British Museum Af,B41.14; Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41: 37; British Museum Af1936,0316.14), (author)

**Fig. 75** Fusi kaMafoko (Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41: 8, detail), (author)

**Fig. 76** Buying (more) 'curios' at close quarters (Powell Cotton Museum album 4.1.41: 20 & 21), (author)

**Fig. 77** A selection of objects from Frank Cornner (British Museum Af1933,0609.), (author)

**Fig. 78** Frank Cornner (1872—c.1959) (Historical Papers Research Archive AB653 Ee1.2: unpaginated, University of the Witwatersrand), (author)

**Fig. 79** Some smoking-pipes from Frank Cornner (British Museum Af1933,0609), (author)

**Fig. 80** Neck-ornaments with metal tins (British Museum Af1933,0609), (author)

**Fig. 81** 'Jubilee Dandies'/'Heathen dandies who came to the [Jubilee]' (Historical Papers Research Archive AB815/Ca/1.24, University of the Witwatersrand), (author)

**Fig. 82** 'BAPEDI pottery [and other items]...offered by I.S. Wansbrough' (British Museum Af,B35.3 & Af,B35.4, (author)

**Fig. 83** A selection of pots from Ivon S. Wansbrough (British Museum Af1933,0109), (author)

**List of Tables etc** (see Volume II: 349—356)

**Table 1** Departmental Responsibility for Ethnography Collections at the British Museum

**Table 2** Ethnography Keepers and Deputy Keepers at the British Museum to the 1960s

**Table 3** South Africa Collections Ranked by Size, Top 15

**Graph 1** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Number of Accession Events by Decade

**Graph 2** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Approximate Number of Objects Accessioned by Decade

**Graph 2a** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Approximate Number of Objects Accessioned by Decade, Excluding Wellcome Historical Medical Museum Additions

**Chart 1** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Donations vs Purchases etc per Accession Event

**Chart 2** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Gender of Donor/Vendor/etc

**Chart 3** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Gender of Donor/Vendor/etc, Excluding Institutions

**Chart 4** South Africa Collections at the British Museum to 1961: Collections by Sending Location

## **List of Abbreviations**

**ALRC** Anthropology Library and Research Centre, BM

**AOA** Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, BM [2004 – present]

**BAAS** British Association for the Advancement of Science

**BEP** Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, BM [2014 – present]

**BM** British Museum

**BM(NH)** British Museum (Natural History), London [now the Natural History Museum]

**BMQ** *British Museum Quarterly*

**Book of Presents** *Book of Presents*, CA, BM

**BP** [Hermann Justus] Braunholtz Papers, ALRC, BM

**Brenthurst** Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg

**CA** Central Archive, BM

**CC** Christy Correspondence, ALRC, BM

**CC UKN** Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban

**CUL** Cambridge University Library

**Ditsong/Ditsong NMCH** Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria

**Donations Book** [Ethnography] *Donations Book*, ALRC, BM

**EBC** Economic Botany Collection, Kew

**EBC EB** Economic Botany Collection, Kew, Entry Book



**ELM** East London Museum, SA

**Eth Doc/s** Ethnography Document(s), ALRC, BM

***Extracts*** *Extracts from the BM Register*, ALRC, BM

**GC** General Correspondence, ALRC, BM

**HPRA** Historical Papers Research Archive, Wits

**Hove** Brighton and Hove City Libraries

**Hove WP** Wolseley Papers, Brighton and Hove City Libraries

***ILN*** *Illustrated London News*

**Iziko/Iziko SAM** Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town

**JAG** Johannesburg Art Gallery

***JRAI*** *Journal of the RAI*

**Kew** Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

**KNM** KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg

**LMS** London Missionary Society

**LSE** London School of Economics

**MA** Museum Africa, Johannesburg [formerly MuseumAfrica]

**MAA** Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge

**ME** Department of the Middle East, BM

**NACF** National Art Collections Fund, UK

**NASA** National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria

**NMB** National Museum, Bloemfontein

**N&Q** *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*

**OELD** *Oxford English Living Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press<sup>2</sup>

**PEMS** Paris Evangelical Missionary Society

**PCM** Powell Cotton Museum, Kent

**Pic Doc** Pictorial Document, ALRC

**Pictorial Collection** AOA Pictorial Collection, ALRC, BM

**PRM** Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

**PRM MC** PRM Manuscript Collections

**RAI** Royal Anthropological Institute

**RCS** Royal Commonwealth Society, Cambridge University Library

**RCMS** Prefix used for archival collections within the RCS collections

**RGS-IBG** Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), London

**SA** South Africa [Republic of]

**SAG** Sainsbury African Galleries, Room 25, BM

**SAM/Iziko** Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town

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<sup>2</sup> Online dictionary <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>.

**SOAS** School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

**SSJE** Society of Saint John the Evangelist

**UK** United Kingdom

**V&A** Victoria and Albert Museum [formerly South Kensington Museum]

**WCEC** World Conservation and Exhibition Centre, BM

**WHMM** Wellcome Historical Medical Museum

**Wits** University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

**ZAR** South African Republic

## **Acknowledgements**

First, my thanks to the University of East Anglia (UEA) for the generous awards enabling this project (a Faculty of Arts and Humanities Postgraduate Research Studentship and a 'The Difference' Postgraduate Scholarship) and to my supervisor, John Mack, who sensed merit in this undertaking from the outset and provided me with encouragement, helpful criticism and advice throughout. This thesis would not be the same without his guidance. Thanks too to my second supervisor, Anne Haour, who together with Karen Jacobs provided further guidance and to Ferdinand de Jong for allowing me to participate in his module 'The Archive' (2014). I am also grateful to other staff members, especially those of the Robert Sainsbury Library, and to fellow students at the Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU) and elsewhere at UEA. To Steven Hooper, Lynne Crossland, Pat Hewitt (for diligent and thorough bibliographical guidance) and other SRU staff – your rallying around me when life took a few turns is deeply appreciated. My thanks to Annie Coombes and Chris Wingfield for examining this thesis and providing stimulating discussion, feedback and further food for thought.

The British Museum also enabled this project. Special thanks to the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas for granting me unfettered access as a volunteer and then as a visiting researcher, especially to Lissant Bolton and Julie Hudson, also Sam Nixon, Chris Spring, John Giblin, David Noden, Sovati Smith, Kate Bagnall, Stewart Watson and Jill Hasell and those in the ALRC, especially Jim (James) Hamill, Joanna Lister, Holly Heenan and to Marjorie Caygill, who also carefully read a draft of Chapter 2 and provided much helpful information. Thanks to Francesca Hillier and volunteer Peter Williams (Central Archive), Gaetano Ardito (Britain, Europe and Prehistory), and Angela Grimshaw (Department of the Middle East) for facilitating my research in their respective domains. I am particularly grateful to Africa curator Julie Hudson not least for enabling and facilitating my prolonged research into the SA collections onsite and in the Museum storerooms. I also wish to express thanks to other museums and institutions (and colleagues there) as well as various individuals. In the UK: Art Fund (Emma Coleman); Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (Rachel Heminway Hurst); Buckinghamshire County Museum (Brett Thorn); Hastings Museum (Catherine Harvey); Hove Library; Maidstone Museum (Samantha Harris and Pernille Richards); Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Chris Wingfield, Remke van der Velden and Rachel Hand); Oryx (Cella Carr); Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (Nicholas Crewe and Philip Grover); Powell-Cotton Museum (Inbal Livne and Hazel Basford); Royal Anthropological Institute (Sarah Walpole and Catherine Atkinson); Royal Commonwealth Society (Rachel Rowe); Cambridge University Library

(Michelle Barnes); Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Mark Nesbitt); Paul Basu; Catherine Moore; Carola Scupham. In the United States: Fowler Museum (Marla Berns and Gassia Armenian) and San Diego Museum of Art (James Grebl and Joyce Penn). In SA: the Brenthurst Library (Jennifer Kimble); Ditsong National Cultural History Museum (Johnny van Schalkwyk); Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) (Zofia Sulej); William Cullen Library, Wits (Margaret Atsango); Iziko South African Museum (Leila Hisham and Gerald Klinghardt); Campbell Collections/Killie Campbell Africana Library (Emily-Ann Krige, Lulu Jakeni, Senzo Mkhize, Mbali Zulu and Bongiwe Mdlalose); KwaZulu-Natal Museum (Gavin Whitelaw, Mudzunga Munzhedzi, Dimakatso Tlhoale and Velisiwe Dlomo); Museum Africa (Zola Mtshiza, Kenneth Hlungwane, Loyiso Qanya and Thabo Seshoka); National Museum, Bloemfontein (Sudré Havenga, Gosiamo Amy Goitsemodimo and Elmar du Plessis); East London Museum (Nandipha Mlonyeni); Stephan Welz & Co (Natalie Randall) and staff at the National Archives of South Africa (NASA). Additionally, the University of South Africa (UNISA) library has been an invaluable source of information. Thanks also to colleagues at the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (APC), University of Cape Town and its chair, Carolyn Hamilton, for stimulating discussion around the *Tribing and Untribing the Archive* project and for introducing me to new ways of thinking 'archivally'. Additional thanks to Ruth Lipschitz and to my fellow honorary APC researcher, Nessa Leibhammer, for her collegiality and friendship, to John Wright for his insight into names and places mentioned in the Powell-Cotton case study; to Patricia Davison who shared insights into the Iziko collections with me; and also to former lecturers at Wits who first nurtured my academic interest in things African, especially to Karel Nel and Anitra Nettleton, two leading lights in the field whose work continues to be an inspiration.

Finally, to other friends (too numerous to name) by whose companionship I was buoyed up and to all my family – thank you for the unstinting, and often very practical, support. Thanks to my parents, Joy and Tony, for always encouraging me to follow my interests and to my parents-in-law, Grazia and Alan, for following my work with interest and also for their close reading of a final draft of the thesis; to Mom, Grazia and Vicky (and family) for enabling me to trawl various SA archives in the knowledge that Jesse was happy; to the Strätters for their hospitality in Cape Town, the Weinbergs in San Diego and to my parents and parents-in-law for theirs in Johannesburg. To Jesse and Abigail, who have shared their lives so far with this project, and especially to my husband, Darius Weinberg, to whom I owe the greatest debt of gratitude – thank you for journeying with me.

## Introduction

### *Part I: An introductory vignette*

#### **1. Moshoeshoe's presentation**

##### **1.1 Pre-British Museum life story/backstory**

In late 1861 James Howell<sup>3</sup> of the Orange Free State (a Boer republic declared independent from British rule in 1854; now Free State province, South Africa) led a deputation to King Moshoeshoe I (c.1786—1870), founder of the Basotho nation (**Fig.1**). An unnamed deputation member wrote an account of this visit to Moshoeshoe's mountain stronghold and capital, Thaba Bosiu, located in the Southern African kingdom known today as Lesotho. The article featured in the *Natal Witness*, a newspaper published in the neighbouring British Colony of Natal, which shared borders with both territories.<sup>4</sup> The eyewitness refers to the king as 'Moshesh', as he was then known, and describes him as wearing Western dress, his custom when engaging with European (i.e. white) visitors (Sanders 1975: 142). On this occasion Moshoeshoe apparently chose to wear 'a general's rich uniform, over which he had a blue cloth military cloak with a military helmet on his head' (*Natal Witness* 27/12/1861: 3). He reportedly received the party at his home, laying on a spread regarding which the tablecloth and 'handsome china tea service' get notable mention (*Natal Witness* 27/12/1861: 3). After the meal, members of the deputation presented Moshoeshoe with various gifts. Howell gave him a blanket described as 'a handsome railway wrapper, made of light blue pilot cloth, very heavy and hairy, lined with bright scarlet cloth and braided', which the king apparently put 'on his [own] shoulders à la Poncho' (*Natal Witness* 27/12/1861: 3). This is possibly the origin, or at least a royal endorsement of, the Basotho wearing blankets that replaced the *kaross*<sup>5</sup> (**Fig. 2**). The account goes on to state that after these proceedings:

Mr. Howell then announced the object of his visit. There was to be a great exhibition of the arts and manufactures of all nations, to be held in London next year. Every country... [was] sending articles to this exhibition. The Natal Government had appointed a commission to carry out this object in parts of South Africa ; and he (Mr H.[owell]) had been honoured by that commission with a mission to the Great Chief, in order to endeavour to procure from him, if

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<sup>3</sup> Probably James Michael Howell, an Englishman who was *landdrost* (magistrate) of Winburg around this time (Theal 1908: 25 & 68).

<sup>4</sup> The article had also been run in the *Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette* (13/12/1861: 3).

<sup>5</sup> An animal skin cape.

he felt disposed, arts and manufactures of his country, which, if given, would be exhibited as coming from him; and the great Queen of England, and her son, the Prince Alfred whom Moshesh had met [during his official visit to South Africa in 1860], and the people of England to whom Moshesh's name was not unknown, would see these things.... Moshesh then asked for a specified list of such articles required, and Mr. Howell then gave him a list issued by the Natal Government (27/12/1861: 3).

Moshoeshoe obliged the commission and true to Howell's word the objects were exhibited as part of what was known as the Natal Court, that colony's varied contribution to the 1862 International Exhibition held in London's South Kensington from May to November that year (**Fig. 3**, see also Figs 8 & 31). Natal's offering included exhibits under several categories, including 'Food Substances', 'Raw Material — Animal Substances', 'Raw Material — Vegetable Substances', 'Colonial and Overberg Manufactures' and 'Kafir'<sup>6</sup> Manufactures — Illustrating Native Industry and Domestic Economy' (Mann 1862a). The last evidently caught the eye of collector Henry Christy, who seems to have acquired most, if not almost all, the Natal Court's African-made exhibits (Elliott 2011, 2013).<sup>7</sup> Christy died a few years later and his vast and varied collection passed to a group of trustees, who in turn entrusted it to the British Museum (hereafter BM) shortly thereafter (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).

## 1.2 Museum life story/biography

Today, one of these objects, a brass breast-plate (Af.304), is on long-term display at the BM in Room 25, the Sainsbury African Galleries (hereafter SAG), where its attendant label obscures Moshoeshoe's presence (**Fig. 4**). The panel mentions 'Moshweshwe',<sup>8</sup> but only in so far as the South Sotho were under his leadership in the nineteenth century. Here the provenance is given as Christy and the 'South Sotho people, Lesotho'. Moving back in time, we see that this same object was earlier on

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<sup>6</sup>Spellings of 'kafir' vary (often also 'kaffir'). Used originally to denote 'black people considered non-believers' by Arab traders on Africa's east coast (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 17 fn. 17), this now highly offensive term, came to refer broadly, and increasingly pejoratively, to the so-called 'kafir race' to which the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa (aside from the San/Bushmen) supposedly belonged. Within the BM, the term seems to have been later dropped in favour of 'Bantu', a word that, despite its use as a term for linguistic classification, would also take on a pejorative colloquial connotation within SA. I use these terms advisedly. However, it should also be noted that the term Bushmen/Bushman is also considered offensive in some contexts and that San/Khoisan is also sometimes seen as problematic.

<sup>7</sup> As well as some 'Boer' items.

<sup>8</sup> An alternative spelling.

exhibition at Christy's house, where his collection would remain for some time before translation to the BM's premises. The 1868 *Guide to the Christy Collection* indicates that the SA display there included a 'brass breastplate...and other articles of dress, obtained from Moshesh, a chief of the tribe, and exhibited in the London Exhibition of 1862' (Franks 1868: 14).

However, by the early twentieth century the link between Moshoeshoe and his objects was all but severed. The BM's *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections*, published in 1910 and again in 1925, includes an illustration of a distinctive winged shield from this now unstated previous owner (BM 1910: 215; 1925: 224), foregrounding rather its 'tribal' and geographic origin. During the course of its life at the Museum, the shield (**Fig. 5**) became further detached from Moshoeshoe. In fact, at some point it lost all connection with its documentation. While working through the collections I was able to identify the shield and reconcile it with its record. Thus, its original registration number (Af.538) has now supplanted the former 'query' number assigned to it (Af1979,01.2945). It is perhaps owing to the previous state of affairs that a similar shield from another source (Af.6094) was selected for inclusion in *Africa: Arts and Cultures* (Mack 2000: 185), published to coincide with the opening of SAG, and again recently for the Museum's major exhibition *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* (27/10/2016–26/02/2017; illustrated in Giblin and Spring 2016: 160).<sup>9</sup> It should be noted, however, that unlike this example the Moshoeshoe shield has evidently lost its plume (illustrated with the object in the 1910 and 1925 guides, but not mentioned on its Museum registration slip, which dates to the nineteenth century).

The Moshoeshoe material is somewhat unusual within the South Africa (hereafter SA) collections at the BM (under which Lesotho falls for reasons to be discussed) in that the accessioning documentation, here registration slips, in many instances names an African connected to an object or group of objects, that they are 'from Moshesh' (and some objects themselves even retain old labels mentioning his name, such as vessel Af.478). Furthermore, this information was largely reflected in the Museum's 'collection online' (collection database), essentially the Museum's publicly accessible catalogue.<sup>10</sup> However, this is not always the case, especially it seems when it comes to more

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<sup>9</sup> This example, gifted to the Museum in early 1870 by Miss Powles, came from David Frédéric Ellenberger, a Swiss French missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) who would have acquired it sometime before then and no earlier than 1860, when he departed for Lesotho. It has been married with a plume from the same source (Af.6095).

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx) (last accessed 10/08/2018).



‘ordinary’ people, Africans generally perceived to be of a lower rank or status. The information here offers us a glimpse of the objects’ pre-Museum life story.

### 1.3 Pre-Museum life story/backstory...continued

The exact source of much of the details that informed the registration slips in this instance is uncertain, although details were evidently drawn from object labels and Natal’s catalogue for the 1862 International Exhibition. Published in an abridged and an unabridged version (Mann 1862a & 1862b), the catalogue is difficult to come by and apparently not retained by the Museum. The information differs somewhat between the two editions. Rather paradoxically, the abridged version shines further light on some items, including the shield and especially the armour, which are listed respectively as ‘B.341. [w]ar-shield (tebe)’ and ‘B.338. [w]arrior’s breast-plate...(legawu)...from Moshesh’s own armoury’ (Mann 1862a: 7; cf. Mann 1862b: 23).

Of the 40 or so objects Moshoeshoe sent to the International Exhibition via the Natal authorities – items such as domestic utensils, body ornaments and weapons – a good deal pertain to warfare or warrior attire.<sup>11</sup> Why?

Founder of the Basotho kingdom, Moshoeshoe was born circa 1786 in what is the modern-day Kingdom of Lesotho. Described as ‘intelligent, a skillful warrior, and also humane’ (Saunders 2004 [2010]: 2), he ‘rose to prominence through his ability to retain the loyalty of his followers and to acquire new ones’ (Saunders 2004 [2010]: 1) during a period of violent upheaval generally referred to as the *mfecane*. This series of wars shook and shaped southern Africa from about the mid eighteenth century until around 1830 (see Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 124-138). A noted tactician and able diplomat, who became known for offering tribute as a strategy to avert conflict (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 132), Moshoeshoe effectively brought together fairly disparate peoples and was able to fend off hostile forces – various other Africans, Boers and the British alike— ensuring the independence of his kingdom. Moshoeshoe would have been well-aware of Britain’s military might, having faced the British at Berea in 1852. From 1858 onwards, the main thrust of the ageing king’s diplomacy is said to have been assuring ‘for his people peace, security, and good government in a territory sufficient for their needs’ (Thompson 1975: 253-4). In this ambition, and in the

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<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to put an exact figure on the number of objects, as some items are not listed individually in the catalogue prepared by Dr Robert James Mann who was an exhibition commissioner for Natal and honorary secretary, Natal Commission. For example: ‘B. 323. Beer vessels...’ (Mann 1862a: 7; see also Mann 1862b: 23).

face of white expansion in the area, Moshoeshoe remained convinced that Britain would provide his country with 'an insurance policy for the future' (Thompson 1975: 263). Moshoeshoe appealed for British protection on several occasions. He died in 1870, but not before his wish for protection had been granted; in 1868 Britain annexed the king's land at his request and it became a protectorate of that imperial power.

Returning to Moshoeshoe's objects, specifically the v-shaped breastplate and shield, it is interesting to note that they would already have been considered somewhat archaic by 1861. In his comparison of various Southern African shields, Major G. Tylden suggests that by the 1850s the South Sotho had all but abandoned the (war) shield in favour of other weapons and methods, including firearms (1946: 35). By the late nineteenth century, a depiction of the Basotho (South Sotho) warrior sporting both a shield and breastplate was considered to pertain to '[a]ncien' or former times (see captioned etching in Christol 1897: 105). Discussing this type of shield, Johnny van Schalkwyk (*in* Mack 2000: 184) asserts that it took on its distinctive form as a means of group identity as it evolved around Moshoeshoe in the early nineteenth century.

#### **1.4 Moshoeshoe's agency**

As outlined above, Moshoeshoe responded to Howell's request, made on behalf of the Natal commission for the 1862 International Exhibition, by providing him with objects for display on the Natal Court. The king's own agency in this collection now at the BM is evidenced in several ways. First, given his diplomatic policy at the time, the opportunity to present himself and his kingdom on an international platform, in this instance at a world's fair, billed as an exhibition of the arts and manufactures of all nations, must have greatly appealed to him. In today's parlance this use of 'objects as ambassadors' (see Knowles 2011: 231) might be considered a form of 'soft power'. Second, the choice of objects, noted above for the number of war accoutrements, may be read as Moshoeshoe's mobilisation of a national identity, one of military strength and prowess (this aspect echoing his own self-representation through choice of attire). Indeed, many of these items – for example the shield, knobkerrie, assegai and conical hat – have become treasured national symbols in modern day Lesotho.<sup>12</sup> But what about the aforementioned list Howell presented to Moshoeshoe? Surely that limited the king's agency and determined what he was to send to England via the Natal authorities? If the list was anything like the open call for submissions to the 1862 International Exhibition published in the *Natal Witness* in July 1861, it is likely to have

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<sup>12</sup> Af.538, Af.305, Af.3902-9 and Af.4157.

been quite general in its specifications (*Natal Witness* 12/07/1861: 5). A third indicator of Moshoeshoe's agency is surely the notable absence of certain objects, for example the lack of tobacco smoking-pipes. South Sotho pipes are quite characteristic and typically imaginative; however, the king reportedly disliked smoking (*Natal Witness* 27/12/1861: 3).

Although Moshoeshoe did not give the collection directly to the BM per se, it has nonetheless become his lasting gift to 'the people of England' and beyond. His legacy to the people of Lesotho is nationhood and independence. As a British protectorate, the kingdom was spared from incorporation into the Union of South Africa in 1910 (and thus later from direct apartheid, which was to become official policy in that country and would have dire consequences for the African population). Lesotho would go on to obtain independence from Britain in 1966.

Thinking about and treating Moshoeshoe's collection in this manner has recovered some of its character as diplomatic presentation – from one monarch and nation to another – and its wider implications in terms of the historical relationships to which it was contributory. Crucially, in the context of this thesis, it enables us to consider Moshoeshoe's agency embodied by this group of objects. Like his choice of dress on the occasion of Howell's visit, the collection could be seen as a form of self-curation.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Karen E. Milbourne's (2013) assessment of Lewanika (1842—1916), king of the Lozi, regarding his mobilisation of self image through dress and the promotion of Lozi arts. Similarly, Tamar Garb argues that an early twentieth century formal portrait photograph showing King Khama III (c.1837—1923) wearing Western clothing and seated on a feline fur-draped chair can be seen as 'the site of self-assertion and agency' and that here he 'had a hand in his own representation' (Garb 2013: 28 & 42). Khama's country (present-day Botswana) became a British protectorate at his behest.

## ***Part II: Introducing the South Africa collections as archive and African agency***

### **2. What is this research about?**

The above-sketched vignette of Moshoeshoe and his objects is intended to introduce and encapsulate several concerns of this thesis. Here, we have a group of items, Moshoeshoe's collection, gathered during the British colonial era as 'arts and manufactures' (an alternative term for what were commonly called 'curiosities' or 'curios'),<sup>14</sup> later acquired by the collector Henry Christy as 'ethnographic' and further 'ethnographised' by the BM.<sup>15</sup> In looking at the putative SA collections at the BM of which this collection forms part through the lens of archive, the present study adopts and adapts the recent and experimental methodology devised by Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (2016b) for critically approaching such museum collections burdened by their colonial past (see Chapter 1). This is a two-step process. The first is to draw the 'material into the ambit of archive...[by] investing in the research necessary to frame collected material culture as archival'; and second is the reconstruction of the materials' *'archival histories'* (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 415, emphasis in original). In the Moshoeshoe case, this is achieved by moving beyond the Museum's registration slips and database entries (based on the former), by collating information currently at some remove from the objects (themselves not stored together) and therefore effectively 'lost' to them. Typically, within ethnographic collections '[o]bjects that once belonged together have been split up, pulled apart and given new identities according to the trajectories of Western museum practice, most commonly according to their geographical region, form, or material' (Byrne 2013: 206).

As advocated by Hamilton and Leibhammer, various dispersed archival sources, which include the objects themselves, are brought into the same 'archival frame'. In the present case, these sources include the objects, various forms of Museum documentation (from object labels to the current exhibition text panel) as well as others not present at the Museum, namely the *Natal Witness* account of the collecting circumstances and the description of the objects in the 1862 International Exhibition

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<sup>14</sup> For references to 'curiosities' in the literature, some penned by collectors, see Colenso (1855: 211); Streatfeild (1879: 197); Mitford (1883: 241); Bent (1902: 87); Wessmann (1908: 52); Cameron (1913: 158) and for references to 'manufactures' see Shooter (1857: 353); Baines (1864: 424); Holub (1881: 214); Monteiro (1891: 254); Stow (1905: 547); Theal (1919: 453).

<sup>15</sup> African objects had been described as 'ethnography' within the catalogue of his collection (Steinhauer 1862), evidently published before the International Exhibition material had been added as it accounts only for a small portion of Christy's collection. The circumstances around the acquisition of the 1862 International Exhibition material are as yet unknown.

catalogues.<sup>16</sup>

Historicisation of the kind achieved here in the case of the Moshoeshoe collection, enables the opening up of what Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016b: 416) call the objects' 'archival potential', transforming often disavowed collections into '*archival* sources' (emphasis in original), thus encouraging their 'utilisation as historical source' (2016b: 418). An additional intervention aimed at enabling objects' archival potential is what Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016b), based on Hamilton's earlier work, define as 'backstory' and 'biography' (see Chapter 1). As employed here, the concept of backstory is taken to refer to an object or collection's 'pre-Museum life story' while biography is applied to its 'Museum life' – its moment of entry into the Museum acting as a point of delineation. In adapting these twin concepts (see Chapter 1 for details of Hamilton and Leibhammer's usage), this thesis provides an original contribution to an approach that is itself a useful extension of the now familiar biographical approach to museum objects.

Although archival research is not new, it is only more recently that the concept of the museum as archive has gained ground, specifically with a number of scholars considering collections of South African ethnography and following Hamilton's cue (Wanless 2007, 2010; Byala 2010, 2013a&b; Weintroub 2013; Hamilton and Leibhammer 2014, 2016b; Byala and Wanless 2016). The current study, in considering the SA collections at the BM as archive, takes a novel approach to this material. It is also the first study of such an extensive SA collection in a single museum expressly examining African agency.

Much of the literature on South African ethnography has, since at least the early twentieth century, tended to be dominated by South Africans in terms of authors. Internationally, the literature from what has been called the 'classic phase' of African art history (Nettleton 1991: 32) has focused mainly on sculptural works.<sup>17</sup> As such, it has notoriously under-represented, but also frequently misattributed or included seemingly as an afterthought, and at worst ignored, SA material (Nettleton (1988); Davison *in* Phillips (1995: 179)).

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<sup>16</sup> Text panels are usually an ephemeral aspect of what is arguably part of museum documentation more generally.

<sup>17</sup> Which, as Nettleton (1991: 44 fn. 2) points out included pioneering proponent in the UK, BM curator William Buller Fagg (1914–1992). The 'classical' paradigm persists – see for example the new edition of Frank Willet's *African Art* (2002). Willet's text is very much in keeping with the 'classical' mode and perpetuates the view that the art of the continent is best represented by a number of well-known and much published examples of sculptural work (a good proportion of which are from the BM collection). Southern Africa receives scant attention.

Seeking to redress the situation, a number of South African art historians from the late 1970s onward began researching collections of local indigenous material culture,<sup>18</sup> bringing together perspectives from across the academic silos of anthropology, archaeology and art history (often publishing in volumes alongside colleagues from these disciplines).<sup>19</sup> A more recent trend in writing about SA objects is one that may well constitute a 'historic turn', as signalled by the above-mentioned current engagement with history and the archive.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.1 Research questions

In order to guide my research project, I formulated the following main research question:

What traces, if any, of African agency in the formation of the SA collections at the BM can be recovered?

This question is intersected by two further questions, viz:

How and why may the collections be treated as archive?

How does such treatment help reframe collections bound up in their colonial and ethnographised pasts?

## 3. Where did the (field) research take place?

This approach to the collections as archive required me, in the first instance, to study first-hand the objects of which it is constituted. It also meant that other pertinent material had to be sought elsewhere, sometimes outside of the museum, housed in other repositories.

The museum storeroom was the main 'field site' (Byrne 2013: 208) for this research,

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<sup>18</sup> Numerous non-South Africans have also made valuable contributions, for example Carolee Kennedy (1978; 1993), Margret Carey (1986), Chris Spring (1993; 2012; 2016 [with John Giblin]), John Mack (2000), Barbara Plankensteiner (1998), William Dewey et al. (1993) as well as Hélène Joubert and Manuel Valentin (eds. 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Of the half dozen or so major shows in SA since the 1980s it is instructive to note that the four most recent exhibition catalogues have included contributions from all three disciplines. In date order these are: *Ezakwantu: Beadwork from the Eastern Cape* (Bedford ed. 1993); *Zulu Treasures: of Kings and Commoners* (Wood ed. 1996); *Evocations of the Child: Fertility Figures of the Southern African Region* (Dell ed. 1998); *Dungamanzhi/Stirring Waters: Tsonga and Shangaan Art from Southern Africa* (Leibhammer ed. 2007). The genealogy of this interdisciplinary approach can be traced to the 1989 University of the Witwatersrand exhibition *Ten Years of Collecting*, the catalogue for which was co-edited by anthropologist David Hammond-Tooke and art historian Anitra Nettleton and included contributions from these and other authors. Similarly, the catalogue for the second major exhibition, *Art and Ambiguity: Perspectives on the Brenthurst Collection of Southern African Art* (Johannesburg Art Gallery 1991), this time held at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (hereafter JAG) and focusing on a recent long-term inward loan, included contributions by both art historians and anthropologists.

<sup>20</sup> And including SA historians such as Carolyn Hamilton (2016b [with Leibhammer]) and Jeff Guy (2005: 264) now looking at material culture.

primarily and initially the BM's Orsman Road facility in East London where, until recently, the bulk of the Museum's SA collections was held.<sup>21</sup> Although this aspect of the research commenced at the start of the study, I had already begun documenting and studying a part of these collections for my MA in Museum Studies at University College London (completed 2011) and continued to work on the collections while employed by the Museum for a period thereafter as a Museum Assistant. In the course of the days and months I spent in the stores, which during the present research was several days a week over a period of more than a year, I worked systematically through the 'South Africa' boxes and drawers.<sup>22</sup> I examined the objects that lay therein, took notes and multiple digital photographs of each and added agreed pertinent information to the BM's database<sup>23</sup> in order to update the record for every one of these items (notably by adding images, dimensions and 'Ethnic [group] Name', through further research and/or stylistic comparison, but also occasionally other information).<sup>24</sup> At this time I further helped enhance and improve the database entries by re-wording object descriptions where necessary, for example in cases where individual records required splitting, or more frequently, combining (such as where an object with a multiple piece count had become separated and the components given various or new query accession numbers).<sup>25</sup> I was also able to identify numerous 'query objects' and had their query numbers (usually prefixed 'Af1979,01.') changed to their actual original accession numbers. These interventions meant that the database of information, which informs the BM's 'collection online',<sup>26</sup> was constantly changing as I worked and has changed significantly since the start of the project. While gathering information that would form the basis of my research I was, in this way, able to simultaneously assist the Africa Section of the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas (AOA) in preparation for the move of the Africa collections from Orsman Road to the then-newly built World Conservation and Exhibition Centre (WCEC) at the BM's main site in Bloomsbury. As the SA collections were earmarked for first relocation to the new onsite storage facility, followed by an

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<sup>21</sup> I also carried out research on the textile collections housed in the Museum's West London facility and on the objects on long-term display at the BM.

<sup>22</sup> I also looked over the weapons stored separately in the same facility and, owing to time constraints, documented a selection thereof.

<sup>23</sup> At the time of research, this was the Merlin database, which has subsequently been replaced by another museum collection management system entitled MuseumIndex Plus (MI+). Data has since been migrated from Merlin to MI+.

<sup>24</sup> Such as approximate production date and a brief condition report. I am grateful to Sovati Smith, who from an early stage assisted me by uploading my digital photographs onto the Museum's system.

<sup>25</sup> One extreme example where a single object (comprising four parts — a reed snuff-container/ear ornament and three hair pins) had become separated and three parts given their own 'query' registration numbers is Af1896,-.766.a-d.

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx) (last accessed 10/09/2018).

indeterminate time when they would become temporarily inaccessible owing to conservation checks and processing, it was necessary for me to carry out this aspect of the investigation intensively at the beginning of my research. Other than potentially running out of time to study all the objects I had earmarked at the outset of my research before the scheduled move date approached, such arrangement worked well with this, my collections-based research project. I had understood from my previous research the importance of studying objects first-hand in such an undertaking, not least because of information that can potentially be gleaned from inscriptions and labels, which is not always captured or recorded elsewhere.

Another significant field site was the Museum itself – where with regard to archives ‘something of a dual system’ exists, Central Archive vs departmental archives (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018). Here, my primary focus was the AOA’s own archive housed by its library – the Anthropology Library and Research Centre (ALRC), again located at the main BM site. Of principal concern to the present study were the various forms of documentation pertinent to the SA collections held there, which contain various pieces of information. This documentation includes the ‘*Donations Book*’, volumes where donations and purchases were initially jotted down prior to registration. In addition, copies of registration details (variously accessions registers and registration slips) were available as well as correspondence, where extant. The following letters were consulted: ‘Christy Correspondence’ (CC) pertaining to the Christy Collection;<sup>27</sup> ‘General Correspondence’ (GC), incoming and outgoing departmental letters mainly from the early 1920s onwards; ‘Braunholtz Papers’ (BP), some of former curator, H.J. Braunholtz’s correspondence. Further material of relevance includes a number of ‘Ethnography Documents (known as ‘Eth Docs’), indexed and filed information regarding certain collections and the ‘Pictorial Collection’, AOA’s holdings comprising mainly photographs of indigenous people, sometimes with links to the collections. The history of the collections (to be discussed) also meant that I needed to visit other archives within the Museum. Hence, I consulted correspondence and some other material held by the Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory (BEP) as well as fewer letters now with the Department of the Middle East (ME). I also referred, at times, to material held by the BM’s Central Archive, which tends to deal mainly with the governance and administration of the Museum (pers. comm.

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<sup>27</sup> References to these BM manuscript sources, prefixed with the archiving department when not AOA, are hereafter given in the abbreviated forms within in-text citations. (See also the List of Abbreviations.) In all cases, as far as possible, the surname and initials of both the sender and recipient have been cited. Where the recipient’s name is unknown, the form ‘letter from...’ has been used. Titles have generally been omitted in correspondence in in-text citations, except in the case of female senders in order to highlight this distinction.



Francesca Hillier, 06/09/2016). I consulted these various (mostly unindexed) materials dotted about the Museum with the aim of gathering further information regarding the SA collections, where available, again not necessarily captured or recorded elsewhere.

Outside of the BM, I identified a number of other museums and archives potentially with material of relevance to my study. My main entry point here, as with the various archives at the BM itself, was through the BM's 'sources' (i.e. names of those who presented the SA collections to the Museum usually as donations or for purchase) and, where known, the names of collectors (where this differed from the donor/seller). This was done with the intention of finding overlaps (i.e. where a particular source had supplied more than one institution) capable of shedding further light on the BM acquisitions. Within the UK, I paid targeted research visits to the two main university collections – to the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) at the University of Oxford and to the University of Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) – as well as to the Powell Cotton Museum in Kent and the Buckinghamshire County Museum in Aylesbury. During the course of research, I undertook a number of projects to help some museums mainly in South East England with their SA collections and serendipitously found some material pertaining to the BM's SA collections, specifically at Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery.<sup>28</sup> I also accessed a number of special collections, namely those of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) housed by the Cambridge University Library (CUL), Hove Library, the Royal Anthropological Institute's archives and manuscripts collections as well as the School of Oriental and African Studies' archives and special collections, University of London.

I further extended this research to a number of museums in SA, using the same general approach as before. However, because none of the museum collections where I wished to conduct research has their collections available online, this required longer site visits lasting up to several days. After initial enquiries as to the history, nature and organization of the collections, I usually asked to look through accessioning details in order to identify objects or collections of potential interest, although at a number of venues it was agreed that a more effective approach would be to start with looking through the stores first. As with museum visits in the UK, I was greatly aided, and remain indebted, to the museum staff (see acknowledgements). In addition to studying the objects and accessioning information first-hand, I sought out further items of documentation, such as

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<sup>28</sup> This includes research into, and reporting on, the SA collections at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter as well as Horniman Museum and Gardens, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. Research into the collections at Hastings and Maidstone (and input on the Bexhill Museum collections) was as part of the Art Council England-funded project entitled *Uniques: Uncovering Ethnography in Kent and Sussex* (2014–2015).

correspondence and photographs, where available. In SA I conducted field research in four major national museums –Iziko South African Museum (SAM), Cape Town; Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria (Ditsong); National Museum, Bloemfontein (NMB); and KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg (KNM)—as well as at Museum Africa, which is run by the municipality of Johannesburg. I also consulted special collections at the Brenthurst Library, a privately owned Africana library located in Johannesburg, as well as the Historical Papers Research Archive (HPRA), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits), the Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg and at the National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (NASA).<sup>29</sup>

### **3.1 Discussion**

When presenting to these various institutions an outline of my research and the purpose of an intended visit, I found that access to the various collections was greatly aided by my being a PhD candidate with a legitimate research agenda. Similarly, in the case of the museums, my prior experience as a collections-based researcher and museum employee with considerable object handling experience may have helped facilitate these visits. The BM, my chosen primary field site, enabled my research within the Museum by appointing me, in the first instance, as a volunteer and later a visiting academic within AOA. Admittedly, the focus of my research on this august institution's collections also probably stood in my favour by helping to open doors elsewhere. Without fail I obtained access to other collections that were also at times under pressures of their own. For example, in one case the curator of many years' standing was about to retire and had a project to complete, in another the curator had only been newly appointed and in a third the collection was due for an audit.

While as many avenues as possible have been explored, as with any study the present project is selective, not least in terms of the museums and archives visited and its choice of longer case studies. The latter have been informed by the depth of available material I was able to access and convene during the course of research, although they do not claim to be encyclopedic. For these longer case studies, and in many of the shorter 'vignettes', I was at times able to refer to the literature (older and more recent) as well as other sources as I sought to historicise the collections. Part of this entailed checking to

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<sup>29</sup> Additionally, in the United States I paid research visits to the Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles and the San Diego Museum of Art. During the early phase of research, I also briefly visited the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art while in New York to participate in a conference.

see if any published biographical and/or autobiographical material pertaining to the collector (where known) existed as well potential holdings of unpublished papers. Also of particular utility were a number of African and other newspapers dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

One of the potential biases of the present study, which seeks to locate traces of African agency in the formation of the collections, is no doubt my own identity as a white South African woman and especially my reliance on an archive (in an expanded sense) created in the main by white, Western men. However, herein lies one of the strengths of the SA collections at the BM. Although in the main assembled and expanded during the colonial period, unlike more conventional archives, they contain objects made and contributed by black men and women. As such, they are apt spaces for recovering African voices, voices often left out elsewhere. This seems particularly pertinent at a moment when museums are being called upon with increasing urgency to know the provenance of the collections in their care. Without such collections-based research, this is often not possible, and it is towards this end that the present study makes a further original contribution.

#### **4. Stretching/sketching borders: what is meant by ‘the South Africa collections at the British Museum’?**

The present research project focuses on the SA collections at the BM curated by the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas (AOA) and accessioned up to and including 1961, the year in which that former British colony declared itself a republic. However, for the purposes of this study, and echoing AOA’s own collections management of this material, the SA collections are construed as objects originating from the modern-day Republic of South Africa as well as from the independent, landlocked kingdoms of Lesotho and eSwatini (formerly Swaziland) that lie within its borders (**Fig. 6**). Of SA objects curated by AOA –there are around 11,000 objects originating from SA at the BM as a whole – around 2,640 fall within the scope of this project. They are made out of various materials and according to a variety of techniques and include objects such as headrests, weapons and vessels as well as items of dress and personal adornment. Some objects are ostensibly of a quotidian nature, while others are seemingly of more occasional use. Created in the main by Africans,<sup>30</sup> the Museum previously deemed these objects to be ‘ethnographic’ although

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<sup>30</sup> Here, and throughout this thesis, I generally employ the term ‘African’ rather than the term ‘black’ as, although the latter is widely used in SA, according to Act No. 46 of 2013: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act, 2013 it can include ‘Coloureds and Indians’ (<http://www.dti.gov.za/news2014/Act46of2013BEE.pdf>) (last accessed 18/09/2018).

generally no longer regards them in these terms.

#### 4.1 Why this period?

The SA collections under investigation here came to the BM at various points between its founding in the mid eighteenth century and 1961, a convenient date for this study being the year in which SA became a republic. The bulk of these acquisitions, during this just over two-hundred-year period, occurred from the mid nineteenth century onwards, and the major focus of this study is the almost one-hundred-year timespan between the mid-1860s and 1961. This timespan overlaps with:

The climax of the period of collecting [ethnography] from around 1880 to 1960 [which] coincided, of course, with the maximum extent of Empire, and when legions of explorers, missionaries, administrators, traders and military personnel brought back to Britain an inexhaustible quantity of exotic material...[t]his was also the period of the scramble for Africa (King 2006: 9).

It is also imbricated with the period during which ethnography evolves as an approach to these objects and reaches its highpoint before what might be understood as efforts aimed at decolonising museum collections in the post-colonial period. This is witnessed, for example, in the renaming of museum departments and collections dealing with this material, of which the BM is no exception (in 2004 the Department of Ethnography became the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas). Decolonisation of museum collections is an important, ongoing debate and a process that this project hopes to contribute towards by reframing the SA collections as archive and uncovering traces of African agency in the formation of the collections.

Another reason for selecting this particular time period is the fact that, further to King's observation cited above and based on my own first-hand experience of numerous SA collections in the UK and abroad, it also coincides with the apex of museum collecting. However, this is not to suggest that collections assembled during the colonial period did not come to the Museum after 1961.

There is argument for an earlier cut-off point of 1910, a date that coincides with the end of the Edwardian era as well the creation of the Union of South Africa (which saw the country govern itself, albeit as a British Dominion). It is also one that would be largely in agreement with Annie Coombes's *Reinventing Africa* (1994), which considers African objects collected and brought to Britain where they were displayed during the colonial

period. Although I initially debated using 1910 as a defining point, it begged the question: would I be attempting to look only at objects field-collected by 1910 or those accessioned into the collections by that date? Further research suggested that in many instances it would not be possible to put an exact 'assemblage' date to a collection, although it seems that many collections would have been put together prior to 1910 (particularly those from British military sources). Moreover, research was beginning to show that a number of instances where African agency in the formation of collections might be traced in some detail resided with collections assembled and accessioned after this date.

## **4.2 Which collections?**

The present study confines itself to the registered collections<sup>31</sup> and as such does not take into consideration the handling collections or the so-called 'duplicate' collections. The duplicates, to be further discussed (see Chapter 2), are a by-product of the Museum's nineteenth- and twentieth-century collecting. They were used, at least during the period under consideration here, as a means of exchange – a resource for building up the permanent collections. The study also focuses on those objects that are currently located within the Museum, be they in storage<sup>32</sup> or on display, although occasional reference is made to items that cannot be physically located at present or which have been transferred out of the collections. Additionally, this study does not include archaeological collections.

## **4.3 Why exclude archaeology?**

Despite the fact that archaeology would also have been cared for by the Department's predecessors (and still is curated by AOA in some instances),<sup>33</sup> this study expressly excludes it for several reasons. Certain archaeology collections, in some cases part of a larger collection of ethnography and archaeology obtained and accessioned simultaneously from the same source (i.e. seller/donor), have now been physically and institutionally transferred to the Museum's Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory (BEP).<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Southern African artefacts dating from the Stone Age, a large part of this material at the BM, has already been the subject of an authoritative study (Mitchell et al. 2002). Moreover, the archaeological collections typically pertain to a more remote past and are therefore unlikely to fruitfully respond to the questions being asked here.

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<sup>31</sup> With the exception of the long-term Royal loan (1902) and the Tower Armouries loan (1914).

<sup>32</sup> Much of the research took place while the bulk of the SA collections were still located in AOA's off-site storage facility, Franks House at Orsman Road, located in East London. They are now housed in the BM's on-site facility, the newly built WCEC, while the stored textiles remain, for the time being, at Blythe House in West London.

<sup>33</sup> Approximately 500 objects from SA.

<sup>34</sup> Approximately 1,870 objects from SA.

However, this is not to suggest that archaeological holdings are devoid of African agency. For example, writing in 1920 about some of the Museum's carnelian beads,<sup>35</sup> all apparently found washed up from shipwrecks along the Eastern Cape shores, one donor indicated that the local 'natives' only began collecting these exotic, loose beads 'recently, when they [realised] they could sell them as curios' (GC J. Burt-Davy memorandum, 21/09/1920). Interestingly, the majority of these accessions date to the 1920s and, based on my research into the Museum's and other collections, such beads are not found incorporated into Xhosa or other Southern African beadwork. As Ernest Warren, then curator of the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg and himself a donor of carnelian beads to the BM in 1922, put it, not entirely accurately, '[s]tone-beads are not known among the South African natives' (GC letter from E. Warren, 23/05/1922).

#### **4.4 Why include Lesotho and eSwatini/Swaziland?**

As stated above, SA here is defined as today's Republic of South Africa, although the study also takes into consideration collections from the respective independent Southern African kingdoms of Lesotho and eSwatini. The reason for this device is several-fold. First, the collections originating from these three countries are largely kept together in the same storage location as part of a geographical arrangement of AOA's Africa reserve collections. At the time that much of the research for the present study was conducted the SA collections mainly appeared under a shared location code, viz. 'SAF' (South Africa).<sup>36</sup> Second, despite careful collections research, it is sometimes impossible to establish with certainty if a particular object originates from today's SA or from a neighbouring country. This is especially the case with cultures not confined to the modern borders of the Republic, for example the South Sotho of SA and Lesotho. Furthermore, this study acknowledges the fluidity of cultures, specifically within Southern and Southeast Africa, and the artificiality of imposed boundaries as well as their shifting nature over time. Third, just as borders have shifted over time, so has the usage and understanding of the very term 'South Africa'. Historically, it was sometimes employed to refer more generally to the Southern African region as well as to the country we now refer to as South Africa, a land mass of recognisable form since Union in 1910. It is understandably for this reason that some 'foreign' items ended up in the SA collections at the BM. During the course of this study I 'repatriated' such objects to more appropriate storage locations. For example, a

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<sup>35</sup> Accession numbers Af1920,-.91.a-f; Af1921,-.2.a-b; Af1922,1007.1-3; Af1924,-.134.a-l; Af1924,1025.35 (a point rather than a bead); Af1928,1106.9.a-ac; Af1935,1015.1.a-n. The Museum usually uses the term 'cornelian' to refer to these orange coloured semi-precious stones.

<sup>36</sup> There were certain exceptions, specifically with some of the larger objects, which were sometimes stored at the end of racks roughly according to geographical origin. The location coding employed in the new storage facility has since been changed, although these collections largely remain stored together.

number of pottery vessels (Af1929,1109.) ‘from the Zambezi’ gifted to the BM by Annie Lawley (GC [Lady] Annie Lawley to T.A. Joyce 05/01/1930) were relocated to the Zambia collections.<sup>37</sup> There are also instances where collections, or parts of collections, were potentially left out of this study. However, as far as was practicable, during the course of research, objects originating from SA that were, for whatever reason, stored elsewhere (e.g. among items from another country) were reincorporated into the SA collections. One such example is an elaborately carved, lidded vessel of a particular genre most probably originating from KwaZulu-Natal (Af1954,+23.599.a-b). Accessioned as originating from Nigeria, in line with the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum’s (WHMM) own documentation (the institution that donated the object), until the current research the vessel was neither recognised as pertaining to the SA collections nor stored alongside other SA objects.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4.5 Why the South Africa collections? Why this study?**

The SA collections at the BM are numerically among the largest Africa collections curated by AOA. As with most of the other particularly well-represented Africa collections, the countries from which these collections originate were once administered by Britain. Despite being rich, the SA collections are largely under-researched and relatively little has been published with regard to them. Over the years, BM curators (e.g. Fagg 1965; Braunholtz 1952; BM 1925 & 1910) and others (e.g. in various *Annals of the South African Museum*, see Shaw 1992; Hooper, Davison and Klinghardt 1989; Hooper 1981; Davison 1976; Böhme 1976; Shaw and van Warmelo 1972; see also Stayt 1931; Shapera 1930) have written, almost invariably briefly, about various objects from these collections. It is not until more recently that the SA collections have begun to receive closer consideration (e.g. Nettleton 1988, in Phillips 1995, in Mack 2000, 2007, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016; Klopper 1991, in Phillips 1995, in Mack 2000; Dell 1994; Elliott 2011, 2013; Elliott Weinberg 2016). In particular the work of South African art historian, Anitra Nettleton, who has spent significant periods studying the collections at first-hand, stands out (Freschi and Charlton 2017). Noteworthy, too, is the recent contribution made by BM curators John Giblin and Chris Spring (2016), whose catalogue was published to coincide with the above-mentioned exhibition they curated, *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* (27/10/2016—26/02/2017). Notwithstanding, the SA collections have not been the subject of a study of this kind, one that seeks to account for such a large swathe of the collections. It is also the

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<sup>37</sup> Some of these items are notable in their similarity to South Sotho examples, which is interesting given the historical links.

<sup>38</sup> However, it should be noted that part of the Wellcome collection was at that point separated out in the storeroom.

first to treat the collections explicitly as archive, here in order to uncover traces of African agency.

Many museums – particularly in the UK and SA, but also elsewhere – house SA collections, with much of the material having been gathered during the colonial era. By shining new light on the BM's SA collections this study might helpfully impact upon other projects – not only in the objects and collections it historicises, in terms of overlaps with other collections elsewhere,<sup>39</sup> but also with regard to the methodology employed for uncovering traces of indigenous agency. This method might usefully be applied to the study of other ethnographic collections.<sup>40</sup>

#### **4.6 Why the British Museum?**

In the early stages of this project a senior museum colleague rather helpfully asked me 'why the BM?' – the suggestion being that there were other significant SA collections in the UK worthy of study, for example at the respective universities of Oxford and Cambridge. However, as will be touched upon (Chapter 2), collections formed by individuals with academic training in the discipline of anthropology tended to end up in those museums rather than at the BM; whereas I hope to capture a more general snapshot of collecting (field- and museum-) during the British colonial period in order to examine, in finer-grained analysis, the resultant archive for traces of African agency. For me the BM's historical collections were, and still are, unparalleled for such a study in terms of their lying, as it were, at the very heart of the erstwhile British Empire, in the 'first city' of the United Kingdom and of empire.<sup>41</sup>

Located in the former imperial and current metropolitan capital, London, the BM's collection is national rather than regional; and its ethnography collection is arguably foremost among national and other museum collections of its kind in the UK. It has long been used as a benchmark against which others in this country, and elsewhere, can be

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<sup>39</sup> For example, the JAG, which despite having little or no documentation pertaining to the longer history of its 'traditional' collections (Leibhammer 2016), is described as one of the most important assemblages of SA material of this kind (Nel 2002: 15; Leibhammer 2016: 60).

<sup>40</sup> There have been a significant number of recent projects looking at ethnographic collections in this country, ranging from PhD theses –e.g. Wintle (2009), Stylianou (2012), Wingfield (2012) and Livne (2013)—to large-scale museum initiatives (e.g. *Pacific Presences* (2013-2018) led by Nicholas Thomas and *[Re:]Entanglements* (current) led by Paul Basu).

<sup>41</sup> There are other collections worth studying for this purpose, including material from the British Empire and Commonwealth Collection now housed by Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.



measured.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the Museum is said to possess 'one of the largest and most important ethnographic collections in the world — if not the largest and most important' (Coote 1997: 177). The ethnography collection's elevated status as the national collection, in the absence of a stand-alone or separate museum dedicated to the subject (and therefore almost by default), was not lost on its curators who often used it to benefit the collections. Does the BM's national status, then, imply that its ethnography collections somehow reflect the whole nation, at least in terms of its 'sources' (the donors/sellers who contributed to the collections)? As far as the SA collections are concerned, this question will be addressed more fully in Chapter 3. It is well to remember that 'the metropolis preferred to see its empire as an extension of the nation' (Shelton 2000: 156), which further underscores the importance of these collections. Anthony Shelton describes the situation thus:

In Britain, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the museum establishment was marked by a rigid hierarchical organisation...Ranking between museums was asserted on the basis of their claims to authority and control over specialised knowledge. The British Museum with its claim to universal and comprehensive knowledge of world civilisations, occupied the apex of a pyramidal structure (2000: 159).

## **5. Sketching histories: British colonisation, conflict and influence in South Africa, Lesotho and eSwatini/Swaziland**

As this study seeks to historicise the material under discussion, what follows is a brief outline of the period and some key historical moments.

The 'British period in SA' is here defined as the era spanning the late eighteenth century to 1910, when the Union of South Africa was created (thus bringing an end to British rule), and beyond to 1961. The nineteenth century in particular saw much conflict between the British, sometimes with support from local (black and white) forces, and Africans resulting in the destruction of numerous kingdoms (Maritz 2008: 6).<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the British opposed the Dutch, who had from 1652 settled at the Cape, <sup>44</sup> some of whose descendants, the Boers (forebears of today's Afrikaans-speaking South Africans), eventually seizing the republics that they established and later forging a country out of these and land they had

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<sup>42</sup> For example, Liverpool Museum's ethnographic collection was (favorably) compared against it in the early 1900s by Dr A.B. Meyer of Dresden's Royal Ethnographical Museum who visited that Museum (see Coombes 1994: 130).

<sup>43</sup> For a summarised list of these conflicts, see Maritz (2008: 6).

<sup>44</sup> The Dutch had initially sought British intervention at the Cape.

taken directly from Africans.

British colonialism in SA can be traced to 1795 with British occupation of the Cape, although it would take a number of years for that imperial power to establish, and then greatly expand, its colony there. When the first significant wave of British settlers arrived in 1820 they were dispatched to the frontier east of the colony, bringing them and the neighbouring isiXhosa-speakers into close proximity. Further up the eastern seaboard, the British established Port Natal (now Durban) in 1824, eventually seizing Natal from the Boers and creating a colony in 1845.

Between 1779 and 1878, the so-called 'Frontier Wars',<sup>45</sup> a series of nine wars formerly referred to as the 'Kaffir Wars', involving in the main colonists and isiXhosa-speakers, were waged at intervals in what is now SA's Eastern Cape province. Of these, Britain participated in the Fourth- to the Ninth War (fought between 1811 and 1878), further increasing both the colony's territorial gains and dispossessing the Xhosa.<sup>46</sup> Following the Ninth War, the British turned on the Zulu kingdom, which lay to the east of Natal. The Anglo-Zulu War (1879) led to the destruction of that kingdom. It saw the invasion of Zululand and the capture of the Zulu king, Cetshwayo kaMpande. No sooner had the Anglo-Zulu War come to an end than the British looked to their colony to the north, the Transvaal. They again asserted their authority over Sekhukhune, the Pedi ruler (1879), destroying this North Sotho kingdom with the aid of Swazi allies (see Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 168; Delius 1984: 217-250).<sup>47</sup> The final episode of conflict involving imperial forces against the last vestiges of African independence in SA came with the uSuthu Rebellion in 1888, when the British once again intervened in Zululand, which in the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu War had been carved up into thirteen chiefdoms and soon descended into civil war.<sup>48</sup> The British suppressed the uSuthu (those loyal to the

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<sup>45</sup> Webb critiques this phrase and problematises the use of the term 'frontier'. He states, '[o]ne of the most obvious problems with the use of the term 'Cape's Eastern frontier', or worse still, just 'Eastern Frontier' is that it implies looking at events from the perspective of the Cape Colony' (Webb 2017: 684).

<sup>46</sup> The first three wars are considered Dutch or 'VOC' (Dutch East India Company) wars (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 77). Curiously, Giliomee and Mbenga do not cite the Ninth War (1877-1879) as a Frontier War.

<sup>47</sup> Here, Delius prefers the term 'Pedi polity' but his later writing refers to the 'Pedi Kingdom' (Delius 2001: 441).

<sup>48</sup> Another significant conflict, known as the 'Bhambatha Rebellion' (1906), is considered 'the last episode of African military resistance to colonial domination in South Africa' (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 169), but as it involved colonial (local) rather than imperial forces is not discussed here (see Stuart 1913: xiv). Similarly, the 'Langalibalele Rebellion' (1873), precipitated when the Natal authorities attempted to control firearms and Hlubi leader Langalibalele refused to comply, appears not to have included imperial forces, although the forces raised against the chief were led by A.W. Durnford, a British officer who was later killed during the Anglo-Zulu War (see Stuart 1913: 10-12).

old order of the kingdom), who aligned themselves with the son and successor of the now deceased Cetshwayo, Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, in favour of their 'client chiefs' whom they had installed (Mahoney 2012: 153; see also Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 168). Zululand had been annexed the previous year and was subsequently incorporated into Natal a decade later.

Partly to escape British interference, Boers had trekked into the interior where they established, among others, two self-governing states in 1852 and 1854 respectively, namely the South African Republic (or Transvaal) and the Republic of the Orange Free State. Britain held designs on these republics, hoping to federate them with the Cape and Natal (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 194). To this end, the Transvaal was annexed in 1877 but regained independence following the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-81), although under British suzerainty. The republics managed to hold onto their independence until the South African War (1899-1902), formerly known as the Second Anglo-Boer War, which pitted Britain against the republics and drew many more into the conflict, particularly black South Africans (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 218-220). Deemed 'the largest and most costly war fought by the British between 1815 and 1914' (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 217), the ensuing peace paved the way for the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. A dominion of the British Empire, the Union was forged out of the four British colonies; each former colony became a province within the new country. Although Union technically signaled the end of the British colonial era in SA, British intervention had certainly shaped that country. Following Union, African dispossession was cemented by the Natives Land Act of 1913, '[t]he most contentious Act passed by the first Union Parliament – and the one that was to have the most far-reaching implications' (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 233). In 1936, 'native land' was formalized into a system of African reserves, entrenching the division between blacks and whites and paving the way for the implementation of apartheid.

In the meantime, if it seemed that Britain had turned its back on SA, it has been noted that:

Part of the concept of British supremacy had entailed the incorporation of the different regions of South Africa into one state after the Union Jack had been hoisted over them. A united or federated South Africa would, it came to be believed, be of greater value to Britain in case of war than four separately governed colonies (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 229).

Post-Union, a certain amount of British sentiment arguably remained in that country,<sup>49</sup> as demonstrated, for example, by SA serving alongside the Allies in both World Wars. However, it would not prevail in the face of growing Afrikaner nationalism and following a referendum on the matter, SA broke completely from Britain and became a republic in 1961, further severing ties by leaving the Commonwealth.

As already discussed, Lesotho as it is now known, came under British protection in 1868 at the request of King Moshoeshoe. In 1871 it was annexed to the Cape Colony for thirteen years before being returned to Britain in 1884 (Great Britain 1952: 5). British administration of Swaziland, which unlike Lesotho is not entirely geographically located within SA, was established in 1903 following the South African War (MacMillan 1985: 118). With the talk of Union in 1909, 'when the constitution of the Union of South Africa was being drawn up, the native inhabitants...asked that they should not be included' (Great Britain 1952: 5). Lesotho and Swaziland, the colony and the protectorate, gained independence from Britain in 1966 and 1968 respectively.

## **6. Chapter outline**

The main body of this thesis is divided into five chapters split across two sections, the first (Chapters 1-3) setting out the context and the second the case studies (Chapters 4-5). Chapter 1, entitled 'Archive as form: the museum (collection) as archive, and towards African agency in the archive', first considers museums and archives as distinct, yet related technologies. It then looks at the 'archival turn', the fairly recent, critically inflected engagement with archive and the move to figure the museum and its collections, particularly of South African 'ethnography', as archive. The chapter concludes by outlining the theoretical framework and key concepts pertinent to the archive as applied in this thesis and further unpacks the notion of 'African agency' as pertains to this study.

Chapter 2, 'Ethnography and "ethnographisation": colonial collecting at the British Museum', opens by defining what is meant by the term 'museum ethnography' and suggests some problems posed by the discipline. The chapter then goes on to outline the shifting curatorial responsibility for this subject at the BM, as it evolved at the Museum, tracing the instrumentality of the archive's archons (or keepers, as head curators are called within this context), primarily that of A.W. Franks and his successor, C.H. Read, who dominated what might be considered the long nineteenth century, followed in the

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<sup>49</sup> For example, the British national anthem was retained until the late 1950s.

twentieth century by the leadership of H.J. Braunholtz and others. The chapter then looks at museum-collecting and the growth of the SA collections at the BM, taking into account the Museum's policy and strategy. This chapter also examines the advice that the Museum issued via the various editions of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, a guide to prospective field-collectors. This is followed by a consideration of how the collections were 'archived', that is to say, catalogued and arranged (stored and, to a lesser extent, displayed).

'Collecting South Africa at the British Museum to 1961' is the title of Chapter 3. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first starts with a brief chronicle of the growth of these collections from the earliest times at the BM up to and including 1961, discussing the SA collections alongside Braunholtz's more generalised accounts of ethnography at the BM. The second part examines the various 'sources' that contributed to these collections, both in terms of field-collectors and donor/sellers, applying, as far as possible, Braunholtz's main categories of collectors (viz. colonial administrators and officials, missionaries, museums and exhibitions, anthropologists and 'collectors'). The third part of this chapter shifts to consider the possibility of African collectors and agency.

Having established the context of this study in the first three chapters, the last two chapters shift to focus on four major case studies. Although case studies are discussed throughout the thesis, the two final chapters are specifically devoted to the longer case studies detailing the selected collections, or specific objects thereof. The collections are discussed chronologically, that is to say in the order in which they were field-collected rather than accessioned by the Museum. Chapter 4, entitled 'Collected by a colonial administrator and an official: The Wolseley and Newnham collections' firstly deals with the Wolseley Collection. This collection was assembled in the Zulu kingdom as it unraveled at the close of the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) and, although ostensibly a study on interrupted African agency, it is suggested that here some African agency may yet be discernible. Significantly, this case study succeeds in reconnecting a named African individual, in this instance King Cetshwayo kaMpande, to a collection that had otherwise lost this link prior to the present research. The second part of Chapter 4 looks at a number of objects collected by a colonial official by the name of Frederick Newnham who acquired items in the early twentieth century while traversing the, by then British, Transvaal Colony as part of the Transvaal Native Location Commission. As with the Wolseley material, these objects can be linked to at least one named African.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, entitled 'Anthropological(?) collecting: The Braunholtz and Powell-Cotton collections' uncovers further named African individuals and traces of African agency in the formation of these collections. This chapter deals with more 'professional' collectors, i.e. BM curator H.J. Braunholtz, who collected objects in the Province of the Transvaal during a visit in 1929, and Antoinette Powell-Cotton, who, like Braunholtz, was not a formally trained anthropologist, but nevertheless collected objects in Zululand, by then part of Natal Province, during the mid-1930s with some guidance from him. In both these cases the names of African agents were noted. However, this information was not carried over to the BM catalogue. Taken together, the four longer case studies examined in the last two chapters, making up Section Two of the thesis, concern objects collected between the late nineteenth century and the mid-1930s in what are today's KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. The objects dealt with here were collected among, in the first instance, Zulu/isiZulu-speakers and, in the second, Venda/Tshivenda- and Tsonga/Xitsonga-speakers. However, vignettes throughout Section One of the thesis cover further cultures and the period under consideration (to 1961) more generally. Additionally, the main case studies represent two different, if vaguely defined, 'sources' of the collections at the BM as classified by Braunholtz (1938) – what he terms 'colonial administrators and officials' on the one hand and what he might mean by 'anthropologists'.

## **Section One: The Context**

### **Chapter 1. Archive as form: the museum (collection) as archive, and towards African agency in the archive**

The term “archives” first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state. However, by “archives” is also understood a collection of documents — normally written documents — kept in this building...The status and the power of the archive derive from this entanglement of building and documents...The archive... is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and of selection...[it is] not a piece of data, but a status (Mbembe 2002: 19-20).

[I]n archives, things do not stand as representative of ‘a culture’... but as inherited resources available for engagement in the present (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 416).

This chapter opens with a consideration of museums and archives as distinct yet related forms and goes on to discuss how in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ‘the archive’, as a utopia, was an imaginary intersection of these and other imperial ‘knowledge institutions’ with London as hub and the BM at its apex (Richards 1993). It then moves on to look at what has been termed the ‘archival turn’, which can be seen as a critical, philosophically inflected engagement with archive, but also the recent uptake of archival sources more generally. In doing so, it provides an overview of the literature pertinent to this study, identifying relevant material while continuing to draw parallels between these findings and the SA collections at the BM. Following that, the chapter explores the recent refiguring of the museum and its collections as archive, making a case for the consideration of the BM material in this manner. It then concludes with an outline of the theoretical framework and critical concepts that this study deploys pertaining to archive and agency.

#### **1. Apropos museums and archives**

While museum collections of ethnography might already be regarded as archives of sorts (see mentions in Mack 2000: 16; Shelton 2000: 160; Longair and McAleer 2012: 2), this thesis aims rather to critically treat and engage with a single such assemblage, specifically

the SA collections at the BM, as archive.<sup>50</sup> But why bring one type of collecting domain, the museum, into the purview of another: that of the archive? Archives and museums in the public sphere usually share some areas of overlap. Both are items of architecture and content; they tend to be repositories constituted by their collections, which we might consider to comprise mainly unique, 'primary sources', even 'treasures'.<sup>51</sup> Both provide public access, albeit with certain restrictions, while maintaining an aura, at least in popular imagination, of secrecy. To adopt Pierre Nora's term, both can be seen as *lieux de memoire*, where 'memory crystallizes and secretes itself' (1989: 7). And both selectively include (or exclude as the case may be), classify, arrange, manage and preserve material, but each according its own, sometimes not entirely different, practices. Another distinction stems from the materials with which each is synonymous; archives tend to be concerned with texts and museums with objects, although this is not necessarily always the case and some degree of interpenetration may exist.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, museums are synonymous with the display of their holdings, their interpretation for a public audience, whereas archives are perhaps less so.<sup>53</sup>

Although museums and archives as we know them, in the 'Western mode', have classical roots (as the ancient Greek origin of the words 'museum' and 'archive' suggest, to be discussed), they have different histories and emerged during the modern period from separate trajectories. To borrow from Foucauldian thinking, they might therefore be seen as discrete historical attempts at all-encompassing, all-seeing 'panopticons of knowledge' (cf. Basu and de Jong 2016: 9). However, it should be noted that, in its original eighteenth century foundation, the BM did not distinguish between objects and other sources and that for many years the Director of the BM was known as the Principal Librarian<sup>54</sup> (whose domicile, in name at least, would become the Round Reading Room, itself of panopticon form and located at the heart of the Museum, acting as a kind of conceptual nerve centre).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Assemblage in the ordinary sense, '[a] collection or gathering of things...' (*OELD*)

<sup>51</sup> Nelson Mandela is quoted on a wall panel at the NASA, Pretoria as having compared the archive to 'a treasure house' (visited 15/02/2018).

<sup>52</sup> For example, the BM's Central Archive houses a number of objects, including the remains of a World War II bombshell that fell on the BM (pers. comm. Francesca Hillier, 06/09/2016) and included in the SA collections at the BM is a study of rock art executed in 1863 by Alexander Moncrieff (Af1979,01.2732), inscribed '[d]rawings on the rock walls of a Bushmans [sic] cave in the mountains on the frontier of Natal'.

<sup>53</sup> Although of course many archives, especially the larger national collections such as those housed by the British Library and the National Archives, have a regular schedule of exhibitions.

<sup>54</sup> The head of the BM was since 1756 officially known as the Principal Librarian and between 1898 and 1973 as Director and Principal Librarian (Caygill 2002: 380).

<sup>55</sup> The Reading Room was completed in 1857, having been based on an idea proposed by Antonio Panizzi, then Keeper of the Department of Printed Books and later Principal Librarian.



In a move that ostensibly anticipates what has been referred to as the ‘archival turn’ (discussed below), Thomas Richards conflates forms, including the museum and archive, in his study spanning the period 1870—1940 (1993: 11). Richards contests that the archive was in that period conceived of as an ‘operational field of projected total knowledge...not a building, nor even a collection of texts, but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable’ (1993: 11). According to him, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the (British) ‘imperial archive’— an imagined and longed-for, but ultimately unrealised ‘utopian space of comprehensive knowledge’ – opened up (1993: 11). Located in London, the Empire’s metropolis characterised by Richards as ‘an archival complex’ (see Basu and de Jong 2016: 7), the archive was made up of various ‘knowledge-producing institutions of Empire’ (1993: 15). Following Richards’s line of argument ‘[p]re-eminent’ among these was the BM (1993: 15). Although Richards, a literary scholar, has mostly text in mind (the British Library was only later to be separated from the BM), his observations that the imperial archive successfully ‘establish[ed] itself at the center of Victorian and early-twentieth-century representation’ (1993: 15) and that the British Empire ‘was more productive of knowledge than any previous empire in history’ are pertinent (1993: 4). Museums, as part of what has been termed ‘the exhibitionary complex’ (Bennet 1995) encompassing world’s fairs (Greenhalgh 1988; 2011) and other institutions of display, played an important and now well-documented role in knowledge production during this period, including of ‘Africa’ and the ‘African’ in both imperial centre and its periphery (e.g. Coombes 1994; Dell 1994; MacGregor 2007; Longair and McAleer 2012).<sup>56</sup> Drawing on Richards, de Jong asserts that metropolitan museums (of which we might consider the BM a prime example), ‘historically conceived for the collecting of art, antiquities, ethnographic specimens, photography and knowledge...constitute the imperial archive – that utopian site for the collection of the world’ (2016: 5).

Conventionally, the archive has been thought of as a place and its contents, usually documents (see Enwezor 2008: 11; Mbembe 2002: 19; Stoler 2002: 94).<sup>57</sup> Given that the archive is ‘largely about “the past”’ (Hall 2001: 92 cited in Basu and de Jong 2016: 5), it is not unsurprising that ‘[t]he standard view of the archive oftentimes evokes a dim, musty

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<https://blog.britishmuseum.org/the-round-reading-room-at-the-british-museum/> (last accessed 02/08/2018). It is possible that he was inspired in his idea by Jeremy Bentham, who devised the panopticon, possibly through their University College London links. The BM’s printed books and manuscripts would later form part of the British Library.

<sup>56</sup> Richards points out that during the nineteenth century the empire was often seen as an extension of the nation (1993: 3).

<sup>57</sup> The *Oxford English Living Dictionaries* (hereafter *OELD*) (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>) gives archive’s first meaning as the contents, followed by place.

place full of drawers, filing cabinets, and shelves laden with old documents, an inert repository of historical artifacts' (Enwezor 2008: 11). Indeed, once secreted in the archive, 'we imagine that a record, an object or a collection is preserved relatively unchanged for posterity' (Hamilton 2011: 319). Conversely, 'the archive' as a concept, usually rendered in the singular and including the definite article, has wider scope, as it does for Richards. Often used figuratively (de Jong 2016; Basu and de Jong 2016; Zeitlyn 2012: 462; Stoler 2002: 94), it 'leads elsewhere... [and] may represent neither material site nor a set of documents. Rather, it may serve as a strong *metaphor* for any corpus of selective forgettings and collections' (Stoler 2002: 94). Crucially, it is also potentially a productive site for revisiting the past in the present (Basu and de Jong 2016: 10; Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b). As Tamar Garb asserts:

A disputed and shifting field of objects, ideas, and propositions, the archive is constantly being remade and rethought, not only by the discovery of history-laden images and materials, but also the development of alternative forms of interpretation that reshape the old and find new meanings where outmoded or exhausted models once stood (Garb 2013: 29).

Paul Basu and Ferdinand de Jong rightly suggest that '[r]ather than a system of files, the archive [might be thought of]... as the practice that determines what is filed' (2016: 7). Indeed, as the quotation prefacing this chapter indicates, Achille Mbembe (2002; cf. Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 416) has shown that archive is a *status* accorded to select items (he discusses documents specifically) that enter a public sphere and, once processed for the purposes of their identification and interpretation, are 'placed under a seal of secrecy', at least for a period (2002: 20).<sup>58</sup> As with museum objects, the move from the private to the public domain is therefore no guarantee of access.<sup>59</sup> Mbembe also calls attention to the imbrication of building and contents in signaling authority. In an evocation that could easily describe the BM with its neoclassical façade and other features (**Fig. 7**), he suggests:<sup>60</sup>

The archive has neither status nor power without an architectural dimension, which encompasses the physical space of the site of the building, its motifs and columns,

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<sup>58</sup>It is also perhaps no coincidence that the meaning of the term 'classification' began to shift in the nineteenth century from 'ordering information in taxonomies' to 'classified' (i.e. accessible only to certain people) (Richards 1993: 6).

<sup>59</sup> Annie Coombes (1994: 60) draws attention to the issue of limited public access to viewing ethnography on display at the BM in the late nineteenth century when visiting hours were restrictive.

<sup>60</sup> Basu and de Jong (2016: 12) note that this architectural style 'index[es] the Ancient Greek polis'.

the arrangement of the rooms, the organisation of the “files”, the labyrinth of corridors (2002: 19).

## 2. The ‘archival turn’

Over recent years, archives have attracted increasing scholarly attention to the point that it has been suggested we are presently witnessing an ‘archival turn’ (Basu and de Jong 2016: 6). This is not to suggest that the use of the archive is a new phenomenon. On the contrary, scholars, specifically historians, have long “mined” the archives for “nuggets of fact” (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 9). What has changed, according to anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler (2009), who is credited with coining the phrase ‘archival turn’ (Eichhorn 2008: 8), is the ‘move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject’ (Stoler 2009: 44) where archives are not conceived of as ‘sites of knowledge retrieval but of knowledge production’ (Stoler 2002: 90). Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever* (1996), based on a lecture he gave at the opening of London’s Freud Museum in 1994 and translated from his subsequent book published in the original French as *Mal d’Archive* (1995), is often credited with igniting critical engagement with the archive (Basu and de Jong 2016: 6). However, as Carolyn Steedman (2001: 2) and Stoler (2009: 44; 2002: 92) point out, despite the stir it created, the ‘archival turn’ had already begun.

Seminal here is Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) wherein he states ‘[t]he archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events...it is...*the system of its enunciability*’ (1972 [2011]: 145-6).<sup>61</sup> Both Foucault and Derrida, in their above-mentioned texts, underscore the link between archives, knowledge, power and authority. In turning to origins, Derrida describes how the very word ‘archive’ archives within itself ‘*archē*’, the Greek root (intimated above) that ‘names at once the *commencement* and the *commandment*’ (1996: 1). He reminds us that the meaning of the word ‘archive’ comes from ‘*arkheion*’, which he describes as ‘initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded’ (1996: 2). It was in this place, and on the authority of the archons, that official documents were kept and interpreted in classical Greece. (Mbembe, as mentioned, elaborates on this point.)

David Zeitlyn recognises that while ‘Derrida and Foucault...see archives as hegemonic, characterizing ways of thought, modes of colonization, and the control of citizens... they also make clear that archives can be read subversively’ (2012: 461). He identifies two

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<sup>61</sup> The work was first published in French as *L’archéologie du Savoir* (1969).

such strategies for doing so, namely reading 'against the grain' and 'along the grain' (see also Stoler 2002: 99-100). For 'against the grain' reading, Zeitlyn cites as an example the joint work of John and Jean Comaroff who advocate an ethnography of archive that works both in and outside of 'the official record' (Zeitlyn 2012: 464). He then turns to Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* (2009). Staying within the archive, Stoler's ethnography as earlier articulated advocates an examination of the form and context of documents (Stoler 2002: 90), what she conceives of as reading 'along the archival grain' (2002: 99). Stoler asserts that '[w]e need to read [the archive] for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission, and mistake — *along the archival grain*' (2002: 100).

Although much of it pre-dating Stoler's, Zeitlyn sees the work of the South Asian subaltern studies group as combining these two critical strategies, namely: 'using an understanding of how records were created (reading along the grain) to recover history from below (reading against the grain)' (2012: 465). However, attempts to write a history of those 'from below' or of lower status, the so-called subalterns, using the inherited colonial archive in independent India were fraught, given that they had been rendered voiceless. This prompted Gayatri Spivak to ask: 'can the subaltern speak?' (1988: 25) to which she posits, 'in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak' (1988: 28).<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding, Zeitlyn (2012: 464) asserts '[w]ith care and assiduity, it is possible to understand [subjugated] people from archives in ways never intended or envisaged by those creating or maintaining the archives', thus 'allow[ing] the excavation of the voices (sometimes names) of subaltern and otherwise suppressed others from the archive' (2012: 461).

Post-1994 SA is the locus of a further trajectory of archive emanating from the Global South. Faced with the doubly problematic challenges of an inherited colonial and apartheid archive needing transformation (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 7), in 1998 historians, archivists and others participated in a project, entitled *Refiguring the Archive*, aimed at bringing together theory and practice (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 11). Located in that country and convened by several South African institutions, the undertaking drew local and international participation, including, notably, that of Derrida. The project also informed a subsequent collection of essays by the same name, which includes contributions from some of those involved (Hamilton et al. 2002). *Refiguring the Archive* came about at a critical moment in a newly democratic and transforming SA. In

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<sup>62</sup> She concludes that this is even more the case for subaltern females.

1995 the interim Government of National Unity had established the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a court of law-like forum aimed at ‘uncovering the truth about human rights violations that had occurred during the period of apartheid’.<sup>63</sup> Victims and perpetrators of violations and atrocities committed on all sides since 1960 came forward and gave testimony before an appointed body and the public.<sup>64</sup> Since the first hearings began in 1996, and over the ensuing years, the TRC received a total of more than 21,000 victim statements and recorded around 38,000 ‘gross violations of human rights’ (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 414).<sup>65</sup> The TRC is widely considered to have been a cathartic platform for bearing witness, but it also exposed issues surrounding archive, while generating its own.<sup>66</sup> As Hamilton, Harris and Reid point out, in the TRC’s ‘attempts to reconstruct the past it became clear that many [official] documents had been systematically and deliberately destroyed’ and that, ‘[p]aradoxically, access to the archives of the TRC itself raises important questions around restrictions of access to information, the sanitising of documents and the role therein of government’ (2002: 11).<sup>67</sup>

Archive still holds traction in SA and elsewhere<sup>68</sup>. Despite the current ‘moment...of intense academic scrutiny [of archives]’ (Basu and de Jong 2016: 6), Basu and de Jong observe that, with the exception of those ‘reading’ the textual colonial archive (e.g. Stoler 2002, 2009) or engaging with its photographic archive (e.g. Elizabeth Edwards), anthropologists have in the main hitherto not made an ‘archival turn’ (2016: 7-9). In a special issue of the journal *Social Anthropology* (2016), which stems from their *Utopian Archives: Pasts and Futures* research project, joint editors Basu and de Jong advocate the ‘material turn’ taken by Edwards *inter alios*.<sup>69</sup> Their conception of ‘affordances’ as applied to the colonial archive can be summarised as the manifold, unintended ‘repertoires of action’ (2016: 11),

<sup>63</sup> Desmond Tutu, ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa’, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 22/02/2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Commission-South-Africa> (last accessed 25/07/2018).

<sup>64</sup> Media coverage of the TRC was unprecedented. The TRC has been described as ‘probably...the most mediated event’ in the history of Africa (Verdoolaege 2005: 181).

<sup>65</sup> Although not authorised to pursue prosecution, the Commission body could grant amnesty following ‘full disclosure’ and did so to over 1,000 perpetrators (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 414).

<sup>66</sup> See for example the TRC Archives Project [http://www.saha.org.za/projects/trc\\_archive\\_project.htm](http://www.saha.org.za/projects/trc_archive_project.htm) (last accessed 25/07/2018). For transcripts of special hearings and reports see <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/index.html> (last accessed 25/07/2018).

<sup>67</sup> The TRC has been called an ‘apartheid archive’ (Laubscher 2013: 47) – other than the Apartheid Archive Project, a research project started in 2008 with the express aim of inserting stories, particularly of marginalised, ‘ordinary’ individuals, into the archive (Stevens, Duncan and Hook 2013: 7). The project’s collection is housed at the University of the Witwatersrand. See <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/collections&c=AG3275/R/9023> (last accessed 30/07/2018).

<sup>68</sup> See for example the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (APC) at the University of Cape Town, a research project chaired by Hamilton <http://www.apc.uct.ac.za> (last accessed 19/09/2014).

<sup>69</sup> De Jong also edited a special issue of *World Art* (2016) concerned primarily with ‘archival art’ (de Jong 2016: 3).

at once latent within and enabled by the archive as a technology, actions and appropriations such as along- and against the grain readings of the kind already discussed. They assert that the archive ‘affords access to the past in the present and in so doing shapes futures’ (2016: 10). Like other critical approaches to archive (see above), theirs is explicitly a postcolonial project, here aimed at further contributing to the decolonisation of their chosen discipline, anthropology, whose history, they recognise, ‘is entangled with the history of the archive’ (2016: 9).

As already suggested, a number of recent scholarly publications and projects have been attending to the colonial photographic archive in important ways (e.g. Edwards 2016, 2013; Coombes 2016; Rippe 2016; Mokoena 2016; Mussai forthcoming;<sup>70</sup> Garb (ed.) 2013; Godby 2010).<sup>71</sup> Of the studies here referenced, with the exception of those of Edwards, all focus specifically on representations of Africans. Contributions to *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive* (Garb (ed.) 2013), in keeping with recent thinking, refuse to simply disavow these images, opening them up instead to the possibility of African agency. For, not only are elements of self-fashioning at times suggested by these images, but, as Hamilton and Leibhammer point out, some essays in the volume and elsewhere<sup>72</sup> ‘are alert to signs of respect and appreciation, empathy and intersubjectivity in such photographs’ (2016a: 27). Interest in African ‘ethnographic photographs’, i.e. photographs ‘made and circulated with ethnographic intention’ as well as those absorbed into the anthropological ambit particularly in the nineteenth century (Edwards 2002: 70), has been a long time coming (e.g. Stevenson and Graham-Stewart 2001). As far back as 1986, Allan Sekula drew attention to portrait photography’s ‘double operation’, its ability to function ‘both *honorifically* and *repressively*’ (emphasis in original) and its entanglement with the archive (1986: 6). However, it is only more recently with the kind of work touched on here, especially with regard to recovering the names of African individuals where possible as advocated by Zeitlyn, that honorific possibilities have been

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<sup>70</sup> Mussai is currently working on a PhD thesis entitled ‘The Black Body in the Archive: Victorian Photography, Race and the Poetics of Difference. A Curatorial & Art Historical Enquiry’ — see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/people/academic-staff/tamar-garb/tabs/teaching> (last accessed 02/08/2018).

<sup>71</sup> Notable recent and ongoing projects include those of Renée Mussai and Paul Basu. The exhibition curated by Mussai, *The African Choir 1891 Re-imagined*, regarding a group of black South African singers who visited the UK in the nineteenth century, images of which have been circulating for some time now and which I too encountered in the archive, was shown in the UK and SA — see <http://themissingchapter.co.uk/the-african-choir-re-imagined/> (last accessed 02/08/2018). For details of Basu’s *[Re:]Entanglements* project, which focuses on the ‘ethnographic archive’ of objects, photographs and other material assembled by Northcote W. Thomas in West Africa during the early twentieth century, see <https://re-entanglements.net> (last accessed 02/08/2018).

<sup>72</sup> For a useful list of these see Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 27–28).

more fully explored.<sup>73</sup> Another welcome development has been the growing interest in the archive of early African photographers (e.g. Anderson and Aronson 2017; Gore 2015).

If there has been an uptake of ethnographic photographs, including expressly those depicting South Africans, by scholars (e.g. Rippe 2016; Mokoena 2016; Mussai forthcoming; Garb (ed.) 2013; Godby 2010) and artists (e.g. Santu Mofokeng's 1997 *Black Photo Album/Look at Me: 1890—1950*),<sup>74</sup> there has been comparatively less enthusiasm for that country's three-dimensional 'ethnographic objects' frequently now languishing in museums (see Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 28).<sup>75</sup> Before here turning to consider studies by South African scholars Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer and others taking an archival turn with such objects, Annie Coombes's recent work (2016), featured in a further special issue stemming from the already mentioned *Utopian Archives* project, warrants attention.<sup>76</sup> In a move that resonates with the work of Hamilton inter alios, Coombes positions the museum as archive.

Coombes examines the reuse of the colonial photographic archive in two very different Kenyan museums. Both institutions – the National Museum of Kenya (NMK), Nairobi and the Lari Memorial Peace Museum, a small, grass-roots venture in Kimende, located some distance from the capital – repurpose British colonial propaganda images derived from that country's 1953-1960 state of emergency. Although quite different in execution, NMK's is a commissioned installation piece by Kenyan artist, Miriam Syowia Kyambi, featuring suspended framed scans of photographs mined from the Museum's own archive, while Lari's is a wall-mounted display of photocopied photographs culled from various partisan British sources, Coombes demonstrates how each effectively reworks the colonial archive. Crucially, both museums utilise the colonial archive in ways never intended by those who created it, thereby changing our understanding of it, and, as Coombes suggests, 'both institutions conversely offer ways to reimagine the museum itself as archive' (2016: 61).

Like SA, Kenya was a British colony with a significant, yet smaller white settler population. Similarly, as part of this legacy Kenyans have inherited a colonial archive, which the above interventions can be seen as moves to challenge, if not transform. Archives, after all, are contingent and not immutable.

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<sup>73</sup> This was something sought by Mussai's project, for example.

<sup>74</sup> See Garb (2013) and Spring and Giblin (2016: 164-169).

<sup>75</sup> Although this is not to suggest that photographs are not objects in their own right (see Edwards 2002).

<sup>76</sup> This time in *World Art* a special issue edited by de Jong and concerned primarily with 'archival art' (de Jong 2016: 3), i.e. artists' engagement with the 'colonial archive'.

### 3. The 'museum-as-archive turn'

In leading elsewhere (Stoler 2002: 94), archive as critical framing has enabled the (re)imagining of other forms, such as the museum, as archive. The work of Hamilton is particularly instrumental here. In setting out a variety of other such forms that might be considered archive, Hamilton signals 'institutions termed "museums"' (i.e. museums as institutions as well as the object and image collections they may house) (2011: 321) and in so doing elaborates on an earlier such gesture made towards museums (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 15). It might be said that here, as with archive, the meaning of museum simultaneously encompasses substrate, i.e. the building, and its contents, thereby allowing for a useful slippage in our understanding between museum-as-archive and collection-as-archive.

This concept of the museum as archive is one that Hamilton has more recently taken up herself, as have a number of others following her work (Wanless 2007, 2010; Byala 2010, 2013a&b; Weintroub 2013; Hamilton and Leibhammer 2014, 2016b; Byala and Wanless 2016).<sup>77</sup> Between them, these scholars have brought within the ambit of archive collections of Southern African objects that would once have been considered 'ethnographic'. Several studies focus on Museum Africa, a Johannesburg city council museum (Wanless 2007, 2010; Byala 2010, 2013; Wanless and Byala 2016), one deals with the Bleek Collection that includes such objects dispersed across three Cape Town institutions (Weintroub 2013), while another focuses on a number of collections housed in SA and the UK (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2014, 2016b).

The last mentioned study by Hamilton and Leibhammer comes out of an Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (APC), University of Cape Town research project. Entitled *Ethnologised Pasts and Their Archival Futures*, '[t]he project draws attention to the archival capacities and challenges of ethnographic material' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2014: 155, 2016b: 415).<sup>78</sup> Hamilton and Leibhammer's essays (2014 and expanded in 2016b) examine hairpins and other items of personal adornment field-collected by British museum curators Henry Balfour and Alfred Cort Haddon and deposited respectively in the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM), Oxford and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), Cambridge. Aside from giving attention to these

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<sup>77</sup> Also Elliott Weinberg forthcoming.

<sup>78</sup> Information regarding this particular project no longer appears on APC's website <http://www.apc.uct.ac.za> (last accessed 26/07/2018)), but details can be retrieved via Internet Archive's Wayback Machine. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140413173240/http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/research/projects/> (last accessed 26/07/2018).



two UK university museum collections, they further consider material collected by Tyrolean missionary to SA, Franz Mayr, and now housed in the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, a national museum located in Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal province.

As with the two-volume *Tribing and Untribing the Archive* (2016), which Hamilton and Leibhammer edited, and where the second essay appears, their study concerns itself with the history of pre-Union (1910) southern KwaZulu-Natal and with identity-making of isiZulu-speakers in that region.<sup>79</sup> Their study reveals how many of the objects have come to bear the generic designation of 'Zulu', in a conflation of identities north and south of the Thukela.<sup>80</sup> Through careful research, Hamilton and Leibhammer have been able to show, for example, that Balfour and Haddon collected the objects in question during a single 'collecting event' (cf. Owen 1999 cited in Wingfield 2011: 126). On Saturday 26 August 1905, Balfour and Haddon visited Laduma kaTetelegu's homestead at Swartkop (alternatively Zwartkop) as part of a British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) tour of SA (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 421). It was here that they 'purchased [these particular] ornaments etc. from natives' (Balfour cited in Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 422), rather than in Zululand (where BAAS did not venture, but MAA documentation pertaining to items collected by Haddon nonetheless suggests).<sup>81</sup> Hamilton and Leibhammer go on to uncover why it may have come to pass that the homestead of Laduma, chief of the Mpumuza people 'an offshoot of the Zondi' (2016b: 434), was selected as a BAAS stopping point. Aside from its close proximity to Pietermaritzburg, seat of the colonial government who were in charge of BAAS's local itinerary and where the party had been staying, and its easy reach by train, significantly this was the location of the Zondi Mpumuza, colonial loyalists, who had previously been subjugated by the Zulu (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 438). Laduma himself was in fact part of a lineage of chiefs who had enjoyed cordial relations with the colonial establishment since the early nineteenth century (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 435). It is also possibly for this reason that Zwartkop was the first 'native location' to be demarcated shortly after Natal became a British colony (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 4).

In their endeavour, Hamilton and Leibhammer make several critical and methodological interventions (here I reference their later essay (2016b) as it is more detailed), already touched on in the Introduction, but further elaborated upon here. Based on the premise

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<sup>79</sup> This area between the Thukela and Mzimvubu rivers formed part of the British colony of Natal and lay outside of the Zulu kingdom (later, once under British rule, known as Zululand) located across the Thukela.

<sup>80</sup> As did other contributions looking at other museum collections, e.g. Elliott Weinberg (2016).

<sup>81</sup> They reference <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/manuscripts/balfourdiaries1905.html>.

that 'inherited colonial collections' of objects typically considered as ethnographic have been 'historically denied archival status' (2016b: 415), excluded from the archive as such by the powers that were, they adopt a two-pronged approach. First, they set about framing the material as archival by researching it (rather than merely seeking to extract information) and second, they reconstruct what they term 'the *archival histories* of these materials' (2016b: 415). This historicisation, they argue, then enables the opening up of what they call the objects' 'archival potential', transforming often disavowed and scantily documented collections into '*archival sources*' (2016b: 416), thus encouraging their 'utilisation as historical source' (2016b: 418). They propose:

As archival items they [objects] would re-enter the world laden with an enhanced potential for enabling thinking about the past, open for invitation into public life, not only by professional and family historians, but also by researchers, intellectuals and creative producers of all kinds. For in archives, things do not stand as representative of 'a culture' or as aesthetic achievements [in the case of such objects 'more recently habilitated as "art"'], but as inherited resources available for engagement in the present (2016b: 416).

Hamilton and Leibhammer endow these collections 'with the mien of archive' by convening dispersed objects, associated images and texts into the same archival frame (2016b: 416). (In the case of the Swartkops material, this includes items stored across various sites – inter alia – the objects themselves, index cards, labels, field photographs taken by Balfour and by Haddon, Balfour's diary, Haddon's notebook, letters, official reports and printed material.) In their view, this bringing together imbues dispersed components pertaining to collecting 'activity of a single collector over time' or of one collecting episode (in this instance a single visit, the trip to Swartkops, made by Balfour and Haddon), with what they term 'the grammar of archive' (2016b: 423), particularly the archival tenet of *respect des fonds*. The scholars point out that, unlike ethnographic objects, which are classified and separated out according to 'region, function or ethnicity', in the archive records are 'maintained in the units in which they were accumulated', according to this guiding principle (2016b: 423). This, they argue, stresses the objects' status as *objects*, rather than as representatives of 'ethnological groups', thereby 'releasing [them]...from their capture as tribal specimens' (2016b: 435).

Hamilton and Leibhammer take an additional methodological step aimed at further enabling the archival potential of objects. Drawing on Hamilton's earlier work on text (Hamilton 2011), they mobilise her conception of 'backstory'. Backstory, as we know, is

ordinarily the background or history of a character in a work of fiction, their life, as it were, before we meet them on screen, stage or page, but which does not feature in the script. Hamilton's take on the term backstory refers 'to the researched history or background of an object *once it has been deemed an archival object*, that is, that which accounts for the archival object being so identified, but conventionally is not a feature of an archival script' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 435). As employed by Hamilton, backstory is the story of an object up until the instant it enters the archive. It is:

[T]he story of where the object came from and how it ended up in the [museum] collection context. It involves providing an account of how the circumstances of collection came about, situating all the parties in the transaction, identifying them as fully as possible, accounting for their presence and motivations at that moment and contextualising the collecting event in conditions of the time...ultimately the backstory can reach back still further for the circumstances and the context of making and the pre-collection life of the object and its contexts (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 435).

In the study outlined above, Hamilton and Leibhammer recalibrate backstory as applied to the objects in question. Owing to the fact that the items were collected 'as ethnographic material, rather than archival material' (2016b: 435), they consider backstory to have continued until their own intervention, i.e. in casting them as archive, rather than the point at which the objects entered the respective museum collections. In addition to backstory, Hamilton and Leibhammer also attend to 'biography', which, again drawing on Hamilton's (2011) formulation, is the story of an object, going forward in time, from the moment that it becomes archival. These dual concepts, it is argued, 'emphasise their own status as crafted stories about the object and more specifically about the object *as an archival item*' (2016b: 436).

#### **4. Interventions in the archive: theoretical framework and key critical concepts**

In conceptualising the SA collections at the BM as archive, this thesis takes an archival turn, drawing on an already sizeable and growing corpus of literature as the above outline of material apposite to this study suggests. It combines 'along the grain' and 'against the grain' strategies for analysing this material in an interdisciplinary manner. It also seeks to understand the assemblage more fully as a subject before proceeding to consider traces of African agency evident in the formation of a number of these collections. The collections more broadly comprise objects gathered by a diverse set of individuals, including travellers, missionaries, colonial officials and military personnel, who may or may

not have personally passed them on to the BM. Often considered ‘curiosities’ by those who field-collected or transferred them to the Museum, usually without much accompanying information, it is arguably the Museum that ‘made’ them ethnographic objects (to be discussed).<sup>82</sup>

While mindful of important distinctions between museums and archives, such as the organising principle of *respect des fonds* in the case of archives and museums’ remit of display (as well as the significance of representation and public reception thereof), this thesis primarily looks at the SA collections ‘behind the scenes’, and in some instances prior to their accessioning. In so doing, the study conflates various notions of the archive: it considers the BM’s SA collections as archive -- an inherited *ethnographic* archive -- requiring intervention. My intervention here is the particular treatment and interrogation of the collections as archive, in order to open them up to rehistoricisation, repurposing and refiguring. Archive is intended as an interpretation of the museum, which becomes an active ‘field site’ (cf. Byrne 2013: 208).

This study closely follows Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016b), but makes two incisive departures from their work. First, the SA collections at the BM are taken not as an assemblage that is ‘historically denied archival *status*’ (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 415, emphasis mine), but rather they are cast as an archive of a particular kind: one made up of material previously considered ethnographic. It does this not in the general sense already alluded to regarding collections of this kind (Mack 2000 and others). Instead it asks what it means to critically engage with these collections as archive; primarily to historically situate and explore them as a utopian archive, to consider the role of its archons (Derrida 1996) or keepers (see Chapter 2) and to analyse it ‘along the grain’ in order to understand its framing, in a manner advocated by Stoler (2002, cited above), as well as the ‘ethnographic’ knowledge it produced. While fully cognisant of the outstanding merit of Hamilton and Leibhammer’s work in moving beyond not only the ethnographic but also the aesthetic paradigm latterly placed upon such material (2016b: 416), the current project asks if such a shift might not be possible while simultaneously acknowledging the assemblage’s long entanglement with archive.<sup>83</sup> Like Hamilton and Leibhammer, mine is a project that seeks to rehistorise collections, archives being associated with historical ‘raw

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<sup>82</sup> This is particularly the case with amateur or ‘lay’ field collectors such as those mentioned here. It may also be argued that the field collector is the ‘maker’ of an item as an ethnographic one (Wingfield 2011: 121). However, this is arguably more applicable in cases where the field collector has professional anthropological training.

<sup>83</sup> For a useful recapitulation of the reclassification of such items as ‘art’ and insights into this process in SA see Leibhammer 2016.

material', but rather than doing so in order to explore questions of African identity, a nonetheless important exercise, this project traces evidence of African agency, specifically in relation to the formation/assembling of the collections.<sup>84</sup> (This interest in, and notion of, indigenous agency draws significantly on ideas put forward by others, to be discussed.)

Notwithstanding my departure with regard to archival status, seeing the collections as already archive of a particular kind rather than as historically having been denied that status, the necessary work as put forward by Hamilton and Leibhammer – viz. collating dispersed material within the same archival frame, imbuing it with the requisite 'grammar' – is required in order to render the collections as *useful* archive in the present. In thinking of collections as archive, Hamilton and Leibhammer rightly call attention to the archival principle of *respect des fonds* (2016b: 423), which stipulates that a corpus of records should be maintained as accumulated by its creator and not mixed with those of another. They (2016b: 423) point out that unlike archives, within the museum context ethnographic objects were routinely separated out from any attendant records then classified and stored according to 'region, function or ethnicity'. Herein lies a major distinction between archives in the conventional sense and museum collections of ethnography where,<sup>85</sup> as far as the SA collections at the BM are concerned, the classificatory and organisational logic pertained to the 'tribal' or geographic origin of objects (in cases where the former was uncertain).<sup>86</sup> Along with tribe, the source (i.e. the individual or entity from whom an object or collection was acquired, thus securing legal title) features, where known, as another important index – captured in the accessioning details (and carried by the accession number). Together, tribe and source inform the grain of this archive and constitute two privileged aspects of provenance, more broadly defined as 'the life story of an item or collection and a record of its ultimate derivation and its passage through the hands of its various owners' (Russell and Winkworth 2009: 15), to be further discussed.

As far as the notion of archive as status is concerned, the inflection of the word 'status' as I deploy it here has less to do with 'standing' or 'rank', as it may for others, and more to do with 'classification' and 'situation'. The term originally had a legal association (*OELD*), which is apposite given that once transferred to the BM, ownership of an object or

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<sup>84</sup> Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a: 43) touch on the notion of agency, in various forms, as do a number of contributors to their edited volume (e.g. Rippe; Croucamp; Elliott Weinberg; Nettleton).

<sup>85</sup> Sarah Byrne suggests that within 'Western museum practice', ethnographic collections are usually housed according to 'geographical region, form or material' (Byrne 2013: 206). During the time of research, the BM's SA collections were generally stored according to region (country as far as possible) and within that according to ethnicity and then material and object type.

<sup>86</sup> The term 'tribe' has generally been substituted at the BM with 'Ethnic Name' (Merlin database, current at time of research) or 'Ethnic group' (collection online).

collection passed to that institution – theoretically, in perpetuity – thus signalling the final point of the item’s provenance (cf. Wingfield 2011: 125). A major benefit of the present approach, of intervening in, and impacting on, the archive and trying to bring dispersed material within the same archival frame, is that it calls for thinking about archival objects as precisely that – connected, even if spatially separated, from other archival items, especially, but not always, those associated with the same collecting event. It also brings with it the prospect of what I suggest might be termed ‘inter-archivality’, whereby an archive may be understood to point to yet other archives, analogue and also increasingly digital, which in the case of the SA collections now includes this study itself.

Second, by way of my divergence, Hamilton’s dual concepts of backstory and biography – in my view a useful contribution to the ‘object biography’ metaphor based on ideas first put forward by Arjun Appadurai (1986) and Igor Kopytoff (1986) and developed by others (see Byrne et al. 2011: 13) – are necessarily realigned owing to the afore-mentioned departure. Unlike Hamilton and Leibhammer, who consider that a given object, such as a beaded hairpin in the example already cited, becomes archival the moment that they, the authors, frame it as such and reconstruct its archival history, this study takes rather the point at which an object enters the Museum as signalling the end of its backstory and the commencement of its biography (cf. Hamilton 2011; Byala and Wanless 2016: 545-546).<sup>87</sup> Backstory is taken as that aspect of an object’s life story left out of the ‘archival script’ or occasionally only partially glimpsed. Importantly, as Hamilton and Leibhammer point out, the two concepts ‘emphasise their own status as crafted stories about the object and specifically about the object *as an archival item*’ (2016b: 436; cf. Mbembe 2002: 21). As devices, they also provide the means of tracking back and forward in time and of delineating two distinct phases of an object’s, or collection’s, life story. It should be clear that in no way is backstory considered inferior or secondary to biography and that both are narratives crafted through the present research.

This study occupies a space opened up by the overlapping concepts of ‘archival potential’ (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b) and of ‘archival affordances’ (Basu and de Jong 2016), outlined above. Both highlight the latent possibilities of use to which archives, as inherited resources, can be put as a means of engaging with the past by opening them up as productive spaces for activity in the present. As Hamilton has pointed out, rather than being static entities, ‘[a]rchival collections are reframed and refashioned over time, subject

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<sup>87</sup> In her earlier work, Hamilton (2011: 327) concedes ‘[t]here is often a grey area between backstory and biography’.

to the ebb and flow of reinterpretation, and in turn affecting interpretation' (2013 cited in Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 18).

The meaning of 'agency', another notion centrally deployed in this study and discussed more fully below, is rooted in the Latin for 'doing' (*OELD*; see also Thomas *in* Gell 1998: ix) and relates to the term 'agent', defined as '[a] person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect', in other words, having power to act, while 'agency' can be seen as '[a]ction or intervention producing a particular effect' (*OELD*). Paradoxically, this thesis is utopian in that it endeavours to unearth traces of African agency (itself an undertaking) in an archive historically apparently not concerned with this matter and which, contrary to its earlier utopian ideal, is fragmented and, like all archive, fragmentary. Importantly, utopia is also future orientated – as Derrida observed: '[t]he archive has always been a *pledge*, and like every pledge... a token of the future' (1996: 18). That future moment here, in this study, is the present.

## **5. Towards African agency: chasing ghosts?**

If backstory is taken as that aspect of an object's life story left out of the 'archival script' or occasionally only partially glimpsed, then indigenous agency, where present, is even less frequently documented. In their recent assessment of the Clem D. Webb Collection assembled between about 1886 and 1920 and since 1937 housed by what is now Museum Africa (MA) (see Chapter 3), Sara Byala and Ann Wanless highlight the limitations of ethnography collections in SA and beyond. With 'the rare (and thrilling) exception aside', such collections, they point out, 'fail to give us what it is we really want: *the name and date of the [African] person who made or used or sold the item*, what Lindsay Hooper, a museum worker at Iziko [SAM], has termed "the ghost" behind acquisition cards' (Byala and Wanless 2016: 583, emphasis mine).

Difficulties with the Webb collection at MA aside – which, as they explain, is now cast adrift from the collector's lost 'index...detailing the provenances of the items' (2016: 547) – most museum acquisition entries are brief and rarely mention what might be termed 'makers, users or sellers'. To be interested in these individuals is arguably to be interested in their agency.

We know from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travelogues and suchlike that Africans were active agents in the creation, and often acquisition, of objects that may have later ended up in museums. For example, in his *Through the Zulu Country* (1883) Bertram Mitford details an incident where '[o]ne young Zulu...fellow' (1883: 240) to whom he

mentioned he was ‘on the look-out for curiosities’ (1883: 241):

[P]roduced a beautiful little horn snuffbox...He then asked if he should get me any more like it, and on receiving an answer in the affirmative he limped off [due to an injury] down the road, returning...with a lot of snuffboxes, bangles, spoons, and beadwork trifles, for which he said I must give him things in exchange, as they were not his own, and he couldn’t make me a present of them as he did the first snuffbox. I took over the lot, to our mutual satisfaction (1883: 241).

He also recounts visiting King Cetshwayo KaMpande, then incarcerated along with four of his wives, at Oude Molen in Cape Town:

Each [wife] had her little stock of manufactures spread out on the floor, beadwork, grass spoons, &c., for which, by the way, they demanded full price. I selected a couple of grass spoons (1883: 302).

Agency would ostensibly be absent from the context where, at ‘the ruins of Ulundi’, site of the final battle of the Anglo-Zulu War, Mitford was ‘keenly on the lookout for relics’ (1883: 239) but found none. It should be noted that this incident occurred some time after the battle and that he states while looking around the site he was ‘under the guidance of an old Zulu’ former headman (1883: 238) (cf. Wolseley case study, Chapter 4).

## 5.1 Makers

I have already published studies detailing the work of the Natal-based carver known as Unobadula<sup>88</sup> (**Fig. 8**) (Elliott 2011; Elliott 2013; Elliott Weinberg 2016) – five of whose wood carvings are recorded as having been exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition in London and all of which probably came to the BM with the Christy Collection<sup>89</sup> – and initially hoped the present research would reveal the names of further makers whose handiwork has ended up in the SA collections at the BM. Although these findings regarding Unobadula might be considered modest – other than being able to account more fully for his work that went to the BM,<sup>90</sup> I was able to establish some biographical details and identify a probable portrait photograph of him (**Fig. 9**) – they nonetheless

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<sup>88</sup> Historian John Wright suggests that this name would be rendered ‘Nobhadula’ in modern orthography (Elliott Weinberg 2016: 497).

<sup>89</sup> A head-rest (Af.1181) and lidded vessel (Af.1560) (both unlocated) and probably also two vessels (Af.4875 and Af.4876) as well as an undocumented chair (Af1979,01.2800) (see Chapter 3).

<sup>90</sup> Anitra Nettleton has discussed his work (1991: 39 & fn. 23; 2007: 266; 2016: 524 & fn. 94) and Elizabeth Dell mentioned it (1994: 145 fn. 3).



present a significant advance in the objects' backstory, as an outcome of the research undertaken.

However, as I worked my way through the collections, it became apparent that such finds are indeed, as Byala and Wanless (2016: 583) suggest, scant owing to the dearth of more detailed Museum documentation (such as, in the case of Unobadula, a glimpse of backstory offered by a registration slip mentioning him by name (Af.1560), which led me to other sources). In fact, with perhaps one or two exceptions, including the work of Unobadula and Muhlati, the possible carver of a figurative wood spoon (Af1903,1215.3) (**Fig. 10**), it is not presently possible to attach a maker's name with much certainty to any other objects in the collections.

Sir William Ingram, owner of the *Illustrated London News* (ILN), donated the above-mentioned spoon to the BM alongside other objects said to be from 'Africa, S' (registration slips). In the apparent absence of further documentation, it may be said that stylistically the spoon relates to the work of a carver active in the late nineteenth century named as Muhlati.<sup>91</sup> Henri A. Junod, of the Swiss Romande Mission, discusses the sculpture of a 'huge panther [sic] about to devour a human being' as being the work of this Tsonga man named 'Muhlati, a sculptor living in the environs of Lourenço Marques [present day Maputo]' (1913: 119). He goes on to indicate that the object is now in the Neuchâtel Museum (1913: 120).<sup>92</sup>

### **5.1.1 Made by Hlunuzaan/Mhlophekazi (d.1897)?**

In 1939 a Mrs R.W. Merrylees of an address in Chelsea gave six objects to the BM (Af1939,36.1-6)<sup>93</sup> (**Fig. 11**) '[c]ollected by Sir Theophilus Shepstone' (accessions register), a British-born South African politician, some or all of which were said to have been 'made by Hlunuzaan, original of Umslopogaas' (accessions register) (see Leibhammer forthcoming). Umslopogaas is the fictional character that appears in a number of Victorian

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<sup>91</sup> Earlier Ingram had also, notably, donated objects originating from the Benin Kingdom to the BM.

<sup>92</sup> See Ethnographic Museum, Neuchâtel (acc. no. III.C.2977) ([https://webceg.ne.ch/pls/MUSEII/DBP\\_OBJECTS.detailWebHtml?myPiId=390210&myPiMusee=&myPiCote=&myPrint=N](https://webceg.ne.ch/pls/MUSEII/DBP_OBJECTS.detailWebHtml?myPiId=390210&myPiMusee=&myPiCote=&myPrint=N)) (last accessed 11/09/2018). Made around 1896, the piece was brought back from Africa by Junod who sold it to the Museum in 1899 ([http://webceg.ne.ch/men/pack\\_consult.affiche\\_objet%28%27III.C.2977%27%29](http://webceg.ne.ch/men/pack_consult.affiche_objet%28%27III.C.2977%27%29)) (last accessed 01/12/2013). On the basis of this object, and also presumably on a wood carving of two spoons joined by a wooden chain illustrated in Junod and said to originate from the same area (Junod 1913: 114), dealer Michael Stevenson attributes a single spoon similar to the BM piece to Muhlati (<http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/colonial/item13a.htm>) (last accessed 01/12/2013).

<sup>93</sup> Af1939,36.1 a male bust in clay; Af1939,36.2 a female bust in clay; Af1939,36.3 a carved wooden male figure; Af1939,36.4 a carved wooden maternity figure; Af1939,36.5.a-b a lidded pottery bowl; Af1939,36.6.a-b a thumb piano with gourd resonator.

novelist H. Rider Haggard's works. Haggard was, for a period, in Shepstone's employ (Etherington 2004: 5) and is said to have based his character on a man by the name of Mhlophekazi (corrupted to 'Umslopogaas'), who was in Shepstone's service (Haggard 2001: 122). Described as one of the 'high-bred Zulus' (Haggard 1914 [1958]: 118), Umslopogaas, or rather the man who inspired him, came to Natal from the Swazi kingdom as an emissary from the King in 1859 and entered the employ of Shepstone thereafter, remaining attached to the family until his own death in 1897 (Haggard 2001: 122) (**Fig. 12**).

There is some uncertainty over which objects Mhlophekazi is reputed to have made. The accessions register has been amended, apparently contemporaneously, to suggest that only items one, two and five (i.e. the clay busts and clay lidded-pot) were made by 'Hlunuzaan'.<sup>94</sup> The truth of this claim is presently difficult to establish as stylistically these pieces, as well as the wooden figures, arguably belong to a genre of 'tourist art' dating to around the early twentieth century. If they had been made by Mhlophekazi and collected by Shepstone as purported, this would have to have been prior to 1893, the date of the latter's death.<sup>95</sup> The KwaZulu-Natal Museum (KNM) houses a lidded-pot (acc. no. 2628B) (**Fig. 13**) related to the BM lidded-pot (Af1939,36.5.a-b). It was purchased by that Museum in 1929, along with two other pieces, all '[m]ade from clay obtained near Table Mountain, Natal', about 20km east of Pietermaritzburg where they were apparently also acquired.<sup>96</sup> The register does not indicate a production date for the items, but given the detailed account of how they were made it is reasonable to assume that they were created around the time that they were acquired. The knob handles on the lids of both vessels are modelled in the form of a 'typical' married Zulu woman, distinguished by her

<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, there appears to have been no correspondence between the BM and the donor and even her surname seems somewhat unclear given annotations in the *Donations Book*. The *British Museum Quarterly (BMQ)* states '[w]ood and clay figurines and a pottery bowl with anthropomorphic cover made by Hlunuzaan...' (BM 1940: 72), while the *Book of Presents* (CA) says '[w]ood and clay figurines and pottery bowl made by Hlunuzaan ("Umslopogaas")', from the Zulus, Natal'.

<sup>95</sup> It is possible that Merrylees obtained the items from Haggard who returned to England and, for example, gave a talk in London in the early 1920s where he discussed 'Umslopogaas', whose name he 'consistently misspelled' (*Umteteli Wa Bantu* 16/07/1921: 2). Haggard himself was also a collector. For film footage showing him at home in Norfolk with a staff 'given to him when he was in South Africa by Sir Theophilus Shepstone to whom it was presented by Cetywayo [Cetshwayo KaMapande] when he was crowned King of the Zulus' see British Pathé 'Camera Interviews: Sir Rider Haggard' (1923) ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4WYnN\\_IhAs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4WYnN_IhAs)) (last accessed 10/08/2018). There is further evidence to suggest that Shepstone, too, was a collector. In 1944 Mrs A.E. Colepeper of Pietermaritzburg gave the KNM a carved wooden staff 'said to be the one he ["Umslopogaas"] carried and the one mentioned by Rider Haggard', which she had been given by Shepstone, a personal friend (KNM Correspondence, Mrs A.E. Colepeper to Lawrence, 17/05/1944) (acc. no. 2904).

<sup>96</sup> The register describes these pieces as 'Ama Lala', used to refer derogatorily to isiZulu-speakers of Natal, originally in the time of King Shaka kaSenzangakhona (c.1787–1828), 'a super-exploited tributary underclass, made up of many diverse conquered chiefdoms' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 437), as opposed to the Zulu of the kingdom.

red head-dress. In similar fashion, the BM male and female bust pair (Af1939,36.1 & 2), etched respectively underneath 'KEHLA' (man who wears the headring or *isicoco*) and 'UMFAZI' (wife), depict 'typical Zulu types'.<sup>97</sup> Arguably, the BM busts and the bowl are made by different hands rather than by the same artist. The busts form part of a genre of clay busts, again made for sale, typified by the somewhat more naturalistic, yet no less stereotypical, depictions of 'Zulus' by Hezekiel Ntuli (1912—1973), examples of whose work are housed by the KNM.<sup>98</sup> The BM's carved wooden figures (Af1939,36.3 & 4), a male and a maternity figure (probably a pair), again would have been produced for sale most likely around the turn of the nineteenth century or early twentieth century. More recently, this as yet unknown hand has been dubbed the 'Master of the Remnant Bark'.<sup>99</sup> Based on currently available information, it would therefore appear unlikely that the BM objects from Mrs Merrylees can be attributed with certainty to Mhlophekazi.

### 5.1.2 Monikers and identifiable 'hands'

Perhaps one of the most well-known, but as yet still unidentified, carvers working at the turn of the twentieth century in the Colony of Natal and producing staffs with figurative finials is a maker who has been dubbed the 'Baboon Master'.<sup>100</sup> It is thought that this carver may have worked alongside other isiZulu- and/or migrant Xitsonga-speakers living probably in the Pietermaritzburg area, as evidenced by the (expanding) corpus of known figurative carvings (see Klopper 1991; 2005). The BM possesses a staff surmounted by a

<sup>97</sup> Definitions of *kehla* and *umfazi* from Bryant's *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1905).

<sup>98</sup> According to text panels at that Museum accompanying a display of animal figures and busts by this maker (current as of 05/2017), he is said to have been born in northern Zululand into a prominent family (his grandfather was an advisor to King Cetshwayo) and to have left formal schooling at the age of 12 in order to herd his father's cattle. In 1929, while apparently selling sculptures far from rural Zululand on one of the city's main streets, Ntuli came to the attention of a local white businessman who championed his work and in 1931 the Museum (then the Natal Museum) acquired 71 sculptures by Ntuli. Hailing him 'the Zulu Clay Modeler' and 'possibly the first...black artist in KwaZulu-Natal...identified by name', the text further states '[w]hile Ntuli's clay modeling had its roots in Zulu tradition, his market was certainly European. Ntuli supplied white customers with "Zulu souvenirs" with certain repetitive features and themes like "Zulu figures", "Zulu cattle" and "Wildlife"'. During their stay in Pietermaritzburg in July 1935 ahead of their excursion to Zululand, the Powell-Cottons acquired three animal figures and one bust by Ntuli at the Museum, possibly from its shop (see PCM APC Zululand 19-35 carbon book, items 1-4) (see Chapter 5). Anitra Nettleton considers that the BM pair 'may stand at the beginning of this particular tradition [including Ntuli and his brother Gabriel] of stereotypical representation of indigenes' (Nettleton 1991: 40).

<sup>99</sup> See Stephan Welz & Co., *Traditional African Art from the Colin Sayers Collection*, Cape Town 25-26/02/2014 lot 348. For a related male figure see Af1954,+23.3558 (given to the BM by the WHMM, purchased, per its WHMM index card (67176), at Stevens auction house in 1929) and for a related female figure see Af2003,16.1 donated by Mrs Margaret A. Hastings in 2003. The male figures appear to have lost their accoutrements (e.g. spears).

<sup>100</sup> It appears that art historian Sandra Klopper coined the moniker, having first identified this hand through a number of Brenthurst Collection pieces housed by the JAG (see Klopper in Sotheby's, *African & Oceanic Art*, New York 11/11/2005 lot 161; Klopper 1991). Typical iconography for this maker includes separate male and female (maternity figure) staffs as well as staffs surmounted by baboons or baboons in combination with male busts.

maternity figure probably created by this maker<sup>101</sup> donated by the WHMM (Af1954,+23.1337) (**Fig. 14**), which had purchased it at auction in the 1930s.<sup>102</sup> This object is but one of numerous examples, particularly – but not only – of a more figurative nature or with figurative elements in the SA collections at the BM, which appear to have been made for an outside market, rather than for Africans.<sup>103</sup> It is not the intention here to attempt to account for all of these, but rather to suggest that this line of enquiry, which is a step towards identifying a maker by name, would benefit from further research, especially with regard to comparing specific examples with related pieces held by other museums. In this way, further light could be shed on items that appear to have been made expressly for trade since at least around the mid nineteenth century onwards (thus building on the literature, e.g. Nettleton 1998 & 1991; Klopper 1991). One of the main drawbacks with this approach is the general lack of detailed museum documentation and of the significant investment of time, expense and effort that such undertakings entail (literally, trawling through often very large collections) if done systematically.<sup>104</sup> The following example illustrates what insights might be gained, as well as the limits of the archive.

### 5.1.3 Fantastic (and other) South Sotho creatures

In 1931 the BM purchased six zoomorphic clay figures from a Rev W.G. Higgs of Oxford (Af1931,0716.1-6) said to have been ‘made by the BASUTO’ and ‘collected at Ladybrand’ (accessions register),<sup>105</sup> which is near the border of present-day Free State province and Lesotho. All but one of the six South African museums where I undertook research house figures, often with elements of polychrome, stylistically related to this collection at the BM. The BM animal figures, typical of this genre, relate to mythical beasts (e.g. Af1931,0716.6

<sup>101</sup> During the course of my research I was able to make this attribution and, to the best of my knowledge, it was the first time that the object has been identified as being a work of the ‘Baboon Master’. I shared this information and the item was featured in the catalogue of the BM’s *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* exhibition (see Giblin and Spring 2016: 121) (pers. comm. to John Giblin, 27/10/2014).

<sup>102</sup> The WHMM purchased it (acc. no. 96857) as an ‘African chief’s’ ‘STAFF OF OFFICE’ from Stevens’s Auction Rooms on 14/04/1931 where it was lot 299 (WHMM label; WHMM index card). Unlike the index card, the Wellcome label mentions ‘South Africa’.

<sup>103</sup> One such type of object without figuration is the genre of carved wooden vessels originating in present-day KwaZulu-Natal, emerging, according to my own field research, probably as early as the 1820s. These vessels have been the subject of quite some discussion (e.g. Nettleton 2007, 2009, 2012; Elliott 2011, 2013; Elliott Weinberg 2016). See also Chapter 4.

<sup>104</sup> Computerised databases, where available, often only furnishing brief descriptions of objects and often no images.

<sup>105</sup> No detailed documentation, for example such as might be contained in correspondence, appears to be extant. Here, we are limited to the objects themselves, to the accessions register and to the *Donations Book* (even though this was a purchase). Figure Af1931,0716.1 appears to have some anthropomorphic features. Cf. with a related piece with more obviously simian features at SAM (acc. no. SAM-AE 11915).

represents the ‘Tokolosi’)<sup>106</sup> and other creatures such as birds. One animal, a crocodile Af1931,0716.5 (**Fig. 15**), is almost certainly by the same hand as a crocodile figure in the Ditsong collections. In 1935 a Mr P. Loewenstein or Louwenstein (possibly Lowenstein)<sup>107</sup> of Ladybrand gave the figure (acc. no. ET. 1935/235) to that Museum as part of a larger group of such objects, where the accessions register indicates that they were made for sale by ‘Basuto’ (South Sotho) women in the Ladybrand and Maseru (Lesotho) area and sold to the donor in Ladybrand (see **Fig. 15**).<sup>108</sup> The iconography of some of the more fantastical creatures (e.g. dragons) are, according to the entry, based on images in books, while the other animals are often based in South Sotho ‘conceptions’ or thought.<sup>109</sup> By looking across collections, inter-archivally, it is possible to establish that this was a fairly popular genre, drawing on indigenous and other imagery, intended for sale and most probably made by women. Furthermore, with reference to the Ditsong group, it is reasonable to assume that the BM’s collection probably dates to around the mid to late 1930s. However, the names of any makers have yet to emerge.

## 5.2 ‘Users and sellers’

The other presences or ‘ghosts’ identified by Byala and Wanless (2016: 583) are, as already mentioned, ‘the name and date of the [African] person who...used or sold the item [to the collector]’. This information is often almost as difficult to trace as the maker’s name. A ‘seller’ might be a person who made and/or owned a piece and then parted with it as a gift or by exchange. Alternatively, it might be someone who acted as an intermediary; for example, previous research into the backstory of objects collected by Bishop J.W. Colenso that came to the BM via Kew revealed that he was aided on at least one occasion with the procurement of ‘curiosities’ in Natal by chief Mqundane kaNobongoza who himself collected items on Colenso’s behalf (Elliott Weinberg 2016: 490). Mqundane was an exile from the Zulu kingdom who gained the confidence of the colonial government in Natal, becoming an adviser to Theophilus Shepstone. According to Colenso’s account, while appointed as guide to the cleric during his visit, Mqundane had

<sup>106</sup> This is according to the accessions register as well as an inscription on the underside of the object. The *tokolosi* (spellings vary) is a malign spirit or creature and a mischief-maker in local folklore.

<sup>107</sup> The Campbell Collections in Durban house a lion figure given by a Mrs Lowenstein of Ladybrand in 1960 (acc. no. KCAV 1761-2). The Ditsong donor was possibly Paul Lowenstein (see <https://www.wits.ac.za/rockart/collections/the-rari-rock-collections/>) (last accessed 11/09/2018).

<sup>108</sup> Additionally, Museum Africa houses a large number of Sotho clay figures, including one of a crocodile similar to the BM and Ditsong examples (acc. no. MM1-67-554). Unfortunately, during the time of research, the accession details of this third crocodile and the other figures was not available.

<sup>109</sup> From my translation of the Afrikaans. Indeed, according to Gosame Amy Goitsemodimo, a curator at the National Museum, Bloemfontein (NMB) who self-identifies as being partly of South Sotho descent, the fantastic creatures there ‘did not resonate’ with her as relating to South Sotho traditions when she first encountered them (pers. comm. 13/01/2017).

promised Shepstone that he would procure 'curiosities' for Colenso, which 'he went to his kraal to fetch' (Colenso 1855: 211; Elliott Weinberg 2016: 490).

Slightly more problematic is the 'user', understood here to include a person said to have been associated with an object, for example a previous owner. Within the SA collections at the BM these numbers are not insubstantial, especially in cases of items that were collected as trophies of war (see Chapters 3 & 4). In fact, the vast majority of personal names traced in the collections during the course of research are of high status figures, usually a king or chief, and can be associated with times of conflict and acts of appropriation. Although to what extent these claims can be verified is often a moot point. One particularly significant exception is a collection given to the BM in 1917 by the widow of Field Marshal Garnet Joseph Wolseley. The collection came into the BM without much hint of its earlier life story, but extensive research into the collection's backstory revealed a hitherto obscured history and connection with a named former owner (see Chapter 4). Another exception is a divination bowl, also appropriated, albeit not under conditions of war, but in this case the name of its previous owner seems to have been lodged at the BM, yet until now forgotten.

Such is the story of the BM's only Venda divination bowl or *ndilo*, attached with a bone flute and a bag containing divining bones, (Af1946,04.1.a-y) (**Fig. 16**), currently on display in the SAG at the Museum.<sup>110</sup> It was given to the Museum in 1946 and has enjoyed its fair share of publicity over recent years. It was exhibited at the *Africa: The Art of a Continent* exhibition (1995-1996 London, Berlin and New York) and at the Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa's *Legacies of Stone: Zimbabwe Past and Present* exhibition (1997 Tervuren) and received write-ups in those catalogues (Nettleton 1995: 201 cat. no. 3.17; Nettleton 1997: 161-178 cat. no. 38) as well as in the BM's own *Africa: Arts and Cultures* (Nettleton in Mack 2000: 188-189 cat. no. 48), which acts as a guide to the permanent display. As Nettleton points out, such bowls are rare and the handful of examples known to her were collected before the 1930s 'by which date they were no longer in use' (Nettleton in Mack 2000: 188). These bowls, she explains, 'were kept by a special class of diviners (*mungoma*), but were used only to establish the identity of suspected witches (*varoyi*); and this only happened in the presence of the king, or his representative' (Nettleton 1997: 169). In these sources, as with the current display, nothing is said of the

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<sup>110</sup> The BM also possesses a cast of another Venda divination tray (CRS.74), said to have belonged to a diviner by the name of Mukharu (Stayt 1931: 292-293, see plates xlv and xlv for illustrations) from 'the Mukula district in Tshivhase's [Sibasa's] location', about 50 miles northeast of Louis Trichardt (Stayt 1931: 293). For further details see Chapter 5.

collection circumstances of the ensemble – although Nettleton does indicate in *Africa: Arts and Cultures* that '[v]ery little is known' in this regard (Nettleton in Mack 2000: 188) and that it 'has no clear provenance' in the Tervuren catalogue (Nettleton 1997: 171 fn. 21). Writing in the early 1950s, Brauholtz, in a feature article from the *British Museum Quarterly*, gives some insight, saying the bowl was presented 'in 1946 by Mr. D. Allam, who had acquired it in about 1911 after the conviction of its owner on a charge of witchcraft' (Brauholtz 1952: 20).<sup>111</sup>

In early 1946, Allam had written to the BM from an address in London explaining that he had in his possession a 'carved wooden platter', which he had until only recently regarded as 'a quaint curio', prior to having seen what he correctly assumed to be a related object illustrated in a copy of J.T. Bent's *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (first published in 1893) (GC letter from D. Allam, 16/02/1946). His letter explains that between 1906 and 1914 he had served as a mounted policeman in SA and that during that time he was stationed among the Venda people at Sibasa in North-eastern Transvaal (present-day Limpopo province) where 'an important part of our Police work was the prosecution of Witchdoctors' (GC letter from D. Allam, 16/02/1946). He goes on to state that: '[i]n one of these cases, amongst the witchdoctors [sic] paraphernalia was a carved wooden platter. This object came into my possession' (GC letter from D. Allam, 16/02/1946). Although Allam's letter regarding the bowl, as well as the subsequent accessions register entry for the piece, are silent as to the identity of its previous owner, the *Donations Book* states: 'acquired by Donor probably 1911 after the conviction of the owner (Chifissa) on a charge of witchcraft'.

So, while Allam and the BM appear to have known a personal name for the bowl's owner, nothing has been said in this regard. To date, I have been able to find out a little more about the donor, David Allam,<sup>112</sup> mainly through newspaper articles, and files housed at the NASA in Pretoria.<sup>113</sup> He is likely to have acquired the bowl slightly later than previously thought, probably sometime between 1912, when he was still living in Rustenburg and appointed Acting Public Prosecutor there, and 1914.<sup>114</sup> However, despite consulting numerous files regarding African divination and trials thereof at the NASA, I have been unable to trace Chifissa, if indeed this was the owner's personal name as the above

<sup>111</sup> The *Book of Presents* (CA) indicates that it is '[a] divining bowl (analogous to the Zimbabwe [sic] bowl) and divining bones from the Bavenda', but does not mention 'Chifissa'.

<sup>112</sup> See <http://www.eggssa.org/newspapers/index.php/south-african-magazine/331-south-africa-1909-3-july-september?tmpl=component> (last accessed 03/08/2017).

<sup>113</sup> E.g. LD 1738 AG1270/09 're Charge of Immorality against Superintendent Allam Rustenburg' (of which he was cleared).

<sup>114</sup> NASA JUS 128 1/44/12/397 'Minor Court Appointments'.

seems to suggest, or any record of a formal trial in the event that one took place. It may be a case of having to spend more time in that archive in order to better understand how things might be indexed and filed, in other words, of reading ‘along the grain’ as advocated by Stoler (2009). The fact that such trials and confiscations were taking place at around the time that Allam acquired the bowl is certain,<sup>115</sup> and it is more than likely that the bowl would have been presented as evidence and seized had the owner gone on trial. Indeed, Museum Africa houses a related Venda diving bowl said to have been confiscated under such circumstances (acc. no. MA1960-1461).<sup>116</sup>

Drawing on Françoise Lionnet, Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (2016b: 442) have argued elsewhere that this kind of research, resulting ‘in a vastly expanded archive convened across a variety of separate locations’ helps overcome ‘the anonymity and “radical depersonalisation” usually associated with [such] museum objects’. This depersonalisation can be understood as the corollary of the ethnographisation or dehistoricisation of objects, to be discussed (see Chapter 2). Returning for the moment to the idea of ‘ghosts’ – the presence of (or rather, often the absence of traces of) the African maker, user or seller – the present research is specifically interested in the notion of their agency in so far as the formation of the SA collections at the BM are concerned. While some of the users or sellers that feature in the vignettes and longer case studies may well have also made some of the objects in question, the present study, for want of having identified named individual makers other than those mentioned above, focuses on these two groups of agents. The concern here is also with naming, as far as possible, these agents as a direct challenge to the depersonalisation that has occurred, and with contextualising the collections historically. There is power in naming. As Zeitlyn rightly posits (albeit with regard to ‘those working on photographic archives’), ‘[k]nowing a name renders an image more than a nice photograph. It connects photographs as (social) objects to the lives of their subjects’ (2012: 465). The same could be said of the objects under consideration here, where knowing names of users or sellers connects objects with the lives of these individuals. While a name in itself is not the same as agency, it goes some way to restoring historically denied dignity to African people and objects.

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<sup>115</sup> At the time witchcraft was suppressed in the Transvaal under Ordinance No.26 of 1904. This law was repealed in 1957 and replaced with a country-wide law ‘enacted by the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty...called the Witchcraft Suppression Act, 1957’ (Union Gazette Extraordinary, 22/02/1957: 3) (<https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/Act%203%20of%201957.pdf>) (last accessed 01/08/2018).

<sup>116</sup> The bowl was given to the Museum in 1960 as part of Rev. Noel Roberts bequest, having been ‘confiscated by Charles Manning at a witchcraft trial’ (MA accessions register).



### 5.3 Tracing agency

Anthropologist Alfred Gell's highly influential work, *Art and Agency* (1998)<sup>117</sup>, makes the often-cited (Holbraad 2011: 5), yet still somewhat startling (Harrison 2013: 15), claim that agency is attributable to 'persons' as well as to 'things' (Gell 1998: 16). (This despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that, as already stated, according to the dictionary definition a person or thing can be seen to be capable of wielding agency.) The 'rise of the thing' (Holbraad 2011: 2), thinking and speaking of 'things' as opposed to 'objects', has come out of the 'material-cultural turn', where 'after years of neglect, objects in general and museum objects in particular have come to the foreground of anthropological, archaeological, and sociological analyses' (Harrison 2013: 4). Here agency, notes anthropologist Martin Holbraad, has been 'the most vocal term' (Holbraad 2011: 2).

Provocatively titled (with a nod to Spivak), *Can the Thing Speak?* (2011), Holbraad's essay convincingly draws parallels between 'the colonial subject (the native, the subaltern)' and 'things' (Holbraad 2011: 2). He argues that calls for the 'emancipation' of the latter in more recent times echo those for the former 'a generation earlier' (2011: 2), and likewise entails what he calls 'widening the circle of the human' (2011: 2 & 17). If postcolonial endeavours attempted to elevate the colonial subject, recognising, among other things, 'its history, its agency, its subjectivity' and its 'voice' (2011: 2), then recent approaches to objects have had a similar agenda. Surveying the literature, Holbraad divides these approaches broadly into two: those that seek to emancipate things 'by association' (with humans), which he calls 'humanist', such as Gell, and those, that even more radically go beyond this, seeking emancipation 'as such', which he terms 'posthumanist' (2011: 4). In the first, people and things remain separate, ontologically intact while the second seeks variously to challenge, and in the most extreme eliminate, the divide, such as ideas around Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the most prominent proponent of which being Bruno Latour (Harrison 2013: 4).

ANT is a method, deploying 'network' as a metaphor, for understanding the interconnected relationships between humans and non-humans. It has been utilised by a number of contributors to *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum* (Byrne et al. 2011) in attempting to 'reconceptualise the agency of [ethnographic museum] objects', or 'things' (Byrne et al. 2011: 10). The volume takes 'a

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<sup>117</sup> His work in broadening the category of 'art', or rather shifting the debate, to include 'everybody's art', that is to say to include objects usually described as 'ethnographic', is groundbreaking (1998: 1) and although I generally refer to objects as 'objects', I nevertheless also consider them to be works of art.

broadly “archaeological” approach’ (2011: 11), considering collections as ‘material and social assemblages’ (2011: 5) and focusing on the ‘multiple kinds of agency expressed within the complex long-term processes that contribute to museum collections’ (2011: 7).

The volume’s introductory chapter, written by editors and contributors Sarah Byrne, Anne Clarke, Rodney Harrison and Robin Torrence, enumerates some of these kinds of agency (Byrne et al. 2011: 7), which has influenced the present study. The list takes in what might be considered the gamut of agents – from what they term the ‘creator community’ (they employ this designation instead of the more usual, and more passively inflected, ‘source community’, and which includes what I here refer to as makers, users and sellers), to field-collector, collector (the intermediary), museum/curator and to the public (conceivably including researchers, such as myself). While the main focus in the present thesis is on an aspect of the creator community, some of these other forms of agency will be acknowledged and dealt with in varying degrees. A case in point is the treatment of the BM’s H.J. Braunholtz (see especially Chapter 5), which like Byrne’s chapter on A.C. Haddon (Byrne 2011: 307-325) considers curatorial agency, although in the present study it is a vehicle for getting as close as possible to traces of indigenous agency, specifically in the major case studies in which he features.

Certain kinds of agency, which Byrne et al. (2011: 7) suggest might be associated with the creator community, viz. ‘production, use/display, gifting/selling, withholding/hiding’<sup>118</sup> have already been touched upon above. For example, makers producing genres for sale – such as ‘Zulu’ figures, which might in various cases be seen as assertions of identity, enhanced ‘traditional’ objects or inventions – or even creating substitutes or copies.<sup>119</sup> (O’Hanlon (2000: 19), elsewhere, has noted that ‘[f]unctionality may decline’ and such objects ‘become more ornamental’.) African gifting or selling (including trading or bartering) are also forms of agency, as Byrne et al. indicate, as is actual field-collecting (e.g. in the case of Mqundane and Colenso) and other forms of direct assistance, such as portering (**Fig. 17**) and interpreting (see Chapter 5). Similarly, as they point out, instances of withholding/hiding objects also constitute forms of agency, and in most cases ask one to consider what a given collection might lack. In the case of the SA collections at the BM,

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<sup>118</sup> The bullet points have here been substituted with commas.

<sup>119</sup> While during the course of research I have not come across documentary evidence in the BM SA collections of substitutes or copies being made, Ditsong houses a Venda *ndilo* (acc. no. ET. 1954/12) recorded in their accessions register as ‘a copy specially made for the donor by the headman George Mphephu ... c.1937’ (my translation from the Afrikaans). It has been commented on that certain SA items in the BM collections, especially those from the 1862 International Exhibition (Christy Collection) often appear to be ‘pristine’ (see Elliott Weinberg 2016; Nettleton 2016) and some of the beadwork items in particular do not appear to be functional.

the fact that many tobacco smoking-pipes made by isiXhosa-speakers lack a mouthpiece may be partly due to the fact it is a highly personal item and a form of 'exuviae'.<sup>120</sup> While smoking was a communal activity and pipes were shared, each smoker would possess their own mouthpiece (Wanless 1991: 140).<sup>121</sup> Similarly, the BM lacks an *inkatha*, the grass coil heirloom symbolising unity and might, and associated with Zulu kings and chiefs (Bourquin 1986: 116).<sup>122</sup> Such objects are understandably rare in collections (**Fig. 18**).<sup>123</sup>

*Unpacking the Collection* also embraces the notion of 'object biography', considering museum collections to have 'ongoing lives' (2011: 14) and possessing 'ongoing agency and relevance' (2011: 18). This further metaphor, it is argued, means that theoretically 'one can trace how a wide range of different forms of agency come into play at various stages in an object's life history' (2011: 13). As already mentioned, the idea of an object or collection having a life story is one centrally employed in the present study, opening up possibilities of agency, although in the present study African agency is the main focus.

In many senses following on from *Unpacking the Collection*, the volume entitled *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency* (Harrison et al. 2013) highlights indigenous agency as does the present study. It is 'a reaction to the perception that indigenous people had little or no agency in the processes that were responsible for the genesis of ethnographic museum collections (largely a result of the exercising of asymmetrical colonial power relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)' (Harrison 2013: 3). Like the volume before it, its contributors are predominantly grounded in either archaeology or anthropology (some previously having participated in the earlier publication) and again many take up a self-consciously 'archaeological sensibility' (Harrison 2013: 7). This approach is more fully articulated and includes conceptualising of museums as 'meshworks and as material and social

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<sup>120</sup> As Nettleton argues with regard to other objects, and using Gell's terms, 'the agency of objects such as clothing can be linked to the fact that they are a form of "exuviae", detached parts of the body that have absorbed aspects of the body, traces of its physical being' (Nettleton 2016: 507). Mouthpieces are a prime example as they have come into direct contact with users' saliva.

<sup>121</sup> Others may have lost their insert prior to coming to the BM or the pipe and mouthpiece may have become separated within the Museum itself. An example of the latter is a smoking-pipe given to the BM in 1933 (Af1933,1204.16.a), where the mouthpiece is clearly visible in the accessions register sketch. The pipe is apparently one of two given to the donor's husband by a third party and said to have been given to their son in SA around 1897 (GC ? Witty to Dr Rodman, 02/11/1913).

<sup>122</sup> This may be also because the significance of such, ostensibly modest, items might have not been known by would-be field collectors. The BM does have examples of more ordinary coils used as pads when carrying a load on the head, e.g. probably Af1859,0908.82.

<sup>123</sup> The KNM houses two examples (2781A & B) that were confiscated and described in the accessions register as 'Ceremonial Fibre Rings serving as tokens of Native Royalty or Authority. Productions in the case of Rex v. Nlehingunmuza (Lower Tugela Division) 1907'. For details of the collection circumstances and named maker, see Guy (2005: 264) and Guest (2006: 36).

assemblages' (Harrison 2013: 4), comprised of persons and objects, or 'things', where agency, now distinguished from 'intentionality', is understood as being distributed across these constructs (Harrison 2013: 15 & 17). This signals the volume's 'attempt to move beyond' (Harrison 2013: 4) the idea that indigenous people and object had/have agency; it also sees the various chapters striving to connect indigenous and other forms of agency (Harrison 2013: 6), something not fully developed in the present study.

Before moving on to further consider how my study relates to these volumes, and especially a chapter from the second volume that deals with one of the BM's Southern African objects, it is important to briefly unpack the notion of indigenous agency in ethnographic museum collections. The notion of indigenous agency requires thinking about such collections in ways beyond what Nicholas Thomas (2000: 273) has insightfully identified as 'a broad perception that, typically, [these] collections were unjustly acquired and are unjustly kept'. Indeed, 'aspects of local agency...are overlooked if the sole identity allowed to such collections is that of artifactual abductees' (O'Hanlon 2000: 3);<sup>124</sup> just such an identity has been ascribed to the SA collections at the BM (Maritz 2008: 4).<sup>125</sup> That said, as Thomas reminds us, 'it is striking just how difficult it is to recover and characterize indigenous agency, in any specificity, from the historical record' owing in no small way to the 'paucity of information' regarding the interactions between [field-] collectors and 'the indigenous people whom we cast in the role of yielding things up for collection' (Thomas 2000: 274). In its choice of major case studies, this thesis hones-in on what Thomas terms 'the scene of collecting' and the interaction of the collector and locals (2000: 274). One of the risks, or unintended consequences, of such an undertaking is that it arguably once again emphasises European agency (Thomas 2000: 277). Despite being reliant on white accounts, the attempt to recover something of the circumstances and context of the creation or acquisition of objects, to hear something of the 'African voice', is

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<sup>124</sup> This blanket narrative is still widely and popularly held, for example as evidenced by the 'museum scene' in the recent and highly successful fantasy film *Black Panther* (2018) ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYwr6Q1HL\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYwr6Q1HL_4)) (last accessed 14/08/2018). In the sequence, one of the film's African-born characters visits a museum, 'a thinly-veiled stand-in for London's British Museum' (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/black-panther-museum-heist-restitution-1233278>) (last accessed 14/08/2018), where he challenges a condescending white curator regarding the African exhibits, including an axe he wishes to take, saying '[h]ow do you think your ancestors got these? Do you think they paid a fair price? Or did they take it like they took everything else?'. See also <https://jhuexhibitionist.com/2018/02/22/why-museum-professionals-need-to-talk-about-black-panther/> (last accessed 14/08/2018).

<sup>125</sup> At the time of writing about his own collection in a book entitled *Relics of War* (2008), Maritz states that there was '[l]ittle public information' available regarding the SA collections at the BM, although he cites 'museum acquisition records [which] show that numerous donations were received from 19th century British soldiers, their estates or heirs'. He goes on to conclude that '[t]here can be little doubt that the British Armed Forces...were the primary source and explanation for the presence of these artefacts in Britain [at the BM and those 'coming on the market']' (Maritz 2008: 4).

important if one is to try move beyond stories told solely from the viewpoint of the collector. However, the collector, along with the museum 'source' (if not one and the same person), remains an important index for tracing African agency in the archive. In *Unpacking the Collection* Chris Wingfield argues that 'trying to identify indigenous agency by examining museum collections is a similar project to attempting to identify field collectors', while reminding us that 'the indigenous agent is an important figure in postcolonial politics' (2011: 122).

Ideas around agency have been taken up especially, but not only, by those, like Gell, working on Oceanic material (e.g. O'Hanlon and Welsch (eds.) 2000; numerous contributors in *Unpacking the Collection* and *Reassembling the Collection*, i.e. Byrne et al. 2011 and Harrison et al. 2013). However, there has been a growing interest in the subject among Africanists and those considering African material. For example, Karen E. Milbourne (2013) has examined King Lewanika's agency as artist and patron as well as his strategic mobilization of a 'Lozi style' in Barotseland (part of present-day Zambia) and Tamar Garb ((ed.) 2013), in her edited volume regarding a private collection of mainly nineteenth century photographs, *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive*, explores pertinent questions around these images and their sitters' agency. Relatively recent work on the collections of the Royal Geographical Society (with the institute of British Geographers) (RGS-IGB), which included an exhibition, has looked at the obscured agency of Africans and other indigenous figures in the history of exploration (Driver and Jones 2009; Jones 2010; Driver 2013).<sup>126</sup> Various contributors to Hamilton and Leibhammer's (2016) recent, edited double volume also touched upon some aspects of agency (e.g. Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a); Klopper; Croucamp; Elliott Weinberg; Nettleton).

Africanist Chris Wingfield's chapter in *Reassembling the Collection*, entitled *Reassembling the London Missionary Society Collection: Experimenting with Symmetrical Anthropology and the Archaeological Sensibility* (Wingfield 2013), deals with agency and, as already intimated, takes a Southern African object from the BM as a key case study. Wingfield argues that this object, an abstractly engraved ostrich eggshell (Af1910,-.363), has agency. Originally intended as a water vessel, Wingfield highlights the fact that the eggshell has been 'a museum object in London' (2013: 63) for almost two hundred years, his particular concern being with the time period between its arrival in the UK and prior to its entry into the BM via the now dispersed museum of the London Missionary Society

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<sup>126</sup> *Hidden Histories of Exploration* (RGS-IBG, 15/10/2009-10/12/2009).

(LMS). His approach, which can be described as an object-focused 'archaeological sensibility', is to treat the eggshell and other LMS objects currently housed by a number of public museums as 'a series of related small-scale archaeological-sites' (2013: 69). For Wingfield, this entails identifying and analysing 'traces' left on the surfaces of, or attached to, objects in the course of 'temporal and spatial dimensions traversed' (2013: 67) during their still ongoing and often long biographies. Further extending the archaeological metaphor, Wingfield states that the LMS collection is a "pot" whose fragments [he has] excavated' and that his 'attempts at reassembly have been directed at understanding both the processes through which it was created and those through which it was dispersed' (2013: 76).

Wingfield's argument about the 'making' of museum objects, articulated as 'ethnographisation' in the present study, discusses the process of 'othering' and objectification 'objects of ethnography' are subjected to, which he identifies as a 'purificatory practice' (2013: 73) that attempts to arrest them in other places and times. Instead, invoking Latour's 'symmetrical anthropology', he asserts that the LMS collection, itself was never static but rather subject to 'continuous movements of particular things in and out of a number of points of assembly' (2013: 81), can be understood as a 'hybrid assemblage'. In Latour's terms, it is an 'actor-network' of interaction where purified divisions can be overcome, namely between the categories of 'humans and nonhumans, on the one hand, and between "us," the moderns, and "them," the nonmoderns, on the other' (2013: 65) and also between the past and present (2013: 84). Crucially, Wingfield's chapter establishes that the BM eggshell can be understood as a hybrid object with an ongoing life story and circulation,<sup>127</sup> an object coeval with those viewing it in the SAG (2013: 62) where it is on long-term display, and an example of 'the nonhuman forms through which elements of the past remain present' (Wingfield 2013: 66). For him, it is 'an object that has emerged from a long-term history of engagement between Britain and southern Africa' (2013: 82), historically one of the many objects that travelled in the opposite direction to European settlers and the like, although such 'exchanges were not symmetrical' (2013: 84), that have impacted on Britain.

It should be clear that a good number of ideas set out in *Unpacking and Reassembling* have influenced the present study, which sees itself as bringing together the South African 'archival sensibility' and an interest in agency most directly informed by this 'archaeological sensibility' scholarship. Although, as previously indicated, the present

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<sup>127</sup> Wingfield cites the use of an image of the eggshell on the cover of *Africa: Arts and Cultures* (Mack 2000) as evidence of its 'circulation' beyond the SAG (Wingfield 2013: 85).

research takes the BM as the primary 'field site', it goes on to pursue an archival rather than archaeological metaphor. Wingfield's contribution to *Reassembling*, just discussed, is particularly interesting not least because its major case study is a Southern African object. A number of his concerns, and the approach of paying close attention to objects, are echoed in the present study. Both studies employ metaphorical thinking to shed light on a specific, albeit not the same, time period in objects' life stories prior to their accession into the BM. While Wingfield's approach may be more radical in that it deals explicitly with the agency of things, the present study focuses on the agency of Africans, and less directly, by association, objects. Like his contribution, here objects are considered as 'forms through which elements of the past remain present' (2013: 66).

Having made a case for considering the SA collections at the BM as archive and outlining the theoretical basis for doing so with reference to agency, the Museum and the SA collections, what follows is a fuller application and exploration of these ideas. The next chapter looks at ethnography at the BM more generally, while the chapter after that examines the SA collections in greater detail.

## Chapter 2. Ethnography and ‘ethnographisation’: colonial collecting at the British Museum<sup>128</sup>

It can be argued – indeed it has been argued elsewhere – that there is no such thing as an “ethnographic” object, merely objects regarded ethnographically (Mack 2000: 25).

These are the words of John Mack, then Keeper of Ethnography at the BM, written shortly before the return of that department to the Museum’s Bloomsbury site.<sup>129</sup> For almost three decades, between 1970 and 1997, the department had been based off-site, at 6 Burlington Gardens near London’s Piccadilly, and was known as the Museum of Mankind. In 2004, after a number of years back in the fold, the Department was restructured and renamed the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas (AOA),<sup>130</sup> its current incarnation; arguably, it was at this point that ethnography ceased to exist at the BM.<sup>131</sup> However, ethnography – what might be understood as the ‘ethnographisation’ of objects within the museum context – casts a long shadow.<sup>132</sup>

A museum in the universal or encyclopaedic mode, the BM owes the incorporation of ‘ethnography’, as it later came to be known, in the first instance to Sir Hans Sloane’s varied, Enlightenment-era founding collection. Bequeathed to the nation in 1753, it included a significant number of items described in his manuscript catalogue as ‘Miscellanies’, which would form the nucleus of the ethnography collections, as they would come to be known. For a long period, such objects were ‘described in the registers as “curiosities,” or “artificial curiosities,” as distinct from “natural curiosities”’ (Braunholtz

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<sup>128</sup> Here I construe ‘collecting’ in the broadest sense as defined in the *OELD*, encompassing ‘acquiring’, ‘gathering together’ (especially ‘assembling’) and also ‘receiving’. Collecting and display are often given separate billing in the literature (see for example Wintle 2013). However, for the purposes of this thesis I treat both under the same rubric.

<sup>129</sup> Mack had envisioned a more all-encompassing approach at the BM, whereby anthropology might be applied to research across the Museum, rather than confined to what was then the Department of Ethnography (pers. comm. John Mack, 03/06/2018).

<sup>130</sup> At this time certain collections were assigned to other departments, viz. European and Asian ethnography, although the Asian would continue to be stored at Franks House, the department’s East London storage facility located at Orsman Road. The collections are currently in the process of being removed from this facility and are intended to be housed in the Museum’s onsite WCEC. The renaming of the department should also be viewed in relation to the late twentieth-century trend for such collections to distance themselves from ‘ethnography’ by effectively rebranding, usually as ‘World Cultures’.

<sup>131</sup> Although somewhat anachronistically the department’s webpage states that the ALRC ‘includes the Museum’s Anthropology Library and provides access to information about its *ethnographic collections*’ ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/about\\_us/departments/africa\\_oceania\\_americas.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/departments/africa_oceania_americas.aspx)) (last accessed 05/12/2017, emphasis mine).

<sup>132</sup> I am indebted to Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer for my usage of this term (see 2014: 157; 2016b: 414).



1938: 4), natural history being part of the Museum at that stage. It was not until around the mid-nineteenth century that these items were increasingly being referred to as 'specimens' at the BM (although, as discussed below, the general public continued to consider them 'curiosities' for much longer).<sup>133</sup> The term 'ethnography' was not invoked at the Museum before 1845.<sup>134</sup>

Ethnography at the BM has for much of its history relied largely on the fortuitous donation, and to a lesser extent purchase, of objects mainly associated with what one AOA member of staff has broadly describes as 'the colonial enterprise' (Burt 1998: 10), stemming from an episode of British history closely examined by Annie Coombes (1994) in relation to Africa and its representation, including at the BM. Prior to their acquisition by the BM, the objects in question were for the most part field-collected abroad as 'curiosities' during the nineteenth- or early twentieth-century by such amateur collectors as travellers, missionaries, soldiers and other colonial officials before their 'scientification', or what might be called 'ethnographisation' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016b: 416), within the Museum. Preliminary to looking in greater detail (see Chapter 3), at the BM's SA collections and its sources –those who sold or donated objects to the Museum and, where it is possible to know, field-collected them— what follows is an exploration of ethnography at the BM up until around 1961. The focus in this chapter is on the department, its history, development, keepers, collecting practices and collections. Consideration is also given to the processing and accommodation of its collections. The aim here is to explore what ethnographisation at the BM entailed, in order to provide a context for understanding the biography of the SA collections at the BM to 1961 and a backdrop to the detailed case studies where backstory is explored.

## **1. Ethnography: towards a definition, or the problem defined**

It is not always clear exactly what was, or sometimes still is, meant by the term 'ethnography'.<sup>135</sup> Defined as '[t]he scientific description of peoples and cultures with their

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<sup>133</sup> A perusal of registration entries reveals that the apparent last reference to 'artificial curiosities' appears in 1828, although an entry from 1835 mentions '[a] curios wooden sword...from the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii]' (ALRC Extracts from the BM register). The word 'specimen' is applied as early as 1818 (with reference to objects collected among the 'Ashantee' in modern-day Ghana by Thomas Bowdich), but the more 'scientific' inflection of this term as applied to the objects in question appears to only start gaining a foothold from the mid-nineteenth century. For example, 'Ethnographical Specimens' were mentioned by the BM Committee in January 1870 (CA Committee Papers Vol 33-35, 22/01/1870: 11786).

<sup>134</sup> Marking 'the first occasion... on which the word "ethnographical" occurs in the official reports' (Braunholtz 1938: 5).

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Burt 1998: 10. The BM preferred the term to 'ethnology', the comparison of different cultures.

customs, habits, and mutual differences' (*OELD*),<sup>136</sup> ethnography, as an approach, has been applied to certain museum objects and collections. At the BM this encompassed items made by 'primitive' or 'tribal' peoples of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, but also to a lesser extent from elsewhere.<sup>137</sup> According to Hermann Justus Braunholtz, who from 1913 worked with these collections at the BM and would eventually become Keeper of Ethnography, the word 'ethnographical' was first used in official reports at the Museum in 1845 (1938: 5). In that year 'a large gallery was opened...for the reception of the ethnographical collections' (1938: 5; see also 1953a: 91).<sup>138</sup>

A BM guide of 1899 is instructive: '[e]thnography is the name given to the scientific study of the manners and customs of particular peoples and of their development from savagery towards civilization; and it more especially concerns itself with those races which have no written record' (cited in Dell 1994: 216; King 1997: 147). The Museum's *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections*, published in 1910 and again in 1925, repeats these words almost verbatim, with due acknowledgement to the developing discipline of anthropology:

Ethnography is that branch of the general science of man (Anthropology) descriptive of the manners and customs of particular peoples, and of their development from savagery towards civilization...especially...those races which have no written records and are unknown to history' (BM 1910: 10; BM 1925: 9).<sup>139</sup>

Ethnography, or museum ethnography to be more precise, which Anthony Shelton critiques as an 'imperial science' (Shelton 2000) and calls the equation of 'material objects with specific cultures' (Shelton 1997: 33) — is embroiled in the colonial past and has had a fraught relationship with the idea of history. History was effectively denied to certain non-Western cultures, as the above quotations seem to imply, inasmuch as only written history might be seen to constitute history. Similarly, it was denied to their material culture, which was, and in some instances still is, presented as 'frozen in a historyless stasis' (Pietz 1996 cited in Byrne et al. 2011: 14).

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<sup>136</sup> The word 'ethnography' combines the Greek term for nation, 'ethnos', with the suffix '-graphy', also from Greek, meaning 'writing' (*OELD*).

<sup>137</sup> It included certain 'ethnographic' Asian and 'folk' European cultures. For frequent usage of the terms 'primitive' and 'tribal', see for example BM (1910).

<sup>138</sup> For an artist's impression, see *ILN* 11/10/1845: 237. I am grateful to Marjorie Caygill for this information.

<sup>139</sup> The handbook focused on the Museum's ethnographic collections from Asia, Oceania, the Americas and Africa.

## 2. Shifting curatorial responsibility and the archons of ethnography

Curatorial responsibility for ethnography at the BM has shifted over the years. The collections emerged out of the *Department of Natural and Artificial Productions* and were incorporated into the newly formed *Antiquities Department*, established in 1807. In 1861 that department was divided into three, with ethnography falling under *Oriental, British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography* (Braunholtz 1938: 5), the first time that the term ‘ethnography’ appeared in a departmental title at the Museum.<sup>140</sup> Following that, in 1866, ‘Oriental Antiquities’ were hived off to create a separate department with the ‘residue’ forming the *Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography* (Braunholtz 1938: 5), which lasted until the second decade of the twentieth century. In 1921 the *Department of Ceramics and Ethnography* was created, followed by a further reorganisation just over a decade later with the creation of the *Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography*. With the establishment of this department in 1933, Ethnography emerged as a sub-department (Braunholtz 1970: 43). It was not until over a decade later that the collections achieved separate department status, with the founding of the *Department of Ethnography* following World War II. This department, as mentioned, also known as the museum of Mankind when relocated for a period off-site in Mayfair, endured from 1946 until 2004 when it became the *Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas*.<sup>141</sup> (For a list of these name changes with dates see Table 1.)

Any study of the archive should necessarily take into account its *archons*. These figures’ primary function, according to Derrida’s formulation, is that of guardian (1996: 2). For, as Derrida points out, it is from the Greek *arkheion*, ‘initially [during classical antiquity] a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded’ a safe haven where ‘official documents’ were kept that the singular meaning of archive derives (1996: 2). As custodian of the archive, the meaning and function of archon overlaps with that of museum curator. Derrida writes:

The archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we will call the power of *consignation*...the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit)...[and also] of gathering together (1996: 3).

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<sup>140</sup> British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography was a sub-department of Oriental Antiquities (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018).

<sup>141</sup> Immediately following former Keeper, John Mack’s departure from the BM.

This is not unlike the curator, or Keeper, whose responsibility it is to select, organise and look after collections (see *OELD* definition of ‘curate’).

There were several successive, principal archons or keepers of the ethnography collections at the BM during the period under consideration here, namely: Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826—1897), Sir Charles Hercules Read (1857—1929), Robert Lockhart Hobson (1872—1941), Hermann Justus Braunholtz (1888—1963) and Adrian Digby (1909—2001). These five most senior curators or *keepers* –as department heads were, and still are, known at the BM— were arguably an elite, drawn from the elite.<sup>142</sup> The same was true of Ormonde Maddock Dalton (1866—1945) and Captain Thomas Athol Joyce (1878—1942), who served as Assistant Keeper and Deputy Keeper to 1921 and 1938 respectively. All were white, British men educated (with one exception) at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge. (For a list of names and dates of Ethnography Keepers and Deputy Keepers see Table 2.)

## **2.1 A.W. Franks & C.H. Read: the colossi of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, the long nineteenth century and WWI**

I think I may fairly say that I have created the department of which I am now Keeper, and at a very modest cost to the country (Franks 1987 [c.1893]: 324).

Already an antiquarian of some standing (then known for his knowledge of ‘Medieval Art’), Franks was taken on as an assistant in the Department of Antiquities in 1851 in order to develop the national collections (coinciding with the time of the Great Exhibition), ‘then a mere collection of odds and ends’ (*Times* 25/05/1897: 12).<sup>143</sup> He was himself a collector and a generous donor of objects to the Museum and known for his deep pockets and ‘warm friendships’ (*Times* 25/05/1897: 12). It is Franks, and in particular his friendship with the wealthy industrialist and collector Henry Christy (1810—1865), that the Museum has to thank in many ways for ethnography, or more precisely for ‘the genesis of much of the development of ethnographic collections during Franks’s Keepership’ (King 1997: 138). Following Christy’s death in 1865, his collection was passed to four trustees (one of whom was Franks) who in turn entrusted it to the Museum, where ‘at a stroke’ (Braunholtz 1953a: 92) it firmly established ethnography at the Museum and led to the founding, in

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<sup>142</sup> This chimes with Thomas Richards’s observation that administration of the British Empire itself ‘was overseen by a sort of extended civil service recruited from Britain’s dominant classes’ (Richards 1993: 3). However, Read’s origins are said to have been ‘very modest’ (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018). See also Wilson (2002: 161).

<sup>143</sup> The development of the ‘British/‘national’ collections’ being ‘the culmination of long-standing attempts’ at doing so (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018).

1866, of the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography. Franks was appointed Keeper of this department, a position he retained until the end of his career at the Museum, a year before he died in 1897. It is estimated that during his tenure the ethnography holdings alone, numbering initially somewhere in the region of 3,700 objects, grew more than tenfold to become 'a major sub-section of the Department' (King 1997: 136). Aside from his own means, Franks drew on the Christy Fund to acquire objects and collections, which he presented to the Museum. His network was extensive. It is said of Franks that he was 'one of the most remarkable men who have ever served the British Museum' (Tonnochy 1953: 83); his interests and expertise were indeed catholic and he seems to have possessed an almost encyclopaedic knowledge when it came to his department. Such was his standing that he was offered the Principal Librarianship of the BM, 'but he declined it, feeling that his proper vocation lay in his own department' (*Times* 25/05/1897: 12).

C.H. Read, Franks's 'pupil, friend and admirer' (*Times* 13/02/1929: 9), was the only non-university educated member of the above-mentioned staff to achieve the status of Keeper.<sup>144</sup> According to his obituary, Read gained greatly from Franks's tutelage, not only in expertise, but 'also [in] the valuable art of making friends with men of wealth...to whose interest...the Department...owes many splendid donations and bequests' (*Times* 13/02/1929: 9). Unlike Franks, Read was not particularly financially well off in his own right. However, he cultivated a gainful network of patrons and supporters and also donated objects to the Museum himself, as did his wife, although modestly by comparison with his predecessor. It was through Franks's friend and colleague at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), Robert Henry Soden Smith, that Read came to Frank's attention. Franks installed Read at the Christy Collection, where he 'described and sketched more than 4,000 specimens for the registration catalogue [i.e. the registration slips]' (Tonnochy 1953: 85).<sup>145</sup> Read remained with that collection, housed offsite at Christy's former flat on Victoria Street where it continued to be kept for lack of space at Bloomsbury, until when in 1880 he was officially made assistant to Franks at the Museum (Tonnochy 1953: 84). In time, Read would become a Christy Trustee (GC ?T.A. Joyce to Sir W. Peake, 03/11/1926).

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<sup>144</sup> He was often referred to as 'Hercules Read'.

<sup>145</sup> Read took over this task from Franks's clerk, Thomas K. Gay who died in 1874. Like Gay before him, Read was paid by Franks until his official appointment by the BM (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill 31/12/2018). See also ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/term\\_details.aspx?bioId=40853](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=40853)) (last accessed 05/06/2018) and (Franks 1987 [c.1893]: 320).

Read retired in 1921, marking 'the end of the great Department...[and with] no Colossus left to bestride it...the huge miscellaneous mass split in two' (Tonnochy 1953: 86). Thus 'the empire of Sir Hercules Read had been partitioned' (Kendrick 1971: 2). The use of imperial imagery in these two separate quotations conjures up a figure not unlike that of the well-known late nineteenth-century *Punch* cartoon, 'The Rhodes Colossus', a visual pun referencing the classical Colossus of Rhodes, depicting arch imperialist Cecil John Rhodes straddling the content of Africa with one foot on the Cape and the other on Cairo. Read, like Franks before him, had effectively colonised the collections within his care, where it is said (and this could equally have applied to Franks): 'his knowledge of antiquarian and ethnographical material had an encyclopaedic range and precision such as could hardly be found in any single individual today' (Braunholtz 1953b: 112). As Thomas Richards reminds us, '[t]hough in theory, as Michel Foucault has written, "the archive cannot be described in its totality," in nineteenth-century British practice the archive was often figured as a fixed place, as a discrete institution, *even as a single person*' (1993: 11, emphasis mine).

## **2.2 H.J. Braunholtz et al: the inter-war, WWII and post-war periods**

Following Read's departure and the splitting up of the above-mentioned 'great Department', two of his subordinates, O.M. Dalton and R.L. Hobson, were put in charge of the newly created departments of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and of Ceramics and Ethnography, respectively. The first was a 'residual' department, while the second was a marriage of convenience, 'for administrative purposes', of ethnography and 'Oriental Antiquities plus Western Ceramics' (Kendrick 1971: 2). Although Dalton, who had started his career slightly earlier than Hobson (under Franks shortly before his retirement), had showed an early interest in ethnography it became, for him, 'a secondary pursuit' (*Times* 07/02/1945: 7). Notwithstanding little interest or involvement in the subject (Braunholtz 1953b: 116), Hobson, primarily a ceramics specialist with particular expertise in Chinese manufactures, was given oversight for ethnography. However, as a perusal of departmental General Correspondence (GC) pertaining to the SA collections from 1921 until his retirement in 1938 attests, Hobson left the responsibility of ethnography to T.A. Joyce and the latter's assistant H.J. Braunholtz, who themselves colonised the collections as had their predecessors. Like Hobson, Joyce had started at the Museum under Read where '[h]is appointment was the first to be specifically ethnographical, and he was at once entrusted with the handling of this section of the Department' (Braunholtz 1953b: 114). He was later appointed Hobson's deputy in the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography with the creation of that department in 1921, having already taken over charge of ethnography from Dalton in 1902 when he joined the Museum (Tonnochy 1953:

85; Kendrick 1971: 3). Joyce, who became an Americas specialist,<sup>146</sup> continued to focus on the ethnography collections as deputy to Hobson when the department was reorganised into the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography in 1933, at which time ethnography became a 'Sub-Department', with 'Joyce assuming the title of 'Sub-Keeper'' (Braunholtz 1953b: 116; see also Braunholtz 1970: 43). Joyce retired in 1938, the same year as Hobson, having never attained outright keepership and H.J. Braunholtz, who as above-mentioned had assisted Joyce, took over as Keeper of the department.

Braunholtz, who was just over half way into his career at the Museum, was the last of the above-mentioned members of staff since Dalton to have worked under Read and to have started out in the 'ur-department', British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography. He had joined the Museum in 1913 where he was immediately assigned to the ethnographical collections (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17) as an assistant and, although like his predecessors his interests were necessarily broad, he is arguably the Museum's first Africanist to work with the collections. It was during Braunholtz's keepership that ethnography attained the 'dignity' (Braunholtz 1938: 3) of its own department following Word War II with the creation in 1946 of the Ethnography Department.

Following Braunholtz's retirement in 1953, Adrian Digby (1909—2001), 'a trained anthropologist' (Braunholtz 1953b: 116), the first for ethnography, and an Americanist, was promoted to Ethnography Keeper, a position that he held until 1969.

### **3. Policy, strategy and advising: collecting and the growth of the ethnographical collections**

This section looks at the policy and strategy for collecting ethnography at the BM, followed by a consideration of advice aimed at field-collectors in the form of the published volumes of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, which the BM was involved with from its inception in 1874.

#### **3.1 'Ad Hoc' collecting: 'salvaging objects of scientific interest for the nation'<sup>147</sup>**

For Derrida, bound up with the archons' guardianship of the archive was their 'right to make or to represent the law...[and their] power to interpret the archives' (1996: 2). If the

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<sup>146</sup> Despite acting as an 'amanuensis' of Emil Torday, who had travelled and collected in Central Africa, becoming 'a firm friend' and joint author, Joyce himself lacked African experience (Mack 1990: 14). For a discussion of this 'symbiotic relationship' between an "'armchair" anthropologist' (Joyce) in this instance and the field-collector (Torday), see Coombes 1994: 132-133.

<sup>147</sup> Here Braunholtz writes to thank councillor S. Vandyk of London's Royal Borough of Kensington for the council's gift. In this case, the objects were salvaged from that council's 'Salvage Department' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to S. Vandyk, 09/10/1941).

'law' was ethnography, then what exactly did the curators believe it was that they were doing and collecting?

The collecting policy for ethnography at the BM in the late nineteenth century has been described as '*ad hoc*' (King 1997: 142), a phrase that could convincingly be applied to the remaining, if not entire, period under investigation here. In characterising collecting at the Museum in this way, Jonathan King, a recent Keeper of Ethnography at the BM, cites C.H. Read who in 1890 stated that, despite the lack of government assistance, 'we do get a great deal from military and naval officers and also from private individuals travelling unofficially' (King 1997: 142; see also BEP C.H. Read to O.T. Mason, 12/04/1890 discussed below). This is a familiar pattern, and one that was to persist in spite of the increased professionalisation of field collecting since around that time. H.J. Braunholtz was later to note, perhaps not entirely accurately (to be discussed), that objects field-collected by 'academically trained workers', individuals with anthropological training, tended to end up in the university museums (such as those at Oxford and Cambridge) rather than at the BM (1938: 12). Expeditions that made contributions to the collections, when they did occur, were 'often privately financed' (1938: 13).<sup>148</sup>

According to Braunholtz, who chronicled the history of ethnography at the BM from the earliest times up until the time of his own keepership (1938), the collections accrued rather slowly at first.<sup>149</sup> Growth, says Braunholtz, elements of whose accounts I follow here, was initially 'spasmodic and fortuitous, depending mainly on the chance "curiosities" brought home by travellers and explorers' (1953a: 90) and without 'any systematic planning' (1953a: 91). The collections of that time are unsurprisingly said to have been 'to a large extent a reflection of geographical exploration and colonial enterprise' (1953a: 90). After a slow start, of 'not...[making] great progress at the Museum during [their] first century' (1938: 4), the ethnography collections grew rapidly 'during the second half of the nineteenth century' (1953b: 109). From about 1890 Africa began 'to obtain an increasing share of the picture' (1953b: 111), a high point of which, from a collections point of view, was the acquisition of a large number of 'bronzes' from the kingdom of Benin (now part of present-day Nigeria) following the British punitive expedition of 1897. This boosted the Africa Section 'spectacularly' (1953b: 112), although Read and Dalton had wanted to obtain more objects than they were able to secure for the Museum for lack of funds (Read

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<sup>148</sup> Braunholtz states that such expeditions were 'undertaken with the advice of the Museum officials' (Braunholtz 1938: 13). He cites Torday's Congo expedition as an example

<sup>149</sup> See Braunholtz 1938, 1953a and 1953b.



and Dalton 1898: 372; Coombes 1994: 59).<sup>150</sup>

This changing picture was ‘presumably connected with the shifting emphasis of colonial development...[and impacted upon by] the spontaneous contributions made by a long list of distinguished colonial officials’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 111). (Braunholtz describes such contributions in these terms because the ethnography collections lacked official patronage, as above-mentioned, unlike in some other countries.)<sup>151</sup> During the late nineteenth century ethnography was to obtain ‘recognition as a science...[and] a subject of formal academic study...in England’ (Braunholtz 1953a: 90). Between that time and the early nineteen-twenties the collections ‘grew rapidly and continuously, both in size and scientific quality’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 112), so that by the end of this period:

[T]he Museum could claim to possess an exceptionally wide and generally *well-balanced assemblage* of source materials from almost all the main regions of primitive culture...while in certain branches its collections were quite unrivalled in scientific and historic value (Braunholtz 1953b: 114, emphasis mine).

From the early nineteen-twenties to the late nineteen-thirties, ‘the collections continued [to grow] steadily... particularly’, it was noted, the Africa Section (along with that of the Americas) (Braunholtz 1953b: 117). Perhaps out of modesty, Braunholtz ends his narrative at this juncture, but rather helpfully a departmental typescript memorandum housed by the Anthropology Library and Research Centre (ALRC) picks up, in a sense, where he leaves off. It states that ‘[b]etween 1939 and 1952 the rate of acquisitions was extremely high’ before markedly declining in the years to 1960 when ‘the Trustees instructed the department to concentrate its policy on collecting only to fill gaps in the collections rather than to aim at great numbers of variations in similar specimens’ (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5-6).<sup>152</sup> Prior to this, the collecting policy is said to have been ‘to collect as much material from the rapidly disappearing primitive cultures of

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<sup>150</sup> Read and Dalton also cited by Coombes. Scholars (see for example Coombes 1994) and others have critiqued this episode and the resultant collections housed at the BM and elsewhere. Calls for the repatriation of the ‘bronzes’ are unabated, as evidenced by recent events at the University of Cambridge (*Guardian* 08/03/2016) and media reportage regarding the ‘Benin dialogue group’, said to include the BM and several other leading museums (*Guardian* 12/08/2017). See also comments made by historian David Olusoga (*Guardian* 27/05/2018) and a recent article by *The Guardian’s* West Africa correspondent entitled ‘Bronzes to Benin, gold to Ghana ... museums under fire on looted art’ (*Guardian* 02/12/2018).

<sup>151</sup> A point picked up on, and lamented, by successive BM Keepers (Braunholtz cites Franks and Dalton 1953b: 111. See also Read 1901: 16).

<sup>152</sup> This six-page document, entitled ‘DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE LAST 20 YEARS’ is stored among GC in the ALRC. Although not stated on the document, it is very likely to have been authored by A. Digby (pers. comm. Jim Hamill, 22/01/2019).

Africa, Oceania, America and Asia in order to form as complete collections as possible in the short time remaining before their extinction' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5). The 'salvage anthropology' mode of collecting, here described, was in fact not new, as the following passage from the BM's *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910) evidences:

But if collections are to be made really comprehensive...work should be pushed forward without delay. The intrinsic value of ethnographical specimens is due in no small degree to the rapidity with which they are disappearing in the countries of their origin. With every year primitive arts and industries are being extinguished.... it is no less important to make them [ethnographical collections] *as representative as possible* before the opportunity is irrevocably passed (BM 1910: 43, emphasis mine).

### 3.2 Strategy: 'specimens', 'series', 'duplicates'... and 'gaps'

The aim of making the collections 'representative', through, as Jonathan King notes, 'the construction of ideal series of objects' (1997: 148) was common nineteenth-century practice. At the BM it can be traced to Franks, who, not unlike a natural scientist:

[S]ought to create *series* of differing *specimens*, just as an ornithologist might collect variations in the subspecies of terns or pigeons. To this end he used the natural historian's concept of 'type specimen', and with great boldness consigned 'duplicate' material to an outer darkness where it could be exchanged or disposed of (King 1997: 148, emphasis mine).

This collecting strategy, whereby non-European objects were used to compare against those of prehistoric Europe, meant that documentation pertaining to the collections was not a particular priority – their 'context... [being] irrelevant to the process of seriation' (King 1997: 139).<sup>153</sup> Arguably, the lack of documentation is also as a result of Franks's sources. Although in time greater emphasis would come to be placed on the acquisition of more thorough documentation to support collections, the negative impact that any lack in such information might potentially cause could be mitigated, as Braunnholtz, in his 1938 Royal Anthropological Institute presidential address, suggests:

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<sup>153</sup> King here refers specifically to the 1860s, but arguably these observations can be applied to a longer time period.

Objects are in themselves the *data of science*, and susceptible of scientific treatment by the curator ; and where descriptions have not been provided by the collector, the lacunae can frequently be filled by subsequent investigation in the field, or by reference to contemporary literature. One trembles to think of the loss to our museums and our science if only fully documented specimens had been treated by curators in the past as worthy of acceptance (1938: 9, emphasis mine).

The collecting strategy arguably changed little, at least in terms of ethnographical material being used comparatively, although greater emphasis would come to be placed on documented collections. Writing in the late 1950s, A. Digby says of ethnography (in his foreword to junior colleague B.A.L. Cranstone's handbook on the subject, intended for museum curators), 'it is often only by recourse to the analogues to be found among modern primitive peoples that the dry bones of archaeology can be fully appreciated' (Digby *in* Cranstone 1958: 3).<sup>154</sup>

Certainly ethnography's (literal) terms of reference cited above – 'specimen', 'series' and 'duplicate' – were long-lived, as much outgoing departmental General Correspondence (GC) housed by the ALRC, and pertaining to the SA collections, attests; an understanding of these terms is required in order to successfully read the archive along the grain. GC includes copies of letters sent out from the BM, starting around 1921 when the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography was formed, and covers the rest of the period under investigation here. Throughout this time Joyce, Brauholtz and Digby repeatedly referred to objects as 'specimens' in their correspondence. For example, Digby wrote to thank a donor, Mr D.A. MacAlister, for a '[carved horn] specimen labelled "a gone-away bird [grey loerie]"' (Af1961,06.1) (GC A. Digby to D.A. MacAlister, 31/05/1961), coincidentally on the very day that SA declared itself a republic.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, writing in terms that harked back at least to the late nineteenth century, they frequently made reference to 'ethnographical series',<sup>156</sup> and to 'duplicates', items deemed to replicate those already in the BM's series and therefore surplus to requirement. The lack of space was, as ever, an issue and was often cited as grounds for accepting collections 'in toto',<sup>157</sup> on

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<sup>154</sup> The idea of comparatively studying cultures is long-lived. For example, another former Ethnography Keeper, M.D. McLeod, claimed that the BM is 'dedicated to collecting materials to aid the comparative study of cultures' (McLeod 1993: 13).

<sup>155</sup> The object, the last accession for the period covered by this study, bears an adhesive label, which reads 'MADE BY A SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE ABOUT 1920', and is inscribed "'GO AWAY" BIRD'. The current research suggests that a South Sotho-speaker would probably have made this piece and comparable examples were identified at the National Museum, Bloemfontein.

<sup>156</sup> See also various articles (e.g. Brauholtz 1937; Brauholtz and Digby 1941).

<sup>157</sup> Here I borrow Cranstone's phrase (see GC B.A.L. Cranston to C.C. Pyke, 03/11/1958).

condition that the BM could dispose of any unwanted items to another museum at its discretion.<sup>158</sup> This so-called 'duplicate collection' (less often 'duplicate series')<sup>159</sup> of unaccessioned objects proved useful, not only as a means of exchange but also as a mechanism enabling curators to cherry-pick the most desirous items for the collections.<sup>160</sup> Its origins within the department can be traced to the Christy duplicate collection, from whence numerous major exchanges were made in the latter part of the nineteenth century, contributing to the developing collections. They include a tranche of 'S African specimens', Christy collection duplicates, exchanged with the Smithsonian Institution in the United States for additions to the BM's 'American series' (BEP C.H. Read to O.T. Mason, 19/11/1890) (see also Elliott 2011: 36-7).<sup>161</sup> It is also probably, at least partly, for reasons of space that in the mid-twentieth century the BM trustees instructed the Ethnography Department to focus on 'filling gaps', as above-mentioned,<sup>162</sup> rather than on the acquisition of iterations. Curators were in fact working along these lines well beforehand. For example, in 1934 Brauholtz writes to Lady Baddeley, accepting her gift of objects collected by her late father, Major-General Sir Reginald Thomas Thynne, during the Anglo-Zulu War (1879). The curator says of one particular item, a carved wooden bowl (probably Af1934,0712.7): "[it] is an unusually fine specimen which will fill an important gap in our South African collections' (GC H.J. Brauholtz to Lady Baddeley, 15/06/1934).<sup>163</sup> Seemingly somewhat at odds with the idea of seriation, although arguably 'as ethnocentric' (King 1997: 151), the BM had long sought out 'typical'<sup>164</sup> as well as aesthetic objects. Not only was Franks interested in collecting ordinary objects, as would come to be espoused, for example, by *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (discussed below) -- it is said that he 'was interested in acquiring items of beauty from a European point of view' and that those after him, specifically Read and Joyce (although one could arguably include Brauholtz and Digby) 'developed this process of scholarly connoisseurship further' (King 1997: 151).<sup>165</sup> However, 'the rising cost of such specimens

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<sup>158</sup> See for example GC H.J. Brauholtz to H.F. Bing, 24/01/1949.

<sup>159</sup> See for example GC H.J. Brauholtz to Vandyk [Kensington council], 09/10/1941.

<sup>160</sup> Such duplicate collections still exist, although in somewhat of a state of limbo.

<sup>161</sup> Read's correspondence with the Smithsonian's O.T. Mason around the time of the exchange makes reference to the three terms under discussion.

<sup>162</sup> The memorandum cites the 'rising cost of...specimens' as a contributing factor to this policy (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5).

<sup>163</sup> Baddeley gave SA items collected by her father on two occasions (1934 and 1935).

<sup>164</sup> For example, writing to F.E.A.C. Foxon, magistrate in Ixopo Division, Natal regarding his gift, Read states 'I have sent for the Zulu objects which are good typical specimens' (BEP C.H. Read to F.E. Foxon, 04/10/1898). Included in this group is a headrest (Af1898,1012.6), profusely marked with a magisterial stamp dated 11/03/1887 and inscribed with the donor's initials 'FEACF' and surname 'FOXON' on the underside.

<sup>165</sup> And others, especially W.B. Fagg, although he was only appointed Keeper in 1969, well after the period under consideration.

['of high artistic merit']' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5) meant that the BM purchased, and presumably would also have been given, progressively fewer such items.<sup>166</sup>

The notion of a gap, or of there being gaps in the collections, implies that the assemblage was somehow seen as moving toward a supposed ideal, a state of wholeness or of completion. This idea, as shall be demonstrated, stands in contrast to the archive; understood here as fragmented and fragmentary, rather than as being a comprehensive entity, in this case as somehow representative of various South African 'tribes'. Of course, exactly where such gaps might have been thought to lie conceivably shifted over time and according to the curator(s) of the day. For example, in 1903 Read, exercising his archontic power of selection, turned away a large collection of 'Fingo, Basuto & Tembu' beadwork picked up '[d]uring several years residence in & travelling about South Africa' (BEP letter from B.K. Bartlett, ?/03/1903),<sup>167</sup> saying 'we have already a sufficient quantity of this kind of objects' (BEP C.H. Read to B.K. Bartlett [sic], 13/03/1903). Mrs Bartlett's accompanying photograph, now detached from her letter, which sits in BEP's archive, forms part of AOA's Pictorial Collection housed by the ALRC and is as such divorced from this backstory (Af,B80.3) (**Fig. 19**). Additionally, this correspondence and photograph serve as reminders of what was excluded and therefore is lost to the collections. Just over three decades later, the BM accepted large amounts of beadwork 'collected [by missionary, Frank Cornner] from Pondomisi & Fingoes' (GC F. Cornner to A. Digby, 17/03/1934)<sup>168</sup> (Af1933,0609 and Af1934,0305 – see Appendix A for discussion). It is perhaps in part owing to Cornner's gifts that the following year Braunholtz was to declare (to a future donor) '[w]e have an adequate collection [of]... I think...beadwork', although he was to add 'but in some other subjects our collections from South Africa are by no means complete' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to J.S. Morrison, 24/09/1935).<sup>169</sup>

### 3.3 A note on *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*

The ethnography curators all enjoyed long careers at the BM, with a mean average just shy of four decades. Between them –namely Franks, Read, Dalton, Joyce and Braunholtz— their contribution to ethnography by way of publication record is

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<sup>166</sup> Would-be donors, once aware of the market value of items, might have thought twice about giving them away.

<sup>167</sup> Mrs Bartlett initially offered the collection for sale to the South Kensington Museum, who forwarded the letter to the BM. The address from which she wrote her letter, 'The Vicarage, Topsham, Exeter', suggests that she had links with the Church of England.

<sup>168</sup> Cornner's response was apparently in answer to Digby's 'enquiry as the tribe of kafirs that the beadwork was collected from'.

<sup>169</sup> Braunholtz nevertheless acquired a number of beaded items from this source (e.g. Af1935,1213.3).

noteworthy,<sup>170</sup> especially bearing in mind their other departmental responsibilities and, for the most part, necessarily varied interests. Their output at times touched on or, less often, dealt with African subjects. Franks, for example, penned the *Guide to the Christy Collection* (1868), while Read was to write with Dalton on the Benin material (1898; 1899), the latter also having done ‘a considerable amount of preparatory work’ up until 1902 (Braunholtz 1953b: 112 & 114) on the Museum’s *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1910) published in his and Joyce’s names. Early on in his BM career, Joyce, acting as a kind of ‘amanuensis’ (Mack 1990: 14; see also Coombes 1994: 132-133), wrote together with Emil Torday, who had travelled and collected in Central Africa including for the BM, on the subject of the Congo (1905-7). Joyce later worked on an updated version of the Museum’s handbook together with Braunholtz, which was issued under the same title as before (1925). Braunholtz, who as above-mentioned can arguably be considered the Museum’s first Africanist,<sup>171</sup> additionally wrote numerous journal articles, including a couple on specifically South African topics (1924; 1952).

Franks, Read, Dalton, Hobson, Joyce, Braunholtz and Digby were also active in learned societies, arguably the most important of which for the material at hand having been established in 1871 as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (later the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, hereafter RAI).<sup>172</sup> With the exception of Hobson,<sup>173</sup> all had been attached to the RAI. A number attained presidency, while others held similarly elevated positions within that institution at one time or another. This participation in the then-evolving discipline of British anthropology is further underscored by contributions that certain of these individuals –namely Franks, Read, Joyce, Braunholtz and Digby— made to *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (henceforth *N&Q*). This handbook, issued jointly by the RAI and the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) (Urry 1972: 45), was published in six editions between 1874 and 1951.<sup>174</sup> Appearing initially under the title *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands*, its stated intention was ‘to promote accurate anthropological observation on the part of travellers, and to enable those who are not anthropologists themselves to supply the information which is wanted

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<sup>170</sup> Although Franks’s contribution is mainly papers.

<sup>171</sup> On his RAI census of British anthropologists form (1940), Braunholtz lists his ‘Areas’ of interest in the following order: Africa, ‘America (Arch)’, Polynesia and Melanesia (RAI A71/43). I am grateful to Sarah Walpole for her assistance with this information.

<sup>172</sup> ‘Royal’ was added in 1907, but in the interest of clarity I refer to it as the RAI.

<sup>173</sup> Hobson evidently attended some RAI meetings. On at least two occasions he acted as a discussant on papers of Asian interest (see *JRAI* 1925: 484; 1933: 540). However, his name does not appear on any of the RAI’s lists of fellows and he therefore does seem to have been a member (pers. comm. Sarah Walpole, 14/03/2018).

<sup>174</sup> Not to be confused with Oxford University Press’s journal, *Notes and Queries*, published from 1849.

for the scientific study of anthropology at home' (*N&Q* 1874: iv). By the second edition, published in 1892, the subtitle was dropped and the title henceforth became simply *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*. However, the book's remit remained essentially unchanged with regard to the collection of data for anthropological rumination back in Britain.

Alison Petch observes that 'each new edition [of *N&Q*] used the previous edition as its starting point' (2007: 31) and George Stocking aptly characterises the manual as a 'palimpsest' (Stocking 2001: 164-206). Indeed, over the years, numerous contributors reworked various sections, sometimes rewriting them, either in part or in full, while others were dropped altogether. Initial contributions were made by such august figures as A.W. Franks, E.B. Tylor, A. Lane Fox (later known as Pitt Rivers), J. Lubbock and F. Galton. At first it was made clear who wrote which section. However, while contributors continued to be listed towards the front, with each edition the authorship grew less clear; by the penultimate edition (1929), the sections became anonymous. Both Stocking and Petch have commented on a marked shift in the fourth edition (1912). Petch states that the shift is from a publication aimed at laity to one for 'the academically trained "field-worker"' (2007: 24). This coincides approximately with the beginning of a decidedly more professional age in British anthropology (Stocking 2001: 180; Petch 2007: 24), when '[t]he era of the educated amateur...was...waning' (Petch 2007: 24), concretised in 1922 with the game-changing work of Bronislaw Malinowski (Urry 1972: 45 & 54), himself known to have taken *N&Q* into the field and being influenced by it (Stocking 2001: 202; Petch 2007: 27). Interestingly, Torday also drew upon it (Mack 1990: 29-31; Coombes 1994: 133). Notwithstanding developments in anthropology and changes to the structure and content of *N&Q*, successive editions continued to grow by accretion, while reverberating with earlier voices. For example, the fifth edition (1929) retained aspects written by Franks and C.H. Read, with due acknowledgement (*N&Q* 1929: vi).

The BM, by way of various curators, had a sustained and direct involvement with *N&Q* spanning all editions. Franks, as mentioned, was among the cohort of contributors to the first edition of *N&Q* (1874). He also contributed to the second edition (1892), where Read joined him as a contributor and, additionally, as editor of 'Ethnography', the second part of the volume (he was one of only two editors for that edition). Read reprised these roles for the third edition (1899), which was 'a virtual reprint' of the previous publication (Petch 2007: 23). T.A. Joyce came on board for the substantially revised and reorganised fourth edition (1912). His junior colleague, H.J. Braunholtz, joined him for the fifth edition (1929) and A. Digby contributed to the sixth and final edition (1951).

The Museum's written contributions to *N&Q* centre unsurprisingly on those parts of the publication dealing with 'culture', subsequently termed 'ethnography' (1892; 1899) and later still 'material culture' (1929) (as opposed to what would become known as 'physical anthropology' by the 1912 edition). BM curators wrote sections on topics such as 'Clothing',<sup>175</sup> 'Personal Ornaments', 'Pottery' (Franks in *N&Q* 1874; 1892; 1899), 'Sculpture' (Read in *N&Q* 1892; 1899) as well as 'Weapons' and 'Weaving' (Joyce in *N&Q* 1912). As already stated, by the fifth edition (1929), the manual no longer attributed sections to named author(s). However, both Joyce and Braunholtz sat on its five-strong 'Material Culture Sub-Committee' (*N&Q* 1929: v) and some of Joyce's sections, including 'Weapons' and 'Weaving', although reworked, are recognisably his. The exact extent of Digby's contribution to the sixth edition (1951), beyond sitting on two of three committees responsible for the volume, is unclear owing to this omission of section authorship.

*N&Q* also offered advice about collecting. Some of these suggestions were to be found scattered about, in various sections, for example in Franks's piece on 'Personal Ornaments' (*N&Q* 1892: 91). However, as Petch points out, '[a] small but important part of most of the editions...was the [dedicated] section on the collection of material culture rather than facts' (2007: 22). This section on collecting was included in all editions, bar the first (where no text appeared under the heading 'No. XCVII. – Anthropological Collections', glossed as '[i]nstructions for obtaining, preserving, and disposing of' (*N&Q* 1874: 142)). Significantly, Read authored the original section on field-collecting, entitled 'Ethnological Collections', which appeared in the second and third editions (*N&Q* 1892 & 1899: 232-233) (alongside guidelines on taking photographs in the field, a section also left blank in the first edition and in subsequent editions written by another author). On collecting objects Read advises:

It is of importance to obtain from natives any portable specimens of their handiwork, tools, weapons, dress, ornaments, fetishes, &c., and, where possible, the native descriptions of the objects...Not only are the finished objects worth collecting, but also the raw material used in their manufacture...The commonest things in use are generally the most valuable from an ethnological point of view, though masterpieces of native art are of artistic value, and therefore should not be despised. At the first moment of leisure the objects should be labelled with the

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<sup>175</sup> Franks's section on clothing was included, and duly credited to him, in the 1912 edition although it appears to have been edited and supplemented when compared against the previous edition (1899). Elements of his text for the clothing section remain in the 1929 edition, although it has again been reworked.



locality where they were obtained, and their use, *and any other particulars*...the best means of doing this will differ with the climate...[from] lead pencil upon the object [to]...labels [preferably] tied on like a luggage-label... A list of the objects should be made, with a slight sketch of each beside the description (*N&Q* 1892: 232).<sup>176</sup>

Read goes on to provide some practical advice on packing and preserving (including with 'naphthaline') the collected objects, information identical in both editions.<sup>177</sup>

By the fourth edition (1912) this section, renamed 'General Note on the Collection of Specimens' (*N&Q* 1912: 27), had been revised and expanded by another contributor. Clearly indebted to Read, it covers a number of the same concerns, advocating one:

Collect...not fine specimens only, but objects in common use...[g]et specimens of the material, prepared and raw ; the finished article ; and the article in various critical stages of manufacture (*N&Q* 1912: 27-28).

With regard to the labelling of objects, it expanded on Read's recommendations as follows:

Label every specimen at once...[ directly with] [p]encil... [or on a label] securely tied with string...[g]ive the English and native names for the object, its use, *by whom and where made, from whom, where, and when obtained* (*N&Q* 1912: 28, emphasis in the original).

Its advice on packing again suggests the use of naphthalene, for example when dealing with feathers, and completely covering and employing cushioning material such as paper when packing up pottery (*N&Q* 1912: 29; cf. *N&Q* 1892: 233).<sup>178</sup> This section on collecting appears under the same heading in the fifth edition (1929), with only minor edits (although placed, once again, towards the end of the volume). It was substantially reworked for the sixth edition (1951), where this time it appears as an appendix headed 'Collecting and

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<sup>176</sup> The 1899 version repeats this advice verbatim, although the last line quoted above states '[a] list of the objects should be made *in a book*, with a slight sketch of each beside the description' (*N&Q* 1899: 232, underlining mine).

<sup>177</sup> Bar the addition of two sentences in the later edition.

<sup>178</sup> Referred to as 'naphthaline' in the 1892 edition and 'naphthalin' in the 1912 and subsequent editions. In response to a request for advice on mothproofing skins from Zululand, Brauholtz advocated the use of this chemical, saying that the Department used both 'flakes' and 'spray' (GC H.J. Brauholtz to Rev. B Kingslake, 02/02/1935).

Packing' (*N&Q* 1951: 361). Notwithstanding changes to the text, the germ of some salient points can be traced to Read's suggestions in the second and third editions (1892 and 1899 respectively).

Although most of *N&Q*'s collecting advice in the various editions is said to have been 'practical and good common-sense' (Petch 2007: 26), several of Read's key points, alongside the guide's advocacy of field photography,<sup>179</sup> stood the test of time, as being carried forward through all successive editions would suggest. They include the appeal for ordinary objects, rather than just those deemed more important, as well as the emphasis on note-taking and especially the labelling of objects, preferably in the field.<sup>180</sup> Interestingly, Read's catchall with regard to object labelling, '*and any other particulars*' (*N&Q* 1892: 232; *N&Q* 1899: 232), seems to make space for the recording of 'native' agency and of the individual. By 1912, as noted, this is further elaborated to include '*by whom and where made, from whom, where, and when obtained*' (*N&Q* 1912: 28). The 1912 edition also includes a new sub-section on the collection of textiles written by Joyce as part of the 'Weaving' section, now authored by him (*N&Q* 1912: 79-86). Here, chiming with the above, he suggests that the field collector look out for 'any makers' marks inserted into the design' (*N&Q* 1912: 85).

In a further move that put the BM at the heart of field-collecting guidance, at least initially, was Read's suggestion (in his introduction to part two, 'Ethnography', of the second and third editions) that the 'traveller' could seek advice from 'the authorities of the British Museum' (*N&Q* 1892 & 1899: 88).<sup>181</sup> Petch asserts that Read 'had presumably been influenced by the customs and practices' of the BM (2007: 23) with regard to the advice given in his section on collecting in *N&Q* (and one might add, in any response to enquiries solicited by his above suggestion). Be this as it may, it is important to remember that this guidance would have been based on the collecting experience of others, as Read himself never conducted any fieldwork. It could also have been informed by earlier, but less detailed, collecting guides and questionnaires, which themselves may have influenced collectors. As James Urry notes '[q]uestions and instructions of an anthropological nature

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<sup>179</sup> Like collecting, this section was left blank in the first edition and featured subsequently.

<sup>180</sup> In the second edition Read suggests that '[a] list of the objects should be made, with a slight sketch of each beside the description' (*N&Q* 1892: 232). He elaborates on this point in the third edition by saying such a list should be made 'in a book' (*N&Q* 1899: 232). By the final edition, it is said that 'labels, however detailed, are not a substitute for, but complementary to, the investigator's notebook' (*N&Q* 1951: 362).

<sup>181</sup> 'or the Museums at Oxford or Cambridge [i.e. the Pitt Rivers Museum or the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology], or any other centre where ethnology is studied' (*N&Q* 1892 & 1899: 88). The 1951 edition also suggested that 'one or more of the National or University Museums' could be consulted 'before setting out on an expedition' (*N&Q* 1951: 362).

issued to administrators and travellers have a long history dating back to the sixteenth century' (1972: 45). One such English language publication was the Ethnological Society of London's *A Manual of Ethnological Inquiry* (BAAS 1852). The fifteen-page pamphlet, reprinted in the society's journal in 1854, includes a brief section entitled 'Works of Art' imploring: '[l]et works of art, in metal, bone, or other materials, be likewise sought and preserved' (BAAS 1854: 203). This appeal is taken word-for-word from an earlier BAAS tract published in 1841 entitled *Queries Respecting the Human Race*,<sup>182</sup> itself based in part on a French pamphlet issued the preceding year (Urry 1972: 46).<sup>183</sup> The Ethnological Society of London, one of the forerunners of the RAI, counted as fellows Franks (from 1863) as well as the membership of at least two other individuals who made significant early contributions to the SA collections at the BM – Henry Christy and, for the most part via the former, Dr Robert James Mann, who was responsible for the Natal Court at the 1862 International Exhibition (see Introduction and Chapter 3).<sup>184</sup>

*N&Q* offered advice on field collecting in its various editions, in which the BM arguably played a key role. Notwithstanding, Petch states that it is 'a moot point how much such information was followed in the field by collectors' (2007: 26). This is true of the SA collections, even in the case of Braunholtz himself, whose 1929 fieldwork was the first in that country to be carried out by a BM curator, and one directly involved with *N&Q* at that (see Chapter 5). Similarly, it is difficult to ascertain the manual's impact on the collections. While pondering over *N&Q*'s legacy after having been asked 'what had happened to the information that *Notes and Queries* had elicited during the century of its use?' (Stocking 2001: 166; see Petch 2007: 34), Stocking asserts that no 'archive' seems to have survived (2001: 166, emphasis mine). However, as Petch rightly posits, 'so far as material culture and artifacts are concerned, the answer is abundantly clear: much of it is preserved in museums' (2007: 34), including, one might add, no less a museum than the BM. Before turning to consider that archive, in relation to the SA collections, it is well to discuss a number of practical aspects pertaining to the processing and accommodation of ethnography at the BM.

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<sup>182</sup> See online transcription of *Queries Respecting the Human Race* (1841) (<http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?pageseq=1&itemID=F1975&viewtype=text>) (last accessed 31/12/2018).

<sup>183</sup> <http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?pageseq=1&itemID=F1975&viewtype=text> (last accessed 04/04/2018)

<sup>184</sup> Franks was elected a Fellow in 1863 and Mann in 1866 (*Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* Vol. VII 1864: 4 & 6). Additionally, Mann is listed as a Corresponding Member and his associate, Dr J.P. Sutherland of Natal as an Honorary Fellow (*Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* Vol. VII 1864: 11). The *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* (Vol. II 1863: 2, at rear) lists Christy as a Member.

#### 4. 'Arranging and cataloguing': archiving the ethnography collections

In Derrida's (1996) terms the function of the archon can be seen as the guardianship, consignation and interpretation of the archive. The following section deals in greater detail with some of the more practical aspects of curation that are bound up with these central concerns. It specifically looks at two activities that could be described as the *cataloguing* and *arrangement* of the collections, processes that contributed to their ethnographisation.

Referring to Read's first task when taken on by Franks, Braunholtz says '[i]t was to assist in *arranging* and *cataloguing*' (1953a: 92, emphasis mine).<sup>185</sup> Braunholtz's phrasing here is interesting, not least because it overlaps with two core archival practices, viz. cataloguing and arrangement (The National Archives 2016).<sup>186</sup> Cataloguing, as it applies to the ethnography collections, might be seen to include the numbering and describing of objects in the accessions registers/registration slips, as the case may be; their inscription into the collections as it were.<sup>187</sup> The arrangement of the collections implies putting items in a particular place or order, be that on display or in storage.

Comprising the twin, guiding principles of 'provenance' and 'original order', *respect des fonds* is a central tenant of archive (see Chapter 1). It calls for the grouping of collections according to their provenance, or source –understood as 'the history of ownership related to a group of records or an individual item in a collection' (The National Archives 2016: 7)<sup>188</sup>— and requires them to be 'kept in the order in which they were originally created or used' (The National Archives 2016: 8;<sup>189</sup> see also Society of American Archivists online glossary).<sup>190</sup> As shall be discussed below, ethnography has been catalogued in such a way so as to maintain source provenance by way of accession numbers and in the information it sought to capture. The same cannot generally be said regarding the (re)ordering of collections, which, for example when already numbered would be assigned new (BM) numbers (and often differently ordered to the original). Similarly, *respect des fonds* was disregarded when it came to accommodating the collections: arrangement would have been usually according to 'tribal', or more generally, geographic origin. Thus, the collections were ordered and placed according to other aspects of provenance, a

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<sup>185</sup> In this case of the Christy Collection, as already mentioned.

<sup>186</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf> (last accessed 07/06/2018).

<sup>187</sup> The term 'catalogue' stemming from the Greek 'katalogos, from katalegein "pick out or enrol" (*OELD*).

<sup>188</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf> (last accessed 07/06/2018).

<sup>189</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf> (last accessed 07/06/2018).

<sup>190</sup> <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/p/provenance> (last accessed 07/06/2018).

situation not to everyone's liking. Writing to Lady Wolseley regarding 'the African things' she had promised, and subsequently donated, Read states '[t]hey are all more or less from the same part of the Continent, and will therefore of necessity be kept practically together' (BEP C.H. Read to Lady Wolseley, 13/10/1917), possibly in response to her request that the Museum keep the objects with each other (see Chapter 4).

Before an acquired collection was catalogued and arranged, either in storage or on display, it would have been accessioned first. In attempting to give an account of what this might have entailed, the following is largely inferred from material evidence of practices dating to the late nineteenth century, but especially those since the early nineteen-twenties. This later period coincides with ethnography's split from antiquities in 1921 when the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography was created. At that time an ethnography '*Donations Book*' was instituted. Somewhat of a misnomer, it recorded donations and sometimes also purchases. These notebooks, not unlike what in other contexts might be called a museum 'day book', are small, bound hardback volumes used mainly to record incoming objects or groups of objects. Individual entries were then later annotated with accession numbers, where applicable and once assigned, following the acceptance of a collection. Official acknowledgement would then be sent out from the Museum director's office confirming inclusion in the BM collection, at least in the case of donations. For example, the Director and Principal Librarian, F.G. Kenyon, acting on behalf of the Trustees, sent Braunholtz a letter of thanks following his 1929 fieldwork, saying 'I am directed by the Trustees of the British Museum to convey to you the expression of their best thanks for the Present mentioned on the other side [of this document]' (BP [Sir] F.G. Kenyon to H.J. Braunholtz, 31/01/1930). Acquisition entails a 'transfer of title' to the Museum; this is followed by a process now known as accessioning (also sometimes registration), in the case of objects destined for the permanent collections (see Spectrum 5.0).<sup>191</sup> The object or objects would then be briefly described, by this stage in a bound, large accessions register, the manuscript entry for each item giving information deemed salient. This cataloguing involved, in Derridian terms, unification, identification and classification and would be applied to objects themselves by way of labels. For identification purposes, objects would be physically inscribed with their assigned accession number and also tagged with a label citing some information drawn from the catalogue entry.<sup>192</sup> In the meantime, various pieces of documentation relating to the

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<sup>191</sup> See <https://collectiontrust.org.uk/resource/acquisition-and-accessioning-scope/>; <https://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Acquisition-and-accessioning.pdf> (last accessed 04/06/2018).

<sup>192</sup> Christy Collection objects tended to be attached with small, round adhesive labels.

collection would make their way to the archives, centrally and/or departmentally, no doubt via some stops along the way, if they were to be retained.<sup>193</sup>

Nineteenth-century procedure is a bit hazier, although we do know that the Christy Collection presented a large cataloguing backlog and that one of Read's first jobs when taken under Franks's wing from 1874 was to tackle it (Braunholtz 1953a: 92). By the late nineteenth century the separate registration slip system that Read had been working on was discontinued and that collection, as it grew, began to be entered in the main ethnography accessions registers, albeit according to a different numbering rubric from before and also to the rest of the collections. The Christy Collection continued to have 'a separate existence' within the main run of the ethnography registers up until 1940 (Braunholtz 1953a: 92).<sup>194</sup>

Before turning to consider the accommodation of the collections, it is worth outlining the numbering convention employed for ethnography at the BM. For not only is a number a means of uniquely identifying a given object, it also links it to information held about it at the Museum. Knowing more about an institution's numbering system is a useful tool in navigating the collections, in a manner advocated by Ann Laura Stoler (2009), '*along the archival grain*'. Here, these numbers act as indexes, but of what exactly?

#### **4.1 Cataloguing the collections and a (brief) note on numbering**<sup>195</sup>

Each object registered into the Museum's permanent collection has a museum number (also called an accession or registration number), which in the case of AOA's African material is now prefixed with the letters 'Af'. Historically, some ethnography acquisitions were written in order of their registration into bound volumes, referred to as accessions registers, while others were entered, usually singly, onto separate rectangular pieces of paper referred to as registration slips.<sup>196</sup> Over the years the Museum has employed

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<sup>193</sup> In the past, there have been episodes of document 'culling' at the BM. For example, it is not known what happened to Franks's personal papers. It is thought that Read perhaps destroyed them, possibly in accordances with Franks's wishes (Read was his executor) (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018).

<sup>194</sup> Braunholtz neatens this up slightly. The final register entry for Christy Collection ethnography appears in 1938 (in the separate Christy Collection register), while the final Christy numbers continue into the following year, although they are not entered into the register.

<sup>195</sup> The information here is drawn mostly from my own experience working with, and studying, the collections and also from an internal Africa section document entitled *Africa Registration Systems* (no date, circa 2015). Further details on the Christy numbers, written by Marjorie Caygill, can be found on the BM's website [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/term\\_details.aspx?bioId=40853](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=40853) (last accessed 05/06/2018).

<sup>196</sup> The 'first document [being] the [Sir Hans] Sloane catalogue', whose collection established the BM (see Chapter 3) (per former Keeper of Ethnography at the BM (1974—1990), Malcolm McLeod (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018)).

various registration numbering systems. In the case of objects usually recorded in the registers,<sup>197</sup> these numbers are three-part: the year of accession, followed by a collection number and an item number (a collection comprising anything from a single object upward). Up until the late 1930s the numbering format followed the convention of year, month and day, and object number (e.g. Af1937,1201.1), the 'month and *day*'<sup>198</sup> effectively constituting a collection number. In 1939 the format changed, and the registration year preceded a single, sequential collection number followed by an object number (e.g. Af1939,15.1).<sup>199</sup> This main numbering series sits alongside the numbers of the somewhat misleadingly titled 'Christy Collection'.<sup>200</sup> The Christy series includes several registration number formats, each featuring a running number, *but no year or collection number* as such (e.g. Af.2175, an example of the Christy run of numbers that goes into the 9000s).<sup>201</sup> The objects from this collection are mostly, but not always, recorded on slips,<sup>202</sup> as with some miscellaneous collections registered during the nineteenth century – an 'administrative device...[which] had the effect of blurring the distinction between the Museum and the Christy Collection' (King 1997: 144). Whether they be Christy or main series, some numbers are now suffixed with an alphabetical value to indicate parts of the same object. For example, '.a' might be used for a vessel and '.b' for its lid (in which case these values would be elided as '.a-b'). Like the 'Af' prefix, these are more recent additions to the museum numbers and were introduced since computerisation of the collections.<sup>203</sup>

Throughout this study attention is paid to Museum numbers, cited here in their current form for ease of reference, as they appear on the Museum's database and online

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<sup>197</sup> There are exceptions, for example purchases from Hugh Cuming in 1854 and 1859 are recorded on registration slips.

<sup>198</sup> These two sets of numbers are generally thought to have referred to the actual month and day that a given collection was registered into the permanent collections. However, the *Donations Book* volumes (ALRC), where from 1929 onward ethnography gifts and purchases were jotted down prior to actual registration, suggests otherwise. It would seem that the 'day' number(s) refer to the order in which a particular collection was registered in a given month.

<sup>199</sup> Originally, this middle number would have been preceded with a continental abbreviation ('Af' for Africa), with the number being a running number of acquisitions from that continent for the year. As mentioned, the prefix now sits in front of the year, as per the cited example.

<sup>200</sup> Misleading in that it comprises objects from Henry Christy's own collection, which was given to the Museum, as well as subsequent additions stemming from various sources, some purchased using funds left by Christy and others donated.

<sup>201</sup> For discussion on the Christy Collection numbers, see Elliott 2011: 7.

<sup>202</sup> Some slips record more than one object and some Christy additions are recorded in accessions registers referred to as 'Christy registers'. Most of the latter numbers are known as the Christy year series, the registration number comprising the year that an object was registered followed by (now a dash and) a running number (e.g. Af1908,-.340). Some of these entries are duplicated on Christy slips.

<sup>203</sup> In the case of certain numbers there are further additions, e.g. the dash mentioned in the previous footnote.

catalogue ('collection online').<sup>204</sup> Whether initially written in a register or on a slip, these numbers function as indexes, helping one navigate and make sense of the archive, in other words to read along the grain. As indexes they highlight the source of an object or collection – viz. their apparently inviolable connection with, and bias in favour of, the donor/seller – regardless of whether or not the objects in a particular collection are physically stored or displayed together. This connection with the donor/seller, arguably the primary index, is further underscored by the information furnished in the registers and slips, which although scant, usually includes a brief description of the object as well as an indication of at least some of its provenance. These details typically include the object's name, dimensions, material(s) and function, its geographic and 'tribal' origin, the name of its donor/seller (and less often its former owner or field-collector, when not the same as the source) in addition to a thumbnail sketch depicting the item.

## **4.2 Arranging the collections: displaying and storing 'the vast assemblage of scientific data'**<sup>205</sup>

In theory, once an object had been catalogued, it was put either on display or, more frequently, into storage.<sup>206</sup> Space, as mentioned, has been a perennial issue for ethnography at the BM – one that applied equally to areas of public display and to the storerooms housing the reserve collections.

### **4.2.1 Display**

By 1845 the collections were said to have been 'substantial enough to necessitate the opening of a large new gallery "for the reception of the ethnographical collections"' (Braunholtz 1953a: 91). The Ethnographical Room, as the gallery was called, heralded the beginning of the use of this term within the Museum (i.e. the reference to the collections as 'ethnographical'). It was not, in fact, until the following year (1846) that the BM's popular guide,<sup>207</sup> *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, would reflect this nomenclature, the 1845 edition still describing the exhibit on the upper floor as 'Artificial Curiosities from different Countries' (BM 1845: no page number). The new arrangement increased the number of cases devoted to Africa from one to four; however the sole SA object among predominantly West African material continued to be a (currently

<sup>204</sup> [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx). MuseumIndex + (MI+), the BM's current database, and the latest in a succession, indicates that registration numbers as they now appear are composites. During the time of research, the Museum was using a database called Merlin; data has been migrated from this database to MI+.

<sup>205</sup> Braunholtz (1953b: 119).

<sup>206</sup> There were times when this was not possible, for example during World War II when registration halted (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2).

<sup>207</sup> Published between 1808 and 1889 it briefly described the contents of each gallery and various other exhibition areas.



unlocated), 'cap, made of a fine mat, from the Cape of Good Hope. *Presented by Captain Duncan, 1780*' (BM 1846: 4).<sup>208</sup>

The Ethnographical Room was not capacious enough to accommodate the Christy Collection, which was accepted by the Museum in December 1865 (Braunholtz 1953a: 92). Instead, as already mentioned, the Christy Collection remained at Christy's residence for the time being. Here, at Christy's residence, the 'Ethnography of Africa and Asia' was exhibited in Room II, with Africa 'arranged' in thirteen cases, one of which was centrally placed (Franks 1868: 12). SA occupied four of these cases, in addition to having 'a few smaller objects' in the central case and a number of shields and assegais mounted on the walls, as well as some carved wooden items placed '[o]ver the cases' (Franks 1868: 15). Franks's *Guide to the Christy Collection* (1868), the source of this information, is unillustrated and makes no reference to accession numbers.<sup>209</sup> However, based on the descriptions provided, a great deal of the Christy SA collections on display, '[c]omprising specimens from the Bushmen and various Kafir tribes'<sup>210</sup> (Franks 1868: 14), corresponds with items Christy acquired from the International Exhibition of 1862. One of the more significant groupings on display acknowledges this provenance: '[a]mong the Kafir objects...[a] brass breastplate, battle axe, hide buskins, and other articles of dress, obtained from Moshesh, a chief of the tribe, and exhibited in the London Exhibition of 1862' (Franks 1868: 14) (see Introduction). Similarly, a number of other objects can be traced to this 1862 world's fair, including at least a few of the 'milk vessels and pillows carved in wood and coloured black' (Franks 1868: 15) now positioned over cases.

Much needed space was created when the BM's natural history collections were finally removed to South Kensington, which became known as the British Museum (Natural History) and later still as the Natural History Museum. The hiving off of these collections allowed for the translation to Bloomsbury of the ethnographic material from the Christy

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<sup>208</sup> This object corresponds with Af1780,0721.1, described in the accessions register as '[a] basket made by the Hottentots' (see also CA Committee Papers Vol 7-8, 21/07/1780: 1727). The cap, or hat as later indicated in the *Synopsis* (see BM 1847: 5), is the only object recorded as having come from Duncan at that time.

<sup>209</sup> It is not known quite when numbering of the Christy Collection began under Franks, but it was probably around 1866 when he appointed a clerk to help him (Elliott 2011: 7), possibly T.K. Gay.

<sup>210</sup> But also some 'Boer' items, including tobacco-pipes and 'some models of native make' illustrating 'the dress of the Kafirs and Bushmen'. These are almost certainly one or both pairs of figures, Af,SA.1-4, acquisition details unknown, and/or Af.2219.a-b, donated in 1866 by Arthur C. Tupper, originally 'sent over from Graham's Town, South Africa by [his] Uncle Capt C. J. Selwyn R.E Commanding the Royal Engineers [?] in that Colony in 1838' (CC 808, ?M. Tupper, no date). There is some uncertainty in contemporary sources and more recent literature about who was making such stuffed leather figures, although I am inclined to go with Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) missionary Frédéric Christol who indicated that 'leather dolls, representing Bushmen...were skillfully made by Boer women' (Christol 1911:29-30, see illustration, my translation; see also Christol 1897: 150-1).

Collection in 1883, by this time itself 'more than doubled [in its original size] through donations and Christy Fund purchases' (Braunholtz 1953a: 92) and also various exchanges. Shortly before the incorporation of the Christy material, the 1883 *Guide* says of the BM's existing display in the Ethnographical Room: '[a]ny scientific arrangement has been rendered difficult by want of space ; but the objects have been, as far as practicable, arranged in geographical order' (BM 1883: 140).<sup>211</sup> This was written at around the time that Franks and A.H.L.F. Pitt Rivers, a collector and prominent figure in anthropology, were engaged in a public falling out over what came down to display methods, Pitt Rivers preferring his own didactic, evolutionary sequencing, which when laid out required more space than was at Franks's disposal (for further discussion, see Mack 1997: 45).<sup>212</sup>

Here, on display in the Ethnographical Room, the only certain hint of SA material were some 'dresses, pipes, and ornaments of various kinds, chiefly worn or used by the natives of Kaffirland' (BM 1883: 141). The Christy Collection's arrival would involve 'an entirely new installation of the ethnographical collections' (Braunholtz 1953a: 92), which was focused on accommodating a much greater number of items from the joint collections within the mainly geographical arrangement, followed by both the Christy Collection when it was off-site and the BM's existing ethnography display. The number of cases dedicated to Africa alone give some idea of the scale of this increase, going from seven in 1883 (BM 1883: 141) to twenty-one by 1886, plus numerous table cases (BM 1886: 217-218). Arguably, it was this physical incorporation of the Christy Collection that, to borrow Braunholtz's phrase, 'established ethnography as a major constituent of the Museum' (cf. 1953a: 92, also cited above).

'South Africa', for one, certainly enjoyed an increased visible, and now distinct, presence at the BM thanks to the geographical arrangement; occupying no fewer than four cases as well a table case (BM 1886: 217). Writing to the depositor of a Xhosa 'Witch Doctor's Collar' in early 1899 (Af1899,0201.1), Dalton advises it 'is now exhibited in the Table Case in the South African Section of the Ethnographical Gallery' (BEP O.M. Dalton to A. Johnson, 14/02/1899).<sup>213</sup> Like the Christy display before (which had also separated out

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<sup>211</sup> The fold-out BM floor plan (between pages 84 and 85) anticipates the new Ethnographical Gallery (comprising five rooms, occupying much of the upper floor on the eastern side) by including it on the plan. However, the text itself describes the 'Ethnographical Room', which, according to the 1881 *Guide* was a small gallery on the south-facing aspect of the Museum (see fold-out BM floor plan between pages 76 and 77).

<sup>212</sup> As Mack notes, it was because of Pitt Rivers's weddedness to his display mode that his collection at the time went to the University of Oxford and not to the BM.

<sup>213</sup> Johnson presented the piece on behalf of his brother, Eustace C. Johnson who appears to have been resident at Kei Bridge, Cape Colony [Eastern Cape] (BEP A. Johnson to C.H. Read, 17/01/1899). This is

these and other collections), the focus of the SA section was on ‘the Bushmen’ and ‘the Kafir tribes’ (BM 1886: 217). The newly arranged Ethnographical Gallery, featuring the joint collections, opened to the public on 12 April 1886 where it occupied much of the upper floor of the east wing, which had previously housed bird and shell specimens (Braunholtz 1953a: 92). However, any sense of achievement on the part of the department for the growing institutional recognition of ethnography must have been overshadowed by what was still an acute lack of space. The BM’s *Annual Return* reported at the time that the new gallery was ‘already then fully occupied and that no room remained for expansion’ (Braunholtz 1953a: 92). Four years later, from around 1890, the Africa collections would begin ‘to obtain an increasing share of the picture’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 111), if not of display space, at least in size relative to the rest of the collections.

One of ‘three co-existent models or paradigms of display’<sup>214</sup> (King 1997: 145) employed at the BM for ethnography during the nineteenth century (and already discussed in relation to the Ethnographical Room and the Christy Collection as well as the Ethnographical Gallery), the geographical arrangement would prove to be the most enduring. Although it had antecedents dating to the late eighteenth century at the BM, it was to come into its own the following century (King 1997: 145) and was much in place throughout the rest of the period under discussion here, as was the Ethnographical Gallery itself. Despite these theories of display, it has been said that ‘it was the policy to put everything they [the Keepers] possibly could in the overcrowded cases to convince the Trustees that Ethnography needed more space. His [Franks’s] successors evidently continued with the policy until the War, in 1939’ (A. Digby to J. Mack, 24/04/1996).<sup>215</sup> Reflecting on ethnographical display the year he assumed keepership of the Department, Braunholtz observed that ‘the factor of chronology has been rather neglected or obscured in museum arrangements’, tellingly attributing this state of affairs ‘mainly due to lack of space’. He further elaborated on the problem, admitting that at the BM ‘things collected, often over a period of anything from fifty to a hundred years, are placed together as illustrating a particular tribal or regional form of culture’ (1938: 13).<sup>216</sup> Arguably, the effacement of time, to which Johannes Fabian calls attention to in *Time and the Other* (1983), may also have

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an instance of an acquisition being put on immediate display, perhaps because the item was a rarity, a fact A. Johnson mentions in his previous letter.

<sup>214</sup> The other two being the cabinet of curiosities model, still evident in places at the BM in the early nineteenth century, and the ‘pseudo-medieval armorial display’ (King 1997: 145), which Coombes identifies elsewhere as the “trophy” method’ (Coombes 1994: 71).

<sup>215</sup> Copy of letter with Marjorie Caygill apparently citing ‘an elderly [curator?] who knew’ Franks (pers. comm. 31/12/2018) (brackets in quotation).

<sup>216</sup> As already mentioned, Braunholtz was later to gesture towards the ‘historic value’ of the collections (1953b: 114), but this appears to have been a concern of lesser importance and not along the lines of historic specificity that concerns the current project.

been a corollary of the insistence on geographical arrangement as then conceived, for time historicises whereas geography regionalises.

This is neither to suggest that the displays themselves were static nor without periodic refreshment. For example, during the early twentieth century the African section was subject to “‘incorporation” and...reorganization’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 114), presumably owing to the marked increase in those collections since 1890, and for reasons of safety objects were taken off display during both the First and the Second World Wars (Braunholtz 1953b: 115; GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960). Undoubtedly the most radical display shake-up in the period to 1961 was posed by the second conflict, which caused major upheaval involving the removal of exhibits and the evacuation of collections, as well as damage to the fabric of the display. The main exhibition space for the permanent display was only fully reinstated until some while after hostilities had ended when, in 1953, ‘the arrangement of the Ethnographical Gallery was completed’ with the completion of the ‘bay’ set aside for ‘South and East Africa’ (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 4). Despite the massive increase in the size of the collections over the years to 1953, the space afforded to the display of ethnography had not increased ‘appreciably’ since the opening of the gallery in 1886 (Braunholtz 1953b: 118). By the time of the outbreak of World War II, the display had become so overcrowded as to be described rather disparagingly as ‘glorified storage’ (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 6). Post-war rehabilitation of the display saw a significant reduction in the number of objects on view at any one time. The policy being to show ‘fewer objects more attractively’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 118),<sup>217</sup> it having been ‘decided to limit the exhibition so that no more specimens were shown than was necessary to give a reasonably accurate idea of most aspects of the material culture of those tribes or cultures there was room to represent’ (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 6).

Writing at the time of the post-war completion of the Ethnography Gallery, Braunholtz describes the display as a tip-of-the-iceberg situation, whereby of ‘all the vast assemblage of *scientific data*’ (i.e. the total ethnography collections at the BM), ‘only a small fraction of the mass, spectacular though it be, is visible above the surface’ (1953b: 119, emphasis mine). In order to remedy the situation, Braunholtz suggested that ‘the provision of adequate suites of store rooms and students’ “laboratories” might render ‘visible’ this ‘data’ (1953b: 119). Although Braunholtz speaks in terms of facts rather than of knowledge, his comment nonetheless suggests the value of being able to visualise the

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<sup>217</sup> Apparently around only ‘one tenth of the pre-war quantity [of material]’ (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 4).

collections in a manner not unlike that within a panopticon (see Chapter 1). Here we have a shift from seeing the collections as a source of knowledge in their Enlightenment formulation to a form of information, which may be due to the onset of the 'Information Age'.

#### 4.2.2 Storage

Braunholtz's iceberg metaphor is apposite. It serves not only to conjure up an image of the ratio of reserve to display material, but also to encapsulate the, albeit shifting, relationship between two aspects of a greater whole.<sup>218</sup> It also hints at the enormous mass hidden below the depths, secrecy having long been associated with the archive (see Chapter 1). However, rather than being frozen solid or slowly melting, the mass in question was actually increasing in size while the above-water peak remained comparatively small. In Braunholtz's own words, '[t]he ratio of stored to exhibited material is...constantly rising' (1953b: 119).

The display at any given moment was not necessarily representative of the collections as such,<sup>219</sup> although there is every suggestion that the storage arrangement followed that of display, at least since immediately after World War I when 'a radical rearrangement of the stored collections on regional lines was...undertaken' (Braunholtz 1953b: 115). At this time, the collections were granted more storage space, an increase from just two basement storerooms (Braunholtz 1953b: 115). By 1953 the number of storerooms available to the Department had risen to 'about 60' (Braunholtz 1953b: 119).<sup>220</sup> Following World War II, there was overcrowding in the basement caused when, in a wartime emergency, objects had been moved from other basement areas and were piled 'higgledy piggledy' [sic] (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2). They had been removed from damp and mouldy conditions in store created by water used to douse a fire, which had broken out as a result of an incendiary bomb that fell through the Ethnographical Gallery

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<sup>218</sup> I.e. when exhibits were altered or objects rotated.

<sup>219</sup> In so far as the exhibitions were not about the collections in a self-reflexive manner. Similarly, the recent major BM exhibition, *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* (27/10/2016–26/02/2017), although featuring many objects from the Museum's own collection –particularly in its middle section, much of the archaeological and contemporary material being loans— was not about the collections per se. Rather, it sought to narrate episodes of SA history through objects, by juxtaposing 'historic and contemporary artworks to tell a history of South Africa from the earliest artistic acts to the most recent' (exhibition introductory text panel, as at 02/11/2016). However, it did briefly engage with colonial collecting in its middle section, taking as emblematic of the 'specimen' a feather head-dress contained within a bell-jar labeled '[h]ead-dress of the bodyguard of the Queen of Swaziland S. Africa 1908' (Af1933,0315.105).

<sup>220</sup> This seems like an enormous increase in the amount of storage space, although in the first cited quotation, Braunholtz does not indicate if there were other, non-basement storage areas in addition to these two. Also, some of the many later basements were likely to be small.

and exploded in the King's Library below, apparently without damaging any ethnography.<sup>221</sup> Post-war reparations included 'repairs' to otherwise damaged objects and the massive task of 'resorting the collections' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2), some of which had been temporarily secreted off-site in locations such as Aldwych tube station in London and Drayton House in Northamptonshire.<sup>222</sup>

Immediately following the war, even locating or finding an object was a challenge (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 4). This must have made the post-war task of 'cataloguing, re-classifying and arranging of the stored material' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 4) all the more difficult, a process, which, like any conservation of 'specimens', was predicted to occupy many years (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2). It is probably at this time of 'resorting the collections' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2) that objects accrued an (often) additional label. Many still carry this buff luggage-label bearing a crown and the initials 'E.R.' (Elizabeth Regina, Elizabeth II succeeded in 1952) and also briefly annotated, typically with the object name, accession number and 'tribe'. Many of the white pre-printed labels currently still in use also have a field for 'tribe', signaling the perpetuation of this paradigm and aspect of provenance (**Fig. 20**).<sup>223</sup>

With regard to the identity of the SA collections at the BM, it has been noted that by the end of the nineteenth century it developed 'to the point where they were differentiated into a (small) *regional* section' (Dell 1994: 216, emphasis mine).<sup>224</sup> As previously argued, however, at the BM this region and SA the country have been conflated (see Introduction). The next chapter turns to look at collecting SA at the BM.

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<sup>221</sup> There 'is no report of damage to the Ethno[graphy] collections' (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018).

<sup>222</sup> Objects were removed from display and from various storerooms into other basement areas at the BM. Additionally, other items were removed to various places around the country, including to 'the Quarry' (pers. comm. Marjorie Caygill, 31/12/2018). For further details of a number of these and the repositories in Warwickshire and Wiltshire, see GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 1.

<sup>223</sup> Although some no longer have this field, I was nonetheless asked to add this information to such labels when I rewrote them as part of my fieldwork process.

<sup>224</sup> There is, in fact, also further suggestion of this differentiation in the cataloguing for a brief period during the 1870s when a run of Christy registration slips was created for a number of objects drawn from various sources and assigned 'SA' numbers. (For example Af.SA.76 and 77, these two particular items given by Miss Powles (having been field-collected by PEMS missionary David Frédéric Ellenberger) and for some reason separated out from the rest of her large donation presented to the Christy Collection in 1870 (Af.6066-6167)).

### **Chapter 3. Collecting South Africa at the British Museum to 1961**

Today curated by the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas (AOA), the SA collections at the BM encompass a wide range of objects made according to a variety of techniques using various materials – from items carved out of wood, horn, bone and ivory, to those modelled out of clay, to beadwork (mainly utilising imported glass trade beads), worked animal skins, basketry and metalwork. Historically, certain materials and/or technologies would have been the preserve of either men or women, as were the creation of various types of objects. Women, for example, were beadworkers, while men were carvers (Nettleton 2012). Objects vary from items of adornment, to those of everyday (yet frequently no less aesthetic) or more occasional use, and include beaded garments and accessories, pots, vessels, containers, utensils, headrests, staffs, weapons and, to a more limited extent, figures. These objects were made by speakers of various tongues, in what are the present-day countries of South Africa, Lesotho and eSwatini/Swaziland. Objects made by Bantu speakers predominate;<sup>225</sup> most numerous are items created by speakers of isiZulu followed by isiXhosa, the two main Nguni languages, which precede numerically items made by speakers of the Sotho-Tswana languages. These are then followed, in numerical terms, by objects made by the first peoples, the San and other non-Bantu speakers, then items made by various other groups of Bantu speakers (Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele and siSwati). There are also small numbers of objects created by people of immigrant and/or mixed heritage, including items classified as ‘Boer’,<sup>226</sup> ‘Cape Malay’,<sup>227</sup> ‘Griqua’, ‘Chinese’<sup>228</sup> and one as ‘Indian’.<sup>229</sup> However, as the following remark

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<sup>225</sup> The classification of objects according to the ‘tribal’ (now usually termed ‘cultural group’) paradigm is, as discussed in the Introduction, a fraught yet ongoing museum preoccupation, which tends to overlook the fluid and often hybrid nature of cultures. Here, I have mainly employed a linguistic classification, which is nonetheless also not unproblematic. Part of the issue with trying to establish, with any certainty, the ‘cultural identity’ of an object is the general lack of documentation coupled with the mainly nineteenth and twentieth century use of the terms, within the BM itself, of the broad, and now highly opprobrious term ‘kaffir’ (and variants) and ‘bushman’ (also considered offensive in some contexts). Later attempts were made within the Museum to amend documentation, for example the classification of ‘Natal Kafirs’ was later changed to ‘Zulu’ in the case of many 1862 International Exhibition items (Elliott Weinberg 2016), a project and intervention in the archive which, in editing the database entries, I continued.

<sup>226</sup> The greatest number of these items are tobacco smoking-pipes and pipe-bowls. A group of these came to the collections with the Christy Collection having been acquired from the Natal Court at the 1862 International Exhibition (to be discussed) and another batch was purchased using Christy funds from dealer William Wareham in 1882, having previously formed part of William Bragge’s extensive collection of smoking pipes, items from which he featured in his *Bibliotheca Nicotiana* (1880). The historical term ‘Boer’ is now considered to be offensive by some Afrikaans-speaking South Africans (pers. comm. Johnny van Schalkwyk 2016).

<sup>227</sup> The most distinctive, and most certain, of which is a *toedang* hat (Af1960,20.113) given to the BM by Kew in 1960. It had been sent to Kew in 1857 by (Sir) Rawson W[illiam] Rawson (1812–1899), then Colonial Secretary, from Cape Town (see Kew EBC EB 1855–1861: 227-8). A note, still associated with the hat, indicates that the raw material for the hat was obtained in ‘Houtsbay’ (Hout Bay, Cape Town).

illustrates, these items are slightly anomalous and were not generally considered stock-in-trade:

I have been through the box of material you offered to the Museum, and I am returning a few objects which are *not of South African origin*. They include a Boer pipe...a Chinese padlock, and two ivory spindles which may be of Indian origin (GC H.J. Braunholtz to Lady Cunynghame, 09/11/1936, emphasis mine).

This comment also speaks of archontic power, specifically of identification and selection as well as the construction of 'South Africa' as a category at the Museum. It also calls to mind the ethnographisation or 'purification' (Wingfield 2013) of objects already discussed. Generally speaking, 'European influence', was 'deal[t] with [by the BM]... either by refusing to admit the more obvious examples of white culture contact into the museum picture, or by segregating them from the unadulterated native products' (Braunholtz 1938: 13). Although the incorporation of European or other imported beads was itself not deemed problematic (Braunholtz 1938: 13), given the relatively long white presence in the country and traces of 'culture contact', the SA collections conceivably challenged notions around 'authenticity'.

Aside from objects, AOA has inherited from its predecessors a Pictorial Collection, comprising mainly photographs, but including other visual representations of African and other people (and less frequently other subjects), many of which came to the BM alongside collections.<sup>230</sup> For many years considered as 'adjuncts' to the collections (?draft letter, BEP 'Christy Collection Notes from A.W. Franks's [box], letter from A.W. Franks, 03/11/1866), these items have not until relatively recently received more serious attention and have yet to be accorded the status of registered Museum objects.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Mainly feather capes (Af1915,-.76; Af1928,-.4.a-b; Af1933,1118.1 — also Af1979,01.4682 and Af1987,04.1), generally thought to be Chinese, although the V&A considers a related example in their collection to have been made in the UK (acc. no. T.28-1910) (<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O114499/pelerine-unknown/>) (last accessed 18/11/2015).

<sup>229</sup> A pair of sandals (Af1895,0806.18.a-b) described as 'East Indian' (registration slip), which came in with a collection of objects originating from present-day KwaZulu-Natal having been given by A.L. Byrne in 1895 (see Chapter 5: 132). During the course of researching the collections, I suggested that these sandals, previously thought to originate elsewhere, had probably been made by, or belonged to, an Indian South African. Additionally, there are a few objects made most probably by Europeans, viz. aluminium penis sheaths made for trade (Af1954,+23.3047 and Af1954,+23.3048) as well as a number of items made by immigrants, possibly English-speakers, such as a snuff-spoon 'made at the Cape of Good Hope for kafirs' (label) (Af,+6026; cf. Af,Cf.13).

<sup>230</sup> For example, there are also images of objects.

<sup>231</sup> At the time of research not all items had been entered into the BM's database and some had not been assigned numbers. The current numbers are location codes rather than accession numbers,



As already mentioned (Chapter 2), Hermann Justus Braunholtz (1888—1963), who worked with the ethnography collections at the BM from 1913 when he started out at the Museum, becoming Keeper in 1938 and retiring in 1953, chronicled these collections (1938; 1953a & b). What follows is a history of the growth of the SA collections at the BM, placed alongside elements of the history of the wider ethnography collections for contextualisation. Thereafter, using as a basis Braunholtz's 1938 RAI Presidential Address, is a consideration of the 'sources' of the SA collections.

### **1. '[T]he story of ethnography in the British Museum': H.J. Braunholtz's chronicles and the growth of the South Africa collections<sup>232</sup>**

*History of Ethnography in the Museum* (Braunholtz 1953a & b) was Braunholtz's written swan song, coinciding as it did with the end of his keepership of Ethnography and long career at the BM. Published in the *British Museum Quarterly* in two parts, the first briefly chronicles the history of ethnography in the BM after its foundation in 1753 up until Franks's death in 1897. The second revisits the second half of the nineteenth century, a period that approximately coincided with Franks's tenure, marked by growth 'nourished by the ever-increasing public interest in colonial peoples, and by the development of anthropology' (1953b: 109). Braunholtz's second installment also discusses some of what he considers 'a few of the major accessions, selected on grounds of size or quality' (1953b: 109). It continues in this mode, accounting for the principal contributions, classing them according to Keeper, from Franks's successor, Read, through various keeperships up until the start of his own in 1938. Seemingly out of modesty, Braunholtz stops his narrative there, but, in an addendum he notes that the ethnography collections at the BM had 'more than doubled in size during the last half-century' (1953b: 118), i.e. between 1900-1950. This is true of the SA collections, which in the same period added approximately 1,130 objects to the around 1,100 accessions of the previous half century (see Graph 1).

1938 is a significant year; as already indicated, it marked the start of Braunholtz's keepership. It was also the year that the curator gave his Presidential Address at the RAI, entitled *Ethnographical Museums and the Collector: Aims and Methods* (published in *JRAI*, see Braunholtz 1938). The title of Braunholtz's paper is somewhat misleading, for, not wanting to tread on the toes of museum curators elsewhere (1938: 2 & 3) when

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although at the time of writing it was understood that plans are afoot to formally register these items into the collections.

<sup>232</sup> Braunholtz 1938: 3.

discussing the ‘sources’ of ethnography collections he considered only the BM’s, which anyway provided him with ample material. His talk attempted to classify these sources according to type (to be discussed) and served to inform the two above-mentioned articles he wrote in 1953. The account of the history of the SA collection that here follows draws heavily on these three texts penned by Braunholtz. It also references other sources to flesh out discussion and to continue the narrative beyond 1938.

Any narrative of the SA collections at the BM should rightly begin with the genesis of the ethnographic collections at the Museum, of which they form part. Like ethnography, the germ of the SA collections can be traced to the founding collection of Sir Hans Sloane. A single SA object survives from this source, a personal ornament (Af,SLMisc.246) (**Fig. 21**), presumably one of a pair, described in Sloane’s ‘Miscellanies’ catalogue thus:<sup>233</sup>

246. The thongs of leather w[hi]ch. the Hottentot women wear about their leggs. They make them in circles when green & so they stick fast, an [?] puddings of quadrupeds [annotated, possibly in another hand, ‘Gutts’] (see **Fig. 21**) (AOA Sloane ‘Miscellanies’ catalogue, ALRC).

As Braunholtz rightly points out, ‘[i]t is to Sloane in the first instance, and to the ethnographical nucleus in his collection, that we owe the inclusion of Ethnography in the British Museum’ (1938: 4), which was founded in 1753, and so too for SA at the BM. On 21 July 1780 the ‘thongs’ were joined by another SA item when a Captain Duncan of Charlotte Street, Rathbone Place nearby in London’s Fitzrovia presented ‘a basket made by the Hottentots’ (ALRC *Extracts*) to the Museum (Af1780,0721.1, currently unlocated). Described in the *Synopsis* as coming, presumably like the above-mentioned Sloane items, ‘from the Cape of Good Hope’ (BM 1844: 4; 1845: 5), this object was exhibited as an ‘artificial curiosity’ for a period of time prior to 1846 (see Chapter 2). Assuming they were field-collected by (an unnamed) Briton and Duncan, these items may well qualify as ‘fruits of first contacts’ (Braunholtz 1938: 5), which generally characterises the emergent ethnography collections, in these instances between the British and SA.

Notwithstanding, with a few exceptions ethnography did not ‘appear to have made great progress at the Museum during the first century of its existence’ (Braunholtz 1938: 4). The same is true of the SA collections, for it was not until the mid-1850s that SA acquisitions

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<sup>233</sup> This manuscript volume includes several sections, including, slightly confusingly, one also entitled ‘Miscellanies’ under which the thongs appear (other sections include ‘Antiquities’ and ‘Pictures and Drawings’). I am grateful to Marjorie Caygill for her advice on this catalogue.

began to be made to any appreciable extent.<sup>234</sup> On two occasions in 1854 and again in 1859 the Museum purchased SA objects from maritime explorer Hugh Cuming, best known for his natural history and especially shell collecting.<sup>235</sup> The first acquisition includes a snuff-container and two pipe-bowls (Af1854,0613.6-8) 'from Kaffirland' having been 'brought from there by a soldier who I expect made a prize of it' (CC 193, Cuming to Burch [sic], 06/06/1854),<sup>236</sup> while the third includes a large number of objects said to originate from 'Port Natal', today's Durban (Af1859,0908.).<sup>237</sup> Two further acquisitions were made during this period since the commencement of Augustus Wollaston Franks's tenure in 1851 and prior to the gifting of the Christy Collection in 1865. They are a spear '[u]sed by the Caffres' (Af1855,1220.115), apparently collected by a Major Gregory quite probably, like Cuming's 'prizes', during one of the Frontier Wars (see Introduction) and a steatite smoking-pipe (Af1864,1216.11) brought back by Henry Waghorn '[s]urveyor to the Oxford Durham Dublin & Cambridge Mission to Central Africa in Connection with Dr Livingstone's Discoveries' (ME Corresp. 5193 Waghorn to BM, 30/11/1864) and of a type quite widely used especially in the Cape around that time.<sup>238</sup>

If, as Brauholtz claims, the ethnography collections saw rapid growth during the second half of the nineteenth century, a period 'which coincided approximately with Franks's period of service' (1953b: 109), then the same is true of the SA collections. However, it is only following the BM's acceptance of the Christy Collection in December 1865 (Brauholtz 1953a: 92) and its transfer the following year (Brauholtz 1938: 6), that the

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<sup>234</sup> In 1846 Joseph Beete Jukes donated a number of objects to the BM, including a spear (Af1846,0731.19) thought to possibly originate in SA (registration slip). On 1 August 1846 it was reported that Jukes, a '[g]eologist to Her Majesty's ship, *Fly*' had given a collection of Oceanic objects, of which most are listed as coming from Darnley Island (present-day Erub, Torres Strait), including arrows —probably Af1846,0731.21.a-e thought by the BM to originate in 'Africa. S.E.?' (registration slip)— and one item, '[a] [w]ooden sword', from New Guinea. It is likely that Af1846,0731.19 is the item described as originating from New Guinea (see CA Committee Papers Vol 18-22, 01/08/1846: 6951).

<sup>235</sup> Following Cuming's death the BM purchased his enormous shell collection. See Dance (1980) for further information on this and Cuming the collector. Anitra Nettleton (2016: 519 fn. 75) suggests that Hugh Cuming 'may have been related to another family of the same name, operating at the same time, whose collection is now in the Cuming Museum in Southwark, London'. Two SA objects were donated to the Christy Collection by this source, Henry Syer Cuming, in 1870.

<sup>236</sup> Probably the BM's Samuel Birch.

<sup>237</sup> The collection, which according to the General Antiquities Register, is '[a]ll from Port Natal' (this information has been copied onto the registration slips, creating duplicate accessioning details) includes a number of anomalous items said to come from that place, although they almost certainly did not (e.g. Af1859,0908.25.a-b, a knife and sheath of a type from further inland (probably today's Zimbabwe)).

<sup>238</sup> The Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Durham Mission to Central Africa is the forerunner of the Anglican mission, Universities' Mission to Central Africa, which in 1965 merged with the older Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, forming the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, now known as the United Society Partners in the Gospel. See <https://www.uspg.org.uk/about/history/> (last accessed 10/11/2019).

collections experienced exponential growth. For not only did the incoming Christy Collection contribute around 350 SA objects, the single largest donation to these collections, but over the course of his tenure Franks secured several important and substantial donations to the Christy Collection which have a bearing on this study (see Table 3). They include over 50 objects from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Kew) (1866), around 40 items from John Currey, commissioner for the Cape of Good Hope at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867 (c.1867 and 1868) and over 100 objects collected among the South Sotho by Swiss-born missionary and member of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS), David Frédéric Ellenberger, which were given by Miss Powles (1870). Here it was Franks's contact with colleagues, in these instances at Kew and at the South Kensington Museum (later Victoria and Albert Museum or V&A), which led to the acquisitions. For not only did Kew give several hundred ethnographic objects in 1866, it also directed Currey's gift to Franks (CC 197, [List], 09/01/1868), while Franks's friend and colleague at South Kensington, Robert Henry Soden Smith, alerted him to the Ellenberger material in the possession of his friends, Mrs Powles and her daughter (CC 723, R.H. Soden Smith to A.W. Franks, 18/02/[?1870]). Franks's own personal contribution to the SA collections is noteworthy. Between 1868 and just after his death, he is recorded as having donated to the Christy Collection in the region of 100 SA objects, drawn from various sources, including dealers, auction houses, field- and secondary collectors.<sup>239</sup>

Franks also oversaw the exchange and purchase of objects for the Christy Collection, which were far fewer than donations. These include the buying of two collections, one small and another large, from dealer William Wareham (1866 and 1882) and a purchase from Rev. Dr William Sparrow Simpson (1875). From 1866 until 1880 all acquisitions pertaining to the SA collections were seemingly made exclusively via the Christy Collection and thereafter accessions were either channelled through the main ethnography collections or that collection.<sup>240</sup> In 1886, following the Colonial and Indian Exhibition that year, two purchases – one of a single object and the other of a larger assemblage – were made for the main collections from Clement Davies Webb and Thomas Hedley respectively. Charles Hercules Read, Franks's protégé since 1874, negotiated these two transactions with Webb and Hedley who were associated with the Cape Court at the 'Colinderies' (see CC 857, C.D. Webb to Read, 25/10/1886; BEP T.

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<sup>239</sup> Some were accessioned posthumously.

<sup>240</sup> In the case of the SA collections, the Christy Collection numbering changes to the 'year,-item number' format in 1899 (e.g. Af1899,-5).

Hedley to Read, 29/11/1886).<sup>241</sup> Evidently Franks's last purchase of SA objects was from dealer G.R. Harding in 1891, this time for the Christy Collection once again. It is instructive to note that Franks's contribution along with five of the other collections just mentioned, viz. Christy, Powles, Kew, Wareham and Currey, is among the largest to the SA collections by number of objects (see Table 3).<sup>242</sup>

Following Franks's retirement in 1896, Read succeeded him as Keeper of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography. During Read's 25 years as Keeper 'the ethnographical collections grew rapidly and continuously' (Braunholtz 1953b: 112). Donations of objects from relatives of returned colonial officials and soldiers that came in during his keepership — of which, like before, there were markedly more donations than purchases— include SA collections formed by Sir Bartle Frere, Sir William Forbes Gatacre and Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley (gifted to the Museum in 1910, 1912 and 1917 respectively). These three collections were added to the main series, while, accepted into the Christy Collection, among others, was an assemblage given by Jeffrey Whitehead (1905). It includes around 30 SA objects Whitehead purchased at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 (BEP Whitehead to Read, 24/02/1905), probably from C.D. Webb who was an exhibitor within the Cape Colony's 'Native Department' section (see Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886).<sup>243</sup>

Read further oversaw the purchase of London Missionary Society (LMS) material (for a detailed discussion of the LMS Museum, including dealings with the BM, see Wingfield 2012). In 1910 Read acquired, with Christy funds, upward of 50 SA objects (Af1910,-) out of several hundred ethnographic items from the soon-to-be defunct LMS Museum as part of its dispersal. Two SA objects joined these items, which, along with other, mainly Oceanic, objects had been on loan to the BM since 1890. The sale of this latter group was

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<sup>241</sup> Webb's earlier correspondence following up on a 'circular' he sent to the BM offering to sell his 'collection of native curios' was forwarded to Read by T. Nicholls at the BM(NH) (see BEP, T. Nicholls to C.H. Read, 28/09/1886). BEP holds further correspondence from Webb, although one letter (CC 857 cited above) apparently from this sequence has ended up in the Christy Correspondence housed in the ALRC. Per his letter (BEP cited above), Hedley was selling a 'Bushman drawing on bone' (Af1886,1130.1) from Mr. [Thomas] Bain's collection (see Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 8, item 174), whereas Webb of Queenstown was selling his own exhibits (see Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 20-21; Webb 1887). Two petroglyphs exhibited as 'Bushman Carvings' (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 20) and presently curated by AOA (Af1886,1123.1 and 2) fall, as archaeological material, beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>242</sup> Aside from Christy and Powles, these collections came to the BM at various dates (see Table 3 for breakdown). The total number of objects from Kew that came to the BM during the nineteenth century alone would have placed this collection just below that of Wareham in terms of size.

<sup>243</sup> Although the catalogue does not give details of the objects, many fit with Webb's general descriptions (Webb 1887). Some objects still have their original 1886 labels attached and further research may confirm this speculative attribution. Natal also exhibited at 'Colinderies'.

reported to the BM Trustees in 1911, the purchase having been made with half BM and half Christy money (BM 1912: 85), thus further blurring the distinction between the main series and the Christy Collection (see Chapter 2).<sup>244</sup>

Read was further ‘a constant donor of individual specimens’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 114), although not to the same degree as his predecessor – as illustrated, for example, by Read’s two SA items, which entered the Christy Collection via his wife in 1908, to Franks’s circa 100 from SA alone. The Frere and LMS collections, respectively, were large (see Table 3), but aside from these the overall number of acquisitions of SA objects during Read’s tenure as Keeper was relatively modest at around 380. According to Braunholtz (1953b: 114), by the end of Read’s keepership the BM ‘could claim to possess an exceptionally wide and generally well-balanced assemblage of ethnographical source materials from almost all the main regions of primitive culture’. In terms of the SA collections to that date, 1921, the number of objects stood at around 1,450. This suggests that acquisitions during Read’s stewardship, which actually fell to their lowest level since the first decade of the second half of the nineteenth century and indeed for the entire period of study here (see Graph 2), had served to modestly augment what was probably already considered somewhat of a ‘well-balanced assemblage’.

As already noted, after Read’s departure the Department was split in two and Robert Lockhart Hobson was made Keeper of the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography. A number of large SA collections were donated during Hobson’s caretaker, or ‘titular’, keepership (Braunholtz 1953b: 116) between 1921 and 1938, when Captain Thomas Athol Joyce, as Deputy Keeper (from 1921), effectively ran the ethnography section. Under Joyce’s seventeen-year watch as Deputy Keeper, the growth of the ethnography collections, ‘particularly in the ancient American [Joyce’s specialism] and African sections’ is said to have ‘continued steadily’ (Braunholtz 1953b: 117). Joyce was assisted by H.J. Braunholtz, who, significantly for the SA collections during this time, was to become the first (and for many decades only) curator to conduct any fieldwork and carry out field-collecting in SA (in 1929 – see Chapter 5).<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> I am grateful to Marjorie Caygill for sharing this reference with me.

<sup>245</sup> Andrew Oddy, Keeper of the Department of Conservation, conducted archaeological fieldwork in SA in the 1980s (see Af1984,03. for Mapungubwe sherds and Af1996,06. for sherds from the Hans Merensky Nature Reserve) and Christopher (Chris) J. Spring, until recently a curator in the Africa Section, collected textiles in SA during the 2000s. In 1940, a Xhosa beadwork apron (Af1940,13.1) entered the collections via the wife of Cottie Arthur Burland, who was working at the time in the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography, although it is likely to have been field-collected by another source. A postcard (Af,B34.8) sent from SA addressed to the Burlands and now housed in

Donations during the period 1921—1938 include four of the larger collections overall (see Table 3): approximately 50 objects collected in the 1880s by Dr Henry H. Sturge, a former Eastern Cape district surgeon (1923), more than 40 objects given by Miss Joy Elvy (1929) as well as collections formed and given by Antoinette Powell-Cotton (given jointly with her father, 1936) and lay missionary Frank Cornner (1933 and 1934) (see Chapter 5 and Appendix A). Further collections include those Braunholtz formed and gave (1929 and 1930), as well as those given by Miss Clayton and Lady Cunynghame (both 1936). Purchases during this period were once again in the minority. However, several purchases of SA objects were made. For example, Gerald P.L. Miles, acting in his capacity as curator of Harry G. Beasley's private Cranmore Ethnographical Museum in Chislehurst, Kent, sold about eight SA objects to the BM in 1937 (and another in 1939) and his predecessor at Cranmore, Arthur Gresley Madan, had sold one SA object, a snuff-spoon, to the BM in 1929 as part of a larger assemblage.<sup>246</sup> These acquisitions entered the main series (there were only three donation events and one purchase event of SA material into the Christy Collection during this period when Christy acquisitions peter out). Another noteworthy purchase during this period was of six South Sotho pottery figures from Rev. Wilfred Gregory Higgs of Oxford, which had been purchased in the Orange Free State (1931) (see Introduction). The period 1930-1939 saw a very high volume of objects accessioned into the SA collections (see Graph 2). Despite this increasing growth, in 1935, towards the end of Joyce's tenure, Braunholtz was to state with regard to the SA collections: '[w]e have an adequate collection of assegais and clubs, and also, I think, of beadwork, but in some other subjects our collections from South Africa are by no means complete' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to Mrs J.S. Morrison, 24/09/1935).

After Joyce's retirement in 1938, Braunholtz was appointed Keeper. It was during his keepership that ethnography, since 1936 elevated to a Sub-Department (Braunholtz 1938: 7), was made a department in its own right (in 1946). As already noted (Chapter 2), the

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the Pictorial Collection mentions 'magnificent specimens'. It is possible that the Burlands obtained the apron from this or another source.

<sup>246</sup> For further details on Beasley, his Museum as well as Miles and Madan see Waterfield (2006) and Carreau (2009). It appears that rather than being from Beasley's collection, the objects that Miles sold were acquired on behalf of the BM from Stevens Auction Rooms, London where Beasley was an active buyer (Carreau 2009: 60). (Madan sold material to the BM in 1929 from the collection of Charles M. Woodford, who had an association with the Solomon Islands and from whence the spoon was initially thought to originate. These were also possibly acquired from another source, this time from London dealers Edward Gerrard and Son (see Carreau 2009: 145).) There is evidence of friendly relations between Beasley and the BM. For example, a letter written to Beasley in 1931 thanks him for his advance of £10, which 'enabled the B.M. to make a quick buy' and saying that 'out [sic] large account' must be settled (GC ?T.A. Joyce to H.G. Beasley, 22/10/1931) suggesting that the BM received quite some help from Cranmore.

period 1939—1952, which almost exactly coincides with that of Braunholtz's keepership, is said to have been one marked by a high rate of acquisition, 'the policy being to collect as much material from...rapidly disappearing primitive cultures' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5). This trend is reflected in the SA collections at least to the end of the 1940s, witnessed by the spike in accessions between 1930-1939 and the fact that the approximate number of SA objects accessioned during the decade 1940-1949, while significantly lower than the previous decade, was higher than it had been for just over half of the other decades since 1850 (see Graph 2). If looked at in terms of accession events, the period 1940-1949 is on a par with 1870-1879, and second only to the period 1930-1939 (see Graph 1).

Some of this flurry can be accounted for, contrary to what one might expect, accessions made during the Second World War (September 1939—September 1945), when '[c]ollecting did not cease...and many important specimens were added to the collections, chiefly by gift' (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2). (It is said that during the First World War '[t]he normal flow of accessions almost dried up', but that C.H. Read had 'subsequently commented on the marked increase in the number of "ill-luck gifts"' (Braunholtz 1953b: 115).) Indeed, just shy of 100 SA ethnographic objects came in during this time, mainly donations. These include four SA items from collector Alfred Walter Francis Fuller<sup>247</sup> and under 20 SA objects from Beasley's widow, Irene Marguerite Beasley.<sup>248</sup> The BM had housed, for safekeeping, some of Fuller's and Beasley's respective collections during hostilities and these accessions seem to be connected to these loans (see GC A.W.F. Fuller to H.J. Braunholtz, 17/11/1940; GC I.M. Beasley to H.J. Braunholtz, 28/03/1944). Additionally, the BM extended the same privilege to the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2). Towards the end of the war, Braunholtz secured for the collections a significant donation of SA objects that had narrowly escaped bombing (GC G.F. Newnham to H.J. Braunholtz, ?/05/1945); the collection was given by Mrs F.J. Newnham, whose recently deceased husband had been in SA (see Chapter 4).

Acquisitions after the war continued, with objects coming in that had mainly been collected in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. These include the Venda divination bowl with accoutrements (Af1946,04.1) acquired by David Allam after 1910 while he was

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<sup>247</sup> It is unclear in the accessions register and *Donations Book* whether this was by donation or purchase.

<sup>248</sup> The Cranmore Museum building had been destroyed by bombing (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2; see also Carreau 2009: 193-199).



working as a mounted policeman in Sibasa (see Introduction), around 45 SA objects collected circa 1900 by a Miss Lyford-Pike and donated by a Mrs Wharton (1947) (see Table 3), as well as '[a] collection of Zulu & Natal Ethnological specimens' given by Miss Grace Smyly (1953). The collection had been sent [in 1909] from the Govt Museum Natal [present-day Kwazulu-Natal Museum]' (GC letter from Miss G. Smyly to BM, 23/09/1953) to the donor's late father, Sir Philip Crampton Smyly, who at that time was Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, in exchange for a collection of objects from that country.<sup>249</sup> Following the death in 1949 of ethnography collector and dealer, William Ockelford Oldman, the BM purchased part of his ethnography collection, which included some SA material, from his widow Dorothy (Af1949,46.).<sup>250</sup>

Braunholtz's retirement in late 1953 coincided with the end of what might be considered a 'Golden Age' for ethnography at the BM, around a century characterised by a high volume of accessions comprising objects often field-collected in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. As previously mentioned (Chapter 2), the period 1953 to 1960 is marked by a sharp decline in ethnography accessions. The reasons for this, according to a document written by the Keeper of Ethnography, Adrian Digby, in mid-1960 (GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 5-6), were the 'rising cost of...specimens' as well as a shift in collecting whereby 'the Trustees instructed the department to concentrate its policy on collecting only to fill gaps in the collections'. Presumably, too the collections were by then reaching a state of perceived 'completeness'.

In October 1953 Digby, who had worked in the department as an Assistant Keeper since 1932, was appointed Keeper, a position he held until his retirement in 1969. During Digby's keepership SA accessions were generally limited, although the Museum formally accepted as a donation a very substantial number of ethnographical items from the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum (WHMM, 1954), established by American-born pharmaceuticals tycoon, Sir Henry Wellcome (1853—1936). Like with Beasley and Fuller, already mentioned, the BM helped the WHMM during the Second World War by housing its 'ethnographical...duplicates of those in the [Wellcome] Collection, or items which were quite outside the scope of [that] Museum's work' (GC E. Ashworth Underwood to H.E.P. Spencer, 12/05/1954; see also GC memorandum by A. Digby, 06/1960: 2). There are over 300 SA objects from this source at the BM, including a Tsonga figurative piece (Af1954,+23.3567), probably one of the more well-known, yet unprovenanced objects

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<sup>249</sup> Still housed by KNM.

<sup>250</sup> See Waterfield (2006) for biographical details.

from the SA collections – for discussion see Nettleton (1988: 50) (**Fig. 22**).<sup>251</sup> However, somewhat tellingly, again in terms perhaps of a perceived utopian ‘completeness’ of the SA collections, but also presumably dictated by official policy, it seems that only a couple of SA items<sup>252</sup> were registered with this initial batch (1954,23.)<sup>253</sup> stemming from the ‘Ninth Distribution of Wellcome Material’,<sup>254</sup> while the remainder was only accepted later. The data here presented effectively masks the above-mentioned downward trend (see Graphs 1, 2, 2b & Table 3) due to the fact that it includes these objects, almost all only having been accessioned later as ‘additions’ to that collection.<sup>255</sup>

Another sizeable SA assemblage added to the collections during Digby’s keepership, comprising over 25 objects among a greater number of ethnographic objects, was donated by Kew following the closure of their Museum No. 2 in 1959. (The Museum had originally opened in 1847 as the Museum of Vegetable Products and was subsequently renamed the Museum of Economic Botany and later still, Museum No. 2 (Cornish 2013: 406).) Digby was able to justify this relatively large acquisition, saying: ‘we have found a great many pieces collected by people who have given us collections in the past, but in which there were one or two gaps, now filled by your specimens’ (GC A. Digby to G. Taylor, 21/12/1960). Digby’s reference to ‘people who have given us collections in the past’ presumably also extended to items that had been given to the BM by Kew in the nineteenth century and had come from individuals such as Bishop John William Colenso, objects from whom came to the BM via Kew then and again in 1960 (see Elliott 2011; Elliott Weinberg 2016). The sizeable 1960 donation from Kew was anticipated in 1958 by the gift of fewer objects, including one SA item,<sup>256</sup> together they bolstered the already large SA holdings from Kew (see Table 3).

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<sup>251</sup> Unfortunately, this object has been separated from its WHMM number, making further research into its history difficult.

<sup>252</sup> A battle-axe, possibly Venda (Af1954,23.2501), and a South Sotho hat (Af1954,23.2525) collected by Frédéric Christol (1850–1933), a PEMS missionary to what is present day Lesotho.

<sup>253</sup> For African material, now Af1954,23.

<sup>254</sup> This was billed as the ‘last’ distribution (see GC for letters exchanged by WHMM’s E. Ashworth Underwood and Digby, e.g. E. Ashworth Underwood to Digby, 15/01/1954).

<sup>255</sup> The remainder being ‘Wellcome Additions’, distinguished by a plus symbol placed before the collection number (Af1954,+23) and registered some years later. Former Keeper of Ethnography, John Mack, recalls that his first job as a curator in the Africa Section, in the mid-1970s, was to manually register WHMM material, a process he continued until digitalisation arrived and others took over the task of data entry (pers. comm. John Mack, 08/09/2018). One of my first tasks as an employee at the BM was to finish assigning object numbers to the last batch of WHMM Africa additions and creating computerised records for them.

<sup>256</sup> A Venda xylophone (Af1958,04.1, Kew no. 137/1889) and beaters. Per Kew’s entry book, the musical instrument came to them from ‘B.M. Woollan Esq. per [the] Royal Colonial Institute’ (see Kew EBC EB 1881–1895: 342).

Before moving on to consider ‘sources’ of the SA collections according to Brauholtz, it is helpful to further historicise 1938, the year of his RAI address, specifically with regard to notions around ‘completeness’. In his speech, Brauholtz was to lament the lack of ‘domestic utensils such as pots and baskets’ in the BM collections, arguing that there were ‘notable gaps to be filled before we can regard our museum pictures as faithful or well balanced’ (1938: 14). This, coupled with his (already mentioned) earlier assertion that ‘in some... subjects our collections from South Africa are by no means complete’ (GC H.J. Brauholtz to Mrs J.S. Morrison, 24/09/1935), begs the question: what, in Brauholtz’s eyes, might have made the collections complete? The answer is by no means straightforward. However, it would seem that aside from certain types of objects or even items from under-represented groups (for example during his own fieldwork in South Africa in 1929, Brauholtz confined himself to collecting a number of Venda ‘domestic utensils’ and a piece of graphite used in the manufacturing process of some of the pots -- see Chapter 5), completeness entailed something more. It was about how collections were assembled and documented in the field, including photographically (1938: 14-16), in a more ‘scientific’ manner allowing for comparative study back in the museum setting (1938: 14), objects being ‘the data of science, and susceptible of scientific treatment...[and any deficient] descriptions...filled by subsequent investigation in the field’ (1938: 9).

In his address Brauholtz stressed the importance of scientific method, claiming that the ‘University Museums’ (of Oxford and Cambridge) had been more inclined than the BM to be the beneficiaries of ‘collections made by academically trained workers’ (i.e. professional anthropologists) (1938: 12).<sup>257</sup> However, he asserted that the situation was changing and that ‘[c]ollections made by students trained in the London School of Anthropology [LSE] [had] recently begun to come in [to the BM]’ (1938: 13). He also expressed the hope that ‘in the absence of any London University Museum of Ethnology, the British Museum may be regarded in future as the natural repository for the more material fruits of the “functional school”’ (1938: 13). But, in truth, the museum had effectively ceased to have real relevance for anthropology – since at least the ‘Museum Period’ of the emerging discipline up until around 1890 (Stocking 2001: 253). According to George Stocking, ‘by the outbreak of World War II [anthropology ‘in the Anglo-American tradition’ had] left museum anthropology stranded in an institutional, methodological, and

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<sup>257</sup> The implication being that those who studied anthropology at either of these universities tended to direct material to the respective museums there. This is perhaps an overstatement, for as recent research at the PRM suggests, the actual number of field collectors who were educated at Oxford University is relatively low ([https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page\\_74.html](https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page_74.html)) (last accessed 10/11/2019).

theoretical backwater' (Stocking 2001: 254). Notwithstanding, the year 1938 stood at the tail end of a decade marked by a high number of accessions into the SA collections, the highest number for any decade, followed by the period 1860-1869 (see Graph 2).<sup>258</sup> The 1930s saw, as already mentioned, collections coming from various quarters, including a number of sources that might arguably be considered to have been 'more anthropological' (namely Braunholz, Powell-Cotton and Wilman). A number of collections accessioned at this time were field collected by the vendor/donor, including the sizable and comparatively well-documented Powell-Cotton and Cornner collections (see Chapter 5 and Appendix A). It was a highly fruitful decade as far as the collections were concerned, and the same was certainly true at the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) in Oxford and possibly for collections elsewhere. The PRM, for example, saw the largest spike in its African ethnography collections (and its ethnography collections as a whole) during the 1930s.<sup>259</sup>

## **2. Towards backstories: 'compiled from the most varied sources' – 'collectors and contributors' to the British Museum South Africa collections**<sup>260</sup>

In his Presidential Address to the RAI in 1938, Braunholtz, set out to analyse '[t]he principle sources of the [BM's] ethnographical collections' (1953b fn. 19: 119). His understanding of 'source' or 'sources' conflates what he calls 'collectors', those who made or formed collections, and what he terms 'contributors', those responsible for presenting collections to the BM (see 1938: 7) through donation, sale or less frequently via other means (e.g. exchange). He notes that the collections have 'been compiled from the most varied sources' (1938: 7), which he then attempts to classify, or at least he does so as far as the 'larger collections' are concerned (1938: 7). Braunholtz's classification of sources comprises the following six main categories: 'administrators and officials in the colonial services', 'navigators', 'scientists', 'anthropologists', 'missionary collectors' and "collectors" (1938: 7-8). Although he acknowledges the contribution of '[m]useums, both foreign and colonial, and exhibitions', he omits from consideration what he calls 'these less personal sources' (1938: 8). Using Braunholtz's classifications against the SA collections is instructive, although as shall be suggested, these classifications require

<sup>258</sup> It should be noted that in 1937 a number of 'unclaimed specimens' of unknown source(s) were accessioned, which slightly inflates the statistics for 1930-1939, meaning that the numbers for this decade and the period 1860-1869 are actually more or less on a par. This is because the 1937 accessions could have been in the Museum's possession for quite some time prior to their registration.

<sup>259</sup> See 'African archaeology and ethnography by decade up to 1945' and 'Pitt Rivers Museum Collection: New Archaeology/Ethnography Accessions by decade...'

([https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page\\_58.html](https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page_58.html)) (last accessed 10/11/2019).

<sup>260</sup> Braunholtz 1938: 7.

some unpacking and refinement. It is also instructive to consider them for the way in which they gender collecting as a male pursuit.<sup>261</sup>

Any attempt at categorising sources is flawed; often the necessary biographical information is absent and, even when made available through research, a given individual may have had more than one career leading to their collection. This is a finding of a recent study at the PRM, which attempted to account for its ‘field collectors’ (those who field-collected rather than assembled collections without doing their own fieldwork, but excluding vendor/donors who were not field collectors).<sup>262</sup> In identifying these sources, the PRM came up with eight categories. Some overlap with Brauholtz’s, but others are more nuanced (for example, ‘Academic’ includes ‘Anthropologists’, both trained and ‘amateur’). Crucially, the PRM has a separate category for the the ‘Armed forces’, which includes the army and navy as well as a more general ‘Military’ designation where service is unclear, whereas Brauholtz rather disingenuously downplays this source by omitting it as a separate category. Interestingly, the ‘Colonial Service’ ranks highly as a source for both the PRM and BM (discussed below). At the PRM, it is ‘second...only to archaeologists’.<sup>263</sup>

## **2.1 Colonial administrators and officials, and some objects ‘not, in the ordinary sense “collected”’<sup>264</sup>**

Of the first category, colonial administrators and officials, Brauholtz states that such sources ‘are easily the most numerous’ (1938: 7). ‘Colonial administrators and officials in the colonial services’ is a somewhat vague and imprecise category and, it shall be argued, overlaps with ‘military’, a source notably absent as a separate class in Brauholtz’s analysis. In fact, he only makes a passing reference to this source, noting that collections ‘were often the by-products of’ other activities, including ‘military operations’ (1938: 9). Despite there being, in Brauholtz’s estimation, many collections drawn from colonial administrators and officials in the ethnography collections at the BM, they are sometimes difficult to confirm for lack of detailed records. These collections almost inevitably include trophies of war. Trophy-taking derives from antiquity whereby a defeated enemy’s seized armaments would be displayed as a marker of conquest (Jacobs and Wingfield 2015: 11). Certainly, examples of objects taken as military trophies abound in the SA collections. In

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<sup>261</sup> The collections themselves, containing as they do objects made by men and women, manage to overcome this bias. However, as Nettleton argues, the appreciation of woodcarvings on the one hand as ‘masterpieces’ and beadwork for example as ‘craft’, has nevertheless served to gender such collections (Nettleton 2012).

<sup>262</sup> See [https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page\\_74.html](https://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page_74.html) (last accessed 10/11/2019).

<sup>263</sup> Like Brauholtz’s 1938 paper, the present study does not include archaeology into its count.

<sup>264</sup> The words of donor T.C.R. Anstey regarding a group of objects taken from Zululand during the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) (GC T.C.R. Anstey to W.B. Fagg, 07/01/1954), here discussed.

the words of one contributor to the SA collections, many objects would have been ‘not, in the ordinary sense “collected”’,<sup>265</sup> but looted as personal booty and spoils of war. These include objects taken during the Frontier Wars,<sup>266</sup> the earliest British military campaigns waged against the indigenous population, up until the South African War (1899—1902), formerly known as the Anglo-Boer War, but renamed in acknowledgement of African involvement (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 218-219). Examples include the already-mentioned snuff-container and pipe-bowls seized in the Eastern Cape as ‘a prize’ (Af1854,0613.6-8) and possibly also a shield bearing the arms of the Orange Free State (Af1902,0630.1)<sup>267</sup> taken ‘from a public building at Bloemfontein’ (Antiquities accessions register).<sup>268</sup> While it is not possible to discuss here each and every collection that may have military links, below are a number of vignettes aimed at giving some indication of the depth and character of such collections.<sup>269</sup> Here, like with Braunholtz, the focus is on what might be termed more ‘personal’ sources, rather than contributions from institutions such as the Haslar Hospital (1855; c.1871), Royal United Service Institute (United Service Museum) (via Henry Christy, 1865), Foreign Office (1913), Tower Armouries (1914) and the Royal Artillery Institution (1933).

With relevance to the SA collections, Braunholtz includes under the heading ‘colonial administrators and officials’ one SA source, namely ‘Sir Bartle Frere (South Africa, 1877—80)’ (1938: 7). This large collection (Af1910,1005.) of over 160 SA objects was given to the BM by Sir Bartle Frere, son of the late Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere (1815—1884) who had served in SA as High Commissioner between 1877 and 1880. Frere’s main objective had been to confederate SA, a policy advocated by Lord Carnarvon, British Colonial Secretary, prompted in no small way by Britain’s interest in the region’s mineral reserves, although dressed up as an attempt to achieve ‘uniformity of “native policy”’

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<sup>265</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>266</sup> Of which, as already noted, the British were involved from the Fourth to the Ninth and final wars.

<sup>267</sup> This sizeable object was sent to the BM (apparently via Woolwich) towards the end of that protracted conflict by the military governor of the Orange River Colony, the former Boer republic having been annexed, and was entered into the Antiquities register, although it was subsequently transferred and is currently part of AOA’s SA collections. The object was sent ‘by the Principal Ordinance Officer at Woolwich & forwarded to the British Museum’ (Eth Doc 647 (part), letter from T.H. Wyatt, 13/10/1900). The Woolwich voucher, also on file, gives a date of 24/07/1900, suggesting it may have arrived in London at around that time. There was some talk in the 1980s of loaning the item to a South African Government building in the UK, but that idea was dropped (see Eth Doc 647).

<sup>268</sup> The coat of arms probably comes from the entrance to Bloemfontein’s Old Government Building (the Third Raadzaal), the building of which commenced in 1875 and took two years to complete. OFS’s coat of arms has varied and the present example would have been current between 1878 and 1900. The building has been extensively remodelled and currently houses the National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre. I am grateful to Elmar du Plessis for this information.

<sup>269</sup> Some omissions include Kingsford (1908, but see footnote on page 175 of this thesis), Gatacre (1912), Shearer (1931), Leverson (1935) and Morrison (1935).

(Benyon 2004 [2008]: 8). Unification was not achieved during Frere's time and his handling of matters seems to have been ill-judged. Frere and his family arrived in the Cape in March 1877 and later that same year conflict broke out on the colony's eastern frontier between the Mfengu and Gcaleka peoples. Sensing an opportunity to gain territory and thereby advance his plans, Frere intervened, sparking the Ninth Frontier War (1877—1879), which pitted Ngqika Sarili kaHintsa ('Kreli', c.1810—1892), king of the last independent Xhosa kingdom, and his ally, Mgolombane Sandile (1820—1878), chief of the Ngqika Xhosas, against British and colonial forces who sided with their Mfengu allies. Many of Frere's BM objects originate from the Eastern Cape and, like a number of other objects from his collection now housed in the University of Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), they may have been collected during the Ninth Frontier War, as that Museum's documentation suggests.<sup>270</sup> The most detailed entry in the BM accessions register, in terms of the association of an object with a named African individual or individuals, is for a British-made '[f]lint-lock smooth-bore "Sargant brothers" [rifle]...[f]ound in the possession of Edmund Sandillie & his brother Mantanzima, when captured. 1878' (Af1910,1005.159). (Edmund and Mathanzima were two of Sandile's sons.)

The remaining BM objects donated by Frere's son appear to relate to other areas of Frere's involvement in SA, including Griqualand West, already destined for incorporation into the Cape along with Griqualand East, where '[m]inor rebellions' had been suppressed (Benyon 2004 [2008]: 10). We do not know the circumstances under which Frere acquired the objects in his collection.<sup>271</sup> However, he may have been aided by his imperial military commander, Sir Arthur Augustus Thurlow Cunynghame (1812–1884), who wrote to Frere regarding 'a Galeka [Gcaleka] chieftains [sic] Ivory ring of honour...obtained... after the successful battle of Newmaka – gained by my troops, and before the action of Quintana' (Eth Doc 73, A. Cunynghame to B. Frere, 04/03/1878).<sup>272</sup> The 'ring', an armband, which Cunynghame hoped Frere would present to Queen Victoria on his behalf,<sup>273</sup> relates to

<sup>270</sup> See E1912.104 to .115. MAA's Annual Report for that year indicates that the objects were given by Frere's sister Mary (MAA Annual Report 1912:28. <http://maa.cam.ac.uk/maa-annual-reports/>) (last accessed 31/08/2017). Although Frere had an older sister named Mary, given the date of this presentation, it is more likely to have come from his eldest daughter by the same name.

<sup>271</sup> According to the *Book of Presents* (CA), the '[e]thnographical series from S.Africa' was 'collected by the late Sir Bartle Frere'.

<sup>272</sup> In 1880 A.W. Franks gave 34 objects collected by Lieutenant Oswato Braine (see registration slip for Af+.1455 and related slips), presumably in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal probably circa 1879. This collection includes a related 'Galaka' [Gcaleka] ivory armband (Af+.1455) also said to have belonged to a chief.

<sup>273</sup> The armband was profusely engraved with a dedication and presented to the Queen in 1878. For a glass plate negative showing it (RCIN 2400600) see <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/2400600/ivory-ring-of-honour->

those other objects associated with the Ninth Frontier War that would later be presented to the BM by Lady Cunynghame (Af1936,1218.19 and 20), the first of which had apparently belonged to Sarili kaHintsa (**Fig. 23**).<sup>274</sup> Frere's objects at the BM may include trophies, as the high number of spears seems to suggest,<sup>275</sup> although Frere himself or one of his family members possibly acquired others under somewhat less violent conditions.<sup>276</sup> For example, a beer-strainer (Af1910,1005.92) described in the BM accessions register as 'Kaffir No. 7' (the information presumably derived from a now lost list),<sup>277</sup> may well have been acquired from one of Langalibalele's wives at Uitvlugt farm where they were being held alongside the Hlubi leader.<sup>278</sup> Here, in making items for visitors (presumably for sale), one could argue that the chief's wives were enacting a measure of agency motivated

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given-to-queen-victoria-in-1878 (last accessed 16/08/2018). Via his son, Frere sent six Zulu assegais to Queen Victoria from Cape Town that same year (RCIN 67872) see <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/67872/spear-assegai> (last accessed 16/08/2018).

<sup>274</sup> These armlets are inscribed on old adhesive labels, respectively, 'Kreli the Galeka -/-1878- Usibi-' and '[?]Tartosi the Galeka/ Ibeka - 1878 -' (the accessions register makes out the latter slightly differently, viz. 'Toutosi the Galeka/ Ibeika -1878'. In 1929 a Mr M.H. Leppan from Cape Province had written to the BM offering for sale an ivory armband, that 'once belonged to Sandile' (GC letter from M.H. Leppan, 13/08/1929) and which the Museum declined.

<sup>275</sup> Indeed, four assegais in MAA (E1912.111) are said to have been 'surrendered at the disarming of the Galeha and Gaiha ['Galeka' Gcaleka and 'Gaika' Ngqika] Tribes after the Kaffir War of 1877—1878)' (<https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/index.php?cmd=objects>) (last accessed 16/08/2018).

<sup>276</sup> See for example the archaeological items (Af1928,1106.1-13) given by Miss L. Frere, said to be from the collection of Lady Catherine Frere, wife of Sir Henry. The RGS-IBG houses a watercolour of Zanzibaris attributed to the Frere's daughter Catherine (see Driver 2013: 425) presumably executed en route to the Cape with her family (the Frere's three daughters accompanied them to SA (Benyon 2004 [2008]: 8). This painting may relate to a series of Pictorial Collection portrait photographs taken in the same place (Af,B17.1-8).

<sup>277</sup> The apparent separation of lists from letters appears to be fairly common (e.g. GC A.W.F. Fuller to H.J. Braunholtz, 17/11/1940 mentions a list) and the whereabouts of such lists is not always known.

<sup>278</sup> There are apparently a number of related beer-strainers in several other museum collections. MAA's E1912.107 and 108, beer-strainers collected by Frere, may have come from this source. The PRM also houses Frere material, including two beer-strainers (acc. nos 1893.17.1 and 1893.17.2). Given to the PRM by another source, they are nevertheless thought to have been collected by Frere and are said to have been '[m]ade by Noselile, wife of Langalibalele, at ?Uitvlugt [Uitvlugt farm], Cape Flats' (PRM Object Catalogue, accessed onsite 28/10/2016). Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu (c.1814–1889), king of the Hlubi of the Colony of Natal, was captured after a clash with colonial forces and was initially exiled to Robben Island. He was later allowed to move to Uitvlugt where he was joined by three of his wives (SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920 no.16a Lloyd to Trimen, 03/05/1877) and where 'curious visitors came to view him as if he were a caged lion' (Laband 2014: 26). Iziko SAM records indicate that Dr Lucy Lloyd presented that Museum with two beer-strainers (acc. no. SAM-AE 2263, the two items apparently sharing an acc. no.) 'made by Nokwatuga, wife of Langalibalele' (SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920 no.17 Lloyd to Trimen, 03/05/1877). Lloyd explained that the strainers were used in pairs during the beer-making process, thus helping explain how two came to the PRM and SAM. Lloyd apparently also gave a a basket (acc. no. SAM-AE 1705) and mat to the SAM, the former, according to a note now associated her letter, given to her 'by Uvangi, April 20th 1887...[who was] one of the three wives of the chief Langalibalele who were with him at Uitvlugt'. For other items associated with Langalibalele at the BM, see a spear Af1886,1120.1 (from C.D. Webb) and two shields (Af1936,1218.2 and 3) from Lady Cunynghame. The BM beer-strainer seems to lack its mate.



perhaps to produce objects that would be associated with the chief and their plight. However, in most cases of loot, agency is arguably in short supply.

### 2.1.1 Cunynghame

As above-mentioned, in 1936 Lady Cunynghame (probably Emily Harriette Cunynghame, the late Sir Arthur's daughter-in-law)<sup>279</sup> donated items from Cunynghame's collection to the BM (see also Giblin and Spring 2016: 100). The '[e]thnographical series from South Africa' (*Donations Book*) housed by the BM represents only part of what was offered, but includes smoking apparatus, items of beadwork as well as 'the [afore-mentioned] ivory armlets....together with the shields and knob-kerries ...[that Braunholtz] picked out' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to Lady Cunynghame, 09/11/1936).<sup>280</sup> The collection reads like a war trophy checklist. Aside from the Hintsa trophy, are a shield and staff said to have belonged to 'Langalibalile' (Langalibalele) as well as an undulating staff with a small knob finial (Af1936,1218.4) (**Fig. 24**) said to have belonged to 'Sandilli' (Chief Mgolombane Sandile (1820–1878), which bears a similarity to one he is holding in a well-known photograph (see **Fig. 24**).<sup>281</sup> In typical trophy fashion, both staffs have been inscribed,<sup>282</sup> presumably for Sir Arthur, with the names of their respective former owners.<sup>283</sup> Cunynghame, who was lieutenant governor and commander of the forces in SA between 1874 and 1878, wrote an account of his time in 'this interesting country...[of which he] travelled over every part' (1880: 375). His involvement in the Ninth Frontier War against Hintsa and Sandile, already alluded to, is apparently the source of some objects, while others appear to relate to the 'Langalibalele Rebellion' (1873), precipitated when the Natal authorities attempted to control firearms and Hlubi king Langalibalele refused to

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<sup>279</sup> Emily Harriette Cunynghame's husband, Sir Arthur's son, died in 1935, the year before the collection came to the BM (*Times* 06/05/1935: 14).

<sup>280</sup> The BM rejected some 'non-South African' items as previously mentioned. Lady Cunynghame also gave at the same time some photographs, including one of 'Kreli' (Sarili kaHintsa) (Af,B82.4) as well as 'a series of drawings illustrating South African Ethnography' (*Donations Book*), the latter at the time of research unlocated. Photographs are not mentioned in the BM documentation. The *Book of Presents* (CA) describes Lady Cunynghame's donation as '[a]n ethnographical series from South Africa, including the shields of Lobengula and of Langalibalele, and the ceremonial staves of Langalibalele and Sandili, and a series of drawings illustrating the ethnography of South Africa'.

<sup>281</sup> A further shield (Af1936,1218.1) is said to have belonged to Lobengula (Lobengula Khumalo, 1845–1894, the last ruler of the independent Northern Ndebele kingdom in present-day Zimbabwe).

<sup>282</sup> Langalibalele's staff (Af1936,1218.3) bears a metal plaque and is inscribed (in pigment) 'Walking stick of Langalibalili', while Sandile's (Af1936,1218.4) is directly inscribed 'Sandilli', in what appears to be the same hand.

<sup>283</sup> Langalibalele's staff, with snakes coiling up its shaft, is in keeping with what is usually identified as 'Nguni' carving (see Conru 2002: 211), but his shield, interestingly, is of the South Sotho swallow-tail type. There may have been a mix up with the shield on the part of the collector – indeed Cunynghame visited Basutoland and records having met Moshoeshe's son, Letsi (Cunynghame 1880: 82). Alternatively, Langalibalele may himself have been presented with it or even acquired it when he fled to Basutoland during the rebellion.

comply.<sup>284</sup> 'Hardly had the anchor dropped' at Cape Town in November 1873, when Cunynghame received news of the rebellion (Cunynghame 1880: 2). In his hastily assembled memoir, *My Command in South Africa, 1874-1878* (1880, first edition 1879), Cunynghame does not mention these objects now housed by the BM or how he obtained them, although he may have enlisted the help of men under his command as well as others.<sup>285</sup>

### 2.1.2 Gisborne

In 1891 C.F. Gisborne gifted around 20 items now housed by the BM. He probably collected them while serving during the uSuthu Rebellion (1888) in Zululand (see Introduction).<sup>286</sup> Indeed, some items came from the centre of hostilities, including an assegai '[f]rom battlefield of Hlopekulu' (Af1891,1110.4) as well as one '[m]ade by Usibepu; from 'Ndwandwe District N. Zululand' (Af1891,1110.2).<sup>287</sup> Zibhebhu kaMaphitha (1841—1904), leader of the Mandlakazi, was an enemy of the uSuthu (Zulu royalists). An opponent of King Cetshwayo KaMpande, he had been among the appointed chiefs, his being one of the thirteen chiefdoms set up according to Wolseley's settlement once the British defeated Cetshwayo in 1879 (see Chapter 4). Towards the end of the Rebellion, he was arrested by the British authorities and removed from Ndwandwe in a reversal of their action that had initiated the unrest (Laband 2009: xxxviii).

### 2.1.3 Smyth

The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society gave an assemblage of SA objects to the BM in 1934. The objects had been deposited in the Buckinghamshire County Museum in 1908 as gifts from Lady Smyth, wife of the recently deceased Sir Henry Augustus Smyth (1825—1906). Sir Henry had served in SA between 1887—89 where he commanded the troops, including during the uSuthu Rebellion when the British forces were under his personal command, after which he became acting governor of the Cape Colony until 1889 (Laband 2009: 260; Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society 1909:

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<sup>284</sup> For details of the ongoing campaign to have Hlubi kingship restored and recognised (as opposed to mere chieftainship) see *Mail & Guardian* 19/10/2018 (<https://mg.co.za/article/2018-10-19-00-amahlubis-battle-against-colonial-legacy-heads-to-high-court>) (last accessed 25/11/2018).

<sup>285</sup> He records that a Mr Palgrave, probably William Coates Palgrave the resident magistrate at Barkly West, presented him with a *kaross* (Cunynghame 1880: 205). Associated with Langalibalele's shield (Af1936,1218.2) is the visiting card of Mrs T.H. Elliott, perhaps the wife of Major Elliott whom Cunynghame mentions in his memoirs of SA (e.g. Cunynghame 1880: 317). It is possible that Elliott presented the shield, and other items, to his superior.

<sup>286</sup> Possibly Charles Francis Gisborne (c.1866-1892) who served in Zululand in 1888 (Venn and Venn 1947 [2011]: 59). See birth entry in 1865 for a Charles Francis Gisborne in Lymington (<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl>) (last accessed 16/08/2018).

<sup>287</sup> This information is drawn from the registration slips. No further information regarding this gift was found at the time of research.

236).<sup>288</sup> The collection includes a number of items originating in Zululand (per the Bucks. accessions register).<sup>289</sup> Some of these may well have been taken as trophies, but at least one item, a beer-skimmer, still housed by Bucks. (AYBCM acc no. 1908.102.1), is described in their register as having been '[m]ade by the chief wife of Cetewayo, King of Zululand & given by her to Sir H. Smyth'.

#### 2.1.4 Damon

In 1881, a W.T. Damon, who was then working for the railways in Cape Town, wrote to the BM shortly after his return from the Basutoland Rebellion of 1880-1 (also known as the Gun War) offering 'a necklet taken at Tsita Village from the neck of an ox in the hut of a Basuto witch doctor' (BEP letter from W.T. Damon, 07/05/1881).<sup>290</sup> He wrote again the following month offering 'one or two other trophies' (BEP letter from W.T. Damon, 28/06/1881): an unfinished beer-strainer from the same location and a headman's head-dress 'taken at Lerothodi's Village' (Af1881,0701.1,3 & 2).<sup>291</sup> Damon had been a private with one of the colonial forces involved in the conflict, namely the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles (now the Cape Town Rifles).<sup>292</sup> Like the field-collector of the Green collection (see below), Damon, despite living in the Cape, probably had personal ties with

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<sup>288</sup> Smyth's nephew, Robert Baden-Powell acted as his aide-de-camp during the Rebellion (Laband 2009: 65).

<sup>289</sup> Including a wooden bowl featuring a poker-worked lion hunt scene (Af1934,1201.3) more probably of Tswana origin. This object relates to three (lidded) vessels in Ditsong NMCH (acc nos. ET. 90-93), described in their 'Etnologie Stamboek nr. 1' (accessions register no. 1) as 'Bechuana' and as having been purchased from 'Colman Bros.' Per then-curator of the collections at Ditsong, Johnny van Schalkwyk, NMCH's ethnography collections were started in the 1880s as part of the ZAR Museum and much poorly-documented material was purchased early on from two local dealers, namely Ivy's and Colman Bros. (pers. comm. 16/11/2016). Colman Bros., whose stock-in-trade was African curios ('KAROSSES, FEATHERS, HORNS, CURIOS, etc.'), had a store on Eloff Street, Johannesburg, which closed down in late 1909 (*Rand Daily Mail*, 26/11/1909: 1).

<sup>290</sup> My thanks to A. (Sandy) Buchanan, Hennie Heymans and Les Pivnic for attempting to find further information regarding W.T. Damon.

<sup>291</sup> Information for the beer-strainer (Af1881,0701.3) is taken from the object's registration slip, while details pertaining to the head-dress (Af1881,0701.2) are from an old label/document associated with this object. In his letter of 28 June, Damon indicates that attached to each object he sent to the BM is 'a label bearing full particulars' (presumably the source of the information entered onto the registration slips, which are comparatively detailed). Only one such label seems to have survived, the above-mentioned slip of paper pertaining to the head-dress. Five years later, Damon was to write again to the BM, this time from the UK, following up on his gift (he now mentions only two items, the necklace and head-dress) as he had not heard anything regarding his presentation (BEP letter from W.T. Damon, 19/10/1886). A.W. Franks promptly wrote the following day to thank Damon and to assure him that his gift had been officially reported in 1881 (BEP A.W. Franks to W.T. Damon, 20/10/1886).

<sup>292</sup> See label/document associated with Af1881,0701.2 and [http://www.northeastmedals.co.uk/britishguide/cape\\_good\\_hope\\_medal\\_roll\\_c\\_d.htm](http://www.northeastmedals.co.uk/britishguide/cape_good_hope_medal_roll_c_d.htm) (last accessed 04/12/2013).

Britain, as his final letter to the BM regarding the 'Basuto curios' written from the UK suggests (BEP letter from W.T. Damon, 19/10/1886).<sup>293</sup>

### 2.1.5 Green

In 1939 a collection given by W.A. Green of St. John's Wood, London includes a number of objects recorded in some detail in the accessions register as having been taken in 'Bechuanaland' in 1897. Some entries are graphic, for example a 'necklet taken off the neck of one of LUKA JANTJE'S [sic] wives' (Af1939,19.4).<sup>294</sup> Other objects are variously associated with 'Jantje', 'Galishwe' and Pethlu.<sup>295</sup> Luka Jantjie (c.1835–1897), along with Galeshwe and another fellow Tswana chief, led a rebellion against the colonial authorities, culminating in the battle for the Langeberg in 1897,<sup>296</sup> in what is part of present-day Northern Cape province.<sup>297</sup> The Langeberg reserve had been set-aside for 'natives', and formed part of the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland (including the republics of Goshen and Stellaland), itself annexed to the Cape Colony in 1895. Despite the fact that the accessions register indicates the involvement of 'an English officer',<sup>298</sup> the opposing troops were colonial rather than imperial, although this might help explain how these objects came to Britain.

### 2.1.6 The Anglo-Zulu War (1879)

Of all the campaigns and wars in SA, it is probably the Anglo-Zulu War that has stood out most, and longest, in British minds.<sup>299</sup> A number of BM collections relate to this relatively brief, yet decisive – and for the Zulus disastrous – conflict, which saw the capture and exile of the last ruler of an independent Zulu kingdom, King Cetshwayo KaMpande (c.1826—1884), and led to the destruction of that kingdom. The BM houses two sets of

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<sup>293</sup> He may have been British-born – see birth entry in 1855 for William Thomas Damon in Weymouth (<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl>) (last accessed 16/08/2018).

<sup>294</sup> Jantjie's wives were Gasiikangwe and Masehoro (Shillington 2011: 287)

<sup>295</sup> Pethlu was Jantjie's cousin (Shillington 2011: 287).

<sup>296</sup> For a detailed account of Jantjie's life, the battle for the Langeberg and accounts of colonial looting (including a photograph of colonial troops posing with booty following the Langeberg conflict) see Shillington (2011).

<sup>297</sup> Bechuanaland had been partitioned in 1885, territory north of the Molopo river becoming the Bechuanaland Protectorate (present-day Botswana) and the area to the south becoming the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland (part of present-day Northern Cape province, South Africa) (Shillington 2011: 146).

<sup>298</sup> The accessions book entry for a water bottle (Af1939,19.3) indicates that 'L. J. is the chief whose head was taken off by an English officer'. Jantjie's body was exhumed shortly after his death and gruesomely decapitated. A contemporary account accords this deed, which echoes other such brutal acts including those carried out earlier on Hintsas and later on Bambatha, to 'a private in one of the Cape Town corps' (Shillington 2011: 264) rather than to an English officer, although it has been suggested that five 'British Army personnel were involved' (<http://www.kaiserscross.com/188001/220801.html>) (last accessed 16/08/2018).

<sup>299</sup> The 1964 British cult film *Zulu* did much to perpetuate the memory (and myths) of the war.

Nguni cattle horns engraved with scenes pertaining to the Anglo-Zulu War, namely Af1960,08.1.a-c and Af1979,01.5234.a-b (for a discussion of the first of which see Giblin and Spring 2016: 108-11).<sup>300</sup> These, and a growing number of other examples in various museum and private collections, have been attributed to the same, as yet unnamed, maker – probably a Zulu-speaking man living the Colony of Natal who was producing them for sale to Europeans as curios in the late nineteenth century (Davison 2016: 84).<sup>301</sup> Other collections linked to this war, and also touched on by Giblin and Spring (2016), include those of Major General Sir Reginald Thynne (given by his daughter, Lady Baddley in 1934 and 1935)<sup>302</sup> (Giblin and Spring 2016: 107) and a collection from T.C.R. Anstey given to the BM in 1954 (Giblin and Spring 2016: 103 & 106).<sup>303</sup> The Anstey collection of 'Zulu relics were picked up' by the donor's father, 'the late Colonel T.H. Anstey, R.[oyal] E.[ngineer] at Ulundi, the last battle of the war' (Braunholtz Papers [BP]). According to the donor, his father 'and another officer were the first to dash into the Kraal of the Zulu King CETEWAYO, at the end of the battle' (GC T.C.R. Anstey to W.B. Fagg, 07/01/1954). It has therefore been assumed that the shield (Af1954,03.1), powder-horn with stopper (Af1954,03.4.a-b) and wooden ladle (Af1954,03.5) came from Cetshwayo's homestead (see accessions register). A letter from the donor dated 7 January 1954, gives further

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<sup>300</sup> The first set, which includes the frontal bone to which the horns attach, was transferred from the BM(NH) as 'an unregistered specimen' (accessions register) 'engraved with battle scenes, by a member of the Zulu tribe' (*Donations Book*). The second set, without a frontal bone, was found in the BM's Organic Conservation section's handling collection and identified as significant (and related to the first) set by myself, and subsequently registered into the collections, in 2012. The second set possibly came from Miss Alice Nelson-Clarke of Hampstead, London. In late 1929 the V&A forwarded the BM a letter from Nelson-Clarke to which Joyce responded. In it she writes 'I have an interesting pair of carved bullock horns from South Africa which I should like to give to the museum, if you care to have them. They are carved with pictures of the Zulu War — a native's idea of it — done by a native in 1883, entirely his own fancy — & are decidedly curious... (GC Miss Alice Nelson-Clarke to [V&A], 1/11/1929). This suggests that the horn enjoyed a relatively extended production period and warrants further research.

<sup>301</sup> Some survive in pairs, others not. For a detailed article and list of known examples, see Davison (2016). For a single example, possibly now one of those listed by Davison but not illustrated, see Michael Stevenson Contemporary (<http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/colonial/item10.htm>) (last accessed 10/12/2013).

<sup>302</sup> The accessions include numerous carved wooden objects and a Zulu cast bronze armlet (*ingxotha*) (Af1934,0712.8). The BM houses two further *izingxotha* (illustrated in Giblin and Spring 2016: 107), namely Af1923,1010.1 and Af1926,0612.1, each donated as individual items. The first, Af1923,1010.1, was donated by Lady Mary Bruce. It had been given to her by J.[ames] Y. Gibson and obtained at Nongoma, Northern Zululand (accessions register). The accessions register also references Gibson's *The Story of the Zulus* (1911 [first published 1903]) where this object is illustrated between pages 50 and 51. (For further details on Scotsman Gibson, a former magistrate in Zululand, see [http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph\\_final.php?serial=1047](http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph_final.php?serial=1047) (last accessed 20/08/2018).) The second, Af1926,0612.1, was donated by G.R. Clarkson and said to have been obtained from his friend, John Muller of Melmoth, Zululand who took it from an 'old, old grave' (Eth Doc 315).

<sup>303</sup> Probably Thomas Christopher Ralph Anstey (see <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/33348/page/396/data.pdf>) (last accessed 20/08/2018). Anstey seems to have achieved the rank of Captain (see <https://www.fold3.com/document/323044814/>) (last accessed 20/08/2018).

information about the assegais, one thrusting and another throwing (Af1954,03.2 and Af1954,03.3), as well as the shields (of which one was registered by the BM, Af1954,03.1). In the letter Anstey explains that his father, then a Captain, found his own brother's body [Edgar Anstey]<sup>304</sup> at Isandhlwana and gathered up the assegais that had killed him and that he assumed that the shields were 'picked up by my father in Cetewayo's Kraal' (GC T.C.R. Anstey to W.B. Fagg, 07/01/1954). Anstey's undated one-page memorandum written on the Department of Ethnography's own letterhead (presumably written when he brought the collection to the BM) gives permission to 'dispose of them [the 'relics'] as duplicates to other museums' (BP), which the BM evidently did.

The ultimate Anglo-Zulu War trophy would undoubtedly have been an item associated with King Cetshwayo. A number of BM objects make such claims, including some of the Anstey objects just discussed as well as a needle-shaped staff, Af1950,18.1 (**Fig. 25**), given by Mrs M. Walton in 1950 and dramatically described as having been '[t]aken from the hand of [Cetshwayo] ... when he was taken prisoner' (accessions register).<sup>305</sup> However, the present research suggests that one collection in particular, that of Garnet Joseph Wolseley, until now disassociated from its backstory, can be firmly connected to the King (see Chapter 4; Elliott Weinberg forthcoming).

### 2.1.7 Not all trophies?

To assume that all objects acquired by colonial administrators and officials, which here includes military personnel, were trophies would be inaccurate. Indeed some would have been acquired by barter or other means from colonists or Africans.<sup>306</sup> Objects from the SA collections that were collected by military men, but are unlikely to qualify as trophies

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<sup>304</sup> The *Times* gives Edgar's full name as 'Edgar Oliphant Anstey' of the '1st Battalion 24th Regiment' [now known as the South Wales Borderers] and confirms that he was killed at Isandhlwana and that his body had been 'recovered and brought home...by his brother, Capt. Anstey, R.E.' (*Times* 23/12/1879: 4). There may be a connection between these items and a neck-ornament in the PRM (acc. no. 1931.65.8), described as '[n]eck ornament of wooden beads of the type awarded for valour. Acquired by G.A. Anstey in 1879, during the Ulundi campaign...and donated by Wilfred F. Anstey in 1931' (exhibit label current as at 31/10/2016).

<sup>305</sup> Recorded as having come from the collection of C.L. Norris Newman [sic], war correspondent for the *Standard*. Charles Norris-Newman was a correspondent for the *London Standard* and accompanied Lord Chelmsford's forces (Knight 1992: 42). Additionally, he was special correspondent of the Cape Town *Standard and Mail* and the *Times of Natal* (Norris-Newman 1880: unpaginated). Another staff (Af1963,15.2), formerly of the Banff Museum, Scotland, accessioned in 1963 and therefore outside of this study, is said to have belonged to Cetshwayo (accessions register).

<sup>306</sup> For example, J.G. Wood mentions a Captain Drayson R.A., who bought an "'isinene'" (man's apron of tails) 'together with many other objects, after the late Kaffir war' (Wood 1868: 26) and an *ILN* engraving (*ILN* 24/08/1878: 172) shows soldiers and officers 'Purchasing Trinkets', albeit from captured women (see Maritz 2008: 47).

include an elephant's tail (Af.3075)<sup>307</sup> presented to a Lieutenant M.L. Sparks 'by Gaika, the late King, as [a Badge] of Office, on his nomination of Captain of the Caffre Nation' (United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine 1832: 267) and the Boer-made leather figures (Af.2218.a-b: Af.2219.a-b) 'sent over from Graham's Town...by... Capt C. J. Selwyn R.E Commanding the Royal Engineers [?] in that Colony in 1838' (CC 808 ?M. Tupper, no date).

## **2.2 Christian 'missionary collectors': 'our collections...have been...rather poorly supported by people like yourself'**<sup>308</sup>

'[O]ur collections...have been...rather poorly supported by people like yourself' – these are the words of C.H. Read to Rev. David Bryant in 1902, a missionary to Zululand (BEP C.H. Read to D. Bryant, 10/02/1902). Bryant wrote to the BM saying that he had 'recently seen mentioned in some publication that the Trustees of the British Museum would be glad to receive supplies of Native curios from these parts' and he expressed an interest in establishing 'some such connection ...between my mission and your great institution' (BEP letter from D. Bryant, 14/01/1902). Read appears to have been open to this suggestion. He responded, saying that rather than 'trade articles', the 'most valuable objects' Bryant could send would be those of a ceremonial nature, along with 'a full account of their use and meaning' (BEP C.H. Read to D. Bryant, 10/02/1902). However, Read does not seem to have picked up on, or perhaps rather chose not to address, Bryant's apparent intimation that he might receive remuneration of sorts – after all, as he had pointed out, his mission 'has to be supported by collections &c [etc.] from home' (BEP letter from D. Bryant, 14/01/1902). What Read did offer was a trial whereby Bryant packed up 'a small consignment to the value of about £10' in exchange for the possibility that the objects might be added to the collections as well as illustrated and his account of them published 'by a Society with which...[Read was] connected', almost certainly the RAI (BEP C.H. Read to D. Bryant, 10/02/1902). For whatever reason, no such 'connection' between Bryant and the BM seems to have materialized. This arguably represents a great, lost opportunity.<sup>309</sup> Rather, the SA collections were to benefit from the labours of

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<sup>307</sup> This object came with the Christy Collection in 1865 and was formerly housed by the Royal United Service Institute (previously known as the United Service Museum).

<sup>308</sup> BEP C.H. Read to D. Bryant, 10/02/1902.

<sup>309</sup> Englishman Alfred Thomas Bryant (1865—1953) arrived in SA in 1883 and joined the Trappist monastery at Mariannhill Mission Station, near Pinetown in Natal. He was later ordained, assuming the name Father David, and in 1896 founded the first Roman Catholic mission in Zululand, Ebuhleni Mission at Ongoye, from which he later wrote to Read. Bryant, a talented linguist, went on to have a long career among the Zulu people. He is perhaps most well known for his book *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929). There is evidence of further communication between Bryant and the BM. In 1929, shortly after Longmans, London had published *Olden Times*, Bryant wrote to T.A. Joyce from an address in Southeast London seeking Joyce's 'counsel' (GC A.T. Bryant to [T.A. Joyce], 20/09/1929).

seemingly all non-Roman Catholic, and mainly English-speaking, sources; the exception being the French-speaking, yet Protestant missionary, D.F. Ellenberger.

### 2.2.1 The French (-speaking) connection: Ellenberger

As far as the SA collections are concerned, the only significant missionary collection to have been accessioned by the beginning of the twentieth century was, as already mentioned, that of David Frédéric Ellenberger (1835—1919),<sup>310</sup> who worked for the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) among the South Sotho in Masitise (in present-day Lesotho). Ellenberger had departed for Lesotho, via SA, in 1860. The collection is significant and, at over 100 objects, large. It includes items of personal adornment, snuff-containers, tools and implements, a drum, two child figures (**Fig. 26**), pottery vessels, arms and armour as well as samples of cosmetics, medicine and food all collected before 1870. However, little is currently known about the assemblage, as it came to the BM from a Miss Powles who donated it in 1870, apparently without much documentation aside from small labels written in French affixed to the objects, a number of which survive and are still attached to the items.<sup>311</sup> As already mentioned, R.H. Soden Smith, A.W. Franks's contact at the South Kensington Museum, brought the collection to Franks's attention. He wrote to Franks advising that friends of his, Mrs Powles and her daughter of well-heeled Portman Square, Marylebone had received 'a collection of objects from S. Africa from the Basuta [sic] Country... the result of the gatherings during eight years made by a German [sic] missionary of what seemed most characteristic & interesting. The difficulty of transport prevented him sending a large coll[ection]' (CC 723, R.H. Soden Smith to A.W. Franks, 18/02/[?1870]). He added that Mrs Powles and her daughter would be happy to show the collection to Franks and present 'any specimens to the Christie [sic] coll[ection] (CC 723, R.H. Soden Smith to A.W. Franks, 18/02/[?1870]).' Franks evidently acted swiftly, for the

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Bryant stated that he was interested in attending anthropology classes, including Joyce's, at the London School of Economics. Joyce replied a few days later suggesting that they meet, which the presumably did. For further information regarding Bryant see [http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph\\_final.php?serial=401](http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph_final.php?serial=401) (last accessed 20/09/2018) and for details regarding Mariannhill and the mission's collections see Rippe (2016).

<sup>310</sup> Or 1920. See <http://www.morija.co.ls/archives/overview/> (last accessed 22/08/2018).

<sup>311</sup> These labels usually name the object and culture: e.g. neck-ornament (Af.6146) '[c]ollier d'enfant. Basutos. S. Africa', whereas others give some interpretive information, e.g. child figures Af.6143 and Af.6144 '[p]oupée que les jeunes femmes steriles portent sur le dos. Basutos' [doll that infertile young women wear on their backs. Basotho]. (Not all labels seem to have been written by the same person – there appear to have been two hands, one of which is probably Ellenberger's own.). It is highly likely that further information accompanied the collection, such as a list written by Ellenberger, upon which the sometimes more detailed registration slip information is based, although this was not found at the time of research. For instance, the registration slip for child figure Af.6143, certain information, including the above-cited quoted sentence (and further details), appears on the slip in French and in quotation marks. Regarding this child figure (Af.6143), for a later, related example in the BM SA collections donated by Mrs H.V. Enthoven in 1930 see Af1930,0707.1.a-b and for an unadorned clay example, possibly also of South Sotho origin and from Wellcome, see Af1954,+23.3562.



collection is recorded as having been presented to the Christy Collection the same month that the letter was written. Soden Smith's letter suggests that Ellenberger formed the collection over a number of years, commencing with the time of his arrival in Lesotho. Ellenberger is known to have 'scrupulously recorded every scrap of information and a multitude of details from the vast collective memory of a people' (Ellenberger 1993: unpaginated) in his quest to document the history of the Basotho, some of which he published.<sup>312</sup> It is therefore very likely that he took the same care with the objects he collected, apparently with an unusually high level of access in the field, both for example suggested by the information associated with the two 'dolls' (child figures) in the collection, which are relatively rare.<sup>313</sup> This collection should be viewed as part of Ellenberger's distributed archive.<sup>314</sup> It makes for an interesting comparison with the one that King Moshoeshoe sent to England (see Introduction). Assembled during the same decade, many object types overlap (including swallow-tail shield, brass breastplate, headdress, drum and pottery vessels). However, Ellenberger's assemblage is stronger in terms of objects that might be considered of ritual use, such as the child figures and medicinal items.

The connection between the Powles and Ellenberger or PEMS is as yet unclear.<sup>315</sup> However, Ellenberger and his wife had links with London where they stayed prior to their departure for Cape Town, to which they sailed on board the London Missionary Society (LMS) vessel the John Williams (SOAS CWM/LMS SA Incoming Correspondence Box 32 1860-1862, F. Ellenberger to Rev., 20/02/1861).<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> *History of the Basuto* (1912) translated by his son-in-law J.C. Macgregor. T.A. Joyce wrote to Macgregor apparently enquiring after a copy of his *Basuto Traditions* (1905), to which Macgregor responded (BEP J.C. Macgregor to T.A. Joyce 19/09/1906).

<sup>313</sup> Af.6143 and Af.6144. For a discussion of Af.6143, the clay figure, see Wood (1998: 43) and for examples similar to the suspended beadwork figure see Nel and Leibhammer (1998: 151-159).

<sup>314</sup> Ellenberger archival material is housed by the Département Évangélique Français d'Action Apostolique (DEFAP), Paris and at the Morija Museum and Archives, Lesotho. A recent British Library Endangered Archives Programme project was involved in the digitisation of Ellenberger's archive at Morija (for details see <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP845>) (last accessed 22/08/2018). Ellenberger's material at the BM would benefit from further research in these locations. Ellenberger material is also still apparently held by the family (e.g. in Montpellier – see Joubert and Valentin 2002: 192). See also paid content at <http://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/missionary-archives-from-lesotho-1832-2006> (last accessed 06/09/2018).

<sup>315</sup> It could possibly have come through the LMS or the French Protestant Church, Soho Square.

<sup>316</sup> I am grateful to Ettore Morelli for suggesting that I consult the microfiches of Ellenberger's unpublished third volume of the *Histoire des Basotho* at SOAS Library. This led me to consider the Archives and Special Collections housed there.

### 2.2.2 Christian society collections: London Missionary Society and the Methodist Missionary Society

The Ellenberger collection would be joined two decades later by the LMS loan material, which, as mentioned, included a couple of SA items. One of these, a model Tswana (North Sotho) house (Af,LMS.3) was made by LMS missionary Robert Moffat 'on the spot' (London Missionary Society n.d.: 37) at Lattakoo, near Kuruman in present-day Northern Cape province (see Elliott Weinberg 2015). These were purchased for the collections in 1911, as was a larger group of LMS SA items the previous year.<sup>317</sup> It was not until the mid-1950s that another few SA objects joined the collections from a missionary collection, this time from the London-based Methodist Missionary Society (MMS). The MMS wrote to Keeper A. Digby saying that they had in their archive 'a collection of specimens of native arts and crafts, customs, etc...built up over the last fifty years...[mostly] by missionaries to be used in exhibitions in this country' and of which they now had 'little or no need' (GC letter from Miss J.M. Anderson, 06/02/1956). This was a further dispersal of their collections, the BM having selected various African, but not SA, items in 1952 (see GC Miss M. Randolph to W.B. Fagg, 01/03/1952).

In some senses the LMS dispersal is an early forerunner of the fate that befell many other Christian societies' collections in the mid to late twentieth century. No longer willing or able to accommodate large collections and, as in the case of the MMS, struggling to find the relevance of such material to their current work, many sold or donated objects.<sup>318</sup> The MMS marks a mid-way point, so to speak, and other collections with SA objects were to follow, including those of the Church Missionary Society (1966)<sup>319</sup> and the United Society

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<sup>317</sup> Like with the Ellenberger material, the LMS 'SA' objects from both transactions warrant further research. Many, although identifiably South African, such as the model house and a pottery vessel (Af1910,-.423), which is similar to those illustrated in Campbell (1822: between pp 276 and 277) and described as originating in 'Kurreechane' (near present-day Zeerust, North West province), continue to be located in other countries' storage locations at the BM. In these two cases, with material from Botswana.

<sup>318</sup> The AHRC-funded networking project entitled *Who Cares? The Material Heritage of British Missions in Africa and the Pacific, and its Future* (2012), of which the publication *Trophies Relics and Curios?* (Jacobs, Knowles and Wingfield 2015) is one outcome, considered museum collections housing objects originally collected by missionaries, among other heritage items. See <http://www.museumethnographersgroup.org.uk/en/projects/330-ahrc-network.html> (last accessed 02/08/2018).

<sup>319</sup> The BM purchased SA items from the Church Missionary Society (CMS), viz. two Xhosa skirts (Af1966,01.47 & 48) and a Chopi xylophone (Af1964,02.42) made in "S.A.L.I.E.S" [sic] (Gold Mine Compound' (per the CMS label associated with the xylophone). 'S.A.L.I.E.S' is probably a reference to The South African Land and Exploration Company Limited, now known as Sallies Limited which was established in 1903. See <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=873895>) (last accessed 03/10/2018).

for the Propagation of the Gospel (1983).<sup>320</sup>

### 2.2.3 Missionary and clerical sources: Colenso(s), Wood, Sparrow Simpson, Higgs, Wansbrough and Cornner

Braunholtz's second category, missionary collectors, could arguably be applied to clerics, including, with regard to the SA collections, Rev. John George Wood (1827—1889), Rev. Dr William Sparrow Simpson (1859—1952) and Bishop John William Colenso (1814—1883).<sup>321</sup> However, Braunholtz lumps such figures into his catchall 'collectors' category, to be discussed, where he references Wood and Sparrow Simpson in his discussion of the ethnography collections more generally (1938: 8). Notwithstanding, their contributions will be considered here.

J.G. Wood donated two SA objects to the collections (1869), including a San poison-making sample (Af.5924) said to have been brought to the UK by Thomas Baines (registration slip),<sup>322</sup> the famed artist and explorer who contributed to Wood's popular and populist *The Natural History of Man* (1868). The publication features illustrations of many SA objects, some of which were in Wood's own collection.<sup>323</sup> About 30 SA objects come from W. Sparrow Simpson, via Franks who acquired them and then gave them to the Christy Collection at various intervals between 1871 and 1900 -- bar one small group, which was purchased for that collection directly from Sparrow Simpson in 1875. J.W. Colenso, the first Anglican bishop of Natal, is the third nineteenth-century English-born cleric who contributed, albeit indirectly, to the SA collections at the BM.<sup>324</sup> Unlike Wood and Sparrow Simpson, who were both secondary or 'armchair' collectors as far as the SA material is concerned, Colenso collected the objects that would end up in the BM during

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<sup>320</sup> There are 89 SA objects from this source at the BM, mainly beadwork, including a neck-ornament, (Af1983,11.83) attached with a United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel label inscribed 'S. Cuthbert's Heathen beadwork - necklace', which relates to the Frank Cornner material from the same mission (see Appendix A).

<sup>321</sup> The question of whether or not Henry Waghorn, surveyor attached to the mission connected to David Livingstone's work, already mentioned, would fall within the missionary category suggests that these categories are not rigid and that sometimes sources can straddle or elude classification.

<sup>322</sup> 'I must here express my thanks to Mr. T. Baines, the accomplished artist and traveller, who made many sketches expressly for the work, and placed at my disposal the whole of his diaries and portfolios' (Wood 1868: v).

<sup>323</sup> Wood appears to be the source of the fairly widespread misapprehension that the distinctive beaded headdress, *umnqwazi*, formerly worn by Xhosa women was a baby-carrier or 'cradle' (see Wood 1868: 9). Wood illustrates a circular shield 'from the late Gordon Cumming's collection' (Wood 1868: 225), almost certainly Af.2163 purchased for the Christy Collection from dealer, William Wareham in 1866. In volume II of *The Natural History of Man* (1870), which excludes Africa, Wood acknowledges the curator (A.W. Franks) of the Christy Collection 'for the assistance which he rendered in the illustration of the work' (Wood 1870: unpaginated [preface]). The Prints and Drawings Department at the BM houses an album of proofs of the wood engravings apparently created in preparation of the two volumes (1913,0415.183).

<sup>324</sup> Some of Franks's donations were only processed after this death.

his preliminary visit to the Colony of Natal between January and April 1854, an account of which he published as *Ten Weeks in Natal* (1855). Objects he had collected came to the BM from Kew in 1866 and in 1960 (see Elliott 2011; Elliott Weinberg 2016: 482-491). Two further items donated in 1867, a bone snuff-spoon (Af.3327) and reed snuff-container/ear-ornament (Af.3369) (**Fig. 27**), recorded on their Christy registration slips as having been presented by 'Bishop Colenso', were in fact sent to the UK by his daughter Harriette Emily Colenso (1847—1932).<sup>325</sup> The previous year, Harriette had written to a Mr Witt, possibly collector Dr George Witt, saying that she was sending him a 'snuff spoon' and a 'snuff box' to add to his collection of 'curiosities' (CC 176, Miss H.E. Colenso to Mr Witt, 30/06/1866).<sup>326</sup>

The only missionaries, or rather lay missionaries, to have given SA objects directly to the BM during the period under consideration are Ivon S. Wansbrough (1932 and 1934) and Frank Cornner (1933 and 1934) of Anglican missions, working respectively in what are present-day Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces (see Appendix A and B). Both Englishmen apparently offered as gifts collections while they were in the UK on furlough. A further collection to have come from the UK is that of a Rev. W.G. Higgs of Oxford, which was purchased by the BM in 1931 (see Introduction for discussion). However, it is currently unclear if Higgs had himself collected the objects in SA or received them from someone else. It is also not known if Higgs was English-born and non-Roman Catholic, which, with the exception of Ellenberger is almost certainly the case with the other 'missionary' sources.

### 2.3 Museums and exhibitions

Although Brauholtz indicates that '[m]useums, both foreign and colonial, and exhibitions have also been drawn upon to no small extent' (1938: 8) in building up the ethnography collections, he disregards them as 'less personal sources' and therefore as falling beyond

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<sup>325</sup> Harriette as a collector and distributor of Zulu-made objects, as well as her strategic use of them, is a topic for further research. A posed photograph showing her holding Zulu power and prestige objects came to my attention during a presentation by Gwil Colenso entitled 'Harriette Colenso, Ambassador and Campaigner for the Zulu People in Zululand, Natal, Cape Town, England and St Helena' (*Photographs Beyond Ruins: Women and Photography in Africa*, symposium held at the University of London, 14/07/2017). A Miss Colenso, almost certainly Harriette, also presented items to what is now the KNM, including a photograph of Cetshwayo (acc. no. 1229) and Langalibalele with his son (acc. no. 2358). The Colensos famously campaigned on behalf of both incarcerated leaders.

<sup>326</sup> The full extract reads: '[a] friend of ours went to England a month or two ago, & offered to take a few things for us, so I took the opportunity to send you a small native curiosity. It has many uses, & may be denominated as a Kafir "strigil", alias pocket handkerchief, alias snuff spoon, which last is its general title here. Perhaps, when it arrives, as I hope it will about the time you get this, you will honour it, & the accompanying snuff box with a place among your other curiosities' (CC 176, Miss H.E. Colenso to Mr Witt, 30/06/1866).

the scope of his address. Looking at such sources with regard to the SA collections suggests that they were far from ‘less personal’. A number of these sources, and the persons involved in the transactions, have already been touched on. The intention here is to consider briefly some of the key museums that have been sources and to discuss the exhibitions that have contributed to the collections.

### 2.3.1 ‘Museums, both foreign and colonial’<sup>327</sup>

Aside from those attached to military organisations and already touched upon, ten museums can be said to have contributed directly to the SA collections. Of these, only one was ‘foreign’ and another was ‘colonial’, the rest were located in the UK. It is therefore somewhat peculiar that Braunholtz did not detail these closer-to-home sources. Kew, with its four museums,<sup>328</sup> proved a source right from the early days of the Christy Collection, donating over 50 SA objects in 1866, another 19 or so over the course of the 1870s<sup>329</sup> and further items, registered into the main series, in 1958 and 1960. A.W. Franks’s friendship with Kew’s Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817—1911), one of his fellow Christy Collection trustees, fostered this long-lived association. In 1868 the Christy Collection received a number of objects in an exchange with the Salford Museum, including a basket (Af.4997) thought to be South African (the exchange of ‘duplicate’ material seen as an acceptable method of enhancing and augmenting the collections).<sup>330</sup> Several years later, in 1891, the Christy Collection engaged the Amsterdam Museum in an exchange, receiving a list of 23 items, the only non-Indonesian of which was a Tsonga male figure (Af,+.5308.a ) (**Fig. 28**).<sup>331</sup> The carved wooden figure is described on that Museum’s list as [item] ‘[n]o 23

<sup>327</sup> Braunholtz 1938: 8.

<sup>328</sup> Viz., Museum No. 2 (1847—1959, initially called the Museum of Economic Botany); Museum No. 1 (1857—1987); Museum No. 3 (1863—1959); Museum No. 4 (1910—1987) (Cornish 2013: 406).

<sup>329</sup> These donations, made in 1870, 1876 and 1877, were of objects that came from John Sanderson (1820—1881), a Scottish immigrant to Natal. Objects that he had collected also came to the BM with Kew’s 1866 donation (for further details see Elliott Weinberg 2016: 494-496). One object is recorded as having come to the BM directly from Sanderson, namely a set of ‘daula’ used in divination (Af,+.847) presented in 1878. Two sets of fire sticks apparently collected by Sanderson (Af,SA.37.a-b and Af,SA.68.a-b) and given in 1872 and 1877 respectively, were put into the ‘SA series’ and it is unclear whether these come from Kew or directly from the collector himself. A further object, a crucible (Af1979,01.2833) with unknown history (hence the ‘query’ registration number), was apparently collected by Sanderson. It bears an old label inscribed ‘Zulu Crucible Pres. by John Sanderson, Esq. of Natal, 13.11 1872’. For letters apparently forwarded to the BM from Kew, see CC [copy] J. Sanderson to Dr Hooker, no date; J. Sanderson to Dr Hooker, 18/01/1870.

<sup>330</sup> Stylistically, the basket does not appear to be of South African origin.

<sup>331</sup> For a discussion of the previous (Zulu) and current cultural attribution of this figure, see Nettleton (1988). The Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen en het Wereldmuseum in the Netherlands houses a related pair (see note below), which it describes on its online catalogue as ‘Zulu’ <https://collectie.wereldculturen.nl/default.aspx?lang=en#/query/0eed101b-dac3-47c4-a79f-a3b00a6b3212> (last accessed 25/08/2018).

[w]ooden carving of Inhambane, bought at Maraba-stad, Transvaal'<sup>332</sup> (CC 5, Collection of Ethnographical Objects Indonesia [Amsterdam exchange], 09/03/1891)<sup>333</sup> and represents the sole SA item to come from a 'foreign' museum (although numerous were given in exchange to other museums in the nineteenth century).<sup>334</sup>

Closer to home, the BM purchased a large mixed collection from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society Museum in 1921, including one potentially South African object, a bone whistle from 'Bechuanaland' (Af1921,1014.175),<sup>335</sup> and in 1934 the BM was sent SA objects from Buckinghamshire County Museum as part of the gift of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (already discussed). Another provincial museum, Hastings Public Museum and Art Gallery, gave 'surplus ethnographical specimens' to the BM in 1948 (GC H.J. Braunholtz to J. Mainwaring Baines, 12/03/1948),<sup>336</sup> including a wooden ladle and a carved smoking-pipe with metal inlay from SA (Af1948,19.4 and 5).<sup>337</sup> Writing in the late 1950s, then Keeper of Ethnography, A. Digby, noted '[i]n the course of the last twenty years or so more and more museums have dispersed their ethnographical collections and

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<sup>332</sup> Marabastad, now called Eerstegoud, is located near Polokwane, Limpopo province. This description is somewhat ambiguous, as Inhambane is located some distance away in present-day Mozambique. It may suggest that the figure was made in that place, probably by a Tsonga carver, but collected in the then-Transvaal where it and others like it were in circulation. A male and female pair, almost certainly by the same hand, said to have been collected before 1892 and with a dark patina, is now housed by the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris (acc. nos. 71.1892.29.1 and 71.1892.29.2). The BM also houses related figures (Af1954,+23.3554 and the pair Af1954,+23.3564 & 5).

<sup>333</sup> The figure is probably originally one of a male and female pair. It relates to a male and a female figure (acc. nos. RV-2668-121 and RV-2668-119), formerly of the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra collection (Amsterdam Zoo), and now forming part of the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen en het Wereldmuseum in the Netherlands. These figures are illustrated in Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller and Johannes François Snelleman's *Industrie des Cafres du sud-est de l'Afrique* (1893), following Muller's 1882-1883 travels in Southeast Africa, where they are described as coming from 'Maraba-stad, in North-East Transvaal' (1893: unpaginated [description of plate xxvii], my translation). The BM figure was almost undoubtedly collected by Muller at the same time. Snelleman, who was curator of ethnology at Leiden Museum, collaborated with Muller in compiling the publication.

<sup>334</sup> SA 'duplicates', including items already assigned Christy Collection numbers, were exchanged with a number of museums, namely Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden (1869), Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (1872), and the Smithsonian Institution (1890) (see Chapter 2) in Washington, D.C. (see Elliott 2011: 34-38).

<sup>335</sup> Therefore possibly originating from present-day Botswana or SA's Northern Cape province, subject to further research.

<sup>336</sup> As the curator of the Museum there stated 'there is no prospect either now or in the remote future of extending this department ['Ethnology']' (GC letter from J. Mainwaring Baines, 10/03/1948).

<sup>337</sup> Both are described as 'Kaffir' on the Hastings list accompanying the donation (Eth Doc 1922), and the ladle is furnished with its Hastings's accession number (E.1098) and 'Brassey Collection'. The Brassey's were a prominent local family and donors to the Museum. Lord and Lady Brassey had stopped off in SA in the late nineteenth century during their final voyage on board their vessel, the *Sunbeam*, documented in Lady Brassey's account, *The Last Voyage* (1883). It is possible that the Brasseys acquired the ladle (and possibly the Xhosa pipe), while briefly in SA. The description of the spoon is near identical to Hastings's entry 1099, and therefore 1098 might have been considered a 'duplicate' (Catherine Harvey, pers. comm. 23/12/2017).

have concentrated on local antiquities' (*in* Cranston 1958: 3), which may well be the case with some of these just mentioned regional collections. From within central London, South Kensington's V&A was also a source of SA objects, donating items in 1942, 1953 and 1957,<sup>338</sup> as was the Natural History Museum.<sup>339</sup> In 1954, the West End's Wellcome Historical Medical Museum was another important source (already mentioned), although the object that would be donated to the collections had been in storage at the BM since wartime.<sup>340</sup>

Objects from what might be considered 'colonial museums' are far fewer.<sup>341</sup> In 1930, Miss Maria Wilman (1867—1957), director of the McGregor Memorial Museum, Kimberley (now McGregor Museum) donated archaeological and ethnographical items (San and other objects) to the BM. Her gift included a Swazi girl's initiation 'dress' (Af1930,0120.24) (**Fig. 29**)<sup>342</sup>, recorded in the *Donations Book* as '[f]rom Kimberley Museum', suggesting perhaps

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<sup>338</sup> A South Sotho axe (Af1942,10.1) was donated to the BM anonymously in 1942 through a Mrs H.P. Mitchell. In 1953 four South Sotho articles of clothing, which, according to the *Donations Book*, had been given by a Mrs Newberry in 1887 (to be discussed), were transferred from the Bethnal Green Museum (Af1953,14.1-4). Following that, in 1957, a carved wooden headrest and staff (Af1957,11.14 & 15, V&A acc. nos 1610-1903 and 1608-1903), given to that Museum by a Mr A.L. Byrne, were transferred from the V&A's Department of Woodwork in 1957 to the BM. Correspondence held in the Department of BEP at the BM reveals that Byrne had initially written to the South Kensington Museum (V&A) in 1895 offering his collection, but that they had declined it at that point, suggesting that he contact Franks at the BM (BEP A.B. Skinner to A. Byrne, 05/06/1895). Byrne then wrote to Franks later that same month on a central London hotel's stationery, enclosing his earlier letter, offering 'the few things I have brought home' (BEP A. Byrne to [A.W. Franks], 26/06/1895). 18 of these objects are now part of the SA collections, having been donated by Byrne, and many are said to have originated from Zululand (see the registration slips) (Af1895,0806.). (A Mr A. Leicester Byrne is recorded as giving the BM a ZAR coin dated to 1894 (1896,0503.1), housed in the Department of Coins and Medals. This is probably the same donor and suggests that he returned to the UK sometime between 1894 and mid-1895.) Evidently, the V&A accepted some of Byrne's collection, including the headrest and staff that were later to be sent to the BM, and a number of SA objects from him remain in the collections there. (For objects said to have been given by A.L. Byrne, see V&A acc. nos. 1488-1903, 1603-1903, 1603A-1903, 1603B-1903, 1604-1903, 1604A-1903, 1604B-1903, 1605-1903, 1606-1903, 1606A-1903, 1607-1903, 1613-1903). These three case studies would benefit from further research at the V&A.

<sup>339</sup> Namely, a basketry penis sheath said to have originated from Zululand (Af1902,-.7) from A. Bull via the BM(NH) in 1902, a few possibly SA objects from R.B. Woosnam via the BM(NH) in 1910 and the pair of engraved horns (Af1960,08.1.a-c) from the Mammals Section in 1960 (already discussed).

<sup>340</sup> WHMM retained some items 'of the aboriginal peoples in the British Commonwealth', and continued to hold its own exhibitions (see *ILN* 09/08/1952: 234-235).

<sup>341</sup> As already mentioned, in 1953, Miss Grace Smyly donated '[a] collection of Zulu & Natal Ethnological specimens', which had been sent to her father in 1909 from the Government Museum, Natal (present-day KNM) (GC Miss G. Smyly to BM, 23/09/1953). However, this example is not considered here as the transaction did not come about as a result of direct links between the BM and a South African museum.

<sup>342</sup> In 1928 Wilman had written to the SAM regarding a Swazi grass dress (see SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 2: 1920-1933 no.179 M. Wilman to Dr Gill, 20/10/1928). In 1929 Wilman is recorded as having donated a 'Swazi [c]eremonial skirt' to the PRM (acc. no. 1929.66.4), currently unlocated. The relation between these three objects, if any, and whether or not Iziko SAM houses such an item from Wilman, would benefit from further research.

that at least one item was given by that Museum to the BM.<sup>343</sup> These gifts, like many other archaeological donations, came in the wake of Braunholtz's 1929 visit to SA for the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) meeting held in that country (see Chapter 5), where Wilman had given a presentation.<sup>344</sup> This relatively late transaction belies much longer-standing contact with the South African museum sector. At the 6th meeting of the Christy trustees in late 1866, A.W. Franks 'announced that he had presented some objects on behalf of the trust to...the Museum at the Cape' (Spence 2004: 16), almost certainly the South African Museum (SAM), Cape Town (present-day Iziko SAM).<sup>345</sup> It is almost certainly to Edgar L. Layard that Franks would have sent the afore-mentioned objects, as the two curators were in correspondence (e.g. see BEP ?E.L. Layard to A.W. Franks, 14/05/?1870) and Layard is recorded as giving archaeological artefacts to the Christy Collection on several occasions from 1865 (Mitchell 2002).<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> The gift included seven ethnographic objects, the rest being archaeological material (Af1930,0120. and 1930,0120.). Mitchell (2002: 109) suggests that some of the archaeological artefacts appear to have come from the McGregor Museum collections. Wilman also gave archaeological items to the BM in 1927 (Mitchell 2002). A further 13 armlets in the SA collections (Af1932,0607.1-13) may have come from the Kimberley Museum. In 1932, Viscountess Milner (Violet Georgina Milner 1872—1958) donated the ornaments 'made by natives of the Kimberley District', which had been apparently given to her at the Kimberley Museum (*Donations Book*).

<sup>344</sup> Wilman presented a talk to Section H entitled 'Bushman Rock Engravings' (BAAS 1930: 369). Braunholtz met Wilman and a number of other South African academics at this time. His papers show that his SA network included key figures such as archaeologist Clarence van Riet Lowe (1894–1956), anthropologist Agnes Winifred Hoernlé (1885–1960), musicologist Percival Robson Kirby (1887—1970) and archaeologist Astley John Hilary Goodwin (1900—1959) (see BP), some, if not all, of whom he would have met in person during his time in SA.

<sup>345</sup> There appears to be no trace of any letter in the SAM Indigenous Knowledge/Ethnography correspondence file (see SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920). However, the (separate) archaeology holdings at SAM were not consulted during the course of research.

The SAM has claims to being the oldest museum in SA, having been founded in 1825 with Dr Andrew Smith as director and curator (du Preez 1982: 8; Davison 2015: 1). Thereafter it fell into decline, but after a period of uncertainty the Cape government intervened; granting it state-aid, and the Museum was re-established in 1855 under the curatorship of Edgar Leopold Layard (1825—1900) (see du Preez 1982: 8; Davison 2015: 1).

Smith had led an expedition between 1834—1836 'to the interior of South Africa' funded by the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Central Africa (Hyacinth 2006: 18). Upon Smith's return to England in 1837, an auction was held by J.C. & S. Stevens at the Egyptian Hall on London's Piccadilly, where the catalogue was billed as that of [objects from] the 'South African Museum', in order to defray costs and repay the Cape Association (Hyacinth 2006: 18). Richard Cuming purchased around 120 objects made mainly by isiZulu- and Setswana-speakers from this sale for his museum, now the Cuming Museum, in Southwark, London (Hyacinth 2006: 18). (For further details on Smith and his collection, see Dell 1994. See also Smith 1836). At least two of these objects would later be donated to the BM by his son, Henry Syer Cuming, in 1892 (Af+.6027 and Af.6872).

<sup>346</sup> The BM Department of BEP also houses a letter from Layard from Cape Town addressed to 'My dear Friend' (BEP ?E.L. Layard to 'Friend', 02/08/1865) apparently a Professor Owen (see Eth Doc 356, [extracts of letter from E. Layard to a Professor Owen], [02/08/1865]).



In more recent times, the BM and Ella Margaret Shaw (c.1910—2002), who from 1933 until her retirement in 1981 curated SAM's ethnological collections (Davison 2002: 118), were in contact.<sup>347</sup> In 1938, A.J.H. Goodwin,<sup>348</sup> lecturer in archaeology at the University of Cape Town (and for a period SAM's Honorary Keeper of Archaeology and Ethnology), wrote to Braunholtz to introduce Shaw (it was under Goodwin's aegis that she had been appointed to the SAM). This heralded another period of friendly cooperation between the BM and the SAM, including at least one study visit to the BM on Shaw's part in 1938.<sup>349</sup>

### **2.3.2 International and colonial exhibitions: (often with) 'large & extremely interesting native exhibit[s]'**<sup>350</sup>

International and colonial exhibitions have enhanced the BM's SA collections. The first international or world's fair, the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, was held in London's Hyde Park from May—October 1851 and may have attracted the young A.W. Franks, then newly-appointed as an assistant in the Department of Antiquities at the BM. It is here that his collecting contemporary, and future major benefactor to the SA and other collections, Henry Christy, is said to have become interested in ethnography, excited by the 'ethnological displays' there (Harrison 2004: 1). He appears to have acquired some such objects there, including a hippopotamus hide *sjambok* (whip) (Af.2168). At least one other object from the Great Exhibition entered the SA collections,

<sup>347</sup> Although already in 1930 the BAAS and the BM presented a number of casts to the SAM, evidently following the Zimbabwe loan exhibition at the BM that same year (see Chapter 5). See SAM-AE 7854, 7869 and 7880, the last two of which are recorded as having been presented by the BM. It seems that these cordial relations between the BM and SAM were long-lived (e.g. John Mack recalls visiting and working with Shaw in Cape Town in the late 1970s (pers. comm. John Mack, 08/09/2018).

<sup>348</sup> SA's first professional archaeologist, Astley John Hilary Goodwin (1900—1959), already mentioned. Braunholtz and Goodwin would have met in person during the BAAS tour of SA in 1929 and were in correspondence since at least 1932 (see BP, A.J.H. Goodwin to H.J. Braunholtz, 13/19/1932). Per the RAI Census of 1940, Goodwin was a member (<https://www.therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/archive-contents/census-of-british-anthropologists-a71>) (last accessed 01/08/2018).

<sup>349</sup> See GC Shaw 1938. For example, in February of that year, Shaw wrote to A. Digby advising that she would be visiting Europe and asking if she may 'be allowed to ferret' at the BM (GC E.M. Shaw to A. Digby, 25/02/1938). In May, already on the Continent, she wrote again to Digby advising that she wished to 'discover the whereabouts of old collections brought from S. Africa in the early days, particularly before 1820; & secondly to take notes of S. African weapons for future comparison' (GC E.M. Shaw to A. Digby, 31/05/1938). Her letter of thanks confirms such a research visit took place at the BM (GC E.M. Shaw to A. Digby, 30/08/1938). A memorandum on file also suggests that the BM may have exchanged '[d]uplicate material' with the SAM (see GC 'Shaw. E.M.', 15/08/1938) at this time. Curiously, SAM's Ethno. Correspondence for the period is seemingly silent on these matters, and it may be that Shaw retained what she considered private correspondence or that it is archived elsewhere at the SAM. At the BM there is further correspondence from Shaw to Digby in 1947 regarding items in the BM's SA collections (GC E.M. Shaw to A. Digby, 22/07/1947) and from Shaw to Braunholtz concerning the shipment of Kenneth C. Murray's collection of Nigerian 'wood-carvings' to the BM from the SAM, where it had been in safekeeping during the Second World War (GC E.M. Shaw to H.J. Braunholtz, 19/04/1949). Shaw also apparently offered advice on objects in the BM's SA collections, as various inscriptions as to 'tribal' identification on certain BM registration slips (Elliott 2011: 37) and labels suggest.

<sup>350</sup> GC T.A. Joyce to [Chairman of Committee, South Africa, British Empire Exhibition], 10/06/1924.

but only in 1960 alongside other items from Kew.<sup>351</sup> This small basketry bag (Af1960,20.127) (**Fig. 30**) would have been shown as part of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope's display,<sup>352</sup> the only African colony to exhibit,<sup>353</sup> and was probably acquired towards the event's close. Kew was involved with, and actively collecting at, such fairs from the start, with its director William Jackson Hooker acting as local commissioner in 1851 (FitzGerald 2004 [2009]: 5).

### 2.3.2.1 The 1862 International Exhibition

Intended as a follow-on to the Great Exhibition, the 1862 International Exhibition of the Industrial Arts and Manufacturers, and the Fine Arts, of All Nations, held from May—November in a purpose-built structure erected in South Kensington (**Fig. 31**),<sup>354</sup> has had by far the greatest impact of all exhibitions on the SA collections at the BM. Although the Cape exhibited, it was the Colony of Natal's contribution to the 1862 International Exhibition that was described as 'one of the most picturesque and romantic Courts' and that colony considered as 'remarkable for the range of its products' (Shaffner and Owen 1862: 113) (see **Fig. 31**). In typical fashion, Natal's exhibit included plant and animal products – in the raw and processed state – as well as colonial and African manufactures and much else besides, all assembled and catalogued by Dr Robert James Mann (1817—1886), an Englishman then resident in that colony (see Mann 1862a; 1862b).<sup>355</sup> It was evidently during the course of the International Exhibition that the Natal Court caught the eye of Henry Christy, who, intent on establishing his own ethnographical museum (CC 622, D.S. Price to A.W. Franks, 19/05/1865), acquired most, if not all, the African (and some 'Boer') manufactures on display there. Kew also acquired objects from the Exhibition and Christy's friend at Kew, W.J. Hooker, who was in touch with the London Commissioner for Natal, may have aided him (Elliott 2011: 31). It is with the Christy Collection, that these many items from Natal, as well as those from King Moshoeshoe (also exhibited on the Natal Court and already discussed) came to the BM.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>351</sup> Also possibly a hippopotamus hide *sjambok* (whip) from Henry Christy (Af.2168), bearing an old label, which reads '[?]cowbatch/hippopotamus hide/Orange River/South Africa/Exhibition 1851'. An E.J. Hanbury of Cape Town exhibited '[r]hinoceros horn sticks and whips' ([Great Exhibition] 1851: 166).

<sup>352</sup> Possibly one of the '[c]uriosities' submitted by M. Thalwitzer of Cape Town ([Great Exhibition] 1851: 166). In the absence of a Kew number, I have been unable to identify this object in Kew's EBC Entry Books and it may have come into their collections after 1851.

<sup>353</sup> Natal did not have a presence at this Exhibition. Various products, mainly textiles, from West Africa were shown by European traders.

<sup>354</sup> The structure is no longer extant and the site is now occupied by the Natural History Museum.

<sup>355</sup> For further details on Mann and the 1862 International Exhibition as well as BM objects originating from this world's fair, see Elliott (2011; 2013)/ Elliott Weinberg (2016).

<sup>356</sup> Not all of these objects remain in the collections as some were used as 'duplicates' for transferring elsewhere, as already mentioned.

The carved wooden objects made by a Zulu-speaking man by the name of Unobadula<sup>357</sup> are notable (see **Fig. 8**), a number of which appear to survive in the SA collections.<sup>358</sup> Not only was this African individual named in the exhibition catalogues, unusually for this period, but Mann also exhibited a photograph of him (see **Fig. 9**), alongside portraits of other, many anonymous, African sitters. A number of these and other photographs probably exhibited in 1862 came to the BM at a later date and are now housed in AOA's Pictorial Collection.<sup>359</sup> It seems that A.W. Franks wrote directly to Mann in late 1866 asking how he might obtain the photographs 'of natives' described in his 'vivid & valuable account' of Natal's contribution (probably Mann 1862b). Franks indicates that the Christy Collection, forming 'part of my Department in the British Museum...includes...a considerable selection from the Natal court' to which 'a series of these photographs would be valuable adjuncts to our collection' (?draft letter, BEP 'Christy Collection Notes from A.W. Franks's [box], letter from A.W. Franks, 03/11/1866). Additionally, in 1871, Mann gave a number of objects to the Christy Collection, probably also 1862 exhibits, including a carved wooden prestige staff (Af.7077) said to have belonged to 'Ngoza', which research into the item's backstory suggests was chief Ngoza kaLudaba (d.1869) who may have been a patron of Unobadula (see Elliott Weinberg 2016: 498—500).<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Historian John Wright suggests that this name would be rendered 'Nobhadula' in modern orthography (Elliott Weinberg 2016: 497 fn. 89).

<sup>358</sup> Five objects were described in Mann's catalogues as having been made by Unobadula, of which a chair (Af1979,01.2800, without documentation) and two vessels (Af.4875 and Af.4876) appear to survive in the collections (see especially Elliott 2013). Two further objects, a lidded vessel and a head-rest (assigned registration slips and Christy Collection numbers Af.1560 and Af.1181 respectively), are currently unlocated. The head-rest was among the 'Aboriginal Ornament Selected from the International Exhibition of 1862 for Henry Christy Esq.' by Miss Louisa Leila Waterhouse Hawkins (see Pictorial Collection Am2002,Drg.72).

<sup>359</sup> For these portrait photographs in the Pictorial Collection, see Af,B36.17-.22 and Af,B79.13-.21 (the two series stored in separate locations). (Other photographs by Mann occur in the Pictorial Collection, for example a full-length image of Ngoza kaLudaba (stored in an album, see Elliott Weinberg 2016: 489).) The Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal, houses a series of Mann's portrait photographs, of which there is some overlap with the two series in AOA's Pictorial Collection. The photograph of Unobadula (Campbell acc. no. a74-006) is absent from the BM's photographs (for a discussion of my attribution of this photograph as being of Unobadula and the identity of the carver, see Elliott 2013).

<sup>360</sup> The other four items in the collections are: a staff with a finial in the form of a Zulu-speaking man's head (Af.7078); a rod-like copper *lerale* (ingot) (Af.7079); a bag or pouch made of '[s]kin tanned by the Basutos' (Af.7080) (old label); and Af.8365, a copper *musuku* still attached with its 1862 exhibit label, which indicates that it was item number 311K '[c]opper of Kafir extraction'. Both it and the *lerale*, Af.7079, (probably 1862 exhibit 393 '[k]nob-kerrie of copper, from near Zoutpansberg' were likely to have been collected by Dr Peter Sutherland (*Natal Witness* 17/01/1862: 5), as was the case with *musuku* 310K (now probably Af.3266, described in the newspaper as 'made in a sand mould, where sickles are thrust down to form receptacles of convenient sized cylinders'). The bag, Af.7080, is very similar to Af.4034, also from the Natal Court, said to have been 'used as a money bag by the Boers' (registration slip). That same year a number of objects were donated by a Dr Sutherland, probably Scottish-born Dr Peter Cormac Sutherland (1822—1900), surveyor general of Natal (Af.8361, Af.SA.34 and Af.SA.61), the last two of which are likely to have been sent via Mann, who appears to have been

### 2.3.2.2 The Paris International Exposition, 1867

In 1868 John Currey donated just over 40 objects to the Christy Collection via Kew (Af.4575-4592; Af.4643-4665; Af,SA.15; Af,SA.44).<sup>361</sup> This collection of garments, adornments and various other items (notably excluding weapons), made mainly by Xhosa-speaking people, had been sent to Paris to be exhibited at the International Exposition of 1867 (May—November) as part of the Cape of Good Hope's display there. Englishman and Cape civil servant, John Blades Currey (1829—1904), who had been resident in SA since around 1850 (Brenthurst 14591 MS.096/1: 15), was appointed commissioner for the Cape. He describes in his memoirs how he began preparing his 'little Colonial Show' for the 'great Exhibition of 1867' in early 1866 (Brenthurst 14591 MS.096/1: 15),<sup>362</sup> having been transferred in April of that year from the Colonial Office to the Attorney-General's (Simons 1986: 140). There was 'some grumbling' over Currey's appointment as commissioner (Brenthurst 14591 MS.096/1: 15), not least it seems because of his limited knowledge of the French language (*Natal Witness* 27/12/1872: 3).<sup>363</sup>

Despite being forced to pack away some exhibits due to a lack of space (*Natal Witness* 27/03/1868: 4), it seems that Currey was able to show the selected African-made items, which were exhibited predominately under two separate categories, viz. 'Portable Weapons' and 'Native Clothing' (Great Britain 1867: 266-7 & 271). The weapons had been submitted by various colonists while the '[n]ative dresses and implements of South African tribes' had been sent by the Cape Town committee for the Paris exhibition (Great Britain 1867: 271). Currey's own report to the local (Cape Town) committee, published in a colonial newspaper, describes the colony's display of these items as follows:

Horns and native weapons decorated a projecting cornice at the top [of the stand], from which are also draped karosses; and the panels of the cases below were ornamented with everlasting flowers and curiosities (*Natal Witness* 27/03/1868: 4).

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visiting London at that time (CC 778, 'Specimens from Peter Sutherland...' no date). Between 1871 and 1874 there were annual International Exhibitions held in South Kensington (Dell 1994: 329). Elizabeth Dell (1994: 121) notes that after the success of 1862, Mann 'undertook Natal's presentation at the international exhibitions as natural part of his job as Emigration Agent'. While cataloguing Natal's contribution to the 1886 exhibition he passed away (Dell 1994: 121).

<sup>361</sup> The last two mentioned objects, a hide bag and a headrest, appear to have come via Kew the year before. A further object, a basketry beer-strainer from this same source, was donated by Kew in 1960 (Af1960,20.128).

<sup>362</sup> This typescript is one of the few to have been produced. The original handwritten holograph is housed in the MacGregor Museum, Kimberley (Simons 1986: 11), which holds his papers (see <http://www.museumsonc.co.za/aboutus/depts/history/hisdocs.html>) (last accessed 24/06/2014).

<sup>363</sup> One report states that 'the articles exhibited had to be labeled in French', and comments on Currey's mislabeling of food items, to humorous effect (*Natal Witness* 03/03/1868: 3).

Reading the report it becomes apparent that in an attempt to minimize on return shipping costs, Currey must have given items to Kew before returning to the Cape in early 1868, having failed to sell them at the close of the exhibition (Brenthurst 14591 MS.096/1: 19).<sup>364</sup>

Unfortunately, Currey does not give an account of how he acquired the items that he was later to present to the BM via Kew, either here or in his memoirs. However, given the number of high status Mpondo and other items in the collection—such as a woman's cloak (Af.4591.a-b),<sup>365</sup> a woman's head-dress (Af.4589) and tooth necklace (Af.4656) (**Fig. 32**)<sup>366</sup> – it is possible that J.C. Warner of the Transkei (in the Eastern Cape), one of the contributors of 'Portable Weapons', had a hand in their collection.<sup>367</sup> Warner, almost certainly Joseph Cox Warner (1806—1870), 'the general "Transkeian Resident" from 1865 to 1869' (Braun 2015: 90) submitted to the exhibition '[a]ssegais and other weapons of Amagalika-Kaffirs [probably Gcaleka]' '[p]resented by the paramount chief, Fakee [Faku of the Mpondo]' (Great Britain 1867: 267, emphasis mine).<sup>368</sup> This has echoes of King Moshoeshoe's presentation for the 1862 International Exhibition. Interestingly, unlike many of the 1862 objects, with the possible exception of the Moshoeshoe collection, these items generally seem to have been used and worn.

<sup>364</sup> A number of objects, including Af.4592, are still attached with an old label indicating that the collection was '[p]resd through the Director of the Royal Gardens, Kew, [on] 9.1.1868. by John Currey Esq', therefore shortly before his departure for the Cape. Currey reports having presented a model of the 'Hope Town diamond' directly to the BM (*Natal Witness* 27/03/1868: 4). Currey also donated a xylophone with beaters via Frederick Michael Coleridge Mackarness to the PRM in 1887 (acc. nos. 1887.23.1-5).

<sup>365</sup> During the course of my research I identified the tortoise shell (Af.4591.b, formerly query object Af1979,01.1376) as belonging to the cloak.

<sup>366</sup> The woman's cloak (Af.4591.a-b) is possibly Ngqika, the woman's head-dress (Af.4589) is possibly Gcaleka and the neck-ornament (Af.4656) is possibly Mpondo. For a related head-dress identified as Ngqika see van Wyk (2003: 18). A related cloak was drawn by George French Angas (1849) adorning 'Nofelete, Macomo's daughter-in-law' (see Giblin and Spring 2016: 157). (In 1908 a Miss E.S. Budden sold to the BM a 'collection said to have been given to [the] Vendor's father by G.F. Angas' (accessions register). (See Af1908,0513., including probably two SA objects, neither a cloak.) Similar cloaks can be seen in various depictions by nineteenth century artists such as Thomas Baines (see Giblin and Spring 2016: 147) and Frederick Timpson l'Ons (Brenthurst ART.502). The South African National Gallery's above-mentioned Baines dates to 1873 and is inscribed by the artist at rear '*Woman of the Amakosa or Frontier Kaffirs. "Head Wife of a Chief". Port Elizabeth...*' (van Wyk 1993: 69) (note also the tooth necklace worn by the sitter) and Brenthurst's l'Ons apparently depicts '[o]ld settlers' well' Grahamstown, 1836.

<sup>367</sup> In his report, Currey mentions making 'some additions to the collections in London' upon his arrival there en route to Paris (*Natal Witness* 27/03/1868: 4), but this is a less likely source for these items.

<sup>368</sup> Apparently Currey wrote a catalogue entitled *Catalogue of the Articles Contributed to the Paris Exhibition of 1867 by Cape of Good Hope* (1867) (Dell 1994: 279), but during the course of research I was unable to locate a copy of this publication. It is possible that further research, possibly at the MacGregor Museum, would help reveal more of the collection's backstory.

### 2.3.2.3 'Colindies', 1886

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 held in South Kensington, also informally referred to as the 'Colindies', is another source of objects for the SA collections. In 1886, the BM purchased a group of 10 objects from C.D. Webb (Af1886,1125.1-10) after having been gifted two items from him (Af1886,1120.1-2), '[a]n assegai taken from the chief Langabalelli [sic] at his capture, and the brass armlet of the Tembu chief Mfanta' (*Book of Presents*) who fought against the British in the Ninth and final Frontier War (1877—1879) (Opland 1989: 137) (**Fig. 33**).<sup>369</sup> South African-born Clement (Clem) Davies Webb (1862—1921),<sup>370</sup> of Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, exhibited privately, under his own name, as part of the Cape Colony's exhibit, a 'Collection of Horns of the South African Antelopes and other Animals' and a 'Collection of Articles of Native Workmanship' (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 20-21 and 23).<sup>371</sup> The latter is said to have 'provided the most comprehensive collection of ethnography [on exhibition]... from the colony' (Dell 1994: 124), outdoing even the Cape Commission's own offering in terms of size and scope. Webb's exhibit at the Cape Court included '[s]ticks' (staves), '[p]ipes', 'Bushman Paintings', various 'dresses', including an 'Abakweta Dress, worn by young men during the circumcision rites', '[o]rnaments', 'weapons' and other items (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 20-21). Correspondence held at the BM (AOA and BEP) reveals that Webb had to return to the Cape in early November and was anxious to sell his 'collection of native curios' (BEP C.D. Webb to I.M.[?] Nicholls [sic] [BM(NH)]),<sup>372</sup> 25/09/1886; see also CC 857, C.D. Webb to C.H. Read, 25/11/1886). He was prepared to do so 'at a considerably lower figure' than he previously had in mind, rather than 'bother about retaining[?] it' (and presumably having to pay for return shipment) (BEP C.D. Webb to I.M.[?] Nicholls [BM(NH)]), 25/09/1886). Webb had initially written to the British Museum (Natural History) (BM(NH)) in South Kensington, saying that others were interested in the collection, but complaining that the 'British Museum people' had not replied to his 'circular' (BEP C.D. Webb to I.M.[?] Nicholls [BM(NH)]), 25/09/1886). Rather persuasive in his

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<sup>369</sup> There are no registration slips for these two items. For some reason there is a jump from slip Af1886,1020.1 to Af1886,1122.1 (pers. comm. Jim Hamill, 21/11/2018). The Temporary Register (ALRC) does not indicate if these items, an '[a]ssegai taken from Langabalelli [sic] and brass armlet of Tembu chief', were given or purchased.

<sup>370</sup> Webb was born on a farm in Fort Peddie, Eastern Cape (Byala and Wanless 2016: 549).

<sup>371</sup> For an account of Webb's biography and of his collection, which is now housed by Museum Africa, Johannesburg, see Byala and Wanless (2016).

<sup>372</sup> Probably Thomas Nichols, the Natural History Museum's first assistant secretary, head of that Museum's administration from 1880—1889 (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=DF+ADM>) (last accessed 30/09/2018). The letter Nichols wrote to Read, in which he forwarded this letter from Webb, is signed 'T. Nichols' (BEP T. Nichols [BM(NH)] to C.H. Read, 28/09/1886).

argument, he stated that his items were rare. He also pointed out that two London newspapers were critical of the BM. The *Morning Post* said it:

[W]ould be a pity [sic] see [his] collection sold to foreigners as some articles there are not seen even in the British Museum' and '*The Daily News* also comments upon it & says the British Museum "must be letting the grass grow under their feet in not having secured the collection or parts of it, before it is sold to some Foreign Institution or private individuals"' (BEP C.D. Webb to I.M.[?] Nicholls [BM(NH)], 25/09/1886).

Thomas Nichols at the BM(NH), to whom the letter had originally been sent, forwarded it to C.H. Read. Following that, Read and Webb entered into correspondence. Webb then proceeded to market a number of items in particular to Read, emphasising their rarity and saying that he had not seen similar examples when visiting the BM. Among the items he promoted were an '*Abakweta Dress*' (BEP letter from C.D. Webb, 05/10/1886) (Af1886,1125.5-9) (see **Fig. 33**),<sup>373</sup> 'a "milk-sack" made from the hide of a calf & usually presented to a chief on the occasion of his marriage...used for preparing the "amasi" or thick milk' (Af1886,1125.8) as well as 'a remarkably well tattooed stick with image of lions antelopes & ostriches burnt on in a neat & clever style, the work was executed by an old Bushman many years ago' (Af1886,1125.4) (BEP C.D. Webb to C.H. Read, 11/10/1886). The Abakwetha outfit (along with the other 'dresses') received some attention in the Cape catalogue, and apparently from visitors to the Cape Court, where the description of it was as follows:<sup>374</sup>

[W]orn by young men during the circumcision rites. The dress is composed of a kilt of the leaves of the wild date, strips of skins round the arms, a band of threaded black beads to go round each shoulder, head-dress of young leaves of the date palm with a veil of fine grass, and other small ornaments sometimes worn (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 21).<sup>375</sup>

So adamant was Webb that the BM should house the '*Abakweta Dress*', that he sent Read a photograph showing young men at an Abakwetha ceremony and an account of

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<sup>373</sup> Possibly also Af1886,1125.10 (roll of antelope skin, unlocated).

<sup>374</sup> 'These dresses have caused some sensation in the Cape Court & many visitors have asked for copies of the photographs' (BEP C.D. Webb to C.H. Read, 11/10/1886).

<sup>375</sup> Based on this description of the object it appears that the BM is missing some components, particularly the beads.

it.<sup>376</sup> This photograph is probably ‘Abakweta men’, an unnumbered photograph in the Pictorial Collection (‘Africa 1230...’ box) (see **Fig. 33**).<sup>377</sup>

The BM was to purchase these objects alongside three ‘Basuto’ musical instruments. These were added to Langalibalele’s spear and Mfanta’s armlet that Webb had donated to the BM.<sup>378</sup> Judging by the registration slip descriptions for the main group, which feature the vernacular African terms for the objects,<sup>379</sup> it would seem that Webb provided the BM with a list or other form of documentation, now probably lost. The objects possibly arrived at the BM with their 1886 exhibition labels still attached. Although none of these survive, a number of objects Jeffrey Whitehead sold to the Christy Collection in 1905 (already discussed), and which he had bought at the exhibition, retain Webb’s original handwritten labels. These labels give details such as an object’s 1886 (exhibition) ‘class’ and item number, as well as a brief description, cultural attribution and sometimes also the relevant African term for the item. For example, Webb’s label on a basketry beer-skimmer (Af1905,-.74) (**Fig. 34**) reads as follows: ‘Class F./ No.29. Elderly ladies spoon./Pondo (mcapi)’.<sup>380</sup>

Webb claimed to have begun collecting in 1880 at around eighteen years of age (Byala and Wanless 2016: 550; SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920 no.65 C.D. Webb to L.A. Péringuey, 05/03/1910). After completing his schooling in Cape Town, Webb migrated back to the Eastern Cape where he settled in Queenstown. Sara Byala and Ann Wanless have written about Webb (Byala and Wanless 2016: 549), in particular his

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<sup>376</sup> The account is now apparently lost. The photograph appears to have been taken at the same event shown in a photograph given by Lady Cunynghame in 1936 (collection discussed above) and now also housed in the Pictorial Collection, viz. ‘Ābākwetā (Circumcision) Dance’ (Af,B84.31). For what appears to be a studio portrait of one of the participants, see, also from Cunynghame, ‘[a] boy after circumcisio[n]’ (Af,B82.1) (see **Fig. 33**). The probable collector of these last two photographs, Sir Arthur Augustus Thurlow Cunynghame, was, as already noted, in SA between 1874 and 1878, which may suggest an approximate date for the photographs. However, photographs can circulate well after they were first produced.

<sup>377</sup> The handwriting of the caption appears to be Webb’s.

<sup>378</sup> The BM also purchased separately at this time a rock art panel (Af1886,1111.1, currently unlocated) from Webb, which I have suggested may correspond with (query object) Af1979,01.5953. Of the ‘Bushman rock painting’, Webb wrote ‘I can guarantee it being genuine native work in so far as to state that it was blasted from the roof of the caves near Glen Grey in the District of Queenstown, inhabited about 30 or 40 years back by Bushmen and is supposed to be their work as no white people have inhabited these parts until quire recently. The specimen [sic] I have was obtained by by W.I.I. Warnford [?] Esq assistant civil commissioner from the caves & was the best specimen [sic] left’ (BEP C.D. Webb to C.H. Read, 11/10/1886). Although rock art falls beyond the scope of the present research, this object would benefit from further investigation.

<sup>379</sup> Webb probably spoke isiXhosa (Byala and Wanless 2016: 552) and therefore may well have had a working knowledge of other Bantu tongues.

<sup>380</sup> According to the Cape’s catalogue entry for Webb’s contribution, Class F was ‘Miscellaneous Articles of Native workmanship’, of which Webb displayed 50 such items (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 21).



collection that his wife was to present some time after his death to the Africana Museum (now Museum Africa) in Johannesburg where he later resided. Webb was among other things a 'military man' who combined his various activities with that of collecting. He served in the Ninth Frontier War (1877—1878), the Anglo-Zulu War (1879), the Basotho War (1880) as well as the South African War (1899-1902) and later went on to enlist for the First World War where he was made a major with the responsibility for a company of the South African Native Labour Corps (Byala and Wanless 2016: 549). Byala and Wanless point out that Webb began collecting around the time that he arrived in Queenstown (1880) and that his collecting continued during his 'military forays' (Byala and Wanless 2016: 552). In the case of the Cape Court items, these could conceivably have included items he acquired in the Transkei area of the Eastern Cape and Basutoland during the intervening years (although items made by isiZulu-speakers do not seem to have been selected for the exhibit).<sup>381</sup> Some of these items may well have been 'spoils of war' (Byala and Wanless 2016: 552), for example the afore-mentioned objects associated with Langalibalele and Mfanta.

Despite his best efforts, it seems that Webb returned to SA with some of his collection in tow. In 1910, after continuing to collect, he approached the SAM in Cape Town offering his 'collection of native curios', which included '[s]ome...curios...exhibited in London in 1886 at the Colonial and Indian exhibition [sic]' (SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920 no.65 C.D. Webb to L.A. Péringuey, 05/03/1910; reproduced in Byala and Wanless 2016: 556-557). In this letter, Webb offers some insight into the backstory of his collection, saying '[e]very curio I possess is an absolutely original native production...Some of them are valuable because of the fact that they have belonged to members of native Royal Families, Chiefs, &c' (SAM Ethno. Correspondence File 1: 1855-1920 no.65 C.D. Webb to L.A. Péringuey, 05/03/1910). SAM turned down Webb's offer and the collection, by then even larger, would resurface again in 1937 at the Africana Museum. It is here that we reach an impasse in the collection's backstory. As Byala and Wanless (2016: 551) point out, the pursuit of backstory for this collection is 'fraught', owing to the fact that, what they term Webb's collection index, a document listing the provenances of items in the collection, 'was lost before the collection's transfer to the Africana Museum'. Whether or not this index (i.e. enumerated list) would have stretched back as far as the early days of Webb's collecting and thus included the 1886 Cape Court items is, it would seem, not known.

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<sup>381</sup> Indeed, Natal had its own Court at Colindies.

The BM acquired a number of other items from the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, including a 'Bushman drawing on bone' (Af1886,1130.1), which it purchased from Thomas Hedley, secretary of the Cape Court, who sold it on behalf of another private exhibitor, Thomas Bain of Rondebosch, Cape Town.<sup>382</sup>

#### **2.3.2.4 Other exhibitions: South African Products, 1907 and Wembley, 1924**

In 1907, the BM seems to have declined to act upon the invitation to attend the South African Products Exhibition held at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster. Joseph Burt-Davy, who was responsible for the Transvaal Section, wrote to the BM enclosing two tickets (still associated with the letter and apparently unused), saying '[w]e have on exhibition here a number of Kaffir curios from various parts of South Africa, one or two of which might possibly be of interest to you, and if so I shall be very glad to place them at your disposal' (BEP letter from J. Burt-Davy, 13/03/1907) (**Fig. 35**).<sup>383</sup> No objects immediately from this source appear to have come to the BM.

However, in 1924, perhaps with the recent appointment of T.A. Joyce as Deputy Keeper (as mentioned, he effectively ran the Ethnography section under R.L. Hobson's titular Keepership of the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography), the BM again had an appetite, and apparently some budget, for SA objects. After attending the British Empire Exhibition, Wembley where he visited the South African Pavilion (**Fig. 36**), Joyce wrote to the chairman of the South African committee saying:

I have seen the large & extremely interesting native exhibit in your building, & I have been wondering whether it might be possible to secure certain of the specimens for the National collection here when the Exhibition closes. Probably many of your exhibits are drawn from private collections, or are contributed by your own Museums, & are therefore not available for this purpose. But there may be

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<sup>382</sup> Probably South African civil engineer Thomas Charles John Bain (1830—1893). The item was listed in the catalogue as '174. — Blade Bone of Seal, with paintings of Bird and Seal, &c., in black' (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 8). In addition, F. Schute gave two 'Bushman Carvings' exhibited at the Cape Court by the 'Kimberley Local Committee' — Af1886,1123.1 and Af1886,1123.2 — said to have been 'taken from a kopje about 10-miles from Kimberley' (Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886: 20) (see also CC 673, F. Schute to A.W. Franks, 20/11/1886).

<sup>383</sup> English-born botanist Burt-Davy was at that time working in the Transvaal. He would later write to Read regarding carnelian beads (BEP J. Burt-Davy to C.H. Read, 25/09/1920; see also GC Burt-Davy memorandum, 21/09/1920) which he donated to the Christy Collection (Af1920,-.91.a-f) (see Introduction). In August 1920, Burt-Davy deposited 'various articles' with the Herbarium at Kew (Kew EBC EB 1896-1924: 534), including two South African baskets, which Kew would give to the BM in 1960 along with other items. One basket is from the Transvaal (Af1960,20.86, Kew no. 52-1920) while the other is said to have been made 'by Zulus at Amanzimtote [sic], NATAL' (Kew label) (Af1960,20.92, Kew no. 52-1920). They probably pre-date 1919, when Burt-Davy left SA (for biographical details, see Gunn and Codd 1981: 111-113).

others which might continue to perform, at the British Museum, the good work which they are doing at Wembley. It is not very much we should want; our South African collections, many of which date from fairly early times, are reasonably representative; but naturally, we should like to fill gaps where they occur (GC T.A. Joyce to [Chairman of Committee, SA, British Empire Exhibition], 10/06/1924).

Joyce was referred to Major C.L.R. Harries, a 'Native Commissioner and Magistrate in the Transvaal' who was in charge of SA's 'Ethnographical Exhibit' (GC letter from Exhibition Commissioner, 18/06/1924).<sup>384</sup> It transpires that no objects were acquired directly from this source,<sup>385</sup> as most, if not all, were on loan from South African museums and a number of private collections.<sup>386</sup>

Joyce's Assistant Keeper, H.J. Braunholtz, also visited the Exhibition and wrote a review of the South African contribution, which was published in the RAI's journal *Man* (1924).<sup>387</sup> Here he describes the 'Ethnographical Exhibition in the South African Pavilion' as follows:

The exhibition, which occupies the back of the central area of the pavilion, consists partly in a rich and varied collection of ethnographical specimens arranged in and above some dozen cases, and partly in a series of about 200 photographic studies of native life and crafts, some of which are illustrated in the accompanying plate. Great pains have evidently been taken to render the collection as representative as possible. A number of the leading museums of South Africa have contributed towards its formation, and their loans have been further supplemented by the

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<sup>384</sup> Harries had actually written to Joyce personally the day before Joyce sent his letter to the committee chairman inviting him to view 'the collection of ethnological objects we have here', adding 'I think you will find our collection...representative...with quite a number of rare specimens' (GC C.L. Harries to T.A. Joyce, 11/06/1924).

<sup>385</sup> There was, however, some discussion of the BM(NH) purchasing damaged 'plaster figures [?casts] of natives' from the South African Pavilion, a communication which Joyce helped facilitate (GC ?T.A. Joyce to Major L. Harries, 12/09/1924). Also, in 1925 the BM received smithing items as a gift (Af1925,0214.1-11). They are recorded as having been donated by the British South Africa Company and were apparently shown at the South African Pavilion at Wembley. This collection has been excluded from the present study as it does not appear to originate from SA. The objects were collected by Frank Worthington, who wrote to the BM offering the items, saying: 'the British South Africa [sic] has disposed of most of the African curiosities — many of which I collected number of years ago — but still have some native black-smiths' tools which they recently offered to me. I didn't want them but though you might like to have them...They consist of blacksmiths' tools and a pair of bellows (imperfect)' (GC letter from F. Worthington, 20/01/1925) (see also the BM's response, GC ? to R.[sic] Worthington, 26/01/1925 and letter from F. Worthington, 26/01/1925). Another collection, of mainly Zambian items, was to come from an F. Worthington in 1940 (Af1940,09.3), most probably the same collector.

<sup>386</sup> Including the South African Museum, Cape Town; Bloemfontein Museum; the MacGregor Memorial Museum, Kimberley; Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg and the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria.

<sup>387</sup> Harries proofread Braunholtz's article (GC C.L. Harries to H.J. Braunholtz, 14/08/1924).

generosity of a large number of private collectors...In the arrangement due regard has been paid to ethnographical classification. Too often in the past have South African natives been treated by collectors as one indivisible unit under the unilluminating title "Kafir" (1924: 129).

He goes on to say of the displayed photographs, some of which he used to illustrate his article:

It would be difficult to praise too highly the photographic studies of natives made by Mr. A. M. Cronin,<sup>388</sup> who has worked partly in conjunction with the authorities of the Kimberley Museum. They are remarkable alike for their technical and artistic qualities, and constitute an invaluable thesaurus of South African native types. Ethnologists are greatly indebted to Mr. Cronin for this piece of field work, carried out at considerable personal sacrifice; it forms a faithful and permanent record of types and customs which are rapidly disappearing, and we can only hope that he will be able to continue his self-imposed task and perfect his collection while the opportunity lasts (1924: 130-131).

Braunholtz obtained a number of prints of these 'studies' from the photographer himself, Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin (see GC A.M. Cronin to T.A. Joyce, no date [1924]; GC A.M. Cronin to H.J. Braunholtz, 16/10/1924). Although it is not certain how many Braunholtz was given, a number survive in the Pictorial Collection.<sup>389</sup> Recent scholarship has been more critical of Duggan-Cronin's somewhat beguiling photographs, arguing that they, along with other ethnographic photographs, played a part in 'entrenching the idea of the traditional and instantiating a vision of timeless tribal life' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 27). Duggan-Cronin's oeuvre in particular is singled out for 'conveying such ideas...in particular by the nature of the costumery involved', as he is now known to have 'arranged and choreographed' his images, sometimes even dipping into his own supply of 'costumes' (beadwork etc.) that travelled with him (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 27 and fn. 43).<sup>390</sup> It is not certain how, aside from the *Man* article, Braunholtz or the BM deployed Duggan-Cronin's photographs. However, as an inscription in Braunholtz's hand on the reverse of one print suggests, there was, at least from the 1930s, a suggestion that

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<sup>388</sup> Irish-born South African, Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin (1874—1954). For biographical details see <http://sharedlegacies.ccaphotography.org/category/cronin/> (last accessed 30/08/2018).

<sup>389</sup> See Af,B36.6-13; Af,B36.25-26 & 29; Af,B37.9, 12, 18-19 & 26.

<sup>390</sup> Here Hamilton and Leibhammer cite the work of Michael Godby (2010), whose study focuses on the period when Duggan-Cronin published his volumes *Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1928—1954), a set of which is housed in the ALRC, AOA's departmental library.

they were alert to some degree of the images' 'constructedness'. The image in question (Fig. 37), ostensibly shows a young Venda woman playing the *mbila* (xylophone) (Af,B37.12). On the reverse, citing a leading ethnomusicology authority, 'Prof. Kirby 1932', Braunholtz has written: '[t]he player on the left should have 3 beaters, two of them being held in the left hand, which plays the base octave. Not played by young girls, & costume incorrect'.<sup>391</sup>

### 2.3.2.5 Exhibitionary thinking

Of the exhibitions, it was the three already-mentioned nineteenth-century ones – namely the International Exhibition of 1862, the Paris International Exposition of 1867 and the 1886 Indian and Colonial Exhibition – that would mostly enrich the SA collections. The first two involved respective Natal and Cape commissioners, both most probably with Kew's intervention, while the third saw a private exhibitor for the Cape market his collection directly to the BM. On the whole, the 1862 objects appear to be unused, which is perhaps unsurprising given that it was stipulated that exhibits needed to have been 'produced since 1850' (*Natal Witness* 12/07/1861: 5), whereas the 1867 and 1886 objects mostly appear to have been worn and used. Research into the 1862 exhibition presents us with several glimpses of backstories, such as those of the carver Unabadula and King Moshoeshoe, which start to uncover traces of African agency. However, traces of such agency are less readily identifiable in the 1867 exhibition material and, pending further documentation coming to light, impossible to ascertain in the case of the 1886 items.

### 2.4 Anthropologists: 'naturally not a numerous body'<sup>392</sup>

Such was Braunholtz's proclamation on this source, for, as he pointed out, these scientists (1938: 7) had 'only entered the field in comparatively recent times' (1938: 8). Furthermore, as already noted (Chapter 2), objects field-collected by individuals with anthropological training tended to end up in the university museums rather than at the BM (Braunholtz 1938: 12).

Up until 1961 there have probably been three anthropologists who contributed to the collections, all of whom were apparently self-taught and lacking what Braunholtz would describe as 'academic training in anthropology' (1938: 8). The first, Braunholtz himself, then Assistant Keeper in the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography, conducted

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<sup>391</sup> Scottish-born musicologist and lecturer at Wits, Percival Robson Kirby is mentioned above. Letters in the ALRC show that he and Braunholtz corresponded in the 1930s and it is possible that they met during the 1929 BAAS tour. For biographical and other information, including his interest in indigenous South African music and instruments, see Kirby (1967).

<sup>392</sup> Braunholtz 1938: 8.

fieldwork in SA during the 1929 BAAS tour and the second, Antoinette Powell-Cotton, collected objects while accompanying her father on what was primarily a hunting expedition to Zululand in 1935. Although neither possessed formal tertiary training in the subject — Braunholtz had studied Classics and Modern Languages at Cambridge (RAI Census A71/43) and Powell-Cotton did not receive a university education (Moore 2012: 10) — both would have nonetheless been well aware of anthropological principles, for example through their attendance at meetings of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences.<sup>393</sup> The collections formed by Braunholtz and Powell-Cotton respectively will be discussed in further detail (see Chapter 5). The third such source was the highly influential medical doctor turned ethnologist, Charles Gabriel Seligman (1873—1940), a professor at the London School of Economics (where Braunholtz himself gave lectures on ‘Ethnology’ (RAI Census A71/43), whom Braunholtz considered a proto- or ‘pioneer anthropologist being of necessity self-trained’ (1938: 8). In 1954, the BM’S Oriental Antiquities Department transferred a large number of assorted beads, apparently from Seligman’s collection, to the Ethnography Department. They included some from SA – 12 in total from what is present-day Limpopo province: nine small, rod-cut glass beads, seven blue and two yellow (Af1954,11.18.a-i), and three hexagonal, faceted blue glass beads (Af1954,11.17.a-c). According to the 1954 register, the first group is ‘[f]rom ♂ chief Modjodji[sic] and the second lot of beads are ‘OLD BAVENDA’. The latter appear to be the highly-prized Venda heirloom ‘beads of the water’, *Vhulungu ha Madi*, while the former purportedly come not from a male, but one of a succession of female Lobedu chiefs or ‘Rain Queens’ known by the regnal name Modjadji. Not known to have carried out fieldwork in SA, Seligman would have obtained these two sets of beads elsewhere.<sup>394</sup> Interestingly, as will be discussed in the Braunholtz and

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<sup>393</sup> Furthermore, Braunholtz had, by 1929, 16 years at the BM working with ethnography under his belt. On the RAI Census return of 1940, Braunholtz indicated that his ‘[a]nthropological interests’ were ‘[g]eneral’, and that he was particularly interested in archaeology and ethnography in the areas of Africa, America (archaeology), Polynesia and Melanesia (RAI Census A71/43). Braunholtz’s subordinate in the Department, Cottie Arthur Burland, who took an interest in the subject and also published but never attained the rank of Assistant Keeper or Keeper, also completed an RAI Census return that year. Burland’s wife was to present a Xhosa beadwork apron the BM in 1940 (Af1940,13.1).

<sup>394</sup> This requires further research. One possibility is that Seligman obtained them from South African government civil engineer and archaeologist, and fellow RAI member, Clarence van Riet Lowe (1894—1956) (see RAI Census list <https://www.therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/archive-contents/census-of-british-anthropologists-a71>) (last accessed 01/089/2018). Van Riet Lowe took an interest in beads and wrote a piece about Venda examples, entitled *Beads of the Water* (1937), in which he thanks Eileen Krige for the beads she sent him ‘from the Lobedu country (Modjadji’s Location)’ (van Riet Lowe 1937: 372). South African anthropologist, Krige, and her husband Jacob Daniell (Jack), carried out fieldwork among the Lobedu people on several occasions in the 1930s, culminating in a monograph on the subject (Davison and Mahashe 2012). Braunholtz had met van Riet Lowe in person during the 1929 BAAS tour and the two corresponded at least thereafter (see BP).

Powell-Cotton case studies, we see the emergence of names and some details of African individuals associated with what might be considered anthropological collections.

## 2.5 Collectors: '[a]n important group'

In the probable absence of any obvious contributions from 'scientists, who were not specifically anthropologists' or 'navigators in the naval service' (Braunholtz 1938: 7) to the SA collections, with the possible exception of the already mentioned Captain Duncan and his currently unlocated basket presented to the BM in 1780, we are left with Braunholtz's final, and most open-ended, source category: that of "collectors" (1938: 8). Braunholtz says of this 'important group', that 'their collections were the composite result of the travels and fieldwork of others, as well as [sometimes] of themselves' (1938: 8). The category includes, according to him (1938: 8), a number of individuals already dealt with here under other sections, such as Sloane, Christy, Franks, Sparrow Simpson and Wood. Two further collectors of the seven that Braunholtz mentions by name also contributed a small number of SA objects to the BM – viz. James Edge-Partington (1854–1930) and Cuthbert Peek (1855–1901). In 1891 Edge-Partington donated a head-ring atop a coiffure (Af,+.5257),<sup>395</sup> described as a 'Zulu head of hair' (registration slip) and in 1893 a *knobkerrie*/snuff-container (Af,+.6398) with 'no history' but nonetheless thought to originate from SA (registration slip).<sup>396</sup> In 1926, the BM purchased, with Christy funds, objects (including a few possibly of South African origin) from the varied collection of Sir Wilfred Peek, son of scientist and collector Sir Cuthbert Edgar Peek, whose own father before him had also been a collector.<sup>397</sup>

Although Braunholtz calls these individuals 'collectors', he points out that this is not to suggest that collecting was their only occupation (1938: 8), nor does it necessarily mean that they field-collected the objects themselves. This category becomes essentially a catch-all into which the above-discussed categories could be collapsed and indeed, by

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<sup>395</sup> Given the high, cylindrical coiffure beneath the head-ring (*isicoco*), it most probably originates from the Colony of Natal where, during the nineteenth-century, there was greater expressive latitude afforded to hairstyles than in the Zulu kingdom (see Klopper 2016). A number of Dr Robert James Mann's portraits exhibited on the Natal Court at the 1862 International Exhibition show men sporting such coiffures beneath an *isicoco* (e.g. Pictorial Collection Af,B79.20). As Nettleton points out (2016: 509 fn. 42) the regional differences in head-rings has yet to be researched. Further north, e.g. the Tsonga of SA and Mozambique, also work similar head-rings.

<sup>396</sup> Both appear to have come from museum collections, the head-ring from Museum Ardwick in Manchester and the *knobkerrie* from 'Greenwich', possibly the Royal Artillery Museum in that London borough.

<sup>397</sup> The collection is varied and includes some comparatively well-documented items of beadwork collected by J.T. Last in East Africa. An Oceanic spoon/scoop has been misidentified as originating from Zimbabwe (Af1926,-.68). Conversely, at the PRM, a bowl from 'Great Kei Island' has been misidentified as originating from SA (acc. no. 1895.1.1). The bowl was given to that Museum in 1895 by Sir Cuthbert (cf. CC 591, C.E. Peek to A.W. Franks, 22/08/1888, for Peek discussing 'Kei island things').

Braunholtz's own admission, there is 'a considerable list of others' whom he had not classified, including the royal family (1938: 8). Any attempt to classify the remaining SA collectors is fraught by still scant or absent biographical information and the fact that classification of individuals with any certainty is itself problematic, given the complexity of identity. What follows is a brief consideration of the tension between the agency of the archons (Derrida 1996: 2) of the archive on the one hand, the curators or keepers, and that of the collectors, as well as the gendering of collecting.

By their very nature, the SA collections can be seen as what Braunholtz termed 'by-product ethnography' (1938: 11), as they were very much formed as adjuncts to other activities (arguably even in the case of Braunholtz's own SA fieldwork, to be discussed in Chapter 5). Braunholtz states that:

[I]t is obvious that collections made by *men* of such varying qualifications, however eminent in their own spheres, and made more often than not rather from personal predilection than according to any systematic plan or museum prescription, are bound to be unequal both in scope and scientific value (1938: 8, emphasis mine).

He goes on to discuss some of the factors which may influence a 'collector's choice', varying from bias for one or other type of object to more practical considerations such as 'portability' (1938: 9). As to collectors' 'aims and methods', he asserts, 'it would be difficult to demonstrate any consistent guiding principles in relation to ethnology', even if such data existed for older collections (1938: 9). However, he offsets this against what we might consider the *archontic power* (Derrida 1996: 3) whereby objects were thought of as 'in themselves the data of science, and susceptible of scientific treatment by the curator; and where descriptions have not been provided by the collector, the lacunae can frequently be filled by subsequent investigation in the field, or by reference to contemporary literature' (1938: 9). Ultimately, according to Braunholtz, even if the BM were reliant on, and to some extent at the mercy of, collectors and their motives as well as the 'element of chance' (1938: 16), by 'clearly formulating' and making known their own 'aims and methods', curators might exercise 'to the full our powers of selection' (1938: 16). And exercise them they did, from the acceptance or rejection of collections, to the selection or 'cherry-picking' of objects for the collections or their displacement as 'duplicates'.



In his discussion regarding the ‘aims and methods’ of collectors, ‘the people who provide the raw material of the museum’ (1938: 2), Brauholtz conflates as ‘source’ collectors (‘those who made’ or formed) and contributors (those who ‘presented’) collections (1938: 7). He does not, however, go on to discuss in any detail this second, yet no less important, group. What follows is a brief consideration of these SA collections sources to 1961: in the main the donors or sellers to the collections. Out of a total of 205 ‘accession events’, i.e. the legal transfer of title of a collection, ranging from a single object upward, from an individual or institution to the BM, the majority, almost 80%, were donations. In fact there were over four and a half times more donations than purchases by event (see Chart 1).<sup>398</sup> Of the 162 contributors to the collections (some were to contribute on more than one occasion), some 143 were individuals (as opposed to 19 institutions such as museums) (see Chart 2).<sup>399</sup> Of the individuals, more than half were men, but women form a significant group (see Chart 3).<sup>400</sup> The total number of collectors (field and non-field) exceeds the number of contributors (162) to the collections, as some collections represent accumulations from various sources (e.g. Kew) and it is difficult to put an exact figure on this source. However, the vast majority, where known, appear to have been men. Yet, when it comes to the contributors, the proportion of women changes – owing to the fact that it was often left to the wives, daughters or other female relatives to dispose of collections once a collector had passed away.

It is instructive to consider the locations from which collections were sent as they give the lie to the notion of the BM collections being national, at least as far as its representativeness as having been drawn from across the nation is concerned (see Chart 4). By accession event, just under half came from London, although that figure is probably greater. London is followed by contributions from the Home Counties and elsewhere in the south of England generally. Relatively few collections (roughly five per cent) were sent to the BM directly from SA and fewer still came from elsewhere abroad. It follows that the majority of contributors were British. A number of contributions were made by individuals, either British- or South African-born, visiting the UK from SA who had brought collections with them including, as already discussed, exhibitors John Currey and Clem Webb. As far as the cultural identity of the contributors based in SA is concerned, judging by their names and biographical details, where gleaned, the majority appear to have been white

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<sup>398</sup> The breakdown is as follows by accession event: 161 donations (includes bequests); 33 purchases; two loans; three exchanges and six unknown/uncertain.

<sup>399</sup> The total breakdown out of 162 contributors is as follows: males 86 (53%); females 53 (32.7%); unknown 1 (0.6%); more than one individual (male and female) 3 (1.8%); not applicable (institutions) 19 (11.7%).

<sup>400</sup> The breakdown for the 143 individuals (so excluding institutions) is as follows: males (60%); females (37%); unknown 1 (0.6%); more than one individual (male and female) 3 (2%).

English-speakers born either in the UK or SA,<sup>401</sup> with a few possible exceptions, including Miss Aucamp. In 1932 a Miss Aucamp of 'Wildealsput...Postmasburg' (*Donations Book*) donated items to the BM. This is likely to have been Juanita Aucamp who collected plant specimens on her father's farm in the Postmasburg area and had a succulent named after her.<sup>402</sup> Another possible Afrikaans-speaker to have contributed to the collections is a J.C. Haarhoff who donated a '[c]arved stick made by natives of East Griqualand, Cape Colony' (*CA Book of Presents*) (Af1886,1020.1). Although it is not possible to establish with certainty, there do not appear to have been any black individuals who contributed directly to the SA collections.

### 2.5.1 Women collectors

As far as can be presently established, there were ten female collectors whose objects would supply the SA collections. Five of these would present and give items directly to the BM:<sup>403</sup> botanical artist Miss Marianne A. North (1830—1890) who in 1882—1883 travelled to SA and gave a *knobkerrie* from there in 1889;<sup>404</sup> a Mrs H.J. Lamb from Johannesburg who, while in London, deposited six wirework armlets; Viscountess Milner who in 1932 donated over a dozen wirework armlets said to have been made in Kimberley and given to her by the museum there; Miss Joy Elvy of Durban gave 43 objects, mainly South Sotho beadwork, in 1929;<sup>405</sup> and in 1936 over 60 objects collected by Antoinette Powell-Cotton the previous year were given to the BM by herself and her father.<sup>406</sup> A further five accession events pertain to objects from women collectors, but which came to the BM via a third party: campaigner for African rights, Harriette Colenso's snuff-spoon and ear-ornament (already discussed), were probably given by George Witt, and are recorded as having come from her father in 1867; in July 1893, A.W. Franks presented to the Christy

<sup>401</sup> With the notable exception of German-born Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek (1827–1875). Bleek, however, published in English.

<sup>402</sup> [https://archive.org/stream/springer\\_10.1007-978-3-662-07125-0/10.1007-978-3-662-07125-0#page/n33/mode/2up/search/Juanita+Aucamp](https://archive.org/stream/springer_10.1007-978-3-662-07125-0/10.1007-978-3-662-07125-0#page/n33/mode/2up/search/Juanita+Aucamp) (last accessed 17/11/2017). Her father was possibly *veldkornet* J.D. [?]Jan Diederik] Aucamp who had a farm named Wildealsput (<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol066ps.html>) (last accessed 17/11/2017).

<sup>403</sup> In 1902, Mr and Mrs R.C. Samuelson (registration slips), gave a number of items to the BM. Robert Charles Azariah Samuelson was a noted author on Zulu matters and had acted as interpreter for Cetshwayo KaMpande during the King's incarceration in the Cape (Nettleton 2016: 523), where his female attendants are known to have made items for sale to visitors (Nettleton 2016: 523 fn.93). Queen Mary, along with King George V, deposited items on loan in 1902.

<sup>404</sup> The *knobkerrie* (Af1889,0618.10) '[m]ade at St. Johns River' (registration slip). Unfortunately, North does not appear to refer to this object in her autobiography (North 1894). For another African-made object she encountered (a vessel from Natal), and possibly collected, see Marianne North Painting 449 at Kew (<http://static1.kew.org/mng/gallery/449.html>) (last accessed 05/08/2018).

<sup>405</sup> Probably Miss Muriel Joy Elvy (b. Sussex 1898–1982), daughter of Dr Frank Elvy (d.1924), district surgeon at Fouriesburg, Orange Free State. I am grateful to Eleanor Lea of GenZA for her input (pers. comm. 24/11/2016).

<sup>406</sup> There are also photographs from Elvy and the Powell-Cotton expedition, now housed in the Pictorial Collection.

Collection a pair of Tsonga figures (Af,+.6190 and Af,+.6191.a-b) (**Fig. 38**)<sup>407</sup> he had acquired from 'E. Cutter' (registration slips) who was dealer, Eva Cutter;<sup>408</sup> a Mrs Wharton donated in 1947 around 45 SA objects '[c]ollected by the late Miss Lyford-Pike about 45 years ago during 7 years residence & travel in Africa' (*Donations Book*);<sup>409</sup> the following year Hastings Museum donated at least one item collected in SA by Lord and Lady Brassey (already mentioned); and in 1953 the Bethnal Green Museum, a branch of the South Kensington Museum (V&A) donated four South Sotho garments (Af1953,14.1-4) (**Fig. 39**), which had been given to them in 1887 by a Mrs Newberry.<sup>410</sup>

### 3. (?)African collectors, towards agency

It may seem in all of this that the idea of indigenous agency has been ignored, but Braunholtz did actually briefly touch on the subject in his Presidential Address. In turning to consider collectors' 'aims and methods', he did so with reference to a number of case studies, including two regarding the collection of objects in Oceania, where what today we would recognise as indigenous agency was at play. In the case of East India Company captain Henry Wilson (1740–1810), who after having been shipwrecked in the islands of Palau 'was presented, before he left the islands, with many of their ['native chiefs'] weapons and utensils' (Braunholtz 1938: 11). Braunholtz continues, 'we note that the selection of the objects, some of which were ultimately to form part of the Museum

<sup>407</sup> These figures had been published in English entomologist William Lucas Distant's *A Naturalist in the Transvaal* (1892) where they are illustrated and labelled 'MAGWAMBA CARVINGS' (Distant 1892: 114) (see also Giblin and Spring 2016: 140). It is probable that they were collected by Distant.

<sup>408</sup> Eva Cutter came from a dealing family and in the 1890s took over the business and seems to have dealt in her own name alongside ethnography dealer William Downing Webster (1868–1913) with whom she developed a personal relationship. From 1922 she went under the name of Mrs Eva Cutter (Waterfield 2006: 59). Franks also acquired objects, including South African items, from her father William. Eva Amarantha Cutter Webster (1854–1945) is recorded as being buried in the same plot as W.D. Webster (see <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/142299031/eva-amarantha-webster#source>) (last accessed 05/09/2018).

<sup>409</sup> The collection includes objects from Zambia.

<sup>410</sup> Almost certainly Elizabeth Newberry, wife of English mining magnate Charles Newberry, who in 1881 built The Manor House at Prynnsberg near Clocolan in the eastern Free State province. (I am grateful to Natalie Randall for providing this information from the Stephan Welz & Co. in Association with Sotheby's *Prynnsberg* sale catalogue, 25-26/03/1996). No African-made material was offered at this sale. In 1995 the Edward M. Smith Family Art Foundation purchased Charles Newberry's 'non-Western art' collection from the private Prynnsberg Museum (Sowell 2004: vii), including South Sotho pieces related to the BM's items, some of which are currently housed by the San Diego Museum of Art. For a related example of skirt Af1953,14.1, see SDMA acc. nos. SA-066-01 to SA-066-03. This dispersed collection warrants further research. For a BM collection with a number of South Sotho objects that appear to be stylistically similar to the Prynnsberg material, see the collection said to have been assembled by a Captain Henry Irman or Inman c.1920 and sold to the BM by Sir Banister Fletcher in 1949 (Af1949,29.). At least one of these objects, a neck-ornament (Af1949,29.7.a-b), retains a small pre-BM label inscribed 'clocolan'. Based on correspondence (see GC 1949) between the vendor and the BM, it would appear that not all of the collection in his possession was selected. Also, some material ended up in the BM's now mostly undocumented 'duplicates', from whence a number were recently registered into the collections during work on these items in which I was involved as an employee (e.g. necklet Af1979,01.4923 bears a small pre-BM label presumably in Irman/Inman's hand).

collections, was made by the natives themselves, and more especially by the King and the chiefs of the islands' (1938: 11). For Braunholtz, this has echoes of an earlier expedition, that of Captain James Cook's first voyage (1768—1771), where naturalist and botanist Joseph Banks and BM botanist Daniel Solander were also present. A scientific rather than a commercial endeavour, Cook, Banks and Solander collected items of material culture alongside their other activities. Referring to the journals of Cook and Banks, Braunholtz describes how the King of Hawaii presented prestige items to Cook, but how on numerous other occasions elsewhere 'their [the collectors'] choice of specimens was limited by various circumstances, and they did not always succeed in getting what they wanted' (1938: 10). In these examples the agency of the peoples that the voyagers encountered is traceable through the strategies of presentation and the withholding of objects.

The case studies from the SA collections, which follow, firstly look in greater detail at an instance of war loot where, perhaps predictably, agency could be argued to be lacking. However, in recovering backstory I am able to associate a prominent African with the collection while rehistoricising it. Thereafter, I will examine three further case studies, which demonstrate various levels of African agency in the formation of the collections and how, by carrying out the kind of detailed research required in constructing backstories, the collections may be considered as useful archive.

## **Section Two: Case Studies**

### **Chapter 4. Collected by a colonial administrator and an official: the Wolseley and Newnham collections**

This chapter considers two case studies drawn from the first category of collector identified by H.J. Braunholtz as being ‘easily the most numerous’: that of ‘colonial administrators and officials’ (1938: 7), which, as mentioned, according to his reckoning appears to include military personnel (Chapter 3). The chapter is treated in two parts. Part I looks at a collection assembled by Field Marshal Viscount Garnet Joseph Wolseley while he was in SA pursuing the Zulu King after the Zulu defeat at Ulundi (1879), one of the last conflicts between British forces and indigenous South Africans. Part II deals with a slightly later period, which saw Britain gain increasing territory in SA. It looks at a collection formed by Major Frederick John Newnham during peacetime when he was travelling around the, by then, British Colony of the Transvaal with the Native Location Commission (1906). Both collections are ‘by-products of’ other activities (Braunholtz 1938: 9), with Wolseley devoting time to ‘bagging’ trophies and Newnham to hunting for ‘curios’ and game.<sup>411</sup>

Donated to the BM in 1917 and 1945 respectively, the collectors’ widows gifted the collections almost 40 years after they had each been assembled. In both instances we find that the collectors’ greater assemblages have been dispersed and that the archive points elsewhere – beyond the BM – extending to other institutions and museums. Both collections allow the question of African agency to be explored, albeit to different degrees. In the case of the Wolseley objects, despite their highly significant provenance –King Cetshwayo kaMpande, the African individual with whom they can once again be associated— this information did not come to the BM alongside the collection and, until the present research, was effectively lost to it for at least the last some 100 years. African presences are to be found in the Newnham Collection, too. This time they are partial and fragmentarily documented. In the case of the only item for which Newnham seems to have named the former owner, this information has been seemingly disregarded until the present research. In both cases the vexed question of African agency is raised. Although,

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<sup>411</sup> In her correspondence with various institutions, Newnham’s daughter, who seems to have been acting on behalf of her mother, refers to the objects as ‘curios’ and it can reasonably be assumed that her father would have, too. (See for example: Maidstone Museum, Miss G.F. Newnham to the Curator [A.J. Golding], 03/11/1944; GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-stamped 25/05/1945; PRM G.F. Newnham ‘List of native South African curios collected by F.J. Newnham, between 1894 and 1907’.)

perhaps surprisingly, given that in the Wolseley case the objects were (to borrow the words of another donor) ‘not, in the ordinary sense “collected”’,<sup>412</sup> it is perhaps here that we can better trace this agency.

## **Part I**

### **1. Af1917,1103.1-10 The Wolseley Collection: (in) the presence of Cetshwayo’s treasures**

It is well to speak of ‘presences’, but what about absences, those shadowy silences in the archive, of which there are arguably more than presences in any given historical ethnographic collection? Reverberating silence, and some red herrings, shroud a particular group of ten BM objects carved out of wood (Af1917,1103.1-10) (**Fig. 40**). Described in the accessions register as three ‘pillows’ [headrests], a ‘globular 4-footed vessel’, four ‘sub-cylindrical vessel[s]’ [milk-pails], a ‘spherical 4-legged vessel’ and a ‘food-trough’ [meat-platter], these objects are notably well made, highly aesthetic and redolent with status. Stylistically, they appear to be ‘Zulu’, and indeed later annotations in the accessions register give this identification for a few of the objects, bar the four ‘sub-cylindrical vessel[s]’ [milk-pails], which are ‘said to be MATABILI’. Museum tie-on labels associated with these objects evidence this past confusion regarding their cultural attribution, indicating either firmly or tentatively ‘Matabele’<sup>413</sup> for just over half and ‘Zulu’<sup>414</sup> for others, while the Museum’s database largely replicated this information.

#### **1.1 Biography and backstory**

Briefly, the objects’ biography, their life story within the Museum to date, can be traced from their registration into the Museum collection in 1917 to several ‘outings’ from storage by way of exhibition. A handful of these items feature in the BM’s *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections* (1925), which suggests they were on display at the Museum around that time as illustrative of the ‘warlike’ Zulu, the ‘dominant people’ of ‘British South Africa’ (BM 1925: 223).<sup>415</sup> Fast-forward to the present, and one of the headrests (Af1917,1103.3) can be seen on long-term display in the ‘Woodcarving’ section of the Sainsbury African Galleries (SAG)<sup>416</sup> at the Museum and a milk-pail (Af1917,1103.8) from

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<sup>412</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>413</sup> Northern Ndebele and therefore originating from what is today Zimbabwe. The Ndebele of SA and Zimbabwe are Zulu offshoots.

<sup>414</sup> variously ‘ZULU’, ‘Natal / Zulu’ and ‘?Zulu’.

<sup>415</sup> Af1917.1103.2-3 and 6-8 (illustrated on page 222).

<sup>416</sup> Where its label reads ‘[w]ooden headrest Zulu people, South Africa, 20th century’.

the collection was recently included in the major BM exhibition, *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* (27/10/2016—26/02/2017).<sup>417</sup>

But what of the objects' backstory –their life story prior to their deposit into the Museum– a narrative seemingly overlooked by their biography thus far and omitted from the Museum's archives?<sup>418</sup> Correspondence traced to date appears to be partial. It gives no details whatsoever regarding these 'African things', also referred to as 'South African specimens'.<sup>419</sup> Rather, the primary information is limited to copies of two letters to the donor (with BEP), a note in the *Book of Presents* (CA) and the accessions register entry, which simply states '[g]iven by Dow[ager] Visc[ountess] Wolseley... brought from Africa by F.M. [Field Marshall] Viscount Wolseley'.<sup>420</sup> Of the twelve objects gifted by Viscountess Wolseley on this occasion, items one to ten are mostly annotated (probably historically) as originating from SA.<sup>421</sup> Closer inspection of the ten objects themselves further links them to their collector, as the underside of each bears the inscription 'Wolseley' in white lettering. Here, we are presented with only one element of the objects' provenance,<sup>422</sup> as a further absence, or rather erasure, tantalizingly suggests – for next to each inscription is another name, word or phrase, which in every case has been removed. What can searches in the wider archive reveal, including at Hove Library, a local authority library in East Sussex that houses the 'Wolseley Collections', and includes the 'Wolseley Papers' (hereafter WP)?<sup>423</sup>

## 1.2 Wolseley and Cetshwayo kaMpande

Lauded as 'the leading British soldier of his generation' (Beckett 2004 [2008]: 14) and ultimately commander-in-chief of the army (1895—1900), Field Marshal Viscount Garnet

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<sup>417</sup> Here the text panel indicated that the piece was made 'before 1880', which is less broad than the date given in SAG.

<sup>418</sup> For example, Anitra Nettleton (2007) speculates that the headrests from this collection were acquired following military action, but does not pursue this line further.

<sup>419</sup> See BEP C.H. Read to Lady Wolseley, 13 & 16/10/1917. Curiously, no letters from Lady Wolseley pertaining to this donation were to be found among BEP's 'Letters In'.

<sup>420</sup> 'SOUTH AFRICA' appears against item one (and presumably applies to item two to four); 'S. AFRICA' appears against items five to eight and no country is indicated for items nine to ten.

<sup>421</sup> Items 11 and 12 from the same acquisition event, Af1917,1103. (Af1917,1103.11 a vessel and Af1917,1103.12 a gold-dust implement), originate from Ghana.

<sup>422</sup> Provenance is taken to mean 'the life story of an item or collection and a record of its ultimate derivation [including place of origin] and its passage through the hands of its various owners' (Russell and Winkworth 2009: 15).

<sup>423</sup> The Wolseley Collections, housed at Hove Library comprise the Wolseley Papers and Wolseley/RUSI (Royal United Services Institute) papers. The history of the Wolseley Collections (of correspondence and papers) is complex and Hove's holdings are incomplete. However, they form probably the largest part of the greater 'Wolseley archive', now dispersed (Great Britain 1970: 2 & 187). Hove Library also houses the papers of his only child, Frances Wolseley and has a Wolseley Room.

Joseph Wolseley (1833—1913) was a ‘self-made’ (Beckett 2004 [2008]: 2) Anglo-Irish army officer and military reformer who became a household name thanks to the Third Anglo-Asante War (1873—1874) (**Fig. 41**). Following the Ashanti campaign in present-day Ghana, Wolseley served twice in SA where he was primarily based in what is now KwaZulu-Natal province: firstly, in an administrative capacity in 1875 and, secondly, in 1879-80 during the Anglo-Zulu War as the general in charge following British defeat at Isandlwana. Although he was twice dispatched to SA, archival material held outside the Museum (to be discussed) suggests that the ten objects in question almost certainly pertain to his second visit. The primary purpose of Wolseley’s return visit was to secure victory over the Zulu, but, much to his disappointment, this was achieved before he arrived on the front. Instead, Wolseley was tasked with hunting for King ‘Cetywayo’ who had fled his capital, Ulundi (also known as Ondini), which was burnt out at the hands of the British following the Zulu defeat.<sup>424</sup>

Cetshwayo kaMpande (c.1826—1884) was the fourth in a line of successive kings from Shaka kaSenzangakhona to reign over the Zulu people (**Fig. 42**). He inherited from his father, Mpande kaSenzangakhona, a still largely independent, self-sufficient kingdom (Marks 2004 [2006]: 1), although for tactical reasons, from 1861 onward, he allowed the British Colony of Natal to become progressively more involved in its affairs (Marks 2004 [2006]: 1). Cetshwayo had effectively reigned alongside his father as coregent, but was formally installed as king in 1873, some while after his father’s death, at a ceremony presided over, at his invitation, by Natal’s Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone (later Sir). It was this relationship with the Colony that would sow the seeds of his downfall and see the destruction of the Zulu kingdom. The British authorities seized upon the opportunity to issue Cetshwayo, long considered an obstacle to confederation, with an impossible ultimatum in December 1878. Unwilling to comply with the disastrous demands, which included disbanding his army, Cetshwayo was defiant. The British responded by invading Zululand in January 1879 and after a series of humiliating defeats eventually secured victory at the Battle of Ulundi on 4 July.

Correspondence housed in Hove Library indicates that during the pursuit of the King, and following his arrival at the ruined royal homestead, Wolseley wrote home to his wife, Louisa, ‘I am after bigger game & I hope my bag may not remain empty’ (Hove WP 8/12-

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<sup>424</sup> Ian Knight states that the two variants are ‘from the common root...meaning “a high place”’ and notes that ‘Ulundi’ was the version preferred by the British ([www.ianknightzulu.com/4th-july-ulundi-day](http://www.ianknightzulu.com/4th-july-ulundi-day)) (last accessed 29/09/2016). Here, Knight uses the form ‘oNdini’, but elsewhere he uses ‘Ulundi’ (see Knight 1992). I use the term ‘Ulundi’ advisedly, and primarily because it is more commonly employed and more widely known.



19, 12/08/1879).<sup>425</sup> This hunting allusion to his hopes of ‘bagging’<sup>426</sup> Cetshwayo can equally be applied to his quest for high status ‘curiosities’,<sup>427</sup> which he actively sought for himself and others, including no less a figure than Queen Victoria.<sup>428</sup> Writing to his wife later that same month, once again from Ulundi where he had set up camp, Wolseley advises ‘I am picking up a few Kaffir curiosities to add to our museum’ (Hove WP 8/20-28, 26/08/1879) (i.e. the Wolseley’s own domestic display of objects, many of which Wolseley had acquired as campaign souvenirs during his career to date). Such was his penchant for collecting, that Wolseley advised his wife to seek the services of a jobbing coachman and carriage, explaining ‘I shall have a lot of barbaric curiosities by the time I reach home’ (Hove WP 8/20-28, 30/11/1879).

While British authorities did not seem to officially condone trophy hunting during the Anglo-Zulu War, the army having ‘a decidedly ambivalent attitude towards loot’ during the nineteenth century (Knight 1992: 39), contemporary accounts suggest that the practice of seeking out and taking battle relics was rife (such as examples cited in Knight 1992; Stevenson and Graham-Stewart 2005; Maritz 2008).<sup>429</sup> The rank and file generally picked up what they could, taking ‘pains to conceal anything they did take, as they were afraid of being made to disgorge’ (Tomasson 1881: 139) – presumably into the hands of their superiors. After all, as Wolseley’s above-mentioned letter suggests, officers were more inclined to have the means to transport objects, large and small, and in greater quantity.<sup>430</sup>

That the group of objects in question is by no means ordinary, and that Wolseley was no ordinary Tommy, is of importance. Wolseley’s letters to his wife reveal that, true to form,<sup>431</sup> he was particularly keen on acquiring royal objects – articles intimately associated with

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<sup>425</sup> Hove Library Wolseley Papers, hereafter ‘Hove WP’.

<sup>426</sup> Hove WP 8/12-19, Wolseley to his wife, 13/08/1879.

<sup>427</sup> See for example Hove WP W/P 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 26/08/1879.

<sup>428</sup> Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 29/08/1879.

<sup>429</sup> Trophy-taking was evidently not a one-sided affair. ‘Relics’ of the Battle of Isandhlwana (where the Zulu were victorious), presumably taken by Zulu warriors, were reportedly discovered at Ulundi after its fall (see for example *Times* 24/07/1879: 5; *Natal Witness* 28/08/1879: 3), including ‘portraits of the Queen and Prince of Wales presented to Cetywayo [sic] on his coronation’ (*Times* 8/09/1879: 6).

<sup>430</sup> ‘[Lieutenant Henry Charles] Harford, a dedicated collector, procured a wooden milk pail from a homestead he searched during the pursuit of the King, and, after Cetshwayo was captured, he took “two very nice grass baskets filled with *utshwala* [beer]”, one of which he presented to Col Clarke, his commanding officer, and the other he kept’ (Knight 1992:46). Whether or not Harford was compelled to offer one of the mentioned items to his superior is not stated.

<sup>431</sup> Wolseley acquired Asante royal objects during his previous campaign in Ghana, including famously an umbrella, which he gave to Queen Victoria. In 1903 the umbrella ‘of King Koffee Kallali, who was defeated at Comassie’ (Leatham 1914: 177, cat. no. 2639) was transferred to what became the Royal United Services Institute, which dispersed its museum collections in 1962 (see <https://rusi.org/commentary/history-royal-united-services-institute>) (last accessed 27/09/2018).

Cetshwayo, including a lock of the King's hair<sup>432</sup> and one of his 'necklaces of lions claws'.<sup>433</sup> However, these letters are strangely silent with regard to the acquisition of the BM objects. Be that as it may, further research points to the fuller extent of their significance.

Eager to be kept in the public eye, on several occasions Wolseley welcomed the press into his home, where his trophies were prominently featured.<sup>434</sup> Although the Wolseleys moved house a good deal, it seems that care was taken to usually display the ten objects in question as a group. Surveying the 'relics of [Wolseley's] latest campaigns' on view in his London Mayfair home, a newspaper article describes that most public of domestic spaces by which Victorians impressed, the hall, where:<sup>435</sup>

Against the wall is a large slab of Italian marble... on which is placed a reduction in bronze of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius... flanked on either side by Zulu milk pails, while beneath the table repose in peace the Brobdingnagian beef dishes and beer pots of ill fated Cetwayo (*New York Times*, 14/11/1885: 2).

Several years later, this time while the Wolseleys were living in Ireland, another visitor describes how:

[O]n the marble slab [of a table in the entrance hall] are a couple of Cetewayo's milk-pails — yellow vases about one-and-a-half feet long. Underneath are more milk-pails, a wooden dish big enough to hold half a sheep, and some Zulu pillows of wood. These were all taken from Cetewayo's kraal (How 1893: 157).

The above-mentioned article further includes an illustration of the milk-pails, meat-platter and two headrests from this collection in what appears to be an outdoor grouped arrangement, identifying them as 'CETEWAYO'S...' (1893: 180) (**Fig. 43**).<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> The lock of hair was intended for Frances, their young daughter (Hove WP 8/1-11, Wolseley to his wife, 30/05/1879; 04/06/1879; 13/08/1879).

<sup>433</sup> Wolseley announces to his wife 'I have managed to secure one of Cetewayo's necklaces of lions [sic] claws – none but a very few of the highest in the land were allowed to wear such a distinction' (Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 29/08/1879). Wolseley broke up the necklace with the intention of distributing the claws as gifts to people back home. He arranged to have some mounted as pins and 'trinkets' (see for example Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 11/09/1879). For a discussion on the significance of this kind of leopard-claw necklace, see Rippe 2016: 386.

<sup>434</sup> Additionally, Wolseley penned numerous essays and books, including two volumes of autobiography.

<sup>435</sup> The hall's 'main role was to impress upon them [the visitor] the wealth and aspirations of the owner [of the house] while they waited to be seen' (Yorke 2005: 91).

<sup>436</sup> The composition includes an Asante stool. There is possibly a ninth object, obscured.

Two later photographs, dating to 1905 and 1907 respectively when the Wolseleys were back in England, now living in a grace-and-favour residence at Hampton Court Palace, show at least some of the objects in a similar configuration inside their home, as before (Hove Wolseley Collections, Scrapbook Vol. 15 [1922]: unpaginated) (see **Fig. 43**).<sup>437</sup>

### 1.3 (?) Interrupted African agency

Wolseley was clearly keen to display Cetshwayo's property prominently and did so according to what can be described as the "trophy" method', which Annie Coombes suggests functioned 'to the glory of those Europeans associated with them' (1994: 71) – in other words Wolseley himself. While the objects no doubt acted as reminders of his success in capturing the King and the subsequent 'settlement', or carving up, of Zululand, the exact circumstances surrounding their acquisition remain uncertain. In the personal letters consulted at Hove, which appear to have been weeded and are in places subject to redaction, there seems to be no mention of these important objects. It is likely that, in the face of the British advance, they had been hidden in an attempt at withholding them, which can be understood as a form of indigenous agency (see Byrne et al. 2011: 7).

One possibility is that they were uncovered by British soldiers among other personal belongings in a cave where they had been hidden, as in an incident depicted in an *ILN* engraving (11/10/1879: 328) (**Fig. 44**).<sup>438</sup> Paulina Dlamini (a Zulu woman who later converted to Christianity after having formerly served as an attendant to Cetshwayo within the *isigodlo*, the King's private enclosure) is recorded as stating that as the British closed in the '*isidoglo* girls were ordered to collect all the king's personal belongings and to take them to a safe hiding place' (Bourquin 1986: 70). With the help of two manservants, whom she names as Lugede Sibiya and Mfezi Thwala, they secreted the King's belongings 'into a deep cave' at Hlophekhulu (Bourquin 1986: 70). Dlamini continues:

On our return we reported to the king that all goods were safely hidden. In reality, however, the king's possessions had been taken to safety for the benefit of those in charge; because when the king was captured and taken away, his possessions were retrieved by the men who had hidden them, and who enriched themselves thereby (Bourquin 1986: 70-71).

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<sup>437</sup> This scrapbook is from a series of 33 scrapbooks 'assembled by Frances Garnet Wolseley at her father's suggestion' (Great Britain 1970: 184).

<sup>438</sup> The etching is captioned 'Finding Some of Cetewayo's Treasures. From a Sketch by Lieutenant D.A. East'. The cave depicted bears some resemblance to an illustration of 'Cetewayo's Gunpowder Magazine' in another publication (*Graphic*, 11/10/ 1879: 365) (see **Fig. 44**).

Dlamini's testimony is striking, for it seems to implicate Sibiya and Thwala as agents in the 'collection' of objects, possibly including those that would end up in Wolseley's hands. While we might imagine, rightly, that African agency is absent in the majority of cases of looted material, or 'artifactual abductees' (O'Hanlon 2000: 3), Dlamini's account may suggest otherwise in this particular instance.

Another possibility is that some or all of the Wolseley objects had been buried within the royal homestead for safekeeping, sparing them from the flames. Writing in his journal on Sunday 10 August, the very day he reached 'the Royal Kraal of Ulundi' (Cetshwayo's royal homestead) where he set up camp, Wolseley casually remarks: '[t]here are large quantities of corn here: we opened some of the pits & found all sorts of private property concealed in them' (Preston 1973: 81). Unfortunately, he does not divulge any details regarding the 'private property', although a newspaper reported that '[a] day was spent [after Wolseley's arrival] in unearthing His Majesty's domestic furniture — beer pots, grease pots, beads, spoons, snuff boxes, &c., &c.' (*Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 11/12/1879: 4).<sup>439</sup> According to another nineteenth century source, grain pits were capacious and had fired 'sides...as hard as stone' (Drayson 1858: 28).<sup>440</sup> They also had the additional benefit of being secreted within the cattle byre, a 'place visited by the ancestral spirits' (Hooper 1996: 74), making them an ideal hiding place for valuables.<sup>441</sup>

In their original context, all ten objects would have been ordinarily kept and used within the homestead (*umuzi*), where they were primarily associated with men (through their production, storage and use) and also with the ancestors and cattle (see Hooper 1996). Cattle were of paramount importance to the Zulu, culturally, socially, spiritually and also economically, being both a source of food (meat and milk) and wealth. As household items, the headrests (*izigqiki*) would have functioned to support the neck and head when

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<sup>439</sup> Wolseley's wife accused him of 'composing his letters with an eye on posterity' (Beckett 2004 [2008]: 5) and it is possible that Wolseley wished to keep secret the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of these objects. Regarding the find-spot, it is possible, but less likely, that the objects were found elsewhere. For example, Wolseley writes to his wife about 'a pillow [headrest] taken in the hut where Ketewayo [sic] intended to sleep in when he was taken prisoner' (Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 3/09/1879). However, he indicates that he would be sending this headrest as a gift to Lady Constance Stanley.

<sup>440</sup> This account by Captain Alfred W. Drayson, who records having fallen, along with his horse, into 'an old corn-pit, about twelve feet in depth and seven in diameter. The sides were as hard as stone, for a fire is always kept burning for a day or so in the interior when the pit is first made' (Drayson 1858: 28). Although this incident occurred in Natal (Drayson 1858: 27), rather than within the Zulu kingdom, grain-pits appear to have been of similar construction across the Thukela River in what was termed 'Zulu country'.

<sup>441</sup> Here Hooper cites Berglund (1976).

sleeping, while the milk-pails (*amathuga*) and meat-platter (*ugqoko*) would have served to temporarily contain food – the milk-pails for milking into and the meat-dish for serving quantities of meat.<sup>442</sup> The purpose of the other two vessels, the isiZulu name for which is apparently *umqenqge*, is less certain.<sup>443</sup> Various historical accounts suggest that such vessels –elaborately carved, usually lidded, often featuring multiple handles and standing on three or four leg – were used for holding milk or beer.<sup>444</sup> Recent scholarship suggests that vessels of this kind, which are evidently unused (typically there is an absence of interior residue), were either prestige snuff/tobacco containers (Nel 2011: 22) or are virtuoso inventions without indigenous precedent,<sup>445</sup> originating mostly from within the Colony of Natal and intended for sale to Europeans during the nineteenth century.<sup>446</sup>

Ostensibly utilitarian, the form and function of the ten objects in question link them to the ancestral realm, as do specificities of their use and storage. All skilfully carved in the solid, out of unseasoned wood, they would have most probably been made by specialist carvers as prestige objects. A number of these objects are noticeably blackened, either partially or entirely, and like the places where they were stored, are intentionally dark so as to appeal to the ‘shades’ (ancestors). All bear carved designs, the most notable being the *amasumpa* (or ‘warts’) motif, a highly aesthetic device associated most closely with Zulu royalty and thought to reference cattle. A few objects are heavily embellished with *amasumpa*, while others have none.<sup>447</sup> The meat-platter would have been intended to hold quantities of meat for consumption following an animal sacrifice ‘requested of the homestead head by the ancestral spirits’ (Hooper 1996: 77). When not in use, it would have been stored towards the back of the dwelling, in the darkened *umsamo*, along with other valuables. Similarly, the somewhat anthropomorphic, curvaceous milk-pails would have been stored towards the back of the cattle byre and their use governed by males.

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<sup>442</sup> Milk-pails were not intended for storing or serving milk.

<sup>443</sup> Dr Robert James Mann included a number of carved wooden vessels in the exhibit at the Natal Court at the International Exhibition of 1862, which he describes as ‘umgenge’, a term repeated on a number of BM registration slips (e.g. Af.1559.a [its lid, .b, apparently now missing], 1862 cat. no. 334.c). For an example of a ‘Sour milk Serving-Vessel’, see Wood 1996: 88, cat. no. W56 (although note that W55 states ‘[n]o Zulu name provided’). At the BM Af.1559.a is described as a ‘Carved Wooden Pot for holding sour milk. “Umgenge”’ (registration slip).

<sup>444</sup> For example, the BM’s Af.1560 (1862 cat. no. 304K, carved by Unobadula and currently unlocated) is documented as a ‘[m]ilk [p]ot & cover’ (registration slip). Mann, who included this item on the Natal Court, states that ‘[g]reat potentates, like Umpanda [King Mpande kaSenzangakhona (1798–1872)], have their beer brought to them in Wooden Pots of some such dimension and fashion as Nos. 304K, 305K, 306K [now Af.1560 and also probably Af.4875 and Af.4876] (Mann 1862b: 18). See Elliott, Cartwright and Kevin 2013; Elliott Weinberg 2016.

<sup>445</sup> Although possibly based on the form of small snuff-containers.

<sup>446</sup> See Nettleton 2007, 2009, 2012; Elliott, Cartwright and Kevin 2013: 19–21; Elliott Weinberg 2016.

<sup>447</sup> *Amasumpa* are present on items one, two, four, seven and nine. Another motif, the chevron, also features prominently.

The milk-pail 'was important as a container not only for essential everyday food, but also as symbolic receptacle to represent the goodwill of the ancestral spirits who caused the cattle to prosper so that the continuity of the family group was assured' (Hooper 1996: 74).<sup>448</sup> Likewise, the headrest, aside from its practical purpose of supporting the neck and head and protecting the user's hairstyle while sleeping, is linked to the spirit world. Unlike milk-pails and meat-platters, which were 'invariably commissioned by the heads of homesteads' (Klopper 1991: 85), headrests were associated with women. Headrests formed part of a woman's dowry and would be brought to the homestead upon marriage. This goes some way to explain the variety of styles of Zulu headrest found across collections, which generally speaking usually evoke the form of cattle. Intriguingly, headrests one and two of Wolseley's Collection, each rising from multiple legs, richly carved with *amasumpa*, conform to a type most closely associated with the Zulu kingdom.

By contrast, headrest three, rising from six pairs of legs, suggestive of a large herd of cattle, has been stylistically associated with the Colony of Natal (Klopper *in* Mack 2000: 173).<sup>449</sup> Therefore, at first glance, headrest number three may seem somewhat out of place among objects provenanced to the Zulu kingdom. However, closer inspection of a photograph linked to Cetshwayo and housed in the Campbell Collections, Durban appears to include the headrest, or one very similar, at bottom left (**Fig. 45**). The image is captioned: '...the crown with which Cetshwayo was crowned King of the Zulus by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in August 1873. The other items shown are articles from the King's household' (acc. no. C66/046).<sup>450</sup> However, this information seems to be slightly at odds with the label on a negative of the image, inscribed 'CETYWAYO'S Kraal (various sticks, shields, headgear, etc. found in the kraal)' (no acc. no.) (see **Fig. 45**), leading Sandra Klopper to speculate that the assembled items shown in the Campbell photograph were looted from the royal homestead (1992: 107; Fig. 42, no page).<sup>451</sup> Given the photograph's unusual composition and its context within the photo album – it is pasted beside a

<sup>448</sup> Here Hooper cites Berglund (1976: 110).

<sup>449</sup> See National Museum of Ireland for a related headrest, but with freestanding legs, donated by Sir Hugh MacCalmont in 1879 and inscribed 'Ulundi' (acc. no. AE:NN537). I am grateful to Rachel Hand for sharing information regarding this object with me (pers. comm. 03/05/2019).

<sup>450</sup> The Campbell Collections has several other images showing just the crown, one of it in profile and front-on (D40/061) captioned '[c]rown used for coronation of Cetewayo by Sir T. Shepstone Zululand 1873' and two showing it in profile alone (D37/133; D37/135 [D37/134 not located during my research visit]), both inscribed 'Cetywayo's Crown'. These images all appear to have been cropped from the larger image (print C66/046).

<sup>451</sup> Klopper states that there are two photographs in the Campbell Collections showing this group of objects (Klopper 1992: 107 fn. 19). Unfortunately, she does not cite accession numbers and, unable to locate a second such photograph during my research visit to that repository, I assume the second image to which she refers is in fact the negative (the caption for which matches her partial quotation of it).

photograph of the King and his 'party' alongside 'Shepstone's contingent' on the day of the coronation – I would like to suggest that the image may in fact be a visual record of some of the 'presents' that were given to Cetshwayo on the occasion of his coronation.<sup>452</sup> These presents included a crown (apparently two views of which are at the centre of the photographic composition) whose 'design was taken from the Zulu war head-dress...improved upon by the master tailor of the 75th Regiment...[and signifying] the Zulu trappings of war subdued to a peaceful purpose' (*Times* 31/03/1875: 7). As such, the headrest, with all its symbolism, could possibly have formed part of the diplomatic gifts exchanged between the King and Shepstone, who was acting on behalf of the Natal government.<sup>453</sup>

Although sketchy on the actual details of the presents from the Colony, an unnamed 'Special Correspondent' for a colonial newspaper, the *Natal Witness*, writes about events on 1 September 1873, the day of the coronation:

[E]verybody [was] astir early... A wagon had been sent over from Mr. Shepstone's camp early in the morning, containing the presents for his sable Majesty, and soon afterwards from our camp we saw a large marquee being erected inside the kraal... The proclaiming of the laws being over, Mr. Shepstone then led Cetywayo into the marquee, into which only a favored few were admitted. Here the mysteries of the King's toilette were carried on. The interior of the marquee had been most tastefully arranged and decked out with the presents to his Majesty. The ground was covered with blue salem pore [cloth]. In the centre of the further side of the

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<sup>452</sup> Acc. no. C66/045. Captions for both these photographs are typescript.

<sup>453</sup> One eyewitness, Paulina Dlamini, states that Shepstone 'received a gift of cattle' (Bourquin 1986: 31). According to a correspondent for the *Natal Witness*, '[p]resents passed on both sides' (*Natal Witness*, 12/09/1873: no page number). Gifts from the Zulu side included sheep and generous allocations of cattle, as well as ivory. In a 'narrative... taken down from the lips of Cetywayo, by Captain J. Ruscombe Poole, Royal Artillery...' (*Macmillan's Magazine* February 1880: 273), Cetshwayo is quoted as having 'sent cattle and sheep' and, following his coronation, as having given 'Mr. Shepstone and his men a lot of cattle to feed them on their return journey; and also [having] sent another lot as a present' (*Macmillan's Magazine* February 1880: 283) (see Webb and Wright 1978: 18 and also, for commentary on this source, Hamilton 1998: 238 fn. 28). According to Shepstone's account, published in the *Times*, London the day after the coronation, he paid a 'farewell visit to the King...[and] At a sign from Cetywayo some fine tusks of ivory were brought from the Royal apartments and laid before me; a herd of oxen had previously been driven into the enclosure. Cetywayo addressed me, saying he wished to convey to me the thanks of the Zulu people for the services I had rendered them, and that the ivory and oxen I saw represented their gratitude. I thanked him, and said that the Government had cheerfully incurred the cost of the expedition...To have declined the present would have been considered an affront. I therefore accepted it, and on my return to Natal had it sold by public auction and the proceeds paid into the Treasury' (*Times* 31/03/1875: 7). The *Times* cites as source '[a]n interesting Report recently laid before Parliament' (*Times* 31/03/1875: 7). This is almost certainly the official report (Blue Book, paper number C.1137) quoted by Klopper (Klopper 1992: 106). The report appears almost verbatim in the *Times*, with a few modifications.

tent, there was a table covered with a handsome railway rug, and bearing a large mirror, a number of knives, beads, &c., &c., while the sides were tastefully hung round with railway rugs, bearing the images of animals, lions, tigers, and "such like beastesses," interspersed with handsome wrappers, shawls, handkerchiefs, blankets, &c., &c. The effect was very good indeed, and the presents were in quite Eastern profusion. The crown was then put on, and Cetywayo allowed to admire himself in the glass...the beautiful scarlet cloak was added... As everything was now ready, part of the side of the marquee was opened, and the Secretary of Native Affairs [Shepstone] led Cetywayo forward to where two chairs had been placed in front of the marquee... [later] we took our leave of Cetywayo, who had returned to the tent to inspect his presents... (*Natal Witness*, 12/09/1873: 3).<sup>454</sup>

After the Zulu defeat the presents sparked a treasure hunt. Writing in his journal, Lieutenant Henry Charles Harford states:

In my spare time I went over the battlefield of Ulundi and picked up one or two relics in the shape of shields, assegais, etc. A few days after we arrived, Jim [his African servant] came to me to say that he knew the spot where [Cetshwayo's] crown and other paraphernalia presented to him on the occasion of his coronation by "Somtseu" [Sir Theophilus Shepstone] were *buried*, and asked if he might go and make a search...However, it turned out that they had been removed, and squatting down, snapping his fingers to emphasise matters, he declared that it had only been done that very day, as the earth from the hole was quite fresh (cited in Knight 1992: 44-45, square brackets in original, emphasis mine).

Seemingly, Harford had lost out to Wolseley (and presumably others) in his hunt for trophies.<sup>455</sup> The quest for booty continued during the pursuit of the King. Cornelius Vijn, a European trader caught between Cetshwayo and Wolseley,<sup>456</sup> describes a party of

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<sup>454</sup> This account is at odds with that of John Dunn, Cetshwayo's sometime white ally, who somewhat disingenuously claimed that the King was disappointed with the presents, 'as there was not a single thing he could put to his own use' (Moodie 1886: 50, cited in Klopper 1992: 106).

<sup>455</sup> Word of Cetshwayo's hidden treasure seems to have spread and captured popular imagination, as one satirical account written under the pen name 'Blikoor' ['tin ears', a nickname for an inhabitant of the Orange Free State] suggests: 'the King's kraal...all in ashes... [where] The only thing standing was the cattle kraal...[a] day was spent [after Wolseley's arrival] in unearthing His Majesty's domestic furniture — beer pots, grease pots, beads, spoons, snuff boxes, &c., &c. ('Chips from the Zulu War Log', *Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette* 11/12/1879: 4).

<sup>456</sup> Vijn was coopted by both after the Battle of Ulundi. He acted as scribe to Cetshwayo in his communication with the British and was then asked by Wolseley to help find the King. Despite his involvement with Wolseley, he takes care not to depict himself as a traitor to Cetshwayo.



soldiers meant to be hunting for the King, saying they instead 'did nothing but capture King's cattle [sic], and burn kraals, and plunder all the huts of curiosities' (Vijn 1880: 72). He goes on to describe one particular soldier carrying 'four milking-bowls over his shoulders, two in front and two behind' and much more besides (Vijn 1880: 72).

After over a month on the run, the fugitive King was captured and sent into exile, while his kingdom was carved up into thirteen chiefdoms. Eventually successful in his appeal, Cetshwayo was later allowed to return to Zululand following a diplomatic visit to Britain to meet with Queen Victoria in 1882. He died at Eshowe less than two years later. Wolseley, on the other hand, concluded his tour of duty in SA<sup>457</sup> and returned to London in 1880, presumably with his booty.<sup>458</sup>

As mentioned, the underside of each item bears an inscription, almost certainly applied at some point between 1880 and before the collection came to the BM some 30-odd years later.<sup>459</sup> Closer scrutiny of the erased element of each inscription reveals that these objects had, at some time or other, been wrongly identified as spoils from 'Coomassie' (Kumasi).<sup>460</sup> Notwithstanding, Wolseley's still visible name asserts their status as war trophies and underscores the link between the soldier and these objects. Hitherto, that link has been maintained, but not interrogated, and very little was known about the objects themselves. However, the present research reinscribes Cetshwayo's presence with regard to these ten objects, revealing more fully their significance and adding to the small corpus of items that can be securely provenanced to Ulundi, the royal homestead of '[t]he

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<sup>457</sup> Which, following the capture of Cetshwayo, included the defeat of Sekhukhune, the Pedi king, in the Transvaal. In 1908, a Mrs Kingsford gave the BM a '[l]eather garment taken by Mr Alan E. Ede from the Kraal of Sekukuni' (accessions register). Registered into the Christy Collection, the beadwork apron (Af1908,-340) may well have been taken by Ede during this campaign against Sekhukhune. For some details of an Alan E. Ede active in SA during the late nineteenth century, see <http://www.rhodesia.co.za/Item.aspx?ItemID=26468> (last accessed 14/11/2016).

<sup>458</sup> It is possible that the objects were sent home at another time. For example, on 29 August 1879 Wolseley writes to his wife telling her that he 'shall send home a few of the claws [from Cetshwayo's 'lion claw' necklace] by Gifford [Wolseley's aide-de-camp, Edric Frederick Gifford] (Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 29/08/1879). In another letter written the same day, again to his wife, he mentions the shields and assegais 'taken from Cetewayo', intended for Queen Victoria, as well as the 'wooden pillow' for Lady Constance Stanley, which '[a]ll...go home by Gifford' (Hove WP 8/20-28, Wolseley to his wife, 29/08/1879).

<sup>459</sup> Based on my own experience of studying the SA collections first hand, these inscriptions are not characteristic of BM markings of the period or later and were almost certainly not carried out at the Museum. The inscriptions all appear to be done by the same hand; one particular to this group of objects.

<sup>460</sup> The erased inscriptions for objects five through 10 were examined under ultraviolet light and appear to read 'Coomassie 1873'. The erased inscription under object one was illegible, an adhesive label covers the erased portion of object two and objects three and four were examined with the naked eye.

Last Independent Zulu King' (Wood 1996: 62).<sup>461</sup> Undoubtedly, Wolseley would have considered these his treasures, but ultimately engagement with the archive has revealed they are Cetshwayo's.<sup>462</sup>

The Wolseley paper archive now largely resides at Hove Library after a rather complicated history, stemming apparently from discord between Wolseley's wife and daughter (Great Britain 1970: cover & 188-189). Owing to this falling out, his wife had consequently endeavoured 'to leave all the heirlooms in her possession outside the family' (Great Britain 1970: 187). The Royal United Service Institution, aside from receiving papers from other sources (Great Britain: 187), received from Wolseley's wife '[t]he *trophies*, medals and other relics of Wolseley which were presented to the Institution by his widow to make a Wolseley Room (opened 1920)' (Great Britain 1970: 188, emphasis mine), conceivably in an attempt to further secure his memory. These objects, which included a number of Zulu items (Leatham 1920: xxix-xxx, cat. nos. 7257-7260 & 7262), were later transferred to the National Army Museum (Great Britain 1970: 188).<sup>463</sup> The BM's Wolseley Collection should therefore be seen in light of this and as part of a greater archive, now dispersed.<sup>464</sup>

## **Part II**

### **2. Af1945,04. The Newnham Collection: Sibedula's, and (?)the blacksmith's wife's, necklaces**

To date, Af1945,04.24, a necklace comprising twenty-three carved, interlocking wooden beads and six worked antelope(?) horn pendants strung on what appear to be lengths of cotton cord, has existed under different guises (**Fig. 46**). It has been biographised at the Museum as Venda and most recently as Zulu. The archive, however, suggests a Tsonga provenance, but also a specific findspot and the identity of its former owner. It also entangles the object, and the collection from which it is drawn, in the question of land.

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<sup>461</sup> Writing in the catalogue of the exhibition titled *Zulu Treasures/Amagugu kaZulu* (1996), Gillian Berning asserts that 'few authenticated artefacts associated with the [Zulu] kings have survived' (Berning 1996: 43). She states that 'there is in museum collections a greater accumulation of artefacts related (allegedly) to Dingane and to Cetshwayo [than to other historical Zulu kings]' (Berning 1996: 44). However, she does not quantify this statement. The exhibition included at most 20 Zulu-made items associated with Cetshwayo and now housed in South African museum and private collections (see cat. nos. K11-K26). Of these, less than a handful of objects are said to have been taken from the King's homestead following the Battle of Ulundi.

<sup>462</sup> See annotation by Frances Wolseley regarding the Asante umbrella, 'a trophy brought home by my father...Like many of his so called "treasures", it was always a source of anxiety to my mother in our many moves' (Hove WP, Lady Wolseley to her husband, 13/05/1875).

<sup>463</sup> The collections there warrant research.

<sup>464</sup> The above-mentioned Zulu objects do not appear on the Museum's 'Online Collection', which features a selection of their holdings (<https://collection.nam.ac.uk>) (last accessed 27/09/2018).

## 2.1 Biography and backstory

The BM's exhibition *South Africa: The Art of a Nation* (27/10/2016—26/02/2017) presented the neck-ornament under discussion here as an *iziqu*, a necklace of the kind 'awarded for bravery in the Zulu kingdom' (exhibition label).<sup>465</sup> Almost two decades prior to this, the Royal Museum for Central Africa's *Legacies of Stone: Zimbabwe Past and Present* exhibited the piece as Venda, an identity it had assumed at the BM itself.<sup>466</sup> The root of this classification is traceable to the accessions register, which shows that in 1945 the Museum acquired from a Mrs F.J. Newnham of 47 Gerard Road, Harrow an '[e]thnographical series from S. Africa, chiefly from the Bavenda of N. Transvaal'. This identification was then carried across to Museum labels, which are still associated with the object.

The Newnham Collection at the BM includes axes, spears, staffs, vessels, spoons, various personal ornaments, two drums, and a number of potsherds (the last from Zimbabwe) (**Fig. 47a**). Of particular note are the personal ornaments, items 16-25, as more particulars appear in the 'Observations' column next to a number of these objects, namely items 17-22 (**Fig. 47b**).<sup>467</sup> First-hand inspection of the objects themselves reveals that these details are direct transcriptions of small labels, in Newnham's own hand, attached to each of these particular objects. Each gives a find-spot of the object and sometimes more information besides.<sup>468</sup> Item 24, the necklace with wooden beads, also has a tie-on label. However, curiously, the information it contains is not transcribed into the accessions register, unlike items 17-22. Its label reads: '[n]ecklace worn by Sibedula by permission of Chief Sikundu – (Tshangaan) – to typify having killed 3 enemies in battle. (Sikundukop)' (see **Fig. 46**). All of the object may once have had Newnham's labels, but only some survive.

To make better sense of these labels one needs to delve deeper into the archive in order to find out more about Mrs Newnham and how she came by the objects. Correspondence housed in the BM's Anthropology Library and Research Centre (ALRC) reveals that in May 1945 a Miss G.F. Newnham wrote to the Director of the Museum offering 'a collection of South African curios' that her late father, Major F.J. Newnham, had put together 'over a period of years ranging from 1895 to 1908' (GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-

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<sup>465</sup> The exhibition catalogue states that the necklace (cat. no. 40) is '[r]ecorded as Tsonga' (Giblin and Spring 2016: 150). This information was drawn from the Museum's collection database and/or its new additional label, information I added during the course of the present research.

<sup>466</sup> 5/11/1997—30/04/1998. See Dewey and de Palmenaer (eds) 1997: 244, cat. no. 57.

<sup>467</sup> Items 16 and 17 are currently unlocated.

<sup>468</sup> 'Sibasa's', 'Malietzie's', 'Palmary's' and 'Makuleka's' are mentioned as find-spots.

stamped 25/05/1945). In the same letter, Miss Newnham explains how (the late) T.A. Joyce had come to their house '[s]ome few years ago' to look at Inca pottery where the 'South African' collection came to his notice. It transpired that the Major had promised Joyce two objects for the BM, viz. the 'Kafir induna head ring' (Zulu headring, Af1945,04.25) and the 'wooden necklace with 3 pair horns, typifying 3 enemies killed in battle' (Sibedula's necklace, Af1945,04.24) (GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-stamped 25/05/1945). Miss Newnham's letter then goes on to list ten further objects '[t]o be offered to the British Museum'.<sup>469</sup>

The Keeper of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography, H.J. Braunholtz, followed up this letter with a visit to Miss Newnham and her mother, Mrs F. Newnham, at the family home in London. He evidently selected the above-mentioned objects along with another fifteen or so items, including beadwork.<sup>470</sup>

Miss Guenn F. Newnham had also approached the Maidstone Museum in Kent (now the Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery).<sup>471</sup> Newnham writes that she and her mother intend 'giving the main collection as a whole, in memory of my father, to the County Museum at Maidstone, as we are Kentish people' (GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-stamped 25/05/1945). Indeed, after the BM had made its selection, Maidstone received a '[c]ollection of big game heads and Ethnographical material collected by Major F.J. Newnham in South Africa' (Maidstone accessions register). The same memorial motive seems to have been behind the gift to the BM (see Miss Newnham's list accompanying her letter – GC G.F. Newnham to Braunholtz, 05/06/1945) as well as the gift of yet more objects, in 1953, this time to the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM).<sup>472</sup> The reason for gifting to a Kent museum is reasonably explained above (they were 'Kentish people') and it may well be the case that the BM and the PRM served to further secure the Major's memory and

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<sup>469</sup> Namely: a 'red Royal umzimmete stick' (?Af1945,04.8); '2 battle axes made specially by a native blacksmith at Palmay's, Zoutpansberg from iron smelted locally from the Iron Mountains' (?Af1945,04.2 and ?Af1945,04.4); '1 used battle axe with notches on handle' (?Af1945,04.3), '3 assegais & shield from Battle of Shangani. 1893.' (Af1945,04.5,6 and 7, there is no record of the shield at the BM); 'war drum from Mamobolo's location' (?Af1945,04.27) and 'dancing drum from Bavenda. Zoutpansberg' (?Af1945,04.28).

<sup>470</sup> The fragments of Zimbabwean pottery, Af1945,04.29-38, were sent later by Miss Newnham (see GC Miss G.F. Newnham to Braunholtz, 20/08/1945).

<sup>471</sup> Probably Guenn Frances Newnham, whose birth was registered in 1891 – see <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl> (last accessed 22/02/2017).

<sup>472</sup> See Report of the Curator of the PRM (Department of Ethnology) for the year ending 31/07/1953, <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/sma/index.php/museum-annual-reports/253-1952-53-annual-report.html> (last accessed 13/02/2017).

prestige by association (and it should be noted that Newnham appears to have been an Oxonian, explaining at least in part Miss and Mrs Newnham's choice).<sup>473</sup>

In her correspondence with all three institutions – in London, Kent and Oxford – Miss Newnham mentions particular photographs. These images, which presumably for sentimental reasons she and her mother 'could not part with' pertain, she explains to Braunholtz, to 'the 1907 Commission in the Zoutpansberg' (GC G.F. Newnham to Braunholtz, 05/06/1945). Documentation shows that Miss Newnham lent this 'book of photographs' to the BM, where a selection was made and copies were printed from negatives. These copied photographs, some 42 in total (Af,B32.1-42), are accompanied by a note (written on an envelope, in Braunholtz's hand), which reveals that the images were 'taken in 1906 (May to Sep) by F.J. Newnham, while on trek with N. Location Commission' (Pic Doc 37). It is these photographs, read alongside the objects themselves and together with documents held by Cambridge University Library (CUL), help to shed light on the Major's activities in SA and on the collection itself.

In 1923 Major Newnham gave the Royal Colonial Institute (now Royal Commonwealth Society) (RCS), whose library collections are today housed by the CUL), a dossier regarding 'Native Locations in the Transvaal'.<sup>474</sup> In his own words, Newnham compiled this information 'when acting as Secretary to the N.[ative] Commission of 1905-6' (RCMS 209, F.J. Newnham to the Librarian, 11/09/1923). The deposit was made 'in case the Council would care to file them for reference purposes' (RCMS 209, F.J. Newnham to the Librarian, 11/09/1923). This portfolio, RCMS 209, taken together with another file acquired by the RCS Library in 1939 (pers. comm. Rachel Rowe, 16/11/2016), RCMS 210, gives us a better understanding of what Newnham was doing in SA. (Facsimiles of RCMS 209 and RCMS 210 are housed at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (see A1375).)<sup>475</sup>

## **2.2 Newnham and the Transvaal Native Location Commission**

As far as can be currently traced, Frederick John Newnham (1860—1944) arrived in SA, as stated above, in 1894. At some stage Newnham was appointed to the Native Affairs Department in Johannesburg and in 1905 he was made Secretary of the Native Location

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<sup>473</sup> In January 1885 a Frederick John Newnham of Merton College obtained BA ('University Intelligence', *Times Digital Archive*) (last accessed 09/02/2015).

<sup>474</sup> Newnham had been a fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute since 1896 (Royal Colonial Institute 1896: 534).

<sup>475</sup> I consulted both collections during the course of research.

Commission.<sup>476</sup> According to Newnham, the Transvaal Government set up the Commission after reviewing the findings of the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903-5 because, in taking over from the South African Republic (Boer) authorities, it deemed that 'the Native Locations were in as unsatisfactory a state as possible' (RCMS 210: 16-17).<sup>477</sup> The Commission's task was 'to enquire into and report on the whole question of Native Locations in the Transvaal' (RCMS 210: 17), the Transvaal having become a British Colony following the South African War (1899—1902). Of primary concern was the vast area of unsurveyed land 'from the Sand river to the Portuguese border [now Mozambique]' (RCMS 210: 16), which was effectively barred to white settlers thanks to the natural defence afforded by the mountains of the Zoutpansberg [now Soutpansberg] (RCMS 210: 7). Consequently, the area was for all intents and purposes, 'a huge Native reserve' divided between 'the great Bavenda [Venda] and Tshangaan [Shangaan, or more properly, Tsonga] chiefs' (RCMS 210: 16). The Commission of 1903-5 had 'resolved' that land 'should be defined, delimited and reserved for the Natives' and that this should be done 'with a view to finality...and that thereafter no more land should be reserved for Native occupation' (RCMS 210: 17).

Newnham details how, in the absence of data, and prior to setting out for the field, he diligently 'prepared a précis of each location and claim, some 86 in all, with every available detail as the name, title and extent of the farms included in the locations and of many of the adjoining farms, collated and checked from the records of the four departments concerned' (RCMS 210: 18).<sup>478</sup> This then forms the basis of RCMS 209, the typescript having been annotated by Newnham with 'action taken in 1907' and notes 'under date 1910' referring to maps (not present) indicating areas approved by the Government (RCMS 209, F.J. Newnham to the Librarian, 11/09/1923).

In a covering letter Newnham reveals his dissatisfaction with the Commission, which he called a 'farce' (RCMS 210: 18), 'command[ing] neither confidence nor respect' (RCMS 210: 17). Not only was the Chairman the only member of the four-man Commission who, according to Newnham, bothered to read the précis, but to make matters worse he also resigned his position before the Commission even set foot in the field (RCMS 210: 17). This left Newnham with two colleagues: 'a magistrate anxious to enjoy a "cheap trip round the country"' and 'a surveyor, discovered with the necessary leisure, who was attached for

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<sup>476</sup> The Department moved its headquarters to Pretoria in June 1905 (Transvaal (Colony) 1905a: A. 3).

<sup>477</sup> The Transvaal was then a somewhat recently created British colony, following the South African War.

<sup>478</sup> 'Lands, Registrar of Deeds and Surveyor General' and presumably also Native Affairs (RCMS 209, F.J. Newnham to the Librarian, 11/09/1923).

the technical work' (RCMS 210: 18).<sup>479</sup> The circumstances were such that, although the Commission officially ran until May 1907 (RCMS 210: 19), Newnham resigned his post after just under 'three months...spent in traversing the north-eastern portion of the Zoutpansberg' (RCMS 210: 18).

Newnham was dissatisfied with the reports generated in the field and cites difficulties with the two other Commissioners. Their disposition, he says, 'led to strained relations with all with whom they came in contact, – the officials, the public and the Natives alike – in fact, an absolute boycott was created, [and] it became evident that no sound work could be done' (RCMS 210: 18). Newnham derides the Commission's 'picnic existence', as one newspaper put it (RCMS 210: 18), although, as the material at the BM, Maidstone and PRM suggest, Newnham himself found time to hunt and collect objects of material culture. Notwithstanding Newnham's evidently meticulous approach and careful eye for detail, one might start to wonder how the 'strained relations' played out in terms of the objects he acquired. Given his clear interest in objects, and relatively detailed information, he may have had knowledge of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (discussed in Chapter 2). The fact that Newnham was critical of the other two party members' disposition and conduct, and with the Commission itself, might suggest that he would have been perceived to have been the more sympathetic of the three in the eyes of the Africans with whom they had dealings, which possibly facilitated the collecting of objects.

Newnham's (distributed) collection suggests he was more inclined to acquire carved wooden objects, weapons and staffs, metalwork as well as old beads/beadwork and other personal ornaments. Of course it is not possible to ascertain whether this fairly broad interest is the collector's or reflective of what was made available to him, although one suspects it would have been determined by a combination of factors. Some objects are reportedly old (for example three strings of blue beads, probably Af1945,04.17, 19 and 2) and well used, such as an axe (probably Af1945,04.3). Others were purchased as is, such as a '[s]tring of blue beads and specimen of dark blue. Bought from an ufazi [*umfazi*, a married woman] at Makuleka's kraal' (PRM acc. no. 1953.6.5), while others were commissioned by Newnham himself (two battle axes now in the BM, probably Af1945,04.2 and 4). Considering the wider collection and extant documentation, it would seem that Newnham was drawn to woodwork and also to items that evoke trade, specifically beads<sup>480</sup> and metalwork such as 'Pallabora copper', ingots and smithed items.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> H.W. Struben was the Chairman and E.H. Hogge and W.E. Kolbe are recorded as Members of the Commission (Tranvaal (Colony): 1906: A. 24).

<sup>480</sup> Newnham's label on PRM 1953.6.5 suggests that the light blue beads are 'old Portuguese' while the dark blue are from the '[V]oortrekkers'.

Newnham was aware of past white contact in the area (as mentioned above) and, as Commissioner he will have appreciated the implications of mineral deposits on native locations. Where Newnham's object labels survive, they also reveal a concern for 'tribe', which was, of course, a tenet of the Commission. In parallel with his work, these tribes are classified under the name of the Native Location where particular objects were acquired. Usually, these place names are the personal names of chief (e.g. 'Sibasa's'). In the case of Sibedula's necklace, Newnham records the findspot as 'Sikundukop'.

This site, Sikundukop, corresponds with the location headed by Sikundu, and possibly named after him, a 'Tshangaan' [Tsonga] chief with 2,275 people under him recorded as living on Crown Land along the Pafuri River (now renamed, probably the Mutale River) (RCMS 209, Zoutpansberg B.9). Newnham's later red ink, handwritten annotations to this typescript document refer to 'Hist p.61'. This is probably a reference to the Transvaal Native Affairs Department's publication, *Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal* (Transvaal (Colony) 1905b), where page 61, in discussing the Tsonga, states 'there are no really powerful Shangaan chiefs to be found at the present day within the Transvaal'. According to a War Office, London publication of the same year:

Sikundu, who resides between Minga and Mvamba, is perhaps the most influential Shangaan next to Minga. The above-mentioned chiefs are of some note, and respected by the Shangaans, but the tribal system is not followed by these people, each small clan recognising only its own Induna or headman as its chief (Great Britain 1905: 65).

In document B.9, one of Newnham's annotations states that some 17 years prior Sikundu 'broke away' from Minga ('Mhinga' in Newnham's note). Newnham's further handwritten annotations on the same document, this time in black ink and apparently dating to 1910, indicate that Sikundu was, as a consequence of the Commission's findings, 'awarded [land] near Tshikundu Kop'.<sup>482</sup> What is unclear is when Newnham would have labelled Sibedula's necklace as coming from 'Sikundukop', a *kop* (hill) near Tshikundu. This last mentioned annotation (dating to 1910 at the earliest) on document B.9 suggests that it might have been done sometime after he was in the field. Whether Newnham collected the object in Tshikundu or elsewhere in the former Zoutpansberg District of the Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo province) is perhaps of secondary importance. Of greater

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<sup>481</sup> See Miss Newnham's list at the BM (see Af1945,04.10) and also at Maidstone (object unlocated).

<sup>482</sup> Sikundu's location ('B.9') was at the time Newnham collated the information, awaiting consideration.



significance is the fact that Newnham, on his label for the object, recorded that it was 'worn by Sibedula by permission of Chief Sikundu – (Tshangaan) – to typify having killed 3 enemies in battle'.

Intriguingly, the Pictorial Collection in the ALRC houses a photograph of four men (Af,B32.33) (**Fig. 48**), among its copies of Newnham's own field photographs (now scrambled). It shows two older African men seated on the ground flanked to the left by a younger, standing African man and, to the right, by a white man sitting in a chair, somewhat to the foreground. The white man is wearing a pith helmet and confidently, if a little casually, holds paperwork and writing implement(s). The seated men wear greatcoats and sport beards as well as thick headrings, indicative of their seniority and status, whereas the younger man, who is standing, appears to be clean-shaven and is without a headring. The inscription on the reverse, which would have been transcribed, somewhat enigmatically reads: '5 (47) S.N. Comt C. Mavsory[?]. Shikundu'. 'Mavsory' may well be a reference to the white man, whose face is mostly shaded in this image but who seems to appear in a number of other Newnham photographs and who probably was a member of the Commission. The reference to 'Shikundu', is probably to the chief, most likely one of the seated *indunas* (headmen, appointed officials), and possibly also his location where this photograph was taken. In studying the photograph carefully, it is just about possible to make out that the younger man, at left, is wearing a necklace similar to Sibedula's. It is conceivable that this person is in fact Sibedula, shown wearing his necklace (see **Fig. 48**).

Necklaces of this particular type of construction are rare in collections (i.e. of short, almost choker length and featuring several centrally placed pendants). Brighton Museum and Art Gallery houses a related, provenanced piece (acc. no. R2778/292) –composed of interlocking wooden beads suspended with two small (uncarved) antelope horns– which, according to an old label, is illustrated in William Lucas Distant's *A Naturalist in the Transvaal* (1892) (**Fig. 49**).<sup>483</sup> Little further is known about the Brighton necklace other than that it came to the Museum from Frederick William Lucas, an avid secondary collector.<sup>484</sup> It is possible that Lucas acquired the necklace directly from its field collector, likely Distant himself (possibly a relation), or from the dealer Miss Eva Cutter (later known as Mrs W.D. Webster). The BM's A.W. Franks gave a pair of initiation figures, a male and a female, to the BM (Af,+.6190 and Af,+.6191) (see **Fig. 38**). The figures' registration slips

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<sup>483</sup> It is no.2 in the plate between pp 102 and 103 entitled 'ARTS AND INDUSTRIES IN THE SPELONKEN'.

<sup>484</sup> Lucas had his own private museum. See <http://brightonmuseums.org.uk/discover/2011/05/12/frederick-william-lucas-fls-fzs-1842-1932/> (last accessed 20/02/2017).

show that Franks had obtained the pair from Cutter and that he presented them to the Museum in 1893, the year after they appeared as illustrations of 'Magwamba Carvings' in *Distant* (1892: 114) in addition to the 'Magwamba necklace' and other objects (1892: opposite 102). Information pertaining to the Brighton item, and now to the BM piece, suggests that this type of necklace was probably in use among Xitsonga-speakers around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

According to the *Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal* (1905b), '[t]he tribes known as Shangaans, Ba-Tsonga or Ama-Thonga, Ma-Gwamba...or Knobneuzen, are said to belong to one race' (Transvaal Native Affairs Department 1905: 59).<sup>485</sup> As Newnham will have observed some fourteen or so years later, *Distant* records that the Tsonga '[did] not live together in large numbers, but [had] small scattered kraals consisting of a few huts' (1892: 100-101), presumably as a result of the previous government's policy of 'encourag[ing] petty Shangaan chiefs to set up for themselves' (Transvaal Native Affairs Department 1905: 61).

The mineral and other natural resources of the area did not fail to strike Newnham, who, like *Distant* before him and other contemporary travellers in that part of the country, seemed to be fascinated with the blacksmith's art.<sup>486</sup> He collected several smithed objects, including '2 battle axes made to order' (probably Af1945,04.2 and Af1945,04.4 – see Miss Newnham's list accompanying her letter – GC G.F. Newnham to Braunholtz, 05/06/1945) and Af1945,04.21, a 'Bavenda' glass bead necklace with '[c]harms made of iron smelted by natives' (see **Fig. 47a**). Newnham's label further indicates that these 'charms' were 'made by [a] blacksmith at [a] kraal near Palmary's' and that the beads, in shades of green and blue, are 'old'. 'Palmary's' is possibly a reference to the (probably trading) '[s]tores of Mr. Palmary, Palmaryville', Palmaryville today being part of Thohoyandou.<sup>487</sup> While we may not as yet know more about this particular 'kraal', two of Newnham's photographs, Af,B32.12 and Af,B32.17, provide further information. Af,B32.12 is inscribed on the reverse as follows: '95 (87) Native blacksmith, with bellows – Nr. [near] M. Palenary's' [sic] and the back of Af,B32.17 is inscribed: '96 (88) His wife and friends (see 95(87))'. The blacksmith photograph is difficult to read (its subjects are shown from behind and are in shadow), but the corresponding photograph of the blacksmith's wife and party is clearer (**Fig. 50**). It shows an infant and four women. The women are wearing striped wraps and necklaces. While it is not possible to make out much detail with any

<sup>485</sup> See Nettleton (1991: 35) for discussion on the Magwamba.

<sup>486</sup> See for example Wessmann (1908).

<sup>487</sup> Palmaryville is given as an 'East Zoutpansberg' polling station (*Rand Daily Mail* 20/02/1907: 3).

certainty, the central sitter, who faces the camera straight on, may be wearing a necklace similar to the object under discussion, if not the very item itself.

The charms that form part of the necklace consist of four hoops, in two pairs, flanking two ornaments, each hooped and featuring a single elongated, pendant element. In the first anthropological monograph on the subject of the Venda people, Hugh Stayt's *The Bavenda* (1931) identifies such metal rings as '*malembe*' (meaning 'hoes'). According to Stayt, '[e]very woman, after her death, may have a small iron ring, made from an old Venda hoe, dedicated to her for the habitation of her spirit' (1931: 247).<sup>488</sup> Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria, houses related amulets, including of the *malembe* and *dgembe* types (the second being the hoop of the sort issuing a single pendant), of which the Ditsong accessions register states 'metal beads are connected to the ancestral spirits and are worn in their memory'.<sup>489</sup> The glass beads that also make up the necklace are sacred, too. These heirlooms, varying in hue from shades of blue to green, are known as *Vhulungu ha Maḍi*, or 'Beads of the Water' (see Chapter 3). According to Clarence van Riet Lowe, they are 'highly prized among the Venda who use them in ceremonies connected with ancestor worship' (1937: 368). Citing Stayt, van Riet Lowe states that these small, translucent cane beads are 'generally only worn by the wives of important men and women of the royal family' (1937: 367).

Both necklaces, then, – Sibedula's and that which possibly belonged to the blacksmith near Palmary's wife – can be described as prestige items, which undoubtedly appealed to Newnham.<sup>490</sup> It is unlikely that a more 'ordinary' white person would have been allowed to have these objects (assuming that they were exchanged), which might have to do with Newnham's perceived importance and authority as a government representative. There may have been an element of coercion in any transaction, although equally the objects' previous owners, the agents, might have been exchanging them in a gesture of reciprocity.

Authenticity, too, seems to have been of concern to the Major. A case in point is his dislike for a 'sporan' (offered to the PRM), which he probably 'just bought, on first going out [to SA] in 1894' and considered the 'usual thing the tyro [novice] always buys' (PRM G.F.

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<sup>488</sup> I am grateful to Johnny van Schalkwyk for directing me to this reference in Stayt.

<sup>489</sup> Translation from the original Afrikaans my own. These objects, acc. nos. ET. 1935/754 and ET. 1935/757, were acquired in 1935 from former staff member Dr W.T.H. Beukes, who had conducted fieldwork in the Soutpansberg at around that time.

<sup>490</sup> Arguably the ultimate prize in Newnham's collection was a pair of tongs, Maidstone temp acc. no. 2014.690, 'Chief Wankie's tongs for lighting his pipe. Zambesi 1895' (Maidstone 'List of South African curios').

Newnham 'List of native South African curios collected by F.J. Newnham, between 1894 and 1907').

Miss Newnham sums up her father's motives for wanting to preserve what she, in writing to all three museums (the BM, Maidstone and PRM), refers to as 'curios', saying:

He was most desirous that this collection should be preserved, as it is genuine native work, having in some cases been made under his eye, & in any case picked up in then little-known localities, & one or two items are unique (Maidstone Museum, Miss G.F. Newnham to the Curator [A.J. Golding], 03/11/1944).

She also explains how the collection, which had been on display in the family home was almost destroyed during the Second World War.<sup>491</sup> She writes 'we were bombed out' but '[t]he collection.. escaped damage' (GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-stamped 25/05/1945).

### **2.3 Regarding the archive**

The Newnham Collection at the BM, like any archive, is fragmentary and fragmented, witnessed, for example, by the Newnham photographs housed by the Pictorial Collection. Not only are they a selection, but Newnham's own ordering and numbering, their *respect des fonds* as it were, has been ignored and superseded by new numbers, which effectively scramble them. By (re)assembling them according to Newnham's system I began to make sense of them and connect them to the objects in the collection, which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been attempted before. Newnham's greater SA collection is also now dispersed – from objects and attendant documentation in London, Kent and Oxford to pertinent material in Cambridge and elsewhere. Letters written by Miss Newnham speak to this, as well as to the fortuitous, at times even precarious, existence of the archive. Indeed, her father's collection, as detailed above, was almost destroyed before it was lodged with the BM. Miss Newnham's correspondence also hints at the missing, lost, or possibly hidden archive. Not only did she and her mother hold onto the discussed photograph album (as mentioned, the BM made reprints of only some of the photographs it contained), but also there was possibly other withheld material. For example, Miss Newnham mentions 'notes' her father made regarding his collection, but at no point have such documents by the Major or written in his distinctive hand come to light (GC letter from Miss G.F. Newnham, BM date-stamped 25/05/1945). In addition to the

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<sup>491</sup> At some point 'the assegais etc took up about 16' of hallway, & the rest of the stuff was in a room about 14' x 10" (Maidstone Museum, Miss G.F. Newnham to the Curator, 03/11/1944).

BM, Maidstone and the PRM, as well as the archives in SA already mentioned, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew also house Newnham material.<sup>492</sup>

Thinking about the Newnham Collection as archive allows us to understand the objects as both witness and party to history. Writing to Maidstone some years after the bequest, Miss Newnham says: 'it is an important collection in its small way. It is closely dated and in many cases the tribe is known and my father just caught the end of the native-fashioned work' (Maidstone Museum Miss G.F. Newnham to the Curator [L.R.A. Grove], 18/08/1955). This 'closely dated' collection is indeed highly significant, not least because it shares a history with the Native Location Commission in the Transvaal, which in its full extent ran from 1905 to 1907. The findings of the Commission would ultimately inform the Natives Land Act of 1913, where 'the same areas demarcated in 1907 for blacks in the Transvaal were set aside' (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 226). The Act assigned most of the land in SA to the white population and it effectively set the scene for the apartheid homeland system, consequences of which are still being dealt with today.

Although critical of the Commission itself, and some white attitudes to 'native' land, Newnham nevertheless supported white settlement in the Transvaal Colony, particularly in the Zoutpansberg and Waterberg districts he had visited.<sup>493</sup> Documents housed by the National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (NASA) show that on the eve of Union, Newnham wrote from the UK as a representative of the Labour Exchange in Dover looking to set up an officially-endorsed programme encouraging British emigration to the Transvaal (see NASA TAD 883 G5581). After resigning from the Native Location Commission, Newnham had stayed on in the Transvaal Native Affairs Department for the next year or so (see NASA LD 748 AG2610/04) before returning to the UK in 1908 following 14 years in SA.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Kew appears to house a single letter from Newnham where he discusses plants from the Limpopo area (Kew Director's Correspondence Vol. 183/735, F.J. Newnham to Sir A.W. Hill, 11/11/1924). The RGS(IBG) material appears to pertain to Newnham's time in what is present-day Zimbabwe in 1895 (see <https://rgs.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl>) (last accessed 27/09/2018), where he also collected the aforementioned potsherds.

<sup>493</sup> For example, Newnham critiqued the notion that 'the Natives...have "pick out the eyes" of the country' and had vast tracts of land' (RCMS 210: 1). He also pointed out the various kinds of African land ownership that were then in place and the fact that they often would be asked to pay more for the same piece of land than whites (RCMS: 3).

<sup>494</sup> Items relating other areas Newnham visited would also benefit from further research, particularly his 'Zulu' material.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at two collections assembled in SA by two British colonial figures almost three decades apart in different parts of the country, under different circumstances and apparently governed by different motives and practices. Both figures of authority, they managed to obtain significant objects but through differing means. Whereas Wolseley may have obtained his objects through another party, for example from one or more of his men (and/or possibly with the help of Cetshwayo's manservants), Newnham is likely to have obtained objects directly from Africans with whom he had encounters. For Wolseley, all that seemed to matter was the fact that the objects were impressive and could be associated with Cetshwayo, while Newnham took pains to label his objects, possibly in the field, noting details such as location.

The present research, in treating the collections as archive, has relocated objects historically while re-establishing links between them and named African individuals.

## **Chapter 5. (?)Anthropological collecting: The Braunholtz and Powell-Cotton collections**

This chapter looks at two case studies that shed further light on African involvement in the formation of the SA collections at the BM. It considers what might be termed more ‘professionally’ collected assemblages, for both field-collectors would have had limited opportunity to professional training at the time – one put together by the BM’s own Hermann Justus Braunholtz in 1929 during his visit to SA that year and another, with some guidance from Braunholtz, by Antoinette Powell-Cotton (whose father had established his own museum) during a hunting expedition to Zululand in 1935.

The two collections discussed here were assembled within a few years of one another, against the backdrop of a global economic downturn that was making itself felt in SA and shortly before the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936. The objects in question were field-collected in the vicinity of rural areas that would later, under the apartheid regime, become the respective black ‘homelands’ of Venda and KwaZulu. These case studies reveal a number of long forgotten African individuals connected to the collections whose voices have all but been lost.

### ***Part I***

#### **1. Af1930,0128. The Sinthumule presentation and the British Museum’s H.J. Braunholtz<sup>495</sup>**

On a fine, mild Soutpansberg winter’s day in August 1929, the BM’s H.J. Braunholtz (**Fig. 51**) visited Chief Sinthumule’s location on the outskirts of Louis Trichardt in the Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo province) (**Fig. 52**). During this brief encounter, Braunholtz met the Western Venda chief and his family who presented a group of objects to the Museum. Braunholtz was the first, and, for the period under consideration, the only BM curator to conduct fieldwork in SA, which he ‘tacked on to his attendance at the British Association’s

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<sup>495</sup> Here I follow modern orthography for the name ‘Sinthumule’, possibly first recorded by South African government ethnologist Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo (see van Warmelo 1935: 47 & 118), which appears to be currently favoured — see, for example, Braun (2015) and Luonde Vhavenda History (<https://luonde.co.za>) (last accessed 06/06/2017). The Luonde website ‘responds to the dearth of historical work on Venda which became obvious to Pfanani Lishivha, a South African business executive who researched and funded the entire project. He noticed the historical literature available for examination in the 1990s almost always contained serious flaws and outright distortions’. Pfanani’s website is, according to Akil Cornelius, a PhD candidate at Michigan State University, the most widely referenced by ‘Venda speaking South Africans in particular’, who use Facebook as a preferred public history platform (<https://cornel84.wordpress.com/2014/05/03/venda-computer-family-4/#comments>) (last accessed 03/10/2018). For further information on Cornelius, see <http://history.msu.edu/people/graduate-students/akil-cornelius/> (last accessed 03/10/2018).

South African meeting' (Wilson 2002: 227).<sup>496</sup> Despite the fact that Braunholtz personally collected the objects, relatively little was recorded in the Museum accessions register, where the collection is designated as his gift to the Museum, effectively effacing Sinthumule and his family. In treating the collection as archive, and by reading it alongside other pertinent archival material at the Museum – viz. field photographs that Braunholtz took and other items of documentation, namely labels, accessions register entries and correspondence – and to a limited extent elsewhere, it is possible to recover some of its character as presentation and to place it within a specific historical moment.

Here, I will consider why Braunholtz collected, where, and what he did. There will also be a discussion of the objects themselves and their associated documentation at the Museum, as well as of Sinthumule and the circumstances surrounding the acquisition. Additionally, attention will be given to Braunholtz's own writing on the subject of field-collecting in order to understand why, if such specific collection details were known, as they indeed were, this information is not foregrounded as one might expect by today's standards.

### **1.1 The British Association for the Advancement of Science's South African Meeting, 1929: H.J. Braunholtz visits South Africa**

From 22 July – 3 August 1929, the British Association for the Advancement of Science (hereafter BAAS) held its 79<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in SA by invitation of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, 'with the full support of the Government of the Union of South Africa' (BAAS 1930a: xxxvi).<sup>497</sup> The first session took place in Cape Town from 23–25 July, followed by a session in Johannesburg from 31 July–3 August. During these sessions delegates presented papers and took advantage of the various activities and excursions on offer, including a visit to Kimberley, en route to Johannesburg, where they were the guests of De Beers Consolidated Mines (BAAS 1930a: xxxviii). Following proceedings in Johannesburg, members could avail themselves of one of four tours laid on by the South African Railways, which went beyond the Union, taking in the Victoria Falls. In total, the South Africans hosted some 535 overseas members from across the BAAS's 13 'Sections' (BAAS 1930a: xxxvi), of which anthropology, 'Section H',

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<sup>496</sup> Wilson states that Braunholtz collected 'Stone Age material', but does not mention ethnographic objects (Wilson 2002: 227). The next BM curator of African material to collect in SA would be Chris Spring during the 2000s, although Andrew Oddy, Keeper within the Department of Conservation, conducted archaeological fieldwork in SA in the 1980s, collecting sherds from Mapungubwe (Af1984,03.) and from the Hans Merensky Nature Reserve (Af1996,06.) (see footnote on page 116 of this thesis).

<sup>497</sup> This was the second BAAS meeting to be held in SA, the first having taken place in 1905, and, until then, seemingly only the third occasion that such a meeting had taken place off British soil.



was one.<sup>498</sup>

On 28 June 1929 BM curator, H.J. Braunholtz boarded *SS Kenilworth Castle* (Braunholtz 1954: 39), bound from Southampton to Cape Town. While Braunholtz was not to know it at the time, he would spend some four months away from the Museum, roughly eight weeks of which in SA. Braunholtz was travelling to SA in order to attend the BAAS meeting, specifically the sessions of 'SECTION H. — ANTHROPOLOGY.' (e.g. BAAS 1930a: 153). Judging by the titles of the papers given, rock art and archaeology were very much the focus of these sessions and Henry Balfour's presidential address to this section, entitled *South Africa's Contribution to Prehistoric Archaeology*, was no exception.<sup>499</sup> Balfour, a noted archaeologist and curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM), was accommodated in Cape Town by the local sectional secretary, Professor T.T. Barnard, and his wife. The Barnards also hosted Braunholtz, who had arrived ahead of Balfour, and the two curators would be sometime travel companions in SA.

Balfour mentions Braunholtz numerous times in his diary, now part of the PRM Manuscript Collections (hereafter PRM MC), which includes a number of Braunholtz's photographs taken during the trip.<sup>500</sup> On at least two occasions during their stay in Cape Town, Balfour records having visited sites with Braunholtz and others, where they 'hunted' for stone implements (PRM MC, Balfour Papers, Box 2, Item 2, Diary of a trip to South and East Africa, 1929, 20 & 21/07/1929: 24 & 26).<sup>501</sup> Letters Braunholtz sent back home to T.A. Joyce, who, as Deputy Keeper, was his senior colleague in the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography, reveal the extent of his own collecting of archaeological material, some secondary, but mostly at first hand in the field.<sup>502</sup> In his correspondence, Braunholtz describes 'having a busy time' generally (see for example GC H.J. Braunholtz to T.A. Joyce, 19/07/1929) and having 'got through quite a lot of hard work in the stone collecting business' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to T.A. Joyce, 29/07/1929). Braunholtz had ample opportunity to collect in SA, and collect he did. He collected ahead of the Cape Town

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<sup>498</sup> Sections, or disciplines, ranged from Agriculture to Zoology, to Botany, Chemistry, Engineering, and Anthropology, *inter alia*.

<sup>499</sup> Braunholtz did not give a paper. Here I use the term 'rock art', although it was not employed at the time (e.g. on 2 August Miss (Maria) Wilman gave a paper entitled 'Bushman Rock Engravings' (BAAS 1930a: 369)).

<sup>500</sup> PRM MC Balfour Papers, 'Notebook I: South & East Africa – 1929 –' (inscription on spine).

<sup>501</sup> For an unpaginated transcription of Balfour's notebook, see <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/manuscripts/balfourdiaries1929.html> (last accessed 28/10/2016). I am grateful to Philip Grover for assistance with page numbers.

<sup>502</sup> Braunholtz's visit resulted in a number of numerically large gifts of archaeology to the Museum, including from Colonel W.E. Hardy, who accompanied the party to 'his' archaeological site on the Cape Flats on 20 July (PRM MC, Balfour Papers, Box 2, Item 2, Diary of a trip to South and East Africa, 1929, 20/07/1929: 24).

session and during Section H's archaeological excursion to Kimberley prior to the Johannesburg session. Following the meetings, he also collected in what is now Zimbabwe and during an independently arranged fortnight's archaeology excursion to the Orange Free State and Basotholand (today's Free State and Lesotho), prior to heading off to East Africa and then finally returning home, via Egypt, in late October.

## 1.2 The collection/archive

The extent of the archive of manuscripts and photographs pertaining to this collection is, as far as is presently known and here described, confined almost entirely to the BM, although attempts have been made to locate Brauholtz material elsewhere, including with the family.<sup>503</sup> The BM material is mainly located within various parts of the ALRC's subterranean archives, and includes General Correspondence (GC), Brauholtz Papers (BP) and the Pictorial Collection, all drawn on here. Additional, supporting information, specifically books and articles published around the time of Brauholtz's visit, is also held by the ALRC and can also be found elsewhere.

Although the collection currently under consideration is small, by the end of his peregrination in Southern and East Africa, Brauholtz had at various intervals dispatched, 'carriage forward' to the BM a staggering '25 or 26 cases' full of objects, mainly archaeological (GC H.J. Brauholtz to T.A. Joyce, 19/10/1929). Such was the scale of Brauholtz's collecting that he cautions Joyce 'it would be best to leave the unpacking till my return' and quips that in order to accommodate all the material '[w]e shall require another Departmental wing!' (GC H.J. Brauholtz to T.A. Joyce, 27/09/1929). In the months following his return, Brauholtz, no doubt with assistance, set about unpacking the cases and selecting that which was desired for the collections – as evidently, Brauholtz did not present all his acquisitions to the BM. For example, in 1930 a group of objects,

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<sup>503</sup> With the exception of the PRM (as mentioned), which houses Balfour's dairy that includes some of Brauholtz's photographs. Brauholtz's 'further papers and photographs c1890-1943 (MS Add. 9845)' housed at Cambridge University Library (CUL) are incomplete and do not include material pertaining to the year 1929 (pers. comm. Michelle Barnes, 17/11/2016). See <https://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?submit=Go&search=Hermann+Justus+Brauholtz> (last accessed 16/11/2016). Carola Scupham, for whom I am grateful to Paul Basu for putting me in touch, informed me that she has a collection of her late father's diaries, but not for the year 1929. Unfortunately, she is not in possession of other papers from Brauholtz's working life (pers. comm. 22/10/2016). The Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) seemed like another likely repository for potential Brauholtz papers, but a research visit revealed that they possess no such holdings (pers. comm. Sarah Walpole, 06/09/2017), although the RAI was able to provide his 1940 census return for their census of anthropologists for the World War II effort (RAI A71/43). See <https://www.therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/archive-contents/census-of-british-anthropologists-a71> (last accessed 03/10/2018). Additionally, I consulted material pertaining to the 1929 BAAS meeting held by the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (AF1211 Ad; Ak1; Ak2).

including a copper rod (*lerale*) (Af1930,0205.1) from the Northern Transvaal, collected by Braunholtz during his 1929 trip were sold to the Museum the following year by collector Captain A.W.F. Fuller.<sup>504</sup>

As the registration numbering – Af1930,0128. – for the collection under discussion suggests, the material was accessioned around January 1930. In an official letter dated to that month, the BM Director and Principal Librarian thanks Braunholtz for his gift to the Museum of '[a] large series of stone implements collected from various sites...in South Africa ; also, ethnographical series from various tribes in the Northern Transvaal and Kenya Colony' (BP F.G. Kenyon to H.J. Braunholtz, 31/01/1930).

This, Braunholtz's only recorded acquisition of ethnography while in the Union, was made en route north during a car journey with two fellow BAAS members, Oxford ancient history professor, John Linton Myres (1869—1954) and George Reginald Carline (1885—1932), Keeper at Bankfield Museum, Yorkshire.<sup>505</sup> In seemingly Braunholtz's only BM narrative account of the event, written on a postcard to Joyce, he remarks '[m]otored up to [Great] Zimbabwe from Pietersburg through fine country', adding briefly '[v]isited Senthimula's [sic] (BaVenda) location near Louis Trichardt, & secured a few nice old "pieces"' (GC H.J. Braunholtz to T.A. Joyce, 13/08/1929) (**Fig. 53**).

The accessions register records that Braunholtz gave eight 'Bavenda' (Venda) objects to the Museum, viz. two pyro-decorated gourd vessels, a wooden porridge spoon and stirrer, a lidded basket, two earthenware pots and a piece of graphite for burnishing such pots (Af1930,0128.1-7 and 12) (**Fig. 54**).<sup>506</sup> The vernacular term is given for a number of these items in the 'Observations' column. Against the first item, a '[g]ourd porridge bowl' (Af1930,0128.1), is written 'Senthumula's [sic] location N Transvaal, belonged to the chiefs [sic] family'. Judging by the entry, it is unclear as to whether this statement pertains solely to the first item or to all eight Venda pieces. (The Museum's database, which

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<sup>504</sup> The other items purchased from Fuller as part of this collection similarly stem from Braunholtz's trip — viz. a number SA archaeological items (all now with BEP) as well as objects from Zanzibar and Kenya. As noted in the accessions register, the *lerale* is illustrated in (Major) Tudor G. Trevor's article (1930: Plate XII, Fig. 2.A). Braunholtz appears to have edited this edition, and indeed was honorary editor of the *JRAI* between 1926–1935 (pers. comm. Sarah Walpole, 06/09/2017). A photograph of Plate XII, Fig. 2 is housed in the Pictorial Collection (Af,B80.15).

<sup>505</sup> For biographical details on both, see Alison Petch <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-John-Linton-Myres.html> and <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-George-Reginald-Carline.html> (last accessed 03/10/2018).

<sup>506</sup> A further item, a 'Bechuana' necklace (accessions register), may have been acquired in SA at the time (Af1930,0128.65).

informs its collection online offering, in turn lacks any reference to Sinthumule.)<sup>507</sup> However, when read alongside other documentation, it becomes apparent that all eight can be provenanced to Sinthumule and his family. Of the objects themselves, three items still bear annotations, which, unlike the above-mentioned accessions register entries, were almost certainly written by Braunholtz himself. The first of these, the smaller of the two gourd 'bowls' or vessels (Af1930,0128.2), and the second, the porridge spoon (Af1930,0128.3), are both inscribed in pencil on the underside. On the gourd is written 'BAVENDA./ for beer.' and on the spoon 'SENTHIMULA'S [? Partly illegible] LOCN. BAVENDA'. The third object, a lidded basket (Af1930,0128.5a-b), is attached with a small, round tag, which reads: 'Ba-Venda. Senthimula's location/ near Louis Trichardt./ N. Transvaal/ Given by H.J.B/ 1930'. Museum labels subsequently attached to these eight objects repeat the identification of the objects as Venda and as coming from the Northern Transvaal, rather than giving more specific provenance.<sup>508</sup> A contributing factor, then, to the relatively poorly documented collection, so far as the accessions register is concerned, is the apparent fact that Braunholtz entrusted the registration and inscription into the register to an assistant within the department.

Fortunately for us, Braunholtz employed the use of a camera during his 1929 tour and the Pictorial Collection within the ALRC houses photographs that he took.<sup>509</sup> Some of these photographic prints are to be found in an album Braunholtz compiled and annotated to document his SA trip, now known as *Africa Album 1* (Af,A1).<sup>510</sup> Others, namely select enlargements<sup>511</sup> and some unnumbered photographs, yet to be location coded,<sup>512</sup> are kept in boxes.<sup>513</sup> Together, these distributed photographs shed light on Braunholtz's trip to SA. The album and two of the loose photographs, both unnumbered, further illuminate Braunholtz's visit to Sinthumule. We learn from the album that Braunholtz and his companions stopped at this chief's location on 8 August. Here Braunholtz witnessed the

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<sup>507</sup> Although the current project entailed enriching information on the Museum's database, it was beyond the scope of that fieldwork to include such detailed information.

<sup>508</sup> Items 1-3, 5 and 12 all still attached each with a, probably mid-twentieth century, buff luggage-label with the printed initials 'E.R.' and annotated 'S.Af/ N. Transvaal/ Bavenda tribe'. Items 4, 6 and 7 no longer attached with buff labels, but (later) white labels are annotated variously with transcriptions along the lines of the older labels (e.g. object 7's label reads: 'S. Africa/ Bavenda'). For examples of these kinds of labels, see **Fig. 20**.

<sup>509</sup> The Pictorial Collection is physically located in a storeroom below the ALRC and constitutes part of its holdings.

<sup>510</sup> These annotations take the form of captions written on slips of paper stuck into the album and acting as interleaving pages.

<sup>511</sup> In Africa Box 92 (Af,B92).

<sup>512</sup> As at 2015, the time of the research.

<sup>513</sup> The ALRC houses further unnumbered Braunholtz photographs in its archives, some stored inside an envelope and others in a box. As of 2015 these were kept in the archives room rather than with the rest of the photographs in the Pictorial Collection storeroom.

chief 'trying a civil case' in a dispute over cattle.<sup>514</sup> A sequence of photographs in the album apparently shows the proceedings taking place in the *khoro*, the Tshivenda term for a meeting space (Tshiguvho 2008: 68) (**Fig. 55**).<sup>515</sup> A group of men can be seen seated on the ground in a semi-circle '[p]laintiff on [the] left, defendant on right' with Sinthumule opposite, facing them and seated on a chair of European style.<sup>516</sup> One photograph shows a group of children making an appearance as onlookers at some point during the hearing.<sup>517</sup> As well as other photographs showing various scenes and further children, Braunholtz also captured a conversation taking place between his travel companion, Myres and a venerable '[o]ld BaVenda man' (see **Fig. 55**).<sup>518</sup>

The album has a curious omission, an absence that suggests a presence. A caption, previously numbered '41' or '42', the figure obscured through crossing out, reads '[o]ne of Senthumule's wives & family, offering decorated gourd vessel, etc; now in the B.M.' (**Fig. 56**).<sup>519</sup> In the photograph's place is another photograph from a different sequence.<sup>520</sup> It is possible that the original photograph fell out or was removed at some point, only to be substituted with a photograph taken almost a month later elsewhere in SA. Fortunately, another print of probably this very same image exists. The reverse of this (unnumbered) photograph's folder is inscribed, in Braunholtz's hand: '...SENTHUMULE's Senthumula's [?] location... S's wife & children, presenting gourd & baskets to the B.M...' (**Fig. 57**). Here we see a kneeling woman shown in profile, aside from her face, which is turned to look at the camera. She is wearing a blanket, beads and armlets and behind her a group of children, some seated and others kneeling, seem to emulate her gesture. The woman is in fact performing the polite *u losha*, signalling that she is showing respect, as are the children who accompany her. (For a description of this attitude of genuflection, see Stayt (1931: 157-158), Tyrrell (1976: 53), Tshiguvho (2008: 68) as well as Af1936,0314.15, a gourd in the SA collections (**Fig. 58**.) Etiquette requires that she 'kneel when giving' (Stayt 1931: 157). Her right hand rests on her leg and her left hand is placed on the decorated gourd vessel sitting in front of her, now BM number Af1930,0128.1 (see **Fig. 57**). Protruding from the gourd are what appear to be the handles of a porridge spoon and

<sup>514</sup> Af,A1, photographs 45-48, caption insert between pages 12 and 13.

<sup>515</sup> Af,A1.45-48.

<sup>516</sup> Af,A1, photographs 45-48, caption insert between pages 12 and 13.

<sup>517</sup> Af,A1.48.

<sup>518</sup> See Af,A1.49. This was possibly with the aid of an interpreter, as the presence of a third person in the photograph might suggest.

<sup>519</sup> Af,A1, insert between pages 10 and 11.

<sup>520</sup> The replacement photograph shows '14 span ox team at Vereeniging [taken on] 6.9.29', the caption is not in Braunholtz's hand.

stirrer, BM numbers Af1930,0128.3 and Af1930,0128.4 respectively (see **Fig. 57**).<sup>521</sup>

Another, more candid, photograph from the presentation sequence, was to be found among a batch of unregistered photographs located in a separate area of the Pictorial Collection. This particular print, kept inside a Kodak film wallet, labelled once again in Braunholtz's hand: '[r]ejects' and 'BaVenda. Senthimula's location...', is inscribed on the reverse: 'BaVenda. Senthimula's locn. 9.m. w. [9 miles west] of Louis Trichardt' (**Fig. 59**).<sup>522</sup> The out-take image itself again shows the chief's children and wife, but this time she is flanked by three men. To her left stands what appears to be the chief himself dressed in his light-coloured suit, high-necked jumper and hat. To her right are two suited white men, probably Carline and possibly the cut-off figure of Myres.<sup>523</sup> Assuming that Braunholtz is indeed the photographer, and that the white men are his companions, Myres and Carline, the actual presentation of objects to Braunholtz and the BM appears to being made to a fourth person. This proxy, who is out of shot, is possibly a white South African (see **Fig. 55**) able to speak Tshivenda and therefore acting as translator.<sup>524</sup> The chief appears to be in mid conversation, while his wife and some of their children look on. Here, through this photograph and the other from the same sequence of events, we witness the chief as interlocutor and as agent, as are his wife and family. But who exactly was Sinthumule and why might he have been so generous towards and welcoming of these visitors?

### 1.3 Senthumule, Senthumula, Senthimula...Sinthumule

The Tshivenda-speaking people have 'occupied the north-east corner of... [Limpopo province] and a small part of South-eastern Zimbabwe across the Limpopo River for at least three centuries', their language being 'a complex fusion of Shona and Sotho elements' (Nettleton 2002: 95). Similarly, their origins are said to 'reflect a fusion of different elements, including the "original" inhabitants...[and] successive waves of...migrants, from Zimbabwe' (Nettleton 2002: 95). The last wave of these migrants, the Singo, is believed to have moved into the Soutpansberg in around 1700 and established the first Venda capital at Dzata (**Fig. 60**), a stonewall structure, which falls 'within the

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<sup>521</sup> In addition to these objects, one of the children seems to be offering a basket, not in the BM collections. This is further evidence to suggest that not everything Braunholtz collected on this occasion made it into the Museum collections.

<sup>522</sup> This photograph is also unnumbered.

<sup>523</sup> Carola Scupham has confirmed that the European man looking towards the camera is not her father, H.J. Braunholtz (pers. comm. 11/10/2018).

<sup>524</sup> In an album photograph, Af,A1.48, which Braunholtz describes as 'Old BaVenda man, in conversation with Prof. J.L. Myres', we see part of the back and side view of a man, presumably Myres, accompanied by another man, whose hat is just visible, possibly the translator.

range of the “zimbabwe” cultures’ found in the greater region (Nettleton 2002: 96). Initially, ruled over by one Singo king, the Venda were later split and came to be governed by several chiefs, all claiming Singo descent, the most powerful of these being ‘the houses of Ramabulana and Tshivhase’ (Nettleton 2002: 96).

Founder of the Sinthumule chiefdom,<sup>525</sup> Sinthumule Ramabulana (c.1870—1931)<sup>526</sup> was the son of Makhado (c.1864—1895) and grandson of Ramabulana, rulers of the Western Venda kingdom, Ha Ramabulana (Ramabulana’s country) (see Braun 2015: 239), ‘the most important royal line of [the] Venda’ (van Warmelo 1935: 117).<sup>527</sup> This kingdom was ‘arguably the strongest single independent power in the mountains of the northern Transvaal...[until] its military defeat in late 1898 [by the South African Republic (ZAR)]’ (Braun 2015: 239). The history of the Venda is contested and, although accounts vary in detail, following the death of Makhado, known among whites that had dealings with him as ‘the Lion of the North’ (Duggan-Cronin 1928: 16), a power struggle ensued between several of his sons.<sup>528</sup> Sinthumule colluded with his older brother, Tshilamulela, to depose a younger brother who had been made king during their absence (Sinthumule had been living in Tuli, Zimbabwe at Makhado’s behest fulfilling mainly a diplomatic function and Tshilamulela was working on the mines in Kimberley). Consequently, Tshilamulela was installed as King Mphephu, and Sinthumule became his ‘Prime Minister’.<sup>529</sup> Relations between Sinthumule and Mphephu became strained, due, it seems, to external interference and hostilities ensued. The ZAR sided with Sinthumule and, when Mphephu fled to Zimbabwe, appointed him king, although it is said he was not recognised locally,<sup>530</sup> and granted him a location ‘just south of the Dorps River’ (Braun 2015: 312). In the aftermath of the South African War (1899—1902), the British, who had ‘voided their earlier resolution to emplace Sinthumule’, brought back Mphephu, thereby effectively deposing Sinthumule (Braun 2015: 331). Notwithstanding, as an outcome of the Native Location Commission, in 1910 the government awarded Sinthumule land southwest and west of

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<sup>525</sup> Luonde Vhavenda History (<https://luonde.co.za/makhado/ha-sinthumule/>) (last accessed 06/06/2017). Van Warmelo states that among the Venda ‘the family name...is inherited by each successive chief’ (van Warmelo 1935: 46).

<sup>526</sup> For Sinthumule’s dates, see Braun (2015: index).

<sup>527</sup> For an account of the Ramabulanas see Möller-Malan (1953).

<sup>528</sup> For example, van Warmelo states that ‘[t]hings are badly mixed up in the historical part of Stayt’s book on the “BaVenda [1931]”’ (van Warmelo 1932: 5). Van Warmelo himself only goes up to as far as Makhado in his own account (1932). It should be noted that van Warmelo does not appear to have had any involvement with the BAAS meeting of 1929.

<sup>529</sup> Luonde Vhavenda History (<https://luonde.co.za/makhado/ha-sinthumule/>) (last accessed 06/06/2017).

<sup>530</sup> Luonde Vhavenda History (<https://luonde.co.za/makhado/ha-sinthumule/>) (last accessed 06/06/2017).

Louis Trichardt, bounded to the north by the Dorps River (Newnham RCMS 209: Z.B1),<sup>531</sup> which corresponds with Braunholtz's description of the location as being 9 miles west of Louis Trichardt and its demarcation on a map of the period (Stayt 1931: map inserted at back).<sup>532</sup> Historian Lindsay Braun characterises Sinthumule's relationship with the ZAR and later with the British authorities as one of 'acquiescence' to the former and of 'reliance on colonial power' with regard to the latter (2015: 329), which perhaps in some way accounts for Braunholtz's warm reception. Sinthumule was, as above-mentioned, a member of the most high-ranking Venda line, ostensibly second only to his recently deceased brother, Mphephu (c.1869—1925) and his successor. As shown, Braunholtz was treated as a guest of some regard, possibly for his perceived standing back home and, conceivably, the stated importance of the BM. But what of his motives and methods as curator and collector?

#### 1.4 H.J. Braunholtz the curator

After completing studies in classics and modern languages at Cambridge, as already mentioned (see Chapter 2), Braunholtz (1888–1963) began his forty-year career at the BM within the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography in 1913, where he was 'assigned to the ethnographical collections' (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17). In 1938 he was appointed Keeper of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography, and then of Ethnography when that standalone department was created in 1946, a position he held until his retirement in 1953 (see Wilson 2002: 383).<sup>533</sup> Considered an ethnographer and an Africanist (Wilson 2002: 226), but actually also a specialist in ancient America and the Pacific (Department of Ethnography 1953: 939), Braunholtz was an active member, and later president, of the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI).

In his 1938 Presidential Address to the RAI, Braunholtz gave a talk entitled *Ethnographical Museums and the Collector: Aims and Methods* (see Chapters 2 and 3). The paper, which was published in the RAI's journal (*JRAI*) (Braunholtz 1938), concerns itself primarily with the BM's ethnography collections, their formation and history, but also discusses collecting. It devotes quite some time to a discussion of the various categories

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<sup>531</sup> Apparently, Sinthumule had been 'given a site on the flats south of the [Soutpansberg] mountains' (Transvaal Native Affairs Department 1905: 63), deemed to be 'State land' (Newnham RCMS 210: 23). For details pertaining to these RCMS files (Royal Commonwealth Society, CUL), see Chapter 4.

<sup>532</sup> Van Warmelo classified the Venda of the Louis Trichardt District as 'Western Venda' (van Warmelo 1935: 117-118) and, based on information gathered in mid-1933, indicates that within the 'Tribe of Chief Sinthumule', that chief had 15 headmen under him, including one 'baSotho' (van Warmelo 1935: 47). Given the date and the fact that the title was inherited (van Warmelo 1935: 46), this information presumably pertains to a successor.

<sup>533</sup> 1945, inaccurately, according to the *Times* (06/06/1963: 17) and Department of Ethnography (1953: 939).



of collector, as identified by Brauholtz, and also includes a section on their 'aims and methods'. In the last part of his paper, he advocates a number of suggested 'aims for the future' (Brauholtz 1938: 15), which might act to guide the would-be field collector, not unlike that text book and field collecting staple, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (N&Q). Indeed, Brauholtz mentions that publication and as a contributor he will have been well versed with its content.<sup>534</sup> (See Chapter 2.)

Brauholtz's paper gives us an opportunity to compare what he might have considered best practice against what may be termed the on-the-ground reality of collecting at Sinthumule's location. It also provides us with some insight into his collecting methods, aims and motives. In his text, Brauholtz acknowledges the role played by factors such as 'personal predilection' (1938: 8), or 'collector's choice', in shaping a collection, for example based on the perceived 'portability' of an object (1938: 9), as well as the difficulty of 'purposive collecting, ...[and] obstacles encountered in doing so' (1938: 10). He also discusses the element of chance often involved in collecting, especially in cases of what he terms 'by-product ethnography' (1938: 11). In many instances echoing N&Q, Brauholtz advocates, among other things, 'the collection of the common objects of daily life' in order to 'balance' the museum collection (1938: 12).<sup>535</sup> He also advocates, where possible, the collecting of the 'comprehensive collection made at one time and place', to include items such as unfinished pieces and tools that show the 'process of manufacture' (1938: 14).<sup>536</sup> He extols the virtue of photography, saying '[i]deally, every object should be accompanied by photographs showing it in its proper context and actual use' (1938: 14).<sup>537</sup> And finally, he stresses the critical importance of recording information, specifically writing things down, saying:

With regard to documentation, there is one point, which, obvious as it is, continues to be neglected and cannot be too often insisted upon. I mean the immediate committal to paper, by labels attached to the objects, or by numbered lists, of all the *available information*<sup>538</sup> (1938:15, emphasis mine).<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> A fifth edition (1929) was edited for the BAAS by a committee of Section H and published by the RAI. Brauholtz formed part of the committee's 'MATERIAL CULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE' (N&Q 1929: v) and also acted as a contributor (N&Q 1929: vi). See Chapter 2.

<sup>535</sup> Cf. '[c]ollect...not fine specimens only, but objects in common use' (N&Q 1929: 381)

<sup>536</sup> Cf. N&Q 1929: 383.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. N&Q 1929: 377.

<sup>538</sup> By 'available information' Brauholtz probably means the 'exact uses of the various objects...their native names, the raw materials of which they were made, and the native names of these materials as well' (Brauholtz 1938: 11).

After a catalogue of 'desiderata', Braunholtz appeals to collectors, asking that they 'put themselves in touch with museum requirements, and work with due regard for system and accuracy' (1938: 16). As a curator at the BM, Braunholtz will have undoubtedly been aware of the Museum's requirements.

### 1.5 H.J. Braunholtz the collector

Braunholtz is said to have possessed 'an extremely wide and detailed knowledge of the vast ethnographical collections of the Museum' (Department of Ethnography 1953: 939). He will, therefore, have been aware of the relative dearth of Venda material, and, perhaps with this in mind, chose to collect in order to fill a perceived 'gap' in the collections (for discussion on the notions of 'gaps' see Chapter 2).<sup>540</sup> This would seem to be the case, given that during his time in SA he traversed the country over a period of some weeks and would therefore presumably have had other opportunities to collect items of material culture. However, there were surely other motives for collecting.

Elements of serendipity, chance and circumstance appear to have also informed Braunholtz's aims and methods of collecting. In some senses, the visit to Sinthumule's location and the resultant collection are the 'by-products' of Braunholtz's archaeological collecting, Section H's interest in prehistory (especially Great Zimbabwe) at the time of the BAAS meeting and the prevailing fascination with the Venda.

For someone primarily remembered as an ethnographer and an Africanist, as previously stated (Wilson 2002: 226), it is perhaps surprising that Braunholtz collected far more archaeology than other objects while in SA. Indeed, two accounts of his life's work mention the fieldwork he carried out in that country in 1929. Both highlight in particular the prehistory collection he assembled, which, together with the gifts of archaeology he attracted around that time, are said to constitute the 'high watermark' of the Museum's

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<sup>539</sup> *N&Q* gives quite detailed instructions on the subject of labelling objects in the field, advocating the use of paper labels or better still, direct inscription on objects in pencil. In summation, it states '[i]n short, leave nothing to memory' (*N&Q* 1929: 383).

<sup>540</sup> Prior to Braunholtz's acquisition, the Museum possessed a small corpus of Venda material from various sources, including mostly cast *lerale* (Af.7079; Af.1924,1016.3) and *musuku* (Af.3266; Af.8365) (see Chapter 3), but also a basket (Af.3117), an axe (Af.1907,0725.1) and possibly also a shield (Af.2163). None of these objects was provenanced as Venda at the time of registration, although ingot Af.1924,1016.3, purchased from a Mr H. Wallach, is said to have '[s]upposed to have been made by Makatees Kaffirs over 100 years ago. PALABORA [sic] N.E. TRANSVAAL.', which has then been annotated by Braunholtz as '[p]rob. Balemba or Basuto' (accessions register).

acquisition from SA and also 'from southern Africa as a whole' (Mitchell 2002: 20).<sup>541</sup> However, it should be noted that rather than seeing archaeology and anthropology as entirely discrete disciplines, Braunnholtz had a dual interest in what he called anthropology's 'prehistoric' and 'ethnological aspects' (1938: 1). He saw great merit in bringing them together in the museum context, where this 'contiguity' is 'fruitful and illuminating' (1938: 3). Tellingly, on his 1940 return for the RAI's census of anthropologists, Braunnholtz declared his 'Anthropological interests' as 'Archaeology and Ethnography...' (RAI A71/43), nevertheless, from a practical point of view, archaeology was in many respects easier to collect. Although collectively heavy, his archaeological finds were relatively small, portable and easily transportable and stone implements seem to have been the collecting priority of his South African excursions.<sup>542</sup>

Braunnholtz, understandably, seems to have been on a fairly tight budget. By his own classificatory system, as articulated in his paper of 1938, he may be understood to have fallen somewhere between what might be termed an 'anthropologist collector' (although self-taught, not having formally studied anthropology) and what he would have called an 'unofficial traveller' on a 'privately financed' expedition (1938: 8 and 13). For Braunnholtz's visit was no officially sanctioned Museum Expedition. Rather, the Museum appears to have given Braunnholtz special leave, and not much else besides.<sup>543</sup> Indeed, the objects Braunnholtz presented to the Museum were collected 'on his own account' (Department of Ethnography 1953: 939), and, as previously stated, given as gifts in his name.<sup>544</sup> The fact that he does not seem to have possessed a collecting budget and that he evidently did not have to pay for the Venda objects – that they were presentations— are no doubt a reasons for their acquisition.<sup>545</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> See Department of Ethnography (1953: 939) article written on the occasion of Braunnholtz's retirement from the Museum, and the *Times* (06/06/1963: 17). The *Times* obituary goes as far as to state that his 'fine collection of African stone age material ...[forms] the nucleus of the magnificent collections in the British Museum [presumably of archaeology]' and credited him for his general 'enrichment of the collections' (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17). I am grateful to Carola Scupham for copies of both clippings and to Mark Nesbitt at Kew for his help with the Department of Ethnography/*Nature* reference.

<sup>542</sup> Braunnholtz's correspondence with Joyce reveals that the South African Museum in Cape Town was particularly helpful in assisting him with shipping.

<sup>543</sup> Braunnholtz was granted 14 weeks special leave by the BM Trustees and took the rest out of his vacation and special leave (BP H.J. Braunnholtz to R.L. Hobson [draft], 25/06/1929). Also, note, as previously stated, that the BM wrote to thank Braunnholtz for his 'Present', further suggesting there was no funding for acquisitions (BP F.G. Kenyon to H.J. Braunnholtz, 31/01/1930).

<sup>544</sup> The article refers here only to 'stone implements'.

<sup>545</sup> Unlike other possible collections of ethnography, Braunnholtz freely picked up stone implements when he visited sites. He also attracted a number of large gifts to the Museum of archaeological material during his visit. For discussion, see Mitchell (2002: 20).

As previously mentioned, Brauholtz and Carline were accompanying Myres to Great Zimbabwe when they stopped at Sinthumule's location (Brauholtz 1954: 39). Somewhat conveniently, Sinthumule's was only a short drive west of Louis Trichardt, which they would have passed en route to Messina (now Musina), the mining town just south of the border with Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where they appear to have stayed overnight (Brauholtz 1954: 39).<sup>546</sup> Precisely whose idea it was to stop in at Sinthumule's location is unknown, although this particular settlement was closer to Louis Trichardt and to the arterial road north than others.<sup>547</sup>

Practical considerations aside, given the general interest at the time in Great Zimbabwe, and also 'the Venda connection', it is perhaps unsurprising that the trio stopped off to encounter for themselves some such living culture, or what Brauholtz, in the parlance of the day, would have termed 'modern primitive man' (1938: 13).<sup>548</sup> It is possible that the impetus to visit the location came from Myres, where, as Brauholtz vividly recounts in his obituary,<sup>549</sup> the professor conversed with several of the elders' (1954: 39).<sup>550</sup> Brauholtz goes on to mention the 'special Zimbabwe exhibition' held at the BM the following year, for which Myres wrote the catalogue and did 'much of the 'donkey work'' (1954: 39). The exhibition, entitled *Loan Exhibition of Antiquities from Zimbabwe and Other Ancient Sites in Southern Rhodesia* (7 April 1930–mid-May 1930) was arranged on behalf of the BAAS and included objects lent by a number of Southern African museums, the BM and some private collectors (BAAS 1930b). While it cannot be said that the exhibition was a direct outcome of the BAAS meeting and the subsequent tours, or that the visit to Sinthumule's was made with the exhibit in mind, it is interesting to note that a number of Venda objects were included in the show. Specifically, the BM showed the two clay pots and graphite used to burnish such pots collected by Brauholtz from Sinthumule's location (Af1930,0128.6, 7 and 12 respectively; BAAS 1930b cat. nos. 151-153) (see **Fig. 54**) and

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<sup>546</sup> A period map clearly marks the road between Louis Trichardt and Messina, which runs about 57 miles almost due north (Stayt 1931: inserted at back). Brauholtz's album indicates that on the 7th they were in the Pietersburg area, and it is unclear as to whether they would have set out from there in the morning or from Louis Trichardt or its surrounds.

<sup>547</sup> About 10 miles north of Louis Trichardt the road skirted the location of Sinthumule's late brother Mphephu.

<sup>548</sup> As Anita Nettleton points out, '[i]n the older ethnographies there was a tendency to trace the origins of the Venda to some region [further north]....[and that] [a]ccording to this theory, successive waves of migration brought the Venda through Zimbabwe to settle in the Soutpansberg' (Nettleton 1984: 192). This putative connection between archaeology and a living culture no doubt provided a frisson for Brauholtz and his peers.

<sup>549</sup> This obituary for Myres, penned by Brauholtz, is detailed in its account of the 1929 BAAS meeting and reads as if Brauholtz had indeed kept a diary or journal.

<sup>550</sup> See AfA1.49 for a photograph showing 'Old BaVena man, in conversation with Prof. J.L. Myres'. It would appear that Myres, almost completely out of shot, is speaking with the man with the aid of another man, most of whose back we see, possibly a South African acting as interpreter.

South African anthropologist, Hugh Arthur Stayt loaned a 'wooden bowl' said to be of 'similar style' to Zimbabwe soapstone examples (cat. no. 49), a cast of which was made at the BM (**Fig. 61**).<sup>551</sup>

Stayt would have collected the bowl during the course of his extensive fieldwork not too long before the 1929 BAAS meeting. It is probable that he referred to it in the paper he gave during the Cape Town session, on 23 July, entitled *Divining Bowls from the Ba Venda* (BAAS 1930a: 367) where Brauholtz would have had the opportunity of seeing it (or image(s) thereof) and of conversing with Stayt.<sup>552</sup> Brauholtz would have been aware of Stayt's work on the Venda, which possibly roused his interest.<sup>553</sup> It is particularly noteworthy that in the preface to his seminal monograph, *The Bavenda*, Stayt acknowledges the 'help and kindness' he and his wife 'received...from numbers of...BaVenda' (1931: xii).<sup>554</sup> He indicates that they 'were treated most courteously by their chiefs' (1931: xii) and he thanks 'Chief Senthumule' for 'valuable information...willing assistance, and...courteous hospitality' (1931: xii). Stayt's monograph, published the year after Brauholtz's visit, is a source of contemporaneous information on the Venda, including Sinthumula's location, and also features a photograph of the chief 'with two wives and some of his councillors' (1931: between pages 202 and 203, plate XXXIV) (**Fig.**

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<sup>551</sup> In *The Bavenda* (1931), Stayt identifies this divination bowl as formerly having belonged to a diviner by the name of Mukharu (Stayt 1931: 292-293, see plates XLIV and XLV for illustrations) from 'the Mukula district in Tshivhase's [Sibasa's] location', about 50 miles northeast of Louis Trichardt (Stayt 1931: 293). (See also Nettleton for discussion, according to whom the current whereabouts of this *ndilo* is unknown (1997: 168, Figs. 76 & 77).) A plaster cast was made of the object, and other loan objects, while at the BM, and the replica of Makharu's divining bowl now resides at the Museum (acc. no. CRS.74, formerly Af1973,Q.340). See Af,B81.11 and Af,B81.12 (Pictorial Collection) for photographs of the original, from which the cast is made, with annotations on the reverse in Brauholtz's hand indicating that it is the '[p]roperty of Mr Stayt'. A number of casts have labels with 'Z.L.E' (Zimbabwe Loan Exhibition) numbers, which correspond with the 1930 exhibition catalogue numbers.

<sup>552</sup> In his diary, Balfour records Stayt visiting the Barnards in Cape Town with whom he and Brauholtz were staying (PRM MC, Balfour Papers, Box 2, Item 2, Diary of a trip to South and East Africa, 1929, 20/07/1929: 24). Stayt brought 'some' divination bowls for discussion, possibly including Makharu's. This could potentially have given Brauholtz an earlier opportunity to view the object, although it is not clear from Balfour's account whether or not Brauholtz was present at the time.

<sup>553</sup> Interestingly, although the BM accessions register cites Stayt, it does not seem to follow his orthography for the Tshivenda names of objects, which suggests that this information is based on Brauholtz's own field notes. Nor does Brauholtz follow Stayt's orthography for the chief's name ('Senthumule'), generally preferring 'Senthemule' or 'Senthimula'. However, an annotation on an insert between pages 10 and 11 of Brauholtz's photograph album (Af,A1) suggests that he was at some point looking at Stayt's orthography for the chief's name, as he has (possibly subsequently) amended the spelling on several captions (possibly written in the field) and writes "'Senthumule": stayt [sic])' at the bottom of the insert.

<sup>554</sup> British-born Evelyn Frances (née Dyson) assisted Stayt with the fieldwork, photographs and the subsequent publication of *The Bavenda* (Stayt 1931: xi). Stayt had been blinded during the First World War and met his future wife while convalescing in England (*Times* 07/06/1922: 16).

62).<sup>555</sup> Given the above, it is possible that Stayt provided information or otherwise helped facilitate the visit to Sinthumule's location.

Another body of work that Brauholtz will have been familiar with, and which may possibly also have served as an inspiration, is that of photographer Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin, whose volume *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa... The Bavenda* (1928) had only recently been published.<sup>556</sup> While visiting Kimberley, Brauholtz enthuses 'have seen Cronin's magnificent collection of photographs of S. Afr. natives' (GC H.J. Brauholtz to T.A. Joyce, 29/07/1929),<sup>557</sup> although it should be noted that Duggan-Cronin does not seem to have photographed at Sinthumule's location.<sup>558</sup> Brauholtz and Duggan-Cronin probably met, as the photographer joined Section H during the archaeological excursion to Pniel, near Kimberley, as a captioned photograph in Brauholtz's album appears to suggest (Af,A1.22).<sup>559</sup>

As a photographer, Duggan-Cronin is now known for his beautiful, yet often posed and staged depictions of untainted 'tribal life' (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a: 27 – see Chapter 3), yet at the time he was highly regarded as a documentary photographer.<sup>560</sup> In her introduction to Duggan-Cronin's *The Bavenda*, Miss Maria Wilman, director of the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum in Kimberley (now the McGregor Museum), asserts that in SA 'natives as yet unspoiled by civilisation...are becoming more and more scarce' (Duggan-Cronin 1928: 8). She, and the Museum being supporters of the project,

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<sup>555</sup> Presumably this photograph was taken within a few years of Brauholtz's photographs, but it is difficult to say with certainty that the Stayt photograph and Brauholtz's photographs are of the same man, although there is a marked resemblance. The wife in Brauholtz's photographs does not appear to be one of the two wives in the Stayt image, although the chief would most probably have had more than two wives.

<sup>556</sup> The BM has one, possibly two, copies of this volume, and it is more than likely that Brauholtz was familiar with it. In his review of the ethnological exhibition in the South African Pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition (1924), Brauholtz discusses some of Duggan-Cronin's work (Brauholtz 1924), although at that stage it did not include any portraits of Tshivenda-speakers (Duggan-Cronin 1928: 8). (See Chapter 3).

<sup>557</sup> Based on Brauholtz's description and Balfour's diary account, these seem to have been kept in Duggan-Cronin's house (PRM MC, Balfour Papers, Box 2, Item 2, Diary of a trip to South and East Africa, 1929, 27/07/1929: 34-34).

<sup>558</sup> *The Bavenda* mainly includes photographs taken at Sibasa (probably Tshivhase's location) and 'Lwamondo's [location]', both of which lie to the east of Sinthumule's. I have not personally inspected holdings at the McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

<sup>559</sup> The photograph seems to show Duggan-Cronin, Goodwin (probably A.J.H Goodwin) and Brauholtz, among others. The caption reads 'Cronin [or possibly 'Gonin'], Goodwin(?), H.J.B...'

<sup>560</sup> The artifice of the photographs is something Brauholtz would only later become aware of. A copy of Duggan-Cronin's photograph 'A Venda Xylophone' (illustrated in *The Bavenda* 1928: plate XV) housed in the Pictorial Collection (Af,B37.12) is annotated on the reverse, in Brauholtz's hand, and picks up on a number of issues. The inscription states that Venda xylophones are '[n]ot played by young girls [as depicted], & [that the] costume [is] incorrect'. In brackets he cites 'Prof. [Percival R.] Kirby 1932', the Wits musicologist with whom he was in correspondence. (See Chapter 3).

extols his work for its depiction of 'the lives of our already fast-changing native tribes' (1928: 7).<sup>561</sup> By his own admission, Brauholtz seems to have had a preference for 'unadulterated native products' (1938: 13).<sup>562</sup> And thus, the prospect of the Venda, 'unspoiled by civilisation', may have appealed to him. It is possibly also for this reason he chose to collect at Sinthumule's location rather than elsewhere in SA, perceiving it, and the objects there to be more 'authentic'. Rather tellingly, Brauholtz did not collect any objects, for example, during his earlier visit to a Johannesburg mine compound where he witnessed black mineworkers' 'war dances' and xylophone-playing (recorded in photographs Af,A1.29-32) (**Fig. 63**).<sup>563</sup>

There is also something of the fortuitous about the collection. He did not seem to plan for the visit to Sinthumule's. Indeed, as suggested in a letter outlining his projected itinerary, addressed to the Keeper of Ceramics and Ethnography, R.L. Hobson, Brauholtz's only non-archaeological work was planned for the Kenya leg of his trip. He writes:

After following the programme of the British Association there [Cape Town] & at Johannesburg, I intend to proceed to Southern Rhodesia in August visiting the excavations at Zimbabwe and other sites of archaeological interest, and thence by sea to Zanzibar & Kenya Colony, *where I intend to visit some of the native reserves* and archaeological sites... (BP H.J. Brauholtz to R.L. Hobson [draft], 25/06/1929, emphasis mine).

Brauholtz evidently had more time when collecting in Kenya, as the quantity of ethnographic objects and series of photographic studies, for example of pottery-making, suggest. His sustained interest in, and later specialist knowledge of, African pottery is said to have come about as a result of his 1929 trip (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17) and it may be for

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<sup>561</sup> Wilman also gave a collection of objects to the BM at this time, mainly of archaeology, but including some 'Bushmen' [San] and Tsonga material as well as a Swazi skirt. The last is said to be 'from Kimberley Museum'.

<sup>562</sup> Brauholtz writes '[a]s regards European influence we do make some attempt to deal with it, either by refusing to admit the more obvious examples of white culture contact into the museum picture, or by segregating them from the unadulterated native products' (1938: 13).

<sup>563</sup> Brauholtz comments on the 'xylophones (marimbas)'. He could have conceivably acquired one of the instruments, although the cost of carriage would certainly have been a consideration. (The sourcing of these instruments is not unprecedented, and in 1964 the BM was to acquire a related xylophone (Af1964,02.42), also with empty paint tins for resonators. This example, which came from the Church Missionary Society, is described on its pre-BM label as coming from "'S.A.L.I.E.S." [sic] (Gold Mine) Compound' (see Chapter 3).) In his diary, Balfour records this same event that Brauholtz visited. He notes going to 'one of the Native Compounds to see some Shangaan dances' and comments on '[t]he music of 36 marimbas...[whose] resonators were paint tins graded in size up to carbide-drums' (PRM MC, Balfour Papers, Box 2, Item 2, Diary of a trip to South and East Africa, 1929, 04/07/1929: 46).

this reason he acquired two earthenware vessels and a piece of burnishing graphite (Af1930,0128.6, 7 and 12) while visiting Sinthumule's location.

During his brief visit to Sinthumule's, which could not have been longer than a couple of hours, perhaps the overriding factor in his acquisition was what the family was willing to part with, and what they chose to present to their guest.<sup>564</sup> Although, as already stated, it is not clear if all the objects come from the same source – the accessions register is ambiguous and the above-discussed two photographs that capture a moment of presentation show only three or four objects – the givers parted with what are ostensibly fairly ordinary, everyday items. Bearing in mind Braunholtz's own thoughts on collecting, as outlined above, this will have fulfilled his, and the Museum's, requirements. Some of the objects are more obviously quotidian, and of a domestic nature, particularly the wooden porridge spoon (Af1930,0128.3), wooden porridge stirrer (Af1930,0128.4) and the piece of burnishing graphite (Af1930,0128.12). The decorated gourd vessels (Af1930,0128.1 and 2), lidded basket (Af1930,0128.5a-b) and two pottery bowls (Af1930,0128.6 and 7), appear to have been intended for more occasional use (see **Fig. 54**).

The larger gourd, or calabash (*tshikumbu*), Af1930,0128.1, incorporates axes in its pyro-engraved imagery and is probably one of the few items to have actually been used. It has been indigenously repaired – the joins (the accessions register indicates that they are called *muzungo*), or stitches, suggesting the gourd vessel is something more than just a disposable item.<sup>565</sup> Rather than intended as a 'porridge bowl' as the accessions register suggests, it is likely to have been meant to hold water and/or beer (Stayt 1931: 53). Said to be 'of true Venda origin', the distinctive *mufharo*, basket would have been made by a man (Stayt 1931: 56),<sup>566</sup> whereas the pots would have been made by a woman or women,

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<sup>564</sup> As previously stated, the trio did not overnight there, but in Messina.

<sup>565</sup> See Ditsong acc. nos ET. 1935/613 and ET. 1935/615 for gourds related to the BM examples. Described in the accessions register as 'calabashes for containing beverages or to drink out of', both were accessioned in 1935, having been field-collected by former curator Dr W.T.H. Beukes. Acc. no. ET. 1935/613 is recorded as coming 'from Mphefu's location' — therefore from among the Western Venda, in the Louis Trichardt district (van Warmelo 1935: 117), whereas ET. 1935/615 is 'from Mphafuli's location', possibly in Sibasa district (see van Warmelo 1935: 120). The 'war axes' on the latter are said to be 'symbolic' (text in inverted commas my translations from the Afrikaans). Commenting on indigenous repairs sometimes found on such gourds (and present on Af1930,0128.1), Ditsong curator Johnny van Schalkwyk suggests that they indicate the value that these items would have had (pers. comm. 06/01/2017).

<sup>566</sup> Johnny van Schalkwyk suggests that the 'ethnographic representation' of such baskets is of a Venda woman, on her knees, presenting something to her husband, the basket being used to store valuables (pers. comm. 06/01/2017). An unusually graphic gourd (Af1936,0314.15), given to the BM by Mr F.W. Mackenzie-Skues, and inscribed 'MAKILIEBIN' (possibly the gourd's maker or former owner) shows a young Venda woman and what appear to be two white men in military clothing (see **Fig. 58**). The



possibly of the Lemba people (Stayt 1931: 52).<sup>567</sup> The fact that they are, like the gourds, decorated suggests that they were intended for food serving rather than preparation (Stayt 1931: 52). Braunholtz was rightly pleased with his ‘few nice old ‘pieces’’ (GC H.J. Braunholtz to T.A. Joyce, 13/08/1929), although it must be said that he did not secure any items regarded as particularly rare or sacred, such as an *ndilo* (divining bowl) (see Introduction), *ngoma* drum or the somewhat more ubiquitous *malembe* (miniature metal hoes) (see Chapter 4), as worn by the elder pictured conversing with Myres (see **Fig. 55**).<sup>568</sup>

I have looked at what Braunholtz collected at Sinthumule’s location, and, using his own writing on the subject of field-collecting, speculated as to some of his methods and motives, thus helping us better understand the archive. That archive can, for the present, be said to be for the most part located at the BM. In the apparent absence of material elsewhere, I have explored the currently traceable documentation at the Museum relating to this collection and in so doing have recovered some of its character as presentation made to the Museum by Chief Sinthumule, his wife and family. This information was previously effaced; the accessions register (and the database drawing on this source), privileging instead only certain aspects of provenance, viz. the collector, general find-spot and ascribed cultural identity. It is possible that Braunholtz intended to write up more about Sinthumule and other details of his SA trip, but in the absence of such a narrative account, be it a manuscript or publication, his annotated photographs act as a kind of visual diary. The discovery of the two photographs documenting the presentation of some objects in particular enable the recovery of otherwise, as is often the case, lost information – in this instance, traces of African agency in action. They also hint at what might lie undocumented beyond the archive, perhaps having only existed in Braunholtz’s memory, never having been committed to paper or object.<sup>569</sup> As mentioned, it is possible that

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depicted scenes include one in which she is performing the *u losha* and another where she is bending to pick a plant, a *mufharo* basket behind her. The accessions register’s ‘Observations’ column states ‘Magat’s Kraal N. Transvaal about 1912’, which is probably where and when the gourd was collected. ‘Magat’ is possibly a reference to Makhado (Magato), father of Sinthumule and Mphephu. The last’s ‘tribe was removed to a new location in the Njelele valley in 1904’ (Newnham RCMS 210: 25). Newnham refers to this location as that of ‘Magato (Mpefu) [Mphephu]’ (Newnham RCMS 209 Z.A.17:). It would appear the settlement took its name from the king, Mphephu’s predecessor, which, unusually in Venda culture, Mphephu himself did not (van Warmelo 1935: 117).

<sup>567</sup> Stayt indicates that ‘to-day there are also a few Venda potters who have learnt their trade from the BaLemba’ (Stayt 1931: 52).

<sup>568</sup> The ‘old BaVenda man’ shown conversing with Myres (Af,Af1.49) is wearing a necklace (probably beaded) with such metal pendants. For a discussion on *malembe* see Chapter 4.

<sup>569</sup> Here I draw on ideas put forward by Lachlan Glanville in an article featured in the *Guardian* (23/03/2017) about the Germaine Greer Archive, University of Melbourne, where he is assistant archivist. Even though Greer is said to have ‘kept it all’, there is, according to Glanville, still ‘much that is undocumented beyond this archive, perhaps existing only in Greer’s own memory’. ‘Integrity’, a core

Braunholtz intended, at some point, to write up his research. Indeed, his scholarliness was commented upon in his obituary, but that 'his wide interests, his heavy responsibilities in the Museum' and 'his devotion' to the RAI effectively kept him from publishing more.<sup>570</sup> However, here we see a glaring gap between what Braunholtz advocates as good practice in collecting, both in his 1938 RAI Presidential Address and in publication, and what he did, especially once back at the BM, where documentation is generally poor and fragmented. This has resulted in the effacement, until now, of his Venda hosts and donators, at the expense of Braunholtz, the curator and collector.

## ***Part II***

### **2. Af1936,0316.1-61 Re(con)figuring the archive: The Powell-Cotton Northern Zululand collection, 1935<sup>571</sup>**

The Powell-Cotton SA collection at the BM, although perhaps seemingly modest in terms of the objects themselves, is remarkable for a number of reasons. Searches in the extended archive reveal the names of African people, including those who in some cases made, previously owned, exchanged or helped collect the objects that make up the collection. Field-collected and field-documented by Antoinette Powell-Cotton (hereafter Antoinette to avoid confusion with her father) during what was primarily a hunting expedition in north-eastern Zululand (then part of Natal province, now KwaZulu-Natal province) led by her father over a three-month period in 1935, the collection is ostensibly well-provenanced (**Fig. 64**). In this regard it is not unlike other Powell-Cotton material, which is generally thought of as 'well documented' (Nicklin 1981: 35), although the limits of this in the present case study will be examined. Despite Antoinette's efforts, the names of Africans are all but completely omitted from the BM archival record. Absent too is any mention of African involvement in the collection; this presence, like that of the (female) field-collector herself, has been obscured.

In exploring the archive, a number of questions arise. Why did Antoinette record people's names and who were these people? Why does the BM's record exclude the names of Africans? What does it tell us about this aspect of the archive and about museum

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archival concept, says Glanville, is in the words of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, a pioneering archival scientist, 'the Conservation of every scrap of Evidence'.

See <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/24/sean-connery-asked-for-germaine-greens-number-and-other-things-we-found-in-her-archives> (last accessed 24/03/2017).

<sup>570</sup> Specifically, it is said that '[h]is friends always hoped that his copious data on the subject [of African pottery] would be published and become a definitive work, but that the cited reasons, together with 'his recent illness prevented this' (*Times* 06/06/1963: 17).

<sup>571</sup> This title is a nod to *Refiguring the Archive* (Hamilton et al.: 2002).

practices at the time? To what extent can these names, and identities, be recovered and restored and does the archive speak to other forms of agency?

A further set of questions asks what this collection tells us about collecting, specifically female collecting, and museum collections? For, as already noted in other instances in this thesis, all too often in museums, women – be they daughters, sisters, wives or others – feature peripherally as donors/sellers (often after the death of a husband or father), and only very occasionally as collectors, especially when it comes to more historical collections (see Chapter 3). The Powell-Cotton Collection offers us insight into female collecting, albeit of a certain class, as well as into the growing ‘professionalisation’ of field collecting.

By reading the collection, and its attendant field photographs, alongside documentation held at the BM and elsewhere, mainly at the Powell-Cotton Museum (hereafter PCM), and by invoking its *respect des fonds* (in so far as attention will be paid to the order in which objects were collected), this case study seeks to ‘re(con)figure’ the collection. In treating the objects as archive, by considering them alongside museum documentation (at the BM and PCM) and other sources, it is hoped that hitherto obscured figures – those of the collector, but particularly of Africans – will be brought into sharper focus, opening up critical and historicised insights into this collection.

## 2.1 The collection/archive at the British Museum

The Powell-Cotton Zululand archive at the BM comprises a collection of objects, a series of photographs along with various items of documentation ranging from a typed list that accompanied the collection to the Museum, to items of correspondence to and from H.J. Braunholtz who was Assistant Keeper of the Ethnography sub-department of the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography at the relevant time.

Just over 60 items make up the Powell-Cotton Zululand collection at the BM.<sup>572</sup> The accessions include articles of clothing and adornment, various utensils, such as spoons, baskets and a meat platter, as well as other items of personal use, including a *dagga* (cannabis) pipe, a snuff-container and samples of natural substances. The collection features, but is not limited to, beadwork, basketry, wirework and, to a lesser extent, woodcarving and skin work (**Fig. 65**). As already suggested, these objects are generally

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<sup>572</sup> This case study considers the objects at the BM. The PCM also houses a significant number of objects from the Zululand expedition, as does the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford (PRM). The PCM made gifts from the Zululand collection to the Uganda Museum, Kampala in 1963.

small-scale (the meat-platter being among the larger objects) and modest in appearance. The collection presents a mix of used, unused and some old objects. By and large, these articles are items of everyday or frequent use as evidenced, for example in terms of dress and adornment, by the 23 field-photographs (out of a much larger total) taken by Antoinette and her father now housed at the BM, which complement the collection.<sup>573</sup>

This selection of photographs came to the BM at around the same time as the collection, in early 1936.<sup>574</sup> As with the objects, the photographs have been assigned Museum numbers (although this was done at a much later stage) and similarly these numbers differ, not least in terms of sequence, from the collector's own numbering system, which in both cases was available to the Museum, showing a disregard to their *respect des fonds*.<sup>575</sup> The Powell-Cotton photograph number appears on the back of each photograph, along with a caption in some instances, while many of the objects retain Antoinette's 'tickets' – often present as a small pieces of card inscribed with a unique number, the item's 'field number', and suspended from thread.<sup>576</sup> Additionally, these object numbers correspond with those on a typed list provided to the BM (now known as Eth Doc 74). This document clearly forms the basis of the information that was entered into the accessions register, as evidenced by the details in the register's 'Observations' column. In almost all instances, these details include the collector's item number, collection place (occasionally citing the longitude and latitude) and sometimes other information such as the isiZulu term for an object, its use and, in the case of clothing and adornment, the intended wearer's gender.

Before considering some of the objects, and the people with whom they can be associated, it is necessary to understand more about Antoinette Powell-Cotton, her collecting motives, aims and methods as well as the Zululand expedition.

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<sup>573</sup> There are a number of exceptions, including a dance shield, an old and by then obsolete hoe and possibly some items of adornment.

<sup>574</sup> The envelope formerly housing the photographs at the BM, now known as [POW-] Pic Doc 42, is inscribed (in Braunholtz's hand): 'Zululand. Powell Cotton [sic] Colln. with [the collection number] 1936.3-16'. Af,B41.3-9; Af,B41.11-16; Af,B41.18; Af,B41.20-26; Af,B41.29. The other BM numbers in this sequence, viz. Af,B41.1-2; Af,B41.10; Af,B41.17; Af,B41.19; Af,B41.27-28 refer to other photographic collections, mainly that of Miss Joy Elvy.

<sup>575</sup> For details of the Pictorial Collection, including its numbering system, refer to Chapter 3.

<sup>576</sup> The Powell-Cotton photograph numbers are based on film and shot number.

## 2.2 ‘Miss Tony’: Antoinette Powell-Cotton (1913–1997) and the Zululand expedition, 1935<sup>577</sup>

Known as ‘Tony’ to family and friends, Antoinette Powell-Cotton was one of three daughters and a son born into ‘a...landed English family’ (Nicklin 2001: 155). Her father, Major Percy Horace Gordon Powell-Cotton (1866—1940), was an avid hunter and explorer who ‘habitually collected “curios” among the peoples whose territories he traversed in the course of his zoological expeditions’ (Nicklin 2001: 150). Following his first two African expeditions, Major Powell-Cotton wrote vivid accounts of the animals and peoples he encountered during these extended East African adventures, entitled *A Sporting Trip Through Abyssinia* (1902) and *In Unknown Africa* (1904).<sup>578</sup> Powell-Cotton had in 1896 established a museum for the display of his burgeoning natural history and other collections and was a member of various learned societies, including, from 1928, the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI).<sup>579</sup> By the mid 1930s the Powell-Cotton Museum had its first curator, George F. Pinfold, and was open to visitors on Thursday afternoons.<sup>580</sup> The Museum was, and still is, situated in the family’s manor house, located in sprawling grounds known as Quex Park adjacent to the Kent village of Birchington-on-Sea. Obituaries describe Powell-Cotton as ‘one of the most generous’ donors to both the British Museum of Natural History (now the Natural History Museum) and to the ‘Ethnographical Department’ of the BM (Braunholtz *in the Times* 8/07/1940: 7).<sup>581</sup> Braunholtz said the Major had formed ‘a long series of ethnographical collections gathered from almost every region of Africa...[and that] [w]henver possible he collected duplicate specimens...[which] were freely offered to the national collections’ (*Times* 8/07/1940: 7).

Keith Nicklin, a more recent former curator at the PCM, describes the Major’s habit of carefully documenting items. During an expedition to the then French Congo in the late 1920s, Powell-Cotton reportedly collected Kuyu objects ‘[w]ith the precision of a military man and meticulous naturalist’ (Nicklin 2001: 150). He took photographs in the field and wrote down details such as ‘the use and meaning of the pieces’ as well as the ‘village of collection...and name of carver and of owner’ (Nicklin 2001: 150). Powell-Cotton also started employing the use of cine-camera in the field at around that time (Nicklin 2001:

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<sup>577</sup> Keith Nicklin states that she was ‘popularly known as ‘Miss Toni’ (2001: 151). However, PCM archivist, Hazel Basford, confirms the spelling of Antoinette’s nickname as ‘Tony’ (pers. comm. 01/09/2017).

<sup>578</sup> His first African sojourn was nine months and the second twenty months long.

<sup>579</sup> See certificate indicating that Powell-Cotton was elected a Fellow of the RAI on 24/04/1928 (PCM 3.1.21/1).

<sup>580</sup> See printed information on PCM letterhead (GC G.F. Pinfold to H.J. Braunholtz, 11/03/1936).

<sup>581</sup> See Dollman in the *Times* (29/06/1940: 9). Braunholtz responded to Dollman’s piece, which focused on Powell-Cotton’s BM(NH) contribution, by pointing out his generosity to the BM.

150). Although interested in 'curios', the Major's main concern lay with animals and, as Nicklin points out, he delegated 'ethnographic collecting and documentation' to his wife Hannah, and later, to the three of his four children (2001: 150) who accompanied him on expeditions at various times and on various occasions. It is interesting to note that, as with the present case, these trips are billed fairly consistently as the Major's expeditions.<sup>582</sup> Here we will seek to challenge the status quo by considering this collection more closely.

Antoinette, for whom at the age of twenty-one Zululand was her first expedition, would have been influenced by her father's field collecting methods, as sketched above.<sup>583</sup> Although she did not receive formal tertiary education (Moore 2012: 10), Antoinette would have been well aware of current anthropological principles and practices. For example, in 1933 she volunteered at Oxford University's Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) under its curator Henry Balfour, sitting in on some of his lectures (Moore 2012: 10), and the following year she attended the first International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held under the auspices of the RAI at University College London.<sup>584</sup> In preparation for the expedition it is possible that Antoinette consulted *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (N&Q) published by the RAI, a library copy of the fifth edition of which (1929) is housed by the PCM and many of whose guidelines regarding collecting practices Antoinette seems, like her father, to have followed (see for example N&Q 1929: 383) (see Chapter 2). Balfour and Braunholtz, his counterpart at the BM, had both contributed to that publication and were Powell-Cotton family friends (Nicklin 2001: 151; Moore 2012: 10). Nicklin states that '[f]rom the early days of his travel and collecting, Major Powell-Cotton collaborated with the Ethnography Department of the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, and presented specimens to both institutions' (2001: 151). While both these institutions received objects from the Zululand expedition, 'collaboration', at least as far as the BM is concerned, may be too strong a term.<sup>585</sup> Rather, it is true to say that the Major consulted with the BM, and did so from early on in his exploring career.<sup>586</sup> Such were the links between the BM and the PCM that Braunholtz and Adrian Digby, his junior in the Department, from time to time 'would be invited to Quex to view new consignments

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<sup>582</sup> For example, Nicklin 1981 and 2001.

<sup>583</sup> She turned twenty-two during the expedition.

<sup>584</sup> I am grateful to Hazel Basford for brining my attention to a copy of the Congress guide housed in the PCM libraries marked 'T.P.C' [Tony Powell-Cotton] (01/08/2017).

<sup>585</sup> The nature of the relationship with the PRM is beyond the scope of the present study.

<sup>586</sup> For example, ahead of his first trip to East Africa he asked then Keeper C.H. Read 'is there anything you specially want from those regions?' (BEP P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to C.H. Read, 29/08/1899).

from the field, and advise as to classification and the collection of further specimens' (Nicklin 2001: 151).<sup>587</sup>

Letters between the Major and Braunholtz, preserved in the PCM archives, show that Powell-Cotton wrote to the curator the month before departing for SA saying 'Tony, our No 3, is sailing with me on the 8th of next month to Zululand. Can you give her any tips what to look out for?' (PCM 3.1.12/79 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.J. Braunholtz, 19/05/1935). Braunholtz responds, giving the names of a number of museum and other people in Natal (PCM 3.1.12/80 H.J. Braunholtz to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 02/06/1935) as well as a short suggested reading list 'on the Zulu' (PCM 3.1.12/81 H.J. Braunholtz to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 03/06/1935).<sup>588</sup> Unlike the Natural History Museum, Braunholtz does not go so far as to submit a list of 'desiderata' for the BM.<sup>589</sup> However, he indicates that he is reliably informed 'that much of the Zulu country is relatively unaffected by *foreign influence*, as far as their life & material culture are concerned' and that there are various technologies 'to observe', including 'pottery[,] basketry, smithing...skin-dressing...woodcarving'; he also expresses an interest in 'films of Zulu technology' (PCM 3.1.12/80 H.J. Braunholtz to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 02/06/1935 emphasis mine). Reading between the lines, it is possible to say that Braunholtz expressed a bias for objects of a certain type, and preferably ones free of European/white influence.

Like the expedition to Angola, which Antoinette together with her older sister Diana embarked upon shortly after the Zululand trip, this was 'not an official "mission"...but a private undertaking, in which the British Museum, as a probable beneficiary, took a friendly interest' (GC H.J. Braunholtz '...re the expedition of the Misses Powell-Cotton to Angola', 27/05/1936: 1).<sup>590</sup> Aside from transportation between Birchington and London, paid 'carriage forward' (PCM 3.1.15/198 G.F. Pinfold to H.J. Braunholtz, 04/03/1936), there is no suggestion that the BM offered any financial support to the expedition. Indeed, according to the BM accessions register, the collection was '*[p]resented* by Major P.H.G. Powell-Cotton & Miss Antoinette Powell Cotton [sic]' (emphasis mine). This information is replicated, and evidently drawn from, the collection's corresponding Eth Doc cited in the

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<sup>587</sup> At the time of research, these links continued to be maintained with a BM curator being a Trustee of the PCM.

<sup>588</sup> Viz., Gibson (1911); Bryant (1929 '1932' [sic]); Kidd (1904; 1906).

<sup>589</sup> See document headed 'THE BRITISH MUSEUM DESIDERATA FROM ZULULAND' (in PCM DOC.6.29 box 2/3).

<sup>590</sup> This typescript document appears to be a draft, the last page of which is signed and dated by Braunholtz. It addresses complaints raised against the Powell-Cotton sisters in despatch No.21 of 28/03/1936, which, according to a reference note at the top of the document, was from the Consul-General at Loanda (now Luanda) and inserted into a letter dated 21/05/1936 from Sir Stephen Gaselee to Sir George Hill. Hill was the then Director and Principal Librarian of the BM.

register (now known as Eth Doc 74) (**Fig. 66**). Neither the register nor the Eth Doc indicates that Antoinette was the field collector responsible for assembling the collection. (Even the *Donations Book* entry states that the 'Large Ethnographical series, from N. Zululand, [was] collected by the donors in 1935'.) For evidence of that and for insight into the collection, we need to consider the objects themselves and examine the relevant photographs housed in AOA's Pictorial Collection as well as consult, in the absence of further information and only scant correspondence, the archives at the PCM.

The PCM's online database describes their DOC.6.29, 'Zululand 1935', as '[d]ocuments generated through the activities of an expedition to Zululand...[where] Major Powell-Cotton was accompanied by his daughter Antoinette Powell-Cotton', citing the Major as both the 'Maker' and 'Field Collector' of this archival material.<sup>591</sup> This trip 'package', as it is known within the Museum, comprises three solander boxes containing an assortment of paperwork relative to the expedition, including some ephemera (for example publicity pamphlets) and other items such as notebooks, official documents and some correspondence.<sup>592</sup> Of particular pertinence to the present study are what Antoinette referred to as her 'carbon book' and a series of loose pages that constitute her diary.<sup>593</sup> The carbon book is a small, commercially produced duplicate memorandum book in which Antoinette kept a numbered, running list of all material culture acquisitions made during the expedition, over 800 entries in total (**Fig. 67**). The numbers, referred to in PCM documentation as 'field numbers', correspond with those she wrote on small card 'tickets' which she diligently attached to the objects once back at camp (**Fig. 68**).<sup>594</sup> (Some of the BM objects still retain these labels.) Her field notes, written on pieces of lined exercise paper, take the form of diary entries, which at times refer back to the carbon book and give further details regarding the field collection of objects and other daily happenings (**Fig. 69**). Both these sources – the carbon book and diary – are hand written (some entries are more legible than others) and give the impression of having been committed to paper soon after each event.<sup>595</sup>

<sup>591</sup> <http://pcm.quexpark.co.uk/view.php?id=2972&database=adv> (last accessed 31/07/2017). The online database indicates there is '[o]ne box', but there are in fact three. The boxes were at the time of my study visits, 03/06/2015 and 01/09/2017, incorrectly labeled '6/30' instead of '6/29'. Hazel Basford has confirmed the correct accession number as 'DOC.6.29'(pers. comm. 01/09/2017). For the sake of clarity, when referencing this source, I have prefixed it with 'PCM' and specified the boxes (i.e. PCM DOC.6.29 1/3, 2/3 or 3/3).

<sup>592</sup> Hazel Basford (pers. comm. 03/06/2015).

<sup>593</sup> See for example her diary (PCM APC Diary 21/07/1935: 5).

<sup>594</sup> For example, on 14/09/1935 Antoinette notes in her diary that she '[t]icketed curios' (PCM APC Diary 14/09/1935: 22).

<sup>595</sup> At the time of my research visits, both Antoinette's diary and her carbon book were stored in PCM DOC.6.29 box 3/3. For ease of reference, I have cited these sources as follows: PCM [Powell-Cotton Museum] APC [Antoinette Powell-Cotton] Diary + date of entry + page number; PCM APC Zululand



The archives at the PCM also hold other material pertaining to the expedition. This includes the Major's diary (and transcription),<sup>596</sup> family correspondence – apparently excluding that of Antoinette—<sup>597</sup> and photographs (but not film, as none seems to have survived, which must have been a disappointment, not least for Braunholtz).<sup>598</sup> A large number of loose photographs and postcards from the Zululand expedition are housed in a solander box, and a selection is mounted into two virtually identical photograph albums each labeled 'ZULULAND 1935', one faintly marked on the inside cover 'T's copy' (Tony's copy).<sup>599</sup> The Powell-Cottons travelled to SA with a number of cameras, a 'Kodak' and a 'Binoc' belonging to the Major and a third of as yet uncertain make, which Antoinette mainly used.<sup>600</sup> Between them, Antoinette and her father took a good many photographs during their trip. They kept track of their shots by way of running, numbered and briefly descriptive lists.<sup>601</sup> In many cases it is possible to marry up these entries with the photographs to which they refer, thanks to reference numbers written on the reverse of individual, loose photographs and/or cited in album captions.

Taken together, these three sources – Antoinette's carbon book, her diary and the photographs – collectively with other material help to shed further light on the objects and photographs at the BM. Before further delving into Antoinette's collecting methods and practices, as gleaned from these sources, and discussing some of the instances where it

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1935 Carbon Book + page number. PCM DOC.6.29 boxes 1/3 and 2/3 contain, among other things, the Major's (unindexed) correspondence. Further Major correspondence (indexed) housed separately was consulted ('British Museum Correspondence' and 'PHG → Hannah [wife] 1935 ZULULAND' (hence some of the Major's correspondence, as cited, includes reference numbers and others do not) as well as a typescript transcription of his diary from the period.

<sup>596</sup> I consulted the transcription, which I reference as 'PCM PHGPC Diary [+ date]'.

<sup>597</sup> Per Hazel Basford, if Antoinette wrote home, which is likely, this material has not as yet been located or indexed (pers. comm. 01/08/2017).

<sup>598</sup> Despite my having found a number of references in the PCM archives to film having been employed during the expedition, no film footage appears to have survived (pers. comm. Hazel Basford, 01/08/2017). For a list of Powell-Cotton films, which excludes Zululand, see Nicklin 1981: 41. The originals are housed at the British Film Institute (BFI) – see also BFI National Archive's database <http://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web/results> (last accessed 29/07/2017). Somewhat misleadingly, the BFI cites the Major as 'Director' (also 'Director of Photography' or responsible for 'Photography') in all its Powell-Cotton holdings, including on expeditions that he personally did not undertake.

<sup>599</sup> PCM acc. nos. 4.1.41 (brown cover) and 4.1.42 (charcoal cover, marked 'T's copy' at front) respectively. The albums contain the same images, occasionally configured differently on a page. 4.1.41, which has a brown cover, is more complete than 4.1.42 as the captions, written by Pinfold, are generally more detailed. According to Hazel Basford, Pinfold probably obtained the information from Antoinette and/or referred to her notes (i.e. carbon book and diary) (pers. comm. 01/08/2017).

<sup>600</sup> Presumably a Kodak – see red notebook 'ZULU 1935 Photos' (PCM DOC.6.29 box 3/3). I have been unable to trace manufacture details of the Binoc.

<sup>601</sup> Antoinette's list see her carbon book pp 53-54 and for the Major's see notebook entitled 'ZULU 1935 Photos' (PCM DOC.6.29, box 3/3).

is possible to reconnect African people with objects, further consideration needs to be given to the fieldsite(s), and to the Powell-Cotton Zululand expedition.

### **2.3 In and around the Mkuzi and Hluhluwe game reserves, Northern Zululand<sup>602</sup>**

On 8 June 1935 Major Powell-Cotton and Antoinette set sail from Southampton on board the passenger liner *SS Wangoni* on what was to be a four-month trip away from home.<sup>603</sup> During the course of the outbound journey they stopped off at several South African port cities before making their way inland to Natal's provincial capital, Pietermaritzburg, then back to Durban where they had disembarked.<sup>604</sup> From Durban they ventured further up the eastern seaboard to north-eastern Zululand where they were based between 12 July and 8 October, a period of just less than three months. During this time in that part of Natal province they set up camp, first at Mkuzi game reserve and second at Hluhluwe game reserve, on both occasions apparently just within the boundary of the respective sanctuary.<sup>605</sup>

Situated inland of an estuary, Mkuzi to the north and Hluhluwe further south, the reserves fell within the respective magisterial districts of Ubombo and Hlabisa and had been designated during the colonial period. It appears they were intended, along with a few other sanctuaries also located in northern Zululand, to mitigate the problem of game depletion – caused mainly by white hunters, sport and otherwise<sup>606</sup> – and also to bolster stock for continued sport hunting among a white elite.<sup>607</sup> Shaka kaSenzangakhona (c.1787–1828), the first Zulu king, is also known to have set aside an area within the kingdom where no hunting was allowed (Ellis 1993/4: 29).<sup>608</sup> Although he and successive Zulu kings maintained this valley sanctuary and controlled the hunting of big game, whites were seemingly given increasingly more leeway (see Ellis 1993/4: 28- 29).<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> The orthography of 'Mkuzi' varies; here I follow the form common at the time, e.g. Potter (1934). See also Brooks (2004; 2005).

<sup>603</sup> They returned on 8 November.

<sup>604</sup> The return journey entailed stopping off at the same South African cities.

<sup>605</sup> At both the start and end of their time in Zululand, the Powell-Cottons lodged in nearby Mtubatuba.

<sup>606</sup> This was a problem in southern Africa more generally (see Brown 2008: 299 citing MacKenzie 1988; Carruthers 2008: 207).

<sup>607</sup> As had occurred earlier in Natal with the protection of wildlife there (see Ellis 1993/4: 30).

<sup>608</sup> There is evidence that he hunted in northern Zululand, specifically in what would become the Umfolozi game reserve, close to and immediately south of Hluhluwe (see Hall: 1977). See also 'History of Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park' <http://wildlifeact.com/about-wildlife-act/reserves-we-work-on/hluhluwe-imfolozi-game-reserve/> (last accessed 06/07/2017). The two parks are now joined and known as Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park.

<sup>609</sup> Beverley Ellis suggests that the kings may not have realized how destructive white hunting methods were, which were unlike Zulu practices (Ellis 1993/4: 29).

Despite these earlier interventions by Shaka and others, Hluhluwe, along with nearby Umfolozi also proclaimed a reserve in 1895 (together now known as the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park), is generally considered the oldest game reserve in Africa.<sup>610</sup> (Although more precisely it can be said to be the first in *colonial* Africa (Brooks 2005: 222), of which it is a product.) The proclamation of Hluhluwe followed the annexation of Zululand to the crown in 1887, a decade-long period when, as the Colony of Zululand, it was a British crown colony (the independent Zulu kingdom, as previously mentioned, having been destroyed by the British in 1879 and subsequently divided into 13 chiefdoms). Hluhluwe's reserve status was maintained in 1897 when Zululand was annexed to the Colony of Natal, which itself had been given responsible government in 1893, and was upheld within the Union of South Africa in 1910. Mkuzi, the larger reserve to the north of Hluhluwe, was proclaimed soon thereafter in 1912. However, it was not long before the sanctuaries were under threat.

Previously barred to white settlement, except in limited numbers in the case of trading stores and Christian mission stations (Laband 2003: 53), Zululand was opened up to whites in the early 1900s (Ellis 1993/4: 37).<sup>611</sup> Government settlements for white farmers were established at Mkuzi and Hluhluwe in the 1920s (Brown 2008: 302; Lincoln 1995: 52).<sup>612</sup> White farmers, together with certain officials, had already begun calling for the closure of game reserves. Not only did they see Zululand as 'ideal cattle country' (Brown 2008: 288) and well-suited to crops, but also, more immediately, they blamed the wild animals for outbreaks of *nagana*, the then little understood animal form of sleeping sickness spread from immune wildlife to livestock by tsetse flies.<sup>613</sup> During the 1930s the Natal provincial administration continued to battle government, which generally favoured the abolition of the game reserves.<sup>614</sup> In a 'clever move' (Brooks 2004: 87) the provincial administration had set up a Game Advisory Committee in 1928 'to try to deal with the game reserves and *nagana* issue in Zululand' (2004: 85 fn. 33).

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<sup>610</sup> 'Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is the oldest proclaimed protected area on the African continent' (see 'History of Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park' <http://wildlifeact.com/about-wildlife-act/reserves-we-work-on/hluhluwe-imfolozi-game-reserve/> (last accessed 06/07/ 2017)).

<sup>611</sup> In this article, historian John Laband discusses the relatively small number of 'squatters', Europeans or people of European/part European descent, who settled in Zululand prior to its opening up to settlers.

<sup>612</sup> These areas adjoined the sanctuaries (see map in Zululand Game Reserve and Parks Committee 1937: between pp 52 & 53). They also share their names with the small towns of Mkuze and Hluhluwe.

<sup>613</sup> For a discussion of the disease in the area and attempts, firstly, to understand, and then to eradicate and later control it, see Brown 2008. In her diary, Antoinette mentions the apparent ravages of the disease. For example she reports passing a 'very dilapidated [sic] kraal' and being told there had been 'many cattle [there]...wiped out by fly' (PCM APC Diary 18/07/1935: 4).

<sup>614</sup> For a synopsis see Charter (1934).

One strategy employed to avert the de-proclamation of the game reserves was to promote them as tourist destinations to a wider 'European' audience, both domestic and foreign, rather than have them remain closed-off spaces for game preservation, scientific research and the occasional elite, white sport-hunter.<sup>615</sup> This occurred in the early 1930s with the launch of the first marketing campaign, notably the publication of the booklet *Natal's Nature Sanctuaries in Zululand* (1934) (Brooks 2005: 224), with which, as mentioned, Major Powell-Cotton will have been familiar. It is perhaps no coincidence that this commercial drive occurred during a decade marked by drought and depression, the drier weather apparently limiting outbreaks of *nagana* (Ellis 1993/4: 41) – although the upper areas of Hluhluwe were free of the disease anyway (Brooks 2005: 225). Hluhluwe was the first game reserve in Zululand to be visited by the public – regularly since 1932 (Brooks 2004: 100) – and it emerged as 'the centre of tourism in Zululand' (Brooks 2005: 225). Indeed, 702 visitors were recorded at Hluhluwe for 1935, more than double the previous year (Potter 1936: 91).<sup>616</sup> The efforts of Captain Harold B. Potter, who had been appointed Game Conservator in the late 1920s and based himself on that reserve (Ellis 1993/4: 40-41), are said to have been a contributing factor (Brooks 2005: 226).

Also known as Mthwazi,<sup>617</sup> Potter was Zululand Conservator between 1929 and 1950.<sup>618</sup> Although based at Hluhluwe game reserve (Ellis 1993/4: 40-41), as mentioned, Potter was also responsible for Mkuzi game reserve some 45 miles north 'as the crow flies', but significantly further away by track and/or road (Charter 1934: 1).<sup>619</sup> He is credited with promoting the Zululand game reserves as tourist destinations at a time when they were under constant threat of closure, often taking it upon himself to act as 'personal host and guide' to visitors (Brooks 2005: 226).<sup>620</sup> Himself a keen hunter, Potter was however rather

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<sup>615</sup> The *OELD* defines a game reserve as 'a large area of land set aside as a protected area for wild animals'. At first glance, hunting may seem at odds with preservation, but according to KZN Wildlife, sport hunting 'can make a significant contribution to wildlife conservation', presumably for reasons of carrying capacity <http://www.kznwildlife.com/conservation/management/hunting-permits.html> (last accessed 06/07/2017). Controlled hunting evidently took place in the reserves – for details of historical permits and costing see Ellis 1993/4.

<sup>616</sup> The author of this article, entitled 'Zululand. Game Reserve. Report of Conservator, 1935', is unstated. However, it has been assumed here that the piece was written by H.B. Potter, who was Zululand Conservator at the time.

<sup>617</sup> Sometimes also spelled 'Mtwazi', which has the dual meaning of monkey-rope (a thorny vine) and 'the tall one' (Brooks 2001: 431 fn. 91). More properly this isiZulu personal name is uMthwazi (pers. comm. John Wright, 22/01/2019).

<sup>618</sup> <http://apgvn.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/tribute-to-mtwazis-daughter-joan.html> (last accessed 14/08/2017).

<sup>619</sup> A.E. Charter is evidently the author of PCM UL/J4 (GFP): 'Game Preservation in Zululand' published as '[a]n address given by the Provincial Secretary of Natal' (Charter 1934: 1), a position Charter held since 1928 (Brooks 2011: x), and is therefore cited in this thesis under his name.

<sup>620</sup> See Brooks (2005: 226); also <http://apgvn.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/tribute-to-mtwazis-daughter-joan.html>

preoccupied with the Game Reserves Commission at the time of the Powell-Cotton's visit.<sup>621</sup> Nonetheless, he met with them upon their arrival in Zululand at Mtubatuba railway station and caught up with them periodically during their stay. He also facilitated the staffing of the expedition.

Apparently well-liked by his African subordinates (Brooks 2005: 229 & 231), Potter had a team of Game Guards working for him – Game Guard being the highest achievable rank for a black man in the reserves at that time, the role of Game Ranger and the even more senior Game Conservator being reserved for whites (Brooks 2005: 229). Although it is said that prior to 1910 Game Guards had enjoyed greater prestige and autonomy, under Potter in the early 1930s they were actually given more responsibility (Brooks 2005: 229) – as evidenced by the fact that, at around the time of the Powell-Cotton expedition, Mkuzi was solely staffed by black Game Guards (Ellis 1993/4: 42).<sup>622</sup> Despite being subordinate to Rangers and Conservators, Game Guards had a certain status and whites were reliant on them as guides and sources of local knowledge. For their part, the reserves offered locals a form of non-migrant labour, not only as game guards but also, for example, during times of game culling and tsetse fly trapping (Brooks 2005: 230).<sup>623</sup> In 1932 there were approximately 100 black people (presumably mostly men) working in and around the game reserves (Brooks 2005: 230). It is said that the reserves provided employment, status (particularly in the case of Game Guards) and meat, which would be periodically distributed (Brooks 2005: 230). According to Potter most of the Game Guards were recruited from among the 'natives', who were 'of a good type', living in the 'corridor' (Brooks 2005: 228), a piece of land between the Hluhluwe game reserve and Umfolozi game reserve to the south, which as mentioned would later be incorporated to form a greater reserve. Correspondence between the Major and Potter reveals that the Game Guards at Mkuzi, acting under instruction from Potter, were responsible for recruiting the requisite local staff for the expedition, viz. a 'Cook...Tent boy...Hunter and...[a] man to do skins' (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 21/05/1935).<sup>624</sup> It was these men<sup>625</sup> recruited by the Game Guards who would act as interlocutors and agents for Antoinette.

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(last accessed 14/08/2017).

<sup>621</sup> This entailed his being away from the reserves for a period as well as a visit paid by the Commission at the same time as the Powell-Cotton's (see PCM H.B. Potter to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 18/08/1935). In his letter, Potter calls it 'this Game Reserve [sic] Commission'. However, it was official known as the Game Reserves Commission (Ellis 1993/4: 38).

<sup>622</sup> In his report for 1933, Potter indicates that at Hluhluwe he had 'one European Ranger and eighteen Native Game Guards', while at Mkuzi there were 'six Native game guards' (Potter 1934: 65-66).

<sup>623</sup> Brooks notes that there was some overlap between men employed as Game Guards and these *nagana* workers (Brooks 2005: 230).

<sup>624</sup> See also PCM H.B. Potter to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 01/07/1935.

<sup>625</sup> Some may have been former Game Guards.

Potter also arranged for one of his former Game Rangers to meet the Powell-Cottons in Durban and to accompany them during the expedition. Ernest Dalton Lightening, known as Mali Ya Vusa but simply referred to by the Powell-Cottons as 'Lightening',<sup>626</sup> was a former soldier and, not unusually for a Ranger, a former policeman.<sup>627</sup> Lightening's presence would have been required particularly when going about the reserves on foot while viewing and tracking game and his job for the Powell-Cottons was in part, as he patronisingly saw it, 'bossing up the boys' (PCM E.D. Lightening to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 21/08/1935), the above-mentioned local black men attached to the expedition.<sup>628</sup> The Powell-Cottons had a somewhat fraught relationship with Lightening, who, among other things helped with interpreting, although Antoinette complained that when it came to items of material culture he was 'hopeless at getting details & at prices' (PCM APC Diary 25/07/1935: 7).<sup>629</sup>

Major Powell-Cotton had ultimately chosen to visit northern Zululand for hunting reasons and delegated the collecting of items of material culture, what he called 'the curio stunt', entirely to Antoinette.<sup>630</sup> That it was remote 'Zulu country' of the kind Braunholtz may have had in mind is in some ways coincidental.<sup>631</sup> Writing to Potter ahead of the trip by way of introduction to the conservator, the Major, who had as yet 'not shot further south than Angola', states that he was 'anxious to bag Nyala, Lechwe and indeed any of the southern game' (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 21/01/1935).<sup>632</sup> Inyala (nyala)<sup>633</sup> is described in his copy of the recently published, above-mentioned booklet, *Natal's Nature Sanctuaries in Zululand*, as 'the most beautiful of all Antelopes' whose 'natural home' was

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<sup>626</sup> The personal name uMaliyavusa is from *imali iyavusa*, literally meaning 'the money raises' or 'rouses up' or 'restores' (pers. comm. John Wright, 19/01/2019).

<sup>627</sup> For biographical details, see <https://angloboerwar.com/forum/5-medals-and-awards/26086-his-ways-and-mine-are-quite-different-the-e-d-lightening-story> (last accessed 02/09/2017).

<sup>628</sup> In the Zululand reserves the 'protection of a Game Ranger' was apparently required to view game, unlike the Kruger National Park in the Transvaal where it was possible to successfully view wildlife from a motor vehicle (Charter 1934: 10). However, elsewhere it is suggested that such 'roaming...through the Reserve' could be done if accompanied by a Game Guard (Zululand Game Reserve and Parks Committee 1937: 51).

<sup>629</sup> Writing to his wife, Hannah, while Lightening was away for a period following his fall from their hire lorry, the Major reports 'various little complications through one not being able to speak the language' (PCM 2.3.3/273 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H. Powell-Cotton, 23/8/1935).

<sup>630</sup> PCM 2.3.3/271 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H. Powell-Cotton, 01/08/1935.

<sup>631</sup> However, Braunholtz did not specifically mention this part of Zululand (see PCM 3.1.12/80 H.J. Braunholtz to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 02/06/1935).

<sup>632</sup> Powell-Cotton acknowledges having read Potter's report in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire* (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 21/01/1935), probably Potter (1934).

<sup>633</sup> See PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 21/05/1935.

the Mkusi game reserve (du Plessis and Warren 1934: no page)<sup>634</sup> (and also found to a lesser extent at Hluhluwe (Charter 1934: 10)). In his letter to Potter, the Major acknowledges having read his report in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*. Here Potter describes the Hluhluwe and Mkuzi reserves as being 'fully stocked up to their carrying capacity' and thus in need of some 'thinning out' under his direction (Potter 1934: 68). Although shooting within the sanctuaries by anyone other than reserve staff had become unusual, the Major nonetheless had hoped to secure permission to shoot in the game reserves. Rather unsurprisingly the Provincial Secretary, based in Pietermaritzburg (Potter's superior to whom he had referred Powell-Cotton),<sup>635</sup> issued the Major with a permit 'to kill or capture two pairs of any variety of Protected Birds or Mammals in Zululand *outside* the Game Reserves', bar the black or white rhinoceros or the hippopotamus.<sup>636</sup> According to this document, the onus fell on the Major to obtain the necessary permissions from 'the owner or occupier' to enter land in pursuit of game, which, in the absence of perimeter fences, were free to roam outside of the reserves. Armed with the permit the Powell-Cottons headed for northern Zululand, via Durban, and after spending the night in lodgings at Mtubatuba set out in a hired lorry for the first of their two camps.

#### **2.4 Locating locations ('native' and otherwise), agents and agency**

Like game reserves, native reserves were a colonial construct – there had been no native reserves in Zululand prior to 1887, the year it was annexed to the British Crown (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 12). The 1913 Land Act confirmed the native reserves in Zululand (the equivalent of native locations as they were termed in Natal) 'as they stood' (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 12). That is to say since their demarcation by the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission of 1902-1904, which rendered blacks 'liable for summary removal to the [native] reserves' (Laband 2003: 54).<sup>637</sup> In allocating land for white settlement, the Commission's report apparently omitted from mention the game reserves, which fell mostly in the 'alienable' part of Zululand, although '[a] very small part of Hluhluwe Reserve...lay in 'Native Territory' (Ellis 1993/4: 37). It is unclear exactly where this area of overlap between native and nature reserve may have been. The authorities

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<sup>634</sup> Powell-Cotton Museum libraries reference UL/J2. This copy is date stamped 15/05/1935, which suggests it arrived by post on that day (i.e. before the expedition took place) (pers. comm. Hazel Basford, 01/08/2017).

<sup>635</sup> PCM H.B. Potter to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 01/07/1935. In his diary, the Major records having visited A.E. Charter, the Provincial Secretary, who 'gave us a free shooting licence' (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton Diary 08/07/1935).

<sup>636</sup> Emphasis mine. See 'Special Permit' (PCM DOC.6.29 box 2/3). This must have been somewhat of a disappointment to the Major, who had hoped to shoot a white rhinoceros 'for comparison with [his] Northern one' (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 06/06/1935).

<sup>637</sup> Here Laband makes specific reference to removal from land designated for white farms.

had assigned numbers to the Zululand native reserves, viz. Nos.1-21.<sup>638</sup> Government ethnologist, N.J. van Warmelo's map in his *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (published in 1935, the very year of the Powell-Cotton expedition) labels the reserves not by number but according to 'tribe'. Using this and other official maps, ones which cite these numbers,<sup>639</sup> it becomes apparent that Mkuzi was flanked by native reserves No.13 and No.2 – respectively recorded as being populated by the abakwaJobe under Chief Zidlele (van Warmelo 1935: 73) and the abakwaMyeni under Chief Gwalagwala (van Warmelo 1935: 77)<sup>640</sup> – while Hluhluwe lay between No.12 and No.3 – peopled respectively mostly by the abakwaMdletye under Chief Vumicala (van Warmelo 1935: 76)<sup>641</sup> and by the abakwaMpukunyoni under Chief Mtubatuba (van Warmelo 1935: 77).<sup>642</sup> However, aside from a passing comment about Chief Mtubatuba kaSomkhele (c.1864—1954), who gave his name to the small town and about whom she heard some gossip, Antoinette makes no mention of any of the above-mentioned people(s) or places.<sup>643</sup> Antoinette evidently visited at least some of these native reserves, although it is not clear if she would have required or indeed obtained a permit to do so.<sup>644</sup>

Notwithstanding the afore-mentioned reputation of Powell-Cotton material culture collections for being well documented – and despite the fact that the objects in question, in most cases, came to the BM with details of one of three collection 'places' (i.e. find-spots) — archival sources, specifically Antoinette's carbon book and diary, do not indicate these locations with much clarity.<sup>645</sup> It transpires that what at first glance appear to be specific *collection sites* as cited by the list forwarded to the BM by the PCM, and copied over into the accessions register, refer in actual fact to the Powell-Cottons' *camp sites*.<sup>646</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> For a full list, see Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 21.

<sup>639</sup> See maps in Curson (1928: no page) and Zululand Game Reserve and Parks Committee (1937: no page).

<sup>640</sup> Cf. entries in Bryant (1929: 705).

<sup>641</sup> The southern part of native reserve No.12 appears on van Warmelo's map as having been occupied apparently by two sections of the abakwaHlabisa, one under Chief Mthekelezi and the other under Chief Muziwamandla. Cf. entry in Bryant (1929: 701).

<sup>642</sup> Cf. entry in Bryant (1929: 704).

<sup>643</sup> PCM APC Diary 'Fri' no date [04/10/1935]: 28. For biographical information regarding this chief see images of his memorial at Mtubatuba, for example [https://www.eggssa.org/library/main.php?g2\\_itemId=3176214](https://www.eggssa.org/library/main.php?g2_itemId=3176214) (last accessed 30/08/2017).

<sup>644</sup> Apparently permits were necessary to visit native reserves (PCM 3.1.12/80 H.J. Brauholtz to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 02/06/1935). 'Europeans [whites] entering [them]... without permit [were] liable to prosecution', as was the case with the Valley of 1,000 Hills reserve advertised by this Durban coach tour flyer (PCM DOC.6.29 box 1/3, 'Maid of the Mountains Comfort Coach Excursions' pamphlet).

<sup>645</sup> See BM Eth Doc 74.

<sup>646</sup> With the exception of 'Hlabisa' where Antoinette acquired one item and 'Matuba [Mtubatuba]...Morrison's Store' (see Eth Doc 74), the place where she acquired nine wire body ornaments, which, like the native reserves, will be discussed below.



What Antoinette notes as 'Mkuzi',<sup>647</sup> and 'Manzibovu' get translated as 'M'Kusi' and 'Manzibovu [sic] Hluhluwe *Native Reserve*',<sup>648</sup> furnished in many instances with the respective latitude and longitude.<sup>649</sup> The two sets of coordinates point,<sup>650</sup> respectively, to a spot just within Mkusi game reserve and to a locality a short distance to the west of the northernmost tip of Hluhluwe game reserve in what would have been native reserve No.12, that of the abakwaMdletye. (The actual spot of this second site is probably meant to lie just within or without the Hluhluwe game reserve itself,<sup>651</sup> somewhere near its upper 'peaked' border and along the Manzibomvu River.<sup>652</sup> When writing to the Major, aide Lightening refers to this second campsite as 'Manzibomvu camp' (PCM E.D. Lightening to P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, 21/08/1935).)<sup>653</sup>

These issues with the translation, as it were, of information from one source to another, and then from one institution to another, are understandable especially when one considers their originating textual sources: Antoinette's diary and carbon book. As already mentioned, both appear to have been written in haste while in the field and the handwriting is at times difficult to decipher. Antoinette's usually brief diary entries mention anything from everyday goings on at camp, to game-spotting and hunting, to the collecting and observing of objects – narratives that tend to be descriptive more than anything else.<sup>654</sup> For example, in an unusually long, extended two-page account of '[a] Zulu marriage ceremonial'<sup>655</sup> she focuses almost solely on what people were wearing aside

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<sup>647</sup> 'Mkusi Reserve' and 'Umkusi' (edited to 'Mkuse') (PCM APC Diary 13/07/1935: 1); also 'Mkuzi' (PCM APC Diary 13/08/1935: 14).

<sup>648</sup> Emphasis mine. A possibly later annotation in Antoinette's carbon book (in pencil, above the place name) appears to give further information about 'Manzibovu'. It reads 'Native Reserve c 15 [?] miles] from Hluhluwe Station...' (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 10).

<sup>649</sup> As well as some other details, such as the date of collection. According to Hazel Basford the coordinates were probably plotted once the Powell-Cottons had returned home as doing so would not have been straightforward at that time (pers. comm. 01/09/2017).

<sup>650</sup> Given as '27.40 S; 32.12 E' and '32.30 E; 28 S' (see Eth Doc 74) and when entered into Google Maps as 27 40 S, 32 12 E and 28 S, 32 3 E respectively (last accessed 23/08/2017).

<sup>651</sup> If the Powell-Cottons pitched their tents within the borders of the Hluhluwe game reserve, they did so apparently away from other visitors who tended to stay in one of the rest huts located near Potter's home base at Hilltop Camp, close to the Nzimane River and the reserve's southern border. The building of rest huts commenced in 1933 (Potter 1934: 67) and by 1935 they could accommodate twenty staying visitors at Hluhluwe. Mkuzi, with one cottage only, could accommodate up to twelve visitors (Zululand. Game Department 1935: 54).

<sup>652</sup> Also sometimes spelled 'Manzabomvu' — this river changes its name from Macabuzela around the point of its entry into the sanctuary (see Google Maps, last accessed 23/08/2017).

<sup>653</sup> It was quite possibly a site known to hunters. In his account of shooting trips in Southeast Africa, big game hunter F.R.N. Findlay mentions camping 'on the Manzibomvu River' in Zululand (Findlay 1903: 197). For reference to 'hunters' camps outside the Game Reserve' see annual report for 1934 (Zululand. Game Department 1935: 53). It is not clear if this refers to the Umfolosi Reserve or to Zululand game reserves more generally.

<sup>654</sup> She participated in hunting to some extent.

<sup>655</sup> Amended from 'wedding'.

from mentioning that the bridegroom was 'strutting [sic] ~~about~~ & ordering everyone about' and that the 'chorus girls' danced 'in two rows' (PCM APC Diary 25/09/1935: no page). Entries in her carbon book are even briefer: typically a single line entry per item, giving the field number, object name and usually a short description and possibly a few other details. Judging by a legend of abbreviations located towards the front of the notebook, Antoinette aimed to be rather more thorough in the information she recorded than was always actually the case, perhaps because she was relatively inexperienced, this being her first fieldwork. Possibly inspired by *N&Q* it reads:

N.N. = native name of article  
 C. = Chief  
 T. = Tribe  
 K = Kraal  
 L = Locality  
 N = Person to whom it belonged  
 F = Fathers [?] & initial of whatever relation  
 (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 2)

A number of her early carbon book and diary entries do in fact almost record this level of detail, but, with the exception of a single photograph, none pertain to the collection at the BM. This particular photograph, Af,B41.30, shows a young girl standing in front of a dwelling, flanked to one side by another, older girl, a small boy and a few other figures almost entirely out of shot (**Fig. 70**). Unlike the other BM photographs from the collection, this image is unusual in bearing inscriptions in what uniquely appear to be Antoinette's own hand.<sup>656</sup> The text gives several references to various entries in her diary and to another photograph.<sup>657</sup> It also indicates the image's Powell-Cotton reference number 'Z.I.4' (as recorded in her carbon book) and crucially gives a caption, which reads: 'K-[kraal] v[ery] near camp see diary game guards d[daughters?]. . . Loscoche on right'.<sup>658</sup> This named individual, Loschoche, is the young woman from whom Antoinette records having purchased her first Zululand 'curios' in Mkuzi on 19 July, about a week into the expedition and the day before her own twenty-second birthday. Although not named in the diary entry, it is likely that this is the female Antoinette describes as the '[s]martest girl who

<sup>656</sup> The handwriting here matches script confirmed by Hazel Basford as being Antoinette's (pers. comm. 01/09/2017). The other BM photographs have inscriptions in what appear to be in PCM curator Pinfold's hand, where present.

<sup>657</sup> I have not been able to match up all these references.

<sup>658</sup> Here described as 'Native woman by hut at small kraal near Mkusi Camp' (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 53).

was brought down by [her] sister after [the] first exchanges..[and who] wanted only money & would not sell many of her things' (PCM APC Diary 19/07/1935: 5). Antoinette's carbon book reveals that she acquired a number of beadwork adornments literally off Loscoche, who had been wearing them. Loscoche appears to have been a Game Guard's daughter living,<sup>659</sup> according to the carbon book, in a location named as Nqivioene apparently under Chief Idhlala (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 4).<sup>660</sup>

Records at the PCM show that the first expedition object registered by the BM, a shield acquired during Antoinette's second collecting event, can be associated with a named individual. However, the name was not transmitted to the BM where the item is described in the accessions register as a '[c]attle skin shield for dancing [and] stick with Wild Cat pom pom, Isimbi tail', the entry further citing the apparent local term for this kind of shield, *hawu*, and its field collection number, 19.<sup>661</sup> This information for the shield, Af1936,0316.1, is based on the list, which curator at the PCM, G.F. Pinfold, had typed up and posted to Braunholtz the day after despatching the collection to the BM by rail (PCM 3.1.15/198 G.F. Pinfold to H.J. Braunholtz, 04/03/1936). This list, dated March 1936, is now known as Eth Doc 74 and is housed in the BM's ALRC. The Eth Doc indicates that the shield, along with a small basket and a necklet,<sup>662</sup> was collected at 'M'kusi' (i.e. the first camp, within Mkusi game reserve) and that the shield was acquired on 21 July.<sup>663</sup> PCM records indicate that the shield, among Antoinette's earlier acquisitions in SA, came from a man she names as Sulamon.<sup>664</sup> According to her diary, Sulamon 'when [sic] home to [his] kraal & brought back 4 odds' (PCM APC Diary 21/07/1935: 5). Antoinette's carbon book indicates that in exchange for a 6d penknife she obtained this shield and stick as well as a 'dancing stick'; she purchased another two sticks from him for the additional sum of 1/-.<sup>665</sup> Sulamon seems to have been later superseded by a man named Jesse,<sup>666</sup> who along with Fusi, accompanied the Powell-Cottons when they relocated to their second and final camp

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<sup>659</sup> A photograph in the PCM Zululand photo album, mounted directly below their (cropped) print of the photograph under discussion here, includes the same young woman, presumably Loscoche, and is captioned as follows: 'K.II.4 FUSI WITH GAME GUARDS [sic] DAUGHTERS' (PCM album 4.1.41: 16).

<sup>660</sup> Historian John Wright suggests that 'Idhlala' could refer to 'Dlala' (game) or 'Ndlala' (famine) (pers. comm. 19/09/2017).

<sup>661</sup> The isiZulu word '*hawu*' is an expression of surprise – see <https://zu.oxforddictionaries.com/translate/isizulu-english/hawu> (last accessed 24/07/2017), although in former times it was also used to refer to a small type of dancing shield (Bryant 1905: 225).

<sup>662</sup> Af1936,0316.2 and Af1936,0316.3.

<sup>663</sup> The other two items are cited as having been collected on 2 August 1935.

<sup>664</sup> Initially, she referred to him as 'Philamone', but most of these entries have been amended. I therefore refer to this individual as 'Sulamon' for the sake of clarity.

<sup>665</sup> This is confirmed by the Major, who, writing to his wife says 'men generally had day off. One went to his village & brought back a dancing shield, knobkerrie, 2 dancing sticks which we bought for a 6- knife & 1/-.' (PRM 2.3.3/269 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H. Powell-Cotton, 19/07/1935).

<sup>666</sup> See PCM APC Diary 03/08/1935: 11.

at Hluhluwe game reserve where most of the rest of the collection at the BM was assembled.<sup>667</sup>

In as much as Antoinette's carbon book, diary and the expedition photographs reveal her agency as the field-collector, they also show that she was very much reliant on local African agency as shown in the above-mentioned case of the shield. Antoinette enjoyed a remarkable level of access when out 'kraaling', the term she used for her visits to various homesteads,<sup>668</sup> which her father tended to refer to as 'villages'.<sup>669</sup> Very often Antoinette was able to enter homes and look around, almost undoubtedly because she was seemingly always accompanied by one of the local men engaged for the expedition. Many of these 'kraals' were the men's own. For example, she visited and acquired objects at the homesteads of individuals she names as Old David, Marquesa, Whiskers, Zung, Jesse and Fusi.<sup>670</sup> Antoinette also acquired objects directly from some of these men, as discussed above, and sometimes from their family members. Word also quickly got round and, as can be expected, people came to her with objects (**Fig. 71**).

Antoinette was cautious with what she spent on her so-called 'shopping' (PCM APC Diary 16/09/1935: 23). She mostly bought objects for money, duly noting the amount paid for each item next to its assigned number and description in her carbon book. Less often she would barter, usually with safety pins, but also apparently with penknives, which were in great demand, and even on one occasion with her own belt (PCM APC Diary 28/07/1935: 8).<sup>671</sup> Perhaps mindful of *N&Q*'s advice – '[f]or articles which the natives buy and sell, ascertain the current native rate, by piece or by time, and do not largely exceed it' (*N&Q* 1929: 383) – Antoinette drove a hard bargain, as witnessed by her father.<sup>672</sup> She appears to have almost always offered below what was asked for an item – and the locals, in return, negotiated hard. However, cash was not always king: on quite a number of occasions Antoinette records with some frustration not being able to successfully obtain a particular object because the owner refused to part with it.<sup>673</sup> Although not always stated,

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<sup>667</sup> See PCM APC diary 13/08/1935: 14.

<sup>668</sup> See for example PCM APC Diary 07/09/1935: 19; 09/09/1935: 20; 13/09/1935: 21; 15/09/1935: 22.

<sup>669</sup> See the Major's diary and for example PCM 2.3.3/269 P.H.G Powell-Cotton to H. Powell-Cotton, 19/07/1935.

<sup>670</sup> The last individual is also referred to as Maforce or Mafoko (see PCM APC Diary 15/08/1935: 14).

<sup>671</sup> 'Then another [woman] who sold her belt in exchange for mine with few safeties [safety pins] sold python skin'. She also gave out the occasional 'favour', such as sugar and confectionary.

<sup>672</sup> This is confirmed by the Major who observed she is 'good at bargaining' (PCM 2.3.3/271 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H. Powell-Cotton, 01/08/1935).

<sup>673</sup> See for example PCM APC Diary 19/07/1935: 5; 22/07/1935: 6; 02/08/1935: 10; 21/08/1935: 16; 31/08/1935: 18; 01/09/1935: 18; 09/09/1935: 20.

the reasons for withholding objects, also a form of agency, seem to have ranged from presumably the, apparently non-commodifiable, value attached to an item by its owner to the purely practical in the case of the wearer being physically unable to remove an article of adornment.<sup>674</sup> Withholding demonstrates that power relations within the colonial context, although by no means equal, were perhaps more nuanced than what one might expect.

The men also assisted Antoinette by gathering information about objects, of the kind advocated by *N&Q*. It is apparent that she solicited information about objects from the men; for example on one occasion she states '[g]ot some names from Fusi for curios' (PCM APC Diary 02/09/1935: 18) and on another 'showed them many of my things including Mkuzi ones & F- [Father] showed them photos of curios & beasts [and they] recognised them well' (PCM APC Diary 17/09/1935: 23).<sup>675</sup> Some of the men and their families also helped Antoinette logistically by storing and portering her 'shopping', any one spree adding up to a considerable number of objects. Zung's homestead became a particular favourite dropping-off spot, where she would stop 'as usual & [leave] things for [his] wife & kids to bring to camp' (PCM APC Diary 18/09/1935: 24).

Just as the locals at times refused to part with items, Antoinette declined to acquire certain objects either because she deemed them to be too dear or found them otherwise wanting. Although she does not articulate her collecting criteria, at various times she refuses items apparently because they were new, had been made for her – as in the case of a 'new bechu' and 'zinane' (PCM APC Diary 06/09/1935: 19) – or were simply deemed not 'very special' (PCM APC Diary 17/07/1935: 4).<sup>676</sup> Newness was in itself not necessarily a reason to reject an item, as other instances where she acquired or expressed an interest in such articles suggest.<sup>677</sup> However, as the above implies, she was rather more interested in collecting items made for local consumption or already in use. The distinct absence in the collection of what she observed as, and termed, 'European', especially items of clothing suggests that she was interested in collecting 'authentic' African objects rather than what she might have considered 'store stuff' (PCM APC Diary 13/09/1935:

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<sup>674</sup> For example a 'double plait [of ?beads] round waist', which Antoinette states the woman 'couldn't get...off' (PCM APC Diary 28/07/1935: 8).

<sup>675</sup> It is not clear who the 'them' is, but it appears to refer to men she calls 'David's boys'.

<sup>676</sup> A man's back and front apron, respectively. These terms were not found described in Bryant (1905).

<sup>677</sup> For example she offered on a 'new [wooden] milking pot' (PCM APC Diary 15/08/1935: 14).

21).<sup>678</sup> The exclusion, for example, of ‘tyre sandals’ – as far as objects are concerned as she ‘collected’ them by way of photography and description – may well have been linked in her mind to this notion and to ideas about modernity. On at least two occasions, Antoinette mentions seeing men wearing sandals fashioned out of old motor vehicle tyres (see PCM APC Diary 15/07/1935: 2; 02/08/1935: 10). The second time was at ‘Jesse’s kraal’, described as being located ‘on [the] edge of M’quala — flats’ (PCM APC Diary 02/08/1935: 10).<sup>679</sup> The man shown wearing such sandals is Jesse’s brother, a carver, according to Antoinette’s diary entry and a photograph, Af,B41.29 – one of only two Powell-Cotton Zululand expedition photographs lodged at the BM to identify by name any of its subjects (the other is discussed above) (**Fig. 72**). Presumably locally made, possibly within the homestead or at a trading store, such footwear was fairly ubiquitous and appears in a number of photographs. Carel Birkby’s ‘Haggardesque’ adventure novel, *Zulu Journey* (1937), describes Game Guard Induna Mali as wearing ‘motor-tyre sandals’ (Brooks 2005: 225).<sup>680</sup>

That Antoinette had a less ambivalent attitude towards trade good materials is evidenced by the collection. Materials such as glass seed beads, brass buttons, metal wire, cotton thread and cloth all feature to various extents, perhaps because they had been ‘indigenised’ through their fairly ubiquitous incorporation into ‘traditional’ yet evolving forms and functions, particularly of dress and adornment (for a recent study of the indigenisation of *isishweshwe* cloth, see Leeb-du Toit (2017)). The materials themselves would have been available at local trading stores visited by Antoinette. Of the BM accessions, Af1936,0316.16-24, nine metal wire arm and leg ornaments were, according to the Eth Doc and the accessions register entries based on this information, ‘made at Morrison’s Store’ in ‘Matuba’ (Mtubatuba).<sup>681</sup> The objects were in fact made immediately outside the trading store using materials sourced from there. Antoinette records that she ‘[b]ought wristlets etc (sic) from [a] native outside [the] store making them’ and describes

<sup>678</sup> Antoinette mentions locals wearing ‘European dress’ on several occasions (see for example PCM APC Diary 27/07/1935: 8). Photographs taken during the expedition show locals, mostly men, wearing items of European clothing.

<sup>679</sup> Possibly the Makhathini Flats.

<sup>680</sup> The character is based on Mali Mdletshe, Potter’s head Game Guard (Brooks 2005: 229). His second name, as cited by Brooks, might suggest he was of the abakwaMdletye people, whose reserve was immediately adjacent to the Hluhluwe game reserve (see van Warmelo 1935: no page, map 12). ‘Mdletshe’ is an alternative spelling for these people (see Brooks 2005: 221). John Wright suggests that ‘abakwaMdletye’ would now be ‘abakwaMdletshe’ (pers. comm. 19/09/2017). Potter indicates that Mali was based at ‘Masimba just outside the [Umfolosi] Reserve’, below Hluhluwe (Potter 1934: 64).

<sup>681</sup> Jock Morrison had started trading in Zululand in 1918 with one store and went on to buy others, all within the general area visited by the Powell-Cottons. As mentioned, Antoinette indicates visiting the Mtubatuba store, possibly Morrison’s Nyalazi store. For information about Morrison’s various stores, see Whelan (2011) and De Villiers (2016).

in some detail the manufacture process (PCM APC Diary 'Fri' no date [04/10/1935]: 27).<sup>682</sup>

The 'bangle maker' and his paraphernalia were, in fact, along with the cobbler and tailor, familiar features of the Zululand trading store veranda, itself 'an integral part of this regional architecture' (Whelan 2011: 199). 'Most stores' had a bangle maker, a 'local... who would fashion wire into anklets "while you wait"' (Ovens 1999 cited in Whelan 2011: 199).<sup>683</sup> Although anonymous, the person who made these items was apparently a free agent, one of many enterprising black individuals to set up shop outside a white-owned trading store and provide additional, supplementary services to locals (see Whelan 2011: 198-199).<sup>684</sup>

Antoinette took a keen interest in beadwork and 14 of the 61 BM accessions feature beads.<sup>685</sup> Like the wirework, they are mainly items of adornment, such as neck, waist, ear and hair ornaments. One particular hair ornament, Af1936,0316.13, made from a trimmed porcupine quill surmounted by an openwork beaded rosette, was obtained along with four others,<sup>686</sup> from the wife of one David Gomo Zulu, a man working for the Powell-Cottons (see PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 20-21) (see **Figs 65 & 68**).<sup>687</sup> The BM accessions register omits this information, describing it as a '[h]airpin, beaded circular ornamentation' and quoting the Eth Doc details, viz 'No 425 [Powell-Cotton field number]... ♀ worn with high coiff[ure]'. This same David accompanied Antoinette to a wedding, which took place at the bridegroom's homestead, 'M'pupuma',<sup>688</sup> about a two-hour walk from camp ('A Zulu Marriage Ceremonial' 25/09/1935: no page number) (**Fig.**

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<sup>682</sup> Her carbon book gives the date and lists, among other items, the metal wire body ornaments and tools used in their manufacture (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 34-35).

<sup>683</sup> Cyril Ovens, who described himself as a 'commercial traveler', supplied goods to Zululand traders in the 1950s. The use of cow's horn and a block of wood in the manufacture process as described by Whelan, and presumably taken from Ovens' account, is not dissimilar to Antoinette's observations made at least a decade and a half earlier.

<sup>684</sup> These artisans seem to have been men. Citing a member of the Morrison family, Whelan describes how a male tailor, usually a Malawian Muslim, would, on behalf of customers, sew up bolts of cloth purchased in the store. (This cloth would have included *isishweshwe*, a piece of which, trimmed with beads, features in Af1936,0316.6, a belt in the collection. Unfortunately Whelan does not elaborate on the cobblers' manufactures, but it is possible that the previously discussed tyre sandals would have been made outside a trading store. These artisans do not seem to have paid rent.

<sup>685</sup> This includes a spoon basket (Af1936,0316.51), which is made predominately out of plant fibre.

<sup>686</sup> Three are now housed in the PRM (acc. nos. 1937.38.43; 1956.9.50 and 1956.9.51).

<sup>687</sup> There appear to have been two Davids, the other being usually referred to as 'Old David'.

<sup>688</sup> Possibly somewhere in area of what is now the Maphumalo Picnic Site (Google Maps last accessed 24/08/2017) on the bank of the Nzimane River. This area would have fallen within the corridor. Alternatively, John Wright suggests that 'M'pupuma' could be 'Mpophoma' (waterfall), which is a common place name (pers. comm. 19/09/2017).

73).<sup>689</sup> Here, as already mentioned, Antoinette focuses on the adornment on display and notes that many of the young men sported '[l]ong velvit [sic] snuff bags worn on their shoulder or in the belt' ('A Zulu Marriage Ceremonial' 25/09/1935: no page number).<sup>690</sup> Af1936,0316.14 is one such snuff bag. According to the accessions register – this information again based on the BM Eth Doc – Powell-Cotton item number 705 is a man's bag and would have been 'worn slung over [the] shoulder'. The Eth Doc further indicates that it was collected on the day of the wedding. In her carbon book entry for that Tuesday, Antoinette records acquiring a lot of 'Mkuzi' beadwork at 'Manzibovu' (PCM APC Zululand 1935 Carbon Book: 30 & 31), including a man's 'velvit [sic]...bead snuff bag' for 1/6, which is now Af1936,0316.14, the bag in question. Her notes from that day indicate that the young men in attendance wore '[r]ather varied costume' and that '[m]any wore flat belts... [and had] [l]ong velvit [sic] snuff bags worn on the shoulder or in the belt' ('A Zulu Marriage Ceremonial' 25/09/1935: no page number).

Another photograph from the expedition, now housed in the Pictorial Collection at the BM, Af,B1.14, is an almost full length portrait of a man shown wearing such a snuff bag (**Fig. 74**). The inscription on the reverse references the Powell-Cotton photograph number, Z.VII.5, and reads '[v]elvet snuff bag on shoulder'. One of the Zululand photograph albums at the PCM preserves another print of the same image captioned: 'VI.5. OLD DAVID, VELVET SNUFF BAG' (PCM album 4.1.41: 37) (see **Fig. 74**). Although not certain, 'Old David' is most probably David Gomo Zulu, this seemingly the fullest name that Antoinette records as far as the BM collection is concerned.<sup>691</sup>

Among various pieces of paper within a PCM archives' solander box (DOC.6.29 box 2/3) lies a small, but tantalizing clue in terms of the identities of the Zululand expedition collection's interlocutors. In what appears to be either a copy or draft of a letter sent to Potter, the Game Conservator, the Major gives further information about the man named as Fusi (**Fig. 75**). Praising his work, the Major says: 'I have had as "skin man", Fusi, son of Mafoko, headman Bhengoza, [he] is excellent at skinning [,] preserving & packing \*\*\*,

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<sup>689</sup> Her diary mentions only David, whereas her separate note on the wedding indicates that she also took Lightening. A loose note also located in PCM DOC.6.29 box 3/3 and written in Antoinette's hand appears to give a short list of names associated with the wedding, including 'Headman NOWANAKOSANA – chief'.

<sup>690</sup> Rather than 25/09/1935, the actual date of the wedding is likely to have been Tuesday 24/09/1935 as indicated in the Major's diary.

<sup>691</sup> Despite his nickname, 'Old David' appears to have been relatively young as evidenced by the photograph and by the fact that he is wearing a young man's accessory. 'Old' may therefore have been used to distinguish him from another man called David, a photograph of whom is captioned 'David II' (PCM album 4.1.41: 31). It should also be noted that Antoinette's spelling of Old David's full name, David Gomo Zulu, varies (variations include Gomozulu, Gomosulu and Gomo Zulu).



also at preparing [animal] skeletons' (PCM P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.B. Potter, 10/10/1935).<sup>692</sup>

In the absence of more information, such as Fusi kaMafoko's genealogy above, it is difficult to trace in much further detail Antoinette's interlocutors. Notwithstanding, with the exception of the Mtubatuba material, these people would almost certainly have been isiZulu-speakers, relatively local to the two respective sites within the Mkuzi and Hluhluwe game reserves where the Powell-Cottons camped. Some black people apparently lived on the game reserves, presumably the Game Guards and their families, but possibly also others. Writing in her diary at the beginning of the expedition, Antoinette observes the black presence on the game reserve:

L[ightening] says natives are poor here in the reserve [Mkuzi], they are those who were here originally or their descendants...[and they] are only turned out if they trap or harm the game [which] quite a few have been (PCM APC Diary 15/07/1935: 2).<sup>693</sup>

She goes on to say:

There are one or 2 kraals near here [presumably their camp site] but nothing big & no *native reserve* near bye [sic] for several miles so looks as if we shall neither see nor get much' (PCM APC Dairy 15/07/1935: 2, emphasis mine).

Unless working on white-owned farms in the area, most black people would have been confined mainly to native reserves, an arrangement that anticipated the apartheid period.

At the start of the 1930s, relations between the locals and the game authorities are said to have been good (Brooks 2005: 222) and during that decade the 'African presence' on the reserves was an open question (Brooks 2005: 220). Although some actively favoured the removal of homesteads from the reserves (Brooks 2005: 227), others were against the idea.<sup>694</sup> Dr Ernest Warren, director of the Natal Museum (now the KwaZulu-Natal Museum) and champion of the game reserves who campaigned for the creation of a

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<sup>692</sup> John Wright indicates that the orthography for this headman's personal name may rather more accurately be 'Bhongoza' (pers. comm. 19/09/2017).

<sup>693</sup> If these people were Game Guards and their families, then Lightning's statement goes somewhat against Potter's already cited comment about guards being recruited mainly from the corridor area immediately below Hluhluwe game reserve.

<sup>694</sup> Removals almost certainly would have occurred with the appearance of 'soldier settlements' in Hluhluwe in 1922 and in Mkuzi in 1927 (Brown 2008: 302). Historian Karen Brown discusses these settlements, intended as farmland, as parcels of land appropriated for white soldiers returning from the First World War.

national park in Zululand, was in favour of presenting 'native life' and game together (Brooks 2005: 227), as was the Zululand Game Reserve and Parks Committee, who considered the combination 'an attraction' (Zululand Game Reserve and Parks Committee 1937: 56).<sup>695</sup> Seemingly not much changed in this regard with the 1936 Land Act, but as geographer Shirley Brooks (2005) has argued, tourism would ultimately lead to the exclusion of black people from game reserves. They would become exclusionary spaces where blacks were alienated and could only figure, at most, as employees, and not as visitors or residents (Brooks 2005: 220).<sup>696</sup>

## 2.5 Lost in translation: curating the archive

Once back home following the Zululand expedition, Antoinette and her father, probably with Pinfold – the curator's – assistance, endeavored to 'get the Zulu things sorted' (PCM 3.1.12/91 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.J. Braunholtz, 29/12/1935) and that December evidently selected 'duplicates' to offer the BM (PCM PHGPC Diary 29/12/1935).<sup>697</sup> (No doubt at the same time they made a selection for Balfour of the PRM.)<sup>698</sup> Writing to Braunholtz, the Major advises that Antoinette would get in touch early in the New Year to arrange for him to come to the PCM to 'have a look at the things' (PCM 3.1.12/91 P.H.G. Powell-Cotton to H.J. Braunholtz, 29/12/1935). Although when, or even whether or not, Braunholtz inspected the objects prior to their arrival at the BM is not certain; on 6 March he wrote to Pinfold thanking him 'for sending the Zululand collection, and the detailed list, and for all the trouble you have taken over it' (PCM 3.1.15/199 H.J. Braunholtz to G.F. Pinfold, 06/03/1936).<sup>699</sup> Shortly thereafter, Pinfold forwarded Braunholtz 'some photos'

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<sup>695</sup> For various reasons, one was never created and to this day the reserves in question remain under provincial control. See Brooks (2004; 2005) and also Carruthers (2008) for further information. For mention of Warren's contact with the BM, see the Introduction (this thesis).

<sup>696</sup> Brooks's research shows that this process of what she calls becoming 'increasingly invisible' (Brooks 2005: 236) began in earnest at the start of the Second World War with the introduction of fences. She cites as a particularly painful episode the 1944 forced removals from an area known as the corridor, a piece of land between the Hluhluwe and Umfolozi game reserves. These removals were carried out in order to create a greater reserve (today's Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park), which is run by the same authorities as Mkuzi, now known as uMkhuze Game Reserve. The native reserves would, in time, form part of the KwaZulu homeland under the apartheid regime and were later reincorporated back into SA after democracy.

<sup>697</sup> Pers. comm. Hazel Basford, 01/09/2017.

<sup>698</sup> Inside Antoinette's carbon book are two lists, dated 26 February 1936, indicating which items were designated for each of these two museums. It would seem that the PRM was given 1937 accession numbers by that institution (others came in later and have 1956 numbers).

<sup>699</sup> The BM does not appear to have retained a copy of this letter. For Pinfold's response see GC G.F. Pinfold to H.J. Braunholtz, 11/03/1936, and for his correspondence copy of this same letter see PCM 3.1.15/200.

which Braunholtz remarked, would 'form an interesting record & addition to the specimens' (PCM 3.1.15/201 H.J. Braunholtz to G.F. Pinfold, 12/03/1936).<sup>700</sup>

By this time Antoinette was well on her way to Angola along with older sister Diana and it is clear that Zululand matters had been left in the curatorial care of Pinfold. Drawing on Antoinette's Zululand carbon book and diary, Pinfold was responsible for compiling the above-mentioned list, which he forwarded to Braunholtz.<sup>701</sup> This list (Eth Doc 74) forms the basis of the collection's accessions register entry. Here, as shown, much was lost in translation – from one medium to another (from Antoinette's notes to the typed list to accessions register), from one person to another (Antoinette to Pinfold and/or to Braunholtz) and from one place to another (from SA to Britain and from the PCM to the BM). Crucially for this study, the African presence, like that of the female collector, were not thought of as important and has been obscured at the BM. Named black individuals, figures present in the Powell-Cotton archive that can be linked to BM objects –accounts of which the above vignettes are intended as indicative rather than comprehensive – having had been lost in translation. Clearly Pinfold, and quite possibly also the Powell-Cottons as well as Braunholtz and his departmental colleagues, did not deem this information necessary for inclusion in the BM record, resulting in it being effectively selected out.

These ideas of translation and curation run further into backstory. For example, the language barrier that existed between the interlocutors and Antoinette (and the limited assistance offered here by former Game Ranger E.D. Lightening) and the consequent loss of information between the field and her notes that would have entailed. Whereas translation in this sense might usually be considered as pertinent to an item or collection's backstory, curation is typically thought of as something that happens to an object or a collection once it has reached the Museum, that is to say part of what here is understood as an operation of biography. However, the present case study challenges this notion and suggests that, at least to some extent, the Powell-Cotton Collection at the BM was co-curated. In the field, both Antoinette and her interlocutors selected items, sometimes because they were available and portable, prior to further acts of curation – the selection, organization and overall care that entails.

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<sup>700</sup> By 'some photos of some of the things collected' (PCM 3.1.15/200 G.F. Pinfold to H.J. Braunholtz, 11/03/1936), it is not clear if these photographs were of objects set up back at Birchington (see for example 'MAT SLATS', PCM album 4.1.41: 61) or expedition photographs as such. However, gauging from Braunholtz's response they appear to have been the latter.

<sup>701</sup> Hazel Basford suggests that the list itself may have been typed up by the Major's secretary, Miss Fuller (pers. comm. 01/09/2017).

Until now, Antoinette's presence with regard to this collection has also been obscured at the BM. The assembled 'curios', as she referred to the objects comprising this collection, reveal her particular interest in clothing and body adornment, a collecting bias arguably informed, at least to some degree, by her gender. Being a woman, especially a relatively young and apparently unthreatening one, may have afforded Antoinette close contact and quite intimate access – as witnessed by a particular sequence of field photographs taken at Mkuzi camp.<sup>702</sup> These images show her touching, lifting and closely examining beadwork and other items worn by a clearly amused bare-breasted young woman (see PCM album 4.1.41: 20-21) (**Fig. 76**). Antoinette often noted the gender of an item's intended user and sometimes whether a man or a woman had made it. Unlike much of what might be considered as the textual archive, the collection as archive reveals, at least in terms of makers and other African people associated with objects, probably as many female as male voices.

By looking at backstory, the Powell-Cotton Collection at the BM can be understood as a group of objects acquired in a specific place at a specific historical moment. A time before mass tourism in northern Zululand (with its attendant curio shops and the proliferation of items made for sale to outsiders) and filled with its own challenges in the lead up to apartheid, the insidious seeds of which had long been sown. Treating the objects as archive has given voice to now somewhat less-obscure figures and acts of agency. It also sheds light onto some of the practices and processes responsible for these once seemingly all but absent presences.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined two case studies involving objects collected, in what are the present day provinces of Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, within several years of each other and gifted to the BM shortly thereafter. In seeking to historicise the collections by constructing backstories, this chapter has explored the archive at the BM and beyond in order to reveal the fuller extent of African involvement in their formation. It transpires that the Braunholtz Collection can in fact be considered to have been presented to the BM by chief Sinthumule and his family, information that lay at some remove from the primary documentation for this collection. Although we may never know, it may be that Braunholtz, BM curator and the collector/donor, had intended to use this information at some stage. However, as with Antoinette Powell-Cotton's material, the collection was passed to others

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<sup>702</sup> Her perceived vulnerability was picked up on, apparently by another woman attending the wedding who thought Antoinette 'should be afraid without the bos [? boss] or my man, [t]hat someone should carry me off' (see PCM APC Diary Sun [no date] 1935: 26).

for processing and the information resided in the 'archive of the mind' or memory, and only in a fragmented and fragmentary way within the archive. That these case studies have enabled backstories that are to a large extent fairly rich may be thanks to their relatively late collection date and to the 'archival inclination' of these particular collectors. However, it is also owing to the, sometimes fortuitous, presence and preservation of documentation at the BM and beyond.

## **Conclusion**

Anyone who has explored the world of archives will know that it is a treasure house, one that is full of surprises, crossing paths, dead ends, painful reminders and unanswered questions (Nelson Mandela quoted on wall text, NASA, Pretoria).<sup>703</sup>

Archives and memory not only shape current identities but represent a dimension of their own, beyond past and present and are also “a means of excavating silences” (wall text, HPRA, Wits).<sup>704</sup>

This thesis examines the BM’s SA collections to 1961, here treated as archive, in order to recover traces of African agency in their formation. In addressing this central enquiry, two further questions are asked, namely: how and why may the collections be treated as archive?; and secondly, how does such treatment help reframe collections bound up in their colonial and ethnographised pasts?

Agency is here understood as a measure of indigenous control and active involvement in assembling the collections. With regard to material considered (or formerly considered) ‘ethnographic’, ideas around agency as applied to people and objects have been perhaps most fully explored by those working on non-African collections (e.g. scholarship around Pacific material, including Thomas 1991, Hooper 2006, see also Byrne et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2013). However, of late those engaged with African material, especially ‘ethnographic’ photographs, have shown a growing interest in indigenous agency (e.g. Garb 2013). Although other scholars have written about aspects of the BM’s SA collections, and also more generally about agency with regard to South African material, the present study is the first to look more systematically at such a large tranche of the collections and to consider the evidence for African involvement therein.

This thesis expressly aims to identify named African individuals, specifically ‘makers’, ‘users’ and ‘sellers’ of objects that are now to be found in the SA collections at the BM. Given the dearth of identifiable makers, the study has focused on a number of major case studies where the names of African users and sellers of objects could be retrieved. To adapt David Zeitlyn’s assertion (with regard to photography), knowing a name helps connect objects with the lives of these individuals (2012: 465) and, as Carolyn Hamilton

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<sup>703</sup> Current at time of research visit, 15/02/2018.

<sup>704</sup> Current at time of research visit, 23/01/2017.

and Nessa Leibhammer argue, mitigates against ‘the anonymity and “radical depersonalisation”’ that commonly marks out ethnographic objects (2016b: 442).

Nicholas Thomas reminds us that indigenous agency is hard to recover and characterise, not least owing to the historical record where a ‘paucity of information’ exists particularly with regard to what he calls the ‘scene of collecting’, the interaction event between the field-collector and indigenous agent (2000: 274). Taking up this challenge, the present study gets as close to the scene as is currently possible, particularly in the major case studies from the second and third decades of the twentieth century (Chapter 5).

African agency is largely absent in the first major case study, that of the Wolseley Collection (Chapter 4). However, the present research has re-established a link between the collection and no less a figure than Zulu King Cetshwayo kaMpande, a connection that had been severed for over 100 years at least. Similarly, the second, third and fourth case studies (Chapters 4 and 5) reconnect the names of African individuals with BM objects, information that is at some remove from the Museum’s primary form of documentation – the accessions registers that inform its database, information from which is, in turn, made *publicly accessible* via its collection online. A collection from Venda was presented to the BM by Chief Sinthumule and his family, but perhaps somewhat surprisingly the presentation was inadequately recorded, despite the material having been field-collected by one of the BM’s own curators, H.J. Braunholz (Chapter 5). In this case, the actual collecting event was captured on film, yet the photographic record apparently remained until now unremarked. Similarly, a field photograph and pre-Museum object label now reconnects a hitherto variously attributed prestige neck-ornament to a man serving under Tsonga Chief Sikundu, an individual named as Sibedula (see Newnham Collection, Chapter 4). Following searches at the Powell-Cotton Museum, the collection assembled by Antoinette Powell-Cotton, and given to the BM by herself and her father, has yielded names of isiZulu-speakers from whom she obtained objects, or who otherwise aided her in her collecting endeavour, during an expedition to Zululand (Chapter 5).

It was useful, even necessary, to look at the SA collections over such a long period of time, from the establishment of the BM up until 1961. In actual terms, this translates as a period of just over one hundred years, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, when the collections took root and grew markedly. Such a long period was necessary partly because traces of African agency in the formation of the collections, as might have been expected, are relatively few and far between, or at least in terms of how much of it the present project has been able to find. It was also, for a project that positions itself as a

postcolonial study, a timeframe that coincides with what is here construed as the British colonial period in SA. Although the period was one of a great difference in power and of injustice – and also saw many changes as British influence and presence grew, became entrenched and then declined— certain ‘creator community’ strategies seem to have been recurrent. For example, withholding, or attempting to withhold, certain items can be seen in the case of King Cetshwayo’s treasures, which were hidden in 1879 during the Anglo-Zulu War, through to Antoinette Powell-Cotton’s experience more than half a century later of not being able to freely acquire whatever she liked from the locals in Northern Zululand. Similarly, the reliance on local knowledge and assistance, such as portering, from an early period to Powell-Cotton and no doubt beyond, is also a leitmotif as is trading items, including those made specifically for sale to a European or white market.

Over the four major case studies, an interest on the part of the field-collectors in obtaining objects either from, or associated with, high ranking Africans is evident. (The Powell-Cotton case is somewhat of an exception in that they were evidently dealing with more ‘ordinary’ people, although the Major’s jotting, as discussed, does make some attempt at linking one of the locals to a headman.) To a large extent, the particular historical moment colours each field-collecting episode. In many ways the Moshoeshoe vignette (at the outset of this thesis) stands as a high point in European dealings with Africans in more respectful terms; a deputation appealing to him, ruler of an independent kingdom, for a group of objects intended to act as ‘ambassadors’ on an international platform. At the other end of the spectrum, and just less than twenty years later, the Wolseley case study demonstrates the disregard for African dignity, the objects having been taken during the destruction of the Zulu kingdom. The Newnham case study is set against the backdrop of the Transvaal Native Location Commission that would inform the Natives Land Act of 1913, which cemented African dispossession, while the Brauholtz and Powell-Cotton studies took place shortly before 1936, when so-called ‘native land’ was formalized into a system of African reserves, thus paving the way for apartheid. All four major case studies (plus those of the appendices) are set in rural geographical areas that would, in time, become ‘homelands’.

The present study has found that a significant number of Africans who can be associated, or are purportedly associated, with objects in the BM SA collections were high-status individuals, revealing a bias in the collections that speaks to the observation that the British Empire was ‘so inflected by an ideology of status and hierarchy’ (Wingfield 2011: 125). The research has accounted for these (although in most cases recorded, mainly trophy, items) within a historical context and in a few such cases, for example that of King



Moshoeshoe's presentation (Introduction), served to flesh out details not present at the BM. Ironically, the Sinthumule presentation (Chapter 5), made more than a half a century later than Moshoeshoe's and field-collected by BM curator H.J. Braunholtz, is, as far as cataloguing is concerned, less well documented regarding African involvement in collecting and assembling (although subsequent research in the archive revealed photographs pertaining to Braunholtz's fieldwork). (Furthermore, some of Moshoeshoe's items were early on actually displayed as having come 'from Moshesh, a chief of the tribe' (Franks 1868: 14, see Chapter 2), which is not the case now with the breast-plate currently on long-term display in the SAG (**Fig. 4**) and very probably more than has been noted of the Sinthumule objects.)

The present research has shown that African agency in the formation of the collections was occluded through the archival processes, that is to say their ethnographisation at the Museum. Despite published guidelines aimed at field-collectors from fairly early on by way of *Notes and Queries*, to which various BM curators contributed and which became more detailed over time, certain information, where accompanying collections, was routinely left out of the accession cataloguing. (Some other items – such as lists provided by the donor/seller or collector – no longer appear to be extant, the evidence for these being suggested by the inclusion at times of text within quotation marks in the cataloguing.) The archive was found to privilege particular information, specifically pertaining to the identity of the donor/seller (and less often former owner or field-collector, when not the same as the source) as well as the 'tribal' or geographic origin of objects. These practices have served to obscure African involvement in collecting and assembling collections, information that seems to have been deemed extraneous to the archive throughout the period examined, but traces of which can sometimes be gleaned through careful research in the (extended) archive.

In seeking out instances of African agency, this study expressly challenges, or at least nuances, narratives that might seek to characterise or even dismiss the collections as 'artifactual abductees', to use Michael O'Hanlon's term (2000: 3); and, although disconcerting, even when such a characterisation is justifiably the case there may yet be traces of indigenous agency, such as with the Wolseley material (Chapter 4). Indeed, this study does not shy away from some of the more problematic aspects of the collections nor deny the asymmetrical nature of colonial power relations, typical of ethnographic assemblages largely amassed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead, treating the collections as archive is to expressly aim to re-historicise them.

The re-historicisation of the collections is greatly facilitated by the chosen methodological and theoretical approach – that of treating the collections as archive; for, as Hamilton and Leibhammer have pointed out, in the archive ‘things’ stand not as ethnographic specimens or otherwise, but as ‘inherited resources available for engagement in the present’ (2016b: 416). In treating African objects, and pertinent photographs – material beyond the solely textual – as archive is to emphasise what I have called their ‘inter-archivality’. That is to say, to stress their connectedness to other archival material held within a particular institution, in this case the BM, and beyond. It is also to make the case for seeking to expand the archive, and our understanding thereof, and to consider objects that have been typically denied history, in this case through ethnographisation, as historical objects.

In making the case for the collections to be seen through the prism of archive, some pertinent similarities and differences between archives and museums are highlighted and, drawing on ideas put forward by Thomas Richards, historically the archive is shown to have been a conceptual ‘utopian space of comprehensive knowledge’ (1993: 11). Interest in, and theoretical engagement with, the archive is then traced to the recent and ongoing ‘archival turn’ (Basu and de Jong 2016: 6). In treating the collections as archive, this study adopts and adapts the ideas set forth by Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016b), most significantly the notion of a collection’s or an object’s life story, which can be broken down into backstory (pre-Museum life) and biography (Museum life). Unlike Hamilton and Leibhammer, here it is argued that instead of being previously denied the status of archive, the SA collections at the BM were seen as an archive of a particular, utopian kind, presided over by a series of archons or keepers and now subject to rehistoricisation, repurposing and refiguring. This thesis also departs from Hamilton and Leibhammer’s ideas regarding the point at which ‘backstory’ is considered to end and ‘biography’ commence. The contention here is that biography commences at the point of a given collection’s entry into the Museum. Unlike in the past, the archive, rather than being seen as moving towards a (fictive) state of ‘completeness’, is now understood as fragmented and fragmentary, partial and contingent. It calls attention to its own constructedness, its form and biases.

Paul Basu and Ferdinand de Jong have written about ‘archival affordances’ (2016: 6), which is not entirely unlike Hamilton and Leibhammer’s notion of ‘archival potential’ (2016b: 416), whereby the archive, although fraught – not least owing to the intentions of its initial gatekeepers and its imbrication within colonial knowledge production – can become a productive, even utopian site. Not unparadoxically, that the present thesis is in

itself a utopian undertaking – seeking presences and voices, male and female, captured seemingly coincidentally – is acknowledged. Admittedly, these African voices are filtered, framed and are now being reframed, and, as Tamar Garb asserts, the whole question of African agency and the archive is admittedly ‘vexed’ (2013: 42). Nevertheless, as various scholars including Garb have shown, the archive can be reread, sometimes even subversively. She posits that the archive allows ‘new stories to be told’ and that:

This is the power and purpose of an archive. It preserves and provides the stuff on which histories are based, even if it necessarily and always delivers a partial and particular view, based on availability, choice, and chance (2013: 27).

The present study has greatly enhanced existing knowledge with regard to the SA collections at the BM by convening information pertinent to the collections dispersed within the Museum itself and beyond. The case studies, like the archives in the UK and SA that were visited during the course of the present research project, are necessarily selective and circumscribed. Although material made by many cultural groups from across SA was considered, some, specifically that of the San, was not discussed in much detail.<sup>705</sup> During the course of research it was found that between museums, and especially those within SA and the UK, rather than collections necessarily overlapping in terms of common donors/sellers or collectors, the occurrence of stylistically related objects and genres, in terms of the reciprocal light that collections may shed on one another, could be a further fruitful avenue for continued and expanded research.

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<sup>705</sup> This oversight was not intentional, but rather indicates perhaps the greater degree to which this material has suffered ‘depersonalisation’. The San material in itself could form an area of study. For example, it would be interesting to further investigate ‘[t]he massive archive that [Lucy] Lloyd and [Wilhelm] Bleek [Lloyd was his sister-in-law and collaborator] produced during the 1870s and 1880s’ (Mitchell 2002: 10). Such a study might try to locate mention of Bleek’s gifts to the Christy Collection in 1874 and 1875 (and whether or not he gives the names of any indigenous people associated with the ‘Bushman’ items, and one ‘Hottentot’ object, that were accessioned into that collection) (see Af.9027-9034 and Af.9503-9506). It might also attend to any photographs housed by AOA’s Pictorial Collection, which may relate to Bleek and Lloyd’s activities. (As previously mentioned (Chapter 3), A.W. Franks, who in effect established what is now known as the Pictorial Collection, and his successors considered photographs to be supplementary to the ethnography collections.) An online archive, *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*, is noteworthy in that many of Bleek and Lloyd’s contributors are named in the duo’s respective notebooks, which have been scanned and made accessible along with other material – see <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/index.html> (last accessed 12/12/2018). However, this online archive, which itself virtually convenes material held across various separate institutions and sites, does not currently include any of Bleek’s diaries or letters and such an undertaking would entail first hand archival research. (For an index of a number of Bleek’s diaries housed at the University of Cape Town, but dating to other periods, see [https://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/existing/Finding%20Aids/bc\\_151\\_the\\_bleek\\_collection.htm](https://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/existing/Finding%20Aids/bc_151_the_bleek_collection.htm) (last accessed 12/12/2018).)

A further avenue, not explored in the present research, could be the 'digital repatriation' of material to communities in SA, such as that of the Powell-Cotton Collection through a project such as the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative's *Five Hundred-Year Archive* project.<sup>706</sup> Similarly, the present study could be enlarged to encompass the BM's SA collections through to the present, or to further African collections, in order to investigate whether or not African agency is recorded or retrievable to any greater extent with more recent acquisitions or with regard to those from other countries. Future research may also be fruitfully applied to further study of particular collections or types of collections, for example military assemblages, such as the Wolseley Collection, especially considering the intense and prolonged British intervention in SA.<sup>707</sup> Other avenues ripe for exploration include that of female agency in the collections, only touched upon in this thesis, and of African encounters with the collections once at the Museum.

Whereas the new light shed on the SA collections at the BM may primarily be of interest to scholars and museum curators, the theoretical and methodological approach adopted here may have wider scholarly application. It has been said with regard to archive that '[s]ometimes the past is truly lost. But we cannot know *a priori* what is lost without trying' (Zeitlyn 2012: 465), which seems to be sage advice for any curator or other researcher undertaking collections-based research, be it at the BM or beyond.

The need for increased knowledge about museum collections is reaching a high-water mark, amid growing debate and calls for repatriation;<sup>708</sup> it is particularly pressing at a time of increasing access to and democratisation of the archive in the digital age (such as through the BM's collection online, the archons no longer able to 'colonise' collections quite as before). So too is the need for hearing new decolonising voices and narratives.

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<sup>706</sup> For further information regarding this University of Cape Town initiative, see <http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/research/projects/five-hundred-year-archive> (last accessed 16/11/2018).

<sup>707</sup> For details of a current project focusing on African and Indian 'ethnographic material in the collections of regimental and corps museums' in the UK entitled *Baggage and Belonging: Military Collections and the British Empire, 1750 – 1900*, see <https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections-research/our-research/featured-projects/collecting-practices-of-the-british-army/> (last accessed 31/12/2018).

<sup>708</sup> See for example <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/21/france-urged-to-return-looted-african-art-treasures-macron>; [https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/dec/04/pitt-rivers-museum-oxford-maasai-colonial-artefacts?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/dec/04/pitt-rivers-museum-oxford-maasai-colonial-artefacts?CMP=share_btn_link) (last accessed 07/12/2018).

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