'A Box of Native Things': Ethnographic Collectors and the South Australian Museum, 1830s - 1930s

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Title

'Herewith a box of native things' was pencilled on a consignment note for a box of artefacts sent from Central Australia to Edward Stirling at the South Australian Museum during the 1890s.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

COLONIALISM AND THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM
(CHAPTERS ONE TO FIVE)

This thesis gives an account of one of the world's great colonial collections. At its broadest it describes a process affecting the conduct of relations between Europe and its colonies across the world throughout and beyond the age of exploration. At its narrowest it describes particular transactions yielding ethnographic objects, which took place between Aborigines and Europeans during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

No forum has crystallised relations between coloniser and colonised more clearly than the ethnographic museum. Referring to such seminal texts as C.B. MacPherson's *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962) and J. Baudrillard's *Le Systeme des objets* (1968), a number of recent studies have focused upon ethnographic collecting as a crucial element in the formation of western identity. This discourse has identified ethnographic museums as crucibles in which events of the colonial era reacted and left their trace. As residues of those events, ethnographic collections have often been discussed as 'cultural property', with implict overtones of misappropriation. Particular histories of appropriation associated with the Elgin Marbles, the Benin Bronzes or other iconic colonial collections are imputed to ethnographic collections in general. The greater the apparent disjunction between coloniser and colonised, the readier has been the implication of cultural theft. In the eyes of some analysts, even visitors to these museums are complicit. Torgovnik writes:

> Why should we pretend that the contemplation of tribal art by European artists, aestheticians and audiences was politically neutral? Conditioned by control and condescension, fear and contempt, such relationships were not coolly or purely aesthetic, even when occurring far from tribal territories, in settings seemingly void of political implications (though actually rich in such implications), like museums, galleries, and homes.[1]

This thesis suggests that such critiques of ethnographic museums require revision. Said's 'Orientalist' paradigm and Foucauldian discourse have tended to circumscribe the meanings of ethnographic objects, constituting them only through relationships of power arising from an interplay of colonial domination and subordination. That broad analysis has been applied to Aboriginal/European history as to other colonial histories.[2] But while the construction of cultural colonialism may be applicable to a generalised interpretation of Aboriginal/European history, the nearer one approaches the frontier of contact the less useful it appears. Notwithstanding the power relations which underpinned daily encounters between

Aborigines and Europeans, those encounters were also formed through pragmatism, opportunism and the gamut of understandings and misunderstandings accompanying a rich diversity of contact.

This study examines the developing role of the South Australian Museum as a repository for ethnographic objects garnered on the Aboriginal/European frontier. The data shows that while this museum may have been created by the forces of colonialism, its profile was shaped through the subsequent actions and transactions of its collectors. In the case of ethnographic material, these transactions occurred mainly on the colonial frontier. This fact necessarily provokes a re-examination of the frontier's role in Aboriginal/European history. A characterisation of that frontier as a line which separates cultures, explicit and implicit in much recent writing about Aboriginal history, seems inappropriate to this analysis. As Reece has observed, in constructing a 'resistance' model of Aboriginal history, Reynolds, Loos and others have 'not been so interested in documenting and highlighting that other major characteristic of Aboriginal-European interaction: accommodation'.[3] The many hundreds of encounters between Aborigines and Europeans which generated the collections of the South Australian Museum suggest a different conclusion: that the frontier was less a line which separated than a zone which unified. That zone was also capable of generating new and potent forms of culture.

This approach modifies rather than challenges prevailing models of cultural colonialism. There is no doubt that, even as a unifying field, the frontier was never an even ground. Applying this analysis to the colonial period in North America for example, F. Jennings has observed that while a model of ruthless conquest by Europeans could usefully be replaced by a more complex account, the result is nevertheless 'a society dominated by transplanted Europeans but modified by a persistent Indian subculture'.[4] Extending the analysis to the Australian situation, T. Swain writes that 'Aboriginal people in early south-east Australia ... used symbols of European power and culture *not* in attempts to eradicate Whites or even merely to overthrow their hegemony, but rather to establish moral relationships within an increasingly immoral world'.[5] Creative processes of mutual acculturation occurred in frontier Australia in spite of unequal power relations between coloniser and colonised.

Notwithstanding examples of innovation in Aboriginal art (bark paintings, acrylic paintings, toas), religion (millennarian cults in Arnhem Land or the Kimberley), or language (the emergence of nineteenth-century pidgin English for example), resistance to the notion of mutual acculturation has been strong in almost every field of Aboriginal studies, from archaeology, linguistics and religion to material culture analyses. As J. Beckett has suggested, 'constructions of Aboriginality, whether popular or official', have been pervaded by notions of antiquity.[6] The characterisation of Aboriginal culture as evocative of a past, even primitive form, has been most readily achieved within museums where the 'aura' of objects, as Walter Benjamin termed it, has tended to 'mask the intentions, meanings and skills integral to the production and appreciation of the objects'.[7] The dominance of cultural relativism within social anthropological practice during the course of this century has done little to modify this tendency to locate Aboriginal culture within

another, implicitly prior, frame. Indeed, as Fabian argues, the discipline of social anthropology continues to reconstitute the 'primitive'.[8]

From their origins in the *cabinets de curiosite* of earlier centuries, museums have built their collections in an attempt to comprehend the unknown in nature and culture. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these institutions provided a frame for debate and experiment in this interpretetive project, and their collections served as this project's data. Given that colonial expansion in the Pacific had begun much earlier, this role did not emerge until relatively late. This is not to say that Australian explorers, administrators and colonists did not regard ethnographic objects as significant or meaningful. From time of the First Fleet the form and function of ethnographic objects were useful categories of information. The first collections were formed within days of the Fleet's landfall at Botany Bay. The fledgling colony's principal legal officer, David Collins, wrote:

> It must be observed that the principal tribes have their peculiar weapons. Most of us had made collections of their spears, throwing-sticks &c as opportunities occurred; and on shewing them to our Sydney friends, they have told us that such a one was used by the people who lived to the southward of Botany Bay; that another belonged to the tribe of the Cam-mer-ray ... and they extend this peculiarity even to their dances, their songs and their dialect.[9]

The colonists' interest in artefacts and Aboriginal culture traits soon faded as each colonial capital absorbed and overwhelmed local variants of Aboriginal material culture. By the time colonial museums were established, the variety of Aboriginal material culture noted by Collins was no longer readily available to be appreciated or collected within the ambit of ordinary colonial experience. This pattern applied to Adelaide. The remarkable and promising decade of ethnographic research and publication which followed the foundation of South Australia as a colony did not result either in a permanent collection of Aboriginal objects or a museum. In fact, the eventual creation of a museum placed natural history at the centre of new scientific endeavour in the colony. Ethnography occupied a peripheral role, and as the Aborigines of the Adelaide Plains became fringe-dwellers marginalised by the colonial economy, greater effort was directed towards acquiring and exhibiting Pacific Islands exotica.

Ethnography's place within museums in the British tradition was mediated by natural scientists as an extension of the natural history project. The gradual unfolding of the evolutionist model throughout the nineteenth century, coinciding with the colonial expansion of western powers, dictated the role to be filled by ethnographic objects from other societies as social markers along a path of human development. The elaboration of the classificatory method and the construction of a universal taxonomic grid rendered the task of museum ethnologists unproblematic: regional and typological gap-filling. In turn, the hierarchical character of the natural history project placed Aboriginal material culture into a key position on this grid, as a benchmark for other world cultures. In this way a remote colonial museum's collection entered an international sphere.

In common with other outposts of colonialism, the Australian frontier became the locus for

successful ethnographic collecting. Within Australia, those colonial capitals which retained active links with the various frontiers of pastoralism, trading, communications, policing and other bureaucracies, or missionary activity, stood to gain the largest ethnographic collections. Adelaide's prominence reflects that comparative geographical and political advantage, heightened by the scientific awareness of its Museum's director and governing committee from the 1880s until the First World War.

In Adelaide the processes of international and national colonialism were in play before the Aboriginal collections entered their expansionist phase. The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London's Crystal Palace helped clarify the new role of colonial museums and their collections. From the 1870s particularly, a great deal of colonial collecting was directed towards these Exhibitions. This fact affected all Australian museums, particularly Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, prompting their curators to establish contact with collectors on the frontiers of European and Aboriginal contact.

The Exhibitions provided more than a market-place for ethnographic objects and natural history specimens. Compendious in their scope, their success depended upon their efficient organisation and the classification of their components. This elaboration coincided with the articulation of taxonomic schema for ethnographic artefacts as expressed by E.B. Tylor and A. Lane-Fox (later Pitt Rivers), based on comparative, sociological method. These schema, heavily reliant upon evolutionist principles, were validated in the Philadelphia and Paris Exhibitions of 1876 and 1878.

The primitive status of Aboriginal artefacts was prominently reinforced at such events and was soon imported back to Australian museums, leading to the redefinition of ethnographic curios as anthropological specimens. From the 1880s onward ethnographic displays within colonial museums began to vie with natural science displays for space and for funding. In Adelaide's case this new role was underpinned by South Australia's own colonial expansion into the Northern Territory. Coinciding with the late international flowering of colonialism and with the major museum movement worldwide, it yielded a flow of ethnographic artefacts which eventually placed the Adelaide collections at the forefront of Australian museums.

While South Australia's colonial experiment established the optimum conditions for gathering a collection of frontier ethnography, that endeavour was likely to have been haphazard without a museum curator prepared to apply principles of selection and organisation to the objects and to the collecting process itself. The efforts of the Adelaide Museum's first Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, demonstrated how opportunity could be subverted by lack of interest in this regard. In contrast, Edward Stirling's record as Director, from the late 1880s until the First World War, revealed an effective alignment of priorities - those of an eclectic and practical scientist, politically experienced and trained in evolutionary theory - with the multiple opportunities presented by the colonial frontier. Just as Ferdinand von Mueller drew specimens and data from a network of botanical collectors across Australia, Stirling's exploitation of similar opportunities and his first-hand knowledge of the frontier brought him into direct contact with a range of

collectors. The motives and methods of these collectors, and the objects of their attention, are explored by category in the middle section of this thesis.

The final section of this study returns to the South Australian Museum itself, by examining the results of this concentrated period of collecting activity, an accretion of more than 740 individual collections ranging from a single object to several hundred objects. The profile of collectors examined in the mid-section of the thesis is based on an analysis of these collectors, most of whom were active during the half-century from 1890 to 1940. In contrast, only 350 collectors have contributed ethnographic material to the Museum in the half-century since 1940.

This study is largely restricted to the analysis of ethnographic collectors - those obtaining artefacts from living Aboriginal people. A similar number of collectors were responsible for supplying the Museum with Aboriginal stone tools and skeletal material not included within this study, and while their motives and methods have not been analysed here, it is worth noting that skeletal collecting, in particular, emerged as a priority during Edward Stirling's directorship.[10] The discovery of the Swanport burial ground in 1911 and the subsequent excavation and examination of the remains unearthed there formed an important chapter in Australian archaeological history. Even before that episode, Stirling had accumulated a formidable skeletal collection and, after observing hollow log burials and tree burials during his 1891 transcontinental expedition, developed a particular research interest in mortuary practice. Stirling's collecting efforts were assisted by a network of medical colleagues with an interest in physical anthropology, discussed in Chapter Nine.

As mentioned, the study does not extend beyond the Second World War. There are three reasons for this. In the first place, the ratio of secondary collectors to primary collectors increased significantly after the War, as the Museum began receiving a greater number of ethnographic collections which had already passed from the original collector through other hands. The second reason is that while ethnographic collections continued to be derived from Aboriginal communities remote from European settlement, after 1940 the content of those collections tended less and less to reflect the technology and traditional cultural practices of hunter-gatherer peoples. Increasing numbers of ethnographic objects were influenced in their form and style by a collector's (and tourist's) market. This fact necessarily introduces new considerations in discussing the history of ethnographic encounters between collectors and Aboriginal people. In particular, and this constitutes the third reason for closing this study in the 1930s, the subsequent gradual dominance of Aboriginal art within the ethnographic market-place began to transform relations between collectors, museums and Aboriginal people. This author has dealt with the history of changing perceptions of Aboriginal art elsewhere, and the complex literature and historiography of the subject must now necessarily take account of intersecting critiques from both fields of art-history and anthropology, beyond the scope of this study.[11]

Endnotes

1. Torgovnik 1990: 125.

2. This writer has posited the European appropriation of the boomerang as a case-study in an 'Aboriginalism' derived from such analysis. See Jones (1992d) and that volume's introduction, for a discussion of 'Aboriginalism' as an application of Said's 'Orientalism'.

3. Reece 1987: 17. See also Reynolds 1982; Reynolds 1987; Loos 1982.

4. Jennings 1975; 1982.

5. Swain 1993: 143.

6. Beckett 1988: 205.

7. Karp 1991: 16.

8. Fabian 1983.

9. Collins 1798: 487-88.

10. During the period until 1990 more than 600 stone tool collectors and (contributing from one to several thousand objects) and more than 500 skeletal collectors (contributing from one to several hundred objects) can be identified. An 1882 letter to the Northern Territory Government Resident referred to a request from the South Australian Institute (Museum) for 'skulls and skeletons of Aborigines'. This request probably originated with Stirling. See A5202, 1882, GRS 11, SRO.

11. Jones 1988. See Marcus & Myers (1995) for a survey of recent critiques.

CHAPTER ONE

'THE SHUFFLE OF THINGS': GENESIS OF A MUSEUM

... a goodly, huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.[1]

The significance of a major ethnographic collection is derived from the sum of its many parts: a myriad of transactions in which thousands of individual artefacts have passed from one culture to another. The relevance of these transactions, and of the collection itself, extends well beyond the confines of the museum. The ethnographic collection reflects the shifting attitudes of European-based science and society towards the culture and history of other societies, particularly during the colonial period. These two aspects - the detailed circumstances of an ethnographic collection's acquisition and the collection's relation to Australia's colonial history - form the subject of this study.

Neither aspect can be considered alone: a collection cannot be regarded as an homogeneous or completely representative entity, nor can individual acts of collection be considered independently of their social context. An ethnographic collection maintains a tension between apparently random, autonomous transactions and wider institutional and social forces. This tension has been an enduring characteristic of museum and private collections. It may also be regarded as a defining element in the collecting process, through which a single object comes to stand as a metonym for its fellows or for its original milieu.

The representational character of collections has persisted throughout the history of museums, and in every kind of collection. All collectors derive the importance of their collections from this fact: in gathering and presenting their arrays of stamps, coins, memorabilia, insects, birds or artefacts they have metaphorically represented the world, or part of it, and have attempted to make it coherent. This crucial function, revealed through individual acts of selection by the collector or curator, defines the collection as an abstraction or exemplar, rather than a direct and objective sample.[2] It also gives a collection a powerful capacity for new forms of representation, transcending the limited vision of the original collector. As this study shows, Aboriginal collections have demonstrated this capacity to a pronounced degree, largely because of their own role in the gradual formation of European-Australian cultural identity.

Here it will be necessary to focus upon the ethnographic object itself, to look at its emergence

during the nineteenth century as a type distinguished from objects of antiquity, natural history and art, and to examine its subsequent history of transformation within the frame of a Western museum. Shifting Western perceptions have seen the role of the ethnographic object transformed from that of an evidentiary relic, testifying to lost or vanishing cultures. As the Smithsonian Institution's first curator of ethnology, Otis T. Mason stressed: 'Every object must possess its significance, representing a certain fact, or providing evidence of an important discovery'.[3] Yet, as Mason and other nineteenth century museum ethnographers were aware, this significance was not derived from a single object but from its place within a museum series. It was an ascribed significance, deduced and attributed by specialists who stood apart from the society in which the object originated. Moreover, the re-creation of context around ethnographic objects through taxonomic displays or lifelike dioramas implies a rejection of the particular histories which are intrinsic to these objects.

The gradual addition of contextual information to ethnographic exhibitions during the past twenty years in particular reveals the influence of notions of cultural relativism, decades after their genesis in university departments of anthropology. Renewed attention has been focused upon ethnographic objects and the cultures which have produced them. The most visible effect within museums has occurred in the boundary shifts between the realms of material culture and art. While the parameters for these negotiations may have been set by academia, it has been museums, once again, which have provided the visible forum for this rearrangement of categories, this 'shuffle of things'.

The emergence of ethnographic museums

The world's great ethnographic museums date mainly from the nineteenth century, although a few, like the Musee de l'Homme or the Museum of Mankind, trace their origins much earlier. A minority, those formed with ethnography as their sole charter, were founded during the 'museum movement' of the last decades of the nineteenth century. Those incorporated within colonial natural history museums such as the South Australian Museum generally began earlier in the century but were considerably augmented and reinvigorated by this movement.[4] Despite their differing origins the two types of ethnographic museums have had little to separate them in terms of style and presentation; both were formed by Western scientific institutions in order to store and exhibit objects of other cultures and both are integral to the history of European colonisation.

The purpose-built ethnographic museums, particularly those established in Germany during the 1870s and 1880s, marked a clarification of the concept of 'natural history', which until that time had encompassed ethnographic material as well as 'that portion of the subject which treats of the history of

creatures endowed with life'.[5] Despite the apparent force of a trend towards museums devoted to the single theme of anthropology, most public ethnographic collections remain incorporated within natural history museums today. Australia's state ethnographic collections are no exception.

These collections often appear as anomalous elements within museums staffed and funded largely as research and collecting institutions which specialise in the natural sciences. It is increasingly evident to a museum public educated to recognise cultural similarities as well as differences, that Western museums' preoccupation with the culture of non-Western peoples requires fresh justification.[6] While Aboriginal and Pacific collections have acquired renewed political and cultural relevance on their own account in recent years, their part in the development of Australia's natural history museums is less understood. This is largely because the social role of these museums has shifted since their establishment during the early and mid-nineteenth century. From their origins as metropolitan institutions representing the natural world and the history of all of its living forms, including mankind, natural history museums have had to defend their interpretative role against the saturating effect of the print and electronic media. The 'meta-narratives'which museums provided from the onset of the modern period had allowed for the unchallenged expression of 'overarching discourses through which objective realities and eternal truths could be defined and expressed'.[7] During the past fifty years at least, much of this traditional function has been usurped. The status of collections as the principal repositories for primary evidence about the natural world may remain secure within the scientific community, but publicly acknowledged verities of this kind are now confirmed by the media rather than museums themselves. Museums are more likely to be known today for individual galleries or particular exhibits than for the unity of their collections and the generalised accounts of science and culture which they convey.

Pearce, Bourdieu and others have suggested that this fragmentation in the credibility of the museum coincided with the end of the 'modern'period, around 1950.[8] The ensuing 'late-modern'or 'post-modern'period has been analysed by numerous commentators, mostly inspired by the deconstructivism of Foucault and Barthes. While no detailed consensus exists, most agree that museum objects represent or crystallise the particular dilemmas of this new period. The tension between their status as real objects and objects with constructed meanings has been repeatedly observed, as has the role of their curators and the institution of the museum itself. Central to these analyses has been an acceptance that the museum and its objects convey a constructed reality, rather than a revelation of reality. As Pearce describes it,

> Museums ... are not privileged places. They, and the people who work in them, are part of social practice in a social world. Museums do not tell about things in the transparent sense; they are themselves complicated things, social constructs ... Museums are active creators of the natural and human past, including of course the very recent past, and their creations should be understood as product - not discovery.[9]

This shift from the modern to the post-modern has also been reflected in the expanding architectural complexity of museums and through an accompanying sequestration of more intimate and disconnected

exhibition spaces. The natural history museum appears less as an organic entity than as a series of discrete collections curated and exhibited by individual specialists. In the process a central fact has become obscured: that a museum's collections and their collectors represent a network of intellectual interest about the natural world which spans many decades and which has linked regional centres of enquiry around the world.

From Curiosities to Specimens

The history of collecting during the modern period from 1450 to 1950 has been only partly documented. Krzystof Pomian's analysis of Parisian and Venetian collectors from 1500 to 1800 offers persuasive evidence that the *cabinets de curieux* assembled during this period were much more than the disordered precursors of rational, scientific collections. These *cabinets* represented an attempt to define a new historical reality, 'no longer controlled by theology and not yet controlled by science'.[10] The subsequent emergence of ordered collections represented much more than an unproblematic and progressivist shift, achieved through the gradual application of principles of scientific classification articulated by Linnaeus and Blumenbach. The new order in scientific collections encompassed the ordinary as well as the curious, signalling a shift in emphasis from nature's singular wonders to the elicitation of universal laws and scientific principles. As sources of wonder and reminders of the limits of knowledge, 'curiosities' became imbued with fresh meaning as 'specimens', vital elements in new schemes of expanding knowledge. Through this shift the nature of a modern museum received an initial and powerful clarification, creating an institutional distance between itself and individual collectors and their *cabinets*.

This is not to say that the *cabinets de curieux*, assembled by European courts and both noble and bourgeois families during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, were entirely the haphazard assemblages of dilettantes.[11] The *cabinets* may have been primitive in terms of later museum development, but they embodied a serious attempt at representing and classifying aspects of an unfamiliar world. To their collectors they were coherent models of 'universal nature made private'.[12] The fact that they were easily absorbed within new systems of organisation suggests that they were already, to some degree, ordered collections. But as Hooper-Greenhill and Foucault have suggested, this order was very often self-referential, representing 'circular relationships of resemblance, infinitely variable, and often personal'. These relationships were to be made obsolete by the public museum's tabular, catalogued order: '[t]hings which had been displayed together to demonstrate the variety and richness of the world would now be displayed apart, linked not to something dissimilar through hidden resemblances, but to something that had the same morphological features, that looked the same, and could be classed in the same family or species'.[13]

The significance of the early *cabinets* in tracing the history of museums and collections lies in the fact that they represent an intermediate stage between private and public collections. This was the age of the gentleman *virtuoso*, individuals whose interests in science, antiquities and the arts was focused through their attention to their collections and those of other *virtuosi*.[14] As Hodgen puts it, 'collectors and their patrons were profoundly interested in the practical problems of preserving, classifying, and arranging their treasures, an aspect of the vogue of collecting that had an important bearing on the history of ethnological thought'.[15] The *cabinets* contained personal souvenirs relating to the collector's own life and travel, 'fetishised objects' which memorialised other events or individuals (both mythological and real), and systematic series of objects such as shells, insects or weapons.[16] These three elements continue to distinguish private collections, and it is generally the second and third categories which still make their way into public museum collections as they have done since the first private *cabinets* were institutionalised during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Other continuities may be observed. Three important sub-groups of *virtuosi* collectors displayed an interest in ethnographic objects which has persisted among analogous categories of private collectors well into the twentieth century. In Britain particularly, the interest of antiquarian *virtuosi* in relics and fossils provided a great impetus to the development of amateur and professional archaeology. Naturalist *virtuosi* such as Gilbert White fused antiquarian interests with those of natural history and made a case for extending an amateur naturalist's field of study into the arena of anthropological enquiry.[17] The third sub-group, medical *virtuosi*, narrowed the focus again, but adopted particular issues and controversies which became the stuff of nineteenth century physical anthropology in particular.

Impey and MacGregor's 1985 survey of the *cabinets* shows the extent to which both natural and man-made objects were classified and valued according to canons of taste which shifted according to the times or in the wake of particular events or discoveries. The results of commerce with Africa, South-East Asia and the Far East, and of the discovery of the New World had far-reaching effects on collecting, revolutionising the way in which Europeans saw the world and their place in it:

> Polar bears, cassowaries, dodos - creatures hardly less fabulous than unicorns and basilisks - were displayed to an incredulous public in raree-shows, and were often, after their demise, acquired for display in museums. The human inhabitants of these exotic lands were less frequently (though not uncommonly) paraded before the public gaze, but items associated with them were among the most sought-after exhibits in early museums - tokens or emblems of societies whose very existence was a source of astonishment to the intensely parochial European public. Clothing, weapons and utensils of all sorts, often made of unfamiliar materials, found their way to collectors through the major ports, and in time, through dealers.[18]

Several of the most important of the early *cabinets*, particularly those formed by royal families, became the basis of Europe's most significant ethnographic museums during the nineteenth century. The French royal collections made their way into the Trocadero before their incorporation within the Musee de L'Homme; the Cabinet of Curiosities of the Danish kings entered the National Museum at Copenhagen; the Austrian

Emperor's 'Hofnaturalienkabinett' formed part of Vienna's Museum fur Volkerkunde; the collections of the Electors of Brandenburg and Kings of Prussia became the basis of Berlin's Museum fur Volkerkunde. In 1837 von Siebold's outstanding collection of Japanese ethnography was incorporated (together with his influential system of classification) within the nucleus of one of Europe's first ethnographic museums at Leiden's National Museum of Ethnology, where it joined the varied collections of King William I's 'Konninklij Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden'.[19] In contrast, the British Museum's early collections were drawn mainly from the *cabinets* of gentlemen *virtuosi*, in particular Sir Hans Sloane and Joseph Banks.

As with the development of natural history museums elsewhere, the establishment of these large ethnographic museums encouraged the emergence of the curatorial profession. It is no coincidence that the terms 'curator', 'care', and 'curiosity' have a common etymological derivation.[20] Natural and artificial (man-made) curiosities, which had previously provoked anxiety about their place in an overall scheme, were now to be cared for in more than a simple custodial sense, by curators whose job it was to allay or 'cure' this anxiety. In penetrating the mysteries of the natural world by classifying and studying them, the emerging figure of the curator came to epitomise the Enlightenment quest for knowledge and order.[21]

The motivation to know and to classify the natural world for its own sake was framed against a strong religious background: the accepted notion that animate and inanimate objects had a place within the scheme of God's creation. The immense popularity of natural history throughout Britain and other European countries reflects the fact that until evolutionary theory took hold, discoveries made in this field were perceived as analogous with revelations of God's own handiwork. Natural history became a pious, socially condoned and egalitarian undertaking, to which any individual, rich or poor, could contribute. Collections of shells, insects, birds and animals were assembled by households throughout Britain and Europe and their study and interpretation was promoted through the wide influence of leading natural historians. Gilbert White's 'Natural History of Selborne', more than any other single work, assisted this process, and marked natural history's transition from a casual, popular hobby to its new status as a science which could inform Western society about its own origins and development.[22]

Each new identification or species provided another small link in the 'great chain of being', linking lower to higher organisms with man at the summit.[23] Critical to this endeavour and to the emergence of the museum profession was the elevation of the notion that objects, whether natural or artificial, could be classified within a series. This series could be located in space and in time: 'The endless [medieval] rhythms of season and liturgy, of astronomy and astrology, gave way to a sense of historical progression - the basis of museology as a science'.[24] The notion that the 'great chain of being' was God's handiwork was reinforced by the complete acceptance of biblical chronology as a frame for the unfolding events of natural and human history, until this concept was undermined and eventually overturned during the mid-nineteenth century.

The 'curiosity' had confronted its collector with an atypical, unique character, reiterating the

strangeness and opacity of the unknown world beyond the pale of civilisation. The 'specimen' or 'artefact', in contrast, offered the collector and the museum public a small window into this hitherto unclassified world. Collecting, naming and classifying objects became accepted as a civilising, colonising act, whether carried out in Britain, Europe, or their far-flung empires.[25] But while the positive elements of this quest have almost invariably been stressed, other ways of regarding the world and its natural phenomena were pushed aside or suppressed in the process. In Britain, the rationalist, largely Protestant tendency to correct 'vulgar errors' and the superstitious folk beliefs of agrarian communities had become pronounced as early as the seventeenth century. This Protestant critque of older ways of looking at the natural world was strongly bolstered by the new scientific literature of the later seventeenth century. It was this same period, in which museum collections began their transition from private *cabinets* of gentleman collectors to museums offering greater access to the public, that was decisive in the separation of popular from learned views of the world.[26] There is an analogy between this divergence and the disjunction between ways in which Australian Aborigines and European colonists perceived the world and each other. With their reliance upon a complex yet often contradictory network of interpretations and resemblances, Aboriginal classification systems may stand comparison with those relied upon by pre-Renaissance Europe. But by the colonial period the 'artificial classification system' introduced by Linnaeus had pervaded most levels of British and European society. Alternative views about the natural world became marginalised as folklore.[27]

Museum curators were vital agents in an accelerating process which led eventually to an exaggerated elevation of the principles of scientific classification. These principles, applied to the full range of Australia's living creatures, inanimate objects and Aboriginal artefacts, were elaborated during the course of the nineteenth century. The path was prepared for the curatorial profession by several individuals in seventeenth-century Europe and Britain. Their scholarly collections bridged the gap between the less focused enquiries of the earlier collectors and the systematic researches of natural scientists. In London, the contents of the Tradescants' Ark (later to be transferred to Oxford as the Ashmolean Museum) were apparently modelled on the plan of arrangement of an apothecary shop:

> the ceiling and walls were hung with chameleons, squirrels, shellfish, a natural dragon, a sea horse's head, a mermaid's hand, and every conceivable kind of stuffed animal and bird. Smaller objects, however, such as coins, fossils, thunderstones, minerals, gems, bits of human skin, and the like were usually placed in cabinets or cupboards, cunningly designed by skillful artisans, and equipped with small drawers, trays, and pigeonholes, to make their contents readily accessible.[28]

Like Sir Hans Sloane's collection (which became the inaugural collection of the British Museum of Natural History) and most other early museums, the Tradescants' Ark offered no firm distinction between objects of natural history and ethnography. One exception to this general rule was the museum of the Danish physician, Ole Wurm (1588-1664), who divided his collection into two parts: 'first, natural objects, including fossils, plants and animals; and second, artificial rarities, classified according to the substance

of which they were formed, and including many man-made artefacts such as vessels, untensils, tools, weapons, coins...'.[29]

Philipp F.B. von Siebold's plans for a purely ethnographic museum were realised nearly two centuries later, yet he was one of the first to articulate the rationale which lay behind ethnographic museums of the future. He successfully argued for a scientific arrangement of objects from various countries, 'which, on their own as well as in relation to each other, are to give us a further acquaintance with the peoples to which they belong'.[30] Of as much significance as von Siebold's grasp of the representational capacity of ethnographic objects was his straightforward acceptance that the initial choice of objects made by collectors and museums and their subsequent arrangement could crucially influence subsequent perceptions of other societies:

> [T]he result of such comparative investigations in ethnography will be dependent on, or conditioned by, the choice of the objects collected. This, however, is in its turn related to the system underlying the classification of the objects. Thus, considering the museum a tool of research ... the way the objects are grouped or classified will influence the conclusions resulting, and vice versa.[31]

In England there had been some effort during the 1840s to reorder the British Museum's ethnographic collections in response to suggestions by ethnologists such as Robert Latham and Ernest Dieffenbach.[32] But aside from a significant name change in 1845 from the Museum's collection of 'Natural and Artificial Curiosities' to the 'Ethnological Gallery', these initiatives had little effect. The founder of the most important ethnographic museum in Britain, Colonel Augustus Lane-Fox Pitt Rivers, described the British Museum during the 1870s as an 'ethnological curiosity ... [in a] molluscus state of development'.[33]

As a practical museum philosopher von Siebold had his English analogue in the anatomist and surgeon John Hunter. Hunter's medical museum in London's Leicester Square, which became the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, was described in 1840 by William Swainson as 'the most beautifully planned and the most conveniently arranged museum perhaps in Europe'.[34] Hunter's museum successfully combined the private *cabinet* with the more public, expansive 'gallery' style which had evolved from the *grande salle* of French medieval chateaux. This combination provided an enduring model for natural history museums. Hunter's great rectangular hall accommodated most of his collections in two longitudinal rows of table cases and two upper galleries. The style is echoed in the Australian Museum's oldest surviving gallery, and in Adelaide's Museum of Economic Botany (1881), minus the galleries. The South Australian Museum's first curator argued strongly for a similar design during the 1870s, having endured the constrictions of a building intended to house a library, reading room, museum and art gallery, after the fashion of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, but in a fraction of the space.[35]

In its internal arrangement, Hunter's museum was a concerted departure from earlier *cabinets*, creating a model of scientific arrangement which curators aspired to emulate:

> the exhibits displayed various complete series of ideas, showing the structure and activities of plants and animals in various phases of life. This was Hunter's brilliant conception - to turn the

> museum from a 'cabinet of curiosities' into a scientifically ordered and instructive display. Every object had its logical place, and was necessary to the scheme.[36]

Hunter was also one of the first to utilise glass table cases, rapidly taken for granted in museums but at that time a significant departure from the apothecaries' model of arrangement, by which objects were arranged around walls and suspended from the ceiling, out of reach. Here the public could crowd around objects, but be distanced from them at the same time just as, through the introduction of plate glass, they were able to approach and inspect desired objects in shop windows.[37]

Hunter's considered approach to building a museum as a means of expressing an ontological scheme has been a rare phenomenon in museological history. From the nineteenth century most museums were conceived through government committees rather than through the vision of individuals such as von Siebold and Hunter, or other museum pioneers such as Owen, Agassiz or William Flower. Moreover, these institutions rapidly grew beyond their envisaged capacities through the unregulated accretion of objects - growth which occurred despite inadequate financing and makeshift accommodation. It is ironic that for many museums the major period of growth at the end of the nineteenth century came just before advances in museological theory which might otherwise have radically affected their shape and style.[38] When notions of cultural relativism began to exert their influence against prevailing models of evolutionary theory it was already too late for most established museums with ethnographic collections. As Kenneth Hudson has observed, these institutions were only able to effect limited and compromising changes in the presentation of their exhibitions:

> In London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna, the principal capital cities of Europe, large new buildings were created almost simultaneously to house collections which had long outgrown their previous accommodation, only for their owners and users to discover that they were seriously out of date as soon as they were opened. If it had been possible to delay them for a few years, the results would have been a great deal more satisfactory.[39]

Australia's colonial museums experienced a similar history of compromise. This is evident today not simply in their docmented failures and achievements, but in the surviving fabric of their buildings, and the design and construction of their exhibitions, storage areas and offices, many of which have survived from each era of their past. The South Australian Museum is notable in that its architectural record is preserved almost undisturbed, together with a representative remnant of its exhibition galleries from 1895 onwards. Its earliest home, the 1860 South Australian Institute Building to the west of its present site, is a reminder that this museum, like other colonial museums in Australia, predates the 'museum movement' of the late nineteenth century by several decades.

It is apparent that there was an earlier museum movement, which both reflected and encouraged the establishment of colonial museums in Australia and elsewhere.[40] Indeed, the museum movement of the late nineteenth century may be said to have had its roots in a ferment of discussion about the purpose and ideal arrangement of natural history museums which followed the tremendous success of London's Great

Exhibition of 1851. The writings of Richard Owen (assistant curator of the Hunterian Museum before becoming Superintendent of the Natural History Department of the British Museum of Natural History in 1856) and Louis Agassiz (the Swiss-born founder of the Harvard Museum) were especially influential.[41] Agassiz advanced the view, first expressed in 1858, by Owen's Keeper of Zoology, Edward Gray, that museums should maintain separate 'study series' and 'exhbition series'.[42] The subsequent debate raised key questions about a museum's primary responsibilities and its clientele which in turn influenced the formation of policies about the acquisition of collections, their accommodation and their accessibility.

While the museum movement of the late nineteenth century was of pivotal importance in the worldwide development of the profession, and reflected a high level of social interest in these institutions, the course of many museums had already been set. For Australia's colonial museums the debates of the 1880s and 1890s had most impact on the development of policy within existing broad parameters, especially in relation to cataloguing systems, commitment to establishing research series of objects, and implementation of new exhibition techniques. The formative years of the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart and Adelaide museums had been spent between the 1840s and 1870s, with attempts by their planners and legislators to transform makeshift organisations into permanent cultural institutions. While contemporary British debate about museums and their role was keenly perceived, the dominant effect on colonial museum policy was exerted through the immediate influence of local conditions, ranging from economic and political exigencies to emerging attitudes towards a natural world which was yielding a rich store of curiosities and useful commodities.

Ethnographic collecting in South Australia - the first two decades

Like most Australian museums, the South Australian Museum was not established as an independent institution. The founding legislation of 1856, 'An Act to establish and incorporate an Institution to be called the "South Australian Institute"', provided for both a library and a museum. This was not simply a matter of economy or convenience, but reflected a prevailing attitude towards popular education, expressed in England through the creation of mechanics' institutes modelled on those established by Birkbeck in London and Glasgow. For their basic principle of self-help education to succeed, these institutes required objects, including natural science specimens and models of machinery, to supplement their small libraries and the various classes which they held.[43] Objects and books complemented each other. Writing in 1902 of the Port Adelaide Institute Museum, Horton observed that

> [the] underlying idea of a library and museum is precisely the same. Both are instruments of intellectual culture, and where combined in an effective degree there is scarcely any limit to the instruction placed ready at hand to those who will accept the opportunities offered.[44]

The institutes provided a focus for an unprecedented popular interest in natural history, and greatly hastened the transformation of the *cabinet* type of collection into museums of a recognisably modern type. Their activities, small-scale and generally accessible to a popular audience, suited the scale of colonial capitals. Inkster and Todd have noted that their membership and activities reflected 'a wide social and intellectual appeal, a search for the natural peculiarities and utilities of Australia and a localism represented in frequent lectures and discussions on agricultural chemistry, geology, mineralogy and mineral resources, and exploration'.[45] More significantly, the rapid growth of these institute museums assisted in promoting collecting as a socially positive activity (a 'rational amusement') at precisely the time that the colony of South Australia was founded.[46]

In fact, in South Australia's case, the impetus to form a museum preceded the actual date of colonisation. The London-based South Australian Literary Association (later the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association) was founded in 1834 with the aim of promoting 'the cultivation and diffusion of important knowledge of the colony'.[47] An eclectic selection of papers was delivered at its early meetings, ranging from internal defence and policing, land pricing, labour regulations and religious provisions for the new colony, to natural history and geology. Signalling a future emphasis in Adelaide anthropology, the apothecary and surgeon Edward Wright delivered a paper titled 'On the Phrenology and the Natural Character of the Aborigines of South Australia'.[48]

Of greater significance for the Museum's early development was the fact that the Association's inaugural address was delivered by Richard Davies Hanson, a utopian socialist with strong beliefs in the transforming power of instruction which mechanics' institutes and museums could provide.[49] Hanson served on a sub-committee to revise the Institute's rules in 1851 and on a subsequent select committee reporting on the need for a 'National Institute'. He was one of the first in Australia to critically air and examine Darwinian theory, in an address contained in four papers read to the Adelaide Philosophical Society in 1864. As Chief Justice, Hanson also chaired the 1874 Commission which examined far-reaching proposals for a 'New Institute and Museum'.[50]

The South Australian Literary and Scientific Association only briefly survived its relocation to the new colony. In 1839 it merged with the newly founded Mechanics' Institute to form a new, gentrified body under the patronage of South Australia's new Governor, George Gawler.[51] Pressure from South Australia's colonists for a separate museum had begun several months earlier, with the formation of a Natural History Society of South Australia in December 1838. The society was to be modelled on the Linnaean and Geological Societies of London, 'for the cultivation of the various departments of Natural History and the formation of a Museum, especially of the indigenous productions of South Australia'.[52] Shortly after the Society's foundation a newspaper advertisement was lodged, calling for 'donations of books and specimens towards the formation of a Library and Museum'.[53] As the Society's principal officer, Governor Gawler

announced the acquisition of important collections just a few months later:

> His Excellency the Governor acknowledges the receipt from Mr Williams, Deputy Storekeeper, for the Colonization Commissioners, a collection of weapons and instruments used by the natives in the neighbourhood, from J.B. Harvey Esq., collections of shells from Kangaroo Island, for the Colonization Commissioners and for the Museum at Adelaide; and from J. Gould, Esq., F.L.S., a Synopsis of the Birds of Australia, in four parts, for the Adelaide Museum.[54]

Only some of the shells and Gould's *Synopsis* were reserved for the proposed Adelaide Museum. The Aboriginal 'weapons and instruments' were sent to Britain, possibly to adorn the offices of the Colonial Commissioners in London. These artefacts represented trophies of empire rather than increasingly rare museum specimens.

At the inaugural meeting of the Natural History Society it was announced that Osmond Gilles (the Society's Secretary and the new colony's erratic Treasurer), had presented the Society with a block of land (fifty by seventy feet) in Adelaide's Hurtle Square, 'on which the Society may erect a suitable building'.[55] This offer was never taken up, and the Society itself lasted only a few months, partly because of the colony's impending financial crisis and related divisions among the Society's committee members, several of whom were government officials.[56] Two of these members were actively interested in Aborigines: George Stevenson, better known as an horticulturalist, had been temporarily appointed as Protector of Aborigines in 1836; William Wyatt became Protector in the following year and published one of the first descriptions of the Adelaide Plains Aborigines.[57] Another Society member, David McLaren, was known to be well disposed towards the Aborigines. John Brown, a founding committee member of the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association in London, was a cousin of the celebrated missionary George Augustus Robinson who worked among Tasmanian Aborigines during the 1830s. During 1836 Brown agitated successfully for Robinson to become South Australia's Protector of Aborigines, but Robinson eventually decided against the position.[58]

An additional reason for the Society's dissolution may have been that as more settlers arrived it became evident that a single society might not be adequate to satisfy their varied interests. By 1839 Gawler was presiding over the newly formed Botanical and Horticultural Gardens Society, with two committee members from the Natural History Society (William Wyatt as Secretary and Osmond Gilles as Treasurer) supporting Charles Sturt as Secretary and John Bailey as Colonial Botanist. The South Australian Agricultural Society was formed in November of the same year.[59] These societies were also short-lived, and for several years the Literary and Scientific Association and Mechanics' Institute remained the centre of the colony's scientific endeavour. Occasional lectures on natural history subjects were delivered at the Institute from early in 1839. New premises were found in the following year and the Institute's President, the explorer Charles Sturt, marked the opening with a lecture on geology and geography.[60] At its annual meeting in July 1840 the amalgamated society confirmed that its aims included the establishment of a museum.

The Mechanics' Institute steadily became less relevant to its original constituents, the city's working

men. The history of the Institute's decline and eventual absorption by a gentrified philosophical society is mirrored by British examples of 'failed attempts at bourgeois persuasion' during the same period.[61] As Laurent has suggested, 'Frederick Engels' 1844 assessment of British mechanics' institutes - that their founders were intent on "making them organs for the dissemination of the sciences useful to the bourgeoisie," with the result that "the mass of working men naturally have nothing to do with these institutes" - contains some substance [and] much the same can be said of the earliest Australian institutions'.[62]

With the deepening of South Australia's financial crisis, Governor Gawler was replaced during May 1841 by another notable patron of Australian anthropology and natural history, the twenty-seven year old explorer and colonial administrator, Captain George Grey.[63] Grey's arrival underlined both the strengths and weaknesses of an emergent South Australian anthropology. As discussed in the following chapter, he promoted Adelaide anthropology as a subject of research linked to wider questions of human origins which were beginning to occupy researchers in Europe and America. His direct encouragement of Adelaide ethnography helped to generate a remarkable series of publications during the 1840s. But in contrast to Gawler, Grey appeared less interested in the foundation of a museum. As with the research which he promoted, his own collecting activities were directed back to Europe and to England in particular. Like other naturalists of the period, Grey sent his collections of biological, geological and anthropological material to the British Museum and to the ornithologist John Gould, with whom he corresponded.[64] While ethnographic research in Adelaide appeared to thrive during this early period, its most significant patrons were aligned towards Britain and with their departure its vigour faded.

In this respect South Australian naturalists were no different from those in the other Australian colonies who deferred to the English scientific establishment until their own network of expertise and a sustaining infrastructure was well enough established.[65] On their part, the trustees of the British Museum were quick to exploit the potential for acquiring collections of new 'specimens of natural history' and other 'rare and curious objects'. In June 1838 the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* carried a circular letter from Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies, which appeared in similar publications in the other colonies:

> (Circular)
> Downing Street, October 14, 1837
> Sir - I have the honor to transmit to you a copy of a letter (Enclosure No.1), which has been addressed to me by the Trustees of the British Museum, requesting me to instruct the Governors of Her Majesty's Colonial possessions to make known within their respective Governments the desire of that Institution to receive Specimens of the Natural History of the Colonies; and also to take advantage of any opportunities which may offer of securing for the Trustees such rare and curious objects as shall appear to be of sufficient importance to deserve a place in the National Museum. I have, accordingly, to request that you will contribute to the utmost of your power towards the promotion of the views of the Trustees of the British Museum.

I also enclose several copies of a Code of Directions which has been prepared by the Officers of the Museum for the guidance of inexperienced persons in selecting and preserving Mineralogical and other Specimens; and I have to request that you will cause them to be distributed among those who may be willing to collect and present Specimens to the Museum....[66]

It is likely that local agents were used by the British Museum to obtain these collections. In August, 1838, the following advertisement appeared in Adelaide newspapers:

To Naturalists etc.
The undersigned are instructed to purchase (until the 1st of September next) specimens of the Natural History and Natural Productions of South Australia, to be accompanied, if possible, with written descriptions. Also a complete set of implements of war and of the chase, used by the Aborigines in the different districts.
Messrs Light, Finniss & Co. Rundle St, August 3, 1838.[67]

This is the first documented reference to official efforts to collect South Australian Aboriginal material culture. It is revealing, not just for its predictable emphasis on weaponry and hunting artefacts, but for its reference to a 'set' of artefacts and to variation between districts - notions applied from Britain, but which became crucial to the formation of the Adelaide Museum's collections later in the century.

Until the establishment of a local museum, serious collectors were obliged to maintain private collections in Adelaide or more characteristically, to send these back to relatives, friends, notable collectors and to the British Museum itself. The 'long arm of London' directed a great deal of natural history research and collecting throughout Australia during the colonial period. As Robert Stafford has written, it was expressed largely through 'the organization and projection of scientific activities from Britain rather than an overt imposition of metropolitan authority over colonial practitioners and data'.[68]

In 1853 the Adelaide entomologist Charles Wilson estimated that during the previous fifteen years he had sent 'upwards of 6,000 specimens' back to England. To this end Adelaide colonists had the services of a professional collector and taxidermist, Robert Hall, whose advertisement appeared in the *Adelaide Examiner* during January, 1843:

PRESENTS TO ENGLAND
The undersigned begs to inform his friends and the public that he has on hand an extensive and very superior collection of STUFFED BIRDS AND PRESERVED INSECTS AND REPTILES, well adapted for the selection of those who desire to send to England, choice and unique specimens of the Ornithology, Zoology and Etymology [sic] of this colony. He will be happy to treat with gentlemen or ladies intending to send collections to their friends or who may be returning to England.
Robt. Hall.
Ornithologist.
Currie Street.[69]

Hall may have been responsible for the 'many specimens of birds' which, together with 'costumes, implements, weapons and utensils, belonging to the Australians and New Zealanders', accompanied the Adelaide and London exhibitions of George French Angas's watercolour paintings during 1845 and 1846.[70]

Few private natural history or ethnographic collections from the first years of South Australian

settlement are known to have survived. One exception is a small collection of 29 South Australian birds, despatched to the London Office of the South Australian Company on October 22, 1838. The collection was donated to the South Australian Museum 90 years later, still in good condition.[71] Another is the 'small collection of native things' obtained from Aborigines south of Adelaide and at the Murray Mouth during the early 1840s by the proprietor of the *Adelaide Times*, James Allen. This collection was donated to the Museum 60 years later.[72] The earliest reference to a transaction involving a named Aboriginal person appears to be that recorded by N.B. Tindale from an interview with an elderly man in the 1930s. This man, Mr. Chalk, recalled that his father had acquired a wooden club from an Aboriginal man, 'Denburi', in 1838, in exchange for a sheeps-head.[73]

Small collections of Aboriginal artefacts which have survived in British and European museums indicate what might have been preserved in Adelaide had its museum existed during the 1840s and 1850s. A single basket 'made by the Aborigines of South Australia, Encounter Bay tribe', probably collected during the early 1840s by the Aborigines' Protector, Matthew Moorhouse, and preserved by his daughter Jane, is among the Museum of Mankind's collections.[74] A small number of objects collected by Lutheran missionaries from the same area were sent to Germany and are now in the collections of the Dresden and Herrnhut Museums.[75] Five objects collected by the Lutherans from Adelaide Aborigines, comprising a spear, two clubs, a net and a headband were sent to the Dresden Museum in 1840.[76] A length of cord, a throwing club and a returning boomerang in the Museum of Mankind, presented by the New South Wales Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, represent the earliest known artefacts collected from South Australian Aborigines. These objects may have been obtained in the vicinity of the Glenelg River by Mitchell in August 1836.[77] Items collected by George French Angas and George Grey, possibly during their 1844 expedition through the colony's south-east, exist undocumented within the Museum of Mankind collections in London.[78]

The best indication of the range of ethnographic objects available to Adelaide collectors during the 1840s lies in the writings and drawings of South Australian ethnographers and artists. Teichelmann and Schurmann, Meyer, Moorhouse, Wyatt, Cawthorne, Grey, Angas, and Eyre each described the various 'productions of the natives'. Most of these men made collections, from which only a handful of objects obtained by Moorhouse, Grey and the Lutheran missionaries are known today. The detailed drawings made by Eyre, Cawthorne and Angas serve as the fullest visual record of the range of objects made and used by Aborigines in and around early colonial Adelaide.

The ethnographic collecting undertaken by Angas and Cawthorne arose from their joint and separate painting and drawing projects. Curiously, while both men later played important roles in the foundation and early years of the colony's Museum, neither promoted an ethnographic charter for it. The reason may lie partly in their gradual disillusionment with ethnography as the Aborigines of the Adelaide

Plains diminished in number and adopted European ways during the later 1840s and 1850s. Another cause may be traced to the jealousies between the men. These were evident as early as 1844 and were aroused by Angas's depiction and description of Aboriginal artefacts which Cawthorne had already carefully gathered, described, and placed in context.[79]

Cawthorne began this project during 1843, hoping to publish a book on the subject of Aboriginal life, customs and language. He revised this ambitious plan, deciding by August of that year to produce

> a little book with about 20 plates entitled 'The Implements of the Adelaide natives ... I have only the afternoon[s] to work in at it and then only about an hour and a half ... but if it is possible I will finish it before this year is over ... The painting of the implements takes me some time for they must be done accurately and neatly.[80]

Cawthorne soon realised that little could be achieved without support and backing. He relied upon the goodwill of the pious Anthony Forster, who took a missionary interest in Adelaide Aborigines, founding a Sunday school for Aboriginal children at Walkerville during 1844. Forster was also a financial agent for George Fife Angas, Chairman of the South Australian Company, and advised Cawthorne to await the arrival of Angas's second son, John Howard Angas, an accomplished lithographer.[81]

Cawthorne also solicited support from Matthew Moorhouse, the colony's Protector of Aborigines. Moorhouse admired Cawthorne's naive sketches ('said they were very natural') but dashed the impoverished young artist's hopes by informing him that Governor Grey was already planning a major illustrated work on the Aborigines:

> he is employing hands in all quarters to sketch their habits and implements ... making a book that embraces the manners, customs, habits etc. of the Aborigines of South Australia with first rate illustrations which alone, Mr Moorhouse supposed, would cost L100 in publishing ... he told me that the Governor did not intend bringing this said work out in this colony but when he went home to England.[82]

Still resolving to publish his own work, Cawthorne was informed by Forster of yet another publication on the subject, the proposed folio volume *South Australia Illustrated*, to be produced by George French Angas. Im Cawthorne's words, it would comprise:

> views of the Harbours, Bays, Coasts, Lakes, Rivers, Lagoons, with Mountains and agricultural scenery, and lord knows what. Natural history, birds, beasts and fishes. The history etc. etc. of the natives and etc. etc. and all illustrated. That he would be about 20 months about it. Begged for support (the idea of the thing. What aid does he need. His father rich as Job) ....[83]

Angas's arrival in Adelaide followed within weeks. Three days before their first meeting on 2 February, 1844, Cawthorne listed thirty-five 'things that the Adelaide natives use'. This listing, reproduced below in Table 1, probably represented the content of the young artist's ethnographic collection and is the fullest surviving statement of an Adelaide Plains 'repertoire' of material culture. Cawthorne's own notes suggest that two Adelaide Plains men, Captain Jack Kadlitpinna and King John Mullawirraburka, were important contributors to this collection. Both men are recorded in other sources as active brokers of their culture in these years, often demonstrating the use of weapons to interested Europeans.[84]

Angas drew extensively on Cawthorne's collection in making his own visual record, which also incorporated artefacts from Port Lincoln, the Murray River and Coorong, as well as selected items from Governor Grey's collection, gathered in Western Australia.The references in square brackets in Table 1 refer to the plate and figure number of the corresponding object in Angas's volume, *South Australia Illustrated* (Angas 1847a):

Table 1 Cawthorne's artefact list, cross-referenced to Angas (1847)

No.	Name	Reference
WAR IMPLEMENTS		
1	**The Uwinda**	[6:22,23;51:34]
2	**The Kootpe (Reed Spear)**	[6:20]
3	**Kyah**	[6:7,19; 51:13]
4	**Midlah**	[6:7,11,12,13]
5	**Molubakka**	[6: 1,14]
6	**Wocaltee (bark shield)**	[6:2]
7	**Wirri**	[6: 15,16,17,18]
8	**Cutta**	[27:23]
9	**Waarpoo**	[6:10]
PLAYTHINGS		
10	**Mattamoodlu**	[27:2]
11	**Witto**	[27:3]
12	**Pando**	[27:13]
DOMESTIC IMPLEMENTS AND CLOTHING		
13	**Wadna**	[27:29]
14	**Katta**	[27:23]
15	**Yookoo**	[51:24]
16	**Tanjalee**	[possibly 27:17]
17	**Witkatja**	[30:2]
18	**Kooroo**	
19	**Pileya**	[27:19; 51:33]
20	**Taaraa**	[27:1]
21	**Gadlotti**	[27:1]
22	**Tando (Opossum bag)**	[51:25]
23	**Yoodna**	[27:27]
24	**Koontje**	[27:28]
ORNAMENTS		
25	**Witto-witto**	[27:12]
26	**Kariwoppa**	[6:8]
27	**Mangna**	[27:8]
28	**Moodlatta**	[27:11]
29	**Teyarkoo**	[27:9]
30	**Wowoodteyedla**	[27:5,6]
31	**Beads**	[27:10]
32	**Crest of cockatoo**	[27:14]
33	**Mootja**	
34	**Kandappe - native chisel**	
35	**Opossum rug**[85]	

Cawthorne's first encounter with Angas arose from the latter's request to borrow some of these objects for the purposes of illustration. Cawthorne's description of that first meeting set the tone for a one-sided ethnographic partnership:

> At 5 Mother and me had tea and who, in the name of fortune, should come upon us in this precious plight but Mr G.F. Angas!!! ... I managed to bundle him into my study ... He began by saying ... that he had been given to understand that I possessed a good deal of knowledge upon the natives and their implements ... and that he would be very much obliged if I would just name a few of them. I did so. And if I would be so ... kind as to let him have a few of the implements, he now saw before him, at his house to draw from. Most decidedly, I answered, and if I would just give him all the names. Certainly. And if I would be so kind to come up to his house in the evening. Of Course. And

> if I would bring this, that, and the other with me. Oh, he would be so very, very much obliged to me, etc. etc. To all these 'ifs' and 'ands' I readily acceded and after each he gave a beseeching smile that would have captivated a 'hyena', let alone me.[86]

Later that evening Cawthorne visited Angas and found him already working on ethnographic subjects:

> Before Mr Angas was a beautiful picture, with all the paraphernalia of an artist, representing 4 shields, 2 curious implements and two large bunches of emu feathers (kariwoppa) exquisitely done, with an outline of a native drawn in the centre, in the attitude of throwing a spear. He showed me many other things, equally honourable to his talent ... After tea, set to and told him the aboriginal names of all their implements and described them besides.[87]

During ensuing weeks Cawthorne fell under the spell of Angas's talent, becoming disgusted in the processs with his own 'futile, puerile attempts'.[88] Nevertheless, Cawthorne's detailed knowledge of artefacts and their uses was crucial to Angas's project. Angas had ready access to Cawthorne's artefact collection and to Aboriginal people themselves, through his agency. Cawthorne wrote: 'I am going to take Capt. Jack (one of the aborigines so called) up to Mr Angas, full dressed as a warrior oiled, painted, decorated etc, precisely as they dress themselves when a fight takes place'.[89]

But beyond his utility as a supplier of ethnographic objects and subjects, Cawthorne was acutely aware of the value of his contribution to Angas's written record of the Aborigines. During July 1844, six months after Angas's arrival in Adelaide, Cawthorne recorded that the artist was 'entirely relying on me for the [letter press] description for the 'Aborigines' part of his work'.[90] On the 10th July, Cawthorne wrote,

> now he wants me to write for him also. Yes, I will, if he puts my name down in the Title page and say 'S.A. Ill. By G.F. Angas and assisted by W.A. Cawthorne', then I have not such a great objection. But the cool manner in which he will mention me in his Preface, thus 'The author is indebted for some rare and interesting implements to Mr W.A.C.' - this won't do for me.[91]

A few days earlier the pair had been seriously considering a scheme to take '6 or 8' Aborigines back to England, 'exhibiting them in London and to make our fortune and then to bring them back again'.[92] This suggests that Angas's ethnographic project was heavily influenced by that of George Catlin, the American artist whose Indian Gallery (including artefacts and Native Americans) had toured Britain and Europe shortly before Angas had left London. Angas subsequently took a Maori boy, James Pomare, with him to England in 1846, together with his collections of Maori and Aboriginal artefacts, for exhibition together with his paintings.[93] It is possible that Angas's collection by now included objects originally obtained by Cawthorne; a few pieces are preserved in London's Museum of Mankind. The fate of Cawthorne's collection remains unknown. Following his rift with Angas he intended to send his artefacts to England in the care of Anthony Forster, who was to arrange for the publication of his manuscript on the Aborigines. This may not have eventuated.[94]

Cawthorne's relationship with Angas and Adelaide's ethnographic establishment (Grey, Moorhouse, Forster and to some extent, the Lutheran missionaries) provides a study in the tension which existed between amateur and professional, collector and intepreter, even that between the primary fieldworker and armchair ethnographer. In Cawthorne's case this tension was exacerbated by his family's

disadvantaged status, and by his hope that his expertise as an ethnographer might secure his future. In the meantime, the insight gained into Aboriginal culture through his acts of collection and description was a commodity, as tradeable as the artefacts themselves.

The concentration on writtten records of Aboriginal material culture and language during the 1840s reflected a trend in the early development of the anthropological discipline world-wide. Grey's promotion of linguistic research contrasts with a lower level of activity in the other Australian colonies at this time. Even so, this did not lead to a greater level of ethnographic collecting in South Australia. Part of the reason for this was that no local focus existed for collectors of ethnographic material. But more significantly, until the theoretical issues of human origins and development were made relevant to Australian scientists after mid-century, ethnographic collecting remained the province of the collector of curiosities for whom a few representative articles sufficed. In contrast to natural science collecting, the acquisition of a particular form of spearthrower, basket or ceremonial decoration was rarely rewarded by the knowledge that the collector had placed a new variety or type on the scientific record. This is not to say that the variability of Aboriginal culture was not perceived in South Australia. Adelaide's proximity to the differing cultures of the desert and riverine regions made these contrasts more apparent than in the eastern capitals. As early as 1840 an Adelaide journalist commented that a 'careful collection of the extraordinary differences of the natives of the whole of the continent of Australia would form a basis for most interesting considerations in reference to their past history'.[95] Despite such perceptive observations, in the early years of Australian ethnography a relatively tiny selection of objects was judged sufficient to represent Australia's Aboriginal culture. It took more than the establishment of the South Australian Museum to alter that perception.

Genesis of the South Australian Museum

Grey's term as South Australia's Governor was one of austerity during which there was little talk of public works apart from bridges and roads. His role in promoting natural history was confined to pragmatic exercises, such as presiding over annual exhibitions of produce and useful raw materials in his capacity as president of the colony's Horticultural Society. These horticultural shows were to provide the testing ground for the development of techniques and modes of presentation at International Exhibitions.

The colony's economy recovered following copper discoveries during the mid-1840s, and Adelaide's arts and sciences assumed a less ephemeral role. After several years of decline the Mechanics' Institute was reopened in 1847 under the patronage of Grey's successor, Frederick Robe. During 1848 the South Australian Subscription Library amalgamated with the Mechanics' Institute, signalling the emergence of an institution combining the functions of library, museum, and classroom. For two years the new

Institute's conversaziones were the focal point of Adelaide's cultural life. Debates and lectures were preceded by recitals of music and poetry and art displays, members borrowed books, visited the small museum, and attended classes in botany, languages, navigation, reading, music and drawing.[96] But the Institute was in decline again by 1850, with controversy over its role either as a source of instruction for working people or as a venue for the entertainment of the 'respectable' class.[97]

During 1851 a special sub-committee was formed to revise the Institute's rules. The former Aborigines Protector William Wyatt and Richard Hanson were among its members. The sub-committee presented a petition to the Legislative Council in September 1851, requesting financial aid and noting that the Memorialists, 'for want of accommodation have been compelled to delay the commencement of a museum'.[98] While some government assistance resulted, it took the additional influence exerted by the Adelaide Philosophical Society following its foundation in 1853 to produce results. In its role as a forum for the presentation of an eclectic range of papers treating natural and applied science subjects, the Philosophical Society was the true successor of the Literary and Scientific Association. It became the hub of research and publication in the natural and human sciences, retaining this significance well beyond the University of Adelaide's foundation in 1874, and after its reconstitution as the Royal Society of South Australia during 1878. Its strength lay not so much in its agglomeration of individual talents but in the fact that most members were linked to Adelaide's scientific establishment and to networks extending well beyond parochial limits. The Society had the distinction of being the 'first forum for the ventilation of Darwinian theory in Australia'.[99]

One of the Society's most active members was the entomologist Charles Algernon Wilson, well known for his series of articles on South Australian natural history published in the *South Australian Magazine* during 1841 and 1842. As well as being a good friend of the Museum's first Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, Wilson was a first cousin and correspondent of Alfred Russell Wallace, author of *The Malay Archipelago* and a substantial contributor to Darwin's theory of evolution.[100] In May 1853 Wilson wrote a lengthy letter to the *Adelaide Examiner*, titled 'On the Formation of a Museum', advocating the construction of a museum and offering to stock the entomological section with specimens from his own 'cabinet' - a collection of '2,000 distinct South Australian species', gathered during his fifteen years residence. As he reminded the paper's readers:

> [t]his colony has now been established seventeen years; and yet, though this is an age of improvement in varous branches of the arts and sciences, and though our province is rich in natural productions, we have not even the commencement of a museum for the exhibition of either. Our colonial produce of all kinds is sent to England, and by degrees distributed over all the civilized countries of the globe, while here, at the fountain-head, but little is seen of any portion of it, by those nor personally interested in its culture or collection: and many of our most remarkable species of animated nature are hardly known to exist except by report... We have theatres and races for the mass and concerts and assembly halls for the more refined; but no exhibition at all of a character which would be more food for the mind than the body.[101]

With further lobbying from John Howard Clark and the explorer Benjamin Babbage, both founders of the Philosophical Society, the Government came under increasing pressure. A committee to enquire into the expediency of establishing a 'National Institute' was formed and the South Australian Institute Act was passed as a result, in June 1856.[102] The Museum's official foundation dates from that point. Even so, the whole project was delayed considerably and a further committee comprising members of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, including William Wyatt and Charles Wilson, was established during 1860. This committee reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the status of natural history specimens in South Australia.[103] In January 1862 the Museum finally opened to the public in premises on the top floor of the Institute Building.

The South Australian Institute Act's preamble stated 'that it is expedient to establish and incorporate a Public Institution, to be called the South Australian Institute, to comprise a Public Library and Museum, and by means of lectures, classes, and otherwise, to promote the general study and cultivation of all or any of the various branches or departments of art, science, literature, and philosophy...'.[104] There were two notable aspects about this legislation. The first was that it clearly acknowledged the Institute's links with Adelaide's natural history clubs and societies, by allowing for its administration by a Board of six, three of whom represented the Societies which it had authority to incorporate. These three Societies were the combined South Australian Subscription Library and Mechanics' Institute, the Society of Arts, and the Philosophical Society. The new Museum's charter and collecting policy were substantially influenced by the concerns of these societies.

Secondly, the new Institute continued to reflect the instructional ideal of the British Mechanics' Institutes, providing a single venue for the study of art, literature and science. The institutes were by their nature pragmatic institutions: far greater emphasis was placed on the 'useful sciences' than on entertainment or the arts. This was certainly the case in Adelaide's Institute, as it had been in Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne. The Museum's opening on 29 January 1861 heralded a significant opportunity for the colony's social improvement through education and science, a fact which was noted by all commentators of the period:

> The opening of a Museum must always be looked upon by every intelligent person as an important step in the work of national education ... It must be remembered that the youth of South Australia have few opportunities of acquainting themselves with scientific objects except through institutions of this description ... everyone who is interested in the future of our adopted land, must feel that such establishments emphatically demand their countenance and support.[105]

Against this background, the role of the museum's objects was distinct. If part of their purpose was to excite the curiosity of visitors, their main function was to clarify and to illustrate, and in combination with library books and lectures, to set this curiosity at rest. The physical setting of the Museum in the South Australian Institute building underlined this function. The collection occupied less than a quarter of the building's space and was exhibited in cramped conditions across the rear half of the top floor. The museum curator's offices

and caretaker's rooms occupied the front half of this floor, while the ground floor was devoted to the library and reading room. There is no doubt that the nature of the Museum's early collections was circumscribed by this arrangement. The collections were envisaged as a source of instruction, not entertainment. Their main purpose was to illustrate principles and ideas contained in the Institute's library collection, or to provoke an interest in these ideas which could be pursued through lectures delivered in the Reading Room below. Two decades before the foundation of South Australia's first university in 1874, the Museum provided an 'object lesson' for its visitors, whom journalists characteristically described as 'students' or 'the curious' rather than more generally as 'the public'. Under these conditions, the scope and growth of the collections were not only circumscribed by the Institute's physical structure, but by its very nature. Just as a collector's *cabinet* reflected particular interests and priorities, so the Museum's 1860s' collections revealed the scientific and educative concerns of South Australia's early, middle-class colonists.

The lack of an 'aboriginal department'

The doors of the South Australian Institute Museum were formally opened on January 2, 1862, almost a year after the library and reading room.[106] A long-awaited repository for collections of scientific and cultural interest was now available for collectors and the public. On its opening day the Museum contained South Australian fossils, rocks and minerals, shells and sponges, birds, insects, a stuffed shark and 'other specimens of the finny tribes', as well as some South African copper ores sent by the former Governor George Grey, a large collection of Fijian artefacts presented by William Owen, M.P., and New Caledonian artefacts presented by Robert Gouger. Aboriginal artefacts were represented by 'a small collection of native implements', unattributed to any particular Aboriginal group or collector.[107] Among the ethnographic objects it was the Fijian rather than the Aboriginal artefacts which evoked most critical and public interest during the first months and years of the institution's existence.[108] Throughout the 1860s and 1870s the most numerous category of ethnographic object collected by the Adelaide Museum was coinage, followed by artefacts from exotic localities throughout the Pacific.

A similar trend has also been observed for both the Sydney and Melbourne museums prior to 1870. Each formed collections more numerous in Pacific than Australian ethnography.[109] The bias was also reflected in the presentation of exotic, rather than Australian, natural history specimens. The subject requires further analysis. The emphasis may reflect an appreciation by curators of the public's appetite for exotica rather than a rejection of indigenous flora, fauna or ethnography. Even so, the South Australian Institute Museum placed unusual stress on Fijian ethnographic collections during its first thirty years. Its second Director, Wilhelm Haacke, resigned following allegations that he had exchanged significant parts

of the Museum's natural history collections and its Fijian ethnographic holdings with German museums during 1884.[110]

There were several reasons for this enthusiasm for Fijian collections in Adelaide during the 1860s. It is partly attributable to Adelaide's connections with Fiji through trading and missionary activity. More significantly though, Fijian material culture had come to occupy an archetypal role in emerging ethnographic discourse.[111] In a period when romantic notions of the Australian Aborigine were being overturned by the reality of fringe-camps in Adelaide itself, Fiji and other South Seas island groups offered a less sullied, more intact version of the 'Other'.

Given that the colony's economy had been rescued by the mining enterprises of the 1840s, and had subsequently benefited from Victoria's gold rushes, it is not surprising that mineralogical specimens comprised the basis of the Museum's collections. Australia's first metal mines were begun in the Adelaide Hills, on the property of Osmond Gilles who had offered land for Adelaide's museum just two years after settlement. The first record of natural history collections made specifically for South Australian scientific use occurred in 1839, when the Colonial Geologist, John Menge announced that: '[w]ith a view to promote the science of geology in South Australia the undersigned proposes making up a series of collections of the Rocks, Minerals, Gems and Metals he has discovered while rambling within the ranges of this Province'.[112] No corresponding series of Aboriginal artefacts were prepared for Adelaide collectors, nor did these figure among the 'many collections of interesting objects in private hands' referred to by the Adelaide *Advertiser* at the time of the Museum's foundation.[113]

In fact, the Aboriginal objects which excited most interest during the first three years of the Museum's existence give an indication of how far the institution's scientific aspirations fell short of reality. During the first few months of its existence, the colony's prime ethnographic exhibit was the infamous 'petrified Aborigine'. This was the partly mummified, partly calcified body of an Aboriginal man which had been found on a ledge in one of the limestone caves near Mt Gambier. The contemporary explanation for the find was that the man had been wounded by a posse of Europeans hunting the murderer of a squatter named Brown, and had crawled into the cave before perishing on the ledge where his body was discovered years later. The body was stolen in 1861 by the scientist-showman Thomas Craig and eventually made its way to England.[114] The second exhibit, displayed within the Institute Museum itself for the edification of students of anatomy and phrenology, was the skull of Pompey, the notorious Aboriginal 'bushranger' who had terrorised the small European community in the Flinders Ranges and the Far North until he was shot by Samuel Stuckey in April, 1864. Stuckey, who was investigated by a coronial inquest for the shooting, donated the skull to the Museum upon his acquittal.[115] These two attractions suggest that by the 1860s comic and macabre images of Aborigines had overtaken serious interest in their manners and customs.

Even so, the Museum's lack of attention to Aboriginal ethnographica aroused public concern at this

time. The *Advertiser* devoted its first leading article of 1862 to the question, noting that concerted efforts to collect ethnographic material were being made in the neighbouring colony of Victoria. It is worth quoting at length:

> And when the aboriginals of Australia have yielded to that apparently inevitable law of nature which destines the coloured man to recede from before the white man, not less peculiar and profound will be the interest taken in those records and illustrations of Australian aboriginal life, the opportunity for collecting which now grows every year less and less. Hitherto there may have been some excuse for indifference, or some apology for delay, but now that a national museum is opened, it will reflect dishonour upon the Parliament, the Government, and the people, if steps are not taken to secure the most perfect possible collection of facts and objects illustrative of the rude life of one of the most strange of all human tribes ... Every year suffered to elapse before the attempt to add an 'aboriginal department' to the South Australian Museum will both increase the difficulty and augment the cost of such a department. Yet, who can suppose that no effort will ever be made to collect and preserve the humble though interesting materials of the history of the Australian aboriginal? It is one of those duties which must be attended to, and certainly now is the time to make a beginning... before the blackfellow becomes extinct on our borders ... It is not for the acquisition of a 'petrified native' that we now plead, but for a properly arranged and accurately classified collection of whatever may be at present accessible or available with regard to races of people who are being rapidly 'civilised off the face of the earth'.[116]

This call to action had little effect on the collecting policy of the infant Museum during the 1860s. Its priorities lay firmly with the natural world and while Aborigines had seemed inseparable from the bush and its creatures for the first years after settlement, Adelaide citizens had a very different image of these people as they adopted European clothing and entered the fringes of the city's economic life. Neither savage nor civilised, their degraded, indeterminate status offered no lure for European collectors intent upon the pristine and the curious. This point is crucial in understanding the apparent irrelevance of Aboriginal culture to the museum in the two decades following its foundation, and the relative attractiveness of more exotic cultural material from the Pacific.

The second Annual Report of the Institute Board, delivered in 1860, accurately conveyed the Museum's priorities, stating that '[i]t is highly desirable, and indeed, almost a national duty, to preserve for posterity the forms and semblance of the various singular and beautiful animals, birds, reptiles, and insects now inhabiting Australia, ere they shall have finally disappeared before the footsteps of the white man'.[117] Such nostalgia did not yet extend to Aborigines or their artefacts. By 1862 the Board recorded that 'it should be generally known that the Curator is now able to receive any contributions, and that he will be glad to communicate with any one who may be disposed to assist him in procuring suitable specimens, either of animals, birds, insects, fishes, snakes or minerals'.[118] It was less clear to members of the public responding to this appeal that large numbers of the natural history specimens gathered by the Museum's Curator were still being sent to the British Museum and other European museums.

The Museum's first Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, was an experienced and well-regarded zoologist. He had worked at the British Museum with his elder brother George, an eminent entomologist

and zoologist, before his Adelaide appointment.[119] As naturalist to McDouall Stuart's transcontinental expedition of 1861, he had made a fine collection of mammal and bird skins (including the first specimens of the Princess Alexandra Parrot *Polytelis alexandrae*) and insects and plants, but had ignored opportunities to collect ethnographic material.[120] Writing to him shortly before his own return to England, George French Angas advised Waterhouse to send these specimens with him to London:

> It is truly a case of "casting pearls before swine" - half a dozen new species of birds or mammals alone would, in the opinion of scientific men, fully atone for your long and arduous journey - But alas! neither you nor I, nor any chap with any other sense than Mammon worship can be appreciated in this part of the world.
> For God's sake, & your own fame, send all the new things to Gould by me & get them described & figured before they are destroyed for ever ....[121]

Through such donations and exchanges Waterhouse was able to build the Adelaide Museum's collections of exotic specimens - such as a series of British and European fossils. Like his successor Wilhelm Haacke, Waterhouse used South Australian and Australian birds, mammals, fish, and shells in exchanges with museums in Britain, Europe and New Zealand from the early 1860s until his retirement in 1882.[122] Both directors were criticised for their eagerness in consigning specimens of local natural history, but exchanges of specimens were an obvious means of raising a museum's international as well as national prominence. Aboriginal artefacts rarely figured in these transactions. Until the articulation of the social and evolutionary role of 'savage arts and manufactures' during the 1870s, the commodity status of ethnographic material was limited.

Even by 1870, Aboriginal ethnography in the South Australian Museum was represented and displayed to the public by a small selection of local artefacts. The remainder of the collection, by now consisting of Aboriginal objects from Western Australia, Northern Queensland, and the Northern Territory, was unexhibited. Given the museum's cramped accommodation this fact was not surprising. But in contrast to the collections of coins, minerals, fossils, insects, fish, reptiles, birds and mammals, no attempt had been made to classify the ethnographic material. It remained subsumed under a 'Miscellaneous' heading.[123] Principles of scientific classification accepted by Waterhouse as the organisational basis for interpreting the natural science collections were not yet regarded as applicable to the ethnographic collections. The benefits of 'a properly arranged and accurately classified collection' of ethnography, extolled by the *Advertiser* in 1862, were unapparent to the Museum's Curator or its Board.

There were contrasting views during the 1860s about the Museum's role in this respect, illustrated not only through the *Advertiser*'s stand, but through the informed opinion of George Windsor Earl, appointed in late 1837 as Linguist and Draughtsman with the North Australian Expedition under Captain Sir Gordon Bremer. Earl spent six years at the British settlement of Port Essington. He was the author of several British publications dealing with the Aborigines of the northern coast, written during the period of South Australia's anthropological decline of the late 1840s.[124] His major ethnographic work, *The Native*

Races of the Indian Archipelago: The Papuans, included a vocabulary of the Aborigines of the Coburg Peninsula as an appendix.[125] At Port Essington Earl studied the Aboriginal languages, noted the influence of steel axes and their trade on material culture and collected artefacts and Aboriginal skulls for the Scottish physical anthropologist, J.C. Prichard.[126] During his brief stay in South Australia Earl joined the Philosophical Society and addressed its members during 1864 on the subject of 'Shell Mounds'. His paper contains one of the first South Australian statements on the scientific benefits of archaeological investigation. In it he called for a collection to be made,

> of the stone implements that were in use among the natives when this colony was first formed, and for which a place could no doubt be given in the Museum of the Institute ... [which] might prove useful for purposes of comparison with implements of an earlier date that may happen to turn up ... I have not given very deep attention to the antiquarian branch of Ethnological science, the opportunities that have fallen in my way of communicating with the existing native tribes having led me to become interested in the living rather than the dead. Nevertheless I sympathise cordially with those who are devoting themselves to archaeological studies.[127]

This call also went unheeded by the Museum and it was to be more than sixty years before Australian archaeological material was exhibited. While Waterhouse's priorities clearly lay with the natural science collections it seems that his view of the domain of natural history was as wide as any curator of his day. He rarely refused any donations, a factor which contributed to the Museum's persistent resemblance to the *cabinets* of earlier decades. To the 'dress of an Eskimo made from the intestines of a whale', and an 'inscribed brick' from the Great Wall of China (received during August, 1866), Waterhouse added, during 1867, 'a tuft of hair from a lunatic white man, named Arnold, found wandering in the interior, 200 miles from the Peake, supposed to have travelled from the Queensland District and to have wandered for upwards of 3 years ... without blanket or canteen and covered with small bluish spots'.[128]

The miscellaneous character of the Museum's ethnographic collections and the lack of a systematic Aboriginal collection did not go unremarked. During 1870 and 1871 a concerted campaign on the behalf of the Institute Library and Museum was mounted by Andrew Murray, as a Legislative Councillor. He warned that the institution was falling further behind its counterparts in Melbourne and Sydney and risked becoming known as the 'East Adelaide Reading Room and Old Curiosity Shop'.[129] A Parliamentary Commission 'to inquire into the whole question of the new Institute and Museum' was finally held in 1874, to confront the issue of the organisation's future and its pressing crisis of accommodation. While the Commission heard varied evidence on the Museum's role as an educative institution and repository for national collections, none of this evidence questioned the institution's collecting priorities. The strong arguments advanced for the Museum's physical separation from the Institute Library, eventually accepted by the Commission, were predicated on the Museum's educative role, and its necessity for greater space in order to present its scientific collections adequately: The Commission found the Museum to be 'almost useless as a means of instruction from the impossibility of a proper classification and arrangement of the

specimens which can be shown, and from the inability, by reason of want of space, to exhibit all those which are now possessed, while the same obstacle prevents or would render useless the acquisition of new specimens'.[130]

It was not the Commission's brief to examine the various departments of the Museum, actual or envisaged. Nevertheless the report gave no indication that ethnography was to become a collecting or research priority. The evidence of John Howard Clark was typical in this respect:

> I think a museum should aim at enabling any student who takes up any branch of natural history or natural science, to pursue that study by means of examples, natural objects culled from all parts of the world, arranged in a systematic way, so that the student himself can find what he wants with very little guidance ... Take geology for example. I should like to see not merely the coal measures, but all the successive strata found in the principal coal fields in different parts of the world systematically exhibited. My idea would be to exhibit them in small vertical cases, with some kind of figures to indicate the depth of each stratum, and with specimens of the earth, rock, or whatever may be found in each of these strata, and similarly with other minerals found in the bowels of the earth. I take this as a matter of illustration, but the aim of the museum should be to afford to the student of every branch of natural science the same kind of information... the student would be able, in course of time, to go away confidently into the field of Nature, with his geological hammer in his hand if he were a geologist, or with his gun in his hand if he were an ornithologist.[131]

An aspiring South Australian ethnologist would not have been so confident or so well equipped during the early 1870s. The question must be posed: how was it that this colony, which had actively encouraged the study of ethnography during the 1840s, could apparently abandon the enquiry after the foundation of its own museum? The question becomes especially pertinent when it is remembered that three of Adelaide's most prominent ethnographers of the early 1840s - William Wyatt, William Cawthorne, and George French Angas - played important roles in the museum's genesis and its formative years.[132]

The main British exemplar of ethnographic museums in the nineteenth century, the Pitt-Rivers Museum, was not opened until 1874, the year of the South Australian Commission of Enquiry.[133] That year also saw the publication of the first edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, the fundamental guide to collecting ethnographic information and objects, which succeeded the Royal Society's *Instructions for Travellers*. Without these powerful models, it was understandable that the ethnographic project occupied peripheral exhibition space in natural history museums. But this alone does not explain the contrast between the vigour of Adelaide ethnography during the 1840s and the Museum's subsequent indifference towards that subject during the 1860s and 1870s.

Endnotes - Chapter One

1 The full quotation, from Francis Bacon's *Gesta Grayorum* (1594), reads:

> First, the collecting of a most perfect and general library, wherein whosoever the wit of man hath heretofore committed to books of worth ... may be made contributory to your wisdom. Next, a spacious, wonderful garden, wherein whatsoever plant the sun of divers climate, or the earth out of divers moulds, either wild or by the culture of man brought forth, may be ... set and cherished: this garden to be built about with rooms to stable in all rare beasts and to cage in all rare birds; with two lakes adjoining, the one of fresh water the other of salt, for like variety of fishes. And so you may have in small compass a model of the universal nature made private. The third, a goodly, huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included. The fourth such a still-house, so furnished with mills, instruments, furnaces, and vessels as may be a palace fit for a philosopher's stone (Quoted in Impey & MacGregor 1985: 1).

2 See Stewart 1993: 151 *et seq.*; Pearce 1992: 4-6.

3 Mason 1887: 239.

4 See Sheets-Pyneson (1988), for a thorough survey of this movement.

5 Flower 1898.

6 See for example, Stocking 1985; Clifford 1988; Hiller 1991.

7 Pearce 1992: 2.

8 *Ibid*; Bourdieu 1977.

9 Pearce 1992: 258.

10 Pomian 1990: 78.

11 The studies of Frese (1960), Hodgen (1964), and Impey and MacGregor (1985) make this clear, although the latter survey includes examples at either end of a wide spectrum. Contrast with Barber's popular study, in which she maintains that in 1800 'such museums as existed were heterogeneous jumbles of 'curiosities' entirely devoid of methodical purpose or arrangement and containing anything from coins to corn-dollies to coleoptera'. (Barber 1980: 152)

12 Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 78.

13 *Ibid*: 140.

14 See Hunter (1981) for a discussion of the Society of Virtuosi, founded in 1689 and still in existence in 1732.

15 Hodgen 1964: 119, 121.

16 Pearce 1992: 69-88.

17 Gascoigne 1994: 134.

18 Impey & MacGregor 1983: 2.

19 Frese 1960: 7. An extensive discussion of the *cabinets* and their history is contained in Impey & MacGregor (1985). For a discussion of von Siebold's classificatory system and its influence on French museology in particular, see Frese (1960), and Dias 1991: 115-38.

20 Partridge (1966: 135) notes the Latin origins of the term: '*cura*, anxiety, care, medical care' and that the term 'to cure' derives from the Old French *curer*, from L. *curare*, to take care of, from *cura*.

21 Thomas's discussion of 'curiosities' (1991: 126-28) leaves their meaning unresolved, stressing the term's ambivalence as a measure of a lack of engagement with, or understanding of, native cultures by Europeans. Perhaps the most significant connotation of the term is its provocative nature: one's curiosity was *stimulated* by these objects: 'wonder was a proper reaction for the learned as well as for the uninstructed: wonder, paraphrased perhaps as inquisitive delight in novelty, mingled with awe and gratitude, was part of the natural history and natural philosophy of the time'. (Schupbach 1985: 170)

22 Gascoigne 1994: 60.

23 Barber 1980: 51: Gascoigne 1994: 49; 137.

24 Crook 1973: 24.

25 This point is best embodied in the career of Sir Stamford Raffles, Governor of Java and founder not only of Singapore, but also of the Zoological Society of London. A large part of his extensive collections were lost at sea in 1824, but he nevertheless became one of the British Museum's main benefactors (Braunholtz 1938: 11).

26 Thomas 1983: 78, 80

27 Thomas (1983) gives an account of this process. For an analysis of pre-Renaissance classification, see Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 43-46.

28 Hodgen 1964: 121. Note that the term 'Ark' carries with it the significant implication that its contents were representative of the world and its living things. For references to apothecaries who made collections of natural history, see Leith-Ross (1984: 171-72). Of the 250 natural history *cabinets* in sixteenth-century Italy, the most notable was that of the apothecary Ferrante Imperato. An engraving of this *cabinet* bears a striking resemblance in its arrangement to Ole Wurm's collection, mentioned below (Crook 1973:23).

29 *Ibid*: 123. Notwithstanding this level of organisation, Wurm's museum has been cast in histories of science as a shambles epitomising the apparent disorder of *cabinets de curieux*. This is despite the fact that illustrations of his museum made in 1665 clearly show objects exhibited according to type and displayed in similar fashion to an apothecary's shop. See for example, Taylor 1963: 67.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Quoted in Frese 1960: 40.

32 Dieffenbach 1843; King 1844.

33 Pitt Rivers, quoted in Chapman 1985: 23. See also p.22.

34 Swainson 1840: 76. See also Gascoigne 1994: 145.

35 Strahan 1979: 2; Waterhouse's evidence is recorded in SAPP. 1874, no.23, p.7. Waterhouse saw no need for upper galleries, and it is unclear, in fact, as to whether the galleries in Hunter's museum were accessible to the public. Barber (1980) includes a good reproduction of the Hunterian Museum at page 175. For an illustration of the interior of Adelaide's Museum of Economic Botany, see Robertson (1986: 121). Like the South Australian Institute building, the Ashmolean building in Oxford lacks any great exhibition hall, consisting, in its original plan, of a series of apartments devoted to antiquities, natural history specimens and curiosities, as well as a laboratory, lecture room and

a library (Crook 1973: 38). The larger city Mechanics' Institutes (of which the South Australian Institute was an example), generally accommodated this range of functions.

36 Taylor 1963: 96. A recent spate of Foucaultian analysis notwithstanding, the opportunity for visitor control and surveillance offered by the architecture and internal arrangement of museums such as Hunter's seems incidental rather than purposeful, but see Chapter Two of Bennett (1995) for an exposition of the Foucaultian thesis on the regulatory function of the 'exhibitionary complex'.

37 Georgel (1994) has explored 'the constellation of signs that linked the museum and the *magasin*', including the development of the *vitrine* case from its origin as a watch-maker's *montre*, 'in which watchmakers place their merchandise, so that they may be seen but not touched' (Georgel 1994: 118).

38 Hudson 1987: 72.

39 Hudson continues: 'The situation in the United States was a good deal better, partly because there was a greater freedom from traditions and restrictions and partly because the new buildings came a crucial five or ten years later than their counterparts in Europe'. (*Ibid.:* 73)

40 Kohlstedt 1983.

41 Owen 1862; Agassiz 1862.

42 Bennett 1995: 41-43.

43 See for example Cardwell 1974; Cunningham 1980. The South Australian Institute's additional role, as an art gallery, was not specifically catered for in its initial charter and remained a minor consideration. Art remained the province of more well to do Adelaide citizens for several decades - South Australia's National Gallery was not founded until 1881.

44 Horton 1902: 55.

45 Inkster & Todd 1988: 107; see also Laurent 1994: 371.

46 This is not to suggest a sinister role for the institutes as instruments of social control. As Inkster and Todd point out: 'While both general cultural and specific 'social control' arguments were often aired by proponents of institutions, such views expressed the standard rhetorical baggage of the nineteenth century emigre'. (*Ibid.:* 106)

47 Quoted in Corbett, Cooper & Mooney (1986: 38) who wrongly give the Association's name as the South Australian Literary and Philosophical Society, a confusion with the Philosophical Society later formed in South Australia. See also Hale 1956: 1-2; Pike 1967: 114, 504.

48 Hale 1956: 1; Pike 1967: 113. Delivered two years before the colony was founded, this paper was presumably based on observations made by Captain Charles Sturt. It is also possible that Wright used a South Australian Aboriginal skull to illustrate his talk. Wright is the only identifiable practising phrenologist among the South Australian colonists, although William Cawthorne (also associated with the foundation of the South Australian Museum) sympathised with phrenological views. The famous Surveyor-General of South Australia, G.W. Goyder, was a son of one of Britain's leading phrenologists, David Goyder who, like Wright, had served as President of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society.

49 Hanson, 1834 ms.

50 For Hanson's involvement in the 1874 committee, see *SAPP* 1874 no.23. For his statements on evolutionary theory, see Hanson 1864. Moyal (1976: 188) describes this as "the most explicit and cogent contemporary examination of the Darwinian thesis'. Pike (1967: 111-12, 114) discusses Hanson's career and achievements, depicting him as an influential free-thinking member of South Australia's Adelphi planners, who fought against privilege and helped establish South Australia's principles of religious equality. See also Finney (1993: 104-105).

51 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 18 September, 1839, p.3. Opie refers to the 'Literary and Scientific Association and Mechanics' Institute as existing in 1840, with Charles Sturt as President, J. Brown, G. Stevenson and H. Watson as Vice-Presidents, George Young as Secretary, and Charles Platts as Librarian (Opie 1917: 107).

52 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 11 November, 1838, p.2. The 'precocity' of South Australia in forming this society barely two years after the colony's foundation, was reported across the border in the *Port Philip Gazette*, 12 January, 1839, and in a self-congratulory way, by the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 15 December, 1838, p.2. See also Finney 1993: 63.

53 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 15 December, 1838, p.4. The group included at least one ethnographer, the Protector of Aborigines, William Wyatt.

54 Government Notice No.35, Colonial Secretary's Office, 10 July, 1839, printed in *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 11 July, 1839, p.2. Williams was well placed to obtain artefacts from Aborigines in Adelaide, as the Colonial Store was in close proximity to the main Aboriginal camp near the River Torrens. He made the most of his opportunities and in March 1839 advertised the publication of his 'Vocabulary of the Language of the Aborigines of South Australia' (*Southern Australian* 27 March, 1839, p.2).

55 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 15 December, 1838, p.4.

56 Similar, if not deeper divisions, were to characterise the administration of Gawler's successor, George Grey. See Pike (1967: 232-33) for an account of Gawler's clash with John Brown and George Stevenson. In September 1839 Gawler was obliged (reluctantly) to remove Osmond Gilles from office as Colonial Treasurer (and presumably as treasurer of the Botanical and Horticultural Gardens Society). Aware of his own mismanagement of the Treasury's finances, Gilles may already have decided not to proceed with his offer of land for a museum.

57 Later published as Wyatt (1879). For an account of Wyatt's Protectorship, see Lendon (n.d. ms.) and Foster (1990).

58 The appointment was offered during August, 1836. See Lendon (n.d. ms.); Pike (1967: 14, 133) and Robinson's entry in ADB 2: 387. On 2 Jauary 1837 Robinson wrote from the Aboriginal Establishment on Flinders Island, asking for a copy of the 'instructions relative to the Aborigines' in South Australia, but postponed acceptance of a position. See Robinson to Protector's Office, 2 January, 1837, GRG 24/1/1837/3a, SRO. Rae-Ellis (1988: 123) suggests that. Robinson may have overstated and even falsified his own achievements during this affair.

59 Opie 1917: 84; 90. The South Australian Agricultural Society's President was the South Australia Company's commercial manager, David McLaren, a former committee member of the Natural History Society.

60 George Stevenson delivered a lecture on horticulture at the Institute on 27 September, 1839. Stevenson was a keen botanist and a former committee member of the Natural History Society. Sturt's lecture was on 20 May, 1840. Johannes Menge, the South Australian Company's geologist, delivered a lecture on mineralogy on 18 September (Opie 1917: 90; 109).

61 Neve 1983: 202, n.38. See also Shapin & Barnes 1977; Inkster 1976; Candy & Laurent (eds.) 1994.

62 Laurent 1994: 371.

63 Pike's history reveals that Governor George Gawler, President of the Natural History Society, was increasingly at odds with key individuals in his government and other public figures during this period. Two of these men, the Emigration Agent John Brown and the newspaper proprietor George Stevenson, were on the Society's committee.

64 Hale 1956: 2-3, 86, 155; Edmonds 1986: 166. Other South Australian naturalists known to have supplied British collectors during this early period were: James Backhouse, the nurseryman, botanist and missionary who visited Adelaide in November 1837 and made botanical collections (Backhouse 1843: 510); Charles Sturt, who sent botanical material from his Central Australian expedition to Robert Brown in London (Robertson 1986: 107); Edward

John Eyre, who sent South Australian freshwater crayfish to J.E. Gray at the British Museum and a collection of birds to John Gould; C.A. Wilson, who was also a firm advocate of the Adelaide Museum; and J.B Harvey (a founding member of the Natural History Society of South Australia), who sent birds to Gould and a large collection of Kangaroo Island shells to the Zoological Society of London (Edmonds 1986: 165-67; Hale 1956: 2-3).

65 This trend is well summarised by Finney (1993: 1-5).

66 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 23 June, 1838, p.1.

67 'Messrs Light, Finniss & Co' was a land and commercial agency established by Colonel William Light and Boyle Travers Finniss. *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 11 August, 1838, p.1.

68 Stafford 1988: 91-92.

69 *Adelaide Examiner* 7 January, 1843, p.1. Part of Hall's own collection of birds, mounted in glass cases, had been offered for sale by auction in Adelaide during the previous year. *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 29 October, 1842, p.1.

70 Tregenza 1982: 13-17.

71 Hale 1956: 2.

72 This material consists of two nets, a basket, a woven mat, and a 'belt worn by natives to allay the pangs of hunger while on hunting expeditions'. The collection was donated to the South Australian Museum in 1906 by A.C. de Hailes (see Jones file on de Hailes).

73 The club was not traced by Tindale. 'Denburi', who was also known as 'Old King John' may have been Edward Eyre's informant, Tenberry, rather than King John of the Adelaide Plains. Data recorded on loose sheet in Tindale manuscripts, AA338, AASAM.

74 Jones 1985 ms; Cooper 1989: 167; Tindale 1986: 236.

75 Cooper 1989: 35, 39.

76 These objects have presumably survived among the Dresden colllection. See Guhr & Neumann 1985: 253.

77 Museum of Mankind documentation nos. 39-10-12-11, 1, 2, Jones 1985 ms. See also Mitchell 1838. The returning boomerang may have been used by Mitchell in his 1852 paper on the 'Boomerang Propeller' (Mitchell 1852).

78 Cooper 1989: 167.

79 See Angas 1847a; 1847b.

80 Cawthorne Diary, Tuesday, 22 August, 1843, Foster (ed.) 1991: 15.

81 ADB 4: 198-99.

82 Cawthorne Diary, Monday, 15 September, 1843, Foster (ed.) 1991: 22.

83 *Ibid*, Saturday, 18 November, 1843, p.28.

84 References contained in GRG 56/68/44, 8b, 9a. See also 99ab, 100a ('Malo makes a canoe for J.C. Hawker'), SRO.

85 Cawthorne Diary, Wednesday, 31 January, 1844, Foster (ed.) 1991: 31.

86 *Ibid*, Friday, 2 February, 1844, p.32.

87 *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid*, Wednesday, 7 February, 1844, p.34.

89 Cawthorne Diary, Saturday, 3 February, 1844, *ibid*, p.33. Two days later, Cawthorne recorded that he had 'marched up with my native dressed as a warrior to Mr Angas at 10 am' (*ibid*). A diary entry for 18 July, 1844 suggests that Cawthorne may have organised an evening 'Corrobery' at Angas's house (*ibid*, p.53). Angas also relied upon the Protector of Aborigines, Mathew Moorhouse, for Aboriginal subjects (see entry for 8 February, 1844, *ibid*, p.34).

90 *Ibid*, Thursday, 4 July, 1844, p.52. Angas's eventual published acknowledgement was even less generous than Cawthorne feared: 'I ... return my thanks to all those who have in any way contributed their assistance towards my present undertaking' (Angas 1847a: preface).

91 *Ibid*, Wednesday, 10 July, 1844, p.52.

92 *Ibid*, Monday, 1 July, 1844, p.52.

93 Tregenza 1982: 13.

94 See entries in Cawthorne Diary, *ibid*, p.55.

95 *Adelaide Chronicle* 28 January, 1840, p.9.

96 Pike 1967: 504.

97 *Ibid*: 504-5.

98 Petition quoted in Best 1986: 33.

99 Moyal 1976: 109.

100 Wallace himself donated insects to the newly formed Adelaide Museum in 1864. See Wilson & Borrow 1973: 230.

101 *Amator Naturae*, quoted in Wilson & Borrow 1973: 278-81; see also pp.229-30. Despite referring to the need for a museum with collections of 'both nature and art', Wilson did not envisage the need for Aboriginal collections or ethnography of any sort. Another letter advocating the establishment of a museum in Adelaide was published in the *Register*, 5 May, 1853, p.3. The writer advocated a 'museum of artistic, scientific objects, and especially Colonial productions'.

102 See *SAPP* (1854) No. 80, for the results of this committee's deliberations. One of the prime witnesses was George Stevenson, the colony's first Protector of Aborigines.

103 Wilson & Borrow 1973: 224.

104 Preamble, South Australian Institute Act, No.16 of 1855-6.

105 *South Australian Advertiser*, 27 December, 1861, p.2.

106 The official opening of the new building had taken place on January 29, 1861. See Hale 1956: 9. On that occasion, the contents of the Museum were described in the following terms:

> the collection of curious and interesting objects prepared for the gratification of the company appears to be quite unique in colonial experience. There is the Fijeean [sic] room furnished by Mr Owen, containing also

some extraordinary specimens of Chinese and Japanese art. There is also the New Caledonian room supplied by Mr Gouge[r] with curiosities that have been brought over from that land very recently ... Last ... there is the Statuary Room in which some of the most recent productions of British art, displayed in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, will be exhibited... (*Register*, 28 January, 1861, p.2).

107 *South Australian Advertiser*, 27 December, 1861, p.2; *ibid*, 4 January, 1862, p.2. Natural history objects and specimens were the principal additions in the months following the opening of the Institute Building itself on January 29, 1861.

108 The Museum Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, noted in his monthly report for June, 1864, that the Curator of the Botanic Museum, George Francis, was anxious to obtain 'Fijeean' objects for his small Botanic Museum. Curator's Report, June, 1864. GRG 19/168, SRO.

109 Galbally 1992: 19, 23.

110 Haacke was cleared of these charges by a special committee, but resigned nevertheless. See for example, Minutes of the Museum Committee, 14 October, 1884, GRG 19/364, SRO.; Hale 1956: 48.

111 See Thomas 1992: 158-62.

112 Menge advertised collections of 100 specimens for four pounds. *Southern Australian*, 18 September, 1839, p.2.

113 *South Australian Advertiser*, 27 December, 1861, p.2.

114 Lindsay 1951. Craig's theft was discovered and the body was returned to the cave following his suit against the Crown, only to be stolen by him again. The body was displayed in Sydney during 1862, exhibited at Madame Tussaud's in London, sold at auction in 1868 and is now untraced. See also 'S.A.'s Strangest Centenary', *Advertiser*, 26 August, 1961, p.13.

115 *Observer* 16 July, 1864, p.4; *Observer* 9 January, 1864, p.3.

116 *South Australian Advertiser*, 4 January, 1862, p.2. Victoria's activity in this regard was relatively recent, triggered in large part by the imminence of the Melbourne Exhibition of 1862. As recently as 1857 a critic had written of the Melbourne Museum that

> [n]ow that we have looked through the whole of the Museum there is one prominent defect that we should be glad to see remedied at once. We allude to the total absence of Victorian aboriginal relics. Whole tribes of aborigines have ceased to exist; others are fast decaying, and their implements of hunting and of war will become more and more difficult to procure with every passing year. All that tangibly relates to the aboriginal inhabitants of the land we now inhabit should find a place for perpetual preservation here. (Archer 1857: 26)

117 Second Annual Report of the Institute Board, 1860. GRG 19/355/2, SRO.

118 Fourth Annual Report of the Institute Board, 1862. GRG 19/355/2, SRO.

119 ADB 6: 357.

120 Waterhouse's report on the expedition contains no reference to collecting ethnographic material (Waterhouse 1863).

121 Angas to Waterhouse, 1 February 1863. 1287/U, MLSA.

122 Museum Curator's reports, GRG 19/168, SRO.

123 The headings employed by Waterhouse in his report on 'unexhibited articles' were: 'Animals, Osteological Specimens, Birds, Miscellaneous Specimens of Natural History in Spirit, Crustacea, Shells, Minerals, Geological Specimens [mainly fossils], Coins, and Miscellaneous Articles'. This last heading comprised 'A collection of native weapons, implements, etc, from Western Australia, Northern Territory, and other parts, also a few miscellaneous objects'. See Waterhouse, 1870 ms.

124 Earl 1846; 1849a; 1849b; 1849-50; 1853.

125 Earl 1853.

126 Reece 1992: 51.

127 Earl (n.d.) ms.

128 Curator's Reports, 1866, 1867. GRG 19/168, SRO.

129 Murray noted that a thousand people had visited the Museum on a recent public holiday. *South Australian Parliamentary Debates*, 23 and 29 August, 1871, p.257.

130 'Report of Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Whole Question of the New Institute and Museum: Together with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix'. *SAPP* no.23, 1874, p.iv.

131 *Ibid.*: 3.

132 All three men were officially involved with the Museum during its first decade and were in a position to influence, or help form, its collecting policy. Cawthorne even lectured at the South Australian Institute on 'the Aborigines' in June 1861, while Angas gave lectures to 'country Institutes' (presumably Gawler) during the same year. Cawthorne was openly critical of the Board at this time, although he later became a member (Minute Book of the South Australian Institute, volume 2, pp.170, 278, GRG 19/14, SRO).

133 The Pitt-Rivers Museum opened at Bethnal Green in 1874, but in 1885 its contents were shifted to its present, more famous home in Oxford and combined with the ethnographic collections of the Ashmolean Museum in a new building. See Chapman 1985.

CHAPTER TWO

WORDS TO OBJECTS: GENESIS OF AN ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

Boomerangs and throwing sticks would serve the role of words; given their basis, the whole history of the world could be reconstructed.[1]

Philanthropists and Fringe-dwellers

Meeting in London during 1834, the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association had shown an interest in Australian Aborigines even before the colony was proclaimed. Expressed in lectures on the phrenological and physiological character of the Aborigines, or their treatment at the hands of British colonists, this interest had less to do with ethnographic theory than with colonialist practice. Phrenological technique was perceived as a means, not only of discovering more about a strange people for the sake of science, but also of managing these encounters more efficiently and, if possible, more humanely than on the colonial frontiers of New South Wales or Tasmania.[2] South Australia's Adelphi planners were aware that their treatment of the Aborigines would test their stated humanitarian objectives for the new colony.

South Australia's first Chief Justice stated the case in these terms: 'The system hitherto adopted in the immediate neighbourhood of this Province, towards the native population, is one at which humanity shudders ... But such is not the system which will be adopted towards them here, where I trust, under Providence, that a new era is about to dawn for them'.[3] Interestingly, this opinion was expressed in an 1837 court case in which two white men had been charged with the theft of a jacket and some 'warlike implements (spears and waddies) from some of the aboriginal inhabitants of this Province' - one of the first documented cases of direct appropriation of Aboriginal artefacts in South Australia.[4] This optimism prevailed at least until 1839 when the *Southern Australian* expressed the view that '[f]or the first time in the history of colonisation, the civilised and uncivilised man have met without collision, and emigration has brought with it a blessing rather than a curse'.[5]

By 1841, following the massacre of the 'Maria' shipwreck survivors and the Rufus River affray, attitudes of South Australian colonists towards Aborigines had noticeably hardened.[6] Controversy

surrounding the legality of the *ex judice* executions of two Coorong Aborginal men for their part in the 'Maria' massacre helped to crystallise the new status of South Australian Aborigines as British subjects.[7] With the privileges attached to this legal standing, such as the capacity to serve as witnesses in criminal trials, came an entanglement of legal regulation directed at defining and circumscribing Aboriginal autonomy and movement in the Adelaide region. As Colonel Light's grid of streets and squares took shape, so Aboriginal hunting and gathering practices near settled areas became increasingly problematic. Aborigines were drawn into the local European economy and their previously unfettered range was restricted to defined living areas such as the 'Native Location' or semi-permanent camps such as those at Glenelg or at Kensington.[8]

By 1847 a plan had been drawn up to create restricted areas within the city's parklands for the Aborigines and their 'wurlies'.[9] Aboriginal children were encouraged or coerced into the missionaries' day school, while their parents were engaged as hewers of wood and fetchers of water. As early as 1839 Robert Gouger had observed that 'a little sugar, biscuit, or bread is sufficient inducement for them to bring wood, water or stone for building, and several instances have occurred of ten or twelve of these poor fellows working during six hours consecutively for an individual for biscuit'.[10] During 1840 the *Adelaide Chronicle* published an article discussing a 'scheme for the indoctrination of industrious habits amongst the Aborigines'.[11] Three years later, 'the best means of civilising Aborigines' was discussed at one of the early meetings of the Adelaide Literary and Scientific Association and Mechanics Institute, the precursor of the colony's Library and Museum.[12]

By the later 1840s Aborigines in colonial Adelaide had been effectively marginalised. The frontier, and the danger which it represented to the young and vulnerable capital, had receded beyond everyday sight and discussion. This period saw the image of the ignoble mendicant and the 'comic savage' displace that of the noble savage encountered by South Australia's First Fleet. Edward Snell's first impression of Adelaide Aborigines in 1850 reveals this shift: 'Plenty of natives stalking about the streets half naked - most of the women with nothing on but a blanket and nearly all of them the ugliest wretches it is possible to conceive'.[13]

The progression in European depictions of the Aborigine observed by Bernard Smith for Sydney's first two decades is also evident in Adelaide.[14] With the increasing tendency to reduce Aborigines to stereotypes in commentary, journalism and art, came an inclination to apply more general policies which took even less account of specific Aboriginal requirements. Of course this trend was not universal; the exotic character of Aboriginal life remained an important ingredient of colonial Adelaide for at least a decade after settlement. Images of the noble savage continued to surface - at the *palti* or *kuri* dances held at full moon, or on the battlefield during periodic confontations between the Adelaide, Encounter Bay, and River Murray groups. Even these occasions were subject to European surveillance or control though: the corroborees were usually attended by European voyeurs, invited or not; while the battles were often either

terminated or forestalled altogether by police intervention.[15] One of William Cawthorne's most telling watercolour depictions of the Aboriginal subject at this time was his study of a pile of decorated shields and spears, smashed by police horses to prevent tribal fighting near Adelaide.[16] Cawthorne was sufficiently disturbed by this event to write an article for the *Register*, on behalf of one of the principal Adelaide elders, King John:

> On Monday last, a fight was to have taken place between Moorundee, Encounter Bay, and Adelaide natives. Great preparations are accordingly made. The young men were all in high glee - tattooed [printed in error for 'karkooed', ochred], oiled, and all ready for the coming amusement, but unfortunately they were disappointed; for, as they were marching to meet each other on the old Bay road, three horse-police very unceremoniously stopped them, and had every spear and shield laid on the ground, and broken up. The astonishment that this act produced, was truly remarkable - some looked quite aghast, others were confounded, and many for the moment, I dare say, doubted their senses, whether such a collection of beautiful uwindas and shields, kylahs and midlays, were absolutely to be destroyed.[17]

By the later 1840s these events, and Aborigines themselves, had become no more than a picturesque backdrop to the bustling activity of colonial Adelaide. Already in 1843 Aborigines were tried for 'appearing naked' in Gawler Place. 'Sunday corroborees' were finally forbidden during 1847.[18] The careful, individual portraiture of George French Angas and William Cawthorne was gradually supplanted by the caricatures and drawings of S.T. Gill, Alexander Schramm, and Edward Snell, or by landscape painting in which 'the aborigine [was] relegated increasingly to fulfil the function of a pictorial embellishment to topographic landscape, providing a local touch and pointing the contrast between primeval life and the busy progress of the town'.[19]

In the years following European settlement the curiosity value of Aboriginal objects, like their owners, steadily diminished, even beyond 1861 when the *Advertiser* referred to their evenascence. Familiarity bred contempt. Some collections of Adelaide Plains artefacts continued to make their way to Europe, evoking, like trophy displays, the raw experience of the colonial frontier, but little attention was paid to the preservation or classification of such artefacts in Adelaide itself during the 1840s or 1850s.[20]

Despite the pioneering roles of Governors Gawler and Grey, the exigencies of colonial life in Adelaide meant that the practice of ethnography was important only so far as it contributed to the colonists' image of a new and strange land, or to an overlapping phase in which it was necessary to understand the Aborigines in order to control them more effectively. The early descriptions of Aboriginal life in South Australia and the published lithographs of watercolour studies by Angas catered for the first category of interest, primarily directed to a British readership. The ethnography of the missionaries and early Protectors such as Wyatt and Moorhouse was directed towards the more practical ends of the second phase.[21]

The concentration of ethnographic research and publication in Adelaide during this second phase was markedly higher than in other colonies, a fact which throws the decline in ethnographic enquiry during the 1850s and 1860s into greater relief. Following the publication of Moorhouse's vocabulary in 1846,

eighteen years passed before the next South Australian linguistic publication appeared - George Taplin's first work on Lower Murray River languages.[22]

The reasons for this concentrated burst of activity are two-fold. In the first place, because of the concern expressed in England during the late 1830s by Lord Glenelg and the Colonial Office about the mistreatment of indigenous peoples, and partly because of the concentration on this issue by the key individuals associated with the colony of South Australia, Aboriginal matters were of greater concern for South Australian policy-makers.[23] This sensitivity accounts for the extended but ultimately unsuccessful efforts to fill the post of Protector of Aborigines with the 'conciliator' of Tasmanian tribes during the 1820s, George Augustus Robinson.[24] It also explains the trouble to which George Fife Angas went to secure the services of Lutheran missionaries prepared to learn the languages of the South Australian Aborigines in order to impart Christian principles to their children. In their attempts to explore the mental world of South Australian Aborigines, Teichelmann, Schurmann and Meyer went further than assembling simple word lists. Their expanded publications on the 'manners and customs' of Aborigines of Adelaide, Port Lincoln and Encounter Bay followed their scholarly work on the languages of these groups.[25]

South Australian ethnography during the 1840s - philology and 'the abstract science of man'

For a decade following the creation of the colony in 1836, the level of South Australian ethnographic activity exceeded that of any other colonial outpost throughout the world. At least eleven vocabularies, four grammars and six broader works on South Australian Aboriginal manners and customs were produced.[26] In addition, it appears that other concerted linguistic work, not resulting in publication, was undertaken, such as that by the surgeon Richard Penney in 1841 and by the police-trooper and Sub-Protector George Mason during the early 1840s.[27] Proportionately, this level of output has not been equalled in Australian linguistics since.[28]

South Australia's evolution as a colony coincided with the early development of ethnography as an accepted international scientific discipline. The first documented use of the term 'ethnography', to mean 'the scientific description of nations or races of men, their customs, habits and differences' was in 1834, the foundation year of the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association.[29] From the beginning, ethnography was far more than a descriptive exercise though: like other branches of Enlightenment natural science it held great promise as a means of discerning the origins of humankind. Australian Aborigines provided a new and exciting field for ethnographers, but not as a people to be studied in their own right. Their primary ethnographic value lay in the data which an analysis of their characteristics could contribute

to the wider debate.

The focus of ethnographic study shifted back and forth several times during the nineteenth century, from physical description to philology, to kinship studies and religion, to archaeology and material culture. Internationally, the emphasis during the first half of the century was firmly on philological research.[30] It contained a certainty and regularity which other branches of anthropology lacked. For newly arrived settlers in the New World and Australia the question of how the native inhabitants came to be there was of particular interest. Posing this question in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1804, Thomas Jefferson had predicted that language would offer 'the best proof of the affinity of nations which can ever be referred to'. Forty-two years later, Henry Schoolcraft's 'Plan for the Investigation of American Ethnology', presented to the Smithsonian Institution in 1846, stressed the resilience of this notion:

> Philology is one of the keys of knowledge which, I think, admits of its being said that, although it is rather rusty, the rust is, however, a proof of its antiquity. I am inclined to think that more true light is destined to be thrown on the history of the Indians by a study of their languages than of their traditions, or of any other feature.[31]

Comparative philology had the added advantage of offering a method for tracing the origins and diffusion of the world's peoples within the relatively short chronology accepted within biblical orthodoxy. South Australia's third Governor, George Grey, was a significant contributor to debate on this subject, which remained the 'queen of the human sciences' until the late 1850s, when biblical chronology was undermined by the emerging acceptance of Darwinian theory, geological time and the new 'prehistoric' archaeology.[32] In the meantime though, the careful, scientific methodology of philologists such as Johann Forster, Samuel Marsden, Lord Monboddo, and Wilhelm von Humboldt paralleled the techniques employed by the rising generation of earth scientists, future evolutionists included. Charles Darwin's influential friend, the geologist John Herschel, drew the analogy: '[w]ords are to the Anthropologist what rolled pebbles are to the Geologist - battered relics of past ages often containing within them indelible records capable of intelligible interpretation'.[33]

In Adelaide during the 1840s the science of philology held similar promise for the colony's 'utopian socialists'. In his address to an audience of 1,000 in the Queen's Theatre even the austere Advocate-General, William Smillie, reserved a prominent place for philological studies in Adelaide's cultural life:

> The student of human nature will also find an appropriate chapter on the *aborigines*. Many of their peculiar customs and superstitions, the analogical sense contained in their terms, and the structure of their speech, illustrate the abstract science of man, while etymologies may be collected to throw some light on their origins and history, as connnected with other races....[34]

The emerging science of ethnography drew its data, not from social traits, nor from a comparison and analysis of material culture, but from linguistic 'specimens'. All the attributes of scientific practice were satisfied by the new field of linguistics. Given the correct direction and technique, useful data could be gathered by amateurs who would gain the reward of knowing that each fragment collected would assist their

scientific mentors in constructing a new picture of human origins. Unlike collectors of ethnographic objects, whose arrays of curiosities still bore no evident relation to European artefacts, amateur and scientific linguists shared the conviction of natural scientists that they were actively collaborating in a grand scheme.

With the decline of philological research and deductive enquiry after mid-century, more tangible types of evidence seemed called for. The historian William Chapman has noted that for some, 'these were the evidence of skeletal and cranial forms, either as measured or uncovered from the ground; for others, the evidence of archaeology more generally; but for Pitt Rivers, the privileged evidence was to be that based on the comparison of artifacts'.[35] Even so, ethnographic collecting did not achieve quick popularity. It was not until the final decades of the century that the role of Australian museums as repositories for ethnographic objects came to be validated in terms of the contribution which those objects might make to the pursuit of ethnography, or to science in general. During the decade after South Australia's proclamation, the collection of linguistic information had been validated in just those terms. As an 'exact science of mental objects', philology provided the impetus for the first systematic application of Western scientific principles of classification to Aborigines.[36] The multitude of Aboriginal vocabularies and basic grammars collected from the colonial frontier during the middle years of the nineteenth century can be contrasted with the relatively casual collection of Aboriginal artefacts during the same period. Susan Pearce has suggested that such an inverse relationship between language and objects may have been characteristic of this era, and implicit in the dual status of ethnographic objects as both 'real' and 'constructed' artefacts:

> The long-term trend of European thought, increasingly cogently expressed from the late seventeenth century onwards, is to give a low value to the material world as such, and to regard it as the fit place for the exercise of human reason and enquiry through which real knowledge will be constituted. On this reading, objects in general are the passive result of social action, and museum collections enshrine the results of objective enquiry which has yielded real understanding; in other words, the metaphorically constructed understandings have been seen as superior to the concrete, contextual reality of the things. An important aspect of this is the tendency to regard language, the prime medium for classification and reason, as the faculty which creates social structure, although as we have seen there is not an exactly parallel relationship between language and the material world.[37]

The rigour which characterised linguistic studies in this early period has its direct analogue in natural science, as Edward Said has observed:

> Science gives speech to things; better yet, science brings out, causes to be pronounced, a potential speech within things. The special value of linguistics (as the new philology was then often called) is not that natural science resembles it, but rather that it treats words as natural, otherwise silent objects, which are made to give up their secrets. Remember that the major breakthrough in the study of inscriptions and hieroglyphs was the discovery by Champollion that the symbols on the Rosetta Stone had a <u>phonetic</u> as well as a semantic component. To make objects speak was like making words speak, giving them circumstantial value, and a precise place in a rule-governed order of regularity.[38]

This 'circumstantial value' was not attached to ethnographic objects by museum scientists until the third

quarter of the nineteenth century. The shift of status which eventually occurred during that period is best symbolised by the replacement of the descriptive term 'curio' by the phrase 'ethnographic specimen', carrying the implication that the classifications and strategies applied to natural objects by museum scientists could equally be applied to artefacts. Until that point was reached philology or linguistics remained the only branch of ethnography accorded scientific status. With few exceptions this field remained beyond the confines of the newly established natural history museums in Europe and Australia.

South Australia's early ethnographic studies, and similar researches in other Australian colonies, have been enlisted by historians of anthropology in describing the developing picture of the country's anthropological discipline.[39] In his subdivision of Australian anthropological history, A.P. Elkin placed the work undertaken during the colonial period within an 'incidental phase', implying little continuity with succeeding periods.[40] While there is no doubt that later ethnographers and anthropologists built upon the results of this early work, the phase does bear a distinct character, apart from the sense employed by Elkin. The phase can be distinguished by the pragmatic, utilitarian nature of the research which it generated. Almost all of the ethnographic pamphlets and booklets appearing in Adelaide during the 1840s were published in the name of science. Most of this output was directed towards practical, short term ends; to facilitate the tasks of administrators and missionaries in dealing with Aborigines in the colonial situation. This early ethnographic work can be regarded as a precursor of the applied anthropology undertaken for colonial administrations during the early twentieth century.

Each of the early Protectors of Aborigines produced vocabularies of the Adelaide Plains or adjoining regions, not primarily as a contribution to the growing international corpus of such material, but as a means of undertaking their assigned duties. The English Parliamentary Select Commission on Aborigines (British Settlements) of 1837 had officially recommended that Protectors of Aborigines 'should be expected to acquire an adequate familiarity with the native language' and that 'the Protectors should be furnished with some means of making to the tribes occasional presents of articles either of use or ornament'.[41] By the time that this directive was issued, South Australia's first two Protectors, George Stevenson and Captain William Bromley, had already prepared working vocabularies. By August 1837, when Bromley was replaced by William Wyatt, the colonial government had adopted the Select Commission's directive regarding Aborigines and advised the new Protector that 'no time should be lost in acquiring a knowledge of their native tongue'.[42]

Wyatt and his successor Matthew Moorhouse prepared vocabularies of the Adelaide and Murray River Aborigines.[43] The Governor's secretary wrote to Wyatt in August 1839 following the Protector's enforced resignation, informing him that the governor 'had peculiar opportunities for observing the patient and scientific research with which you have investigated their language, and he has now in his possession an extensive and very valuable vocabulary of it compiled by you'.[44]

The Colonial Storekeeper, William Williams, who also collected Aboriginal artefacts at this time

for the Colonization Commissioners (referred to in Chapter One), recognised the utility of publications which might assist government officials and employers to benefit from the labour of 'idle natives', while encouraging the civilising process. During early 1839 he compiled his own vocabulary of the Adelaide Aborigines and offered this for sale to subscribers, including Governor Gawler and other government officials and notables.[45] Until his removal from office in 1841, Gawler played a vital role in sponsoring ethnographic studies of this kind, encouraging and assisting the work of the Protectors (notably Moorhouse), the Lutheran missionaries, and Edward John Eyre.

The arrival of Governor George Grey during 1841 to replace Gawler lifted South Australian ethnography out of its short-term, utilitarian mould. An influential anti-slavery and Church Missionary Society advocate, the young cavalry captain had already undertaken substantial ethnographic and linguistic studies of Western Australian Aborigines before his South Australian appointment.[46] In the year of his arrival in South Australia, and two years before the foundation of the Ethnological Society in London in 1843, Grey published a paper on administering native peoples, his major anthropological conclusions on Western Australian Aborigines and a detailed dictionary of South-Western Australian Aboriginal dialects.[47] During his term as South Australia's Governor from 1841 to 1845, Grey's first interest remained Australian linguistics and his 1845 paper on this subject summarised the state of knowledge in this field, noting that South Australian researchers had adopted a common system of orthography.[48]

Together with Threlkeld in New South Wales, Grey was a leading Australian figure in investigating the Indo-European hypothesis of Aboriginal origins. His conclusions were reinforced with the publication of J.C. Prichard's findings that the Australian language had affinities with that of the Tamils of southern India.[49] He was a strong critic of inconsistent or inferior research, and stressed the importance of establishing consistent principles of orthography in recording Aboriginal languages as a means of adducing reliable evidence to support the Indo-European hypothesis.[50] In this respect his encouragement of the linguistic work of South Australian Lutheran missionaries was a major contribution. This began before his appointment as Governor, during his first visit to Adelaide in 1840.[51]

Until Grey's arrival in South Australia the colony had no ethnographer of equivalent standing to Threlkeld, who combined local, practical linguistic studies with a commitment to ethnography as a developing international science.[52] By promoting ethnographic enquiry as a branch of science linked to other fields of philosophical enquiry, Grey helped to give the study of Aboriginal manners and customs a new relevance in the colony. His significance in Australian anthropological history lies in the fact that he bridged the gap between the applied ethnography of colonial administrators and the more scholarly, enquiring approach promoted by the Royal Society, subsequently adopted by both the Royal Geographical Society and the Anthropological Society of London.

Grey's style of ethnography, like that of the explorers Charles Sturt and Edward Eyre, had its origins in the British naval and exploration tradition. The Royal Society's 'Directions for Seamen, Bound

for Far Voyages' were first published in 1665. Cook's instructions, based on these directions, included the obligation to 'observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number of the Natives'.[53] The earliest opportunity for British ethnographic study in South Australia arose on Matthew Flinders' voyage of exploration in 1801-2. In view of his thorough investigation of northern Australian Aboriginal implements, rock paintings and burial modes, it is unfortunate that Flinders had little contact with Aborigines in South Australia. The single vocabulary collected by his expedition was obtained at Caledon Bay, on the west coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria.[54] The French voyage of Baudin and Peron to Australia coincided with Flinders' voyage and the two expeditions met in Encounter Bay on April 8, 1802. But the French and British observations of South Australian Aborigines were minimal in comparison to the wealth of data on Tasmanian Aborigines recorded by Baudin's expedition.[55]

The earliest record of South Australian Aboriginal languages was in fact made in Western Australia, by a colleague of Dumont d'Urville during his voyage in the 'Astrolabe' (1826-29).[56] The explorer Charles Sturt made little use of his numerous opportunities to record Aboriginal language and customs, despite having been directed to 'note the description of the several people whom you may meet, the extent of their population, their means of subsistence, their genius and disposition, the nature of their amusements, their diseases and remedies, their objects of worship, religious ceremonies, and a vocubulary of their language'.[57] While he adhered to his other instructions regarding the collection and recording of natural science objects, Sturt collected very little ethnographic material and made few observations of Aboriginal life. Writing after his Central Australian Expedition of 1844-46, Sturt admitted: 'It might be thought that having been in the interior for so many months I ought to have become acquainted with many of the customs and habits of the people inhabiting it, but it will have been seen that they seldom came near us'.[58]

Sturt's only records of exchange with Aboriginal people were references to bartering tomahawks, knives, pieces of iron and coloured ribbons for fish.[59] Two members of his party, Daniel George Brock and John Harris-Browne, did make small collections though, and part of the latter collection may have been received by the South Australian Museum in 1949.[60] Brock's contact with Aborigines on the expedition was relatively close and frequent, in contrast to his leader. His ethnographic observations are discussed in Chapter Four. Sturt's attitude towards Aborigines, like that of the influential surveyor G.W. Goyder, tweny-five years later, appears to have been friendly but firm:

> if one or two of them were a little forward, I laid it to the account of curiosity and a feeling of confidence in their own numbers. But a little thing checked them, nor did they venture to touch our persons, much less to put their hands in our pockets, as the natives appear to have done, in the case of another explorer. It is a liberty I never allowed any native to take, not only because I did not like it, but because I am sure it must have the effect of lowering the white man in the estimation of the savage, and diminishing those feelings of awe and inferiority, which are the European's best security against ill treatment.[61]

George Grey produced several manuscripts on Aboriginal material culture subjects, including 'basket making', 'utensils for carrying water', 'ornaments', and 'shields', presumably directed towards a major publication on South Australian Aborigines, never completed.[62] These papers were not simply descriptive. In his attempts to ascribe origins to styles and design motifs Grey prefigured the work of later ethnographers who elevated material culture studies to scientific status. Here again, Grey encouraged similar work, particularly that of George French Angas and Edward John Eyre. The twenty-three year-old Angas accompanied Grey on his vice-regal tour of the colony's south-east during January 1844, and his written observations reveal something of the more experienced ethnographer's influence. Even taking account of William Cawthorne's unacknowledged assistance, Angas's fine-grained artistic depictions of South Australian Aborigines and their artefacts set new standards in ethnographic realism within Australia. They met his stated objective of 'preserving true and life records of man and scenes, so quickly passing away ... by pictorial representation, to describe the most interesting and peculiar features of South Australia and its aboriginal inhabitants'.[63]

This verisimilitude was heightened in Angas's first major exhibition, at London's Egyptian Hall during April 1846, by the inclusion of 'costumes, implements, weapons and utensils, belonging to the Australians and New Zealanders'.[64] Angas had collected these artefacts during his travels in order to illustrate them at the journey's end. A critic from *The Times* commented on the exhibition's value as a documentary record, together with the accompanying 'antiquities': 'The views and portraits are far beyond the common class of pictures; as works of art they possess very great merit, but as connected with the antiquities and present character and manners of the country in which they were taken, they are almost invaluable'.[65]

A similar emphasis on the range and variation of Aboriginal material culture in southern South Australia was evident in Angas's narrative, *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand*.[66] The accent was further marked in the work of Edward John Eyre. Like Angas, the explorer's ethnographic investigations were encouraged by Governor Grey, particularly following his appointment as Resident Magistrate at Moorundie on the River Murray in 1841. Here Eyre had the task of regulating relations between Aborigines and cattle overlanders following the bloody events of the Rufus River affray earlier in that year. Eyre used the opportunity to supplement the notes gathered on his Central and Western Australian explorations with detailed observations on the life and material culture of the Aborigines of the lower River Murray. Perhaps inspired by Angas's scheme to display artefacts and Aborigines themselves in England, Eyre assembled a large collection and obtained the permission of his main informant, Tenberry, to take his son and another Aboriginal boy with him when he left South Australia in 1844.

Many of Eyre's artefacts were collected by Edward Scott, his old friend, a fellow explorer and a neighbour at Moorunde. Scott shared Eyre's interest in ethnography and it is evident that this collection, which included weapons, nets, fishing gear and ornaments, represented more than a casual assemblage of

souvenirs. In fact Eyre was probably half serious when he informed Scott by letter that, 'When I get all odds and ends together, I shall almost be enabled to open a museum in Regent Street'.[67]

Eyre was among the first to recognise the value of collecting Aboriginal objects as empirical data which could be used to supplement the evidence for cultural origins and diversity made by linguists:

> as Captain Grey judiciously remarks, if the comparison in such [linguistic] cases be extended, and the vocabulary of each enlarged, there will always be found points of resemblance, either in the dialects compared, or in some intermediate dialect, which will bear out the conclusion assumed. This view is still further strengthened, by including in the comparison the weapons, habits, customs, and traditions, of the various tribes ... No one individual can hope personally to collect the whole material required; but if each recorded with fidelity the facts connected with those tribes, with whom he personally came into contact, a mass of evidence would soon be brought together that would more than suffice for the purpose required.[68]

Even so, this passage makes plain the restricted, corroborative role of native artefacts in the developing science of ethnography at this time. Artefacts were still characterised as 'curiosities', not yet amenable to the levels of investigation and analysis which 'specimens of language' were receiving from philologists. Exceptions could be found: during his survey of the Australian coast undertaken between 1818-1822 Philip King was able to collect and describe material culture objects in some detail, notwithstanding the fact that his primary ethnographic instruction was to compile comparative vocabularies of all the tribes encountered.[69] Eyre's researches provide another significant example.

At the time of Eyre's publication, the United States scientific expedition vessel 'H.M.S. Rattlesnake' was cruising Pacific waters. The Australian linguistic data gathered on this voyage was later contributed to one of the most influential works in philology, R.G. Latham's *Elements of Comparative Philology*.[70] The anthropological research undertaken on the voyage was largely restricted to philology, despite the wealth of material culture objects encountered throughout the Pacific and northern Australia.[71] Yet just five years later, in his account of the voyage, J. McGillivray published the first investigation into comparative material culture.[72] His discussion of the similarity between the Australian boomerang and an Egyptian boomerang in the British Museum had two effects. It signalled the admissibility of material culture data as evidence to be investigated in tracing the history of peoples. More significantly perhaps, it drew attention to the future relevance of museum collections as a site for this investigation.

Grey, Angas and Eyre helped shift the character of Adelaide ethnography from its restricted basis in administrative practice to a more empirical style linked to wider trends. Grey's and Eyre's approaches in particular foreshadowed the 'survey method' of anthropology which became so popular later in the century. In contrast to the vocabularies and short works on 'manners and customs' produced in Adelaide, the work of these individuals was published in London for a wide readership. Unfortunately for the development of Adelaide ethnography, the nature of their talents and connections made it inevitable that their stay in Adelaide would be brief. While Grey can be said to have built on the work of Governor Hindmarsh in fostering the beginnings of Adelaide anthropology, he left no successor. A gap of almost two

decades separated the publications of Eyre and Angas from the next detailed research on South Australian Aborigines - George Taplin's work on the Ngarrindjeri groups.

The trio left Adelaide within months of each other: Grey to become Governor in New Zealand and then South Africa, Angas to exhibit and publish his Australian and New Zealand watercolours in London and to add a further series of South African studies during 1847, and Eyre to become Governor of Jamaica. Each of these men had formed important collections of Aboriginal material, but almost nothing is known of the subsequent history of these objects or, indeed, of the original circumstances of their collection. This is despite their extensive writings on Aboriginal material culture.

There is little doubt that Eyre, like Angas and Grey, collected Aboriginal objects partly to illustrate subjects discussed in his publications. Most of the items figured in his 1845 two-volume account were probably retained in his private collection. But he may have had an additional motive, linked to his official role as Protector. By 1840 his counterpart in the Port Phillip Protectorate, George Augustus Robinson, was advising his Sub-Protectors in each Victorian district to encourage the manufacture of native artefacts for sale through agents appointed for the purpose. A Mr Lilly, based in Melbourne, acted as the main agent for this purpose until his retirement during September 1840. By July 1840 the volume of artefacts had provoked Robinson to advise that a scale of purchase prices be devised, so that Aborigines could 'receive in provisions or useful articles the full value of the money realised ... money on no account should be given to the Natives'.[73] Following Lilly's retirement the scheme appeared to lose momentum, and Robinson advised that the 'baskets, skins and other articles ... of Aboriginal industry are in future to be retained in store at the station, until a sufficient quantity be collected for transmission to Melbourne ... to be disposed of ... either by private bargain, public auction, public bazaar, or any other mode'.[74]

Eyre's advocacy of a similar scheme suggests that he was aware of Robinson's initiatives in this regard. He wrote: 'The elder natives should be led as far as could be, to make articles of native industry for sale, as baskets, mats, weapons, implements, nets etc., these might be sent to Adelaide and sold periodically for their benefit'.[75] The idea went no further apparently; with Eyre's departure the link between ethnography and administration of Aboriginal affairs was broken. It was to be another two decades before South Australian Aborigines were actively encouraged to produce artefacts for sale, under George Taplin's administration at the Point MacLeay Mission.[76]

Angas's published account of his January 1844 expedition with Governor Grey refers to only two occasions on which he collected ethnographic items. Of the first Angas wrote: 'Mooloo, the native whom I met near the junction of the lake, parted with his mother's skull for a small piece of tobacco!'. This object was noted by William Cawthorne on Angas's return to Adelaide, shortly after Angas had drawn it for publication. Cawthorne described it incredulously as

> a human skull plastered up here and there with gum for a PITCHER. The natives put a string through one part of the skull ... and so carry their water. The skull is <u>cleanish</u> outside but very

black on the inside. It looks a curious thing for a domestic utensil. They are as bad as Lord Byron.[77]

On the second occasion Angas recorded without comment the requirement of reciprocity implicit in dealing with objects on the frontier of contact:

> about twenty young men and boys came up to us, and lighted their fires close to our encampment. Their hair was mostly in curls, and had it not been for the grease and ochre with which they had bedaubed their heads, many of them would have displayed beautiful hair. We obtained specimens of it, and they insisted upon having locks of ours in return, which they carefully stowed away in their rugs.[78]

Immediately prior to his appointment as Secretary to the Australian Museum in Sydney in 1853 Angas donated twenty-one artefacts to that institution. Several of these may have been Aboriginal, although it is likely that bulk of this and other ethnographic donations made by him consisted of African and New Zealand artefacts.[79] Angas returned to South Australia by the time of the Museum's foundation, but by then had abandoned his interest in ethnology for the scientific description of shells.[80] He acted as temporary Curator of the Adelaide Museum during Waterhouse's absence on MacDouall Stuart's expedition of 1861-62 and assisted in describing the shells collected on that expedition.

Four small grinding stones 'from Southern Australia, carried by the females in a bag slung at their side' were presented by Grey to the British Museum during his term as Governor of South Australia, possibly as part of a larger collection.[81] The skull of a South Australian Aborigine, used as a drinking vessel, was collected by Grey and sent to Owen at the British Museum during the early 1840s: this may even have been the very object mentioned by Cawthorne.[82] Grey continued to correspond with South Australian linguistic workers after his departure from Adelaide, receiving a revised version of Teichelmann's Adelaide vocabulary as late as 1858.[83] As Governor of South Africa, Grey made presentations of copper ores and 'a collection of [mineral] specimens' to the Adelaide Museum in 1857, and donated a New Zealand greenstone axe thirty five years later, from his home in South Africa.[84]

The departure of Eyre, Grey and Angas marked the close of the first phase of South Australian ethnographic activity. The period had been characterised by a remarkable level of linguistic research and publication. While the products of this research helped to make evident the differences between local Aboriginal groups, and highlighted something of the complexity of their social structures, the results barely touched the sensibilities of those European immigrants who rapidly outnumbered and displaced the diminishing Aboriginal population. Against the governing perceptions of Aboriginal people as undifferentiated, marginal and primitive, the work of the colony's early ethnographers seems more exceptional. In that light, the subsequent lack of attention towards the collection and description of Aboriginal material culture was hardly remarkable.

International Exhibitions and new models of classification

By the mid-1870s ethnographic collecting in South Australia still awaited its main impetus. This came, not through any local or Australian initiative, but through the combination of two international influences - the application of evolutionary theory to the classification of museum collections, and the popularisation of these classifications through the medium of International Exhibitions.

The Exhibitions played a crucial role in the construction of ethnographic collections during the second half of the nineteenth century. Unprecedented in their mass appeal, these 'carnivals of the industrial age' lent vital impetus to museum ethnography.[85] Many of the collections acquired specifically for the Exhibitions by officials and private collectors on the frontiers of colonial settlement were subsequently obtained by public museums.[86] By presenting ethnographic collecting and its results as a worthy pursuit the Exhibitions also exerted an important indirect effect on museum collections. Each 'First Order of Merit' awarded for an array of spears or clubs provided inspiration for new collectors who recognised their own opportunities.

In their complex and wide-ranging displays, the Exhibitions explored and developed new ground in the presentation of evolutionist principles. By giving prominence to the ideal of progress measured by technological sophistication, and presented through a taxonomic approach, Exhibitions soon provided a leading example for ethnographic museums. This combination of evolutionism and taxonomy (both geographic and typological) had already been developing in natural history and the Exhibitions served to validate this alliance in the popular mind.[87] The exhibiting states and countries enhanced the effect of their productive achievements by presenting their own manufactured products against a backdrop of raw materials and ethnographic objects. As with the enormous range of other entries to the Exhibitions, from oil paintings to sewing machines, these objects were also assessed competitively. Categories headed 'specimens of natural history and curiosities', 'miscellaneous', 'indigenous vegetable products and the manufactures and processes connected therewith', or even 'native weapons and implements', enabled this appraisal.[88]

In the Melbourne Exhibition of 1861, Mr W. McKenzie of Swan Hill received an 'honourable mention' for an Aboriginal fishing net made from sedge. Several collectors contributed arrays of 'native weapons' to 'Division H - Native Weapons and Implements'. The sole attribution of manufacture to an Aboriginal individual was made ironically, in a description accompanying a prize-winning entry in a category comprising 'Agricultural Products and the Manufactures and Processes connected therewith': 'Her Majesty Mary, Queen Dowager of the Bacchus Marsh and Melton Tribe of Natives - Baskets Made from Victorian Grass in Her Leisure Hours'.[89]

Further entries, submitted under Class VI: 'Animal Products, and the Manufactures and Processes

Connected Therewith', emphasised the prevailing European tendency to regard Aborigines and their productions as integrally related to the natural world even as they were being transformed into European commodities. Entry no. 609, for example, submitted by W.J. Pershaw of Castlemaine, consisted of a 'Tomahawk, Native Skull, and Dog with One Eye'. Entry no. 662, submitted by William Thomas, Protector of Aborigines, consisted of 'a Kur-ber-er or Australian Bear [and] 1 Tar-nuk, or Native Bucket'.[90]

This tendency to enlist and recombine Aboriginal motifs and objects in the Exhibitions of the 1860s was exercised without awareness of the anthropological project.Instead, the Aboriginal subject was directly manipulated in the Orientalist mode, 'a powerful means of securing the frontier'.[91] The capacity of exhibitors to select, reduce and represent Aboriginal cultural material was most aptly illustrated through the example of the *Decorated Box Containing Miniature Aboriginal Implements*, presented by Caroline and Albert Le Souef at several Exhibitions during the 1860s. These comprised minature replicas of Victorian Aboriginal artefacts contained within small wooden boxes decorated extensively with Caroline Le Souef's detailed ink drawings of Aboriginal ceremonial, hunting and fighting scenes. By defining Aboriginal material culture at the level of the Victorian toy cupboard these assemblages reflect a 'nostalgic desire to present the lower classes, peasant life or the cultural other within a timeless and uncontaminable miniature form' as Stewart has identified in her studies of childhood and history.[92] It is ironic then, that the surviving examples of these boxes (at least four are known to exist in Germany and Victoria) now provide one of the few tangible remnants of the material culture repertoire of south-eastern Australian Aboriginal life.[93]

While this orientation became supplanted by more enquiring and systematic approaches in later Exhibitions, the form lingered on in trophy exhibits, even beyond the turn of the century. The first International Exhibitions held in Australia - during 1861 and 1866 in Melbourne, and during 1870, 1879 and 1882 in Sydney, represented Australia's world debut as a manufacturing and trading nation. These events also provided a major stimulus for collections of Aboriginal ethnography to be formed, and retained, within Australia. The first real surge in Victoria's collections occurred prior to the International Exhibition of 1866, in response to the circular letter soliciting donations prepared by the Exhibition's President, Justice Redmond Barry. Barry placed greater emphasis on assembling a 'simultaneous' collection of vocabularies of Aboriginal languages than on material culture, but nevertheless called for 'weapons and implements employed by them' to be procured, 'and also skeletons and skulls, as many as possible, with photographs of individuals of each sex and of all ages'.[94]

The Australian Museum in Sydney was greatly supplemented its ethnographic holdings from collections gathered for the Exhibition of 1879. Among the displays in the huge Garden Palace building was the Ethnological Court, 'where the habits, dresses, ornaments, weapons, canoes and paddles, implements for fishing and the chase and the rude pottery of the various Australian Colonies and the natives of the various groups of Polynesia were illustrated by a collection of samples which, for variety and

extent as relating to the race named, has, in every probablility, never been got together before'.[95] These artefacts, together with a number of 'technological' specimens (numbering 2,000 in all), were destroyed in the Garden Palace fire six months after the Exhibition closed.[96] Waterhouse had sent a consignment of seventy-nine spears, three clubs, a boomerang and two 'bamboo trumpets' (didjeridu) to this Exhibition, apparently collected by Paul Foelsche in the Northern Territory.[97]

As a less prosperous and populous colony, South Australia's opportunity did not arrive until the 1880s when its first Exhibitions were held, largely in the shadow of Melbourne's Exhibitions of 1880-1881 and 1888.[98] The Adelaide Exhibitions devoted considerably less space to ethnographic material. Moreover, the highlight was not Australian, but New Guinea, ethnographica, and an important and varied collection sent by the Sultan of Johore for the 1887 Jubilee Exhibition.[99] An exception was the ethnographic exhibit provided for that Exhibition by the explorer David Lindsay, accompanied by demonstrations of firelighting and artefact manufacture provided by Lindsay's Aboriginal 'boy', the accomplished tracker and guide, Dick Cubadji.[100]

In contrast to New South Wales and Victoria, those Exhibitions which provided the main stimulus to ethnographic collecting in South Australia were international rather than Australian. The Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 and the Paris Universal Exposition of 1878 were the two main examples, followed by the Colonial and Indian Exhibition held in London during 1886.

The International Exhibitions often provided the first venue for the display of many important ethnographic collections. The range of objects selected and the mode of their arrangement and presentation varied little from the earliest Crystal Palace Exhibition in London (1851) until the First World War. Nevertheless, the taxonomic arrangement of objects, indicated for example by the various 'classes' in the 1861 Melbourne Exhibition, provided the flexibility sufficient to accommodate a range of cultural paradigms, of which evolutionism became the most pervasive and successful.

The Exhibitions elevated the notion of civilisation's progress by means of sophistication in technology. It was natural that the tools and weapons of 'savage' societies would be regarded in juxtaposition to this sophistication, providing a measure of progress for the throngs of visitors. Charles Rau, the organiser of the Smithsonian's ethnographic exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, expressed the fact plainly: 'the extreme lowness of our remote ancestors cannot be a source of humiliation; on the contrary, we should glory in our having advanced so far above them, and recognize the truth that progress is the law that governs the development of mankind'.[101]

The competitive character of these events in which individual states and countries vied through their exhibits for points and medals, was only partly obscured by the universalist jargon of the 'world fair'. Within this context evolutionist theory easily found expression during the seven decades in which the Exhibitions were presented. A primary effect of the early International Exhibitions was to accomplish a prerequisite process though: the separation of ethnographic objects from their culture of origin by

presenting them as commodities, like other arts and manufactures on display. Walter Benjamin noted this fact earlier this century:

> The world exhibitions glorify the exchange-value of commodities. They create a framework in which commodities' intrinsic value is eclipsed. They open up a phantasmagoria that people enter in order to be amused.[102]

In fact, by the close of each Exhibition, the ethnographic artefacts, like other objects, were often traded for collections or merchandise offered in competing exhibits.[103] In the process these objects acquired their own measure of value. There is no doubt that they remained peripheral to the main purpose of the Exhibitions - the conspicuous display of the industrial achievements of western nations. Nevertheless, the significance of the various arrays of 'savage weapons' lay not only in this marginal character but in the contrast which could be drawn between simple weapons and complex devices such as photographic apparatus or steam engines. By the mid-1870s interest was growing in ethnographic objects themselves as an independent source of knowledge. This was because of the light which, as representatives of an earlier stage of humankind, these objects could cast on the history and course of civilisation.

This development was most obvious at the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition, the first held in the United States. The South Australian Government contributed Aboriginal artefacts from the Northern Territory and from South Australia itself.[104] Here, for the first time in the history of International Exhibitions, sufficient ethnographic material from across the world was displayed to enable the relatively new principles of evolutionist theory to be applied in a considered fashion. A profusion of weapons, tools, and articles of dress from colonised peoples was available to anthropolgists as data to be manipulated, as it had rarely been before.

Even so, much of the ethnographic material had been sent to the Exhibition by contributing countries almost as an afterthought, serving as a decorative backdrop for the main exhibits of produce and manufactures. As Edward Knight commented in his study of the 'savage weapons' at the Exhibition,

> the weapons shown in the various national sections were in most cases treated as mere casual objects thrown in as curiosities, and in many cases so little esteemed by the parties in charge that they were huddled away under tables; surprise was sometimes expressed that any one should pore over the coarse and clumsy when the best talent of the country had exerted itself on the objects prominently displayed as worthy of notice.[105]

Knight went to lengths to identify and sketch entire series of objects. This was not an exercise in itself: there is little doubt that Knight was aware of the new potential for sociological insight which material culture offered. The most cogent outline of this potential had been offered just one year previously by Colonel A.H. Lane Fox (later Pitt Rivers) in the 'principles of classification' governing the arrangement of his anthropological collection exhibited in London's Bethnal Green Museum.[106]

Knight's synthesis contained a restatement of Pitt Rivers' fundamental observation about material culture, which would find expression in museum exhibitions during the following years. This was that ethnographic objects could show variation in space and through time, indicating both cultural similarities

and diversities and the influence of evolution. In applying this double principle, Knight's analysis of the 'savage weapons' at Philadelphia in 1876 offers showed how ethnographic artefacts could become recast as objects of scientific analysis and description, subject to a flexible series of new interpretations and serving as metaphors for the cultures which had produced them.

The system of classification evolved for ethnographic objects became a mechanism not only for fixing the boundaries of types but for facilitating movement between these types, according to evolutionary principles. As Knight expressed it:

> The simplest form of weapon is a stick; a heavy stick is a club. The club with a knob becomes a mace; the swelling end sharpened on one edge is an axe. Point the stick and it is a spear; if light it is a javelin; shorter still, it is a dagger for close quarters. Flatten the stick and give it an edge, it becomes a sword; or, if short, it is a knife.[107]

Pitt Rivers had graphically depicted this model of variation and mutability in diagramatic form in his 1875 'Evolution of Culture'.[108] As with the design of his own museum, this diagram provided an insight into 'the development of specific ideas and their transmission from one people to another, or from one locality to another'.[109] It was, as he stressed, a 'sociological' arrangement, and by it Pitt Rivers hoped to demonstrate the 'succession of ideas by which the minds of men in a primitive condition of culture have progressed from the simple to the complex, and from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous'.[110]

Pitt Rivers' theory of cultural evolution became the standard paradigm in ethnographic museums throughout the world during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Together with Edward Burnett Tylor's 'comparative method', postulated in 1871, the theory was progressively applied to most ethnographic museum collections in Britain, Europe, North America and Australia. Tylor had identified

> a single social entity called civilization or culture which was possessed by all peoples but in various stages of development. Those in the 'same grade of civilization' might be compared regardless of distinction of time, place, or race. This was the famous comparative method.[111]

By means of the comparative method, it became a central concern of museum ethnographers to classify and arrange the 'phenomena of Culture ... stage by stage, in a probable order of evolution'.[112]

The comparative method and the theory of cultural evolution which underpinned it were not accepted immediately in scientific circles. In overcoming critics of their theories Pitt Rivers and Tylor had to deal with considerable opposition to Darwin's own evolutionary theory. Notable among these adversaries were not only those who maintained the orthodoxy of biblical chronology but the degenerationists - adherents to the belief that the savage races of the world had regressed from an original state of civilization. As vital evidence in rebutting this fundamental challenge to progressionist or evolutionist theories the Australian Aborigines and their material culture assumed new prominence. Enlisted by proponents of an international argument, Aboriginal artefacts entered a new sphere.

As a forceful advocate for the progressionists, Sir John Lubbock reminded his opponents of the universally accepted status of the Australian Aborigines as among the least advanced, most savage races

in existence, a position shared only by the Indians of Tierra del Fuego and the South African Hottentots.[113] Yet even this most abject race, he observed, was capable of enough inventive propensity to develop the boomerang.[114] In its apparent fluidity of form, and with a returning capacity often mistakenly imputed to all its forms, the Australian boomerang became the most potent example of the principle of cultural evolution. Pitt Rivers used the artefact as a centrepiece of his famous diagram, 'Clubs, boomerangs, shields and lances', published in *The Evolution of Culture* (1875). More than any other object the Australian boomerang illustrated that small, almost imperceptible modifications over time and space amounted to fundamental changes in form:

> Just as a comparison of languages [the philological research of previous decades] had been used to determine recent historical relationships among races, so could a comparison of artifacts establish more distant connections. Boomerangs and throwing sticks would serve the role of words; given their basis, the whole history of the world could be reconstructed.[115]

Lubbock had suggested a similar approach, enlisting the apparently primitive material culture of the Australians as an analytical tool for measuring the progress of European civilisation, just as palaeontological research was revealing the pace of evolution in natural science. He wrote:

> Our fossil pachyderms, for instance, would be almost unintelligible but for the species which still inhabit some parts of Asia and Africa ... and in the same manner, if we wish to clearly understand the antiquities of Europe, we must compare them with the rude implements and weapons still, or until lately, used by the savage races in other parts of the world. In fact, the Van Diemaner and South American are to the antiquary what the opossum and sloth are to the geologist.[116]

By arranging his collection according to the form of objects and their 'affinities' Pitt Rivers explicitly rejected the geographically-based classification which had been generally accepted throughout British and European ethnographic museums. The geographical model had been established most successfully by von Siebold during the 1840s in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden. According to von Siebold this method of arrangement gave the best impression of 'a people's relative progress', 'the condition of their arts', and the nature of past exchanges with other peoples.[117] Decisively, Pitt Rivers noted that the geographical system had not only reflected a casual, superficial attitude towards ethnographic objects on the part of their collectors, it had encouraged this tendency: 'not being supposed capable of any scientific interpretation, [ethnographic objects] have not been obtained in sufficient number or variety to render classification possible'.[118]

This criticism also applied to Australian museums. 'Scientific arrangement' of their collections implied little more than a rude geographic classification; thematic, culturally-based alternatives were not explored until the 1890s. The geographical model continued to provide the basis for classification in International Exhibitions and major museum exhibitions for the remainder of the century. Despite this fact, Exhibitions in Britain, Europe, North America and Australia gradually absorbed additional schema with similarities to Pitt Rivers' 'sociological' arrangement, relying also on its key principle, that of evolutionary theory.

Pitt Rivers' sociological method made few inroads within Australian International Exhibitions or museum exhibitions until Stirling in Adelaide, Baldwin Spencer in Melbourne, and Robert Etheridge in Sydney reorganised their respective Aboriginal galleries at the turn of the century.[119] Stirling and Spencer had direct exposure to international museum developments during the 1890s and 1900s. To this was added their formative fieldwork and collecting experiences among Aborigines. Both men, but particularly Spencer, also contributed through their publications to a heightened international awareness of Aboriginal artefacts and their sociological role. Before the Horn Expedition of 1894, which involved them both, and Spencer's subsequent expeditions with Francis Gillen, Aboriginal artefacts had greater significance internationally than within Australia.

Pitt Rivers and Knight had each recognised that Aboriginal artefacts occupied a key role in the developing pattern of variability which provided the basis for cultural evolution. It was natural that recognition of this apparent fact would spread and take root more readily in Britain and Europe than in the newly established colonial museums within Australia. To begin with, these provincial museums did not possess collections which were large or varied enough to allow for the presentation of comparative exhibits. The demand among British and European museums for Australian Aboriginal artefacts during the last two decades of the nineteenth century should be understood in that light.

It is not surprising to find that anthropological collecting in South Australia was encouraged through the stimulus from overseas demand rather than by local recognition of the cultural value of Aboriginal artefacts. The request for Aboriginal artefacts by the organisers of the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 was followed by a further request in the following year, from the Natural History Museum of New York. Its Director wrote to the Institute Board in April, 1877, asking 'to be supplied with as perfect a collection as can be procured of skeletons, arms, dresses & whatever illustrates the Aborigines of Australia for which an ample return would be made of American ... or of other objects that this Museum might require'.[120]

The Institute Board members were keen to meet this request as speedily as possible and on hearing from Waterhouse that he was unable to locate suitable material immediately instructed him to report back on the cost of obtaining a collection for New York, as well as one for the Museum himself. Waterhouse's response was to call on the resources of South Australian police troopers in such localities as Overland Corner on the Murray River, Fowlers Bay on the West Coast, and Port Darwin, with an offical request to forward artefacts to the Museum.[121] This reliance upon government officials for obtaining ethnographic and natural history material was to be exploited to much greater effect by Waterhouse's eventual successor, Edward Stirling.

While the amount of Aboriginal ethnographica sent out of the country to International Exhibitions was considerable, by the 1880s large quantities of artefacts were being transferred between the Australian colonies themselves, for the same reason. As mentioned, a collection of eighty-five objects collected by

Paul Foelsche was sent by Waterhouse to the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879, to be handed over to the Australian Museum at the close of the Exhibition for an 'equivalent exchange in native weapons & impliments [sic] from the South Sea Islands'. This collection would have been lost in the Garden Palace fire of 1879. Nearly 200 artefacts were sent by Waterhouse's immediate successor, Wilhelm Haacke, to the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1888, and were eventually sold privately at the Exhibition's close. The collection consisted of 133 pronged, barbed, plain and stone-headed spears (no spearthrowers), fourteen boomerangs, five carved shields, six clubs, two model canoes, seven string bags, one large basket, five bark belts, two necklaces, four large mats, one fishing net and three string bags for carrying the narcotic *pituri*.[122] This array was more representative of Aboriginal material culture than the catalogue of material sent to the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879, which did not include any women's artefacts and comprised mainly weapons.[123] This was despite the South Australian Commission's request for a more representative collection: 'specimens of native weapons, dresses and ornaments ... the Commission are anxious to have as good collection of exhibits illustrating the Ethnology of the native tribes of South Australia [as possible]'.[124]

Weaponry remained an enduring theme, and at Adelaide's Jubilee Exhibition of 1887 the Protector of Aborigines received a First Order of Merit for an Aboriginal weapons display.[125] Given the enduring popularity of 'trophy' displays it is likely that the award was given for the array's aesthetic appeal as for as for their weapons' individual characteristics. The same criterion no doubt applied in the case of the South Australian Museum's own award of a First Order of Merit for its three wax 'Figures of Aboriginals'.[126] These figures were immediately re-used in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition held in Calcutta from 1887-88. The diorama which featured them there was probably little altered from the Adelaide Exhibition.

By the time of Haacke's resignation the Museum Committee was conscious of the pressure exerted by International Exhibitions upon the Museum's stock of ethnographic and natural history objects. From the time of the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 the Committee's intention was that only 'duplicate specimens' would be sent from the Museum, but Haacke had apparently ignored this directive more than once. His assurance that the consignment of material sent to Sydney for its 1879 Exhibition would be returned was misplaced. By 1888, when the Committee was approached for the loan of specimens for the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, its reply was that 'past experience does not encourage the Board to strip their own collections for the purpose of enriching international exhibitions, but they will be happy to send duplicate specimens if they have any worth sending'.[127]

This policy must have further handicapped museum staff in their efforts to document the collections, by creating the likelihood that objects not on display could be drawn upon for exchange at any time. The 'Duplicate Collection' was never formalised as a separate entity, but references to it and to the 'Museum Collection' in internal documents point to a distinction which influenced the manner in which

the ethnographic collection was managed as a total entity.

The presentation of ethnographic objects within the context of International Exhibitions is a plangent reminder that ethnographic museums emerged out of Europe's own colonial expansion. As early as 1775 the British Admiralty was suggesting that the British Museum should display the artefacts and specimens obtained on Pacific exploration voyages 'in a particular manner and in a distinquished place as a monument of ... national exertions of British munificence and industry'.[128] Natural history museums in the British tradition have always referred, if obliquely, to the state-sponsored endeavours which have filled their galleries and stores. And while references to 'national exertions of munificence and industry' may have been only partially noted in these museums during the nineteenth century, the International Exhibitions stand in striking contrast. Variously described as 'festivals of nationhood' and the 'nineteenth century's official visiting cards',[129] the Exhibitions rendered the aims of colonialism explicitly and tangibly for all to view and perhaps, to buy. And if the pyramids of minerals and produce represented colonialism's end, the arrays of spears, boomerangs, clubs, bows and arrows displayed next to them represented the means to that end.

In fact, ethnographic objects occupied an uneasy position at the Exhibitions, somewhere between trophies and specimens. To the public filing through the great halls, these objects were the spoils of Empire, mementos of a chase from which the bounty was rich, obvious and apparently limitless. Yet for those involved in collecting and contributing the artefacts and arranging the displays more complex issues were present. Knight's analysis of the artefacts at the 1878 Philadelphia Exhibition shows, for example, that standards of classification and description, borrowed from natural science, were becoming crucial to the emergent discipline of anthropology.

'Ethnographic Specimens' and the Natural Science Paradigm

Pitt Rivers' system of classification was one of several founded in natural science models. E.F. Jomard's 'Plan d'une Classification Ethnographique' used during the 1840s to classify artefacts in the Biblioteque Royale collection of the Louvre, was also based on natural science categories of 'classes', 'ordres', 'especes' and 'varietes'. Its emphasis on cultural comparison was derived from Cuvier's model of comparative anatomy.[130] The German antiquarian Gustav Klemm arranged his collection typologically according to natural science principles, a system which lent itself to his stated purpose of demonstrating technological developments.[131] Klemm's system was adapted during the 1870s by Otis Mason at the National Museum in Washington, but Louis Agassiz was the first in North America to apply evolutionary principles to the classification of specimens in natural history museums.[132]

Each of these classification systems reveals the strength of the Western propensity to classify man and nature into 'types'. The tendency is characterised by Said as one of the defining impulses of Orientalism: 'a proclivity to divide, subdivide, and redivide its subject matter without ever changing its mind about the Orient as being always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object'.[133] The characterisation applies also to Aboriginal Australia. Taxonomic systems, in Foucault's words, reduced 'vast numbers of objects to a smaller number of orderable and describable types', each with a recognisable character and designation. And as for natural science collections, 'to know what properly appertains to one individual is to have before one the classification - or the possibility of classifying - all others'.[134] Once the possibility of a 'scientifically arranged' ethnographic collection revealed itself through this process, museum directors such as Edward Stirling in Adelaide became aware of the potential for filling those gaps in collections which taxonomic systems made evident.

The South Australian Institute Museum's correspondence of the mid- to late nineteenth century confirms natural history as its central preoccupation. The fact had two important effects. Firstly, the amount of Aboriginal material collected by the Museum remained low in comparison to the steady stream of natural history specimens. During the 1860s and 1870s natural history collectors outnumbered ethnographic collectors on average by more than ten to one, and by a much greater proportion when numbers of specimens and objects are taken into account.[135] And yet the Aboriginal contribution to the early natural science collections of Australia's state museums has rarely been acknowledged. Examples abound in the South Australian case, particularly where Central Australian and northern Australian material was concerned. The official Museum collector W.P Dodd used Aboriginal collectors extensively during his 1912 northern Australian expedition, and Inspector Paul Foelsche of Darwin was another whose reputation as a naturalist rested heavily on Aboriginal efforts. Perhaps the most extreme example recorded was that of W.H. Caldwell, who came to Australia in 1883 specifically to study Australian monotremes, marsupials and lungfish. On one of his field-trips to the Burnett River, in New South Wales,

> over 150 natives were employed during July and August, and they caught between 1,300 and 1,400 *Echidna* of both sexes, from which a fairly complete series of stages was obtained. A skilful black, when he was hungry, generally brought in one female *Echidna*, together with several males, every day ... The blacks were paid half-a-crown for every female, but the price of flour, tea and sugar, which I sold to them, rose with the supply of *Echidna*. The half-crowns were, therefore, always just sufficient to buy food enough to keep the lazy blacks hungry.[136]

Several naturalists made a point of noting the 'native names' applied by Aborigines to the animals, birds, insects and plants which they delivered in exchange for small portions of European commodities. But no European collector, apparently, commented on the intimate totemic connections which particular Aboriginal people had with individual species which they collected. Even if Aboriginal taxonomies of the natural world were recorded by natural history collectors it is likely that this information would have been regarded as irrelevant, even obstructive, to the clear scientific analysis of particular species.[137]

More importantly though, the natural historical paradigm had a fundamental influence on the way in which ethnographic material was collected, classified and exhibited. The critical point here is not just that anthropology was dominated by natural history practice, but that it actually emerged from, and operated upon, that ground. The ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel recognised this fact when he advocated in 1904 that the anthropological approach to the collection, description and classification of cultural traits (and objects) must be natural historical in its essence.[138] Pitt Rivers attended a number of lectures on Darwin's theory during the 1860s and regarded his own 'sociological' framework as complementary to it. The ethnographer considered that his collecting efforts were equivalent to those of naturalists:

> Just as natural history collections conveyed the order and evolution of the natural world, so his collection showed a parallel evolution within the realm of human technology. He later had a tendency to say that Darwin's work was simply confirmation of his own 'principle of continuity'.[139]

This unambiguous influence, and the fact that most anthropologists and ethnographic collectors of the late nineteenth century were themselves naturalists, had a fundamental and lasting effect on the way anthropology was practised and native cultures perceived.

The taxonomic approach to ethnographic collections had its most obvious effect in museum exhibitions. In the meantime, collectors and museum curators alike became used to describing their objects, both formally and informally, as 'ethnographic specimens'. This did not preclude the same objects from being characterised as 'articles of war', 'native dress and ornament' and so on, but the implication of connectedness with natural history specimens was clear and unproblematic. The classification of artefacts as specimens formalised their dislocation from the social groups which had produced them and symbolised their absorption into new systems of European science. The fact this scientific discourse was in its turn a culturally constructed 'meta-narrative' is a recently perceived irony; the encompassing methodologies of museum classification proceeded nonetheless.

The notion of a specimen representing a species was directly applicable here: a single boomerang, shield or wooden dish served to represent these classes of objects from a particular tribe, locality or region. Ethnographic objects were regarded not for any intrinsic aesthetic worth, or for their individual case histories of manufacture, use and acquisition, but for this representative, evidentiary value. Such a role for ethnographic objects was articulated by a range of specialist curators, men like E.T. Hamy at the Trocadero Museum of Ethnography in Paris or Otis T. Mason at the Smithsonian Institution. The absorption of ethnographic objects within the natural history classification system meant that there were no longer any miscellaneous collections of curiosities: every object was classifiable, even if this meant extending the system of classification into new areas.[140]

The corollary of this literal implementation of a natural historical system of classification meant that, as with insects or shells, a collection of like ethnographic objects could contain duplicate specimens. Taken on their own, these neither added substantially to knowledge about that class of specimens nor

imparted further value to the collections. 'Duplicate' ethnographic specimens, as with natural history specimens, could either be rejected by the museum at the point of acquisition or could be obtained for exchange purposes.

This function was particularly relevant during the later nineteenth century as an international museum market in desirable objects evolved. Aboriginal artefacts entered that market on the same terms as natural history specimens. But even as the free traffic in museum objects intensified during the second half of the century, and as Aboriginal artefacts found their measure of value with African and Pacific counterparts, a recognition of the local significance of these objects (and of particular, rare natural species) was developing in Australian capitals. This recognition was founded, not on natural historical principles, but upon cultural and historical arguments, and upon an understanding that Aboriginal objects were coming to represent in some measure the cultural heritage of Australians themselves.

Two opposing forces can be discerned here: the classification of Aboriginal objects as anonymous specimens with an international exchange value, and the gradual emergence of a consciousness that these objects also represented part of a finite patrimony of the Australian colonies. Both forces are especially evident in an analysis of the motives and practices of ethnographic collectors in this country. The first carried the implication that Aborigines were best understood as an undifferentiated, homogeneous people, for whom a series of weapons or utensils was a sufficient metaphor. The second appeared to suggest that rather than operating just as 'ethnological specimens', Aboriginal artefacts contained a new potential founded on their cultural significance.

In the post-contact history of Aboriginal objects and their collectors these two influences rarely operated independently of each other. The friction between them has produced a constant stream of museological theory and practice during the past century. This was particularly evident during the late nineteenth century, partly due to the boom in museum construction. The main impetus though, was the activity generated by the huge International Exhibitions which followed the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London's Crystal Palace. These events drew attention to the new international currency of ethnographic objects and their role in defining the emerging cultural character of exhibiting nations.

Endnotes - Chapter Two

1. Chapman 1985: 31.

2. See Reece (1974: 85-93) for a discussion of the effect of phrenological theory on social debate about Aboriginal issues in New South Wales from the 1820s to the 1840s.

3. Sir John Jeffcott, address to Grand Jury, quoted in the *Register*, 3 June, 1837, p.5.

4. *Ibid:* 4-5. The offence was committed in an Aboriginal hut at Glenelg.

5. Editorial comment, *Southern Australian*, 16 June, 1838, p.4.

6. Pope (1989) documents the deteriorating relations between Aborigines and Europeans near Adelaide during this period.

7. *Ibid*: 144-45.

8. See Foster 1991b. For example, in June 1837 the Protector of Aborigines noted that he had removed 'certain Aborigines who had settled on Dr Wright's town acre' and a few weeks later John Morphett complained that Aborigines were cutting down trees on his town acre (GRG 24/1/1837/210; 246). In December 1838, the Superintendent of Police reported the 'habit of the Aborigines of disfiguring trees in the Park Lands, yet during the same year colonists were employing Aborigines to remove timber from the same areas (GRG 24/4/1838/20; 24/1/1838/8, SRO). For a broader discussion of this issue, see Reynolds (1990: 129-163).

9. GRG 24/61847/440, SRO.

10. Gouger 1838: 56. By 1847 Adelaide Aborigines were being employed to break stones for paving the city's streets (GRG 19 24/4/1847/273, SRO).

11. *Adelaide Chronicle*, 18 & 25 February, 1840, p.3; p.2.

12. The meeting canvassed a range of strategies, ranging from the establishment of a native police force to the dual operation of a 'House of Correction' and a 'Native Location'. See the *Southern Australian* 28 February, 1843, p.2; *Adelaide Examiner* 25 February, 1843, pp.3-4.

13. Snell 1988: 49.

14. Smith 1984: 174-75; 220-221.

15. See Angas (1847b, vol.1: 102-108) and Leigh (1839: 143) for descriptions of corroborees attended by Europeans at this time.

16. Cawthorne Diary, Monday, 22 April, 1844, Foster (ed.) 1991: 46. The original drawing is contained in the Cawthorne mss., MLS.

17. *Register*, 24 April, 1844, p.3.

18. *Southern Australian* 5 September, 1843, p.2; GRG 24/4/1847/195; 205; 1430; 1462, SRO.

19. Smith 1984: 220. Smith makes this point in relation to Sydney artists of the 1790s and 1800s; the same shift can be observed in Adelaide's colonial period, three decades later. See also Dutton (1974).

20. A factor of some significance, particularly in the light of the marked effect on local collecting practice triggered by the demand for Aboriginal artefacts for the International Exhibitions of the 1870s, may lie in the British Museum's focus (and that of British collectors) on the Assyrian antiquities, first acquired in 1849 (See Bohrer 1994). The British Museum's preoccupaton with antiquities during the late 1840s and 1850s may well have been mirrored in colonial Australia, to some extent.

21. Moorhouse 1846. Moorhouse's Murray River vocabulary was constructed well after his Adelaide work, and was made at Grey's behest. In this sense it does not provide an exception to the general rule, by which other ethnographers followed their publications on grammar and vocabulary with more discursive works on manners and customs. Moorhouse and Teichelmann produced a joint 'Report on the Aborigines of South Australia' (published in January 1842), and Moorhouse was solely responsible for the 'Annual Report of the Aborigines' Department' (unpublished until 1991). See Foster (1991) for an introduction to these two reports.

22. Taplin 1864. Teichelmann produced an unpublished, extensive, revised version of his Adelaide vocabulary during this period; this was sent to George Grey in Cape Town in 1857 (Teichelmann 1857 ms.). The vocabulary published by E.M. Curr in 1886 (Teichelmann, Schurmann & Wyatt 1886) is a much shorter wordlist.

23. The correspondence files of the South Australian Company, particularly those of its Director, George Fife Angas, are full of references to this crucial issue (PRG 174, MLSA). See also further discussion of this point in Pope (1989). Following the recommendations of the 1837 *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines* (1968 (1837)), Standish Motte (himself a member of the South Australian Literary Association), published his '*Outline of a System of Legislation for Securing Protection to the Aboriginal Inhabitants of All Countries Colonized by Great Britain*' (Motte 1840).

24. Discussed in Chapter One.

25. For example, Teichelmann and Schurmann's grammar and vocabulary of the Adelaide Aborigines (1840) preceded Teichelmann's work on their manners and customs (1841) published in the following year, and Schurmann's vocabulary of the Parnkala people of Spencer's Gulf (1844) preceded his general work on the Aborigines of Port Lincoln (1846). Schurmann's ethnographic work with Port Lincoln Aborigines can be regarded as part of his duties as Protector of Aborigines there. Meyer's vocabulary of South Australian Aborigines (1843) preceded his work on the manners and customs of Encounter Bay Aborigines (1846).

26. The vocabularies were by Bromley (unpublished and untraced); Gell (Assistant Secretary to Governor Gawler) 1841; Meyer 1843; Moorhouse 1846; Piesse 1840; Stevenson [n.d.]; Schurmann 1844; Teichelmann 1886 (posthumous); Teichelmann and Schurmann 1840; Williams 1839; Wyatt 1886 (posthumous). The broader ethnographies were by: Angas 1847a; Angas 1847b; Cawthorne 1926 (posthumous); Eyre 1845; Grey 1841a (includes Adelaide material); Meyer 1846; Schurmann 1846. Schayer's 1844 Berlin publication on the language, manners and customs of South Australian Aborigines (Schayer 1844) was probably based on the work of the Dresden missionaries.

27. Lendon 1929: 24, 27.

28. The 1960s-70s produced a very high volume of linguistic publications, but from a much greater pool of specialists (J. Simpson pers. comm. 1991).

29. SOED: 685.

30. See Gascoigne (1994: 160-176) for an account of philology within the Enlightenment context.

31. Jefferson and Schoolcraft quoted in Hinsley (1981: 23).

32. See Chapman 1985: 21-22; Crawfurd 1863.

33. Quoted in Desmond & Moore 1992: 215.

34. Smillie 1842: 437. Another of South Australia's 'utopian socialists', Robert Gouger, devoted considerable space to the Aborigines in his publication about the colony, referring to the linguistic similarity between South Australian Aborigines and the 'Malays of Dampier Straits', as perceived by Mr Donovan, chief officer of the 'Katharine Stewart Forbes' (Gouger 1838: 52-53).

35. Chapman 1985: 22.

36. Renan had written that philology was a scientific method to be used for arriving at

> the very system of things ... [It is] ... the exact science of mental objects. It is to the sciences of humanity what physics and chemistry are to the philosophic sciences of bodies. (Renan 1890 (1848): 149)

37. Pearce 1992: 257.

38. Said 1978: 140.

39. See for example, McCall 1982; Mulvaney 1964; 1993; Peterson 1990; Tindale 1986.

40. Elkin 1970: 6; Elkin 1963. McCall (1982) and Peterson (1990) accept this characterisation of early Australian anthropology.

41. *Reports from the Select Committee on Aborigines.* 1968 (1837), vol.2, p.83.

42. Colonial Secretary's Instructions to Protector of Aborigines, *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register,* 12 August, 1837, p.1.

43. Wyatt 1879; 1886; Moorhouse 1846. Although Wyatt's vocabulary was not published until 1879, it was available for use in government circles on its completion in 1839. See *South Australian Government Gazette,* 7 June, 1839.

44. Lendon (n.d.) ms.: 212.

45. Williams' advertisement appears in the *Southern Australian*, 27 March, 1839, p.2. A copy of this vocabulary is listed among the contents of Grey's papers, held in the South African Library, Cape Town (Williams 1839). It was later published in Parkhouse (ed. 1923).

46. Grey 1841a. He had also written carefully, on the basis of his Western Australian experiences, on the issue of 'promoting the civilisation' of Australia's Aborigines (1841b).

47. Grey 1841b; 1841a; 1841c. See also Mulvaney 1964: 23-25.

48. Grey 1845. Grey proposed that linguistic evidence suggested that 'this continent was peopled from the north-west, and that the lines of migration were along the coast and the great water drainages of this country' (*ibid*: 366).

49. Mulvaney 1964: 22.

50. Grey wrote:

> Up to the present time we have had only very meagre vocabularies, collected by passing strangers, each of whom adopted his own system of orthography, and the comparisons formed from such compilations must necessarily have been erroneous in the highest degree. (Grey 1841a vol.2: 215-16)

51. Tindale (1974: 3) asserts that Grey guided the Lutheran missionaries in the production of their linguistic work. Some evidence for this lies in Teichelmann's acknowledgement of discussions with Grey about Australian 'dialects' (Teichelmann & Schurmann 1840: vii, viii). But Schurmann also recorded the fact that although Grey gave valuable encouragement to Teichelmann and himself in publishing their grammar and vocabulary, it was Moorhouse who assisted in reading and editing their English text (Schurmann 1987: 104; Teichelmann & Schurmann 1840: viii). In fact, it is possible that Grey incorporated some of Teichelmann's and Schurmann's vocabulary within his own 1841 publication without acknowledgement (Grey 1841a: 212-15). Grey was also quick to adopt the modified Threlkeld/'South Sea' orthography, used by Teichelmann and Schurmann in their work, and argued for its adoption

by the Royal Geographical Society. (J. Simpson, pers. comm. 1991).

52. See for example, Threlkeld 1834; 1850.

53. Smith 1984: 8,16.

54. Flinders 1886.

55. As Jones explains, the French at this stage displayed a much greater commitment to anthropological research than the British, through the Societe des Observateurs de l'Homme. This is despite the fact that the French expedition rarely approached the standards set in Degerando's detailed anthropological instructions and suggestions (Degerando 1969) or by Cuvier (quoted in Jones R. 1988: 37). For a useful discussion of the distinction between French and British anthropology at this time see Gascoigne (1994: 158-159).

56. Dumont d'Urville 1830-35. Dumont d'Urville did not visit South Australia, but obtained his word list from a colleague, Gaimard, who had recorded several words from a South Australian Aborigine in Western Australia, possibly brought there by sealers (J. Simpson, pers. comm., 1991; Simpson [in press]). See Gaimard (1833) for this vocabulary. Dumont d'Urville also made an ethnographic collection in Australia, identified by Sylviane Jacquemin and referred to in Kaufmann (1994: 125).

57. Sturt 1833 vol.1: 187-88.

58. Sturt 1847, vol. 2: 139-40.

59. For example, see Sturt 1833 vol.1: 180; vol 2: p.113.

60. See Jones file on the Gilbert Collection. The provenance of the collection is not clear and several objects appear to date from later in the century and from regions not visited by Sturt. Harris-Browne and his brother had pastoral interests throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory. Several of the objects conform to the type and style of manufacture observed for the north-east of South Australia, through which Sturt's second expedition passed during 1845.

61. Sturt 1847, vol. 1: 77-78.

62. Grey manuscript collection, South African Library, Cape Town. Copies held in AIATSIS library, Canberra. The publication is referred to by William Cawthorne during 1843. See Foster (ed.) 1991: 22.

63. Angas 1847a: preface.

64. *Illustrated London News*, 18 April 1846, p.253, quoted in Tregenza (1982: 13).

65. *The Times*, 6 April, 1846, p.3c, quoted in Tregenza (1982: 17).

66. Angas 1847b.

67. Dutton 1967: 163-64.

68. Eyre 1845, vol.2: 398, 411.

69. Both this and the following example are drawn from Mulvaney's 1964 survey of the history of Australian anthropology (Mulvaney 1964: 18-19, 22, 26).

70. Latham 1862.

71. Mulvaney notes the fact that despite the sixth volume of information published by the expedition being titled 'Ethnology and Philology', linguistics occupied all but a few pages: 'A few lines sufficed in every instance for a superficial account of the rich material culture of contemporary Pacific peoples' (Mulvaney 1964: 26).

72. Noted in Mulvaney 1964: 30.

73. G.A. Robinson to C.W. Sievwright, 20 July, 1840, quoted in Lakic & Wrench (1994: 37).

74. G.A. Robinson to C.W. Sievwright, 18 July, 1840; 21 September, 1840, quoted in *ibid*: 36, 37.

75. Eyre 1845, vol.2: 489.

76. The first indication that Point MacLeay Aborigines were producing artefacts for sale appears in the *Observer*, 4 February, 1860, p.6.

77. Cawthorne Diary, Saturday, 3 February, 1844. Foster (ed.) 1991: 32-33.

78. Angas 1847b, vol.1: 94, 134. It unlikely that the Aborigines regarded this occurrence as extraordinary; their own use of human hair for hair-string would have provided a context.

79. Specht 1980: 8-9.

80. Angas acted as temporary Curator of the Adelaide Museum during Waterhouse's absence on MacDouall Stuart's expedition of 1861-62. He assisted in describing the shells collected on that expedition, and published several other papers on South Australian conchology between 1863 and 1878. See Gill 1886: 44.

81. Museum of Mankind specimen documentation no. 1840-12-1 (1-4), Jones 1985 ms. Grey's note also reads: 'The magnet is sensibly affected by them'. It is not certain that these were collected by Grey in South Australia. The 1840 date, if correct, may indicate that they were obtained on his first, brief trip to the colony, or that they were collected in Western Australia, which would be consistent with the description, 'Southern Australia'.
Artefacts which Grey collected during his governorship in New Zealand were presented to the British Museum in 1854 (Braunholtz 1938: 7). As noted in Chapter One, Grey was also an enthusiastic natural history collector, with several species named after him. See Appendices C,D,E,F in Grey (1841a).

82. Gill 1907-8: 232-33.

83. Pers. comm. J. Simpson, 1991.

84. Hale 1956: 6-7. On taking up his post as Governor of South Africa in 1855, Grey became a firm advocate of the South African Museum in Cape Town (founded in 1825). He sought copper ores from South Australia for it, in exchange for those sent to South Australia.

85. The phrase is Hinsley's (1994: 344).

86. The nucleus of Chicago's Field Museum was formed from the ethnographic collections at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition. The Smithsonian Institution obtained many of the artefacts exhibited at the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876. American museum anthropologists were quicker than their European or Australian counterparts to use the Exhibitions as an opportunity for adding to their collections. See Bean 1987: 554; Hinsley 1981: 109-110.

87. Fabian makes the point that natural history provided the dominant paradigm for anthropology at this time: 'Its manifest concerns were progress and 'history', but its theories and methods, inspired by geology, comparative anatomy, and related scientific disciplines were taxonomic rather than genetic-processual'. (Fabian 1983: 147)

88. See for example, *Catalogue of the Victorian Exhibition, 1861*.

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

91. Fox 1994: 16.

92. Stewart 1993: 66.

93. The boxes are discussed in this context by Tindale (1974: figs.43-46). Note that while Tindale dates the manufacture of one box at 'circa 1845', Fox (1994: 17) confirms that they were made during the mid-1860s. For records of Le Souef boxes and miniature artefacts in Hamburg and Munich museums, see Jones 1985 ms.

94. Barry 1866 ms.; Barry 1867.

95. Strahan 1979: 38.

96. See Bolton, O'Donnell & Wade 1979. Despite the enormity of this loss, Strahan makes the point that within five years 7500 artefacts had been collected by the Museum to replace those destroyed (Strahan 1979: 39).

97. List in Museum Diary, October 1874 to April 1880, entry for August, 1879, SRSAM.

98. Davison 1988: 158.

99. The Theodore Bevan collection, from the Douglas and Jubilee Rivers in New Guinea, was purchased for the Museum. The Sultan of Johore's collection was presented through the South Australian Government (Hale 1956: 64).

100. Jones 1991a.

101. Rydell 1984: 24. And yet the division of the Exhibitions in halls or 'courts' devoted to separate countries and states meant that even as the evolutionist paradigm was being conveyed, so too was a growing appreciation of geographical diversity.

102. Benjamin (1978: 152), quoted in Hinsley (1991: 344).

103. These included Aboriginal artefacts sent from South Australia to the Paris Exhibition, the Philadelphia Exhibition or the Melbourne Exhibition. A few of the artefacts sent to the Paris Exhibition eventually returned to Australia and were acquired by the Beechworth Museum [Anthony Hamilton, pers. comm., 1992]. Most were dispersed throughout Europe.

104. Knight 1880.

105. *Ibid.*: 213.

106. Pitt Rivers 1874.

107. Knight 1880: 214.

108. Pitt Rivers 1875.

109. Pitt Rivers 1874: 295.

110. *Ibid.*: 294.

111. Gillespie 1977: 42.

112. Tylor 1871: 6-7.

113. See Jones 1989.

114. Lubbock, quoted in Gillespie 1977: 43.

115. Chapman 1985: 31.

116. Lubbock, quoted in Harris 1968: 152-153.

117. von Siebold 1843, quoted in Chapman 1985: 24.

118. Pitt Rivers 1874: 294.

119. Spencer began his reorganisation of the Melbourne collections following his appointment as Director in 1902. Etheridge was appointed as Curator of the Australian Museum in 1895 and began the re-arrangement of the collections 'so as to render a comparative study possible' (Curator's Report, 1896, AMA).

120. Curator's Report, April 1877. GRG 19/169, SRO.

121. The police-troopers involved were J.W. Ewens (Overland Corner, Morgan), J.B. Richards (Fowler's Bay) and P. Foelsche (Palmerston, later Darwin). A single grinding stone (A22553), collected at Morgan in 1877, is the only identifiable object from Ewens' larger collections. Richards sent a varied collection of twenty-seven documented objects from Fowlers Bay in October 1880. Several of these may still exist within the Old Collection. See Curator's Report, October 1880, GRG 19/168, SRO. Five Fowler's Bay objects (two stone tools, A29896, two head ornaments, A32822-3, and a hank of wombat fur string, A1951) remain identifiable from a larger collection donated in 1880 by Richards' wife, Annie.

122. Curator's Report, July 1888, GRG 19/168, SRO. These objects were probably supplied by Paul Foelsche and by George Taplin of Point MacLeay Mission.

123. The material forwarded to the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879 included seventy-four spears, five spearthrowers, three clubs, one boomerang, and two 'bamboo trumpets' (didjeridu - apparently the first examples recorded for a museum collection). (Curator's Report, March 1880, GRG19/168, SRO. It was purchased from Foelsche for twenty-three pounds and fifteen shillings (Minutes of the Museum Committee, 17 March, 1879. GRG 364, vol.1, SRO).

124. Minutes of Museum Committee, 30 June, 1879, GRG 19/364, vol.1, SRO.

125. Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition, 1887. First order of merit certificate to the Protector of Aborigines for an Aboriginal weapons display. 1 item. GRG 52/89, SRO.

126. The award is recorded in the Minutes of the Museum Committee, 2 December, 1887. GRG19/364, SRO. The figures are illustrated in Hale (1956: facing p.63) as they appeared in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886.

127. Minutes of Museum Committee, 13 May, 1889, GRG 19/364, SRO.

128. Miller 1973: 75.

129. Davison 1988: 149.

130. Jomard 1845; Chapman 1985: 24-25.

131. Penniman 1965: 61-62; Chapman 1985: 25.

132. Dias 1991: 110; Agassiz 1862.

133. Said 1989: 119.

134. Foucault 1970: 138, 144.

135. This estimate is derived from the monthly Curator's Reports of the South Australian Institute Museum. GRG 19/168, SRO.

136. Caldwell 1887: 465-66, quoted in Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 144.

137. This attitude persists today within the natural science divisions of Australian museums.

138. Ratzel 1904: 507.

139. Chapman 1985: 20.

140. Dias 1991: 98-102.

CHAPTER THREE

OBJECTS OF THE FRONTIER: A NEW IMPETUS TO COLLECT

The Museum already possesses a fair number of things from some localities, but others are entirely unrepresented, and it is these gaps in the collection, representing the ethnology of the country, which we particularly wish to fill up.[1]

South Australian Ethnography in Abeyance

In contrast to the intensive output of the 1840s, the level of South Australian ethnography declined markedly during the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s. It was not until the last decade of the century that local interest in the subject matched its early level. Despite the presence of the new Institute Museum as a base, ethnographic research lacked a metropolitan focus until after Dr Edward Stirling's appointment as Honorary Director in 1889. Even so, this relatively dormant phase of South Australian anthropological history saw the creation and definition of the main categories of collectable ethnographic objects. This was achieved through two main influences, both external to Adelaide and Australia. In the first place the expanding international anthropological literature, informed by natural science and evolutionary theory, identified and defined particular classes of objects. From 1851 the International Exhibitions gave these categories a formal legitimacy and an international currency.

Both of these influences affected the work of Australia's colonial ethnographers in a piecemeal and indirect fashion. Australia's isolation was an obvious reason for this. Another was the relatively unfocused nature of Australian ethnography. Metropolitan or even provincial centres for the pursuit of this new field of study did not exist until late in the nineteenth century. In fact, during the middle decades of the century South Australian ethnography tended to fragment rather than concentrate, moving from Adelaide to the more remote frontiers of settlement. Similar trends occurred in the other Australian colonies.

Ethnography became less the province of interested citizens like William Cawthorne who had encountered Aborigines around Adelaide daily during the early 1840s. Instead, it became the specialised interest or hobby of those working at the margins of colonial life - missionaries, mounted police and naturalists for example. Moreover, while these individuals produced work on their own account, a feature of

Australian ethnography during the mid-nineteenth century was the degree to which the final synthesis of ethnographic detail occurred overseas, in Britain, Germany, or the United States. South Australia was not without its own armchair or 'postal' anthropologists - J.G. Wood and George Taplin provide examples during the 1870s - but their efforts were overshadowed by the survey work of E.M. Curr, Lorimer Fison, R. Brough Smyth and Alfred Howitt, based in Victoria and New South Wales.[2]

South Australian ethnography continued to be characterised by its German connections. The Lutheran missionaries of the 1830s were the forerunners of a large number of German immigrants who transformed the face of science and the arts in South Australia and Victoria especially.[3] The German contribution to South Australia's ethnographic record persisted as a distinct element throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Between the 1840s and 1870s this influence was most evident from Germany itself rather than locally in South Australia. German researchers relied on data sent by the early missionaries and by compatriots who had followed the first wave of German emigrants to South Australia. Only Clamor Schurmann carried the research of the first Lutheran missionary ethnographers into this middle period. Even so, he published nothing after 1844 and did not contribute any artefacts to the new museum in Adelaide. The small provincial museum in Herrnhut, Germany, retains a spear, two clubs, a net and a headband as the surviving elements of a collection sent home in about 1840 by Schurmann and his fellow missionaries H.A.E. Meyer, and C.G. Teichelmann.[4]

Within South Australia the Barossa Valley Germans were served from the 1860s by at least two museums: the Gawler Institute Museum, discussed in Chapter Nine, and the private museum of Marianne Kreusler near Nuriootpa. The first two Curators of the Gawler Museum were German; the first was Richard Schomburgk, later to become Director of Adelaide's Botanical Gardens. Marianne Kreusler was primarily a natural history collector, one of many across the country encouraged by the botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. By 1882, when her collection was offered to the South Australian Institute Museum for 500 pounds, it consisted of seventy small cedar cases containing Lepidoptera and Coleoptera specimens, about 350 bird skins, minerals and shells, as well as some Aboriginal artefacts. Three boomerangs and a play-stick were eventually donated to the South Australian Museum by her grand-daughter, B.J. McNamara, in 1958.[5]

The publications of Koeler (1844), Schayer (1844; 1847), Behr (1848a; 1848b) Ecker (1859; 1861), Meissel (1871), and Greffrath (1876) are representative of ethnographers and linguists based in Germany for whom South Australia represented a focal point in the developing picture of world ethnography. Within the colony itself three Germans made notable ethnographic contributions during the mid-nineteenth century - Karl Emil Jung, Charles Wilhelmi, and Richard Schomburgk.[6]

Jung's publications on the Aborigines of the Lower Murray and Cooper's Creek stand with those of George Taplin and Samuel Gason as the only works in this second phase of South Australian ethnography to go beyond simple description.[7] His careful delineation of weapons and tools were integral to his discussion of the features of different Aboriginal groups. Jung apparently took his collection with him on his return to

Europe; at least one club collected by him on Cooper's Creek remains in the Leipzig Museum of Ethnography.[8]

Although incidental to their occupations as botanists, the ethnography undertaken by Wilhelmi and Schomburgk was significant. Wilhelmi's 1861 publication on the *Manners and Customs of the Australian Natives, in Particular of the Port Lincoln District*, was encouraged by his mentor, the botanist Ferdinand von Mueller.[9] It is possible that Wilhelmi supplied von Mueller with artefacts which were subsequently sent to European museums.[10] Schomburgk was the first to provide a published description of the sacred tjurunga of Central Australia (discussed in Chapter Ten). His interest in ethnographic objects was encouraged through his curatorship of the Gawler Institute Museum days. By 1879, when he described tjurunga for the Berlin journal *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie*, Schomburgk was the Director of Adelaide's Botanical Gardens and a member of the Adelaide Museum's Board of Governors. This did not prevent him sending the tjurunga to the Berlin Museum, with the accompanying note that such objects were 'unknown to Australian museums'.[11] Schomburgk also contributed eastern Central Australian ethnographic material to the Museum of Ethnography in Vienna from 1877 to 1879. Its provenance, from Lake Hope on Cooper's Creek, suggests that Schomburgk obtained this material, as with the tjurunga, from expeditions returning to Adelaide with botanical and natural history specimens.[12]

German artists were also among the first in Australia to pay serious attention to Aboriginal subjects since the ethnographic studies of George French Angas of the early 1840s. During a period in which Aborigines tended to become marginal figures in the landscape studies of British artists, painters like Alexander Schramm (c.1814-1864) and Heinrich L. Schrauder (1832-80) restored the Aboriginal subject to prominence.[13] Schrauder's portrait of 'Tenberry, a Chief on the Murray', is of especial significance, depicting Edward John Eyre's main ethnographic informant of the 1840s.[14] The landscape painter Eugene von Guerard (1812-1901) also painted Aboriginal subjects and was one of the earliest artist-collectors. Ethnographic objects collected by von Guerard in Victoria were sent by him to Berlin's Museum of Ethnology during 1879.[15]

The German naturalist and artist William Blandowski was active as a collector during the 1850s. In 1854 he became the first officer appointed to the staff of Victoria's new Museum of Natural History. Three years later he undertook a collecting expedition from the Murray-Darling junction to the Murray Mouth in company with another German naturalist, Gerard Kreft.[16] Blandowski's drawings of artefacts and Aboriginal subjects made on this expedition indicate his serious interest in ethnography. A few of Blandowski's artefacts survive in the Berlin Museum. More intriguing is the possibility that he may have taken a camera with him on the expedition; this would pre-date other expeditionary photography in Australia by at least two decades.[17]

The South Australian Museum's second Director, the German Wilhelm Haacke, was apparently uninterested in ethnography or the opportunities presented by other German ethnographers in South Australia. His successor, Assistant Director Amanduz Zietz, although born in Denmark, spoke fluent German

and had considerably more success in cultivating these connections. It was Zietz, for example, who made the first fruitful contacts with the Palmerston-based ethnographer and police trooper, the Prussian Paul Foelsche (see Chapter Seven). Zietz apparently also encouraged ethnographic collecting and donations through the Museum's German entomologist, J.G.O. Tepper. Tepper contributed at least two ethnographic collections from Western Australia and was responsible for the translation and subsequent publication of an ethnographic manuscript written at Hermannsburg by the Lutheran missionary Louis Schulze.[18] Zietz also familiarised himself with the substantial ethnographic museum at the Gawler Institute (curated by a German, Otto Wehrstedt), and corresponded with the Barossa Valley collector, Dr J. Richter. The latter contributed several significant pieces to the Museum, including a carved shield obtained by him at Mannum on the Lower Murray during 1855[19].

From the early 1860s the English missionary George Taplin linked his South Australian studies with ethnographic work being undertaken elsewhere in Australia and Britain. He provided the first substantial South Australian contribution to the Museum's ethnographic collections. Unlike his predecessors in the 'Adelaide school' of the 1840s, Taplin had no colleagues close at hand to assist him in his researches. He looked to Britain, to the work of the newly formed Anthropological Institute (especially its South African correspondent, W.H. Bleek), and to the eastern colonies. Lancelot Threlkeld, the missionary-linguist at Lake Macquarie in New South Wales during the 1830s and 1840s, was a major influence on Taplin as on all other Australian linguists. Following the publication of Lewis Henry Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1870), Australian field-workers were introduced to the complexities of social anthropology through the publications of Alfred Howitt and Lorimer Fison. A feature of early Australian anthropology was the fusion which occurred between philological and kinship studies. Taplin was one of a handful of Australian workers who contributed to the kinship questionnaires distributed by Fison and Howitt. Indeed, there is some evidence that Taplin plagiarised these for his own interests, which, like Threlkeld, lay more in the relation between Australian languages and their deduced origins.[20] In this sense, Taplin's linguistic work had more in common with that undertaken by George Grey and the early Adelaide school than with the nascent social anthropology pioneered by Alfred Howitt under the influence of Morgan and Andrew Lang.[21] Taplin produced his own questionnaire during the 1870s and published the results in 1879.[22]

Taplin was enlisted by the Institute Museum's first Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, as a natural history collector who could contribute valuable specimens from the vicinity of the Point Macleay mission, near the junction of the Murray River and Lakes Albert and Alexandrina. In May 1864 Waterhouse reported that:

> Mr Taplin of Point Macleay having also offered to employ the young Aborigines to collect specimens for the Museum, I have forwarded him with a supply of methylated spirit and some arsenical soap for the purpose of preserving the specimens. Mr Taplin having said that he would occasionally like to reward the collectors with some trifling sum I have undertaken to say that any expenses of the sort would be repaid.[23]

It was only after Taplin had contributed several small natural history collections to the Museum, and after his own ethnographic interest had developed, that ethnographic collecting from Aborigines became a recognisable end in itself. In his monthly report for August 1864, Waterhouse noted that Taplin had contributed 'various articles of matting, baskets etc, manufactured by the Aborigines, also two black Cockatoos' skins, some small reptilia, insects etc.'[24] By this time the Aborigines of Point MacLeay Mission had become accustomed to supplying artefacts to a European market. Mats, baskets, feathered objects and weapons were produced for sale on behalf of the mission from 1860 onwards.[25] Taplin recorded that he had sent a 'bundle of mats to Revd. W.B. Andrews' during June, 1864 and on 22 August, 1871 was 'busy packing up mats to send to Adelaide'.[26] These consignments to church and mission outlets were apparently made independently of collections prepared for the Museum. Among other natural history material sent there, Taplin made further donations of '3 native daggers and [a] headband of native hair' in October 1867, and some 'native fishing line' and 'native twine' in July, 1868, but apparently no more before his death in 1879.[27]

Waterhouse did not actively seek Aboriginal ethnographica until the mid-1870s, although he was clearly in a position to capitalise on the Museum's good name among interested colonists a decade earlier. In 1865 the Secretary of the South Australian Institute, Robert Kay, informed the government that: 'Mr Waterhouse, the Curator of the Museum, has formed connections with persons resident in various parts of the province and also with the authorities of the Museums in the adjoining colonies, for the purpose of collecting specimens and of exchanging duplicates; any increase of means will of course enable him to avail himself very advantageously of these arrangements'.[28] The priorities which Waterhouse and Kay considered would benefit most from increased government funding were 'specimens of the Mammals of this province', 'mammals and birds from the adjoining colonies', and 'specimens of the fish & crustacea of this coast which are but little known'.[29]

When Waterhouse did obtain ethnographic material it was through the agency of natural history collectors like Taplin or R.H. Caldicott of King George's Sound in Western Australia, who were well placed to add ethnographic material to their consignments, or through former South Australians who had established themselves in remote parts of the country, but still regarded Adelaide as their home.[30] These collections arrived in Adelaide in random fashion, much like trophies or souvenirs of the colony's own pioneers. By 1870 the most extensive collections of artefacts derived from the colonial frontier or from locations such as missions where large numbers of Aborigines were grouped. Even so, in the latter case, the speed with which Aborigines abandoned the manufacture and use of most of their traditional range of weapons and artefacts meant that missions and settlements near Adelaide such as Point Macleay, Point Pearce or Morgan were regarded as having limited potential as collecting points. In June 1877, the police trooper J.R. Ewens, stationed at North-West Bend near Morgan, reported to Waterhouse that 'the natives of the Lower Murray had long since discontinued making or carrying weapons'.[31]

The idea of commissioning artefacts or of encouraging Aborigines to manufacture objects used

before European arrival were not entertained at this time, either by collectors such as Ewens or by the Museum itself. Forty years earlier, on the Adelaide Plains, individuals such as Captain Jack and King John had been encouraged by Cawthorne and Angas to produce artefacts for illustration in their publications. As ethnographic collecting developed its protocols, the emphasis was restricted to obtaining relics of a vanishing people, rather than the broader project of documenting or describing the extent of material culture. Despite plentiful evidence of the Aboriginal capacity to respond to increasing European demand for their objects, it was several decades before Museum collectors openly recognised this means of adding to or completing collections. Missionary collectors, or visiting ethnographers such as Erhard Eylmann, intent upon rapidly compiling a representative set of artefacts, provided exceptions, but only after the 1890s.[32]

The South Australian Museum's best chance for augmenting its ethnographic collections came with the colony's own expansion into frontier regions. The most explicit and enduring illustration of this occurred with the colonial venture which followed South Australia's annexation of the Northern Territory in 1863. The scale of South Australia's colonial adventure was modest compared with the forays of the British, Dutch, Germans or French during the same period, but it was part of the same international phase of museum building. The construction and expansion of ethnographic and natural history museums during the second half of the nineteenth century helped create a new demand for ethnographic objects from all cultures. This demand was boosted by the international Exhibitions, which focused the public's attention on *classes* of objects, and on the comparisons which might be drawn between the ethnographica of individual countries as a measure of evolutionary progress.

South Australia's New Colonial Frontier

British attempts at establishing a settlement on the northern coast at Port Essington from the 1820s to the 1840s had resulted in a remarkable local efflorescence of ethnographic activity. This reached its zenith at precisely the same time as Adelaide ethnography reached its peak. during the mid-1840s. During 1845, for example, three years before the British abandoned the remote outpost, Port Essington was home to at least six active ethnographers, including the explorer Ludwig Leichardt and George Windsor Earl, who actively promoted ethnography in Adelaide.

The Catholic priest Angelo Confalonieri was a leading figure in this community, undertaking considerable ethnographic research during the 1840s. He prepared a tribal distribution map, seven vocabularies and several religious translations until his death a few months before the British abandoned the settlement in 1848.[33] Another key figure was the Royal Navy assistant surgeon A.R. Tilston, credited with consigning collections of natural history specimens (including a 'bower bird's playground') to London, and

with compiling 'aboriginal vocabularies and legends'. Working from the hospital at Coral Bay, Tilston apparently even bartered with Aborigines for the teeth removed in their evulsion rites, sending these to England for sale to dentists.[34] It is possible that Tilston was the source of the earliest known Aboriginal bark paintings to be collected.[35] These paintings (two of which survive in the British Museum), may have been collected by him before his death during 1845 or 1846, or by either of two ethnographic collectors who visited the settlement on four occasions during the 1840s' surveying voyage of H.M.S. Fly.[36] Lieutenant Ince was an active ethnographic collector during the voyage and later deposited boomerangs and clubs from New South Wales as well as a spearthrower and club from Port Essington in the British Museum. The other collector was the naturalist John McGillivray, later the naturalist for H.M.S. Rattlesnake. He published an inventory of Aboriginal artefacts collected or noted during the Rattlesnake's Port Essington visit of 1848, including 'three types of clubs, fourteen or more types of spears, three types of spear-throwers, the bamboo drone-pipe or *ibero*, and five items of bodily apparel'.[37]

The imperial government's colonial experiment at Port Essington ended twelve years before the the South Australian Institute Museum's foundation. The Museum was to play a major part in South Australia's colonisation of the north though, beginning with Frederick Waterhouse's appointment as naturalist to McDouall Stuart's 1861-2 transcontinental expedition. Together with John McKinlay's 1862 journey, this exploration gave the stimulus for South Australia's annexation of the province by opening stock routes to the northern coast and by identifying promising pastoral land.[38] The Museum obtained some natural history material from Waterhouse's involvement in the expedition, but almost no ethnographic artefacts. Type specimens of bird species such as the Alexandria Parrot were sent to John Gould at the British Museum.[39]

During 1864 the South Australian movement to colonise the Northern Territory was strengthened with the arrival in Adelaide of the noted ethnographer George Samuel Windsor Earl, who had been appointed in 1837 as linguist and draughtsman for the North Australia Expedition. He became Commissioner of Crown Lands at Port Essington and played a key role in South Australia's colonization plans, but any ethnographic collections gathered by him remain untraced.[40] Subsequent ill-starred attempts at surveying a site for settlement in the Adam Bay region by Boyle Travers Finniss during 1864 and by Captain Francis Cadell during 1867 yielded some natural history specimens and small ethnographic collections for the Museum. Cadell's northern exploration resulted in 'four long and six short spears [and] one rush basket' for the Museum's collections.[41] Finniss presented the Museum with an Aboriginal canoe collected at Escape Cliffs: this is one of the earliest identifiable donations of the period.[42] Finniss's relations with Aborigines soured shortly after his arrival. He reacted to the theft of stores from his camp by mounting a punitive expedition resulting in the death of an Aborigine and the wounding of one of his men. The surgeon and Protector of Aborigines accompanying the Finniss expedition was Dr Francis Goldsmith; his demand for an enquiry into the shooting of Aborigines in that incident was followed by the advertisement of his position in the southern newspapers. On his return to Adelaide during 1865 he donated a small ethnographic collection consisting of

'a spear and spear head, two womerahs, a paddle ... [and] 2 specimens of native ore used by natives for making pigment'.[43] As with almost all these early collections, no trace remains in the Museum Registers of these acqusitions.

Two years before Cadell's 1867 expedition the Museum had received a small but significant collection, including spears and nets obtained from Aborigines of the Adelaide River, gathered by Dr Belgrave Ninnis, the surgeon accompanying the Royal Navy's ships which visited the settlement at Escape Cliffs. Ninnis's 'Remarks on the Natural History, Meteorology and the Native Population of the Northern Territory of South Australia', published in Britain, represented the first published ethnographic observations on the region since Earl's journal articles and books of the late 1840s and early 1850s.[44]

It was George Goyder's Northern Territory Survey Expedition of 1869 which underlined the importance of the colonial enterprise to the Museum as a collecting institution. After strong encouragement from the Botanic Gardens Director, Richard Schomburgk, the South Australian government appointed Friedrich Schultze as the expedition's naturalist.[45] Schomburgk and Schultze would probably have known of the varied collections made in the same region by the botanist Frederick von Mueller and naturalist J.R. Elsey on Gregory's Northern Australian Expedition of 1856. Part of that expedition's brief had been to record information about Aboriginal customs and habits.[46]

Schultze was an assiduous collector, sending twelve boxes of dried plants and natural history specimens to the Botanical Gardens and the Museum within a month of the expedition's arrival at Port Essington. Among the preserved birdskins, crustaceae, shells, insects, fish, reptiles, and corals was a solitary Aboriginal weapon, and some emu feathers 'used by the Natives as Ornament'.[47] More Aboriginal material followed in later months. A collection of 'native weapons and manufactures', including 'spears, basket-work, amulets etc' was among Schultze's June consignment of natural history specimens. With another large consignment of thirty-five boxes of animals, birds, fish, reptiles, corals, insects and plants sent south by ship in January 1870 Schultze included examples of ceremonial headgear - the first recorded acquisitions of their type by the Museum.[48]

William Hoare, the doctor's assistant, also acted as the expedition's scientific illustrator, drawing and painting 'Natural Specimens' for the Adelaide Museum:

> I had a box of moist watercolours given to me belonging to the Government and was given to understand that I am to illustrate all perishable specimens of natural history. Mr Schultze prepared a case of insects for that purpose.[49]

He obtained natural history and ethnographic objects by barter for the purpose and it is likely that most of these were passed to Schultze for consignment to Adelaide. On 4 May, 1869, he collected 'a necklace from *Bellamuck* [Biliamuk] a native of Port Darwin made of reed beads', and two days he 'obtained a few things from the natives viz: yam bag, necklace, Emue feather orniment [sic], a headdress with bills of the Spoonbills attached, bracelets of reed and Native string'. Other acquisitions during the month were 'a bunch of Sea Bird

feathers' (14 May); 'two large fishing spears and a basket' (19 May); 'another Native Basket only better than that got yesterday' (20 May); 'spears in exchange for food etc' (23 May); and 'a bunch of feathers from the Natives also a sword of wood in other words a club about 4'7" long' (31 May). This succession of acquisitions was interrupted on 24 May by the spearing and subsequent death of one of the expedition's draftsmen, J.W.O. Bennett, at a satellite camp about 150 kilometres south-west of Port Darwin - the only episode of its kind to occur during the expedition.[50]

In contrast to Schultze, whose attention was almost wholly occupied with natural history, Hoare took a direct interest in the Aborigines and their habits, recording details such as cicatrization practices in his diary:

> I got some curiosities from the Natives ... The Natives paint themselves with Red, Yellow, White in different styles. It is curious to see the scars on the body of the Natives. They are raised folds of flesh very much in relief nearly half an inch above their skins and 1/2 inch wide.[51]

Apart from the food and tobacco traded for artefacts, Aboriginal people derived practical benefit from the cast-off items found around the expedition's camps. A few days after Bennett's death Hoare recorded that

> The Natives [are] still about us in search of food. They are a lazy lot and require careful watching. They have been grinding hoop Iron for knives to make spears with them....[52]

Hoare noted only one instance in which he offered an artefact of value in European terms to an Aborigine. This was a looking glass, given to an Aboriginal woman who came to the camp to see his drawing of an insect:

> she was highly delighted with [it]. She looked at herself with such a contorting countenance as to cause convulsed laughter.[53]

Hoare observed that other expedition members collected such objects as spears, baskets and necklets to send home to relatives.[54] An Arnhem Land spearthrower was donated to the South Australian Museum at the turn of the century by a member of the expedition, Dominick Daniel Daly (nephew of the former South Australian governor).[55] The sole ethnographic object recorded against Goyder's name in the Museum registers is a marlin-spike, obtained in April 1869 from Malay trepangers wrecked on the Arnhem Land coast.[56]

These natural science and ethnographic collections were acquired against the background of colonialism, a world-wide phenomenon often characterised as a remorseless, unyielding process. Yet, as the earlier failures of British settlement in Northern Australia had demonstrated, little certainty attached to the isolated efforts of Europeans in this region. The success of the colonial venture hinged on the cooperation of local Aboriginal groups: particular Aboriginal individuals assumed varying degrees of prominence in acting as brokers between their people and Europeans.[57] Here on the Arnhem Land coast a model had already been established with Aboriginal exposure to the British attempts at settlement, as well as several generations of trading visits by the Malay trepangers and pearlers. Besides acting as guides, interpreters and advisers on water sources and landing places, Aborigines greatly assisted the collection of natural history specimens and ethnographic material.

Tilston's 'collector-in-chief' during the 1840s was Neinmal ('Jack White'), a literate Aboriginal man who had assisted J. MacGillivray, the naturalist on H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* and had travelled throughout the Pacific.[58] During the South Australian Survey Expedition of 1869, Goyder and Schultze relied upon three Aboriginal men in particular - the Woolnah elder Maira, and two young Larrakiah men - Biliamuk ('Billy Muck') and Umballa ('Tom Powell'). Despite assistance from these three men and notwithstanding earlier contacts made between Europeans and the Aboriginal groups of the Coburg Peninsula, Goyder's expedition established only a fragile beach-head of trust among local Aborigines. Goyder recorded the fact that Biliamuk saved Schultze from being speared on 29 April, 1869, and had

> dissuaded Mr Schultze from getting his revolver, saying no good, no good. Mr Schultze moved his tent to within the fence and had no further trouble. He had preferred to stay outside before...[59]

The apparent lack of interest in Aboriginal ethnography shown by Schultze and his son may have protected them against the fate of J.W. Bennett. Goyder's clear policy was to keep fraternisation to a minimum in order to reduce the potential for misunderstanding.

Bennett had blurred this distinct line, despite a 'special memorandum' on the subject from Goyder. He had gradually become more familiar with the Aborigines around the camps, Maira in particular, and had collected a vocabulary of their language, the Woolnah dialect, entering the words alpabetically in notebooks as he learned them.[60] In itself this interest was no more striking than that taken by Hoare, but his encounters with Aborigines and their objects had all taken place in the expedition camp on European terms. Bennett's involvement extended ambiguously beyond the European pale. He was permitted to watch Aboriginal ritual performances, and even to take part in them, a privilege exposing him to reciprocal obligations which he may not have comprehended. A hint of this was contained in the subsequent record of his fate:

> [On 23 May] Mr Bennett went out shooting with them and partook of some wild turkey, which they gave him at their camp, and they also painted him after their native fashion. In the afternoon they appeared very anxious for all the men to bathe in the lagoon, but Mr Bennett was the only one who did so.[61]

Goyder's men camped each night within their base-camp stockade, following the example set by Finnis five years earlier. In Bennett's camp, the boundary was a marked line only, beyond which Aborigines would not ordinarily encroach. In his ambiguous social role Bennett could no longer maintain that boundary satisfactorily, and on 24 May when he and the axeman Guy were alone in the camp, two Aboriginal men crossed it, encouraging the two Europeans to join them in a hunting trip. They called out 'Bennettie come on' and 'Guy come on', and left four spears and two spearthrowers for them, presumably as tangible evidence of their invitation. Apparently Bennett's rejection of these objects and his refusal to join them was reason enough for the fatal attack, and this time there was no intervention from a friendly Biliamuk or Maira.

It was not until the arrival of the first large party of South Australian government officers in Port Darwin during early 1870 that the balance of authority in the region began to shift decisively.[62] During that year Biliamuk and Umballa were taken south to Adelaide by ship, 'in order to impress them with 'the number

and power of the white races' and thus convince the local Aboriginal people to desist from hostilities.[63] Within a few months the maintenance of order in South Australia's colonial outpost was firmly in the control of Inspector Paul Foelsche and his men.[64] By 1873, after the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line and the discovery of gold, the force under Foelsche's command had increased to seventeen men. These troopers imposed an uncompromising form of British justice on Aboriginal people during the decade, retaliating with decisive force in instances of theft and murder.[65]

Foelsche was to become one of the Museum's most avid collectors of natural history specimens during the following five years, and later still, a significant collector and recorder of ethnographica. Like Schultze, it seems that his reputation as an efficient natural history collector was founded largely on the use which he made of Aboriginal collectors. He assured Waterhouse in August 1871, that

> anything I can get which will be of use to Science I shall be most happy to send to you. I could get many things such as bats, rats, mice, etc from the natives, but as I can not yet get any damaged flour out of the store, I have nothing to pay the natives with ....[66]

Waterhouse encouraged Foelsche's hobby, supplying him with natural history texts and collecting apparatus, and in turn the police inspector promised that 'as long as you have the management of the Museum, I shall do my best to promote its interest'.[67] In fact, Foelsche's loyalty to the Institute Museum persisted beyond Waterhouse's term as Curator, and beyond that of his immediate successor, Wilhelm Haacke. The police inspector continued to supply the Museum with natural history specimens and ethnographic objects well into the 1890s. By this time South Australian ethnography had moved into a new phase, with its centre located in the Institute Museum itself, largely as a result of the efforts and encouragement of its third Director, Edward Charles Stirling.

Frontier Collecting - Edward Stirling's Role

The decision of the South Australian colonial government to collect Aboriginal artefacts for the Philadelphia Exhibition and the New York Museum during 1876 and 1877 signalled the first concerted effort by the Institute Museum to obtain a comprehensive collection of Aboriginal artefacts. As such, it marked the uncertain beginning of a new era in the Museum's history, in which the ethnographic side of the institution's activities would eventually be accorded equivalent status to that of natural science. This did not happen immediately: it was not until the 1890s that the full pattern of complexity in Aboriginal material culture was thought to be worthy of collection, study and arrangement in Australia's museums. In Britain, this shift can be detected much earlier, largely as a result of the part played by Pitt Rivers in applying natural historical principles of classification and Darwinian evolutionism to artefacts within his own museum. Until that time, as Chapman has observed,

> the Ethnological Society had shown little interest in museums or in collections of exotic implements. What was later called 'material culture' was treated simply as an aspect of physical description - clothing and ornament being subsumed with other attributes distinguishing different 'races'.[68]

In Adelaide in the meantime, for both the zoologist Frederick Waterhouse and his successor Wilhelm Haacke, a 'series' or a 'set' of weapons or implements was sufficient to define the Australian Aborigine just as a collection of individual natural history specimens defined a genera. Any excess, whether from the Adelaide vicinity or from the remote outback, was regarded as legitimate exchange material. After successfully exchanging Aboriginal ethnographic 'specimens' with the New York Museum in 1877, Waterhouse sent a further collection to the Paris Universal Exposition of 1878, consisting of Murray River and Western Australian artefacts. In early 1879 Waterhouse reported to the Institute Board that a consignment of '190 Aboriginal artefacts collected from Port Darwin, The Goldfields and Port Essington', which had arrived too late to be sent to the Paris Exposition, should be purchased anyway, but only to serve as material for future exchanges with other museums.[69] The fact that this material (collected by Inspector Paul Foelsche) represented one of the earliest and most comprehensive collections of northern Australian ethnography yet assembled did not figure in the argument. Waterhouse wrote:

> ethnological specimens are becoming scarce and much required for Museums. Dr Haast of the Canterbury Museum has lately applied for some and offers a liberal return ... in natural hist. specimens, incl. skeleton of an Ostrich, a young Giraffe, and a full grown lion ... Dr Peters of the Royal Museum, Berlin, is also desirous of procuring [ethnological] specimens and would make a liberal return for any I could forward him.[70]

Waterhouse's successor, Dr Wilhelm Haacke, was also a zoologist. He showed little interest in Aboriginal material and considered that the Museum was already well represented in this area. He appeared even more willing than Waterhouse to use ethnographic material in exchanges to build the strength of the natural history collections. This practice did not go unnoticed in the local Adelaide community and there were several letters to the press complaining of this action during 1884, a vital sign that for the first time, ethnographic artefacts were being regarded by the wider population as elements in the construction of a distinctly local heritage.[71]

The South Australian Museum remained without a formally appointed Director until 1889, when Edward Stirling was confirmed in the role after serving since 1882 as chairman of the Museum Committee. He continued to incorporate Aboriginal material within exchanges, both with Australian and overseas institutions and with private collectors. Natural history specimens were a primary objective in these exchanges, such as that with the Otago Museum during 1890, in which 'S.A. Ethnological specimens' formed part of a consignment of mammals, birds, snakes, lizards and 'Bactria' sent from Adelaide.[72] Like several museum directors of the period, Stirling's interest in anthropology arose from a more focused concern with palaeontology; his scientific career centred upon the excavation and description of Australian megafauna such as the diprotodon and the giant emu, *genyornis*. It was not surprsing then, to find Stirling incorporating a range of natural history specimens and Aboriginal material, including skeletal remains, within a large consignment to be exchanged for a single plaster cast of a *Megatherium* (giant sloth) skeleton made at Henry

Ward's museum and taxidermist's business at Rochester in Kent. The consignment comprised:

1 Plaster Cast of Whale head
2 Tapir skeletons
1 Camel "
2 Central Australian Boomerangs
2 Skulls & 2 casts of Kangaroo heads
1 Cassowary skin
1 Peragalea stuffed
2 Leipoa skins
2 Corcorax skins
16 Echidna skeletons
1 Corcorax nest & 4 eggs
Dry Echinodermata & Polyzoa
4 Moloch horridus in spirits
1 Malay Tapir
2 Red Kangaroos }
1 Scrub " } skins in pickle
16 Echidna }
5 Human skeletons.[73]

In contrast to his predecessors though, Stirling focused upon obtaining ethnographic material through these exchanges; he was probably the first head of an Australian museum to 'repatriate' Aboriginal objects from Europe. This occurred during 1888 when, in return for sending fifteen Central and Northern Australian artefacts to Munich's Ethnological Museum, he received nine Aboriginal artefacts (a boomerang, four 'curved swords', a spearthrower, a shield and a spear) and a Fijian tapa beater.[74] Stirling is likely to have been the Museum Committee member responsible for newspaper advertisements during 1884 and 1885, 'stating that the Board are anxious to procure either by gift or purchase, more specimens of native weapons'.[75]

As the Committee's acting chairman Stirling proposed in 1882 that the Museum send a formal letter of thanks to Inspector Paul Foelsche for his ethnographic and natural history collecting efforts on behalf of the institution.[76] These initiatives may have been suggested by Amandus Zietz, Stirling's able deputy. During the 1880s Zietz took on the main responsibility for the Museum's 'Ethnological Department' and presided over a small and irregular flow of artefacts. Some of these were acknowledged in a series of newspaper articles dealing mainly with the Museum's natural history acquisitions during the period. The anonymous writer noted that 'veritable old weapons' had previously been 'bought up by the white men, then destroyed or lost, because then considered of little value'. Now, he wrote, they were

> highly prized by such men as Mr Zietz, and anyone who wishes to see a smile as wide and deep as the Zuyder Zee has only to go to the Museum and present to his ethnological department a South Australian aboriginal implement, tool, weapon or ornament, which was surely made by the aid of the ancient flint or the antique rat's teeth. He will examine it with a mighty magnifier, and trace out the marks with a delight which is so contagious that the donor departs with a feeling that he or she has received a great favour instead of conferring one.[77]

Following Haacke's dismissal in 1885, Stirling assumed the position of Honorary Director in October 1889

until his appointment on a salary of L250 in 1895.[78] A co-founder of the University of Adelaide Medical School, and the first Australian politician to introduce a bill to enfranchise women, Stirling was also a qualified scientist with a Masters degree in Arts and a doctorate in Medicine from Cambridge. He had studied anthropology at Cambridge as part of his science degree and was well aware of the value which a large and varied artefact collection represented to the emergent profession of anthropology. It was his professional background, his links with Cambridge and Oxford anthropologists such as A.C. Haddon and E.B. Tylor, as well as his social connections within Australia, which enabled Stirling to transform Adelaide's Aboriginal collection into the finest in Australia. A decade after Stirling's appointment to the Adelaide Museum his chief rival, Walter Baldwin Spencer, assessed the state of public ethnographic collections in Australia: 'in Melbourne we have nothing at all and in Western Australia less still. Sydney even is very poor in Australian things while Adelaide has a great deal the best Australian collection and is especially well off in South and Central things'.[79]

This achievement was almost entirely due to Stirling's recognition of Adelaide's strategic advantage as a base for ethnographic collecting. He was able to create a network of collectors throughout South Australia's outback, the Northern Territory and beyond, which continued to supply his museum until the First World War. A good deal of the groundwork for this web of collectors, particularly among South Australian Germans, was laid by Zietz during the 1880s.[80] Stirling saw a broader potential in the wide network of telegraph and police stations controlled from Adelaide. The idea may have been suggested by the publication during 1886 and 1887 of Edward M. Curr's four volume work, *The Australian Race*, which presented the results of an Australia-wide survey of correspondents (many from police and telegraph stations) on the subject of Aboriginal language and custom.[81]

During mid-1890 Stirling composed and sent two form letters to police stations and to telegraph station masters. The second letter read:

> Sir,
> In view of the rapid disappearance of the Aborigines of Australia, it is much desired to obtain, for the South Australian Museum, as complete a collection as possible of all articles made and used by them. The Museum already possesses a fair number of things from some localities, but others are entirely unrepresented, and it is these gaps in the collection, representing the ethnology of the country, which we particularly wish to fill up.
> I am permitted, by the courtesy of the Superintendent of Telegraphs, to request your kind assistance and cooperation in this matter while you have opportunities which will shortly not recur.
> All expenses of transport, and any reasonable outlay necessary for obtaining such specimens, will be gladly paid by the Museum department. Parcels may be addressed either to me or to Mr Zietz, at the Museum, Adelaide.
> The following are the kinds of articles it is desired to obtain:-
>
> > Spears, boomerangs, and other weapons; stone axes and knives, and other tools; charms, ornaments, and other articles of attire peculiarly native; food utensils, Pituri bags - in short, we shall be glad of any objects made by the natives for their own use.

The value of any article will be much enhanced if it be accompanied by a short statement indicating its native name, the name of the locality where found or where used, and, when its use is not obvious, an explanation of the purpose for which it is employed.

The commonest of objects are often of value as illustrating geographical distribution or tribal variations.[82]

As well as indicating Stirling's main collecting priorities, this letter contained a several enduring assumptions about Aborigines: an implicit acceptance of their looming extinction or 'rapid disappearance'; the urgency which followed this assumption and which underpinned a great deal of ethnographic activity, and the notion that, like butterfly collections, an ethnographic collection could be taxonomically completed by filling gaps. The final two paragraphs, referring to the value of documentation and the importance of collecting 'the commonest objects' indicate that Stirling had paid thorough attention to his copy of the manual, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*.[83]

The initial response to Stirling's form letters confirmed his underlying assumption that Aborigines were doomed to extinction following sustained contact with Europeans. Telegraph station and police officers from the settled districts near Adelaide were unanimous in their pessimism about gathering worthwhile collections for the Museum. The reply of the Eudunda staionmaster, G. Gibbons, conveys the tone of this response:

> The natives were never very numerous in this District but of late they have quite deserted it. There are a few on the River & no doubt Morgan could assist you. I have made enquiries but from all appearances not the slightest interest has been taken in either the natives or their 'Relics'. I regret very much not being able to assist in such a worthy object as it would be very interesting for those growing up to look back upon the Relics of the first Inhabitants of their native land.[84]

Stirling recognised that his best chances of building a large ethnographic collection lay with 'remote districts' beyond the reach of close settlement.

The new Director's success in increasing the Aboriginal collections from the frontier lay partly in his own field efforts. During 1891 Stirling and a museum collector accompanied Adelaide's Governor, the Earl of Kintore, from Darwin to Adelaide by horse and buggy. On this trip he met Francis Gillen, the genial, whisky drinking Alice Springs telegraph operator who was already becoming known as the expert on Central Australian Aboriginal life. Three years later, Stirling accompanied the Horn Expedition to Central Australia as the official anthropologist, and was able to introduce the expedition's zoologist, Baldwin Spencer, to Gillen in Alice Springs. This meeting launched their crucial anthropological partnership.[85]

Stirling's description of his trading encounter at Port Essington with the Iwaidja people of Arnhem Land occurred soon after the transcontinental expedition began. It remains one of the few detailed eyewitness accounts of ethnographic collecting as it occurred on the colonial frontier. Through their occasional contacts with European and Malay visitors the Iwaidja were not unused to trading, as Stirling's account indicates:

> we went ashore for purposes of barter with the natives. Our commodities were knives, gaudy hanks [handkerchiefs], pipes and tobacco. Theirs were spears and other weapons, baskets, charms, articles of personal adornment. The most tasteful were the baskets made so well out of the leaves of the

> cabbage palm that they hold water and are used for that purpose among others. Each individual brought up in turn what he had to dispose of and named an appropriate value in knives etc. They are all smokers and a pipe and 4 sticks of tobacco were accepted gladly in exchange for 3 or 4 spears and 2 or 3 baskets or bags. Finally an extra stick of tobacco and a meal of rice was served out to each, and everybody seemed happy and contented.[86]

As the expedition made its way south from Darwin to Adelaide along the Overland Telegraph Line during following weeks, the effect on Aboriginal people of the sight of a buggy containing the Queen's representative and the Museum Director can only be guessed at. The evidence of the Barrow Creek police officer that Aborigines there regarded the Governor as 'a magnified policeman' and therefore kept well away, may well have applied along the line.[87]

In spite of relatively few encounters with Aborigines, the transcontinental expedition not only yielded a haul of almost 2,000 objects, 'filling up' (as Stirling put it) 'many gaps in the collection'; it also represented a major publicity exercise for the Museum. It brought the Director into direct contact with his two vital constellations of frontier collectors: a Northern Australian group centred on the figure of Inspector Paul Foelsche in Darwin, and a Central Australian group, centred on Francis Gillen in Alice Springs. The flow of important collections into the Museum for the next two decades can largely be attributed to these relationships initiated by Stirling.

By the 1880s the Aboriginal populations adjacent to the colonial capitals had diminished to the point of extinction. In the case of Sydney and Melbourne in particular, the impact of European colonisation extended well into the hinterland of each colony. The potential for building comparatively based collections of Australian ethnography was diminished just at the time when international demand for such collections was increasing. Following the Garden Palace fire of 1879 the Australian Museum concentrated its collecting efforts on the Pacific to a greater degree than the other capitals; even so, the awareness of lost opportunities for collecting Australian material was keenly felt. During 1902 the Museum's Curator, Robert Etheridge, joined with the newly formed Ethnological Committee of New South Wales in calling for the collection of Aboriginal artefacts 'before more of these valuable records of the early history of the Continent are further disseminated over the world and lost to the people of the State'.[88]

Similar concern was expressed in other Australian museums at this time. But South Australia represented a unique case, and had done so since the Goyder expedition of 1869. While the hinterland around Adelaide had become a barren field for ethnographic collectors by the 1860s and 1870s, the colony's administration of the Northern Territory presented a remarkable opportunity. By actively soliciting for artefacts through South Australia's colonial network, Stirling successfully tapped a new source of collectors at the frontier of European/Aboriginal contact. He used his influence as a powerful member of Adelaide's establishment to ensure that artefacts and natural history specimens obtained on the major scientific and exploring expeditions of the 1890s came to the South Australian Museum. The Elder Exploring Expedition (1891-92), the Horn Expedition (1894) and the Calvert Expedition (1896-97) were three important examples.

Otherwise, Stirling's contacts included a web of telegraph operators, mounted police, and other government officials such as customs inspectors, railway employees and even government bore-sinkers. His efforts made the South Australian Museum known to many pastoralists with connections in Adelaide. Large collections obtained from R.F. Thornton, the manager of Tempe Downs station near Alice Springs in 1892, J. Bagot, manager of Peake Station near Oodnadatta, or William Coulthard, owner of Frew River station east of Alice Springs, are examples. Collections obtained by the pearlers and traders Henry Hilliard from north-Western Australia, or D.M. Sayers from Melville Island, fall into the same category. For these men, there was little effort involved in accumulating a collection of weapons and artefacts from Aboriginal people in exchange for the potent commodities of flour, sugar and tobacco. Usually a reimbursement of freight charges by the Museum was all that was required in recompense.

Aboriginal artefacts retained the attention of anthropologists world-wide throughout Stirling's period of office at the Adelaide Museum, despite two fundamental shifts in the profession's attitudes towards ethnographic objects. The first shift, representing the birth of cultural anthropology, had seen anthropological interest focus on those objects which might represent the evolution of object types (and therefore cultural types), through Pitt Rivers' 'principle of continuity'. The Australian boomerang was the illustration, *par excellence*, of this, and had achieved world prominence for it by the early 1880s. The second shift, which saw cultural anthropology forsake the study of objects for the study of social institutions, ironically projected Aboriginal artefacts into the foreground of attention during the late 1890s.[89] The controversy over 'primitive religion', and whether the Australian Aborigines could be said to possess this fundamental social attribute, magnified the importance of the sacred Aboriginal *tjurunga* beyond any local significance.

Most of the significant collections discussed in this study were obtained during the period from the 1890s to the 1930s. In this period collectors had Aboriginal artefacts, rather than art, firmly in view. Despite the occasional preference for ceremonial material, the collections' overall content partly confirms a European perception of Aborigines as simple and primitive hunter-gatherers. The prevalence of men's weaponry among the collections distorts this perception further, suggesting a warlike character unsupported by the ethnographic evidence.

The collections reveal as much about the collectors as the collected. A profile of significant collectors confirms the fact of ethnographic collecting as a characteristic act of colonialism. But despite this, these collections (both as obtained in their original form and as reconstituted in the South Australian Museum), represent more than just a remnant of the 'hegemonism of possessing minorities' which has characterised the colonialist and orientalist endeavour.[90] The collections offer an insight into the nature of the transactions and interactions which underpinned and sustained this hegemony. From the cryptic and jumbled entries of the South Australian Museum's Anthropology Registers and correspondence files emerge the recognisable categories of collectors: expedition personnel, colonial officials, missionaries, pastoralists, traders, private collectors and anthropologists themselves. The complexity of their motives and strategies mirrors yields a

richer and more textured account of the colonial frontier than has often been portrayed.

It was the social dynamic of that advancing frontier which led to the creation and exchange of many of the objects in these collections, and which brought them eventually to rest in the South Australian Museum. While a large proportion of objects were undoubtedly 'loosened' from their original and secure tribal context by the shock of European contact, there is also a case for suggesting that many of the objects wre generated through a new context, that of the frontier itself. This is to characterise the colonial frontier not as a defined line of confrontation separating Aborigines and Europeans, but as a zone of engagement through which Aborigines were able to negotiate a position - albeit one of great disadvantage.[91]

As with their labour, local knowledge or the sexual services of their women, Aboriginal artefacts of the colonial frontier were negotiable items. In the sense employed by Nicholas Thomas for artefacts of the Pacific region, the Aboriginal objects examined in this study are 'entangled objects ... not what they were made to be but what they have become'.[92] As Thomas puts it:

> insistence upon the fact that objects pass through social transformations effects a deconstruction of the essentialist notion that the identity of material things is fixed in their structure and forms. Hence, although certain influential theorists of material culture have stressed the objectivity of the artifact, I can only recognise the reverse: the mutability of things in recontextualization.[93]

This notion, which challenges the role which ethnographic museums have set for themselves as custodians of essentially static cultural items, can only be sustained by reference to a level of context surrounding those objects which processes of museum classification and storage usually obscure. A glance at the registers of anthropology collections in major museums will confirm this: data about the traditional ascribed function of the object has invariably taken precedence over information relating to the circumstances of its acquisition.

Writing of the African Nuer people, the anthropologist Evans-Pritchard observed that material culture objects possess the capacity to encode social relations: 'Material objects are chains along which social relationships run ... people not only create their material culture and attach themselves to it, but also build up their relationships through it and see themselves in terms of it'.[94] This characteristic of material objects not only operates within a culture, but also at its limits, as at the frontier of Aboriginal and European contact. Examples abound in the ethnographic literature of ways in which artefacts (European as well as Aboriginal) were used to mark the nature of encounters between the two cultures.

As the next chapters show, European explorers and travellers in Aboriginal Australia were prepared for these transactions: coloured handkerchiefs, beads, metal tools, clothing, tobacco, flour, tea and sugar were their stock in trade. These superfluities, particularly tobacco and metal tools, came to exert a disproportionate attraction on the frontier. For them Aboriginal people were prepared to offer in exchange weapons, personal ornaments and even sacred tjurunga. The exact motivations behind such exchanges will never be known, but an examination of those transactions raises new questions about the nature of social relations on the various ethnographic and social frontiers across the country during the 'museum age'.

Endnotes - Chapter Three

1. Extract from Edward Stirling's 1890 letter to remote police and telegraph station operators, AA309 Acc.161, AASAM.

2. 'Postal anthropologists' is a term employed by Mulvaney (1993). Howitt's own additional role as a field-worker places him apart from the other theorists of his day. See Mulvaney (1971).

3. For a discussion of the network of German friends and colleagues maintained by Ludwig Becker in Victoria see Tipping (ed.) 1979: 18.

4. Schurmann 1987; Guhr & Neumann 1985: 253. Further objects are held in the Berlin Museum of Ethnography; see Cooper (1989: 35, 39).

5. These objects are registered as A5058-61. They were apparently obtained by Kreusler from Aborigines of South Australia's mid-North who were passing through Gawler, probably during the 1860s or 1870s. The South Australian Museum purchased most of Kreusler's Lepidoptera specimens in 1882 for 210 pounds. See GRG 19/364/May 1882, p.61, SRO.

6. Jung 1876; 1877a;b;c;d; 1878; Wilhelmi 1861; 1862; Schomburgk 1879a;b. See also von Mueller (1879) for an overview of German ethnography during this period.

7. This is despite the fact that Jung's Lower Murray work is based largely on Taplin's findings. See Nobbs 1993.

8. Pers. comm. Chris Nobbs, 1995. In January 1894 the South Australian Museum acquired four spears, two boomerangs and ten clubs collected on Yorke Peninsula, from an A. Jung, apparently unrelated to the German ethnographer. See 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.84, 2 January, 1894, SRSAM.

9. Wilhelmi 1861; 1862.

10. Cooper (1989) contains several references to these collections.

11. Schomburgk 1879a: 106; Cooper 1989: 5, 57.

12. Cooper 1989: 5. Jung himself may have been the source; he had spent time on Cooper's Creek during the 1870s. Schomburgk published two ethnographic papers during 1879, drawing upon these collections. See Schomburgk 1879a; 1879b.

13. For examples of Schramm's work, see Dutton (1974: 151-52).

14. Eyre took Tenberry's son Warrulan and another Aboriginal boy with him to England in 1844 (GRS 24/4/1847/40 & 1165 & 34, SRO; Dutton 1967: 168). Schrauder's portraits of King Tenberry and his wife were acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1884 from the estate of Dr William Gosse (father of the explorer) who preceded Edward Stirling as Chairman of the Museum Committee.

15. See Cooper 1989: 57. Von Guerrard may have collected artefacts in South Australia during the 1861 Burke and Wills Relief Expedition under the command of A.W. Howitt, but no record of these exists.

16. ADB 3: 182-83.

17. Cooper 1989: 57; Sayers 1994: 6,7, 101. The original Blandowski drawings from this expedition remain untraced. They were photographed by C.P. Mountford in 1958; these photographs are held in the Mountford-Sheard Collection, State Library of South Australia. For evidence of Blandowski's photographs, see Blandowski (1862).

18. Schulze 1891.

19. Richter may have accompanied the northern railway working parties as a doctor; his correspondence reveals that objects from Strangways Springs were among his donations and that he knew a landowner of the district, John Warren, who also collected Aboriginal artefacts. Richter also sent ethnographic objects to Germany. See Jones file on Richter.

20. Mulvaney 1993: 115; Walker 1971: 300; Hiatt 1996: 191-192. Taplin was one of the first Australian ethnographers to draw attention to the marked physiognomic differences between Aboriginal groups, positing the notion that Aboriginal settlement of Australia occurred through the arrival of distinct and chronologically separate waves. See Taplin 1874; 1879.

21. Taplin's direct link to the linguistic work of George Grey has not been clarified, but he did correspond with the South African linguist, W.H.I. Bleek, who relied heavily on Grey's work. See Bleek 1872; Taplin 1874; Walker 1971: 300, n.50.

22. For criticism of Taplin's 1870s' questionnaire, see J.D. Woods in the *Observer*, 12 April, 1879, pp.10-11.

23. Curator's Report, May, 1864, GRG 19/168, SRO.

24. Curator's Report, August, 1864, GRG 19/168, SRO.

25. See for example, the *Observer*, 4 February, 1860, p.6; 20 July, 1861, Supplement, p.2; 10 August, 1872, p.7 (production of basketry hats); 17 November, 1877, p.20; 26 March, 1887, p.38; 16 June, 1888, p.29; 12 October, 1889, p.30.

26. Taplin (1860-1879) ms., entries for 7-8 June, 1864, 22 August, 1871. Andrews was an evangelical clergyman who had worked as a missionary in the lower south-east of South Australia during 1856. See the *Observer*, 1 July, 1905, p.40.

27. Curator's Report, October 1867; July 1868, GRG 19/168, SRO. Taplin may have contributed collections to international Exhibitions during the 1870s.

28. South Australian Institute Minute Books, vol. 3, July 4, 1865, p.83. GRG 19/14, SRO.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Caldicott contributed natural history specimens during the mid-1860s and contributed a boomerang and a spearthrower in January 1866. Curator's Report, January, 1866. GRG 19/168, SRO.

31. Curator's Report, June 1877. GRG 19/168, SRO.

32. The Lutheran missionary, J.G. Reuther, clearly commissioned many of the pieces in the collection which he sold to the South Australian Museum in 1906. The German ethnographer, Erhard Eylmann commissioned artefacts from Ngarrindjeri people during the 1890s, including an adze and a saw made with quartz flakes. See Eylmann 1908: 365,367.

33. Confalonieri n.d.; NTDB: 58-60: Reid 1990: 19-20.

34. Hill 1951: 57-58.

35. Bark paintings on Melville Island were noted in 1834 by the British officer Major Campbell. See Groger-Wurm: 1973: 4.

36. I am grateful to the late Ed Ruhe for these insights, contained in an unpublished manuscript (Ruhe 1988 ms). The existence of these two paintings was first noted in Mountford 1964: 21.

37. Ruhe 1988 ms: 6. For the full list see McGillivray (1852).

38. There is no indication that Waterhouse collected any ethnological material on the McDouall Stuart expedition. Mackinlay may have done so though: in November 1862 the Board of the South Australian Institute thanked him for 'the curious and interesting articles presented ... to the Institute Museum'. Minute Books of the South Australian Institute, GRG 19/14, vol.1, November 27, 1862, p.594, SRO.

39. George French Angas was present at the London meeting at which John Gould described the birds sent by Waterhouse. Angas's letter to Waterhouse gives a full description (Angas to Waterhouse, 26 October, 1863, Stirling Papers, AA309, no.312, AASAM).

40. NTDB: 87-89. Earl had been a champion of the Northern Territory's colonisation since 1836, when he had approached the Colonial Office with a plan for settlement based on Port Essington as a 'commercial emporium' for the region. See Donovan 1981: 16. For five examples of Earl's vocabulary lists from northern Australia, see Taplin (1871).

41. Curator's Report, April 1868. GRG 19/168, SRO.

42. The canoe is registered as A6446.

43. See Curator's Report, January 1865, GRG 19/168, SRO, and 'Museum Memoranda Nov. 1863 - Feb. 1867', entry for January, 1865, SRSAM. For a series of twenty-four letters dealing with the shootings and documenting the relations between Finniss and Goldsmith, see GRG 35/643, SRO.

44. Ninnis 1866. Ninnis's donation also included 'specimens of natural history' and three bows and arrows from Timor. See Curator's Report, January 1865. GRG 19/168, SRO; Museum Memoranda Nov. 1863 - Feb. 1867, 24 December, 1864, SRSAM.

45. Schultze had previously supplied the Museum with natural history specimens from North-West Bend on the Murray River during the mid-1860s. See for example, Curator's Report, May 1867, GRG 19/168, SRO. Schultze was accompanied as Assistant Botanist on the Goyder Expedition by his son, Alfred (Kerr 1971: 48). Later in the 1870s another South Australian collector, William Bednall, collected natural history specimens, particularly shells, from the north coast. He subsequently became the South Australian Museum's conchologist and donated 'native weapons' which may also have originated from this region (Hale 1956: 20; Jones file on Bednall).

46. NTDB: 129-31.

47. The weapon was described by Schultze as a 'kundillo', probably a wooden sword club. 'List of Specimens collected by Fr. Schultze, Naturalist [1869]', GRG 19/399/15, SRO.

48. 'Letter from Frederick Schultze (Naturalist and Botanist) concerning the extent of his collection. 1870.' GRG 19/399/22, SRO. None of this early material has survived in identifiable form.

49. Kerr 1971: 123-24. Although two photographers accompanied the expedition, neither apparently produced natural history studies. In fact, no photographs are known from J. Brooks, the official photographer: he was more often engaged in drafting work. Captain Samuel Sweet's photographs include some Aboriginal images, but it is not until the advent of Paul Foelsche that this medium was directed towards the ethnographic record.

50. *Ibid*: 123-133.

51. Quoted *ibid*: 109. Obviously a colourful character, Hoare distinguished himself in later life by appearing for four months dressed in animal skins as an ancient Briton in the 1911 Empire Pageant at the Crystal Palace, London (*ibid*: 144). For an obituary, see the *Register*, 26 October, 1927, p.12.

52. Quoted in Kerr 1971: 133.

53. Quoted *ibid*.: 109.

54. Quoted *ibid.*: 110.

55. See Jones file on Daly.

56. The object is registered as A40679. Goyder's diary entry for 16 April, 1869 reads: 'Found two Malays in camp the survivors of a wreck and [Mira] saved them from being speared - ordered Mira a ration for is humanity (Goyder 1869. ms.).

57. See for example, Mariac ('Wellington'), who assisted conciliation at the Raffles Bay settlement during 1827-29, and Medlone ('Jim Crow', 'Jack Davis'), who acted as a pilot and interpreter for passing ships for the second half of the century (NTDB: 200; 203-204).

58. Hill 1951: 51, 58; Mulvaney 1988: 46. Goyder's diary contains several references to Aborigines collecting natural history specimens. An entry for March 1, 1869 refers to a 'specimen of Echidna brought in by blacks', and on May 11, 'A few blacks returned at noon, bringing a specimen of bat for Schultze' (Goyder 1869 ms.).

59. Entry for 29 April, 1869, *ibid.* Schultze's reason for staying outside the stockade probably had more to do with the fact that his tent, a naturalist's workshop, 'was not a very savoury place to be near'. This impression was recorded by another expedition member, Edwin Smith, who noted that Schultze 'skinned and cured the birds which his son, a great fellow 18 or 19, shot when they were roaming about. I often wondered they were not lost or speared by the blacks'(quoted in Kerr 1971: 81).

60. *Ibid*: 121. Kerr observes that on 17 April, five weeks before he was speared, Bennett had arrived at the main camp from his own camp at Fred's Pass and had taken an Aborigine (presumably Maira) back with him 'to learn his language'(*ibid*: 109). The vocabulary is filed among G.W. Goyder's papers in the Mortlock Library and has been wrongly attributed to Goyder by N.B. Tindale (1974: 366).

61. Death of J.W. Bennett as reported in the *Observer*, 20 November, 1869, pp.2-3. Quoted in Kerr 1971: 139-41.

62. See Reid 1990 for an analysis of this period of conflict.

63. Entries for 'Billiamook and Umballa', NTDB: 19-20.

64. NTDB: 107-8.

65. Reid 1990: 65-71.

66. Foelsche to Waterhouse, August 30, 1871. GRG 19/399/15, SRO. On September 19, 1872, Foelsche wrote: 'I am sorry that I cannot procure a native cat to send you the skeleton, but the natives have promised to get one...' and on July 3, 1875, Foelsche wrote again: 'I am sorry to say that, as I am situated now, I have no chance of collecting anything, for the neighbourhood of Palmerston is very poor indeed of any kind of specimens, and it is but once a year that I go up country and then only to inspect the different stations, and the natives are that lazy that they won't bring you even a snake' (Foelsche to Waterhouse, GRG 19/399/15, SRO).

67. Foelsche to Waterhouse, 19 September, 1872. GRG 19/399/15, SRO.

68. Chapman 1985: 22.

69. Curator's Report, February 1879. GRG 19/168, SRO. A large proportion of Foelsche's collection was probably sent to Sydney for the 1879 Exhibition, as detailed above.

70. Curator's Report, February 1879. GRG 19/168, SRO.

71. It is not clear that these protests were a response to Haacke's exchanges of Aboriginal material in particular. It is more likely, in fact, that they related to the large proportion of the William Owen collection of Fijiian artefacts which Haacke had sent to Germany earlier in 1884, and to natural history specimens. Hale (1956: 47) described this criticism as 'seemingly ... the first protest by the man in the street against undue exportations of Australian natural

history specimens'.

72. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.61, 21 May, 1890, SRSAM.

73. It is presumed that at least one of these 'human skeletons' was Aboriginal. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.103, July 1896, SRSAM.

74. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.39, 10 October, 1888, SRSAM.

75. Minutes of Museum Committee, 11 September, 1884. GRG 19/364, SRO.

76. Minutes of Museum Committee, 1 November, 1882. GRG 19/364, SRO. The minutes make it plain that Stirling took official responsibility for Aboriginal matters in the Museum following Haacke's resignation. The entry for June 1885 deals with the state of the plaster models of Aborigines displayed in the Museum. (Minutes of Museum Committee, 25 June, 1885. GRG 19/364, SRO)

77. 'An Amateur Naturalist' 1889: 37. Zietz was given considerable responsibility by the Museum Committee for ethnographic matters during the late 1880s, between Haacke's and Stirling's directorships. He published short communications on three material culture items during 1890, possibly taking inspiration from the work of Robert Etheridge at the Australian Museum in Sydney, but overshadowed by Stirling, did not pursue this interest. Internal memoranda suggest some tension between Stirling and Zietz at this time.

78. Minutes of the Museum Committee, 4 October, 1889; 5 April, 1895, GRG 19/364, SRO. Stirling had travelled 'home' to England in late 1884 after Haacke's resignation, and while there had undertaken to 'make enquiry for a suitable person to fill the post of Museum Director, at the present salary (L400 per annum), and report the result to the Board' (Minutes of the Museum
Committee, 4 November, 1884. GRG19/364, SRO). In the meantime, although it had not been advertised, the Board received an application for the post of Director from Clement Wragge, already a prominent ethnographic collector. See Chapter Seven.

79. W. B. Spencer to H. Balfour, September 20, 1897. Spencer Papers, Box 4, no.2, PRMO. McCarthy (1982: 24) has noted that Stirling's effect at the Adelaide Museum from 1889-1919 was similar to that of Robert Etheridge at the Australian Museum (1895-1920) and to Baldwin Spencer's at the Melbourne Museum (1899-1928). There is little doubt though, that Stirling's influence on transforming the Aboriginal collections was relatively greater.

80. See for example, Hale 1956.

81. Curr 1886-87. Several of Curr's correspondents contributed material to the South Australian Museum. The first to do so was W. Graham, a telegraph station operator at Eyre's Sandpatch in Western Australia. His wife donated samples of ochre and native fruit during 1887, followed by a fur-string belt ('warreja') and, prompted by Zietz, a 'spinning machine' (spindle) during 1893. See Jones file on Mrs J.W.W. Graham; Curr 1886 vol.1: 394-99.

82. AA309 Acc.161, AASAM.

83. Freire-Marreco & Myres 1912. Erstwhile anthropologists were instructed to 'Collect, therefore, not fine specimens only, but objects in common use' (*ibid.:* 27).

84. Gibbons to Stirling, 10 September, 1890. AA309, no.248, AASAM.

85. Mulvaney evaluates Stirling's role on the Horn Expedition, and discusses the Spencer - Gillen partnership in Mulvaney and Calaby (1985). See also Jones 1996d.

86. Stirling (1891) ms. (Notebook '6').

87. Diary entry for 3 May, 1891, *Ibid* (Notebook '7').

88. Thorpe 1931: 6.

89. 'Objects, once the stuff of ethnography, became epiphenomena' (Bean 1987: 552). See also Stocking (ed.) 1985.

90. One sees how much, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the hegemonism of possessing minorities, unveiled by Marx and Engels, and the anthropocentrism dismantled by Freud are [sic] accompanied by eurocentrism in the area of human and social sciences, and more particularly in those in direct relationship with non-European peoples. (Malek 1963: 108).

91. See Berndt & Berndt 1987.

92. Thomas 1991: 5.

93. *Ibid*: 28.

94. Evans-Pritchard 1940: 89.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPEDITIONARY COLLECTING, 1830s - 1920s: THE FIRST PHASE

... keep a journal and record the fullest possible information respecting the aboriginal tribes met with ... any information concerning tradition, folklore, totems, mythology, initiatory ceremonial to manhood, circumcision, betrothal, marriage, polygamy, degrees of kinship, funeral customs, corrobborees [sic], songs, natural food, method of making fire, utensils for preparing food or carrying water, clothing, ornaments, manufactures ... habitations, implements, weapons, signals and communication with other tribes, curative remedies etc.[1]

The incorporation of Aboriginal objects within the collections and projects of Australian natural history museums occurred over several decades during the nineteenth century and, at first sight, in an apparently random fashion. It is tempting to conclude that with so many categories of collectors pressing their collections upon the South Australian Museum, the creation of an Ethnology Department was an imperative dictated more by necessity than by perceptions of new and productive fields of scientific research. This would be to ignore or at least downplay the way in which ethnographic collecting emerged as a scientific priority for natural history museums. The main agents of this change were not the miscellaneous collectors operating outside the museum's sphere but those whose scientific mission overlapped or coincided with that of the museum. This category is represented in the first instance by scientific and exploration expeditions, particularly those operating during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

The Aboriginal objects collected by ethnographers such as Lindsay, Helms, Stirling, Gillen, Basedow and Tindale in the course of their expeditions are particularly significant in the history of Australian anthropology. These objects were enlisted in a project involving the gradual definition of Aboriginal Australia from a miscellany of observations, objects and images.

The 1880s and the 1890s are the period in which museum ethnography came of age, in Australia and internationally. It is the period in which museum ethnographers, by participating in scientific expeditions, developed coherent systems of classification for ethnographic material, complementing those existing for natural science collections. This process would not have been so successfully achieved had

scientists such as Edward Stirling or Baldwin Spencer not been able to observe at first-hand the context of function and use surrounding the ethnographic 'specimens' which they collected. This validating experience conferred a new status on ethnographic objects within natural history museums, just as fieldwork later served to confirm the professional standing of anthropologists themselves.[2] But while Stirling's description of artefacts from the Horn Expedition helped to 'fix' Central Australian artefact types within a museum taxonomy, he and other expeditionary collectors were largely unconcerned with the social context of the exchanges through which objects were secured for their collections.

The wide authority which museum ethnographers possessed to fix and define categories of objects was reinforced by even a limited degree of field experience. Notwithstanding the fact that numbers of individual collectors may have possessed more detailed knowledge of local ethnography, the generalised authority gained in the field by museum ethnographers was rarely challenged. It is important then, to examine the role of scientific and exploring expeditions in the history of museum ethnography before turning to the other categories of collectors who were influenced by these new paradigms.

The expeditions discussed in this chapter can be described as concerned with exploration, or science, or both. Until the 1890s most of these expeditions were only concerned incidentally with natural science and anthropology. Most Australian exploring expeditions from the 1850s until the 1880s were mounted without official collectors. The example set in 1848 by Ludwig Leichardt, the botanist explorer who landed in Australia with the 'express intention of exploring the continent and opening its treasures to the world of science', was rarely followed.[3] Faced with the necessity to keep exploring parties as unencumbered as possible, ethnographic or natural history collecting was left to the discretion or interest of individual explorers. Artefacts which found their way into museums from these expeditions had little direct effect on the formation of anthropological ideas. These objects were often collected incidentally, such as the string bag and a fibre basket obtained during William Hann's 1872 Cape York expedition.[4]

Despite this, explorers often adopted an ethnographic mode of description in noting the characteristics of different groups. These descriptions corroborated their accounts of the country and its resources, and enabled an assessment to be made of the 'warlike propensities' of the Aboriginal inhabitants. At the same time, in their concern with material culture, physiognomy and linguistics, the content of this field data reflected the emphases of an emergent local ethnographic tradition. Having travelled overland from Sydney during early 1839, James Coutts Crawford's comments on Adelaide Aborigines were informed by this background:

> On the race course one day a native who had come from the Sydney side amused his Adelaide friends of the same color by throwing the boomerang. It is strange that this weapon was unknown to them. The use of it ceases somewhere on the Murray; where the exact line of demarcation is I cannot tell, probably where the language changes also.[5]

An example of the benefit to be derived from a scientifically oriented expedition had been set by Augustus Gregory during his 1855 - 1857 North-West Australia Expedition which the botanist Baron Ferdinand von

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Mueller had accompanied. Gregory was issued with specific instructions to collect natural history specimens and to record Aboriginal customs.[6] A few Aboriginal artefacts were collected on the expedition by the artist, Thomas Baines, and fifteen of these are preserved in the museum at his birthplace, Kings Lynn.[7] Von Mueller collected hundreds of new plant species during the expedition and possibly Aboriginal artefacts as well. Ethnographic collections attributed to him (amounting to several hundred objects in at least seven European museums) suggest this, although it is likely that most were sent to von Mueller by members of later expeditions into Central Australia from the 1860s to the 1880s.[8] The botanist retained an active interest in Australian ethnography throughout his career, publishing on subjects ranging from the names of different woods used for artefacts by the Aborigines of the Yarra River to 'an ornament from Central Australia.[9]

The failure of the 1860 - 1861 Burke and Wills Exploring Expedition may have had a significant negative impact on Australian scientific expeditions for the next two decades. The image of an over-equipped expedition party, exposed to the privations and extremes of the interior, seems to have discouraged governments and most expedition backers from including naturalists and collectors in their expedition parties until the mid-1880s. Von Mueller's advocacy of expeditionary collecting during this period was almost a lone voice. One exception was James Martin's 1863 expedition in search of new pastoral land in the vicinity of the Glenelg River in Western Australia.The members of this expedition devoted considerable energy to gathering geological and botanical specimens, and made a point of collecting Aboriginal artefacts. Here the motive was strategic as much as ethnographic. The party engaged in several 'skirmishes' with Aborigines and Martin made a thorough record of their weapons, even recording a stone knapping site after one violent encounter:

> After the skirmish our party passed by some of their fires recently extinguished ... Around their fires were strewn fragments of greenstone (syenitic) with conchoidal fractures, broken so as to adapt the cutting edges for making and pointing their spears, chips and shavings of which lay in all directions. Specimens were obtained of this greenstone and also the limestone (a brecciated limestone) which is used, after burning, as a paint ... None of the native weapons were secured, as it was not deemed expedient to follow them into the mangrove thicket; and the whole affair from beginning to end occupied so short a space of time that not one of hte party noticed even whether the spears were barbed or not.[10]

The South Australian exploration expeditions of the 1860s and 1870s had relatively limited aims, few personnel and small budgets. Natural history and ethnographic collecting rarely figured as a priority until the the more ambitious and better funded undertakings of the 1880s and 1890s. After the Calvert Expedition of 1896-97 though, the pioneering era in Australian exploration was all but over. Expeditions became more pragmatic in their objectives, generally centred around the expectation of mineral discoveries, but with an implicit brief to collect natural science and ethnographic material as well.

The Barclay-McPherson Exploring Expedition of 1911-12 was perhaps the last expedition to combine the ideals of heroic exploration with this new pragmatism. The instructions to its leader, H. Vere

Barclay, were modelled on the Royal Geographical Society instructions adopted by the Elder Expedition twenty years earlier. These included the following invocation:

> [to] give special personal attention to matters connected with the aborigine ... [an] endeavour should be made to collect specimens of native arms, ornament and appliances, but none of these articles are to be taken except with the full consent of the owners and after payment of reasonable compensation.[11]

The records of explorers and scientists who made their collections and ethnographic observations at the frontier of European and Aboriginal contact carry rich detail about the nature of that encounter. Not yet exposed to the European market for ethnographic objects *per se*, Aboriginal people confronting Europeans for the first time parted with their objects in ways which had more connection with their own customs and practices than with new forms of normative behaviour arising in the contact period. These converntions evolved rapidly; Europeans and Aborigines had developed a shared strategy for the mutual exchange of commodities by the time of Spencer and Gillen's 1901-1902 Expedition along the Overland Telegraph Line.

A feature of the transactions documented by explorers entering the sphere of Aboriginal people for the first time is that these exchanges were usually instigated by Aborigines themselves. With these exchanges, a history of negotiated relations between the two parties began. Objects collected under these circumstances are imbued with at least a trace of the social encounter which generated the original exchange. Australian historical sources are peppered with accounts of first encounters between Aborigines and Europeans. An exchange of objects figures in most of them. Against the background of tentative and uncertain gestures which characterised these meetings, ethnographic objects acquired new status as artefacts generated by these encounters. The personal associations of objects combined with their tangible solidity to lend them this new, symbolic authority. Among the early accounts it is not surprising to find that objects of personal decoration and use figured heavily in negotiations and overtures. George Barrington made one of the earliest Australian records of this characteristic, during the First Fleet's explorations near Port Jackson:

> Lieutenant Flinders went in his boat to examine the river, and its entrance. On nearing Point Skirmish, several natives came down towards the boat unarmed, and by friendly offers of their girdles and nets would fain have persuaded him to land.[12]

Aboriginal guides and interpreters played an important part in promoting Aboriginal objects as currency in these exchanges and in establishing value for them. The most famous of these individuals during the first years of the Australian colony was Bungaree (later to become the first Aborigine to circumnavigate the country, with Matthew Flinders). Barrington recorded his use of objects in social exchanges with newly-contacted Aborigines:

> two natives came to the beach, and were very desirous they should land ... Bong-ree, when he made an exchange for their hair fillets and ... belts, giving them a woollen cap in exchange, and came

to the boat for a piece of cloth and some biscuit, to make the exchanges more equal.[13]

This chapter and the next consist of a series of accounts of collections made by Australian explorers and scientists at the point of contact. Several of these collections are held today by the South Australian Museum. Their size ranges from one or two to several dozen objects. The collections were made during the period of a century in which these first encounters were made. A rare account of collecting ethnographic material at the beginning of that period, contained in the journals of Captain Collet Barker, provides a benchmark by which an unfolding series of transactions can be evaluated.

No trace exists today of the ethnographic collections made by Barker at Raffles Bay during 1828 - 1829. During his eleven months as Commandant of this remote Arnhem Land outpost, Barker and his men engaged in a series of transactions with Aboriginal groups visiting the settlement. His journal records at least fifteen separate collecting events, but Barker did not indicate that he or his men added these objects to any formally constituted ethnographic collection. This is in contrast to natural history specimens which were actively collected and described in the name of science.[14] But both categories were obtained during social interactions with Aboriginal people, often as a means of furthering that interaction. Barker's first encounter with Aborigines was marked by such an exchange:

> On our approach to the beach the natives retired some distance from it evidently in a little alarm. I advanced to where I supposed them to be & soon fell in with one who seemed to be a chief. We exchanged presents, I giving him a handkerchief, & he giving me a spear unheaded, & the stick for throwing it. He had perhaps taken off the [spear]head. He also gave me a string of beads made of a kind of cane.[15]

Barker had, on this occasion, met Merriak ('Wellington') one of the head men of the Raffles Bay people (probably the Iwaidja). Within a few days he was to meet two other head men, Yacana ('Waterloo') and Mago. These meetings were characterised by exchanges: spears, spearthrowers, baskets, stone axes, food, vegetable-fibre string, and tortoise-shell for buttons, handkerchiefs, knives, fish-hooks and tomahawks.

The exchanges prefigure subsequent accounts of Aboriginal trading encounters across Australia, both in terms of the range of commodities exchanged and in terms of the formalities and protocols involved. That Barker had some appreciation of these formalities and their significance seems clear; each transaction represented some advance or regression in the social relations of his men with the Aborigines. This explains his careful record. At the same time, these transactions were more than social exchanges. On the part of Aboriginal people anyway, useful artefacts were being acquired. European objects and materials were readily incorporated within the material culture of Aboriginal groups just as the metal implements of the Malay trepangers had been for the previous two centuries. But Barker's journal underlines the social dimension of these exchanges. Each fresh encounter between Barker and significant Aborigines was marked by an exchange of objects, usually instigated by the latter, as on 20 - 21 January, 1829:

> Wellington and Marinbal first appeared, & then went back & brought seven others, one of whom, Mayoorook, was pointed out as Wellington's son ... They brought in some crabs which they gave to the men, & a small root about the size of a nut ... I gave the two stranger chiefs a tomahawk

each, & a small one to Maioorook the young chief, with some buttons to the others ....[16]

Another instance occurred on 26 March, 1829: 'About 1 pm 8 blacks came in, 4 of them strangers. Immooloo & Rogaro each gave me a basket in exchange for handkerchiefs'.[17]

Against these apparently ordinary social interactions can be contrasted more significant exchanges which seem intended to restore balance to particular situations in which the social order was threatened. An attempted theft of stores from the settlement resulted in an adjustment more than a month later by the Aboriginal men responsible. Barker encountered Wellington and Luga,

> whom we had not seen since their supposed depredation on the night of the 4th March. They both seemed exceedingly anxious to make friends with us, offering me as presents everything they had with them, being three or four spears, a basket etc ....[18]

A further example of appeasement occurred a few weeks later following the theft of the doctor's canoe (retrieved immediately), when Barker surprised a group of Aborigines on the beach near the settlement:

> They started on first seeing me & I thought were for a moment disposed to make off on seeing who it was ... they approached slowly. It was Waterloo, Luga, Nagary & Maigena. Luga [the suspected thief] came in front of the others & gave me two spears & a wamara [spearthrower], for which I presented him with a towel I had with me. Waterloo gave me a basket in return for my handkerchief ... It is probable these were the four who took the Dr's canoe.[19]

More than half a century after Barker had made these exchanges, the same categories of objects were being exchanged in Arnhem Land and on the Coburg Peninsula. Reporting on his exploratory visit to the Daly River during 1884, the Government Resident J.L. Parsons recorded an encounter with a group of about 150 Aboriginal people, who guided his party to 'a fine site for a plantation' on an open plain near the river: 'we distributed tobacco and flour among the natives, obtained from them a number of spears and other weapons and have left them with every token of good will on their part'.[20] During 1891, observing what by then amounted to a formal protocol, Edward Stirling exchanged coloured handkerchiefs and knives for baskets and weapons at Port Essington, just a few miles from Raffles Bay. Variations on that protocol were observed across Australia during the period, reflecting the enduring role of certain European commodities within the Aboriginal economy. Flour and tobacco were the most important of these.

In the districts close to the colonial capitals Aborigines had accepted money as a medium within the first years of settlement. In Adelaide itself, they were aware of the difference between 'black money' (copper coins) and 'white money' (silver) as early as 1838.[21] During Edward Snell's visit to the city during 1850 he paid one shilling for a spearthrower and a spear from 'one of the natives' camped at Kensington, and 'practised throwing it for an hour or so'.[22]

On the remote frontiers of settlement money was not to become the dominant medium of exchange until as late as the 1920s and 1930s. Carl Strehlow employed precise measures of flour, tea and sugar as a currency in acquiring artefacts at Hermannsburg as late as 1921 (see Chapter Eight). George Aiston on the Birdsville Track was using money to obtain artefacts during 1921, but only because he found this less

costly than using measures of flour, tea and sugar which the Aborigines preferred. Perhaps the crucial attribute shared by these commodities, and tobacco, was the fact that they were invariably consumed within the defining frame of Aboriginal social relations. Money became a more potent medium once European impact had weakened the structures of social life to the extent that individual Aboriginal consumers had begun to appear.[23]

> Referring to the 1930s in Central Australia, the surveyor and collector Charles Chewings wrote: If you desire some article they possess and value, you can offer nothing more tempting than tobacco in exchange for it. More *tjurunga*, pointing bones, and weapons have been purchased from them by tobacco than anything else. Only in recent years have the natives begun to value money as a medium of exchange for clothes, flour, tea, and sugar. Among themselves, or with a neighbouring tribe, bargaining for an article in exchange for another is an age-old practice.[24]

One of the first references to money being paid to Aboriginal people for ethnographic purposes occurs in W.B. Spencer's journal of his 1911 expedition to the Northern Territory. After interviewing English-speaking Larakiah men in Darwin, each man was paid a shilling and tobacco for his information.[25] Even so, it is likely that the shilling was used to purchase more tobacco.

Apart from Chewings, the German ethnographer Erhard Eylmann was one of the few commentators to comment directly on the influence of tobacco among Aboriginal people at the turn of the century. By 1908 Eylmann estimated that from a third to a quarter of Aboriginal people in South Australia and the Northern Territory had been introduced to European tobacco. He observed that Aborigines handled native stimulants more carefully than introduced forms, including opium, alcohol and tobacco, noting that 'the desire for a strong narcotic effect is the reason for preferring clay pipes to wooden ones.[26] The overland telegraph line provided the main source of tobacco for Aborigines north of Adelaide, attracting large numbers for the primary purpose of trading for this commodity:

> Many men and women close to the telegraph line and the surrounding stations are in possession of a pipe for smoking. Even stick tobacco travels through trading to tribes who do not have great contact with strangers. This trading is especially flowering on the north coast. Hundreds of Aboriginals walk annually to the eastern side of the railway line, where there are a few cattle stations, to trade tobacco and pipes in exchange for weapons, utensils, etc, with other Aboriginals, or the light coloured races [i.e. Chinese] in exchange for their women.[27]

Eylmann also recorded long journeys which Alligator Rivers people made by foot into Palmerston in conditions of summer heat to obtain tobacco. While other social and pragmatic reasons accompanied the desire for tobacco, Chewings and Eylmann identified the importance of the stimulant as a factor underlying many of the transactions involving artefacts on the frontier. At the same time, the influence of tobacco was rarely noted by anthropologists such as Spencer and Gillen, Howitt, Roth or Mathews. Even Donald Thomson, writing of the ceremonial exchange cycles of Arnhem Land, overlooked tobacco in his discussion of trade routes for objects such as boomerangs, spear-heads and tobacco pipes.[28]

The collections acquired by scientists and explorers at the frontier of contact were generated by two main influences, social and economic. These influences were rarely separable but exerted differing

effects. There are no documented instances of purely economic transactions; a reflection of the fact that the exchange value of items within Aboriginal society itself was socially determined, rather than measured and fixed. Despite the mass-produced character of a large proportion of trade items dispensed by Europeans along the frontiers of contact, historical accounts suggest that these items were also imbued with a social dimension.

The data supports the hypothesis advanced by Appadurai and others that 'exchange is not a by-product of the mutual valuation of objects, but its source'.[29] In this sense ethnographic objects in museum collections are socially constituted rather than simply 'collected'. The circumstances of initial encounters between Aborigines and Europeans assume a new significance in this light. The presentation of Aboriginal objects to exploring parties can be interpreted as acts loaded with social meaning confined to these encounters. Certainly, direct responses by Europeans in these circumstances may have satisfied an initial requirement for social engagement, but, accepting Nicolas Peterson's model of 'demand sharing', exchange was more often geared towards longer term imperatives.[30]

Explorers as Collectors: From Sturt to Lindsay

Scientific enquiry and colonialism have been inextricably linked in the Western tradition from at least the time of Herodotus.[31] By the time of Cook's voyages, British explorers knew what was expected of them in their observations of the Aborigines. The French were the first to formulate a manual of anthropological directions for explorers: a detailed set of instructions directed primarily at obtaining anatomical and physiological data was issued in 1786 for the use of the La Perouse expedition.[32] The pioneering *Societe des Observateurs de l'Homme* issued two further sets of instructions in 1800 for use on Baudin's expedition. George Cuvier's 'Instructive note on the researches to be made relative to the anatomical differences between diverse races of men' stressed the importance of collecting 'comparative objects', particularly skulls.[33] In its recognition of a standard of objectivity applicable to social phenomena, Joseph-Marie Degerando's 'Considerations on the Various Methods to Follow in the Observation of Savage Peoples' is acknowledged as a seminal document in the history of the anthropological method.[34] Degerando's expression of the rationale behind the new 'scientific travel', based on its temporal ethos, would serve to define the anthropological endeavour for at least the next century: 'The philosophical traveller, sailing to the ends of the earth, is in fact travelling in time; he is exploring the past; every step he makes is the passage of an age'.[35]

A pamphlet of instructions published in 1840 by the Ethnological Society of Paris and titled *Instruction generale adressee aux voyageurs* was based on Degerando's 'Considerations'. As Urry's work

has shown, this pamphlet was used in turn as the basis for *Queries respecting the Human Race to be addressed to travellers and others*, published in 1841 by the British Association for the Advancement of Science.[36] This was the direct predecessor of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, the standard text linking the informal and haphazard observations of travellers with the structured field-work of social anthropologists.[37] This series of pamphlets and questionnaires reveals the extent to which early anthropology, as a form of 'scientific travel', was rooted in the pursuit of natural history. The anthropologist Johannes Fabian has noted the fact that one of the earliest pamphlets of this kind was prepared by Linnaeus himself, confirming 'the roots of the new science of travel in natural-historical projects of observation, collection and classification, and description'.[38]

While other questionnaires and guides continued to be published, *Notes and Queries* remained the preeminent anthropological text at least until its third (1912) edition, reflecting the shift which occurred as anthropology developed from 'a mere pastime ... into an absorbing pursuit'.[39] In that sense it transcended its original function, 'to promote accurate anthropological observations on the part of travellers, and to enable those who are not anthropologists themselves to supply the information which is wanted for the scientific study of anthropology at home'.[40]

From its earliest edition the manual was divided into sections devoted to 'Physical Anthropology', 'Technology', 'Sociology' and 'Arts and Sciences'. The diversity of questions represented the extensive basis of a new anthropological project pursued in a number of countries from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.[41] A fundamental principle behind the book and its use by amateurs and professionals was the assumption that raw data collected by amateurs on the frontier (ethnographic objects included) would require interpretation by experts 'at home', that is, in Britain. And so, while *Notes and Queries* played a crucial role in opening the field of anthropology to amateur ethnographers at the edges of the British Empire, it also reminded them of their marginal relation to anthropology's metropolitan focus. The great synthesisers and distillers of late nineteenth-century anthropological data - J.G. Frazer, Sir John Lubbock, Edward B. Tylor, for example - were based mainly in Britain. Lewis Henry Morgan was the chief exception.[42]

In Australia, the *Notes and Queries* approach to ethnography was not fully implemented by scientific expeditions until the Horn Expedition of 1894. A similar methodology is evident as an influence in earlier expeditions though; the Lindsay expedition of 1885-86 and the Elder Expedition of 1891 provide the clearest examples. Artefacts from these three expeditions form part of the South Australian Museum's collections. Scientific and exploring expeditions during the middle decades of the nineteenth century largely ignored the potential for investigating ethnographic subjects. In South Australia it is necessary to go back to the exploring expeditions of Sturt and Eyre during the 1830s and 1840s to find ethnographic questions occupying a significant place in the instructions issued to explorers. Sturt's instructions for his 1830 expedition, issued by Alexander McLeay in 1828, included the directive to 'note the description of the

several people whom you may meet, the extent of their population, their means of subsistence, their genius and disposition, the nature of their amusements, their diseases and remedies, their objects of worship, religious ceremonies, and a vocabulary of their language'.[43] Thomas Mitchell's instructions for his 1836 expedition, aside from the primary brief regarding exploration, included the following: 'to help the Botanist; to get specimens; to seal up all documents, curiosities and so forth ... to keep a journal and record of meteorological observations [and] to note the number of people met, the vocabulary of the natives'.[44] This integration of anthropology and natural science objectives within the wider exploration project was a constant theme echoed throughout the century. An early expression was made in instructions issued to Augustus Gregory by Western Australia's Colonial Secretary, prior to his 1848 expedition north from the Swan River. While the primary object was exploration, 'the examination of a new tract of country for practical purposes by practical men ... this chief object may be promoted and attained without neglecting to observe the geographical, geological, and mineralogical features of the country you pass through; its productions - animal and vegetable; and the character, dialects, customs, to some extent, of the aboriginal tribes you may fall in with'.[45]

Very few ethnographic objects obtained on these early exploration expeditions remain in museum collections today. A small collection of weapons, possibly including objects collected during Sturt's Central Australian Expedition of 1844-46, was donated to the South Australian Museum by a grand-daughter of Sturt's surgeon and naturalist, John Harris-Browne.[46] Browne's journal contains several references to his observations on material culture, through which he distinguished Aboriginal groups of the Murray, Darling and the desert to the north-west. As for several observers, the boomerang became a convenient cultural marker, noted here for the Darling region during the last week of September, 1844:

> all these people go naked or at most have only a small rug in which to wrap their children. They use the same weapons and implements as the Murray natives and in addition the Boomerang, but this is not in use lower down than 'Cawdellah'. Several of the natives had old Iron Tomahawks which they had got from Mitchell's stores which he buried when he turned back to decrease his loads. Some of them had pieces of a Cart's tire fastened to a handle with string for a Tomahawk.[47]

Browne's observations were corroborated by those of Daniel George Brock, natural history collector on the same expedition:

> In observing the implements which the native in these wastes seems to deem indispensable for his getting on in the world with, I noticed a piece of hard wood about 2 feet 8 inches long, being slightly hollowed, having a point bevelling off - not unlike a turner's chisel. This is used as a spade - throw away the soil from beneath trees, to discover the holes formed by a large white-coloured grub, which grub is highly esteemed. As soon as the hole is found (which is as a glutinous case or pipe running 10 or 12 feet beneath the surface) their bobbing hook is brought into use. This hook they make out of a piece of twig, forming it with a muscle [sic] shell, and then just pushing it beneath hot ashes to harden it - this is then fastened on to a piece of "Polignum", which grows to a great length and as big as a pen holder. Down the before-named hole is the hook passed, and with little trouble, the gobbish morsel is hooked ... When ever we saw a native, he had his waddie and spade in one hand, and his hook and gear, thrown over his shoulder, held by the other - with

> one native I observed a piece of thick hoop iron, which was fastened onto a piece of wood, and had been brought to a cutting edge. This must have been obtained through Major Mitchell's party.[48]

Brock's accounts of artefacts in use and their manufacture also included references to skin water containers and emu nets, emu traps, huts, and seed processing.[49]

On 19 October, 1844, Brock recorded one of the first acquisitions of ethnographic material to be made on an exploring expedition to Central Australia. It followed the return of a stolen flag to the party through the influence of an elderly Aboriginal man, who then visited the camp, wearing

> a very fanciful head dress like a woven nightcap - it being the human hair and the white fur of an animal they call the "Pinkoe", netted so as to form a strip of black and a strip of white. A plume of feathers was fastened on the top, and pendent from behind were a kind of tails, as are the tails from a councillor's wig. Another man accompanied him wearing one somewhat similar but destitute of any appendages - this latter one I obtained in exchange for a cotton nightcap. The old man gave his to Sturt, receiving a knife in exchange. The natives brought us two Pinkoes - I skinned them.[50]

Brock judged it appropriate to exchange a like object for the head-dress, an indication that he regarded the object itself as useful to its Aboriginal owner, rather than just a symbolic item of exchange. As for the eventual destiny of this and other ethnographic items which Brock collected, it can be assumed that they accompanied his geological specimens and the bird and animal skins which he prepared, to the Australian Museum in Sydney. Sturt had been appointed to the Museum's governing committee in 1836.[51]

Brock's sensitivity towards Aboriginal people, and curiosity about their customs places him in the same tradition as George French Angas and Edward John Eyre, the explorer and Protector of Aborigines who was based on the Murray River at Moorunde. Eyre's expeditions also yielded ethnographic objects, a fact made clear by the sketches in his published journal. A small collection of Eyre's Aboriginal artefacts survives in the Leeds City Museum.[52]

Unfortunately, no natural history collector with similar interests in ethnographic matters was to accompany another Adelaide-based exploration expedition for several decades. Ethnographic collecting during the middle decades of the nineteenth century was characterised by its desultory nature. Neither Benjamin Herschel Babbage nor Peter Egerton Warburton are recorded as collecting ethnographic material during their expeditions of 1859 and 1860, although Warburton later supplied the ethnographer Thomas Worsnop with information.[53] It is more surprising in the case of Babbage, whose mathematician father (inventor of the calculator) had been an acquaintance of Darwin and John Herschel the geologist.[54] Babbage had been trained in geology and natural history and made a botanical collection for Baron Ferdinand von Mueller during the 1859 expedition.[55] It is quite possible that both men, and other explorers of the period, gathered at least a few ethnographic objects during their expeditions and passed them to von Mueller together with their plant specimens. This is suggested by the number of artefacts donated by him to European museums during the period from the 1860s to the 1890s.

Despite this informal collecting, the South Australian government did not regard ethnography or

natural history as a prime consideration on these expeditions. The main aim was to assess the northern part of the colony for its mineralogical and pastoral potential, and to find a way through the suppposed 'horseshoe' of Lake Torrens. No naturalist accompanied McKinlay's 1861-62 Burke and Wills relief expedition and subsequent transcontinental crossing. This journey yielded only a few 'curious and interesting articles', received by the South Australian Museum in November 1862, as well as further plant specimens for von Mueller in Melbourne.[56] The Museum's best opportunity for augmenting its ethnographic collections undoubtedly came with the appointment of its Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, as naturalist to John McDouall Stuart's transcontinental expedition of 1861-62. Unfortunately neither material culture nor social relations were considered useful fields of enquiry by Waterhouse. In Waterhouse's own words, he was engaged, 'for the purposes of my making observations on the physical features of the country, its flora and fauna, and to make a collection of such plants and seeds and specimens of natural history, as I might find opportunity of collecting'. [Mudie 1968: 170] One of the only episodes of ethnographic collecting documented during the expedition occurred at Kekwick Springs on 30 June 1862. Here Stuart noted that the Aborigines willingly traded their spears for metal fish hooks which they could see pinned to the expeditioners' hats. The Aborigines made further approaches on the following day:

> On his [Keckwick] coming up to them they put two fingers in their mouths, signifying that they wanted more fish-hooks, but we had no more to spare ... they followed us for some miles, when Mr Waterhouse observing a pigeon shot it. They did not like the report of the gun, went off, and we saw no more of them.[57]

In fact it is likely that most of those Aboriginal artefacts directly encountered by members of the expedition were thrown at them. Aboriginal men attacked the party with boomerangs at Chambers Pillar and with boomerangs and spears at both Attack Creek and Mount Hay. These fracas apparently did not result in any casualties, or even serious injury (Stuart and McKinlay were each notable in this respect), but none of the party seemed prepared to engage closely with Aboriginal people. Kekwick provided a limited exception, bartering a handkerchief for a stone axe on one occasion.[58] Four years after the expedition, Waterhouse received three Northern Territory spears on behalf of the Museum, donated by an individual recorded simply as 'Thring'; this is likely to have been F.W. Thring, a member of Stuart's party.[59]

As his official report reveals, Waterhouse's collecting efforts were mainly dedicated to zoological and palaeontological ends.[60] His sole attempt at making an ethnographic record is contained in that report, and consists of the most rudimentary observations of Aborigines encountered by the expedition at Howell's Ponds, north of Newcastle Waters:

> The natives paid us several visits at this camp; at one time there were about fourteen. They varied much in size and form. I observed that their faces are generally narrower than those of the natives in the south, and are also to be distinguished from them by having a more aquiline nose. I tried to learn from them the names of a few common objects, that I might ascertain whether they were of the same stock as the natives of the south, but they did not seem very willing to gratify my curiosity. All I could learn was their name for water was *mooloo* - in the south the native name is

owie and *cowie*.[61]

Waterhouse's observations are revealing despite their brevity. They indicate that for him, ethnographic significance lay mainly in the accepted fields of physcial anthropology and philology.

Samuel White's private ornithological expedition to the Cooper Creek during 1863 yielded a collection of shields, boomerangs and play-sticks which remained with his family until donated to the South Australian Museum by his brother William during the 1920s. No records of these acquisitions remain, although it is clear that White used Aborigines as informants in locating and collecting bird specimens.[62] The ethnographic material may represent the first to be gathered from this region, visited in the previous year by the Burke and Wills expedition. As for that expedition, apart from the sketches and notes made by Ludwig Becker, its primary anthropological significance lay in the fact that the subsequent relief expedition by Alfred Howitt brought him in contact with Aborigines, fuelling an interest in their society and beliefs which was to affect Australian anthropology in fundamental ways. [63]

South Australia's colonial expansion into the Northern Territory during the 1860s and 1870s ultimately led to the first concerted ethnographic collecting on behalf of the Museum in Adelaide. The result was not immediate: neither McKinlay's 1865-1866 Adam Bay expedition, Goyder's Northern Territory Survey Expedition of 1869-1870, nor the Overland Telegraph Survey Expedition of 1870-72 yielded ethnographic collections of any size. McKinlay was lucky to survive his ordeal, a fact which lends enhanced value to his carefully pencilled Arnhem Land Aboriginal vocabularies which are preserved in Adelaide's Mortlock Library.[64] The specimens gathered by Goyder's naturalist Frederich Schultze were overwhelmingly zoological and botanical. Those ethnographic objects obtained by him or by the surgeon William Hoare were only randomly collected or recorded, uninformed by any ethnographic project. This is despite the fact that Richard Schomburgk, who was instrumental in Schultze's appointment, was sufficiently interested in ethnography to publish several papers in Germany during the later 1870s.[65] Mindful of expense and the main task ahead of it, the South Australian Government did not equip the Overland Telegraph Survey Expedition with a naturalist. Moreover, Alfred Giles' diary indicates that the government's official policy of no fraternisation with Aborigines was adhered to in the main. This policy was adopted on Goyder's recommendation, following the spearing of Bennett in 1869.[66] Giles himself collected at least one artefact, a spearhead selected from among several bundles of spears, 'some of them 10 feet long, some double-pronged and jagged, and some with stone points, all freshly sharpened' in readiness for an attack repelled by his party at the Strangways River on July 23rd, 1871.[67] He wrote:

> The best way to handle wild blacks is never to allow them within spear distance of the camp. We could have got rid of them by sharp and rougher methods, but our instructions were to treat them as peacably as possible everywhere, especially, as the first party through, we should set the best example possible for the sake of those to follow.[68]

Inevitably, Goyder's policy was subverted by the inevitability of social contact between Aborigines and Europeans on the frontier. To Alfred Giles, atop Central Mount Stuart in early January, 1871, that prospect

still seemed remote: '[s]tanding on this historic mountain and within a few feet of Stuart's cairn, we knew that from each point of the compass for 1,000 miles there existed not a single white human being - not a city, house, fence, or sign of civilization'.[69]

The Adelaide Museum's natural history collector, F.W. Andrews, accompanied the 1874 government-sponsored J.W. Lewis expedition which explored the country north and east of Lake Eyre. Andrews made collections of 'numerous mammals, birds etc' and brought back a small collection of Aboriginal artefacts for the Museum. This included 'two koories used by the natives in certain ceremonies, made from a large shell (*melo iadema*) found on the North Coast, a moodlawilpa or nose piercing implement and some fishing net[s] ingeniously made from grass'.[70] This is one of the first documented acquisitions of Aboriginal ceremonial items by the South Australian Museum, and one of the first examples of a collector going to the trouble of recording Aboriginal names for particular objects.[71] A vocabulary collected by Andrews later appeared in George Taplin's 1879 edited volume of ethnographic studies.[72]

Lewis's report contains several ethnographic references, but these, such as his encounters with Aboriginal fishermen on the Kallakoopah and Warburton Creeks, were incidental to the record of his party's attempts to locate suitable water supplies. Tobacco and matches, as well as European food items, became the favoured medium of barter for helpful information and also, apparently, for ethnographic objects and natural history specimens. Lewis later recorded that the Aborigines 'appeared to be most desirous of giving all information they could, being kind in their ways, parting with their possessions freely, either by gift or barter'.[73] On the Kallakoopah Creek on 22 January 1875, the party encountered a large group of about 350 Aborigines, several of whom helped the party water their camels:

> [W]e could not get the camels down to the spring, but in about two minutes they carried from thirty to forty pirras [wooden bowls], each holding fully a gallon of water, up the bank, which thoroughly satisfied my animals. I gave them all the tobacco and matches I could conveniently spare ....[74]

Apparently none of the pirras were collected, nor did Lewis or Andrews take another opportunity which arose in May 1875 at Lake Perigundi when they were 'visited by a large mob of natives armed with most murderous looking weapons, but they were very polite, and left their implements about 200 yards from the camp, and came up, begging for tobacco'.[75]

Further opportunities were missed during the early 1870s with expeditions led by John and Alexander Forrest, Percival Warburton, William Gosse and Ernest Giles.Warburton's 1873 expedition from Central Mount Stuart to Roebourne was intended to find a secure stock route from Central Australia to the Western Australian coast. Mere survival for the party of seven was the expedition's hardest-won achievement; science was far less of a priority, and Warburton's sponsor, Thomas Elder, had not included a collector in the party.[76] The expedition did provide the occasion for the first documented encounter by an explorer with Central Australian sacred objects (as discussed in Chapter Ten), but no permanent collection was made.

John Forrest's 1874 expedition, the first west to east exploration through the western centre of Australia, resulted in one of the earliest records of a tjurunga cache, and may have yielded further ethnographic objects. During previous expeditions Forrest had collected geological specimens and botanical specimens for von Mueller.[77] Gosse's expedition to Western Australia, funded by the South Australian Government, shared Warburton's objective and followed a similar route.[78] Gosse's brother Henry was employed by the Government as an official collector but his brief was confined to collecting natural history specimens. Gosse was the first European to sight Ayers Rock ('the most wonderful natural feature I have ever seen') and his observations included brief notes on the rock paintings there, incorporating 'all sorts of devices - some of snakes, very cleverly done, others of two hearts joined together, and in one I noticed a drawing of a creek with an emu track going along the centre'.[79] His contact with Aborigines was otherwise restricted to brief negotiations over locating water supplies. In exchange for this information he gave them damper, coloured handkerchiefs and 'lucifers' (matches), for which 'they seemed greatly pleased, especially with the lucifers, which they stuck through holes in their noses'.[80] Gosse recorded the acquisition of Aboriginal artefacts on one occasion only. This was related to the party's quest for water and indicates the context of reciprocity which accompanied a great deal of expeditionary collecting. In return for leading him to a waterhole in the Musgrave Ranges, Gosse gave each Aboriginal man 'a handkerchief and some lucifers, and they directly returned the compliment by presenting my brother and myself with a bone hairpin each'.[81]

South Australia benefited only indirectly at first from the influence of Australia's greatest botanist and geographer of the period, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. An immigrant to South Australia in 1847, his first publication on the plants of the colony led to an appointment as the first Government Botanist in Victoria. Based in that colony for the rest of his life, von Mueller encouraged a wide network of botanical and natural history collectors who supplied him with specimens and information from across the country. Following his experience as the botanist accompanying Gregory's 1855-1857 expedition von Mueller recognised the immense value of expeditionary collecting. He became the chief instigator behind the Victorian Exploring Expedition, or the Burke and Wills Expedition as it became known after its debacle; Ludwig Becker was his recommended choice as naturalist and artist.[82] With Victoria's subsequent withdrawal from exploration projects, von Mueller's friendship with the South Australian land baron and philanthropist Thomas Elder allowed the botanist to gain valuable specimens and data from several expeditions which Elder sponsored and equipped with camels. These included Warburton's 1873 expedition, Giles' 1875-76 expeditions, and Lindsay's expeditions of the 1880s. With this widespread emphasis on botanical and natural history collecting, it is not surprising that ethnographic collecting eventually emerged as a worthy, if minor goal, of exploring and scientific expeditions.

Ernest Giles' first expedition in 1872-73, undertaken with horses, was largely sponsored by von Mueller, and the explorer made extensive botanical collections for him in return. The expedition passed

through the western MacDonnell Ranges and the Musgrave Ranges, and brought Giles into contact with Aboriginal rock paintings of Central Australia. His detailed descriptions of the Mt Udor paintings ('the aboriginal national gallery of paintings and hieroglyphics') were given added significance by his thorough account of the stencil techniques used to paint some of them. A member of Giles' party, Carmichael, 'left ornamentations upon the walls of a few choice specimens of the white man's art [images of a gun-fight] which will no doubt help to teach the young (native) [sic] idea how to shoot in one direction or another'.[83] Rather than an act of vandalism, this may have been regarded by Aborigines as an attempt at communication on a symbolic level, a form of exchange. The seeds given to Giles by von Mueller and planted at Lake Amadeus and other localities - 'garden seeds ... some seeds of the Tasmanian blue gum, and some wattles, rye and prairie grass' - may have been similarly regarded. Like Gosse, Giles relied mainly on red handkerchiefs for gifts and for occasional exchanges, although he noted during his 1875-76 overland expedition that Aborigines had taken their own form of recompense in return for the quantities of scarce water drunk by his camels: 'unconsidered trifles ... such as bags, towels etc, etc. These thefts always occur when I am away somehow'.[84]

Giles' experiences underline the fact that relations between Europeans and Aborigines on the frontier were defined through a series of negotiations and renegotiations, marked by reciprocal exchanges of objects and services. When this evolving balance was inevitably disturbed, as at Fort Mueller in the Cavenagh Ranges during Giles' 1873 expedition, objects also featured. Giles and his party were trapped here by drought for several months, their enclave threatening Aboriginal access to this vital desert waterhole. The apparent permanence of their depot was reinforced by the party's cultivation of von Mueller's seeds for use as a vegetable garden. The subsequent attack on the depot by Aboriginal men was repelled by Giles and his party, who captured

> [a] considerable quantity of military stores, in shape of spears ... and numerous other minor valuables. These we brought in triumph to the camp. It always distressed me to fire at these savages, and it was only when our lives were in most imminent danger that we did so.[85]

Giles's journals reveal a level of ethnographic detail not seen in exploration accounts since those of Grey and Eyre. He gave more than passing attention to the physical characteristics of the Aborigines encountered, noting women's cicatrication marks and the fact that Aborigines on the western fringe of the Nullarbor Plain practised 'the same rites of incision and circumcision as the Fowlers Bay tribes'.[86] During this expedition he noted the absence of boomerangs and methods of obtaining water from tree roots in Pitjantjantjara country. His records of Aboriginal material culture were keenly observed, as in this description of the bark containers carried by two women surprised at Victoria Springs waterhole on the Nullarbor Plain:

> When they came near enough to see me they bolted and looked at me with their four eyes. I made signs for them to come to the well and drink, but they dropped their bark water vessels and walked somewhat smartly off: I picked up these things and found them to be of a most original, or rather

aboriginal construction - they being simply a small sheet of the yellow tree bark, tied up at the ends with a kind of bark string and forming a small trough....[87]

The weapons carried by two men in the Levi Range provided another example:

> [T]wo natives ... did not see or hear us until we were close upon their heels ... They each carried two enormously long spears ... two thirds wood and one third reed; they also had an implement with which they project these spears, having a kangaroo's or wild dog's claw fixed at one end. They also had small narrow shields. Their hair was tied up in a kind of chignon at the back of the head, being dragged off the head from infancy - a custom which prevails among the natives of this part of the interior.[88]

In contrast to the detached style of later ethnographers, these were anecdotal observations arising directly from personal contact with Aborigines. This familiarity was most evident during Giles' Nullarbor Plain crossing of 1875-76. On one occasion he showed particular interest in what can be identified as a *wanigi* mask, worn by a visitor to his camp:

> [A]nother had a queer ornament made of short feathers, likewise worn around the neck ... the extraordinary mask gave him the appearance of a demon in a pantomine. In taking this ornament off his neck he broke the string, and I supplied him with a piece of elastic band, so that he could put it on and off when he pleased without undoing it, but the extraordinary phenomenon of an extension of a solid was rather more than he was prepared for, and he scarcely liked it to touch his person again, but as I put it over my head first, it reassured him, and he wore it again as usual. They were a good natured lot of fellows, and we gave them a trifle of damper and sugar each.[89]

Like J.W. Bennett, the draftsman-ethnographer on the 1869 Northern Territory Survey Expedition, and in contrast to Goyder, Sturt and other explorers, Giles seemed ready to disregard or blur the boundary which separated the domain of his camp from the domain of the 'savage' beyond.[90] His own testimony reveals the extraordinary lengths to which he was prepared to go to engage the Aborigines of the Musgrave Ranges during his 1873 expedition: 'I amused them greatly by passing a stick through my nose (having formerly gone through an exruciating operation for that purpose) and telling them I had formerly been a blackfellow'.[91] As with Bennett immediately before his spearing by Aborigines in 1869, Giles was unwittingly exposing himself to greater risks by this familiarity and, as in Bennett's case, Aboriginal objects played a role in this exposure.

On 15 October, 1875, north of present-day Kalgoorlie, Giles and his party were attacked without apparent warning by 'the best organized and most disciplined aboriginal force [he] ever saw'. Recognising the role of previously friendly Aborigines in preparing this attack and acting as 'spies', Giles wrote with grudging admiration for the ruse by which the attack nearly succeeded.[92] While he had no ready explanation for it beyond implicit 'treachery', an explanation seems apparent. A fortnight earlier, 250 kilometres to the east at Queen Victoria Spring, Giles and his men had discovered a cache of objects, which they took to be weapons. The find was actually made by Giles' Aboriginal tracker, Tommy Holman:

> Above the water was a well-beaten corroborie path where these denizens of the desert have often held their feasts and dances. Tommy found close by a quantity of long, flat, sword-like weapons, and brought four or five of them up to the camp. They were ornamented after the usual aboriginal

> fashion - some with slanting cuts or grooves along the blade, others with square, elliptical and rounded figures; some of these two-handed swords were seven feet long.[93]

It is probable that Giles collected at least a few of these objects which, rather than 'swords', were likely to have been men's *tjurunga* or sacred boards, stored in a defined cache. The incident may represent the first recorded instance of the collection of these objects by Europeans. By disturbing, and possibly even removing these objects, Giles and his party (including Tommy) were inviting full retribution: execution by a party of killers assembled for the purpose.

The 'observer and naturalist' on this expedition, Jesse Young, left the expedition on its arrival in Perth during November 1875 and did not accompany the return journey overland. Arriving back in Adelaide, he donated a small collection of geological, zoological and ethnographic specimens to the Museum, including '4 Spears, 4 boomerangs, 2 spearthrowers, 2 stone axes, 4 `skinning sticks" collected in Western Australia.[94] The latter objects were likely to have been sticks decorated with attached wood-shavings, worn by men in ceremonial contexts in the Victoria Desert region.

More than any other South Australian explorer of the period, David Lindsay seems to have been aware of the scientific value of natural history collections and observations, if only for the additional benefit which this information could provide to European settlement in Central Australia. His ethnographic collecting was encouraged directly by von Mueller and, even more significantly, was stimulated by the influence of International Exhibitions held in Melbourne and Adelaide. In this light, Lindsay's collecting activities represent the closest articulation between exploration collecting of the late nineteenth century and the emerging project of museum ethnology.

A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Lindsay was conscious of his prominence as an explorer. He published in the Society's journal as well as in the journal of South Australia's Royal Society. Like other collectors of the period, his interest in ethnography developed from his natural history collecting and from the recognition that he was adding to an important store of European knowledge about unknown or unmapped areas. But Lindsay could also see a place for ethnography as a field of investigation complementary to that of natural science, as his 1887 address to the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide illustrates:

> If you are a geographer with a knowledge of the history of early Australian exploration, the first question on your lips will be - what of the brave but unfortunate Leichardt? Can you tell us how and where he died, or is there still the faintest hope that any of the members of his party still survive?
>
> Then you will ask about the aboriginal people, if any prehistoric records exist; and you will want a description of the striking geographical features of the country. If moved by an enterprising spirit for pioneer settlement, your questions will be - what of the lands, its waters, its woods, its grasses?[95]

A critical factor enabling Lindsay to add a collector to his 1886-87 expedition was his friendship with von Mueller, inspired perhaps by their mutual concern for Leichardt's fate. The Baron's connection with Sir

Thomas Elder also bore fruit for Lindsay. When Lindsay requested the South Australian government to fund the costs of a collector for his 1885-86 expedition from the Finke River to the Gulf of Carpentaria, he relied on von Mueller's backing. Lindsay asked the government to pay

> the expenses of a collector, so that a complete collection of Botanical and Natural History specimens might be obtained. Such a collection would be exceedingly valuable from an economic as well as a scientific view and would cost but little in the collecting.[96]

Within a week the government had agreed to pay half the costs of a collector: the other half was borne by the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society.[97] Von Mueller's nominee, Lieutenant H. Dittrich, was appointed as naturalist, further evidence of the enduring German influence on Australian natural history.

As well as his botanical knowledge, Dittrich was apparently familiar with linguistics and photographic technique, and his appointment provides the first example of an expedition photographer engaged with the specific aim of recording Aboriginal images. Lindsay wrote to von Mueller shortly before the expedition set off, thanking him for his interest and support:

> [I] trust that we will be enabled to make a grand collection of botanical specimens for you ... [I am] favourably impressed with Lieut. Dittrich ... grateful to you for the instruction and assistance which you gave him ... so desirous was I of taking someone who could devote his time to collecting ... We are taking a photographic camera and intend photographing the natives all through Australia. Altogether I hope to make the expedition an interesting and useful one from a scientific point of view.[98]

Lindsay's plans for the scope of the expedition, covering the various fields of ethnography, physical anthropology and linguistics as well as natural history, in addition to the main aim of recording geographical data, squarely reflect the emphases of his fellow contributors to the Royal Geographical Society's British journal, as well as von Mueller's eclectic approach.

As a complementary recording or collecting method, photography was also evident in the pages of the *Proceedings* during this period. Sadly, despite his intentions, Dittrich's photographic skills were far outstripped by his botanical collecting efforts. In December of 1886 Lindsay reported to von Mueller that 'all the photographs save one or two are complete failures'.[99] Even so, Lindsay's own journal records at least one consignment of natural historical and ethnographic objects, including photographs, obtained during the expedition:

> From Dalhousie I sent down a collection of plants to be forwarded to Baron von Mueller for classification. In this collection, as well as in others subsequently sent, were as far as possible three specimens of each plant, so that one complete set could be kept by the Baron, one by the Geographical Society of Melbourne, and the third for Lieutenant Dittrich and myself to dispose of as we might think fit. A box of photographs was also sent, together with native weapons, seeds, and other interesting articles. As much information as possible about the language, manners, and customs of the natives was obtained, and put together in a report by Lieutenant Dittrich.[100]

Dittrich, who fell out with Lindsay during the expedition, later submitted his report separately. This consisted of two main collections of Aboriginal vocabularies with associated data. The first was 'a

Vocabulary of the Charlotte Waters, Dalhousie, Stevenson & Macumba tribes', together with four song transcriptions and descriptions of customs, sent to the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide in December 1885. [101] The second was 'another Vocabulary of the Albert River, Nicholson and Gregory River tribes, with some additional information about certain customs and habits, as correct and exact as I could gather them'.[102]

Lindsay was quick to capitalise on the success of his 1885-86 expedition, seeing the Adelaide and Melbourne International Exhibitions of 1887 and 1888 as an ideal forum for displaying his collections and for publicising his commercial ventures. Lindsay's ethnographic presentation at these exhibitions outshone those of both the Adelaide and Melbourne museums, largely because of the presence of Dick Kubadji, the physically imposing Warramangu man whom Lindsay employed as his tracker and personal servant. Lindsay was one of a number of explorers who brought their Aboriginal guides back to their home cities at the conclusion of their expeditions. Writing to the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society in Melbourne during May 1887, Lindsay confirmed that 'if I do not require the boy he will be engaged about the South Australian Court in the Adelaide Exhibition where also my collection of native weapons, curios and other interesting articles will be on view ....'[103] Kubadji sat within Lindsay's array of weapons and artefacts, demonstrating fire-lighting techniques and chatting to visitors, reinforcing his newly constructed status as the 'King of the Warramunga'. Within months the young man was dead of tuberculosis, despite efforts from Adelaide's leading specialists, one of whom, Professor Archibald Watson, made sure that Kubadji's skeleton was retained for the Museum's collection.[104]

Lindsay's artefacts displayed at the Adelaide Exhibition consisted of the following items, mostly collected during his 1885-86 expedition:

1 bundle containing 7 stone spears
56 barbed spears
2 plain spears
1 wire spear
9 reed spears
... and 3 clubs
1 bundle containing 8 womeras [spearthrowers]
1 bundle containing 4 boomerangs
1 bundle containing 1 Cooliman (water vessel)
1 Haliman (shield)
2 waddies
1 box containing 2 coolimans
2 flint adzes & chisels
2 stone tomahawks
1 piece native rope from Macarthur River
1 Headdress

	L50
1 Map Australian Ruby Fields, mounted on cloth & roller	10/6
[total]	L50/10/6[105]

The obvious bias towards men's weapons and artefacts in this list (ninety-eight men's objects compared to two or possibly three women's objects) is a fair reflection of most nineteenth century explorers' collections. A more balanced result was to be achieved by the Horn Expedition of 1894.

The Emergence of Expeditionary Anthropology

The three-way collaboration between Thomas Elder, von Mueller and Lindsay was to influence another important expedition, the Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition of 1891-92. Elder responded to von Mueller's plea for support to complete the land exploration of Australia, made in an address to the 1890 Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. The philanthropist informed von Mueller, who was speaking as the President of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, that he was prepared to offer the Society a total sum of 10,000 pounds for this purpose:

> I cannot but agree with you that it would be almost a reproach to permit the opportunity to pass for completing what you properly describe as the main work of Australia - land exploration. You say that this work in the past has devolved on nine travellers only, and that space seems left now for only one more great explorer to rank with the nine. This being the case, I would like to furnish the tenth exploring expedition; and if you will take up the matter energetically, as you have done on former occasions, I will hold myself responsible for the funds.[106]

The Society's first choice of an expedition leader was one of the 'nine travellers', Charles Winnecke. When he declined, the Society turned to von Mueller's protege, the thirty-five year old David Lindsay, a logical choice following the success of his 1883 Arnhem Land expedition and his 1885-86 transcontinental trip.

Despite his obvious talents, Lindsay was not unanimously accepted as leader by members of the expedition. The friction which resulted seems to have directly led to the party breaking up in disarray with less than a third of its allotted task complete. The ill-starred enterprise has been aptly described as 'a pretentious foray ... a latter-day Geographical Society answer to Victoria's Royal Society -sponsored fiasco under Burke and Wills'.[107] Yet this analysis, and the success of the Horn Expedition less than three years later, should not obscure the fact that the Elder Expedition held enormous scientific and ethnographic potential for its organisers and backers. The Expedition's forty page Handbook makes this clear, as does the appointment of three scientists to the party of nine Europeans and four Afghans.

As well as containing detailed instructions on the collection and preparation of zoological, entomological and botanical specimens, the Handbook represented the first clear statement of what Australian science expected of ethnographers in the field. Officially these duties fell to Dr Elliott, the expedition's Medical Officer, although the bulk of ethnographic observation and collection was actually undertaken by the two German naturalists who were engaged as the geologist and meteorologist (F.P.V. Streich), and as the zoologist and botanist (R. Helms). The handbook instructed the Medical Officer to

keep a journal and record the fullest possible information respecting the aboriginal tribes met with. The number of men, women, and children in each tribe should be ascertained if possible, and any diseases to which they are subject noted, as well as their general physique and shade of colour. It is of considerable importance to obtain accurate comparative measurements of a considerable number of individuals, both men and women, of each tribe, recording particularly any striking points of similarity common to many tribes, or any special tribal peculiarity. A careful representation of tatoo [sic] marks is of interest; also any information concerning tradition, folklore, totems, mythology, initiatory ceremonial to manhood, circumcision, betrothal, marriage, polygamy, degrees of kinship, funeral customs, corrobborees [sic], songs, natural food, method of making fire, utensils for preparing food or carrying water, clothing, ornaments, manufactures (such as twine, nets, baskets etc.), habitations, implements, weapons, signals and communication with other tribes, curative remedies etc. As complete a vocabulary as possible of each tribal language is much to be desired. Rules for an [sic] uniform orthography are contained in appendix. Efforts should be made to ascertain to what extent words are common to several tribes, such words as fire, water, head, foot, man, woman, boy, girl, etc, are suggested for special enquiry. A list of additional words are given in the appendices. Native drawings on wood, bark, stone, or rock carvings (to be looked for in caves) are of exceptional interest, and should be zealously searched for, and when found, copied in their actual colours with the greatest faithfulness, the dimensions and other details to be recorded. Careful enquiry to be made as to the existence of cannibalism, as on this point there is a great conflict of opinion. More than ordinary care is requisite to ensure the accuracy of the information gained on this question.

The Medical Officer will also be entrusted with the photographic apparatus to secure views of natural scenery illustrative of the geological and botanical features of the country; also portraits of the natives. Large-sized portraits of single individuals are much to be preferred to groups. It is desirable to have a standard of measurement, numbered in feet and inches, by which the aboriginal can stand when the portrait is being taken.[108]

This comprehensive statement of the ethnographic project was further strengthened in Appendix C, a sample page of an abstract from an expedition journal. In addition to notes on the expedition's progress, meteorology and natural history, the page suggested several opportunities for recording ethnographic observations:

Aborigines - locality and number seen, and whether friendly disposed.
Number of men, women or children seen; if aged, infirm, or diseased.
If any photographed, and number of plate ....
If native drawings seen ....
Native weapons, implements, utensils secured ....[109]

Lindsay was further encouraged to collect Aboriginal data by Adelaide's Town Clerk and amateur ethnographer, Thomas Worsnop. Nearing the end of the research required for his book on *The Prehistoric Arts, Manufactures, Weapons, etc. of the Aborigines of Australia*, Worsnop asked that Lindsay supply him with

photos of any natives showing distinctly the cicatrices on their bodies, also the name of the tribe to which they belong, as well as the locality which they inhabit. Also copies of any native paintings, carvings, sculptures or curiosities they manufacture and the locality in which they are found ... I have made use of the former reports of Mr Lindsay's Explorations amongst others to illustrate my findings as to the artistic nature of the mind of the Australian native.[110]

Notwithstanding this encouragement the party was warned that 'no member of the Expedition should at any time venture among the natives unarmed'.[111] This policy was probably supported (if not initially advocated) by George Goyder, who was a member of the Royal Geographical Society's organising committee in Adelaide. Lindsay resisted the Society's suggestion that 'two natives be engaged to go with the expedition as an advanced [sic] guard to disarm suspicion, judging this suggestion as 'not good for Australian Exploration'. Lindsay reminded the Society that he had 'never found any difficulty in establishing friendly relations with the interior natives'.[112] To von Mueller he wrote reassuringly: 'The exploration of Arnhem Land shows that I am able to deal successfully with the natives no matter how troublesome they may be'.[113]

The Elder Expedition's scientific reports were published as a set by the Royal Society of South Australia during 1896. They make it plain that the Expedition not only cast meagre light on 'the unknown portions of Australia', but that it added relatively little to natural historical or ethnographic knowledge of the interior. A wide-ranging geological survey, several new lizard and beetle species, and a large botanical collection were the main features. Most of the reports were prefaced by remarks to the effect that the Expedition's naturalist, Richard Helms, obtained his specimens in spite of 'the unfavourable character of the season'.[114] His anthropological report assumes greater significance against this unexceptional background.

Lindsay's published account of the Expedition contained surprisingly little ethnographic detail, given the interest which he had previously expressed. It seems clear though, that Lindsay had expected Elliot to produce an ethnographic report as part of his official duties, and stated as much in his official journal: 'Of the natives little need be said, as no doubt the medical officer will hand in his full report'.[115] In fact nothing suggests that Elliot compiled any report of substance. He was one of several expedition members to fall out with Lindsay during the course of the expedition.[116] His main contribution was his series of more than 120 photographs of varying quality taken *en route*. Some twenty of these depict ethnographic subjects, several conforming to an emerging category of physical anthropology, but influenced also by prevailing notions of the ethnographically bizarre. A photograph of an expedition member revealing an Aborigine's sub-incised penis, and a photograph of a six-fingered Aboriginal woman from the Fraser Range district were features of the collection. Sets of 107 captioned photographs were bound into two volumes and sold to libraries, museums and collectors.[117]

It may not have surprised Lindsay that it was the Expedition's German naturalist, rather than Elliot as official ethnographer, who most satisfied the requirements outlined in the Expedition's Handbook.[118] Richard Helms' ninety-five page report contained an account of physical characteristics of the different groups met, discussions of food-gathering techniques, tobacco use, hut-building, pastimes, rock-painting, wood-carving, and weapons and utensils, as well as vocabularies obtained directly from Aborigines of the Everard Range, Blyth Range, Fraser Range, Hampton Plains, Yunga, Knutsford, Yaurigabbi and Murchison districts. It was the fullest ethnographic survey undertaken on an Australian exploration

expedition to that date. Helms further supplemented his report with 'Notes on Various Customs, Ceremonies etc. Obtained by information from reliable sources'. These included an extensive account of the 'Diyeri' people of Lake Hope, submitted to him by J.B. Beck, police trooper at Warrina, some notes on Aborigines at Annean Station (Murchison) made by Cruickshank the station owner, and information about Western Australian coastal tribes from Geraldton to Albany, contributed by C.A. Paterson.

Aside from its detail two aspects of Helms' report stand out. First, his material represented more than incidental, unrelated data: he was self-consciously making a contribution to an ethnographic project - that of 'completing our knowledge of the aborigines of Australia'.[119] Second, by focusing on such apparently sophisticated customs as sub-incision, or on Aboriginal artistic abilities, Helms was exploring a paradox which Australian Aborigines presented to international practitioners of anthropology:

> Whilst on the one hand they possess habits and customs as well as traits of character that are indicative of a very high culture, on the other hand their general state of savageism places them without dispute in the lowest grade of barbarity. These contradictory aspects, that must force themselves upon every thinking mind who comes in contact with the natives, make them extremely interesting subjects for psychological study.[120]

With its inexplicable origins the rite of subincision offered one of the clearest indications that the Aboriginal past was worth exploring. Helms' logic was similar to that used by Tylor, Lubbock and Morgan:

> Considering this extraordinary rite, together with their complicated marriage laws, the existence of which have been authenticated by almost everyone who has become acquainted with the customs of the blacks, besides other remarkable features of intellectual culture ... it comes almost naturally to one's mind that they must either be the remnants of a highly advanced culture once possessed by this people, or that a race preceded them in this land, who, being highly cultured, were gradually suppressed, but not before implanting some important characteristic practices upon them; or thirdly, that a shipwrecked crew of an advanced nation spread those customs amongst them.[121]

In preferring the first option, with its Darwinian overtones, Helms' ethnography became, like that of other practitioners of the 1890s, primarily a search for origins. Long before Australian archaeology itself became a respectable intellectual pursuit, the ethnography of social institutions and material culture was characterised by an evolutionist tinge. Helms and other ethnographers of the period mined Aboriginal material culture for possible clues as to the origins of Aboriginal society and institutions. The significance of Helms' careful inventory of 'The Weapons, Implements and Utensils Seen with the different tribes encountered during the journey; with descriptions' rests in this context. Helms wrote:

> There are, moreover, several other indications that favor [sic] the idea that the race has become retrogressive. How, for instance, can it be conceived that the present race invented the boomerang? It has been asserted that a falling gum-leaf gave the intimation for the first production of this implement. If this were true, one must attribute to the native a higher deductive talent than is at present perceptible. And, further, how can it be imagined that a black in the present state of development could have invented the womera, this marvellous and unique lever. Admitting that the application of a simple lever comes almost naturally to anyone who has but the least experience in the practice of hand-work, the application of the principle to the method of throwing

> the spear becomes far too complicated for the intellect of a black-fellow. To this I must add the rite of circumcision, and the belief in the transmigration of the soul.[122]

A total of seventy-seven items have survived in the South Australian Museum ethnographic collections from the Elder Expedition. Fifty-five of these were obtained on the conclusion of the expedition; a further twenty were donated by the expedition's geologist, Victor Streich, in 1895.[123] A few objects among the first group, which were mostly collected by Helms, can be matched with his published report. For example, items A1763 and A1764, registered as 'Nalla balga. Bark of a root which is pounded and eaten' and 'Nalla bulba. The above bark pounded', are referred to in Helms' diary entry for 7 October, 1891 at Fraser Range Station:

> When I got up this morning I found the native woman on her knees engaged in pounding some mallee roots. These were perfectly dry and were lying on the hollow side of a thick piece of bark that served as a base for the operations of pounding. I could not help admiring the dexterity with which this was performed. Taking a handful of short pieces, she pressed them firmly down on the bark, leaving an opening between the thumb and index finger of perhaps an inch and a half in diameter. Catching the yam-stick with the other hand about four inches from its sharpened end, she brought it vigorously down upon the open space of uncovered bark. The accurate hitting of the small exposed surface with a heavy stick that is over four feet long and an inch thick, caught so much below the centre of balance, must have recquired a considerable amount of practise [sic] to acquire, as she never missed her aim, which is the more surprising, because the yam-stick was not brought down vertically, but almost at an angle of 45°. Any European trying to do this would cut his hand nine times out of every ten strokes he would make. When the roots were pounded almost to dust they were eaten dry, and the men who had not stirred or helped in the least towards preparing this unique repast satisfied themselves first, leaving the coarsest and most fibrous stuff for the women. The taste of it is slightly sweetish, which seems to indicate that it contains a sacharine [sic] substance; but the nutrient it furnishes as a whole cannot be very great. The finest of the dust is the sweetest, and undoubtedly contains the greatest amount of sugar pa/rticles which may have crystallised during the preparation of the bark.[124]

As a description of an entire process this account surpasses in detail any preceding accounts recorded by Australian exploring expeditions. This attention to detail may be partly explained by Helms's botanical training (he had been employed as an official collector for the New South Wales Department of Agriculture earlier in 1891). He gave similar attention to the manufacture of other items derived from plants or wood such as a series of message sticks made at Fraser Range station a few days later, on 11 October, 1891:

> The blacks were busy this morning making message-sticks, for which they used some kind of acacia-wood they call 'yauwilli'. The wood is worked down with the stone chisel fastened on the end of the spear-thrower and afterwards scraped smooth with the sharp edge of chip of flint. For this purpose they, however, had already discovered the usefulness of glass, and employed it also. The lines were put on with embers. A piece of hard stick is chosen that will form a well-tapered conical ember on one end. This is fairly firm to stand a gentle pressure, and last for some time. While the spiral or wavy lines are put on the ember is kept aglow by gentle blowing. I have no doubt that certain meanings are conveyed by these differently curved, wavy, and spiral lines that may be broken off or interrupted by a circle or bar, but through ignorance of their language I could not understand the meaning of the explanations given by the blacks.[125]

The South Australian Museum's Elder Expedition collection and the collection acquired from Victor

Streich each contain two *waninga* or head ornaments. These may have been collected by the Expedition at Fraser Range station. Helms referred in his report to 'elaborate head ornaments ... used in some special dance' which he had not witnessed.[126] A number of the objects collected by Helms did not find their way into the Museum's collection. Of particular interest are some bark 'etchings' which he obtained at Fraser Range on 31 October, 1891,

> representing some crudely-drawn landscapes and other objects. They are produced on the inner side of the bark, when it is still fresh, by a pointed piece of hard wood, and are called "worma".[127]

With its fold-out illustrations of rock art and carefully figured artefacts, Helms' 1896 publication set a new standard in the documentation of expeditionary ethnography. It directly influenced the style of the Horn Expedition's anthropological report, written by Edward Stirling as the expedition's anthropologist and edited by Baldwin Spencer for publication in 1896. Stirling made several references to Helms' report, 'now passing through the press'.[128] Stirling also acknowledged the influence of two standard anthropological texts of the day: physical measurements were taken according to the directions in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, and the Royal Geographical Society's system of orthography for native names (referred to in the Elder Expedition's Handbook) was adopted in collecting vocabularies. Stirling used the same list of words suggested in the Elder Expedition handbook for making a comparative table of three Central Australian languages.[129]

In spite of its private criticism by Spencer and by F.J. Gillen, who contributed a separate chapter on the 'Notes on some Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the McDonnell [sic] Ranges belonging to the Arunta Tribe', Stirling's *Horn Expedition Report* broke further new ground in Australian ethnography.[130] It was the first publication to attempt a formal synthesis of the various branches of anthropology as presented in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*. Territorial distribution, physical characteristics, social organisation and customs, ceremonial life, hunting, gathering and domestic activities, games, language, plant use, implements and weapons were all treated in some detail. And while his efforts at applied anthropology were soon eclipsed by the publications of Spencer and Gillen (whom Stirling introduced to each other on this expedition), Stirling's *Report* had considerable impact within Australia and overseas.

Stirling was representative of a new force in British anthropological method, distinguished by 'the collection of data by academically trained natural scientists defining themselves as anthropologists, and involved also in the formulation and evaluation of anthropological theory'.[131] A.C. Haddon and the German-born physicist Franz Boas provide international exemplars of this shift. Within Australia Walter Baldwin Spencer provides the most outstanding example of a natural scientist whose contribution to the field of anthropology was crucial to its development. Apart from Stirling, South Australian anthropology was influenced by a disproportionately large group of workers who were trained, in the first instance, as natural scientists: H. Basedow, F. Wood Jones, T.D. Campbell, J.B. Cleland, and N.B. Tindale were the

most important. The work of the last four gave a distinctive flavour to South Australian anthropology during the 1920s and 1930s, well after this influence had given way to the social anthropological method in the eastern states.

Unlike previous exploration expeditions through Central Australia, the Horn Expedition's observations were confined mainly to the territory of the culturally homogeneous Arrernte groups. This enabled anthropological observations to be recorded with a greater depth of certainty, as themes pursued in one camp could be tested or elaborated in other localities. It is not surprising then, that the Horn Expedition yielded a new level of ethnographic information, paradigmatic in its effect. The most obvious example is provided by the way in which the sacred *tjurunga* were placed on record by Stirling. This was done tentatively - much like the first, uncertain description of a new species - but in a way which signalled a major advance in European knowledge of Aboriginal religious practice.[132]

The number of artefacts collected on the Horn Expedition set this venture apart from earlier expeditions. The South Australian Museum has more than 200 objects from the Expedition in its collections; sixty-two artefacts were sent to the Expedition's sponsor, W.A. Horn in England, and thirty-five objects from the Expedition are in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.[133] Aware of the value that the artefacts represented to ethnographic science and to his Museum, Stirling was impressed by the ease with which he was able to acquire most of them:

> One could not help being struck with the extreme readiness with which, for comparatively trifling returns, they parted with belongings that must have taken much time and labour to produce. To certain exceptional articles, however, they attach extreme value and part from them with the greatest reluctance. Frequently indeed, after a barter, did I experience a pricking of conscience in that it was a one-sided bargain, but I rarely saw an instance where there was any demur at the value offered for the exchange or any jealousy expressed at the idea that one man was getting better value than another.[134]

The medium of exchange consisted of European trade goods such as tobacco, sugar, or flour, or specific items such as coloured handkerchiefs or knives.

In common with other collectors of his time Stirling's record of individual transactions involving artefacts was rarely explicit. Leaving aside the question of obtaining sacred *tjurunga*, Stirling recorded that he had particular difficulty in obtaining some categories of waist bands and neck ornaments composed of human hair. A neck ornament of human hair was parted from reluctantly and spoken of in a whisper'. 'Great value' was attached to male waist belts, 'made from the hair of a deceased warrior ... it was always exceedingly difficult to persuade a native to part with such articles'.[135] On the other hand, Stirling noted that 'No sense of shame of exposure was exhibited by the men on removal of the dimuntive articles worn as conventional coverings; they were taken off *coram populo* and bartered without hesitation'.[136]

In contrast to the haphazard ethnographic reportage of previous expeditions, Stirling's attempt at providing an analysis and ordered inventory of Central Australian material culture matched that of Helms

in its methodical approach. The principles and techniques of natural science were being applied to ethnography, without reservation. Stirling's description of Arrernte weapons accords with the principles of accurate description established in the *Notes and Queries* handbook:

> (1) All descriptions should be constructive - *i.e.*, the description should follow as far as possible the process of manufacture. (2) It should be borne in mind that outline sketches with section are of the greatest use when dealing with objects of such infinite variety of form as weapons; terms expressing shape are generally relative or otherwise indefinite; an outline with a diagram of the cross-section will often save many words, and is more certain of conveying the exact form of a weapon than any verbal description. (3) Particular care should be taken that the material or materials used in the manufacture of a given weapon are expressly stated.[137]

Informed by these principles, Stirling collected and documented objects to the standard of scientific classification which had been applied to natural science collections at the South Australian Museum during the course of the preceding decade. One example, that of an Arrernte shield, might suffice:

> *Shields - "Ulkuta"* (Plate V., Figs. 11 and 11a)
>
> All the shields observed and collected during the Expedition were made of the soft wood of *Erythrina vespertilio* so that the same remark as to their importation into the district applies to them as to the "Pitchis" made of the same material *vid. infra.* They are all of the same oval shape, though they vary in size and in the degree of convexity of the outer, and of the concavity of the inner, surface. The smallest of those collected was 22 1/2 inches by 7 inches, and the largest 31 inches by 10 inches. the length of the bar, serving as the haft, did not exceed in any case 3 3/4 inches, and was, in many cases, still shorter while the subjacent hollow was correspondingly small. As previously stated these facts afford an indication of the small size of the native hands. Almost all were uniformly and copiously red-ochred all over, and two from Alice Springs showed signs of having been used as receptacles for blood. In fact we saw them so used. Several also showed charred transverse grooves on their convex surface, the result of their having been used for the production of fire by the ploughing method. Cracks, in some, had been mended by splicing with tendons, and in one a considerable depression had been neatly filled up with Triodia resin. The black cross-shaped patch, shown at the lower part of Fig. 11a, is a mass of the same resin stuck on for some unknown reason.[138]

The precision of Stirling's descriptions of Arrernte artefacts is attributable to his zoological training. His appreciation of the new role of these artefacts as specimens in the natural science mould is evident in his analysis of object types, his separation of gross and minor attributes, and his appreciation of the ways in which certain objects could be linked through their involvement in a single ethnographic process. Writing of the practice of blood-letting for ceremonial purposes ('Venesection'), Stirling noted the association between objects which he collected:

> [T]he operator ... squatted in front of his patient and, with a very small piece of glass not more than half an inch long and a quarter wide, notched and sawed at the integuements of the bend of his elbow ... When at last the blood did flow freely it was caught in the hollow of the haft of a shield (the spearthrower is often used for a similar purpose) ... The quantity of blood thus obtained, about six or eight ounces, was applied to the body with a roughly improvised brush, made by twisting a strand of native string round the end of a rough untrimmed stick.[139]

These and other objects (illustrating fire-making or food preparation for example), were displayed in the

South Australian Museum with labels based on Stirling's anthropological report. The descriptive labels remained largely unaltered for several decades, fulfilling a similar function to 'type' descriptions of natural science specimens. In this sense the Horn Expedition represents the first occasion on which an Australian museum's ethnographic project coincided with the emerging practice of field anthropology.

Stirling's field documentation contrasts poorly with those of later workers such as Norman B. Tindale, Donald Thomson or Ronald Berndt. Following the advice given in *Notes and Queries* Stirling conscientiously recorded the processes of manufacture of several artefacts but made no effort to link objects with individual owners or makers. After the rise of social anthropology during the early twentieth century this category became a desirable, if not essential, requirement of museum documentation. Yet, together with Helms' account of the Elder Expedition collections, Stirling's documentation of the Horn Expedition objects contributed to an important shift in the practice of Australian field anthropology. Like Helms, Stirling obtained his ethnographic material with an appreciation of the broader anthropological discipline in which categories of objects were becoming accepted as cultural and social markers. Following the publication of Helms' and Stirling's papers, many expedition and field collectors were aware of a new standard of documentation for their ethnographic objects, matching that traditionally applied to botanical, geological or zoological specimens.

These publications introduced a new phase within Australian anthropology, enduring for varying periods in different centres, in which descriptions of material culture and associated practices became integral to the broader project. As importantly, Stirling's participation in the Horn Expedition enabled him to appreciate the connectedness of objects - both within Aboriginal society and against the background of natural science. This appreciation was marked in the Horn Expedition Report by Stirling's attention to the botanical origins of Aboriginal foods and raw materials. It was to become a major theme in South Australian anthropological practice during the 1920s and 1930s, in contrast to the eastern states.

An opportunity to implement this new standard in the field arose in the year following the publication of the Elder and Horn expedition results. 1897 saw the deaths of Baron von Mueller, Sir Thomas Elder and Ernest Giles, but the golden age of Australian exploration was not entirely eclipsed. The South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society received one final opportunity to retrieve its reputation after the debacle of the Elder Expedition. The Branch was contacted in 1895 by A.F. Calvert, the London-based entrepeneur and explorer who had made his fortune from the Western Australian goldfields.

Like Elder before him, Calvert was inspired by the notion that he could fill in the blanks remaining in Australian geography. To this end he engaged the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society to equip and organise an expedition to the unexplored deserts between the upper Murchison and the Fitzroy Rivers of Western Australia. The experienced surveyor Larry Wells, who had succeeded Lindsay as leader of the Elder Expedition, was to lead the group, comprising twelve men and twenty-four

camels. Despite the presence of the naturalist, Keartland, and the Adelaide School of Mines student, G.L. Jones, who was engaged as a 'mineralogist and collector of native vocabularies', the expedition's primary aims could not be characterised as scientific.

The Calvert Expedition had none of the organisational or personal difficulties of the Elder Expedition but foundered nevertheless, with the disappearance and death of two of its members, G.L. Jones and the leader's own cousin, Charles Wells. The modification of the main party's itinerary following the onset of severe heat coupled with the disappearance of Jones and Wells meant that Keartland's carefully made collection of botanical and zoological specimens had to be abandoned. Given Keartland's status as a proven naturalist in Central Australia (he was a member of the Horn Expedition), this was a particular loss.

It is all the more remarkable then that a collection of about forty ethnographic objects and two Aboriginal skeletons collected during the expedition was deposited in the South Australian Museum, through the expedition's Adelaide agent, A.T. Magarey.[140] These included native foods and raw materials such as red ochre, sticks for spear-making, eagle down and vegetable fibre string, and a selection of artefacts. As well as standard items such as wooden containers, spearheads, a spearthrower, two boomerangs, a shield, stone knife, waist belt and kangaroo teeth ornaments, three categories are worth noting, if only because Wells devoted some attention to their description in his journal. The first of these, wooden bullroarers collected at Joanna Spring, is discussed in Chapter Ten. The second, a pair of adult's and a pair of child's sandals, represented a new category in the Museum's Aboriginal collections of the time. Registered as 'Sandal[s] made of stems of Bird flower plant. 100 miles s. of Joanna Springs, N.W.A.', the sandals were referred to by Wells in the following terms:

> The desert natives are of medium stature and good physique. They generally travel about in small numbers, up to about 20 in all - no doubt owing to the limited supplies of water in some of the wells or soakages, and also to the scarcity of game and other food about them. In the cooler months they are in good condition, but have a hard battle to subsist during the summer, owing to the terrible heat. To protect their feet from the burning sands they make shoes from the bark of shrubs, chiefly the "parrot plant" or "Hack's bean".[141]

The third category, of metal tools, is of particular interest, representing the first objects of their kind to be collected from Aboriginal people not situated near to a major European route or population centre. These artefacts have an extra significance: it is likely that they were fashioned from the equipment abandoned by or taken from the two doomed explorers, Jones and Wells. Six of ten items were registered as 'Pieces of pack saddle sharpened to an adze and used as hatchet'; the rest were described as chisels or awls. In his published report Wells noted that during the fifth search expedition for the missing pair he captured two Aboriginal men:

> "Pallarri" and "Yallamerri", who had in their possession pieces of iron broken from a camel riding saddle. Handcuffing the natives, we proceeded to Joanna Spring, thence travelling westerly about 15 miles to the summit of a high sand ridge. Up to this time the natives would talk eagerly of

> anything except dead white men, and we had, so far, not been able to induce them to do so. Neither would they, without force, go in the direction in which I supposed our friends had perished. A flogging administered to the younger man, "Pallarri", had the desired effect, for the elder man, "Yallamerri", becoming alarmed, then pointed excitedly to the southward, exclaiming, "Purrung whitefellow! Bah! Bah!" and handcuffed together, they started off at a Chinaman's trot. At six miles from that sand ridge, we stood over the dead bodies of my cousin, Charles F. Wells, and G.L. Jones. They lay on top of a sand ridge in the solitude of horrible surroundings, where they had perished from exhaustion and thirst. Carefully packing the bodies, and collecting all the relics we could find, we liberated the natives, rewarding them with presents, and started on our return journey to Derby, reaching there on June 10th.[142]

Wells had obviously used the Horn Expedition report as a model in compiling his short ethnography of the region.[143] His sketch contains a brief outline of the physical appearance of the Aborigines encountered, as well as notable aspects of their material culture and social organisation. Wells also pursued his interest, previously displayed on the Elder Expedition, in collecting Aboriginal vocabularies, even though this responsibility had been formally allotted to G.L. Jones. No evidence of Jones' linguistic work survives. His last diary entry, recorded shortly before his death at an abandoned Aboriginal camp, provides fragmentary evidence that he was at least attuned to ethnographic observation: '21 October, 1896: Made a bough shade and got things snug around camp. Found a piece of native boomerang amid old camp fires'.[144] The young man was also a competent photographer and may have taken several ethnographic images; broken glass negatives were found at this last camp, nearly a century later.[145]

Back in Adelaide, the expedition was acknowledged as 'a splendid failure'. The Royal Geographical Society's President, Simpson Newland, recorded that:

> The Chapter of Australian Exploration closes as it began, with deeds of splendid endurance and courage, with deeds of awful suffering, and with the loss of heroic lives. I say 'closes', for it cannot be supposed that any other expedition will ever be fitted out, for there is nothing more to discover. The blanks still to be traversed may wisely be left to the squatter, the prospector, and other hardy adventurers to fill up when good seasons and opportunity occur.[146]

Endnotes - Chapter Four

1. Instructions to the Elder Exploration Expedition, Council of the Royal Geographical Society 1891: 11-12.

2. For contrasting discussions on the place of fieldwork in the history of anthropology, see Stocking (ed.) 1983; Urry 1984; Clifford 1990.

3. Moyal 1976: 55.

4. These items were donated in 1953 by a daughter of one of Hann's party. See Jones file on Mrs V. Rogers. See also Hann 1873; Hann 1874. For an account of Hann's expedition in North Queensland, see the *Observer*, 27 June, 1903, p.5.

5. Pike (ed.) 1965: 13. Crawford collected Aboriginal artefacts during this expedition, as detailed in these encounters near the Rufus River:

> [March 16 1839] ... observed natives on the opposite bank. One of them came across, I gave him a tomahawk for which he presented me with a small opossum skin cloak.
> [March 17] ... Eight natives came across to us. They seemed quiet, one of them was a grey haired old man.I gave him a tomahawk, for which they offered me a net but I declined it (*Ibid:* 8).

6. Cumpston 1972: 8.

7. Cooper 1989: 200. For Baines' role as ethnographer on this expedition, see Braddon 1986.

8. See Cooper 1989: 39, 55, 57, 59, 68, 147, 309. Photocopies of a typed list of artefacts supplied by von Mueller to the Rumiantsev Museum in Moscow before 1867, and of a list of 'Australian objects sent to Russia by F. Mueller - 1867', are held in AASAM.

9. von Mueller 1867a; 1867b; 1873; 1890.

10. Martin 1865: 243. Martin's party later collected three wooden rafts from Shoal Bay to the south, apparently left on the shore by their owners (*ibid*: 265). These collections have not been traced.

11. Memorandum for H. Vere Barclay, esq., Melbourne, 18 January, 1911. 1913/7162, Series, A3/1, AAC.

12. Barrington 1802 vol.2: 344.

13. *Ibid*: 345. For Bungaree see ADB 1: 177.

14. Mulvaney & Green 1992: 83,87,89,93,110,113,118,137,155,175, 178,179,181,188,199,209,216.

15. *Ibid*: 82-83.

16. *Ibid*: 110.

17. *Ibid*: 137.

18. *Ibid*: 155.

19. *Ibid*: 175.

20. Prior to this event the government steamer was approached by a group of 'about 150' Aborigines who swam from the shore or paddled in dug-out canoes with the purpose of obtaining sticks of tobacco. See J.L. Parsons to Minister of Justice and Education, South Australia, Report on Visit to Daly River, 28 June, 1884. 1884/651, Series 1640, AAC.

21. Mann 1839: 285.

22. Snell bartered for artefacts at this time too; he attempted to secure a *marpangye* fighting club in exchange for a knife, 'but the black vagabond wouldn't take it as it was a favourite weapon of his' (Snell 1988: 105).

23. See Rose (1965) for a Marxist-influenced analysis of this process, undertaken at Angas Downs cattle station during the early 1960s.

24. Chewings 1937: 30-31.

25. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 269. The explorer R.T. Maurice noted that the Aborigines at Fowlers Bay had adopted a more sedentary way of life by 1901 and were 'in various stages of civilization wanting money besides the ancient stipend of clothes and tobacco' (Maurice Papers, PRG 158/45, MLSA), but these were people who were now largely reliant upon the European economy rather than upon resources gained through the use of hunting and gathering artefacts.

26. Eylmann 1908: 309.

27. *Ibid*: 307.

28. Thomson 1949.

29. Appadurai 1986: 4. See the other contributions in this volume, edited by Appadurai.

30. Peterson 1993.

31. Oswalt 1972: 12.

32. Jones, R. 1988: 36.

33. Cuvier advised:

> travellers should not neglect any opportunity when they can visit the places where the dead are placed, when they will witness some fight or take part in one. When they can, by any means, lay their hands on a corpse, they ought to note carefully everything pertaining to the individual. (Quoted

in *ibid*: 37. Jones notes the influence of the German physical anthropologist Johann F. Blumenbach on Cuvier.)

34. See especially Moore 1969; and also Jones, R. 1988: 38; Oswalt 1972: 83; Urry 1972: 45.

35. Degerando 1969 (1800): 63.

36. Urry 1993: 18-19.

37. The manual was first published in 1874. Subsequent editions appeared in 1892, 1899, 1912, 1929, and 1951. These are all discussed in Urry (1972).

38. Fabian 1983: 8.

39. Frazer 1907: 8.

40. Freire-Marreco & Myres 1912: iii.

41. Urry 1972; Urry 1984.

42. Service (1985) and Kuper (1988) provide the best recent syntheses of the work of these anthropological pioneers.

43. Sturt 1833 vol.1: 187-88.

44. Andrews (ed.) 1986: 13.

45. Cumpston 1972: 8.

46. See Jones file on Mrs. W. Gilbert, a descendant of Browne's sister. While one or two of these artefacts may have been collected on Sturt's expedition, it is likely that most originated from the Browne family's extensive pastoral holdings in the north of South Australia and the Northern Territory. See also Jones file on Browne's nephew, L.G. Browne, another collector.

47. Finniss (ed.) 1966: 36.

48. Brock 1975: 38-39. Brock made further mention of an adapted iron implement on 6 October, 1844 (*ibid*: 42).

49. *Ibid*: 51-52; 81; 100-101; 111.

50. *Ibid*: 54.

51. Strahan notes that Sturt's specimens from this expedition 'were lodged at the Australian Museum but cannot now be identified with certainty' (Strahan 1979: 15).

52. See Cooper 1989: 202.

53. Worsnop 1897: vii.

54. Babbage's middle name, Herschel, reflects the connection. In 1849 Herschel had edited a scientific manual for the use of British Navy officers, containing a chapter on 'ethnology'. See Urry 1972: 55. Babbage's father, Charles Babbage, published the 'Ninth Bridgewater Treatise' in 1837, a controversial attempt to reconcile biblical Christianity with evolutionist views as they were being developed (Desmond & Moore 1992: 212-15).

55. For von Mueller's assessment of Benjamin Babbage's botanical collection, see *Victorian Parliamentary Papers* 1859-60, no.1.

56. South Australian Institute Minute Book, vol. 2, November 27, 1862, p.594. GRG 19/14, SRO. The 'articles', which may have included ethnographic objects as well as relics of the Burke and Wills party, are untraced in the Museum's collections today.

57. Quoted in Mudie 1968: 113.

58. See Mudie 1968: 217.

59. 'Museum Memoranda Nov 1863 - Feb 1867', entry for December 1866, SRSAM.

60. During August 1864 the pastoralist John Chambers, one of Stuart's sponsors, donated 'specimens of rocks & soils from Stuart's expedition' to the South Australian Institute Museum, an indication that Stuart may have made his own private collections during the expedition ('Museum Memoranda Nov. 1863 - Feb. 1867', entry for August 1864, SRSAM).

61. Waterhouse 1863: 9.

62. Linn 1989: 66, 85.

63. Another protogé of Ferdinand von Mueller, Becker accompanied the expedition as artist, naturalist and geologist, until his death on 29 April, 1861 (Tipping (ed.) 1979).

64. Two small notebooks containing vocabularies and phrases, attributed to John McKinlay, are preserved as ms. 1404, MLSA.

65. Schomburgk 1879a; 1879b.

66. Giles, A. ms. See also 'Instructions to the Officers in Charge of the party sent out by Messrs. Darwent and Dalwood to Port Darwin'. Copy in GRG 154/7, SRO. Instruction no.7 reads: 'Keep as clear as possible from the Aborigines, and do not allow them to approach any camp within a certain distance to be determined'.

67. Giles 1995: 98-99.

68. *Ibid*: 60.

69. *Ibid*: 48.

70. Andrews' bird specimens were sent to John Gould in London. Curator's Report, July 1875, GRG 19/168, SRO. Andrews' *Catalogue of the Specimens of Natural History, Minerals, Fossils, etc.* is appended to Lewis's report of the expedition (Lewis 1876: 40-42).

71. Andrews later collected for the ornithologist Samuel White in the Aru Islands, obtaining a large number of bird specimens and artefacts of which a few survive in the Museum collections today. See Jones 1992a.

72. Taplin (ed.) 1879.

73. Lewis 1875: 3.

74. Lewis 1876: 14.

75. *Ibid*: 35. Another opportunity to collect fishing nets was passed up on 10 March, 1875:

> We found two native men and several boys busily engaged in fishing. Across the large channels their nets stretched, and in the smaller ones, grass and bushes. I am quite satisfied that I shall not exceed the mark if I say they had thousands of fish, varying in length from one to eight inches. (*Ibid*: 26)

76. Threadgill 1922: 137-41.

77. The South Australian Museum purchased two objects from John Forrest's collection at auction during 1994. One of these, a central Australian boomerang, may have been obtained during this expedition. See ADB 8: 544.

78. Threadgill 1922: 142-44; Gosse 1874.

79. *Ibid*: 9.

80. *Ibid*:18 (28 October, 1873).

81. *Ibid*: 19 (7 November, 1873). In 1951 Gosse's son James allowed the South Australian Museum anthropologist, Norman Tindale, to photograph a pearl shell ornament collected by the explorer during his traverse of the Mann Range. No detail for the acquisition of this object is recorded. See AA40, Acc.596, AASAM.

82. Tipping (ed.) 1979: 24.

83. Giles 1875a: 19, 24. A photograph of Carmichael's drawing is reproduced in Walsh 1988: 29.

84. Giles 1876a: 15.

85. Giles 1899 vol.1: 261.

86. Giles 1876b: 5; 1876a: 11.

87. Giles 1876a: 10.

88. *Ibid*: 28.

89. *Ibid:* 11. Giles gives no indication that his interest in these objects extended to their collection.

90. Giles was one of the only South Australian explorers of the period to use his Aboriginal guide's name in his journals - in fact 'Tommy Holman' was given both a Christian name and a surname, as well as his place of origin. (Giles 1876a; 1876b)

91. Giles 1876b: 15.

92. Giles described the attack as

> the best organized and most disciplined aboriginal force I ever saw ... After the engagement we picked up several spears upon the rocks where the hostile natives had stood, which mostly had a separate barb attached. I destroyed these weapons, much to the disgust of the remaining spy .... (Giles 1876a: 12)

93. Giles 1875b: 9.

94. Curator's Report, December, 1875. GRG 19/168, SRO. A small collection of geological and zoological specimens was also received; see Museum Diary, October 1874 to April 1880, entry for December, 1875, SRSAM.

95. Lindsay 1887: 1.

96. Lindsay's estimate for a collector's costs, covering 2 camels, 2 saddles, pack bags, firearms and ammunition, the rail fare to Herrgot Springs, nine months' rations, and chemicals, amounted to 180 pounds (Lindsay to Hon. Minister of Education, 12 October, 1885. Letter Book 1, p.396, ML Ms 5200/1, MLS).

97. Lindsay 1887: 2. The South Australian Museum itself was apparently not approached for funding, although Lindsay and his collector H. Dittrich were introduced to Stirling before their departure. The Museum Committee's minutes recorded that 'it was not probable they would be able to do much in the way of collecting' (Minutes of Museum Committee, 12 November, 1885. GRG19/364, SRO).

98. Lindsay to von Mueller, 21 October, 1885. Letter Book 1, p.398-9, ML Ms 5200/1, MLS.

99. Lindsay to von Mueller, 17 December, 1886. Letter Book 1, p.403, ML Ms 5200/1, MLS.

100. Lindsay 1889: 650. In his report to the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide, Lindsay was more forthright in his opinon of Lieutenant Dittrich:

> His attachment to the party proved to be a serious mistake, because he had no knowledge of the duties he had undertaken, and lacked that enthusiasm which is so necessary for the successful pusuit of any scientific object. His collection of plants was poor and badly preserved, and the photographs of natives and interesting natural scenery which he had taken right across Australia proved, on being developed in Adelaide, to be quite worthless, the majority of the plates being blanks. (Lindsay 1890: 2)

101. This four page manuscript is held in the Royal Geographical Society library, Adelaide (Ms.10d)

102. Both manuscripts were referred to by Dittrich in his letter from Gregory Downs Station to A. Magarey, 9 June, 1886. (Folder 6, ML Mss 200/3, MLS). The Gregory River material was obtained by Dittrich alone, after splitting from the main party, which he later rejoined, following his 'solitary scientific trip on [his] riding camel to the Gulf of Carpentaria'. Dittrich observed that 'the niggers are getting bold and recently killed a white man and his boy on the open road on the Gregory'.

103. D. Lindsay to A.C. MacDonald, 9 May, 1887. Letter Book 2, p.33, ML Ms 5200/1, MLS.

104. The skeleton was returned to the Warramungu community at Tennant Creek for reburial during 1991. See Jones 1991a.

105. Invoice of goods to be exhibited at the Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1889, by David Lindsay FRGS, Surveyor & Explorer. 11 June, 1887 'Letter Book 2, p.91, ML Ms 5200/1, MLS. See also Lindsay 1889; Lindsay 1893. Some of Lindsay's collection was passed to the School of Mines initially, before reaching the South Australian Museum. Some artefacts remain with the Lindsay family. See Jones file on Lindsay.

106. Chewings 1891: 243-44.

107. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 117. See also Peake-Jones (1985) for an analysis of the reasons for the expedition's failure.

108. Council of the Royal Geographical Society 1891: 11-12.

109. *Ibid*: 38. This journal *pro-forma* was devised several years earlier and was used by William Tietkens during his 1889 expedtion (see Chapter Five).

110. T. Worsnop to W. Peterswald (Commissioner of Police), 23 April, 1891. Folder 3, ML. Mss 200/3, MLS.

111. Council of the Royal Geographical Society 1891: 8.

112. Lindsay wrote:

> I would object to two natives unless they were small boys because they would in all probability put their heads together to mislead. Of course if it were possible to get two uncivilised boys - like the native troopers, it would be different but even then it would not be safe to let them go by themselves for they delight in killing the natives belonging to other tribes. The party should consist of the leader, an assistant, a cook, an Afghan camel driver, a native to act as tracker and interpreter...

(Lindsay to A.C. MacDonald, 16 April, 1890. Letter Book 2, p.399. ML Ms 5200/1, MLS)

113. Lindsay to F. von Mueller, 1890. Letter Book 2, p.423. ML Ms 5200/1, MLS.

114. See for example, the preface to Helms (1896) and introductory remarks to papers in Parts 1 & 2 of same. Helms was born in Altona, Germany in 1842 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1862, becoming a watchmaker. A self-taught naturalist, he was employed by the Australian Museum in Sydney in 1888, collected alpine plants on Mt Kosciusko in 1889, and resigned from the New South Wales Department of Agriculture to join the Elder Expedition. His interest in ethnography appears to date from his Australian Museum employment; he published papers on Aborigines of the Monaro region of that colony in 1895 and 1896. (Gibbney & Smith vol.1: 320)

115. Lindsay 1893: 11.

116. Peake-Jones 1985.

117. Albums are held in the Mitchell Library, the Royal Geographical Society's library in Adelaide, and the South Australian Museum, for example. The latter collection also contains a separate album holding a greater number of prints. Copies of several of the photographs were reproduced in Helms (1896).

118. Helms prefaced his report by the following remarks:

> The accompanying paper on the aborigines has been written by me in response to repeated requests. It was not my original intention to publish these observations, which were made merely to gratify my own desire of acquiring information concerning the habits and customs of the Australian Aborigines.
>
> As Naturalist of the Elder Scientific Expedition, such a line of enquiry lay altogether outside my duties....

(Helms 1896: 237)

119. *Ibid*: 239.

120. *Ibid*: 238. One of the most cogent summaries of this paradox, as expressed in the contemporary debate about Aboriginal religious beliefs, is contained in Swain 1993.

121. *Ibid*: 251.

122. *Ibid*: 251-52.

123. The Streich objects may not all have been collected by the Elder Expedition. An unexamined possibility is that the South Australian Museum collection also includes some Elder Expedition objects collected by the surgeon, Dr Frederick John Elliot. A small collection of twenty-two objects, including spears and boomerangs, was sent to the Museum from Geraldton, the expedition's final destination, during the late 1890s by C.E. and C.M.G. Elliot of Adelaide. No connection between this family and that of Dr F.J. Elliot has so far been established. It is also worth noting that a Dr Elliot was present in Derby, W.A. as Resident Medical Officer at the time of Basedow's 1916 Kimberley expedition. See Basedow 1916-17: 112, 153.

124. Helms 1896: 304.

125. *Ibid*. These two sets of sticks are registered in the South Australian Museum collection as A3760 and A48907-22.

126. *Ibid*: 247.

127. *Ibid*: 307.

128. See for example, Stirling 1896: 40, 58, 65.

129. *Ibid*: Appendices I, II, IV.

130. See Jones 1996d.

131. Stocking 1983: 74.

132. The collection of *tjurunga* in Central Australia is dealt with in Chapter Ten. See also Jones (1995a) for an earlier, published version of this chapter.

133. The South Australian Museum's Horn Expedition objects include those registered as part of Stirling's collection and of that of his son-in-law, Brailsford Robertson. See also Jones file on W.A. Horn; Jones 1996d; Cooper 1989: 216.

134. Stirling 1896: 35-36.

135. *Ibid*: 104; 107.

136. *Ibid*: 36.

137. Freire-Marreco & Myres 1912: 59. Note also, that in several cases, Stirling's own terminology for ethnographic objects and their manufacture is borrowed directly from *Notes and Queries*, a further indication of the manual's influence on the ethnographic project. For example, in describing the Arrernte boomerangs, Stirling referred to the absence of a 'slight spiral twist', a term used in *Notes and Queries* to characterise returning boomerangs (Stirling 1896: 91; Freire-Marreco & Myres 1912: 65).

138. Stirling 1896: 90.

139. *Ibid*: 69.

140. See Jones file on Magarey.

141. Wells 1897-1898: 168-69. These sandals are registered as A6054-55.

142. *Ibid*: 165. The bodies of C.F. Wells and G.L. Jones are buried in the West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide.

143. This is evident from pp.169-70 of his published report in which he refers to Gillen's description of bullroarers (*ibid*).

144. Quoted in Steele & Steele n.d.: 115.

145. During 1993 one of the last campsites of Wells and Jones was discovered by a party from the Northern Territory University. Remnants were found of cooking equipment, small arms and ammunition, a collection of more than fifty geological samples and scientific instruments, as well as photographic plates. See the *Advertiser*, 6 July, 1994, p.4. In 1990 the South Australian Museum received a small collection of objects apparently obtained by the surveyor W.F. Rudall during a search for the missing expedition members which was conducted independently of the five Wells search parties.

146. Quoted in Peake-Jones 1985: 21.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPEDITIONARY COLLECTING, 1830s - 1920s: THE SECOND PHASE

... if you are desirous of securing the whole collection I will be most happy to send all specimens on to you as opportunity offers from time to time ... As my work for the most part will be carried on in totally unknown and unexplored country, it is more than likely that my collections will have a high scientific value ...[1]

The Spencer and Gillen Expedition of 1901-1902

The second wave of museum-based anthropology in South Australia gathered force during the 1920s and reached its height during the 1930s. Its source lay in the niche which anthropology had carved for itself as a distinct branch of the natural sciences in South Australia. It had achieved this to a greater degree than other parts of the country, mainly because of the role of scientific expeditions involving anthropology which were organised in, and from, Adelaide. The published results of these expeditions, and the artefacts obtained, reinforced the role of anthropology as an enterprise which complemented the existing projects of the South Australian Museum. Rather than a distinctly new field of social enquiry, Adelaide anthropology tended to emerge, and operate most successfully, as a branch of the natural sciences.

Until Malinowski's publications of the 1920s the texts which offered the clearest model of what social anthropologists could achieve in Australia were Spencer and Gillen's *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1897) and *The Northern Tribes of Central Austalia* (1904). Spencer's role in these publications had emerged from his background as a zoologist and a natural history museum worker. *Northern Tribes*, the pair's most comprehensive anthropological survey, was derived from an expedition which had distinct natural historical, as well as anthropological aims.

1897 was the year in which Australian exploration completed its heroic phase. It was also the year in which Gillen first made the suggestion to Spencer that together they should 'establish a record of the tribes right through the continent from the settled districts in the south to the ... northern coast'.[2] The idea gathered momentum, receiving international support from James Frazer, the pair's mentor and acclaimed author of *The Golden Bough*. Informing Spencer of his intention to organise a petition to the governments of South Australia and Victoria, Frazer wrote, 'it is a grand piece of work we are asking you ... to do, probably the finest piece of anthropological work that could be done in the world'.[3]

Details of the 1901-1902 expedition, undertaken by Spencer, Gillen, police trooper Harry Chance,

and two Aranda men, Purunda (Warwick) and Erliakiliaka (Jim Kite), have been expertly documented by Mulvaney and Calaby (1985). The expedition's significance lies not only in its ambitious itinerary spanning eleven months, but in the fact that the two anthropologists were able to construct the most complete Australian ethnographic study to date, using almost every available field technique. Gillen's surviving field diaries, even more than Spencer's, make it plain that the intensive fieldwork approach associated with Malinowski's period of influence in academic anthropology was being seriously tested two decades earlier.[4] Spencer and Gillen obtained the first field recordings of Aboriginal voice and music on the Australian continent as well as the first ethnographic film. Spencer took anthropological measurements according to the method outlined in the third edition of *Notes and Queries*. The only justifiable criticism of Spencer and Gillen's anthropology was Spencer's reluctance to use W.H.R. Rivers' genealogical method, pioneered on Haddon's Torres Strait expedition.[5] Hundreds of artefacts were collected and many photographs were taken by both men. A number of these were incorporated within the final published account. Spencer and Gillen sent most of the artefacts collected on the 1901-1902 expedition to the National Museum of Victoria. A few items from the expedition made their way to the South Australian Museum directly, and more than 500 Central Australian artefacts collected by Gillen (including objects from the expedition) were subsequently acquired.[6]

By the time of the 1901-1902 expedition, Spencer and Gillen's *Native Tribes* had become an undisputed landmark in anthropological literature, primarily for its analysis of Aranda social and ceremonial life. Their chapter dealing with 'Clothing, Weapons, Implements, Decorative Art' represented a substantial addition to Stirling's 1896 contribution on the subject, particularly in its identification of regional typologies for weapons and utensils.[7] Nevertheless, this chapter was only one of nineteen, and occupied only sixty-eight pages (about a tenth of the book). In 1904 *Northern Tribes* was published, based on the results of the 1901-1902 expedition. In several respects it was a better rounded ethnography. It contained more comparative material, and three separate chapters were devoted to 'Weapons and Implements', 'Clothing and Ornament' and 'Decorative Art', occupying a total of 110 pages (a seventh of the book). Neither *Native Tribes* nor *Northern Tribes* contained chapters on hunting or food-gathering, an indication of the new primacy of social anthropology over traditional ethnographies. Despite this emphasis, these publications, together with others such as Walter Roth's *Ethnological Bulletins* (1901-1910), set standards for ethnographic documentation which still endure.

Stirling's Horn Expedition report had made some mention of the circumstances of ethnographic collecting, referring to the ease with which most categories of objects were acquired, and to the fact that barter was involved in these transactions. As a more professional ethnography, concentrating less upon actual events, places, people and objects than upon the structures and processes underlying them, it is not surprising to find that Spencer and Gillen's *Northern Tribes* omitted reference to these circumstances. The pair's privileged social standing among the Aranda and related groups was referred to in the context of

obtaining restricted ceremonial knowledge only, not in any discussion of their acquisition of material culture items. Yet this status was crucial in terms of the number and range of objects offered for barter. Gillen's diary of the expedition, published in 1968, makes this plain.[8]

Northern Tribes contains several examples in which omission of the circumstances of collection have contributed to a particular construction, one in which the object and its function takes precedence over the social context in which it was made, used and subsequently collected. An example is provided by the photograph of funerary objects collected on the Expedition and arranged by Spencer to form a diorama in the National Museum of Victoria (illustrated on page 550). The caption to the published plate describes the scene as

> an exact reproduction of the original one. The parcel of bones was obtained from the Bimbinga tribe, where it was found in the middle of a camp on the banks of the MacArthur River. In the same case are seen three log coffins decorated with totemic designs, the one on the right belonging to the dugong totem.[9]

In fact, the log coffins were an intrusion, obtained at another locality on separate occasions more than a month after the parcel of bones.[10] But the main feature of the case, the parcel of bones placed on a forked pole within a horseshoe-shaped mound, seemed an authentic fulfillment of the expectation expressed in Gillen's diary, that '[i]t will probably find a resting place in the Melbourne Museum where the original scene will be faithfully reproduced'.[11] Nevertheless, Spencer and Gillen's analytical account of the Binbinga burial customs, and of the particular practice of keeping the wrapped bones of a deceased relative, omitted reference to important social facts about the object, relating to its original context and to their own motivations as collectors. Gillen's diary confirms that the parcel was obtained from the father and brother of the deceased individual. The diary also reveals that Gillen and Spencer had been 'consumed with a longing to possess this bundle', and describes its acquisition by barter, following a joint decision by the father and brother of the deceased, as the anthropologists were preparing to travel on: 'It was just six o'clock and we were busy saddling and packing up when a deputation of the Binbing-ga arrived carrying various articles for trade and in the rear to our great delight was an old man carrying the much coveted bundle of bones - the bones of his son - which I promptly relieved him of...'.[12]

In stark contrast to the published account of the expedition, Gillen's 365 page diary refers directly to more than forty-five individual transactions through which several hundred objects were acquired by the two anthropologists. Another twenty or so transactions relate to the acquisition of natural science specimens collected mainly by Aboriginal women and children for the party, and to payments for the privilege of viewing ceremonies or taking photographs. There is no comparable body of documentation relating to the actual process of ethnographic collecting on the Australian frontier. The diary's significance lies not so much in the relative values ascribed by each party to particular objects or ceremonies, as in the matter-of-fact acceptance by Aboriginal people and the two anthropologists of the fundamental principle of reciprocity underlying all transactions between them.

An acceptance of this principle underpinned Spencer and Gillen's preparations for their expedition. They were equipped with 400 pounds of tobacco, 400 each of tomahawks, knives and pocket knives, 'pipes innumerable', and large quantities of flour and sugar.[13] Gillen's diary shows graphically how these commodities were brought into play to obtain the desired results. In the case of obtaining artefacts, three methodologies can be identified.

First, the anthropologists would set up a 'trading table', making it known that they had goods to barter. This was usually done on first arrival at a destination, as among Kaitish people at Barrow Creek on 7 June, 1901:

> Busy all day unpacking stores etc. Collected from natives 4 spears 3 clubs 17 pitchies 9 shields 13 boomerangs 8 churinga 7 stone knives 6 magic knouts Atilika 3 hair girdles 2 curved adzes some fur necklets and string in return for which we served out flour tomahawks butchers knives pocket knives beads looking glasses. Native women and children brought in a number of lizards and animals 1 legless lizard being of very recently known and rare variety.[14]

A few weeks later, on 24 July, the anthropological caravan had reached Tennant Creek, site of a growing fringe population of Warramangu people:

> In the afternoon we unpacked and displayed our stores to a gaping grinning chattering crowd and some of them later on added to our collection a Tarna sacred pendant made from whiskers of dead men, two stone knives, 1 Wilgara wooden hook used for spinning fur string, the first of the sort we have met with, 2 Kutirra womens fighting clubs 1 small pitchie and some odds and ends.[15]

On 9 October, 1900, seven months after setting out, the pair's store of trading goods remained apparently bottomless. At Beetaloo Downs station they encountered Wambaia people:

> Unpacked our trading material and did a brisk trade with the blacks thus occupying the morning. Added 25 spears and a number of other things to our collection, but nothing of special value except a wooden Churinga (Purkauali) of the Umbaia tribe.[16]

The second avenue for obtaining objects by barter was for the anthropologists to wait for Aboriginal people to approach them at their camp. This was the most common means of receiving sacred objects, in particular, as it allowed the Aboriginal people involved to transfer these objects with appropriate discretion.[17] Otherwise, secular objects were obtained throughout the trip in this way. At Barrow Creek on 17 June for example, the Aboriginal woman 'Artipintunga', who had already supplied natural history specimens to the expedition, approached Spencer and Gillen with another woman and 'contributed two large pitchies (Terna) wooden vessels used for carrying food and water to our collection'.[18] A more bountiful exchange occured three days later at the same camp:

> the new arrivals rolled up to interview us bringing with them 2 spears 19 boomerangs, 3 shields 2 Lonka Lonka pearl shaped ornaments worn suspended from the waist at corroborees 3 Matcherta 1 stone knife 1 Alpita 1 bunch feathers 1 Nose stick Lalkirra 2 Arkara sticks tipped with feathers and worn in hair by men. Nothing specially good amongst this lot but in all probability they are holding the best things in reserve for future occasion [sic]. We dispensed a number of tomahawks knives Pipes and tobacco and gave each man a large pannican of flour.[19]

This form of collecting took place along the length of the expedition's route, culminating in Borroloola,

where Gillen noted that '[n]ew arrivals visit us daily all bringing implements to exchange for tomahawks and tobacco'.[20] Aboriginal string figures provided a fresh focus for collecting here, and on 17 January 1902 Spencer and Gillen were happy to receive the offer of a full-size canoe: 'Anula blacks brought us a fine bark canoe nearly 17 ft. long for which we gave them 6 tomahawks 6 butchers knives 6 pocket knives 4 water melons and 2 lbs of tobacco'.[21]

The third method, perhaps less considered as a strategy, was to use the context of ceremonies and subsequent payment to Aborigines for these ceremonies as an opportunity for obtaining associated objects. Thus at Alice Springs on 4 May, 1902, after a ceremony in honour of Gillen's own adopted totemic ancestor Urangara, Gillen recorded that he and Spencer

> regaled the Niggers on 50 or 60 lbs of salt junk which brought forth smiles so expansive that we could not measure them. Secured the decorated shield and pitchie used in the ceremonies also two hair girdles, a blood stained shield the haft of which was used as a receptacle for holding blood when decorating the performers.[22]

A similar opportunity arose after Spencer and Gillen witnessed a ritual conflict which involved the Alice Springs Aranda and a deputation of about twenty-five men from Owen Springs and the Eastern MacDonnell Ranges:

> They arrived in full dress each with a bunch of Eaglehawk or Emu feathers in his waist girdle and armed with spears boomerangs and shields; as soon as the local men heard that the party was approaching they hurried to their camps and decorated themselves with yellow ochre and charcoal and mustering together all fully armed they marched to meet the visitors; both parties when within a few hundred yards of the meeting place began to dance in a warlike manner carrying their spears upright and shields in front as if for protection joining forces they continued dancing for a few minutes led by one man who took up a position a few yards ahead of the others. It was a savage looking scene and one that fairly warmed the cockles of Spencer's big heart. I took one picture with the half plate camera he secured 18 ... Things calmed down by degrees and after the more belligerent characters had grown too hoarse to make themselves heard I served out a stick of tobacco to each man which put them all in good humour. Casualties some broken weapons and one nasty flesh wound. Secured from the visitors 3 spears (Ilcherta) 2 woomeras, 1 shield 1 bunch Eaglehawk feathers and 5 stone churinga of Yelka and Unjeamba totems in return for which I served out flour.[23]

It is an irony that in spite of his hard-won and detailed knowledge of all of the objects which he collected, Gillen's documentation of his collection, acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1909, was no better than that of the average amateur collector of the period. A partial exception may be made in the case of sacred objects. Gillen apparently considered that his published documentation of the object types would suffice, and indicated this in a letter accompanying his collection: 'All articles enumerated are figured in our books where full particulars can be obtained'.[24] This did not apply to 'half a dozen dilly bags beautifully woven from grass fibre and decorated in various designs', bartered from 'Gnanji' people on 15 October, 1901 and referred to in Gillen's Diary.[25] Two of these are in the South Australian Museum collection (A2531, A2821), documented simply as 'native basket, N.T.'. A 'Chignon, with ornament of

small bones' (A3094) collected from the Kaitish people at Barrow Creek, is unreferenced in either *Camp Jottings* or *Northern Tribes*. Such an item may have been collected by Gillen on one of his occasional trips north along the Telegraph Line from Alice Springs.

Otherwise, most artefacts from the 1901-1902 expedition in Gillen's collection may be identified at least to the level of object type from the figures and descriptions in *Northern Tribes*. These objects include tjurunga, boomerangs and spears, shell ornaments, charms, pointing bones, wooden containers, stone knives, headbands, neckbands, and tassels. As with Stirling's descriptions of the Horn Expedition items, it seems that Spencer's editorial work on both *Native Tribes* and *Northern Tribes* assisted him in cataloguing and exhibiting the Melbourne Museum's collections to best effect.[26]

If the Horn Expedition had indicated the potential benefit to be gained from a systematic field exercise in ethnographic collecting, Spencer and Gillen's 1901-1902 Expedition fulfilled that promise. It was a unique event resulting from a rare combination of several factors: a scientist and field worker who were also close friends, the advantage gained by working along the Telegraph Line, the support of two state governments and private sponsorship, and the goodwill extended to the party by Aborigines and Europeans alike. Until the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions of the 1920s, this field partnership remained the only example of an Australian scientific expedition dedicated to the main goal of anthropological research.

The Expedition contained two important models for the way in which Australian field anthropology would develop during the next few decades. On the one hand, Spencer's readiness to withdraw from academic surroundings and immerse himself in fieldwork for an extended period signalled the course that would be taken by anthropology in Sydney and Melbourne, towards the promotion of the emerging British model of intensive fieldwork by individual participants. Bronislaw Malinowski became the leading exemplar of this methodology, advocated by W.H.R. Rivers in his 1913 'Report on anthropological research outside America'.[27] On the other hand, the Expedition had also indicated the benefits of teamwork in the field, with each individual exploiting a particular area of expertise and pooling the results for synthesis. This approach, demonstrated to most obvious effect by Haddon's Torres Strait Expedition, was rejected by the Sydney school of anthropology, but was embraced during the 1920s by the emerging Adelaide school under the aegis of the Board for Anthropological Research.[28]

As far as the South Australian Museum was concerned, the part played by scientific expeditions in influencing the basic structure and content of its ethnographic collections was largely completed by the Spencer and Gillen Expedition. The main classes of objects and their descriptions seem to have been decided by that time. Only one additional category remained to be fixed, that of bark paintings. Through these objects, the identification and investigation of Aboriginal art itself began, a subject which lies beyond the scope of this study. Spencer's expedition to the Northern Territory in 1911 was of crucial significance in that respect.[29]

In the meantime, from the turn of the century until the 1920s, Australian anthropological fieldwork returned to its earlier status, as a minor adjunct to larger expeditions. With the close of the age of Australian geographic exploration, the focus and scale of those expeditions had also shifted. The expeditions of the previous decades had raised as many questions as they answered, particularly about the mineral potential of the interior. It was this issue in particular which came to be addressed by the smaller and less ambitious expeditions which characterised the period from the 1890s until the 1920s.

Prospectors, Surveyors and Part-time Ethnographers - From Tietkens to White

Until the establishment in 1926 of the Adelaide-based Board for Anthropological Research, scientific expeditions with a natural history or ethnographic emphasis occurred randomly, arising from a combination of private and government initiatives. The South Australian Museum benefited from several of these expeditions, particularly those which had surveying and mineral prospecting as their main aim. Six collectors serve to illustrate this category.

William Cornish surveyed a large part of the extreme north-east of South Australia during the late 1870s. During March 1879 he donated a small collection to the Museum which included:

> rocks from Cooper's Creek and a large net made of rushes made of rushes by the natives on Coopers Creek, a small net made from the bark of the Stereulia used by the natives on the Warburton near the N.T. boundary of S.A., a net bag containing an herb called Picherie greatly valued by the natives of the interior by whom it is smoked, also specimens of the seed of the nardoo plant, used as food by the natives.[30]

Later in 1879 his colleague, the surveyor William Strawbridge, donated further objects collected by Cornish at Cowarie station. These comprised two australites ('obsidian bombs'), considered by the Aborigines of the region as charms and known as 'Waragirta Milketundra' (emu eyes).[31] Of this small collection the pituri bag carries the most historical significance. Cornish's report of his survey expedition of December 1878 to January 1879 indicates that he encountered a large group of 'Queensland blacks' on the Warburton River, who had fled there from trouble with white men to the north. This group were survivors of massacres at Kaliduwarry and Koonchera waterholes, carried out by Europeans and native police in reprisal for the murder of a European station cook some weeks earlier. Kaliduwarry was the closest large waterhole to the most valued source of pituri, the centre of a wide trade network.[32] Cornish took some trouble to establish good relations with Aborigines during his survey expeditions, as evidenced by his report. He contributed two vocabularies to Curr's 1886 survey of Aboriginal languages, from Cooper's Creek and the Warburton River.[33]

After several years'work as a stockman in western New South Wales, William H. Tietkens gained his first exploring experience as a member of Giles' 1873 and 1875 expeditions. He graduated as a

surveyor in 1878 and in 1889 was appointed by the Adelaide-based Central Australian Exploring and Prospecting Association to lead an exporation party of four through the Western MacDonnell Ranges to examine the country around Lake Amadeus. During this expeditoin he became the first person to photograph the Olgas and Ayers Rock, although he considered it 'a great pity one more expert than myself is not here with a large camera to do greater justice to this wonderful feature'.[34] These images, and many of the four dozen glass plate negatives which he processed, have not been traced. Even so, his studies of Aboriginal people and of paintings at Ayers Rock were the first ethnographic photographs to be made successfully during a Central Austrailan exploring expedition.[35] Tietkens encountered very few Aboriginal people during this trip, other than a group of forty men, women and children at Glen Helen station, and collected just seven ethnographic objects among the geological and botanical specimens which were his primary scientific concern.[36] He noted cryptically in his journal that artefacts were 'obtained with difficulty'. Four of the seven objects made their way into the South Australian Museum collections: a small wooden bullroarer, a bean-tree shield and two boomerangs. These were probably obtained at Glen Helen Station on 1st April, 1889, the bullroarer being described by Tietkens as one of 'two "whirrls", used at corrobborrees'. The shield may have been of particular significance to Tietkens. Three days earlier, at Camp no.7, he had 'obtained specimens of the bean tree, from which the natives make their shields and procure fire'.[37] One other Aboriginal object, a diorite axehead, appears in Tietkens' listing of mineral specimens collected on the expedition, later classified by H.Y.L. Brown.

Captain F. Carrington undertook much of the survey work of the Arnhem Land coast and river system during the mid-1880s, correcting and extending investigations made by Cadell and Lindsay. A literate observer, he noted several encounters with Aboriginal people in his reports and publications. During his 1885 survey of the MacArthur and Roper Rivers, for example, he observed that the Aborigines there spoke the 'Macassan tongue' but were 'quite unacquainted with the whites, and were very much afraid of the steamer and launch, it required a deal of persuasion to induce them to visit us, but through the medium of a bag of rice and some tobacco we made their acquaintance ...'.[38]

More than ten years after the re-establishment of European settlement in Arnhem Land, their commodities were being continually employed in dealings with Aboriginal people. Carrington recorded a further example during his survey of the Tomkinson River during 1885: 'Many natives were met with on the Tomkinson River, they were very friendly, and brought their children with them, a practice not at all common, they were presented with pipes, tobacco and biscuits'.[39] Carrington was not an active collector and did not exploit the opportunities presented by these encounters to obtain ethnographic material. Nevertheless he did make two important acquisitions, obtaining some of the first bark paintings and hooked boomerangs to be obtained by museums. Both acquisitions were made in the absence of Aboriginal owners or custodians. In his Horn Expedition Report, Edward Stirling mentioned the acquisition of two hooked boomerangs collected by Carrington: 'The first specimens of this peculiar weapon which reached the South

Australian Museum were discovered in 1884 by Captain Carrington of the S.S. Palmerston, in a cave in a sandstone hill on the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and were afterwards presented to the Museum by F.J. Sanderson, Esq'.[40] The locality indicates that the boomerangs had been traded into the Arnhem Land area from well south and were probably cached for ceremonial use as part of an exchange cycle later documented by Donald Thomson.[41] Carrington's own account indicates that the 'very curious weapons ... a boomerang and battleaxe combined' were associated with a cave burial and had been 'wrapped up very carefully in several layers of paper bark ... several friends who have seen them, and who are well acquainted with the natives of Australian generally, have informed me that they have not met with the same kind of weapon elsewhere'.[42] In the course of the next decade the hooked boomerang was to become increasingly familiar to collectors.

Carrington's discovery of paintings on the ceilings of bark huts in an abandoned Aboriginal camp on Field Island was made during his Alligator Rivers survey of 1885. As the earliest provenanced examples in existence, these five bark paintings, depicting fish, a turtle and a goose in the style of Eastern Arnhem Land rock art, have attained iconic status. Carrington's original report does not mention the find; he subsequently recorded the discovery briefly within his 1886-87 publication on the 'Rivers of the Northern Territory'.[43] There seems little doubt that Carrington would have bartered tobacco for the paintings had their owners been present; he noted the familiarity of the Aborigines of Blue Mud Bay with tobacco as a trade item obtained through their dealings with Malay trepangers. Additionally, Carrington's camp was raided on at least one occasion for 'iron buckets, shovels, wire, and blankets'.[44]

Perhaps as significant as the discovery of the bark paintings was the action of Carrington or his men in trimming the bark paintings to size, evident from the cut edges of the paintings and from the fact that their present dimensions (approximately one metre square) would not have allowed their use in the construction of Aboriginal shelters. While Aboriginal people were not present to observe it, this action might constitute the earliest documented instance of European intervention in the production of what came to be described as Aboriginal art.[45]

Allan Arthur Davidson, graduate of the Adelaide School of Mines, led two prospecting expeditions into the little known Tanami region of the Northern Territory during the 1890s. He discovered the Tanami goldfield during the second of these. The expedition yielded a total of sixty-seven artefacts, forty-three collected by Davidson himself, and twenty-four by a member of his party, Frederick R. Field. Davidson's collection, purchased from his daughter in 1954, is one of the most comprehensive obtained by these early prospectors. It consists of five spears, three shields, a wooden dish, three boomerangs, two hafted axes, a hafted stone pick, five spearthrowers, five stone knives, a pearl shell pendant, a head ring, five hairstring necklets, two bean necklaces, four pointing bones and five tjurunga. Davidson's interest in ethnography may have been encouraged by his father who had collected artefacts in western South Australia while on an epic horseback journey from Broken Hill to Kalgoorlie via Eucla in 1890.[46] Field's collection of twenty-

four artefacts, donated by his daughter in 1940, comprises two bone nose-pegs, three stone knives, a fighting pick, five axeheads, three boomerangs, a spearthrower, a wooden dish, a shield, a shell ornament, two wooden tjurunga and four stone tjurunga. The presence of a rifle bullet embedded in the bean-tree shield may indicate a context for this collection.[47]

During the 1890s the surveyor and geologist Samuel Grau Hubbe led several expeditions with the combined aim of mineral exploration and establishment of viable stock routes from South to Western Australia. The published report of his 1897 expedition indicates only passing attention to ethnographic detail, but during his 1898 Gawler Range explorations Hubbe made a collection of at least seventeen objects, including two large 'sword boomerangs', a 'play-stick' and a 'spinning top'. This last object, apparently modelled on a European example, signalled that the nomadic existence of the Aborigines of the Gawler Ranges was about to become transformed by contact, making this an important collection.

The South Australian Government Geologist, H.Y.L. Brown, was a sixth collector of note. Trained under T.H. Huxley, 'Geology Brown' was reputed to have known 'every mineral belt from Darwin to Mount Gambier'.[48] Francis Gillen observed of Brown during 1895 that he 'takes great interest in things anthropological and has been going through my collection with much interest'.[49] Gillen also recorded that Brown had a 'grievance' against Edward Stirling, but this did not prevent him donating a range of ethnographic material from his explorations in Central and northern Australia from the late 1880s until 1909. As with many other collectors of his day, his ethnographic and natural science material arrived at the Museum with little additional explanation. The responsibility for classifying and positioning these objects within an appropriate context was assumed to lie with the Museum itself.

These 'incidental' collectors may be contrasted with four South Australian explorers who made conscious efforts to locate their ethnographic collections within a scientific frame. The expeditions of Herbert Basedow (1902-1926) and of Captain S.A. White (1913-1916) into Central Australia, the northern Kimberley expedition of Charles Price Conigrave (1912), and Richard Threlwall Maurice's forays north from Fowlers Bay (1896-1903), are all notable for this reason.

Each of these men built reputations as latter-day explorers and added substance to this status through collections of natural science specimens and Aboriginal objects. While Captain S.A. White's motives were more obviously directed to his consuming interest in ornithology, the rest were drawn, like many nineteenth-century explorers, to the remaining blanks on the exploration map - as well as by the possibility of discovering mineral riches in Central or Northern Australia. In Maurice's case, this is despite the claim made in a letter to his mentor, the surveyor and explorer Charles Winnecke, that 'I don't pretend to be an explorer like yourself and others - only a traveller using what little abilities [I] possess in endeavouring to promote knowledge be it of aboriginals, country or the botanical etc etc specimens of the places I visit. I prefer the life to that of civilization'.[50]

As an ethnographic collector Maurice was directly influenced by the outcome of the scientific

expeditions of the 1890s discussed above. The delineation of ethnographic categories by authorities such as Stirling, Spencer and Gillen signalled new opportunities for collectors who derived most satisfaction from extending their knowledge of the bush and its mysteries beyond that defined by 'city-based experts'. Maurice's friendship with Charles Winnecke, who had guided the Horn Expedition but had subsequently fallen out with both Spencer and Stirling, further sharpened this focus.

Maurice's manuscripts reveal the extent to which nineteenth century explorers derived their methodology from models established by previous expeditions. For his Rawlinson Range Expedition of 1901 and his Fowlers Bay to Wyndham Expedition of 1902, Maurice used the pro-forma daily entry developed for the Elder Expedition, with fields for geological, botanical, zoological and ethnographic observations.[51] His drive to obtain Aboriginal sacred objects in Central Australia (discussed in Chapter Ten) can be traced to his understanding of these objects as described in Stirling's Horn Expedition report.

Maurice relied on barter to obtain artefacts and specimens. Bags of flour and axes were exchanged for significant sacred objects. For other 'sundry native implements', tobacco, shirts and knives were the accepted medium of exchange.[52] Maurice's collection lists read much like those of his contemporaries - a miscellany of natural science and ethnographic material - but with the distinctive addition of Aboriginal nomenclature for objects.[53]

Maurice sent the majority of his collections to Winnecke, who by 1902 had amassed a collection of more than seventy tjurunga, numerous other ceremonial stones and secular artefacts, and many jars of reptiles, insects and other natural history specimens.[54] Despite his intentions Winnecke showed none of Spencer's flair for synthesising the data of his field informant and instead encouraged Maurice to publish his own material. Maurice demurred after conceding that 'Gillen and Spencer's' scientific description of the semi-civilized Arunta tribe could not be surpassed': 'I have not the brains or patience to write a readable book and unless it could be made truly worth reading from the fact that the information was truly correct in every sense I would have nothing to do with it'.[55]

The South Australian Museum eventually acquired the natural science and ethnographic collections of both Winnecke and Maurice, but in a circuitous fashion. In 1901 the pair had made an agreement by which each would have the first opportunity to purchase the other's collection in the event of the death of that partner.[56] Winnecke died in 1902, but offered his collection to the Museum for fifty pounds not long beforehand, describing it as superior to Gillen's collection (acquired by the University of Melbourne through Spencer) which he dismissed as 'not half so numerous and rare as mine is'.[57] Stirling selected more than 200 of the 400 artefacts offered, including 73 tjurunga, 31 message sticks, 72 ceremonial stones, 30 axes and knives and several spearthrowers, for the agreed sum of fifty pounds, but the Museum Committee vetoed the sale for lack of funds.[58] All was not lost. On his death shortly after, Winnecke's collection passed to Maurice who presented it to the Museum together with his own collection in December 1902. Stirling reported to the Committee that Maurice had 'acquired & presented ... all the Ethnological,

Zoological & sundry other specimens which belonged to him and the late Mr Winnecke, jointly, a good part of the collection having been obtained by Mr Maurice on various exploration expeditions during recent years.[59]

Like Maurice, Herbert Basedow was a self-made anthropologist who worked at the fringe of museum ethnology as this new profession was becoming entrenched by Australia's museum directors - Stirling in Adelaide, Etheridge in Sydney, and Spencer in Melbourne. As with Maurice's 'Buddistic manipulations', Basedow's original ideas about the origins of the Australian Aborigines and their beliefs marked him as a maverick. His particular interest in erotic ritual and phallicism provoked the bush ethnographer George Aiston to describe him as 'very nearly a sexual pervert - he lived for the sexual organs, he was a true phallic worshipper'.[60] Nevertheless, Basedow had opportunities for pursuing ethnographic interests of which Spencer might have been justifiably envious. His involvement with geological survey expeditions in northern Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, his medical relief expeditions following the 1919 tuberculosis epidemic in northern South Australia and in the Northern Territory, all brought him into close contact with Aboriginal people. These opportunities encouraged Basedow to produce a general survey work, *The Australian Aboriginal* (1925). The work was criticised for its lack of substance, for errors, and, less explicitly, for being the work of a dilettante ethnographer who had already crossed from the professions of geologist and physician. Writing to Spencer about the book, the South Australian Government Geologist, L. Keith Ward, was unrestrained in his criticism:

> I would express my sympathy for those who are destined to take the work as authoritative ... they will be duped like those who took his writings on oil for gospel ... The generalisations that are backed by reported observations from widely distant parts of this continent are not impressive to one who is accustomed to look in most things for the geographical limits to customs as well as rocks.[61]

The South Australian anatomist and anthropologist, Frederick Wood Jones, described Basedow's credentials as 'an impudent parade of degrees, real or assumed; and knowledge, borrowed, stolen or feigned.[62]

Basedow was prepared to make virtues of his shortcomings. In a veiled reference to Spencer and Gillen's status in the Northern Territory, he claimed authenticity for his work in spite of not being 'an initiated member of any tribe'.[63] In his introduction to *Knights of the Boomerang* (1935) he stressed that his work had kept him 'constantly among the natives, who learned to regard him as one of themselves'.[64] Basedow did make a significant contribution in recording and analysing Aboriginal rock art. He was the first to posit substantial antiquity for the form, basing this hypothesis on the accretions of 'desert varnish' overlaying the carvings.[65] He also extended the analysis of Aboriginal art from rock carvings and paintings to an examination of stylised ornamentation on wooden artefacts.[66]

Basedow's early expeditions followed the model established by the Royal Geographical Society

through the Elder and Calvert Expeditions. He adopted the Society's system of orthography 'as closely as possible' when recording Aboriginal words and names.[67] Four of Basedow's expeditions yielded the majority of ethnographic material in his collection; these were the 1903 Government North-West Expedition into northern South Australia, the 1905 geological survey of the north-western coastal districts of the Northern Territory, the 1911 Bathurst Island expedition, and the 1916 North-Western Australian Expedition. These expeditions, together with his other collecting forays, resulted in a total of approximately 1700 artefacts by the time of Basedow's death in 1933. He had sold about 200 of his artefacts in Europe before the First World War to the Ethnology Museums in Hamburg and Hannover, the Wellcome Historical and Medical Museum and the British Museum in London.[68] Most of the collection remaining at his death was acquired by the Commonwealth Government and is now in the collection of the National Museum of Australia.[69] In consideration for classifying the collection (undertaken by N.B. Tindale), the South Australian Museum was given seventy-nine 'duplicates' from the collection, a figure to which can be added twenty-two other objects acquired directly from Basedow, his family, and through an acquaintance, M.C. Fisher.[70]

Basedow's first expedition, undertaken while he was still a science student at the University of Adelaide, was led by the veteran explorer and experienced ethnographer Larry Wells, second-in-command of the Elder Expedition and leader of the Calvert Expedition. The Calvert Expedition's cook, James Trainor, also accompanied the expedition, as did the South Australian Government Geologist, F.R. George. Five other Europeans including Basedow and three Aboriginal helpers made up the complement. Basedow regarded his work on this expedition as falling within recent traditions of ethnographic research, stating that 'the following facts are placed on record to afford some account of the natives of a region of Central Australia that has been practically unexplored, from an ethnological point of view, and to bring those tribes into comparison with those natives of Central and Northern Australia which the reports of the Elder and Horn Expeditions and the work of Messrs Spencer and Gillen have made comparatively well known'.[71]

Although none of the objects collected by Basedow on the 1903 expedition are in the South Australian Museum's collection, his expedition report was published in Adelaide by the Royal Geographical Society. The report constitutes one of a series of publications which helped to define the course of material culture studies within the tradition fostered and encouraged by the Royal Geographical Society in association with Australian natural history museums. Edward Stirling and Baldwin Spencer each read Basedow's manuscript and made editorial suggestions. It is therefore worth noting some of the circumstances in which Basedow obtained the material.

As with other frontier collectors, Basedow's acquisitions reflect his social encounters with Aborigines and the currency of barter goods available for exchange. His expedition equipment list included 'tobacco, pipes and knives for working natives, and useful presents for wild natives'.[72] Coloured cloth, used as an item of barter by exploration expeditions throughout the nineteenth century, again made an

appearance. At Opparinna Waterhole on 5 July, 1903, Basedow wrote:

> I have with me several sample bundles of brilliantly coloured patches of cloth, which I brought from Adelaide to distribute among the aborigines. Some of these presents were given to our dusky neighbours who accepted them with pleasure. That the vivid colours appealed to them is certain, for, when I visited the camp this afternoon, they had adorned their pubes with tassels they had constructed of the cloth. They proudly pointed to the ornaments and called them 'waipella [white-fella] moiranje'.[73]

A clearer example of the way in which Aboriginal people incorporated European objects within their own material culture occurred on the same day. On this occasion Basedow himself was the object of appropriation: 'When McEvoy cut my hair today, the natives collected it all and worked it up into string, out of which they made themselves a necklace they call 'olinndu''.[74] Basedow's willingness to place himself within the Aboriginal sphere probably facilitated his acquisition of sacred objects. Despite later criticisms of his research, his 1904 report contains an impressive amount of ethnographic detail. Following the format established by the Elder and Horn Expeditions, the report contained extensive visual records of Aboriginal rock paintings, as well as descriptions of artefacts. Basedow's 1904 ethnography exceeded the standards set by the Elder and Horn reports in several respects. He recorded a large comparative vocabulary of about 1500 'Aluridja and Arunnda' words and 130 'Karkurrerra' words, as well as twenty-two names of men, twenty-one of women, and four names of dogs[75]. Besides making records of rock art by tracings and interviewing Aboriginal people as to its meanings, he took the pioneering step of obtaining original pencil drawings upon 'teaching some members of the Karkurrerra Tribe ... south of the Musgrave Ranges, the use of a pencil'.[76] This method of obtaining ethnographic data was to become standard practice for anthropologists such as Tindale, Mountford and Berndt only after 1930.

Basedow's observations on material culture during this expedition also went further than his predecessors: while adopting the same broad categories of description used by Stirling, Spencer and Gillen, he added new detail. Basedow was the first to obtain Aboriginal names for the component parts of artefacts such as spears and spearthrowers.[77] He also noted the incorporation of metal into the traditional repertoire of artefacts used in the region.[78] Only one of Basedow's artefacts from this expedition was subsequently acquired by the South Australian Museum - a wooden dish from the Alberga Creek (A21534). Basedow's advances in ethnographic description were of greater importance though, particularly in view of Edward Stirling's assistance with his manuscript.

Stirling also helped to edit Basedow's 1907 report on his 'Anthropological Notes on the Western Coastal Tribes of the Northern Territory of South Australia'.[79] Basedow joined this 1905 expedition as assistant to H.Y.L. Brown, the South Australian Government Geologist, and again his report made a significant contribution to material culture studies. Unlike previous ethnographies (including Spencer and Gillen's) which had offered only general descriptions of hunting and food-gathering practices, Basedow's account incorporated specific references to artefacts and their manufacture. His detailed discussion

confirmed earlier models of artefact classification.In the case of spears for example, he adopted the 'scheme of classification of main types of Australian spears, as described by Spencer and Gillen' (in *Northern Tribes*).[80] As in Spencer and Gillen's analysis, Basedow's 'Notes' contained explicit reference to evolutionism as the taxonomic principle which determined object types.[81]

During 1907 Basedow was able to extend the principles of material culture classification into the same region, a visit to Bathurst Island made towards the end of his brief term as the Chief Protector of Northern Territory Aborigines. With little of the island's ethnography described, Basedow derived maximum effect from his report which was published in London's Anthropological Institute *Journal* in 1913.[82] He made the first description of the elaborately carved spears of Melville and Bathurst Island and identified four types of clubs, two of which 'have not to my knowledge been observed in Australia before'. He wrote: 'They form an interesting group of Australian implements and weapons that allows of a satisfactory system of classification on account of the regularity of the various types, not only as regards the actual cutting of the particular form, but also as regards the way in which they are decorated'.[83] The five-metre long sewn bark canoe of Bathurst Island was another previously undescribed form, and Basedow sold one of the examples figured in his report to the South Australian Museum in 1911.[84]

A feature of Basedow's 1911 expedition and of his subsequent report was his description of the five decorated wooden grave posts discovered by him on the island, surrounding an infant's grave. He briefly documented the excavation of the grave, noting that 'several men of the local tribe gave me voluntary assistance in the exhumation of the skeleton, and did not in the least object to handle the bones and carry them for me'.[85] He focused upon the posts themselves though, and particularly on their painted designs. Again, he had the willing assistance of Bathurst Island Aborigines (Tiwi people) in documenting these. They cooperated to the extent of complying with Basedow's request to have the faded designs 'freshened up', exercising 'the greatest care to apply the colours in precisely the same positions as they originally occupied'.[86] Basedow not only described this process, but also photographed it, providing a rarely documented instance of a collector directly applying aesthetic standards in the field:

> Having persuaded the natives to repaint the designs on the tomb-posts, in places where they were defective or missing, they set about the work with enthusiasm, and did not rest until they had repainted the whole of the surfaces. To accomplish this they leaned the posts against trees and divided themselves into small groups of two to four, each of which undertook part of the work...[87]

The South Australian Museum had acquired examples of the grave posts several years earlier through the Adelaide-based merchant and collector D.M. Sayers. Basedow's published description enabled Edward Stirling to display these earlier acquisitions with more accurate descriptions. In fact, Basedow's analysis of the grave-post designs (and their re-painting) as a 'case-study in the evolution of art', coincided with similar developments in museum anthropology at that time. This was particularly the case in Victoria; Spencer had begun collecting and documenting Arnhem Land bark paintings in 1911.[88] Basedow's opinion was that:

> Ethnologically, these tomb-posts are of the greatest importance ... Apart from the carvings, the painted designs, alone, are quite superior to anything existing on the mainland. The marked symmetry of the individual patterns and their diversity, when compared with one another, can hardly find a parallel on the mainland. We might look upon these island productions as representing interesting and independent transition stages between the primitive art of the Continental Australian, on the one hand, and the more perfected types of equatorial island tribes to the north of Australia, on the other.[89]

Despite this remark, Basedow did not record the direct impact of Macassan and European technology and symbolism on this form of Aboriginal art. This opportunity was taken up a few months later by the anthropologist H.K. Fry, as discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

Before his report was published, Basedow offered the grave posts to Stirling together with the bark canoe, but at a price which obliged the Museum Director to select only the latter, an object unrepresented in the collections. Four of the five grave posts were eventually donated to the Museum half a century later, from the estate of Basedow's sister.[90]

Basedow's three anthropological reports, from his 1903, 1905 and 1911 expeditions, represent his most valuable ethnographic output. On the basis of these reports, aside from his geological experience, his candidacy in 1912 for the position of Director of the South Australian Museum was well-based. Stirling had retired from the position of Director in order to concentrate on revising the ethnological exhibits, and an ethnographer of Basedow's standing was not required. His lack of success in the application may explain the fact that his subsequent ethnographic publications no longer conformed to the model established by the Elder, Horn, and Spencer and Gillen expeditions. *The Australian Aboriginal* (1925) and *Knights of the Boomerang* (1935), contain no additional data of importance and his attempts at synthesis and generalisation detracted from, rather than added, to his reputation.

In the meantime, Basedow was involved in another notable expedition yielding a large quantity of ethnographic material. This was the 1916 North-Western Australia Expedition, undertaken to locate minerals required for the Home Munitions Department during the First World War. Basedow published his journal of this three month expedition which consisted of several forays into the Kimberley from the expedition vessel, together with scientific reports on the geological and natural history specimens collected.[91] In contrast to his earlier more disciplined anthropological reports, Basedow's ethnographic references for this expedition were scattered throughout the daily journal and couched in the same journalistic prose which characterised his later publications. As in Gillen's Diary, and in Basedow's own journal of his 1903 expedition, this style allowed anecdotal description of the circumstances under which he acquired ethnographic objects. At Napier Downs station, inland from Derby, on 21 April, 1916, he recorded that 'the local tribe brought me a number of useful things in exchange for which I distributed tobacco, beads, coloured kerchiefs, and pocket knives among them'.[92] Before moving on to the next locality, three days later, another exchange occured: '[e]arly in the morning I attended to a levee of gins who

were anxious to do business by exchanging their throwing sticks and boomerangs (kailis) for pocket knives and tobacco'.[93] At Port George IV Mission to the north, on 20 May, Basedow noticed new forms of ethnographic objects among the material offered for barter:

> The people walked about naked, the only pretence at dress being a firmly plaited hair belt, with or without a small shell appendage over the pubes. The principal weapons in use are the reed spear ('Djinnalye') with a long mangrove point and stone head, the spear-thrower ('yungulcha') and the throwing stick. A type of water-carrier was found, which, so far as I am aware, is new to Australian ethnography. It consists of a cylindrical bucket ('wirrauwa'), made of paper bark, the joints of which are stiched with strips of vine and sealed with gum. The vessel is carried by a fur-string handle ... A fine collection was made of spears, spearthrowers, fire-making sticks, water-carriers, fur and human hair-belts, ceremonial objects, and implements.[94]

Three bark buckets, eight boomerangs, a shell necklace, four clubs, a spearthrower, two hafted axes, one spear, several spearpoints, and some skeletal material collected by Basedow during this expedition were eventually acquired by the South Australian Museum.

Basedow's northernmost collecting locality during this expedition, the Forest River, had been the starting point for the collecting and exploring expedition led by Charles P. Conigrave during 1911-1912. Son of the Adelaide journalist, businessman and Secretary of the South Australian Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, John Fairfax Conigrave, Conigrave was no stranger to museum exhibits or collections. He had worked as a zoological assistant at the Western Australian Museum from 1896 until 1910. As he later wrote, the expedition's purpose was dedicated to 'the collection of birds, mammals, insects, each and everything that comes within the scope of natural history and ethnology'.[95]

The Western Australian Government funded the expedition in return for Conigrave's survey. He was apparently free to dispose of any specimens collected. The ornithologist Gregory Mathews purchased the bird specimens and the South Australian Museum became the main repository for other zoological material as well as his ethnographic collection.[96] In preparing for the expedition, Conigrave had alerted Edward Stirling to his plans and had agreed to collect mammal specimens as well as ethnographica. His letter of 21 February 1910 contains this commitment, and indicates Stirling's role in influencing the collection's composition:

> In reply to your query re ethnological specimens, I beg to state that I have not up to the present time offered them to any Institution, and if you are desirous of securing the whole collection I will be most happy to send all specimens on to you as opportunity offers from time to time ... As my work for the most part will be carried on in totally unknown and unexplored country, it is more than likely that my collections will have a high scientific value ... in the meantime [I] should be much obliged if you would kindly let me know your wishes as regards the ethnological results of the trip.
>
> Thanking you for your encouraging letter ...[97]

More than 200 registered objects survive in Conigrave's collection today.[98] Apart from raw materials such as kangaroo sinew, ochre, and resin, the collection includes a large number of articles of dress (waist belts, forehead bands and feather plumes) and several objects illustrating particular processes, such as spinning

of fur string or the manufacture of stone or glass spearheads. This bias may reflect Stirling's advice to Conigrave. Relatively few weapons were collected, apart from spears and spearthrowers, and aside from two spindles the collection contained only a solitary woman's object, a 'gin's yam stick'. Eight wooden tjurunga were collected. As well as spears tipped with finely worked heads of glass and of porcelain telegraph insulator, Conigrave collected five iron axes, hafted in traditional fashion. This evidence of European influence belied his later claim that this

> far north-western corner of the continent is one of the last strongholds of the absolutely wild myall black. We saw him there, uncontaminated in any way, and many of the photos show the natives in their wild, rough haunts.[99]

A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Conigrave regarded himself as a naturalist explorer and adventurer rather than an anthropologist: he passed his collection to Stirling without further explanation. Stirling purchased the collection in three lots, for a total sum of seventeen pounds and nine shillings.[100] Touring Australia as 'The Famous Explorer of Northern Australia' Conigrave gave a series of 'unique and descriptive talks on "Exploring in the Far North"', illustrated with lantern slides.[101] Three of these were 'general lectures': 'The Empty North'; 'A Naturalist in Tropical Australia', and 'The White Australia Problem'; the fourth, to which men only were admitted, was titled 'Life and Customs of the Aboriginals'. Something of his lecturing style can probably detected in his published account of this expedition, which appeared under the title of 'Walkabout' in 1938.[102] One extract, describing Conigrave's acquisition of ethnographic material from Aborigines of the Forrest River, makes it clear that his transactions were an exercise in straightforward collecting, unmarked by the mutual curiosity and engagement which characterised many of Basedow's acquisitions, for example:

> The men ... gleamed like polished ebony in the sunlight as they stood watching us with just a touch of truculence in their attitude. There was a goodly number of spears of which we had insisted on depriving them as we were taking no chances. One fellow, a bit of a firebrand it seemed, was in high dudgeon over this being done, and though he indicated his displeasure at thus being relieved of his 'armoury', we were adamant.
>
> Numerous head ornaments, made of human hair, kangaroo, fur, and wild beeswax were well distributed among our aboriginal visitors, but they required very little persuasion to part with all and sundry when by signs we convinced the myalls that up at our camp we had stuff in exchange for them. There was much clicking of tongues when we handed out some empty revolver shells and a few pieces of vivid Turkey twill, which we had brought with us for purposes of 'trade'. Pipes and tobacco the myalls didn't 'savee' however, but before long some of the braver of the natives had experimented, under our tuition, with 'Lady Nicotine' and had concluded that her acquaintance was worthy of cultivation. Then, as the *piece de resistance*, we gave the newcomers a huge feed of kangaroo meat.[103]

Conigrave continued to follow in Basedow's footsteps, visiting Melville and Bathurst Islands from as early as 1914. The South Australian Museum received three objects from his expedition to Bathurst Island in 1914; a chaplet and two head decorations. This expedition, guided by the veteran buffalo shooter and ethnographer, Joe Cooper, was led by the Northern Territory government entomologist, Gerald Hill

(second-in-command of the Barclay-McPherson Exploring Expedition of 1904-1905). The trip was primarily for the purposes of collecting insects and mammals but Conigrave also collected ethnographic material. He recorded the manufacture of decorated bark baskets, distinctive to the islands, writing:

> when the bark was quite dry, the artist gave full play to his artistic tendencies. With a wealth of varied design in bright colours, these baskets, and other objects, are no mean exposition of an interesting expression of wild, aboriginal art'.[104]

The account appeared first as a journalistic piece in 1931, and later in his 1935 book, *North Australia*. This book also described his acquisition of ethnographic objects from a Melville Island camp of thirty Tiwi people:

> Standing against a pandanus palm in the camp we saw a number of highly-coloured spears, multiple-barbed, several of them having more than one or two prongs. These had been freshly painted with red and white ochre and were particularly fine specimens. These and many baskets and other objects of native arts and crafts, we took in barter, and we soon had a full cargo for the dinghy.[105]

Conigrave referred to a further acquisition made as his party was leaving the islands, further confirming the Tiwi's familiarity with European trading encounters:

> From the Bathurst Island side of the strait, as the *Buffalo* fetched ahead, a canoe came off into the fairway from the mangroves, having in it three natives in corroboree paint. They explained to Joe [Cooper], and he translated to us, that they had come from a camp that was on a creek not far inland. Thinking that a visit there would give Hill and me opportunity of making additions to our ethnological collection, as well as securing further interesting photographs, we ... followed the canoe and its occupants ashore.[106]

At least one other contender shared Conigrave's position in the limelight of the period as Australia's premier naturalist explorer. Like Conigrave, Captain Samuel A. White (1870-1954) had been encouraged to collect ornithological specimens in remote Australia by Gregory Mathews in order to contribute to his 'Birds of Australia' volumes. White became Mathews' most valued Australian collector. After service in the Boer War he had mounted an expedition along the east coast of Africa during 1903, hunting game and collecting birds and ethnographic objects for his private museum in Adelaide.[107] White undertook several expeditions between 1912 and 1922; three of these brought him into contact with tribal Aborigines and yielded ethnographic material. Like Conigrave, White gave lantern-slide lectures following these trips with such titles as 'From Capetown to Somaliland by Camera', 'Into the Dead Heart' and 'Among the Tribes in the Far North-West'.

Each of White's major Australian expeditions was organised with varying degrees of support from the South Australian Museum, subject to the proviso that, aside from the birds destined for Mathews' and White's own collections, the zoological collections would be deposited in that institution. No such agreement was apparently negotiated for the ethnographic material - explicable in that none of the three expeditions brought White into contact with Aboriginal groups not already well represented in the Museum collections. Moreover, at this time Stirling was preoccupied with transferring the ethnographic collections

to the Museum's new East Wing.

White's 1913 expedition, a camel trip through the MacDonnell Ranges undertaken with his wife Ethel, brought him into only passing contact with Aborigines. His principal encounter with them was at Hermannsburg Mission. This locality, and Alice Springs itself, were the main sources of the ethnographic objects collected by him and of the photographs published in his report.[108] It was White's 1914 expedition, undertaken in conjunction with the South Australian Government's geological survey expedition, which established his reputation as an anthropological expert. White's 'Scientific Notes' from his 1913 expedition had ranged across the field of natural history. His more substantial 1915 publication devoted 10 pages to the Aborigines of the Everard Range, a group previously described only briefly, by Helms' Elder Expedition report. Before setting out White offered his ethnological services to the Adelaide branch of the Royal Geographical Society, and his subsequent efforts can be explained by the undertaking which Francis Giles, the Society's Secretary, confirmed in writing: 'Our Council would like you to keep a diary, and collect all available information concerning the Aborigines, and take photographs of any Ethnological objects you observe, especially inscribed or painted rocks, totem stones etc'.[109]

White's field diary indicates only cursory attention to this responsibility, hardly surprising when his other natural history collecting tasks are considered:

> We were up at a little before sunrise, and after a hurried breakfast, pocketed a mouthful or two for our midday meal. When the camels came in we assisted to load them, and then, taking our guns, we worked out on either flank in search of specimens. Coming into the camel train at 12 or 1 o'clock, we took turns in riding the camel, ate our lunch, and took a drink from the waterbag. Then off we went collecting again. When the halt was called for the night camp, we helped to unload the ships of the desert and pitch the tent. After tea we began skinning and preserving the birds, and later I used to see the botanical and other specimens, and write my notes. Generally the camp was in deep slumber before we turned in.[110]

Two spearthrowers, eighteen spears, three wooden containers, a club and a 'musical stone' were acquired subsequently by the South Australian Museum from this expedition, following White's death in 1954.[111] White's collecting efforts were tentative compared to Basedow's record in the Musgrave Ranges eleven years earlier. Despite being accompanied for several days by an Everard Range man, White made little effort to obtain additional objects or data. An unfocused photograph of a bartering exchange is a rare example of such documentation; it depicts a formal, hesitant transaction though, rather than the vigorous exchanges described by Basedow or even Conigrave.[112] His most significant ethnographic record of the Everard Range people consisted not of artefacts, but photographs, as the reaction to his 1915 publication showed.

White's Australian publication on the Aborigines of the Everard Range followed the same basic format established two decades earlier by the Royal Geographical Society: a general introduction dealing with physical characteristics, followed by thematic sections devoted to 'weapons and utensils', 'food', 'water supply', 'native art' and so on, completed by a vocabulary and photographs. White sent prints of

these photographs to A.C. Haddon at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Buoyed by the response, he submitted a revised manuscript of the 'Natives of the Everard Range' to the journal *Man*, together with thirty-five photographs. The manuscript (with four photographs) was eventually published in in 1921.[113]

White's third expedition involving the collection of ethnographic material took place in 1916, under the auspices of the South Australian Museum. The itinerary took the party through the north-east of South Australia, following the Strzelecki north to the Cooper Creek and south again via the Birdsville Track. The expedition leader was Edgar R. Waite, Stirling's successor as Museum Director. In a drought year, those few Aboriginal people encountered by the expedition appeared demoralised and contaminated by the worst aspects of European contact. It was not an auspicious introduction to the ethnographic enterprise for Waite; he noted in his report that 'there is little of interest to write about the aboriginals'.[114] Despite this, both he and White collected several ethnographic objects during the expedition. As on the 1913 and 1914 expeditions, White confined his attention to wooden artefacts only, collecting shields, boomerangs and clubs.[115]

White's contribution to the South Australian Museum's ethnographic collections was less significant than those of Basedow or Conigrave. Neither his ethnographic observations nor the collections made by him extended the boundaries of anthropological knowledge. He was a significant figure nevertheless. Through his role in the 1914 Expedition and the subsequent publication of its results, he ensured that Adelaide-based anthropology continued to play a part in scientific and exploration expeditions. At a time when anthropology elsewhere in Australia was being defined out of the natural-historical sphere and marginalised as a new profession among the social sciences, this was an important point of difference.

The distinctive strain of anthropology which emerged in Adelaide during the 1920s had its origins in, and derived its working model from, the collaborative approach which characterised the scientific work undertaken through the series of expeditions discussed in this chapter. This applied with greater force to particular expeditions. The Elder Expedition, the Horn Expedition, Basedow's 1903 Expedition, and White's 1914 Expedition might serve as examples of expeditions which despite their varying levels of scientific success, resulted in reports which treated anthropology as a branch of the natural sciences. This effect was heightened by the presentation of anthropological data within the style and format of natural history reports published under the aegis of the Royal Geographical Society. These expeditions have more in common though; the collections gathered during their course were all assembled with museums in mind. Basedow and White provided limited exceptions, but their private museums took the place of public institutions in the shorter term.[116]

Endnotes - Chapter Five

1. C.P. Conigrave to E.C. Stirling, 21 February, 1910, GRG 19/5/8009, SRO

2. Quoted in Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 188.

3. Quoted in *ibid*: 189.

4. One field notebook, covering the period from late July to early August 1901, survives in the Stirling papers at the South Australian Museum, AA309. Four other diaries are held in the Mortlock Library of South Australiana, PRG 54, covering the periods 18 March 1901 to 7 March, 1902. Gillen wrote his more polished *Camp Jottings* (1968) from the raw data contained in these diaries.

5. *Ibid*: 195.

6. More than 500 objects are registered under the names of Gillen, Spencer & Gillen, and Field in the South Australian Museum Anthropology Registers. See Jones files on these collectors.

7. It seems that Spencer and Gillen's efforts in this regard were at least partly motivated by competition with Stirling, who was perceived by them as unjustifiably receiving the lion's share of credit for the scientific successes of the Horn Expedition. See *ibid*: 133-134.

8. Gillen 1968.

9. Spencer & Gillen 1904: 550.

10. See Gillen's journal entries for 2,3,4,5 December, 1901, when a total of five 'native coffin Narlanja' were acquired. The 5 December entry reads:

> Binbing-ga brought in two small Native Coffins these we shall keep for our private collections. The other two [three] will go to Melbourne and Adelaide Museums. (Gillen 1968: 342-44)

11. *Ibid*: 313.

12. *Ibid*: 313.

13. Mulvaney and Calaby 1985: 193.

14. Gillen 1968: 107.

15. *Ibid*: 177-78.

16. *Ibid*: 282. Wambaia is the term as rendered by Tindale (1974).

17. In at least a few cases it appears that these transactions were made by Aboriginal people without an immediate return, as for example on 10 June, 1901, at Barrow Creek, when Gillen recorded that 'Billy Abbott arrived from the Stirling and brought me a couple of decorated Churinga which an old blackfellow asked him to hand to me'. (*Ibid*: 113)

18. *Ibid*: 125.

19. *Ibid*: 129.

20. *Ibid*: 335.

21. *Ibid*: 354-55. Of the string figures, recorded by Spencer in pencil drawings, Gillen wrote on New Years Eve, 1901: 'If only we are the first to record these figures it will be an important addition to our work but in all probability Dr Roth has met with the same things amongst the tribes he is investigating'. (*Ibid.*: 352-53)

22. *Ibid*: 66.

23. *Ibid:* 73-74.

24. Gillen to Stirling, 28 February, 1907. GRG 19/4/07, SRO.
Unfortunately, Gillen's assertion applies only to a minority of specific items in his collection, although most of the types are described in the publications.

25. Gillen 1968: 290.

26. Spencer 1901; 1915; 1922.

27. Rivers 1913: 10-11. See Stocking 1983 (in Stocking (ed.) 1983) for a discussion of this period in anthropological history.

28. See Jones 1987.

29. For a history of the definition and acceptance of Aboriginal art by Europeans, see Jones (1988).

30. 'Museum Diary, October 1874 to April 1880, April 1879', SRSAM; Curator's Report, April 1879, GRG19/168, SRO.

31. See 'Museum Diary, October 1874 to April 1880', December 1879, SRSAM. Strawbridge later became a member of the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide.

32. Cornish to Surveyor General's Office, 25 January, 1879. Copy in AASAM (Cornish collection), obtained from Vlad Potezny, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, 1996. Cornish also contributed Aboriginal skeletal material to the private museum run by W.G. Torr. See Jones file on Cornish, Torr, and discussion of Torr's museum in Chapter Nine. The massacres are referred to in Hercus & Sutton (1986: 183-192) and Jones (1991b: 171).

33. Curr 1886, vol.2: 22-23; 28-29.

34. Tietkens 1889 ms. Notebook. See ADB 6: 275.

35. A few of these images are preserved in the Mitchell Library, including images of Aboriginal people, probably taken at Glen Helen.

36. Tietkens 1889 ms. Notebook, specimen entries 3, 20, 27; Tietkens 1890: 4. The shield and two boomerangs were passed to the Museum by the Royal Geographical Society in 1956. The bullroarer was donated to the Museum in 1892 by the Society's Secretary (and keen ethnographer) A.T. Magarey, to whom Tietkens had first consigned the artefacts and his photographs. The other bullroarer, another shield and a sample of corkwood with fire-making grooves have not been traced.

37. *Ibid*: 3; Tietkens 1889 ms. Journal.

38. Carrington 1885-1886 ms.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Stirling 1896: 92. The two boomerangs were apparently never registered and now form part of the amorphous 'Old Collection'.

41. Thomson 1949.

42. Carrington 1886-1887: 61.

43. Carrington 1886-87: 73. The discovery has been recorded as being made in 1884; Carrington's original report (Carrington 1885-1886 ms.) fixes the date as 1885. Carrinton exhibited the paintings at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide on his return.

44. Carrington 1886-1887: 66; 59.

45. The Field Island paintings have been cited and illustrated in most histories of the bark painting movement. See for example, Groger-Worm 1973: 4; Mountford 1957; Ruhe 1988 ms: Ryan 1990: 14.

46. See Jones file on Davidson and biographical entry in Gibbney & Smith 1987 vol.1: 164.

47. See Jones file on Field.

48. ADB 7: 439-440.

49. Gillen to Spencer, Good Friday, 1895. Letter 7, PRMO.

50. Maurice to Winnecke, 1 September 1899. R.T. Maurice Papers, 158/26, PRG 762, MLSA.

51. R.T. Maurice Papers, items 159, 160, PRG 762, MLSA. Although Maurice assiduously noted the instances in which he observed Aborigines, he seems not to have recorded either natural history or ethnographic collections in these journals.

52. Maurice recorded his 1900 camp at Oowarlirinna Springs 'where we found a party of natives on ceremonial ceremonies [sic] ... & who exchanged sundry native implements etc for tobacco, shirts knives etc.' (R.T. Maurice Papers, 158/34, PRG 762, MLSA).

53. Very little of Maurice's collection has been matched with this documentation.

54. A full list of Winnecke material appears to be in the Maurice Papers, 158/9, PRG 762, MLSA.

55. Maurice to Winnecke, 10 November, 1901. R.T. Maurice Papers, 158/42, PRG 762, MLSA.

56. A copy of the agreement is contained in Maurice Papers, 158/9, PRG 762, MLSA. See also Jones file on Maurice.

57. Winnecke to Stirling, 12 June, 1902. R.T. Maurice Papers, PRG 762, MLSA.

58. Minutes of the Museum Committee, 6 August, 1902, p.302. GRG 19/364, SRO.

59. Minutes of the Museum Committee, 3 December, 1902, p.313. GRG 19/364, SRO. See also Jones files on Winnecke and Maurice.

60. G. Aiston to W.H. Gill, 1 May, 1934. Ms. A2535-A2537, MLS. For Basedow's record of his discovery during his 1916 Kimberley expedition of 'a record of genuine phallic worship ... new to Australian ethnology', see Basedow (1916-17: 184; 1925: 284).

61. L. Keith Ward to Spencer, 23 January, 1925. Box 1, Envelope G, item 48, Spencer Papers, PRMO. Spencer succeeded Basedow as the senior Government official with responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory. Basedow resigned as Chief Medical Officer and Chief Protector of Aborigines after just four months in the post. Basedow's career in the Northern Territory is reviewed in Mulvaney & Calaby (1985: 276-78).

62. Quoted in *ibid*: 276.

63. Basedow 1925: xiii.

64. Basedow 1935: 16.

65. Recent archaeological research (albeit controversial) on the dating of 'desert varnish' in Australia substantiates Basedow's early hypothesis (Basedow 1914; see Nobbs & Dorn 1988). Basedow's 1903 report on Aboriginal rock art of north-western South Australia was another important contribution to the subject (Basedow 1904).

66. Basedow 1908. Basedow pursued this theme further in *The Australian Aboriginal* (1925).

67. Basedow 1914: 241.

68. Cooper 1989: 53, 158, 245; Chris Nobbs pers. comm. 1995.

69. Kaus 1986: 11-14.

70. See Jones files on H. Basedow; Mrs H. Basedow; Miss Basedow Collection; M.C. Fisher; ex Basedow Collection (Commonwealth Government). For a summary of Basedow's career, see ADB 7: 202-203.

71. Basedow 1904: 12. Basedow acknowledged Stirling and Spencer for their 'valuable criticisms and suggestions on various points of the paper' (*ibid*: 47).

72. Basedow 1914: 240.

73. *Ibid*: 164.

74. *Ibid*: 163. This object was illustrated by Basedow as fig. 2, plate III.

75. Published in Basedow (1908).

76. Basedow 1904: 39-41.

77. *Ibid*: 50, plate IV.

78. This was a combination digging stick and adze, carried by a woman. See Hilliard 1968: 70.

79. Basedow 1907.

80. *Ibid*: 30-31.

81. *Ibid*: 31-32.

82. Basedow 1913.

83. *Ibid*: 300-301; plate IX, figs. 1-4. One of these clubs is registered in the South Australian Museum collection.

84. See Basedow to Stirling, 10 August, 1911, GRG19/5/9046, SRO. The canoe is registered as A14143. See Basedow 1913: 303-305, Plate XI. The South Australian Museum later acquired a Bathurst Island canoe paddle (A21539) described in *ibid*: 305, plate XII, fig.2, second from right.

85. *Ibid*: 315. Basedow acquired further skeletal material during his 1916 Kimberley expedition.

86. *Ibid*: 315.

87. *Ibid*: 319. Illustrations of the grave post decorations, and photographs of the re-painting, appear in plates XVI, XVII, XVIII.

88. See Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 303-304.

89. Basedow 1913: 320.

90. These were donated to the South Australian Museum in 1963 and are registered as A54585-8. They are figured in *ibid*: 315, plate XIV, figs. 5a,b,c,e.

91. The format was the same used by Captain S.A. White, as discussed below.

92. Basedow 1916-17: 146.

93. *Ibid*: 148.

94. *Ibid*: 202-203. See also Jones file on Basedow.

95. Conigrave 1938: 49.

96. In his account of the expedition, published in the *Observer*, Conigrave wrote: 'as an Adelaidean, I am glad to say the South Australian Museum secured our ethnological collections, which were not inconsiderable' (Conigrave 1912: 51).

97. Conigrave to Stirling, 21 February, 1910, GRG 19/5/8009, SRO.

98. See Jones file on Conigrave.

99. Conigrave 1912: 51.

100. See Jones file on Conigrave.

101. Quotation from handbill copied from collection held by Conigrave's great niece, Mrs L.M. Conigrave. Conigrave's photographs are held in the National Library, Canberra.

102. Conigrave 1938.

103. *Ibid*: 90-91.

104. Conigrave 1935: 169.

105. See Conigrave 1931; 1935.

106. Conigrave 1935: 167-68.

107. For a discussion of S.A. White's career see Linn (1989).

108. White 1914a; 1914b. Despite White's claim that all of the photographs in his scientific report were his own, this is unlikely to be true. The four photographs depicting Aboriginal ceremony were probably taken by an Alice Springs telegraph station master, Bradshaw.

109. Giles to White, 5 June, 1914. S.A. White Papers, AA365, AASAM.

110. Linn 1989: 79-80.

111. These objects were not donated to the South Australian Museum on the expedition's return, despite the inference made by Linn (1989: 89). None of the objects were documented, beyond their most general provenance, although White gave some detail for the spears, spearthrowers, and wooden containers in his report (White 1915: 727-28). The 'musical stone' (A51658) was not mentioned; presumably it is a similar object to those described by Tindale (1963).

(1963).

112. The photograph is among White's extensive collection, catalogued as AA365, AASAM. Fig.18, p.13, in Jones 1992a, is a related image.

113. Martindell to White, 23 September, 1919. S.A. White Papers, AA365, AASAM. See White 1921.

114. Waite 1917: 429.

115. See Jones files on White, Mrs M.B. White, and Waite.

116. It is likely that both collectors were confident of selling their collections to the South Australian Museum on their return to Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

COLLECTING THE COLLECTORS
(CHAPTERS SIX TO TEN)

Material objects are chains along which social relationships run ... people not only create their material culture and attach themselves to it, but also build up their relationships through it and see themselves in terms of it.[1]

Edward Stirling's focus on the frontier as the most productive ground for his museum's collection of ethnographic objects was a means to a greater end, the description of Australia's natural history in the fullest sense. His agenda was shared by other museum directors and ethnographers, and included a project to define Aboriginal Australia from colonial collections of objects, data and images. During a period in which no other forum or medium challenged the veracity or scope of the museum's definition of its subject, Stirling's ethnographic collection was integral to the formation of ideas about Aborigines in late nineteenth-century Australia, just as Oriental collections represented European ideas about the worlds of the Far East and Middle East.

While the complex nature of the Aboriginal-European frontier was often obscured by this project, Stirling's concentration upon the frontier as a source for collections has incidentally illuminated many significant transactions which occurred there. By tracing the biographies of objects, collections and collectors, the following chapters revisit that ambiguous region of Australian history.

In Evans Pritchard's terms, material culture comprises 'a chain along which social relationships run', inviting an analysis of the forces, events, ideas and individuals lying behind this culture. The Aboriginal/European frontier was crucial to the formation of these chains of connection. It constituted a complex zone of interaction in which Aboriginal objects and collections were generated and exchanged. Originating within this zone, Aboriginal objects underwent the first of several shifts in status as they were collected and documented, and subsequently stored, catalogued and exhibited. The following chapters record and analyse the cultural biographies of objects and collections against those of their collectors, and against the history of the South Australian Museum which provided the ultimate frame for these objects. Through this analysis it becomes clear that the social relationships encoded in material culture objects were not confined to the other side of the frontier, but persisted beyond it, into the museum itself.

The next chapters provide an analysis and description of the categories of collectors responsible for gathering more than 25,000 ethnographic objects, mainly obtained directly from the frontier of

Aboriginal and European contact. These objects comprise the bulk of the South Australian Museum's collection of Aboriginal artefacts. The period examined spans the decades from the foundation of South Australia until the Second World War. More than 1200 individual collectors were responsible for making these collections. Most were private citizens, but an analysis reveals the dominant role played by the representatives of official science. Expeditionary collecting, treated in Chapters Four and Five, was crucial in fixing the priorities for other, less formal, ethnographic collecting. While many of these expeditions operated independently of the South Australian Museum, the institution retained a link with several, from the 1860s onwards. This relationship culminated in the close collaboration between the Museum and the University of Adelaide during the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions of the 1920s and 1930s. These expeditions have been discussed elsewhere by this author.[2]

As the history of expeditionary collecting (discussed in Chapters Four and Five) reveals, it took a particular combination of personnel and interests for natural science collecting, let alone ethnographic collecting, to influence the agenda of these expeditions. Generally speaking, the objectives behind the exploration expeditions - opening up the country for mining, pastoralism and communications - were best served by downplaying the Aboriginal presence. Expeditionary ethnography became important only after natural science itself had become a defined objective, quantifiable in specimens and published lists.

Explorers usually documented their encounters with Aborigines in matter-of-fact terms, while compiling their assessments of the country. Accordingly, these accounts often reveal details of individual encounters and the nature of social and material exchanges between Europeans and Aborigines. Such details are rarely recorded in other contexts, such as pastoralists' station journals. Moving ahead of the frontier itself, the exploring expeditions nevertheless illuminated its complex character. From the early exploration accounts a protocol of enounter emerged, in which both European and Aboriginal objects figured as significant commodities. The frequency of these exchanges, and the readiness with which Aborigines initiated or executed them confirms the fluid, negotiable status of Aboriginal property in objects. This fact has been little discussed in Australian anthropological literature, except in relation to traditional trading practices. And while the European readiness to trade reflected the quantity of surplus objects or commodities brought to these encounters, Aboriginal people were often willing to trade all they had. This may be partly explained by their facility for making replacements, partly also by the power which European commodities exerted on the frontier. Few historians have noted this potency and its effect on Aboriginal society. William Stanner is one exception, writing of the Aborigines of the Fitzmaurice River in the Northern Territory:

> They say that their appetites for tobacco and to a lesser extent for tea became so intense that neither man nor woman could bear to be without. Jealousy, ill-will and violence arose over the division of the small amounts which came by gift and trade. The stimulants ... were of course not the only, or first European goods to reach them; probably iron goods were the first, but it was the stimulants that precipitated the exodus. Individuals, families and parties of friends simply went

away to places where the avidly desired things could be obtained. The movement always had phases and fluctuations, but it was a one-way movement.[3]

The level of engagement in these first encounters varied widely. The uncertainty of relations between Europeans and Aborigines meant that first encounters were laden with mannered gestures and actions. Ethnographic objects were weighted accordingly, and were therefore subtly transformed from a mundane context, even if this significance was not evident to Europeans. And while this significance fell away from these objects after their collection, to be replaced by new and different associations once they became absorbed within museum collections, the role of these objects as witnesses to those early encounters remains.

The two chapters documenting expeditionary collecting not only provide an insight into the changing nature of the Australian frontier over several decades; they also indicate that the expeditionary collecting brief itself was subject to considerable change. The emergence of a professional scientific base in colonial museums, as constituted through their collections and publications, played a considerable part in reforming the priorities of explorers and frontier collectors, particularly after the 1880s. Founded in the natural sciences, with consequent emphases on evolutionary theory and classificatory schema, this professional base was a key formative factor. Natural scientists such as von Mueller, Baldwin Spencer and Edward Stirling exerted great influence over collecting priorities. Another factor was the effect on expeditionary collecting exerted by International Exhibitions and the growing perception of an international demand for ethnographic objects.

Chapters Six to Ten are concerned with the main categories of frontier collectors. The first large category concerns those private citizens who found themselves on the frontier through chance or design: pastoralists, merchants and adventurers comprise this group. Few of these individuals left records of their collecting activities. Much of the data has been gleaned from related secondary sources or letters to the South Australian Museum. The motives of these collectors often stemmed from their obligation to receive objects in exchange for the commodities desired by Aborigines, but included public-spiritedness and also the prospect of monetary gain. The perception of importance attached to obtaining representative objects of an apparently doomed race was often implicit in these collectors' actions, reflecting the commitment to 'salvage ethnography' which distinguished the character of museum-based investigations of the period.

The next major category of collectors suggests Adelaide's unique advantage within Australian colonial ethnography. The frontier officials sent from Adelaide to manage and control South Australia's Northern Territory from 1861 until 1910 represented a formidable source of supply for the colony's museum. It was this group, comprising police officers, customs officials, telegraph and railway officers, which was largely responsible for gathering suites of ethnographic material from Aboriginal people of Central and Northern Australia - people whose material culture was to become transformed by the first decade of European contact. Stirling's own participation in expeditions during the early 1890s brought him

into personal contact with many of these collectors, and particularly with key officials such as the police inspector Paul Foelsche in Darwin and the telegraph station-master Francis Gillen in Alice Springs. Edward Stirling's facility for understanding and exploiting the main networks of colonial officials led directly to his museum's recognition during the 1890s as the country's largest repository of Aboriginal ethnographica.

Stirling was the only Australian museum director to tap the potential of missionary ethnographers in the period before the First World War. Adelaide's links with mission collectors in the Pacific had been established from the 1870s, particularly with Church of England missionaries.[4] The city was a base for the operations of Lutheran missions in Australia and with a strong representation of German scientists and artisans on the South Australian Museum's staff it is not surprising that opportunities for augmenting the natural science and ethnographic collections arose. With their drive to comprehend the inner workings of Aboriginal society and belief the German missionary ethnographers such as Carl Strehlow, Oskar Liebler and Johann Reuther were responsible for obtaining some of the best-documented collections of the period, particularly in relation to sacred objects. The collecting methodology of these missionaries, involving the commissioning or collection of entire series of well-described objects, suggested the potential of an artefact 'industry' as a contribution to the mission economy. An unanticipated consequence of that development was its effect on Aboriginal material culture traditions. As a site for encouraging and generating artefact production the mission emerged during the early twentieth century as one of the main collecting points for new and innovative ethnographic forms, even though this shift was rarely perceived in that light by missionaries themselves, or by the museum scientists who subsequently received the collections.

The next chapter in this section examines the metropolitan collector's role in shaping the South Australian Museum's collections. Until the 1920s it was common enough for city-based collectors to have formed at least a part of their collections in the field, on the various frontiers of contact. Likewise, it was not unusual to find that major field collectors also obtained artefacts from other collectors or from ethnographic dealers. The chapter begins with a survey of the main South Australian, Australian and international dealers who contributed towards and influenced the collection. This analysis leads into a description of the range and characteristics of private ethnographic collectors in Adelaide. The web of connection revealed by this survey suggests that Adelaide stood apart from other capitals in offering a network of shared interests centred in the North Terrace cultural institutions; in particular, the Museum, Public Library and the University. There is no doubt that Adelaide's regional dominance lent a city-state character to South Australia, more so than the eastern colonies. Even so, the growth of suburban and country institutes as localised versions of the South Australian Institute itself, meant that networks of collectors were often reproduced on a smaller scale, independently of the Adelaide Museum's direct influence. The chapter concludes with a survey of the ethnographic content of the Port Adelaide, Gawler and Mount Gambier Institute collections.

Most of the chapters in this section deal with categories of collectors whose interests spanned the

full range of Australian ethnography and extended into other fields, notably archaeology, natural history and the ethnography of other peoples. Chapter Ten involves a case-study in a single ethnographic category - that of Central Australian secret-sacred material. The chapter charts the history of European discovery of the significance of *tjurunga* stones and boards, and documents the rapid elevation of these objects to iconic status. The chapter explores the proposition that even as the tjurunga became keystone objects by which an authentic and fixed Aboriginal culture was defined, Aborigines themselves were using them in exchange and barter to modify their relations with European Australia, repositioning their own cultural practice as they did so. Here again the theme of the thesis is exposed: ethnographic objects were enlisted in social processes, both by collectors and by the Aboriginal people who positioned these objects for collection.

Endnotes

1. Evans-Pritchard 1940: 89.

2. Jones 1987.

3. Stanner 1958-1959: 100.

4. Jones 1993.

CHAPTER SIX

COLLECTORS OF THE FRONTIER - PASTORALISTS, MERCHANTS AND ADVENTURERS

The articles were carefully selected, and only genuine ones, actually in use at that time, were accepted ... in addition to the transport charges there was, of course, the cost of tobacco, clothes, food, etc. for barter - for the native demands a quid pro quo and rightly so....[1]

Objects became part of the emerging discourse wherever Aborigines encountered Europeans on the various frontiers throughout Australia. In many instances, objects were generated by this discourse and were secondary to it. As one study has termed it, 'what is exchanged are not things for things, or the relative values of people quantified in things, but mutual estimation and regards'.[2] The primacy bestowed upon objects in ethnographic museums tends to obscure the history and even the fact of this 'mutual estimation'. A club, a boomerang or a spear displayed in a museum are readily assumed to have been obtained under conditions of conflict, as that is their obvious function and none other is evident. Yet a voluntary exchange of objects or services between Aborigines and Europeans may have taken place against a broad range of social encounters - encompassing suspicion, caution and varying degrees of hostility as well as overt enthusiasm.

Through a multitude of encounters, most undocumented, flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, metal and glass were exchanged for boomerangs, headbands, wooden dishes and other artefacts, as well as for Aboriginal labour, guidance and the sexual services of women. The evidence from this and following chapters suggests that on both sides these commodities were, if not surplus, then dispensable. They could be replaced. A day's labour might replace a wooden dish or a boomerang; the stick of tobacco exchanged for it might last for several days. While there is no doubt that the exchanges were rarely equal, or that they were underpinned by disproportionate power relations, surviving evidence indicates that individual Aborigines were prepared to enter into bartering relations with Europeans, and often initiated these exchanges. The exploration encounters discussed in the previous chapter make that clear. Similar exchanges occurred throughout the categories of frontier encounters discussed in this and subsequent chapters.

A feature of frontier collections seems to have been the straightforward, unproblematic manner in which most of them were assembled. Neither the fact nor the context of collection attracted much

comment or reflection at the time. A typical collection might be that of thirty-six 'native articles', purchased from Miss Jane Thompson of Hutt St, Adelaide, in October 1909 for the sum of three pounds and fifteen shillings. The objects were listed by simple description, such as '5 boomerang shaped wooden swords', or '1 Erythrina bean necklace with shell pendant', with the accompanying note: 'These things were got at Port Augusta some years ago'.[3] collectors were more likely to comment on sacred objects and their method of acquisition, but even in those cases the identities of Aboriginal individuals who made, owned, or exchanged these objects were almost never recorded.

Lack of confidence about the ethnographic project was certainly a factor. As with natural history specimens which they also sent south, the frontier collectors of central and northern Australia expected their own interpretations to be overshadowed by museum scientists. It is not surprising that most ethnographic collections were sent to the South Australian Museum without any accompanying description. 'Herewith a box of native things' might stand as a typical covering note. But this paucity of documentation does not indicate a lack of interest by Europeans in individual interactions with Aborigines. Those encounters were often of vital concern to the the colonial enterprise.

The inattention to the precise context surrounding particular objects suggests that the collecting process, as with broader ethnographic projects of the period, stood outside history. The status of boomerangs, spears or ornaments as primitive objects was self evident and unproblematic. For most collectors the tangible presence of these objects was the central fact, a cogent reminder of the gulf separating civilised from uncivilised. The histories of objects (before and after their collection) went unremarked within the prevailing ethnographic milieu. There were exceptions: the detailed descriptions provided by Inspector Paul Foelsche and some of his colleagues, or by several of the Lutheran missionaries, indicated awareness of the privileged access to specialised knowledge which the frontier afforded. These individuals were often amateur ethnographers, eager to make a mark in this field through publication or by direct communication with the Museum Director.

The collections made by these men display a further difference from most other frontier collections, both in the range of objects collected and in their documentation. Government officials such as Foelsche and frontier missionaries paid particular attention to extending their collections to include objects of domestic use, raw materials and native foods. The frontier missionaries were also distinguished by their attention to collecting and documenting sacred objects, a topic further pursued in Chapter Ten.

Frontier Pastoralists

Most of the pre-1940 collectors who contributed more than twenty objects to the South Australian

Museum were from the frontier of settlement. They obtained their collections directly from Aboriginal people either still living according to traditional custom or in the process of abandoning it. Few frontier pastoralists kept a record of their collecting activities. This applies to a large number of small collections and to some collections of considerable size. For example, a significant collection from the Roper River comprising more than forty stone tools, ceremonial hats, wands, armlets, headbands, ornaments, string girdles, net bags, and pubic tassels, was received from W.E. Welbourne during the 1890s without any accompanying information.[4] The collection is atypical in its inclusion of stone tools, and for the fact that it contained no men's weapons or implements.

For many of these pastoralist collectors no evidence remains to document the circumstances of acquisition. The collections were often obtained casually through dealings with Aboriginal people, without any awareness of a broader ethnographic project. This applied particularly to those whose collecting activities were incidental to the struggle to maintain or better their lot. A bundle of spears and some boomerangs may have been swapped for tobacco, rations or European artefacts and then formed part of a 'trophy' display in a homestead hallway for some years. The most outstanding South Australian example of such a display is that which still adorns the walls of the smoking room at Mintaro's Martindale Hall, purchased by the pastoralist William Ranson Mortlock in 1892. During 1904 Mortlock donated a single club to the South Australian Museum in exchange for a Northern Territory reed spear. The club had been obtained on his Eyre Peninsula property, Yalluna.[5] Mortlock's array of spears, boomerangs, spearthrowers and clubs remains as one of the largest intact examples of the ethnographic 'trophy' display.

In many cases when a station owner or manager died or moved on, objects were abandoned, coming to light many years later, as in the case of the throwing club used for many years as a roost in a fowl shed at Milang.[6] In a few notable instances frontier pastoral collections were gathered with the Museum in mind, largely through the promotional efforts of Edward Stirling as Director from the 1880s through to the First World War, or through the active research efforts of Norman Tindale during the 1920s and 1930s.

A striking fact about this category of collections was that some frontier pastoralists kept their home-town museum in mind despite their remoteness, and after the passing of many years. The earliest indication of the South Australian Museum's attraction for frontier collectors beyond the colony's borders occurred well before Stirling's time; G.B. and S. Yeates sent their collection of 'Native implements consisting of spears, stone axes, basket work, ornaments etc.' from the Lynd River, on south-western Cape York Peninsula, during July 1864.[7] The station overseer, W.B. Greenwood, himself a keen amateur ethnographer, sent a small consignment of weapons to Zietz at the Museum during 1889, using the Bliman police-trooper W.E. Rumball as an intermediary. Greenwood's accompanying letter revealed that Europeans were sometimes drawn into trading relationships on Aboriginal terms:

> The long barbed spear I got from a black that came from Mt Brown N.S.W. across to the Strzleckie Creek. I gave him some pituri [Aboriginal botanical narcotic/stimulant] for it.[8]

Pastoralists were among those responding to Stirling's 1890s' appeal for ethnographic collections. L.G. Browne, nephew of Sturt's expeditionary surgeon John Harris Browne, donated seven artefacts collected at the family's station at Newcastle Waters during that year.[9] From the same region the pioneer Northern Territory pastoralist Alfred Giles (veteran of the Overland Telegraph Survey Expedition of 1870-1872) undertook to 'do my best to make a collection for you ... I will put in everything I consider of any value'. Stirling subsequently received sixty-two well documented objects from the vicinity of Delamere Station near Katherine, with their uses and Aboriginal names recorded. Giles' nomenclature was eccentric even for the period: his 'List of Weapons, Utensils etc Used and Made by Natives at and near Spring Vale Station, Katherine River N.T.' included 'flutes' (didjeridus), 'pouches' (string bags) and 'loin screens' (pubic tassels).[10]

The original circumstances of acquisition were sometimes distinctive enough to be remembered many years later and passed on with the objects to the Museum. A. Percy Kemp, who donated two string bags in 1931 from the Nambucca River in New South Wales, recalled that:

> [o]ne is a new one with a little fibre inside not converted into string and the other, I gave a gin one shilling and she took the picaninny out & handed it over. This was in 1897. I am looking for an old note-book that I made many records of names [in] many years ago but so far cannot find it.[11]

In 1930 the pastoralist A. Ragless donated a small collection, part of which had been collected forty years earlier at Callabonna Station in north-eastern South Australia. He recalled that these objects, including boomerangs, spears, a shield, a club and a bullroarer, had been collected before 1890 'at the last big gathering of the tribes at Callabonna. Most of the natives came from further east'.[12] This emphasis on men's objects was typical of the casual frontier collector.

A collection of boomerangs, clubs and a shield from Myrtle Springs in the Flinders Ranges, donated in 1961 by Miss L.O. Stuart, was obtained eighty years earlier by her grandfather, J. Stuart, 'during a raid on a native camp'.[13] The collection is one of the few in the South Australian Museum directly associated with Aboriginal and European conflict. The raid was presumably in retaliation for Aboriginal attacks on sheep or cattle, possibly during periodic excursions still being undertaken into the Flinders Ranges by northern Aboriginal groups for the purpose of obtaining sacred ochre.[14] In similar circumstances other pastoralists showed less regard for ethnographic data. Writing of three sheep-stealing incidents near Pekina during 1847 and 1848, J.F. Hayward described the pursuit of the culprits, during which his party made bonfires of 'slaughtered mutton, sheepskins, native spears and waddies, skins, and charms, left behind in their hurry to escape'.[15]

Several other Flinders Ranges pastoralists became interested enough in ethnographic matters to record details of language, tribal boundaries and some customs. N.E. Phillipson, managing partner of the Beltana Pastoral Company, was one of these. He forwarded data and vocabulary to E.M. Curr for publication in his Australia-wide survey during 1885. Fifteen years later he donated a pituri bag, apparently

traded to the Flinders from further north, together with a fishing net, a bone gouge and some plant material collected at Cooper's Creek.[16] In 1894 W.B. Sanders donated a spear and a boomerang, collected from 'members of a tribe of aboriginals who came from Queensland by way of Tilcha Creek, in order to collect red ochre from a rich deposit about 7 m south of Parachilna'.[17]

Few frontier pastoralists had sufficient interest in the Aboriginal people whose lives they were fundamentally altering to record these details. In many cases, particularly where their collections comprised weapons and utensils, they may have considered that further description was unnecessary. More enigmatic objects, such as the 'pituri packed for transport in marsupial skin turned inside out', collected during the late 1870s by the merchant and pastoralist W.R. Cave from Kalumurina station on the Diamantina River, provided exceptions.[18] In general though, any depth of documentation reflected a pastoralist's special interest in the subject, such as that shown by Edward B. Sanger, an amateur naturalist who contributed his 'Notes on the Aborigines of Cooper's Creek' to the *American Naturalist* in 1883. His paper followed the standard format of anthropological papers of the period, with a description of physical characteristics followed by accounts of particular techniques and practices such as fire-making, hut building and male subincision. The short illustrated listing of weapons and implements gave weight to Sanger's dismissive conclusion that the way of life of these people was 'rude to a degree ... in habit, structure and mental capacity, they seem to be the lowest forms of men'.[19] Three objects, a pelican bone implement '*Wanapnyi*' for boring the nasal septum and two pelican bone nose ornaments '*Padlamookoo*', remain in the South Australian Museum collection. These are among nine objects described in his publication and donated by Sanger in 1881.[20]

Sanger may have left the Cooper before the arrival of W. Lamb, the Innamincka store-keeper who shared these interests in natural history and ethnography. Lamb sent several small collections to Adelaide between 1887 and 1890, totalling about forty objects, and visited the Museum himself during that time, discussing ethnographic matters with Edward Stirling. At Stirling's suggestion he supplied his rendering of the Yawarawarrka names for ten artefacts, an important record. Stirling's influence can also be discerned in the fact that Lamb's 1888 donation included raw materials for net-making as well as stone chippings, a rare early instance of a collector paying attention to the technology by which more popularly sought wooden artefacts were manufactured.[21] Other pastoralists in the Cooper Creek area showed an interest in ethnography. N.E. Phillipson, although based at Umberatana, forwarded Cooper's Creek artefacts to the Museum during 1899 and had earlier contributed to Curr's 1886 survey publication. Another contributor to Curr was J.W. Kingsmill, agent for Thomas Elder's camel business based at Beltana. He donated a specimen of 'native flax' to the Gawler Museum during 1883; this was acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1926.[22]

Stirling's own expedition through Central Australia with the Earl of Kintore during 1891 enabled him to meet a number of potential collectors on the pastoral frontier and to encourage their interest in

natural history and ethnographic collecting. Through Stirling's 1890 circular to police and telegraph stations several of these collectors had already been alerted to the South Australian Museum's new interest in ethnographic material. Together with notable bush ethnographers such as Paul Foelsche and Francis Gillen, Stirling played a vital role in promoting science and ethnography along the frontier. Baldwin Spencer's partnership with Francis Gillen after 1894 raised this profile further.

Stirling's 1891 Vice-Regal party broke its journey in the MacDonnell Ranges in Central Australia at Tempe Downs station where they were hosted by its manager, R.F. Thornton. Stirling and Kintore arrived there only weeks after Francis Gillen had taken the unprecedented step of investigating and subsequently charging the Centre's most powerful police officer, W.H. Willshire, for the murder of Aborigines at the station in retaliation for cattle-spearing.[23] The police officer who arrested Willshire was William South, later appointed as a Protector of Aborigines in South Australia. Encouraged by Stirling, he collected at Mt Burrell, one of the expedition's destinations south of Alice Springs.[24]

At Tempe Downs Thornton contributed to the Museum collections on three occasions during the early 1890s, supplying more than 200 artefacts as well as natural history objects, particularly fossils. Thornton's first collection, made in response to Stirling's form letter in mid-1890, was apparently mislaid before it reached the head of the railway line at Oodndadatta. Thornton wrote:

> I was sorry to hear that you had not got the native weapons I sent last year as I would have liked you to have seen the thing they say that they make rain with. I sent all I had and cannot get some more of it. I am sending some other thngs bye Camels. They ought to get to the head of the line about the end of Oct. There is one box one bundle of spears (42) and one parcel. I also send som Fossils & other stones ....[25]

A poorly educated man, Thornton was nevertheless aware of the value of his contribution to science, as his 1893 letter to Stirling makes clear:

> I am glad that you got the native weapons and that some of them are new to you, the small sticks the Blacks use as hair pins to keep their Cooticher [kurdaitcha] shoes in their hair as they carry them on the back of their head and caree [cover?] them over with their hair. They also youse small bones for the same. I am glad to hear that Perfes. Tate [the geologist, Professor Tate] has found some thing new in the Fossils, at any time I am onely to glad to help the Museum in anny thin that lays in my power.[26]

The principal categories represented in Thornton's collections were men's weapons and tools, items of clothing and decoration (both male and female) and ceremonial material including 'corroboree ornaments', 'wooden charms' and 'sacred woods'. These tjurunga and bullroarers were among the first objects of their kind to be acquired by the South Australian Museum. Only seven women's utensils were represented among more than 200 objects.

Thornton's motivation may not have been as disinterested as it appeared. He was one of the principal agitators for an increased police presence in Central Australia to protect his herds against attacks by Aborigines. These had commenced during 1887, two years after the station was formed, and had become

more frequent since the onset of drought in 1889. Thornton had written to the South Australian government about the problem in 1888 and it is possible that his effort to supply Stirling with a large ethnographic collection was linked to an attempt to win support in Adelaide..[27]

Like Tempe Downs, the Frew River station managed by Bob Coulthard was situated on permanent waters which became the focus of Aboriginal attention as the drought deepened after 1889. Coulthard lost many head of cattle through Aboriginal attacks (more than 300 cattle during one period of three weeks) and in June 1891 his stockaded station was besieged by sixty armed Aboriginal men. Between 1892 and 1896, when the station was finally abandoned, Stirling received three collections totalling more than 100 artefacts from Coulthard's nephew William, who worked on the station.[28]

Cattle-killing was a new problem for another pastoralist whom Stirling met during his 1891 expedition, A.G.B. Ravenscroft, the lessee of Newcastle Waters station near Katherine. Ravenscroft went to considerable effort to document his collection for Stirling:

> I never get an article from the blacks without getting the native name & some of them are terrible jaw-breakers ... I have never taken one single article from them without paying for it in tobacco etc & in return for my absolutely fair dealing with them they started killing the cattle this year ... you need be in no alarm that the blacks will die out before you get a collection of knick knacks for there are thousands of square miles left in undisputed possession of the blacks.[29]

Stirling encouraged Ravenscroft's interest and in 1892 assisted him to publish a short paper in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* on the 'habits and customs of the Chingalee Tribe'.[30] In a rare account of a collector's motives, Ravenscroft wrote to Stirling in 1891:

> I have travelled a good deal in Queensland, and in fact in all the colonies. I have been a collector of a variety of things all my life, natural history being a great weakness of mine, when I first came to the colonies I went in largely for collecting butterflies, beetles etc, and sent home over 12 doz bird skins. We have a very nice little collection of English butterflies and birds at home, weapons from Africa and my sisters have passion for botonay [sic] & conchology. I must apologise for giving you all these details but I wish you to understand that I shall be deeply interested & grateful to you for anything you can show me & for any information. I have I think cultivated observation to a certain extent in that I often find things to interest me outside my every day work in this isolated place...[31]

Aware of Stirling's requirement of variety and 'quality, not quantity', Ravenscroft supplied the Museum with a wide-ranging collection of raw materials, ornaments, articles of dress and weapons in 1891.[32] In exchange Stirling sent him the following artefacts: '1 finger ring, 3 armlets (2 plaited & 1 painted string) 3 string necklaces, 1 bowel [sic], 2 shields, 1 stone axe, 1 battle axe, 1 wooden shield (beantree wood) 5 boomerangs (wide curved) 1 hook boomerang, 3 waddies, 1 stone knife, 1 throwing stick (with human hair tassel), 1 spear thrower, 13 various spears'.[33]

The record of acquisitions which flowed from Stirling's 1891 expedition underlines the fact that successful collecting was founded as much upon opportunism as foresight. A passing conversation ***en route*** during the expedition often yielded important collections in later months and years. The expedition had

stopped briefly in Pine Creek, south of Darwin, on its journey south, spending an evening at the local hotel. Later in the year a large collection of spears, bark belts, armlets and other objects was sent to Adelaide by the publican, Mrs T. Evans.[34] A conversation with a railway employee in Oodnadatta as the party prepared for the journey back to Adelaide also brought tangible results. A. E. Swinburne promised then to collect for Stirling and in December 1892 consigned a collection of MacDonnell Ranges artefacts by the Great Northern Railway to Adelaide. Swinburne wrote to Stirling:

> Dear Sir, in accordance with my promise to you about twelve months ago I have made a collection of Native Weapons which I am forwarding to you by tomorrow's train. They comprise 4 packages containing 1 bowl, 5 spears (2 hunting, 3 corroboree), 2 woomeras, 3 shields, 1 nullah nullah or waddy, 1 yam stick, 8 boomerangs, 3 necklaces, 5 nose bones, 3 tattoo bones, one with brush for painting, 1 cookeroo [play-stick], 1 bundle of rattails, do not know proper name, used for covering person. I should of [sic] sent these on to you before but I have been waiting for some Native Boots that were promised to me but I have not received them yet should I get them I will foward them ... P.S. These weapons come from the McDonnell [sic] Ranges.[35]

Stirling's own pastoral interests near Lake Alexandrina and his membership of the Adelaide Club brought him into contact with many potential collectors from the pastoral frontier. One example was the Bagot family who supplied several collections from the Oodndadatta region during the 1890s and 1900s, as well as information about sacred objects and their use.[36] Another was D.H. Cudmore of Avoca Station on the River Darling, who donated a small collection in 1904 including one of the last bark canoes used on the Murray-Darling system. Stirling was especially pleased with this acquisition, recording in the Museum Committee Minutes that it was a 'valuable and excessively rare specimen, and adding that he has been endeavouring for nearly 20 years to secure one of these canoes'.[37]

Stirling's friend and co-founder of the Adelaide Medical School, Archibald Watson, was a pioneer physical anthropologist and a collector in his own right. Aware of Stirling's ethnographic project, Watson influenced one of his pastoralist brothers to gather a collection which conformed to most of Stirling's requirements. During 1896 P.S. Watson presented 'a valuable collection of native weapons and articles from the Gulf of Carpentaria'. Amandus Zietz assessed it in the following terms:

> This Collection ... fills a long felt gap in our australian ethnological Collection. We had only four Native Weapons from this locality in our Collection, but through Mr Watson's gift, our series from Gulf of Carpentaria consist now of 74 specimens.[38]

Watson's collection was one of the best balanced of the frontier pastoralists, containing twenty men's weapons and tools, six women's utensils, thirty-five items of clothing and decoration, a musical instrument, five ceremonial items and seven examples of raw materials.[39]

Stirling's 1890 circular had indicated to potential collectors the wide range of artefacts which he hoped would 'fill up the gaps' in the collection. Twenty years later, towards the end of his term as Director, and as a new registration system was implemented in preparation for the opening of a comprehensive exhibition in the new East Wing of the Museum, it was evident that many gaps remained. Stirling

communicated his priorities to a frontier pastoralist living on the Walsh River, north-east of Chillagoe in Queensland, during 1910:

> I would ask you to pay some attention to the smaller articles which are often neglected by the collector such as charms, articles of adornment or of dress, tools, food products, native string, toys and the like. It is in this direction that you are likely to find something new for the attention of collectors is generally drawn to the larger things such as weapons ... Please have each article labelled with the locality where obtained & make a memo of any facts concerning the use or manner of making it that would be of importance to an ethnological collection.[40]

Warming to his subject, Stirling also revealed his long-standing interest in Aboriginal mortuary practice and the collection of skeletal material. His note of caution in this respect probably reflected the public concern over the activities of physical anthropologists and collectors since the arrest of South Australia's coroner, William Ramsay Smith, for 'body snatching' in 1903.[41] He wrote:

> I do not know whether the process of mummifying the dead bodies is in vogue in your district as it is in some parts of Queensland but if you can get hold of a mummy without hurting anyone's feelings we should particularly like to acquire one and the same remarks apply to native skulls - but these things require to be judiciously collected for you would naturally not wish to create a scandal.[42]

Pastoralists continued to supply the South Australian Museum with Aboriginal artefacts beyond the Stirling era. In most cases these collections dated from the earlier period of contact. By the 1920s and 1930s most Aboriginal groups in proximity to pastoralist activities had ceased making or using the range of objects contained in earlier collections. Sacred objects provided the main exception. So, for example, the widow of the owner of Mt Peake Station in Central Australia, Donald Campbell, sold a collection of forty-eight stone and wooden tjurunga and three boomerangs to the Museum in 1940 following the death of their custodian:

> The locality given for the specimens is in the Black Hills where they are stated to have been kept in a cave ... The native Billy, from whom they were obtained, was recently killed in a motor accident at Alice Springs. He was the 'king' of the people who lived on Peake Station, and made journeys for corroborees to Central Mount Stuart and Cockatoo Creek ... Mrs Donald Campbell asks the sum of L10 for the collection as she is anxious that the collection stay in South Australia ... Included in the collection [is] ... a hooked boomerang ... treasured by Billy.[43]

Norman Tindale's influence on Central Australian collectors during the 1920s and 1930s was marked, if not as profound as that of Edward Stirling. His role in assisting with the organisation of the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions enabled him to correspond with pastoralists still at the frontier of contact in Central Australia. While not acting as collectors themselves, these pastoralists provided Tindale and the Board members with the opportunity to obtain large numbers of well-documented artefacts.[44] In at least two cases, the interest of these pastoralists was stimulated so that they subsequently became collectors, if only on a small scale. The family of pastoralist C.O. Chalmers, newly arrived in Alyawarre tribal country at MacDonald Downs station, later supplied Tindale and the South Australian Museum with information and artefacts following the Board's visit during 1930.[45]

The Board for Anthropological Research expedition to the Diamantina during August 1934 was facilitated through contact made with the pastoralist and amateur ornithologist Lew Reese, of Minnie Downs station. Reese had already contributed to the Museum's ornithological and natural history collections from as early as 1922; this expedition led him to extend his interest into the anthropological field.[46] Like Chalmers, he contributed ethnographic objects to the Museum collection and supplied Tindale and J.B. Cleland with detailed information on Aboriginal customs and beliefs of the eastern Simpson Desert region.[47] Additional objects from Reese's collection were also acquired in 1934 through the amateur ornithologist and collector, Dr A.M. Morgan.[48]

Merchants and Adventurers

South Australians proved to be among the most mobile of Australian colonists, extending pastoral interests into Central and Northern Australia and joining the various 'rushes' for gold, minerals and pearls during the second half of the nineteenth century. Some of these individuals also took the opportunity to collect natural history specimens and artefacts for their home museum.

The pearling 'rush' to north-western Australia during the last years of the nineteenth century provided one of the best such opportunities. From it the Adelaide Museum received two important frontier collections. That contributed by the pearling captain Henry F. Hilliard comprised more than fifty objects collected from the coastal regions near Broome. Hilliard met Edward Stirling on Thursday Island during March 1891, just after Hilliard and his brigantine, *Sketty Belle*, had survived a cyclone which wiped out most of the pearling fleet accompanying him from the Kimberley coast.[49] Hilliard subsequently returned to the Kimberley. His first instalment included the first fish-killing boomerang to be obtained by an Australian museum and three pearl-shell ornaments, described by Zietz at the Museum as 'plates'.[50] Hilliard wrote to Stirling of his efforts on the Museum's behalf during 1891:

> I thought that I would have been able to add to it during my trip to the eastward, as I was on shore at several places, particularly on the islands which are all inhabited, but the natives were very shy & would have no communication with us ... The native utensils I send you now, are from this district alone, viz Cape Leveque & islands at mouth of Kings Sound, the nearest port to which is Derby. The collection is not so good as I would wish it to be but there is not a great variety of native implements in use here, nor are they so ornamental as those used in other parts of the colony. I have not had an opportunity of visiting any of the tribes further south, however I will keep on collecting & hope to be able to send you a better shipment next time as I have asked some friends to collect for me further south & will be moving about more myself.[51]

A further collection, including a wooden raft, was sent by Hilliard during 1894.

The pearling and mining industries also brought a new wave of pastoralism to north-western Australia. The ship's captain, prospector and pastoralist P. St. Barbe Ayliffe contributed more than 100

objects from the region during the 1890s. Ayliffe had already made a notable collection for the Museum during his 1889 prospecting expedition to the Musgrave Ranges in South Australia. Stirling had described this as 'a nearly complete Collection of ethnological Specimens from one Tribe ... of great scientific value'.[52] A year later, having moved to take up Yanyereddy station between the Ashburton and Gascoyne Rivers in Western Australia, Ayliffe offered Stirling another opportunity to fill a gap in his collections. He wrote to Stirling:

> You may remember my presenting a collection of Native Weapons etc to the Museum from the Musgrave Ranges. I could get a far better collection from here ... The natives still use their own implements for making their Weapons which they carve a good deal ....[53]

Stirling had already informed his Committee that the district 'has previously been little visited by collectors, and I consider [it] a fair opportunity, for getting a gap filled in our australian ethnological Collections'.[54] Encouraged in this way, Ayliffe gathered several collections from the region. A surviving list of twenty-six objects indicates that he had gone to some trouble to collect beyond standard categories, and to document Aboriginal terms for particular objects, and their uses.[55]

Stirling's period saw the Museum's collections keeping pace with the frontier itself. As Aborigines were drawn into relations with pastoralists in central and northern Australia they bartered their own objects for European commodities. The South Australian pastoralist G. Bagot recalled that 'artefacts were usually traded in for food and clothing' by Aborigines of the Macumba River earlier in the twentieth century.[56] The station store often provided the forum for these exchanges and it is not surprising to find that, occasionally at least, station managers sought to recoup their expenses by selling artefact collections made in this way. A foremost example was the station overseer G.H. Birt, whose multiple transactions with the Museum indicate that he was more than an incidental collector. Based in Adelaide, he sold fourteen separate collections to Stirling between the years 1895 and 1903. The collections were drawn from western New South Wales, south-western Queensland, Lake Lefroy, the Lyons River and Carnarvon in Western Australia, and from Beltana in the Flinders Ranges. The significance of these collections was appreciated by Assistant Director Amandus Zietz, who noted that the New South Wales objects were the first well-documented objects to be received from that colony, a fact which 'increases their scientific value'.[57] Birt was alert to the commercial value of his collections and offered illustrated lists of artefacts for consideration; his 1902 Lyons River collection was accompanied by ink sketches of thirteen object types.[58] Offering a collection of clubs, spears, spearthrowers, boomerangs, a digging stick and a 'lizard head stick' in 1903 he wrote: 'If you keep them a time they are really worth double the amount. They are a picked lot, really first class'.[59]

Generally it was only anthropological or exploring expeditions which ventured beyond the existing frontier for their collections, but the quest for particular commodities influenced other collectors as well. The pearling captain Henry Hilliard and the mining prospector St Barbe Ayliffe have been mentioned. The

geologist Charles Chewings was another who amassed a large collection of Central Australian artefacts during his outback travels. Chewings was one of the earliest to recognise the potential benefit of camel transport in Central Australia; he shipped nearly 300 camels from India to Port Augusta during 1884. A sizeable inheritance enabled him to establish a camel transport service and to purchase Tempe Downs station, an important site in the history of Aboriginal-European relations in Central Australia. Following the discovery of fossils on Tempe Downs by his manager, R.F. Thornton, Chewings pursued a career in geology. He studied in London and Heidelberg, eventually returning to Central Australia as a mining consultant and camel-carrier between Oodnadatta and various Northern Territory localities. His Aboriginal collection was more than a casual accumulation from his expeditions. He became a student of Aranda linguistics and culture, responsible for a complete translation of the missionary Carl Strehlow's *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stamme in Zentral-Australien*, and for his own 1937 book, *Back in the Stone Age*, and several other publications.[60]

Chewings was one of an impressive group of applicants for the position of Museum Director following Edward Stirling's retirement in 1913.[61] Unsuccessful, he nevertheless offered the South Australian Museum first refusal on his Aboriginal collection during 1921 and 1923. It included seventy-four tjurunga, about eighty stone knives, forty hooked boomerangs, 160 hunting boomerangs, sixty spearthrowers, eighty spears, forty shields, eighty wooden containers, twenty-five fighting sticks, six spearheads, five adzes, five pointing sticks, three women's digging sticks, nine millstones, ten message sticks, ten hair ornaments, fur string, armlets, pubic tassels, beard ornaments and kurdaitcha shoes. Had Stirling been alive he may have attempted to bargain for at least a proportion of Chewings' collection, given the latter's standing as an ethnographer. But Stirling's successor, Edgar Waite, rejected the offer, probably considering that most items were already represented in the Museum. Unable to find a museum buyer, Chewings auctioned his collection in 1923, describing the circumstances of its acquisition for an emerging market of discerning city-based collectors. The collection, he wrote, was

> got together by Charles Chewings ... during several years' travel with a large caravan of camels trading between Oodnadatta and Newcastle Waters. The articles were carefully selected, and only genuine ones, actually in use at that time, were accepted ... in addition to the transport charges there was, of course, the cost of tobacco, clothes, food, etc. for barter - for the native demands a quid pro quo and rightly so, for everything, and especially for his dearest treasures. Pointing sticks, churingas, and his best weapons are not easy to get. The collection is one of the two largest and best ever got together, and in some respects this one is unique. The other collection belonged to the late F.J. Gillen (of Spencer & Gillen), and was sold by him to the South Australian Public Museum, where it now is.[62]

The South Australian Museum eventually acquired some Chewings objects through Sir John Glover, a former Lord Mayor of Adelaide and a noted collector who had purchased them at the auction.[63]

Another later example of an independent collector operating beyond the frontier of contact was the dingo hunter Alan Brumby. One of several hunters in the region, he traded with Aborigines for dingo

scalps in the little known Mann and Musgrave Ranges region of South Australia during the later 1920s. These transactions were observed by Norman Tindale and Cecil Hackett who were guided by Brumby during their 1933 camel expedition through the ranges. Brumby's small collection, received in 1931, included a nose-piercing implement, pearl shell pendant, 'mulga wax', a chignon, an owl feather plume, and pubic tassels.[64] While it appears that Brumby offered Aboriginal people the standard rate of exchange of the time for dingo scalps, not all of his colleagues were as even-handed. During the 1960s Winifred Hilliard recorded the following reminiscence of the doggers' activities from a Pitjantjatjara woman, Nganyintja:

> many bad men came and took black wives - white men wanted the girls. They brought food supplies on camels, coming from a great distance, and hunted dingoes. Our men gave them scalps in exchange for food which was put into our digging dishes. They really stole the scalps because of our ignorance of money. These doggers took all they could get and took the girls for themselves. Our own men became angry with this, especially when the girls were happy to be with the white men who gave them clothes and food.[65]

Tindale noted that before the South Australian government enforced a minimum bounty the usual price for scalps in 1933 was '4 lb flour, 1 lb sugar, handful of tea, 1/2 stick tobacco, a clay pipe and a box of matches.[66] The doggers played an important part in introducing European commodities to the Pitjantjatjara and Yangkantjatjara people, but with the establishment of the Ernabella Mission in 1937 the payment for scalps was raised to the actual Government bounty and most of the doggers abandoned the region.

It was inevitable that at least a few of these frontier traders would recognise the opportunity to turn ethnographic collecting into a paying concern. The practice was well established throughout the Pacific, where the commercial value of ethnographic and natural history objects had been recognised since the mid-nineteenth century. At least two merchant collectors made Stirling aware of their capacity to penetrate the Australian frontier on behalf of his Museum. These were the Darwin-based mariner and speculator Charles E. Gore and the Adelaide-based merchant and miner David Morney Sayers. Gore made his proposal to Stirling after reading a southern newspaper article on the subject. He recalled

> somebody writing about the scarcity of native weapons & curios and reckoning eventually they will be unobtainable. I can assure him that it will be many years before that happens up this way.[67]

Gore explained that since the Malay trepang fleets had been prevented from trading along the northern coast a golden opportunity existed for Europeans to deal with the Aborigines of the region who had previously gathered pearls and tortoise shell to exchange with the visitors. Gore had engaged in this trade himself a few years earlier, obtaining fifty pounds weight of tortoiseshell which he subsequently shipped to London. This amount had cost him eighteen shillings in barter from one Aboriginal camp ('4lbs of tobacco at 4/6'), and returned about fifty times that amount - L45 ('price received 22/6 per lb'), 'a good margin of profit'. He outlined his scheme to Stirling:

> the blacks are anxious and eager to trade and I thought that if two whites and myself hired a lugger and made a six months trip amongst them we would reap a small fortune ... one could collect

enough weapons and curios to supply all the demands from South and also make a small fortune in shell and pearls and if the two men that joined me were a little up in stuffing and preserving birds and skins we would have a fine collection for the Islands and coast ... I cannot see how it is possible to lose on the spec ... I hold a masters certificate and have been on this coast for 30 odd years so I know every nook corner river and Island in it, a thing no other man in the N.T. can say.[68]

Stirling's response is not known but is likely to have been cautious. In any event, the Museum was to benefit from its own collector, Walter Dodd, working along the north-western and northern coasts during 1912, collecting mainly natural history specimens, but some ethnographic objects as well. Stirling would also have been conscious of the large additions to the collections from the region made by the Adelaide merchant David Morney Sayers.

Little is known of Sayers as a collector, beyond the fact that while based in Adelaide he had opportunities for several trips to the Arnhem Land coast during the 1890s and 1900s.[69] He probably purchased buffalo hides from the only European resident on Melville Island during this period, Joe Cooper, whom he described to Stirling as

an old companion who is well versed in the native language, habits, and customs and who has promised to render me all the assistance he could in getting native weapons and other curios with their names. I think it most probable I could obtain one of the ornamental wooden posts you refer to ... I feel sure that if I were in the Territory I could get a number of interesting native curios you do not at present possess.[70]

In his letter of 2 October 1907, Sayers referred again to Cooper and claimed to have

a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the Territory and Islands where I know the most important specimens are to be found and being able to avail myself of the services of a friend with whom I crossed through the Territory in 1877 and who has resided there since ... he has a yatch [sic] which I could make use of, and his knowledge of the habitats and customs of the natives would enable us to procure more variety of curios than if a stranger had to deal with it.[71]

Stirling may have met Cooper in Darwin during the 1891 expedition, but at that time neither Cooper nor any other European had attempted to deal with the notoriously hostile Tiwi people of Melville and Bathurst Islands.[72] During that expedition Stirling had been lucky to obtain a single Melville Island spear which had apparently been traded to the mainland. Cooper was to become an important field assistant for Baldwin Spencer during his 1911 visit to Melville Island. In the meantime he assisted the ethnographic collecting of Sayers, Herbert Basedow, and the physical anthropologist Hermann Klaatsch, and obtained two significant collections for Stirling. These consisted of fourteen spears and four clubs in 1906, followed three years later by '1 bark canoe 12 feet long. 1 doz spears. 1/2 doz bark baskets, 5 human hair belts, 6 fancy armlets, 4 doz common armlets, 1 twohanded sword, 1 neck ornament (for dancing)'.[73]

Sayers made almost annual trips from Adelaide to the north coast from 1906 to 1911. In 1907 he again urged Stirling to support his collecting proposals, suggesting that he enlist the 'cooperation of a spirited public of generous hearted citizens' such as the Adelaide businessman Robert Barr Smith:

I think it would be wise for your Board to obtain samples of the old curios as the natives becoming Anglicised fall out of their ancient customs, and there would be more difficulty in getting what you

> most desire. In the event of procuring rare animals or birds, I could obtain at a small cost, the services of a Chinese Taxidermist ... I feel sure ... that I could obtain the best collection ever submitted to any of the Australian States.[74]

A few days later, Sayers reported that he had 'accidently met Mr R. Barr Smith in Victoria Square' and had raised the issue of his sponsorship of a collecting expedition. Barr Smith had apparently indicated that L200 would be available for Stirling if he were to ask for it.[75] Sayers estimated the cost of the collection in trade goods:

> say 200 tommyhawks, 200 fishing lines, a few gross of assorted hooks, about 1 cwt of tobacco at 3/6 a lb. and 2 gross of clay pipes and 100 common shirts for distribution amongst the natives. By this means I would readily obtain their services and no doubt valuable information which otherwise I might not be able to obtain.[76]

Like Gore, Sayers had become aware of the growing commercial interest from museums and private collectors in Aboriginal artefacts, especially after the turn of the century. He collected ethnographic material for at least one other institution - the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Sayers also assisted Baldwin Spencer on his collecting trip to Melville Island during mid-1911, although he assured Stirling that he would 'look after curios for Adelaide rest assured'.[77]

Stirling was not prepared to fund Sayers' collecting activities directly, partly because his Board had just recently purchased the missionary J.G. Reuther's ethnographic collection for the record amount of four hundred pounds. He did obtain the Board's authorisation to purchase any material offered for sale though, and the result was the acquisition of more than 500 artefacts through more than twenty transactions between 1907 and 1915.[78] Several categories were previously unrepresented in the Museum's collections.

Joe Cooper, referred to as 'the party that got them for me', or 'my man', appears to have been Sayers' primary source for most of the material, which consisted mainly of spears, clubs, baskets and body ornaments, miscellaneous items such as canoes, paddles and didjeridus, but also included funerary goods and some skeletal material.[79] A set of five Melville and Bathurst Island grave posts or 'tomb monuments', together with two individual posts, were the first examples of their type to be obtained by any museum. These acquisitions are likely to have resulted from Stirling's encouragement. The Museum Director had read the proofs for Herbert Basedow's 1907 description of Melville and Bathurst Island grave posts which was published in the journal *Man*.[80] In September 1907 Stirling asked Sayers to obtain examples of these Bathurst and Melville Island 'native monuments'. After obtaining two examples in early 1908 Sayers wrote that 'the game is risky and my man don't like the job'. He nevertheless supplied Stirling with a 'set' of five posts and a bark bag belonging to the one grave during November 1908.[81] Cooper's simmering emnity with the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Island may be partly explained by his sanctioning or becoming directly involved in the collection of grave posts and, in several instances, skeletal material. On negotiating with Stirling for the sale of two human skulls from Arnheim Bay in 1912, Sayers wrote:

> The party that got them for me would not take the job on again for a L5 note. I want L1 each - if not I should think you the hardest man in Australia.[82]

Compared to many of the collections sent to the South Australian Museum by pastoralists and others employed on the frontier, Sayers' collections were well documented. The function of most objects was identified in his lists even if their Aboriginal names or places of collection were not recorded. Sayers' offer to 'classify' his curios on their receipt at the Museum promised no more than this bare description.[83] Despite the outstanding example of collection documentation set by Paul Foelsche several years earlier, Stirling apparently considered that this level of documentation was sufficient.

As discussed below, it was the remote missionaries who tended to make a success of ethnographic collecting as a commercial operation, affecting the material culture traditions of Aboriginal people in the process. One Top End collector appears to have gained inspiration from this missionary approach to developing an artefact 'industry'. J.G. Niemann became well known in the region after the turn of the century for his innovative attempts at establishing a range of industries on the Daly River from commercial kapok harvesting, tobacco and fruit growing to silver mining, all assisted by Aboriginal labour. His base was the abandoned Jesuit Mission of New Unia on the Daly River. Another sideline was trapping animals for museums:

'for a stick of tobacco the Brinken [Aborigines] would bring in enough to sink a ship, while keeping the family in fish, game, geese-eggs and Daly wild apples for pies'.[84] In about 1903 he sold a collection to the South Australian Museum of 155 artefacts - comprising firesticks, baskets and bags, string belts, headbands, didjeridus, clubs, spears, spearthrowers and fishhooks. The accompanying list included the Malak Malak language terms for the objects and is very similar in style to the collection lists produced by the Anglican missionaries at Kaparlgoo Mission, to the east.[85] As with those collections, Niemann's consisted of a wide range of traditional objects with the same exception - metal-headed spears. It is likely that Niemann would have been aware of the Kaparlgoo initiatives.

Most Europeans who placed themselves at or beyond the frontier of contact during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did so for economic reasons or through the need to administer the communities established through these initiatives. Missionaries, anthropologists and, more rarely, writers and journalists, were the only groups drawn to that extremity by Aborigines themselves. As the final 'adventurer' to be considered within this section, Daisy Bates combined attributes of each of these professions and achieved maverick status as a result.[86] Her investigations among Aborigines began in earnest during her reconnoitring tour of north-western Australia during 1900 in search of a suitable property for her second (bigamous) husband, Jack Bates. She had received anthropological guidance before this trip began, from a colleague of Bishop Gibney (one of the founders of Beagle Bay Mission) and from the Western Australian Premier and explorer, Sir John Forrest.[87] By the time she met her husband in Cossack and reached nearby Roebourne, she had begun the anthropological record which was to occupy her life for the next half century. She wrote:

The natives of Roebourne number about 200 ... some of them fine looking men; the women are

very inferior looking. They make several articles from spinifex grass which grows so abundantly about here. Netted bags ... which they manipulate with a small kangaroo bone, beads, rope and a splendid glue, which they use to fasten their glass spear heads on the end of their wooden spears.[88]

Unaligned with any institution or academy, Bates remained an outsider throughout her life. This status was not assisted by her gender, her eventual inability to produce a monograph, or by an eclectic approach to her subject. Her newspaper and journal publications covered topics as diverse as kinship, infancticide, trade, material culture, ceremony and mythology as well as natural history.[89] In this respect her reputation as an anthropologist may be contrasted with that of the Queensland anthropologist Ursula McConnel who undertook fieldwork on Cape York Peninsula during the 1920s and 1930s. Despite her relatively slim output, McConnel has provided a more suitable exemplar of a pioneer female anthropologist in Australia.[90]

Unlike McConnel, whose surviving ethnographic collection totals more than 500 artefacts, Bates was not, according to Ernestine Hill, 'a curio collector'. Hill wrote:

Their sacred tribal objects - *churinga, wanningi*, totem boards, initiation knives, rain and fertility stones, phallic symbols and man-making regalia, ceremonial spears, stone tools, letter-sticks, music-sticks, utensils and charms, in her time authentic and of unique interest, she never claimed.[91]

Hill's assertion is difficult to reconcile with her own text in which she described the contents of three tin trunks which Bates kept in her Ooldea tent. The third trunk was 'her chamber of horrors', containing death bones, medicine stones, quartz knives, carved snakes and kurdaitcha shoes.[92] Yet from a comparison with objects later acquired by the South Australian Museum and by other collectors, it seems that this particular assemblage, with a few additions and supplemented by sacred objects discussed below, represented a large part of Bates' complete ethnographic collection.

Bates' 1903-1904 commission for the *Western Mail* to report on the mines of the Weld Range, Murchison River, Meekatharra and Nannine districts presented her with her first opportunity to investigage Aboriginal life as a dedicated anthropologist. The exercise also yielded a small ethnographic collection. It included an adze, fire-making sticks, ochres from the famed Wilga Mia mines, a wooden container, a boomerang, a spearthrower and a shield, a bone awl, 'string made from sheeps wool found on bushes', a bull-roarer and a pointing stick. Bates presented this small collection to a friend, Dr Lillian Cooper, who subsequently passed it to Stirling at the Adelaide Museum in 1909.[93] Selected items from the same localities were acquired by the Museum directly from Bates during 1914.[94] Other objects collected by Bates were passed in turn to a range of collectors, including the Adelaide medical anthropologists R.H. Pulleine and J.B. Cleland.[95] Her direct relationship with Adelaide scientists may be traced back at least as far as 1905 when she sent Aboriginal hair samples to Cleland for analysis: 'his report the hair was elliptical meant that the western Aborigines, like the Europeans, were Caucasian and not negroid, by origin'.[96]

Bates's scientific interest in Aborigines was tempered from the first by her solicitude for their welfare, a sentiment sharpened by her 1900 journey with Bishop Gibney to the Beagle Bay Mission north of Broome and her subsequent report on its activities. Bates spent subsequent decades applying the welfare

principles characteristically practised on missions, wrote some 270 newspaper articles concerning Aborigines, and gathered volumes of anthropological data, intended for her *magnum opus*, never written. Her observations on Aboriginal artefacts formed a distinct section of this manuscript, dealing with 'weapons, arts and crafts'. These observations related particularly to the small collections mentioned here.[97] From her appointment as anthropologist by the Western Australian government during 1904, and through her participation in the Cambridge Research Expedition expedition led by A. R. Radcliffe Brown during 1910-1911, she had adopted the technique of participant-observation which was not to be fully accepted by the anthropological profession for another twenty years.[98] In that respect, Bate's fieldwork methodology resembled that of Francis Gillen. She adopted the advice from the Australian ethnologist R.H. Mathews and the British anthropologist Andrew Lang to concentrate upon facts rather than theory, and she directly implemented the latter's exhortation to 'get out among the blacks herself'.[99]

The inclusion of ceremonial men's objects among Bates' early collection from north-western Australia signalled a trend which was to continue during her later work on the Nullarbor Plain. Bates' capacity to deal with the sacred aspects of Aboriginal men's tradition has been questioned more than once. Ernestine Hill gently parodied Bates as 'the sexless stranger at these secret phallic rites', while Bates herself clearly played upon her formidable, precedent-setting status as an elderly white woman among initiated men.[100] Writing of her presence at a Western Desert ceremony involving sacred objects which she later sent to the South Australian Museum, she observed: 'When I go to these night dances I go as Kabbaili ("spirit" "magic" grandmother) so that I shall still, in the natives' minds, keep my apartness from them, and I find that they all felt this apartness'.[101]

Bates traced this status to two pivotal events which followed her intensive period of field investigations with Western Desert Aborigines in the Meekatharra region. Here she had pioneered the method of obtaining Aboriginal renderings of their sites and country by supplying them with brown paper and pencils, allowing them to map 'an early history of their home waters and wanderings'.[102] This level of engagement by Bates signalled a commitment which probably resulted in decisions to transfer sacred objects to her. One object in particular was cited by Bates as 'the magic *bamburu* which has been my passport among all the central circumcised tribes throughout the years.[103] The second incident involved her induction by a man of the red ochre totem into the 'mysteries' of Wilga Mia in the Weld Range, the principal ochre mine in Western Australia. Wearing a 'cream holland coat and skirt', Bates became, like her companion, progressively coated in red ochre, a potent symbol of rebirth and initiation:

> I came out a Woman in Red. There was not an inch of me that had not been ochred all over, even my face and hands were smeared with the greasy stuff.[104]

The critical decision of old men to extend initiated status to her during ceremonies held at Eucla during 1913 may be traced partly to her willingness to stand so close to their cultural life, on their own terms. Objects entrusted to her during these ceremonies were sent to the South Australian Museum during 1919.[105]

It may also be that in supplying flour, tea and sugar to sustain the performers at these ceremonies she was paying for the privilege as Gillen had done at Alice Springs. She had certainly become used to the idea that 'to accept the gift of information in the way of vocabularies and legends, she must reward the donor, perhaps with a tin of fruit, perhaps with a new shirt'.[106] According to her own account, Bates always paid her informants for objects or information with rations rather than money. Whatever the reason, sacred objects gradually accumulated in her possession at the various camps which she maintained during her Nullarbor sojourns, together with the responsibility 'to grease and freshen these boards occasionally, and to hide the place of their storage from white men'.[107]

Bates showed no great enthusiasm for collecting secular objects, partly because she was unwilling to sell them on to collectors or museums. In a 1932 letter to Herbert Hale at the South Australian Museum she stated that she 'had never before disposed of native objects for remuneration of any kind'.[108] Knowing this, museum staff had supplied her with clothing and rations to facilitate exchanges from the early 1920s, and a small collection of sacred and secular objects gradually passed to Adelaide as a result. But by early 1932, conscious that her time at Ooldea was drawing to a close, Bates wrote that she 'would prefer Adelaide to purchase and possess all these special things'.[109]

Several of the more significant acquisitions resulted from the arrival at Ooldea siding during 1930 of a group of twenty-six Pitjantjatjara men, women and children who had made the thousand mile journey across the Nullarbor to escape drought conditions in the Mann Ranges. Bates sent a collection of artefacts obtained from this group, including kurdaitcha shoes, spearthrowers, fur and hair string decorations and wooden dishes, to Hale at the Museum. Two years later she sent a hair-string cross or waninga made by Guinmarda, one of the men, for which she had given 'shirt and trousers and blanket and a dress for his woman ... although I supplied the hair (for string) and for one (or two) of the larra [bullroarers]'.[110] The Mann Range group were also responsible for making two remarkable sacred objects, representations of two ancestral Snakes fashioned with a mixture of traditional and European materials. The male Snake, a sinuous canvas shape stuffed with grass and decorated with ochre designs and bird down, was fixed to a three metre long plank. The female Snake or 'woman emblem', was 'an ancient motor tyre, also on a pole, ochred, with its circles covered with down'.[111] Bates could not walk the distance from her camp to attend the ceremony at Ooldea Water involving these objects, and observed that the men responsible for them carried them four kilometres to her camp. She wrote:

> they also performed the final stage of the ceremony by slowly erecting the object, setting it in a hole in the sand and then bowing or standing most reverently before the erect image. At once Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness came to my mind and just the same way Kimberly men erected their tchooroo on a carved pole and stood in reverence around it. As Mr Tindale will know the magic snake was known and feared in every group in Australia.[112]

Knowing that the Museum would probably accept such items, and would reimburse her for expenses, Bates devoted considerable effort to gathering and documenting sacred and secular objects for Hale and Tindale

during the last two years of her Ooldea sojourn. The documentation of the sacred boards made for her by Western Desert men was notable for its detail, later transcribed by Tindale into the Museum Registers.

With her intimate experience of the acquisition of objects through her own carefully negotiated role in Aboriginal society, Bates was understandably dismissive of the transactions undertaken by Aborigines with 'the new and rather vulgar travelling public' at the Ooldea siding during her years there from 1920 until 1934.[113] She played only a minor role in the emergence of tourist craft along the East-West Line, seeing it as one more indication of the deleterious changes brought through the railway's influence. These forms were more vigorously encouraged by her successor at Ooldea, the missionary Annie Lock (see below, Chapter Eight). Even so, Bates documented some crucial developments in this field.[114] She noted, for example, that one of the 1930 arrivals, a left-handed man named Moondoor, had carved a wooden model of a *milbarli* or 'long-tailed iguana', an example of 'new art' learned by the group from examples made by the Aborigines of Fowlers Bay nearby for sale to tourists. Bates was also the first to observe the emergence of women's creativity in this field, responsible for burning poker-work designs onto these carvings with hot wire.[115] She recognised that Aborigines obtained a limited amount of economic autonomy through these transactions, but her attitude to the deleterious effect of the railway was uncompromising:

> Biscuits and cake were thrown to them from the train windows, while their boomerangs and native weapons, and their importance in the landscape as subjects for photography, brought many a shilling and sixpence for them to spend, which they promptly did, without any knowledge of its value, and sometimes were wickedly imposed upon. The train was their undoing.[116]

In 1931 Bates observed that those men who had arrived at Ooldea a year earlier from the north were making short journeys to collect wood 'for <u>very poor</u> boomerangs & other objects which the ordinary train passengers buy'. Bates was apparently unaware that Aborigines of the Mann Ranges did not make boomerangs traditionally, and that she was witnessing a considerable adjustment to an altered cultural reality. She did note the fact that though, that 'the 'bacca' & tinned foods & other luxuries bought with these monies from the fettlers' wives, with the rabbits that swarm round the siding & camp & are caught by women or dogs - suffice for them'.[117]

Daisy Bates began her encounters among Aborigines as a journalist, a passing stranger. Her point of view in those early days was similar to that of other adventurers and travellers who exchanged money or commodities for artefacts with Aborigines on the frontier. For many of those travellers, the objects collected in those brief encounters symbolised the imagined reality of Aboriginal life which lay behind the exchange. It may be too great a generalisation to suggest that these collections served to compensate these travellers for the lack of dialogue with Aborigines themselves - that they were, to adopt Susan Stewart's analogy, souvenirs of experiences never shared.[118] Even so, Daisy Bates' conscious efforts to minimise her artefact collecting may be related to perceptions of her own proximity to the culture she studied, even if this factor did not apply equally to other anthropologists in the field. What is certain is that by the time she left Ooldea as an elderly woman, artefacts served more than ever to mark the ground in casual exchanges

between tourists and Aborigines. That much is clear from the A.G. Bolam's 1927 advice to travellers passing through Ooldea by railway:

> When you are buying a boomerang from a black at Ooldea, remember that you are not necessarily getting a man-killing instrument, but rather a "blackfellow's plaything." You will, however, be buying a genuine boomerang, made by the blacks with infinite labour, and well worth the "bob" or two that the native asks for it. Treat these blacks then, a little generously, and their happy smiles will be something given in with the unique boomerang, which you should be proud to possess.[119]

Endnotes - Chapter Six

1. Chewings 1923.

2. Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992: 17.

3. Miss Jane Thompson, 'Special Lists, October 1906 - 1917', p.56. AA298, Acc.156, AASAM.

4. See Jones file on Welbourne.

5. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.140, 10 February, 1904, SRSAM. A listing of the Martindale Hall collection is held in AASAM.

6. This club was acquired from the pharmmacist and keen lepidoptera collector, Oswald Lower. See Hale 1956: 52.

7. No trace of this collection exists in the Anthropology Registers, although it is possible that some items may be identified among the Old Collection. See Curator's Report, July 1864, GRG 19/168, SRO.

8. This important letter also contains information concerning the long boomerangs of the Cooper's Creek region, with evidence that they were used by women to settle disputes in hand-to-hand fighting. W.B. Greenwood, Beltana, 26 August, 1889, extract in letter from Rumball to Zietz, 1889, no. 256, Stirling Papers, AA309, AASAM. See also Jones files on Greenwood, Rumball.

9. See Jones file on Browne. The objects may have been obtained by the station manager, A.G.B. Ravenscroft (see below).

10. Giles to Stirling, 12 July, 1890. AA298 Acc.184, no69, 69a, AASAM. For Giles' diaries and papers see A626, A1082, MLSA. See Jones file on Giles.

11. Kemp to Tindale, 10 February 1931. Specimen documentation file for A15513-4, SAM.

12. See Jones file on Ragless and Enfield Institute.

13. See Jones file on Miss L.O. Stuart.

14. See Jones (1984) for a discussion of the red ochre expeditions.

15. Hayward 1927-1928: 99-100, 107, 110. Notwithstanding these incidents, Hayward's account contains rare ethnographic detail on the Aborigines of the Pekina region.

16. The Cooper's Creek material may have been collected by a relative, C. Phillipson, who assisted Edward Stirling on his 1899 expedition to the Warburton River in search of fossils. See Phillipson (1886) and Jones file on Phillipson.

17. Register entry for A3936-7. Sanders also collected objects from the Ashburton River in Western Australia, and took photographs of Aborigines in both locations. Copies of these are held in the AASAM. Sanders' papers are filed as PRG 182, MLSA. See Jones file on Sanders.

18. See Jones file on Cave. For a copy of a journal describing an expedition made by Cave and others in this region, perhaps the occasion of this object's collection, see the H.K. Fry collection, AA105, AASAM.

19. Sanger 1883: 1225. Sanger provided the principal list of Central Australian mammals before the Horn Expedition of 1894 (Sanger 1884).

20. These objects are registered as A3407-8, 3413. A3413 is attributed to W. Sanger, but this is probably an error.

21. Register entries for A1981-4, 1986-9, 3311, 3896, 6548, 28411, SAM. See Jones file on Lamb.

22. Phillipson is mentioned above in this chapter. See Kingsmill 1886 and Jones file on Kingsmill.

23. For a full account of this incident and its background, see Reid 1990: 121-24. Several artefacts collected by Willshire in South Australia were acquired by the South Australian Museum during 1995, when they were offered for auction by a descendant.

24. South also collected from Point MacLeay and from the Killalpaninna Mission on Cooper's Creek. From this locality he sent Stirling a collection of hair samples from named individuals, an indication that Stirling had discussed the aims of physical anthropology with him during the 1891 expedition. See Jones file on South.

25. Thornton to Stirling, 20 September, 1891. AA309, no.453, AASAM.

26. Thornton to Stirling, 20 July, 1893. AA298, Acc.184, no.72, AASAM. Only sixty-five of the 230 artefacts donated by Thornton from 1890 to 1893 can be traced. See Jones file and AA298, Acc.184, nos. 58, 58a, 72a (lists), AA309, nos. 167, 168, 453, AASAM.

27. Reid 1990: 119.

28. Coulthard's uncle, the pioneer Central Australian pastoralist Bob Coulthard, perished during the 1890s, writing a final message in blood on his empty water canteen. This item is in the collection of the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society. See Jones file on Coulthard.

29. Ravenscroft to Stirling, 9 October, 1890. AA298 Acc.184, no.55a-d, AASAM.

30. Ravenscroft 1891-1892. This two-page paper is arranged under the headings of 'locality', 'water-supply', 'religion' ('The idea of a Supreme or any other Supernatural Being does not appear to exist'), 'customs' and 'superstition'. It does not refer to material culture.

31. Ravenscroft to Stirling, 9 October, 1890. AA298 Acc.184, no.55a-d, AASAM.

32. Nearly 100 objects were received. See Jones file on Ravenscroft.

33. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.78, October 25, 1892, SRSAM.

34. At least thirty-one spears were transferred by Stirling to the 'Duplicate Collection' and are now probably untraceable in the Old Collection. For identifiable objects see Jones file and AA298, Acc.184 no.71a, AASAM.

35. Swinburne to Stirling, 7 December, 1892, AA298 Acc.184 nos.10a,d, AASAM. Seventeen of the original thirty objects are identifiable; see Jones file.

36. The Secretary of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, Robert Kay, wrote to John Bagot on Stirling's account during April 1888, asking for information regarding a large ceremonial boomerang purchased by Stirling for the Museum from an Adelaide dealer. Bagot's reply is likely to have aroused Stirling's interest in collecting sacred objects. Bagot to Kay, 27 April, 1888. Stirling Papers, AA309, AASAM.

37. The bark canoe, which has been on display in the Museum's Stirling Gallery since 1914, is registered as A6443. See Minutes of the Museum Committee, November 1904, p.370. GRG 19/354 SRO; AA298, Acc.184, no.36, AASAM; Jones file on Cudmore.

38. A. Zietz, Assistant Director: Report to the Museum Committee, 27 January, 1897. AA298, Acc.159, no.2a, AASAM.

39. This listing is compiled from the Anthropology Register and from the original list, AA298, Acc.187, no.2a, AASAM.

40. Stirling to Arthur Hardy, 4 April, 1910. GRG 19/11, vol.2, SRO.

41. See below, Chapter *(9)**.

42. *Ibid.* Hardy's collection may never have been made. No record exists of its acquisition by the South Australian Museum.

43. Tindale to Director, South Australian Museum, 10 December, 1940. The same individual, a Warlpiri man of high authority, was referred to by T.G.H. Strehlow as

> old Wirririkara ... the guardian of the sacred cave at Katna [who] was encouraged by Don Campbell, the owner of Mt Peake, to stay near his station premises as a sort of insurance against any depredations by wandering Walbiri tribesmen. (Strehlow 1970: 107)

44. See Jones 1987.

45. Items forwarded to the Museum included a range of Aboriginal foods supplied by Chalmers' daughter Jess in 1934, a skin waterbag sent by C.O. Chalmers in 1950, and a pair of kurdaitcha shoes purchased from Chalmers' son Charles in 1971. See Jones files on Chalmers family.

46. See letters in GRG 19/5/1922-23, SRO. In 1924 Reese sent some caterpillars to Waite and offered to send 'circumcision knives' as well, 'if desired'. Reese to Waite, 27 May, 1924, GRG 19/5/39088, SRO.

47. Reese's ethnographic donations to the Museum included shell and bone initiation pendants and stone tools. His personal collection of ethnographic objects and photographs were lost in the fire which destroyed this ill-starred pastoralist's homestead. See Jones 1991b.

48. See Jones files on L. Reese and Dr A.M. Morgan.

49. That fortuitous meeting is obliquely referred to in Stirling (1891a) ms. (Notebook '6').

50. Hilliard list, dated 29 December, 1891. AA298, Acc.184, nos.9,9a, AASAM.

51. Hilliard to Stirling, 3 November, 1891, AA298, Acc.184, nos.9,9a, AASAM. Hilliard also donated natural history specimens, particularly shells. Sixty-seven ethnographic objects from Hilliard's collection are identifiable today. See Jones file for further information. See Hill (1942: 37-41), for an account of Hilliard related by his widow.

52. Zietz to Museum Committee, March 7, 1890. AA298 Acc.159 no.17, AASAM.

53. Ayliffe to Stirling, 14 February, 1891. AA298 Acc.184, no. 85a, AASAM. See Jones file for Ayliffe's surviving collection.

54. Stirling to Museum Committee, 3 April, 1891, AA298, Acc.184, no.85c, AASAM.

55. No.2: 'Berry, a hollowed out piece of wood used by the women to carry water etc.'; No.19: 'Cootcherry, used by the women to put on their heads to carry the berry on'; No.18: 'Chalgoo, hooks used to get grubs from trees'. P. St. Barbe Ayliffe, n.d. 'Native Names & Uses of Specimens', AA298, Acc.184, no.85, AASAM.

56. Bagot to South Australian Museum, 25 July, 1975. Specimen documentation files, SAM.

57. Zietz to Museum Committee, 25 January, 1897. AA298, Acc.159, no.5, AASAM.

58. 'Lyons River Collection', AA298, Acc.184, no.62, AASAM.

59. Note and list by G.H. Birt, 6 July, 1903. AA298, Acc.184, no.52, AASAM. Birt's collections also included some New Guinea material. See Jones file.

60. Chewings 1909; 1923; 1930a; 1930b; 1937.

61. Chewings to South Australian Museum, 15 December, 1913. GRG 19/6/14993, SRO.

62. Chewings 1923.

63. See Jones file on Glover.

64. Brumby's collection, received in 1931, is registered as A15515-6, 15518-20, 16641-42. It includes a nose-piercing implement, pearl shell pendant, 'mulga wax', a chignon, an owl feather plume, and pubic tassels.

65. Hilliard 1968: 81.

66. Entry for 18 June, Tindale (1933) ms.

67. Gore to Stirling, 15 May, 1911. GRG 19/5/1911/8707, SRO.

68. *Ibid.* This 'spec' was not the only one advanced by Gore: another was a scheme to ship 'alligator hides' to Bristol, England. See NTDB, vol.1: 121-22. Gore's brother, Alfred D. Gore was a Darwin journalist who also collected ethnographic material. See below, in discussion of R. Stott's collection.

69. Sayers' papers documenting his turn of the century attempts to revive the Lady Alice gold and copper mine (at Humbug Scrub, north of Adelaide) are in the Mortlock Library (BRG 251). Evidence suggests that Sayers was on Melville Island at the time of visits there by Baldwin Spencer and by the German physical anthropologist, Herman Klaatsch, during the early 1900s.

70. Sayers to Stirling, 19 September, 1907. GRG 19/4, SRO.

71. Sayers to Stirling, 19 September, 1907. GRG 19/4, SRO.

72. Reid (1990: 97) characterises the Tiwi as '[t]he one tribe which offered consistent, uncompromising resistance to European intrusion, from first contact with the Dutch, until the end of the nineteenth century'.

73. Only part of the second collection can be traced today. See Jones file on Cooper.

74. Sayers to Stirling, 2 October, 1907. GRG 19/4, SRO.

75. Stirling apparently did not take up this offer. Sayers to Stirling, 11 October, 1907, GRG 19/4, SRO.

76. Sayers to Stirling, 2 October, 1907, GRG 19/4, SRO.

77. Sayers to Stirling, 26 February, 1912; 13 June, 1911. GRG 19/5/10242; GRG 19/5/8790, SRO.

78. See Jones file on Sayers for records of these multiple acquisitions.

79. Cooper was mentioned specifically as Sayer's source again in 1913. See Sayers to Stirling, 1 August, 1913. GRG 19/5/13873, SRO.

80. See the preceding chapter for an account of Basedow's collection of these objects.

81. Sayers to Stirling, 19 September, 1907; August, 1908. GRG 19/4, SRO. See also 'Special Lists, 1906-17', November 1908, AASAM.

82. Sayers to Stirling, 20 December, 1912. GRG 19/5/12285, SRO.

83. Sayers to Stirling, 8 September, 1909. GRG 19/5/9201, SRO.

84. Hill 1951: 219. New Unia's abandonment is discussed in Sutton & Palmer 1980: 6-7.

85. 'Daly River Curios', AA298, Acc.184, no.87a. AASAM. The sale price for the collection is not known.

86. For biographical details on Bates, see ADB 7: 208-209. See also Isobel White's introduction to Bates 1985, and White 1993.

87. See Salter 1971: 62-71.

88. *Ibid*: 75.

89. See the list of Bates' publications in Greenway (1963).

90. See O'Gorman (1989; 1993). More than 300 of McConnel's artefacts were lodged by her in the South Australian Museum during 1948. Impressed by Tindale's commitment to material culture studies, she favoured Adelaide over Sydney and Brisbane. See also Mather (1956: 56-58, 211-213). O'Gorman suggests that McConnel obtained much of her collection through bartering European commodities, and that many objects may have been directly commissioned by her (1989: 26, 75).

91. Hill 1973: 115.

92. *Ibid*: 112-115.

93. Cooper was apparently embarassed about passing this collection on, presenting it 'on the understanding that her name should not appear & that when exhibited neither her name nor that of the collector should appear'. See Jones file on Stirling.

94. See Jones file on Bates.

95. See Jones files on Cleland, James Lawson Pty. Ltd. (Pulleine collection), R. Wreeford, M.V. Richter, B. Roberts and T. Brailsford Robertson.

96. Salter 1971: 131. Cleland maintained his good standing with Bates despite some scepticism of her claims about Aboriginal cannibalism. He was largely responsible for organising support for Bates from the Adelaide linguistics expert Professor Fitzherbert, who also directed the early linguistic work of T.G.H. Strehlow (*ibid*: 216).

97. These manuscripts, held in the Australian National Library, are listed as entries 345-354, in Craig 1969: 46-47.

98. The point is well made by Isobel White in Marcus 1993 (ed.): 59-60.

99. Quoted in Salter 1971: 113. Bates's relationship with Lang, Mathews, Fraser and A.R. Brown is discussed by Salter (1971: 127-48) and by Isobel White (Bates 1985: 7-35).

100. The description is taken from Hill (1973: 52).

101. Bates to Hale, 7 June, 1932. Bates Papers, AA23, AASAM.

102. Bates 1944: 108. This method, with distances calculated by querying 'how many sleeps?', was later adopted by Norman Tindale at the South Australian Museum, and subsequently by Charles Mountford and Ronald Berndt.

103. Bates 1944: 111-112.

104. Bates 1944: 114. She gave another, journalistic account of this experience in Bates (1922). For discussion of the significance of the Wilga Mia mine and of red ochre, see Bates (1909), Sagona (1994) and Jones (1984).

105. Bates to Stirling, 7 January, 1919, AA23, AASAM. The collection comprised seventeen objects, including rain-making material.

106. Salter 1971: 185. In reference to the Eucla ceremonies, Salter wrote:

> Daisy's rations of tea, sugar, flour and jam made feasting possible in spite of the game shortage. In gratitude the groups bestowed upon her the "Freedom of the Totems" (*ibid*).

107. Bates 1944: 130; 1927: 9. Bates later informed Herbert Hale at the South Australian Museum of the attempted theft of sacred boards from this storehouse near Eucla. See Bates to Hale, 7 February, 1932, AA23, AASAM.

108. Bates to Hale, 20 March, 1932, AA23, AASAM.

109. Bates to Hale, 7 February, 1932, AA23, AASAM.

110. *Ibid.* Bates wrote at least two newspaper pieces about this group (Bates 1932; Bates 1933).

111. *Ibid*: 216. Both objects were donated to the South Australian Museum by Bates in 1932.

112. Bates to Hale, 7 February, 1932, AA23, AASAM.

113. The reference was made in a letter from Bates to Hale, 26 November, 1931, AA23, AASAM.

114. Bates' notes on the 'new industry of carving at Ooldea', are preserved within her papers in Ms 365-29/154-165, ANL.

115. See Anthropology Register entries for A17130, A17131.

116. Bates 1944: 192; see also p.194 for an account of an Aboriginal man's reaction to being cheated during a transaction.

117. Bates to Hale, 26 November, 1931, AA23, AASAM.

118. Stewart 1993: 132-135.

119. Bolam noted that the enthusiasm for boomerang throwing by inexperienced passengers at Ooldea meant that 'it had been found necessary to request that the throwing of boomerangs be conducted a little distance from the train whilst it is standing at Ooldea' (Bolam 1927: 82).

CHAPTER SEVEN

COLLECTORS OF THE FRONTIER - FRONTIER OFFICIALS

You would be obliging us very much if you will continue to bear the Museum in mind if any opportunity arises of getting things from out of the way places round your coast, mainland or islands & we shall always for that purpose be glad to bear any necessary expenses ...[1]

Frontier officials have taken a prominent role in every theatre of world ethnography. The authority to obtain data and objects combined with the sense of curiosity which led many of these individuals to remote places has contributed to this prominence. Most of these collectors displayed their own private enthusiasm for collecting Aboriginal artefacts and natural history specimens, but their collections carry an additional resonance; that of officially sanctioned enquiry. While few of these collections were obtained through active duress, there is little doubt that the power wielded by local officials in remote communities could benefit a museum's collections, directly or indirectly.

During the late nineteenth century many frontier officials were active collectors of ethnographic and natural history material. This potential was not always exploited by metropolitan museums, but through the efforts of Waterhouse, Zietz and Stirling the Adelaide Museum pursued several opportunities in this sphere, mainly arising from South Australia's colonial relationship with the Northern Territory. Frontier officials were first identified as a potential source of both natural history and ethnographic material by Frederick Waterhouse in his attempts to obtain material for International Exhibitions during the 1860s and 1870s. Police trooper John Ewens at Overland Corner, and Inspector Paul Foelsche at Palmerston and Port Essington were notable early contributors.[2] This factor may also account for the 1867 donation of a collection of nineteen rare south-west Western Australian artefacts, including quartz and glass-barbed spears and emu feather head ornaments, by the Adelaide Registrar of Land Titles, W.B.T. Andrews.[3]

It was not until Stirling issued his circular letter to police and telegraph officers during mid-1890 that Adelaide's network of frontier officials was efficiently exploited as an ethnographic source. In the following year Stirling was able to recast this request in personal terms during his transcontinental expedition from Palmerston to Adelaide with South Australia's governor, the Earl of Kintore. Stirling's meetings with Inspector Paul Foelsche in Darwin and the telegraph operator Francis Gillen in Alice Springs during that expedition were momentous both in terms of the range and quality of their own collections and

their links with other collectors whom these men were able to channel towards the South Australian Museum. Foelsche and Gillen were each key individuals in South Australia's colonial service. Each was a 'gate-keeper' for knowledge about Aborigines in North and Central Australia respectively and during the 1890s each became a focus of collecting networks which serviced a growing metropolitan demand for ethnographic and natural history objects.

As a former Hussar (born in Hamburg) and an efficient policeman committed to protecting and extending European interests on the northern frontier, Foelsche fitted the imperial mould of survey ethnographers.[4] His neatly numbered specimens and formally made photographs arise from this circumscribed context. His published work on Aborigines provided data within established criteria without exploring new areas for research. More sceptical of British hegemony perhaps, the telegraph operator Francis Gillen had little hesitation in arresting Foelsche's Central Australian counterpart, W.H. Willshire, for the murder of Aborigines on Tempe Downs station in 1891. Gillen's ethnography and his photographs provide a more engaged and intimate view of Aboriginal life than most of his predecessors or contemporaries. He was prepared to look beyond the imperial structures which governed Foelsche's more formal studies to an emerging, locally defined view of Central Australia and its people.

Police Collectors

South Australia's policing of the Northern Territory yielded only a small number of ethnographic collections during the 1860s and 1870s. In December 1868 Waterhouse reported the donation by Sergeant Saunders of 'various specimens of native manufacture, comprising prepared pelican pouches, articles of dress ... shells etc'.[5] This donation can no longer be traced in the Museum's collections, but may have been from the Lake Hope police station, established during 1864 to protect the interests of Cooper's Creek pastoralists. Three years later Waterhouse received a further donation of 'specimens of various manufactures used by the natives' from the same region, sent by the police trooper William Raymond, by then transferred to Yardea.[6] In July 1873 Lieutenant Ferguson of the South Australian Volunteers donated 'a large bundle of native spears and other weapons' from the Northern Territory.[7] Preceding the series of collections prepared for the Museum by Inspector Paul Foelsche from 1877 onward, this was the first of a large number of police collections made in South Australia's northern province.

Motives varied among these police collectors. Individuals such as Foelsche, Samuel Gason or George Aiston became ethnographers in their own right. Most made just a single collection in response to official encouragement, no doubt regarding it as an additional duty. Several senior officials, such as William Peterswald who was South Australia's Police Commissioner from 1882 to 1896, perceived

ethnographic collecting as a serious responsibility and promoted the practice on the Museum's behalf among the force. Peterswald's predecessor, George Hamilton, Commissioner from 1867 to 1882, took a personal interest in collecting. Founder of the Adelaide Club and an accomplished artist, Hamilton made his own ethnographic collection, swapping artefacts with Waterhouse at the Museum. During March 1870 for example, he donated 'two Boomerangs, two Womerahs, and some native spears to be exchanged for some native weapons from some other country'.[8]

Apart from Hamilton and Foelsche there were few prominent police collectors during the later 1870s and 1880s. An exception was the Fowlers Bay police trooper, Thomas P. Richards, who sent a varied collection from this remote settlement to Adelaide in October 1880. It was described by Amandus Zietz in the following terms:

> 8 long spears, 5 womerahs (minie), 3 carved boomerangs (cuttee), 1 specimen of gum (candy) used for attaching objects, 1 jallow for carrying water, 1 waist ornament, used after circumcision, 1 emu feather head ornament, 1 waist ornament, 1 beard ornament, 1 bundle of string made from wombat hair, 1 waist ornament made from wombat hair and wild dogs' tails, 2 ornaments for decorating the head at festivals, 1 packet of pigment used by the natives for painting themselves.[9]

This range of material, including weapons, domestic utensils, ornaments and ceremonial paraphernalia, indicates that Richards had developed relations of some depth with Aborigines of Fowlers Bay. His answer to George Taplin's ethnographic and linguistic questionnaire, published in 1879, also confirms this.[10] Richards' wife Annie probably encouraged and contributed to this research; she was a keen naturalist and contributed ethnographic objects to the Museum in her own right during 1882. Her small collection included stone tools with documented uses, and a named head ornament ('Currarah') identified as used in a particular ceremony (the 'Coorie dance'); such level of detail was virtually unknown at the time.[11]

Annie Richards was one of a small group of committed women ethnographic collectors active during the nineteenth century. Representative of many women of the Victorian era who pursued botanical interests, Annie Richards took her hobby further, corresponding with Ferdinand von Mueller in his capacity as Director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens and with Professor Ralph Tate at the University of Adelaide. She combined her ethnographic and botanical interests by contributing a paper to the Royal Society of South Australia during 1879, dealing with plants used as food by the Aborigines. During 1881 Richards published one of the earliest South Australian papers to be focused entirely on Aboriginal material culture, titled 'Artefacts of the Fowlers Bay District Aborigines'.[12]

Another police collector of the period was Lance Corporal Burdon, stationed at Goolwa near the Murray Mouth. He sold two extremely rare 'native rugs' (presumably made of possum skins) to the Museum in 1885 for one pound and ten shillings.[13] In January 1890, Zietz purchased a punting pole from Burdon, belonging to one of the last River Murray bark canoes, having sent word that this was required for the Museum's collection. Burdon had paid five shillings for it. He noted that these were 'a lot of trouble to prepare and hard to get now'; most of the Aboriginal bark canoes had already disappeared from the

River.[14]

Police in remote localities were already well disposed to the South Australian Museum by the time of Edward Stirling's circular of 1890. Stirling's circular may even have been prepared in consultation with the South Australian police inspector, Brian Besley, apparently a personal friend. Besley had already collected artefacts on behalf of the government, contributing a 'large number of spears, boomerangs, waddies and other native weapons' to the South Australian Court at Adelaide's 1887 International Exhibition.[15] An enlightened official who apparently earnt the regard of Aboriginal people, Besley implemented a policy of ration distribution to Aboriginal communities throughout South Australia's 'Far North' and Central Australia during the 1880s and 1890s. It was on his suggestion, made in 1881, that South Australian police began employing Aboriginal men as police and as trackers.[16] He contributed ethnographic collections to the South Australian Museum in 1888 and was a key figure in Stirling's collecting initiatives of the 1890s.

Besley was to leave for a tour of duty to Central Australia in August 1890, shortly after Stirling's circular was drafted. Prior to his departure Stirling wrote to the Secretary of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, suggesting that Besley's expedition represented a timely opportunity:

> Inspector Beazley [sic] is starting on Monday for the Far North ... it might be a good opportunity to collect native things ... please instruct Zeitz to go to the Commissioner's office ... to discuss the matter & to indicate what things are desirable ... we are willing to spend L10 in facilitating the acquisition of specimens and it might be desirable to lay out the whole or a portion of this sum in tobacco or other means as would enable Insp. Beazley to trade or bribe as occasion permits ... I know ... Beazley well and think he is from his great knowledge of the natives just the man for our purpose if he can be induced to enter into the matter *con amore*. We are doing so well in native things just now that I am glad of every chance where there is opportunity.[17]

Besley was supplied with five pounds 'for the purchasing [of] tobacco or any other articles ... suitable as means for exchange'.[18] While he collected only a handful of artefacts on that journey, his larger role in advancing the Museum's cause was considerable judging from the number of collections subsequently received through police and telegraph stations. He distributed Stirling's circular to police stations and apparently reinforced the message during his patrols between Port Augusta and Alice Springs until his death in 1894.[19]

Stirling's appeal for donations brought an immediate response from police collectors, as it did from the telegraph station collectors discussed later in this chapter. It also had the effect either of extending the Museum's contact into new localities on the frontier or of reinvigorating the institution's links with localities already represented in the collections. An example of the latter was Fowlers Bay, from where the Museum had received nothing since the Richards' donations a decade earlier. A month after Stirling's appeal he received a donation of forty-four artefacts from Richards' successor, police-trooper Frederick Gardener. The collection included spears, boomerangs, clubs, digging sticks, headgear and waistbands. Notably, Gardener's list drew a distinction between 'old' and 'recently made' artefacts, an indication of

an active response by Aboriginal people of the area to this renewed demand for ethnographic material.[20]

Stirling did not take the opportunity, as Norman Tindale did during the 1930s, of exploiting this readiness by Aboriginal people to generate artefacts expressly for the Museum. The Meningie-based Mounted Constable J.M.B. Marshall had presented Stirling with an offer of a commissioned collection during August 1890. He wrote:

> I have seen a number of the natives here re the above [Stirling's letter] but am unable to obtain any of the original weapons used by the natives around this part as for the last 25 years none have been used & those then buried with the warriors have decayed, but there is an old man who states he can make a number like those used for a sum of L3-0-0 should it meet the approval of the Directors to have it done.[21]

Stirling did not respond; his charter was to obtain the relics of a passing race, not to encourage new cottage industries. Aboriginal people at Point MacLeay mission, close to Meningie, had been manufacturing artefacts for sale since 1860, but Stirling had not taken the opportunity to purchase these items. Like other ethnographers of the period, he looked back to an era untouched by European influence. Marshall was undeterred. He collected Aboriginal material on his own account from Meningie and from other postings around the colony. His collection of more than fifty objects from localities as diverse as Melville Island, Katherine, the Diamantina and Alice Springs, was eventually purchased for eleven pounds from his daughter in 1945.[22]

Stirling's primary interest lay in extending the range of 'authentic' types in his ethnographic collection, rather than reproducing existing examples. He was therefore most interested in a response to the 1890 press notice which accompanied his posted appeal for artefacts, from Samuel Gason, a police-trooper based at Beltana in the Flinders Ranges. Gason had published on the Diyari Aborigines of Cooper's Creek as early as 1874, including full descriptions of 'vegetable productions used in manufacturing, weapons and implements, and personal ornaments'.[23] He penned this reply to Stirling's appeal:

> in answer to letter inserted in Register [newspaper] by Dr Stirling urging on the necessity of keeping a record by a collection of genuine weapons etc. of the Aborigines of South Australia ... I have myself taken a deep interest in the Aborigines of the North, studied their manners and customs in their wild savage state and personally seen all their customs secret ceremonies and masonic obligations and mysterious signs, and mastered four dialects.
>
> I am sending you by train two pieces of wood rudley [sic] made by the Aborigines and used by them in the ceremony called by them Willyaroo. These pieces of wood are called Yuntha ... I am [also] sending you [a] bag made from the native cotton bush called Mootcha. This bag is made expressly for the packing of Pitcharie (Native Tobacco). It takes the Natives some considerable time in collecting the cotton and making the bag. The coloured stripes are dyed with Red Ochre. Any of the Curioes I collect I will forward with full explanation.
>
> I trust you will receive nothing but genuine implements curioes charms Etc made only by the Aborigines.[24]

During the 1890s Stirling was given more assistance in tapping police collections by Commissioner Peterswald, who displayed an active interest in ethnography. He had encouraged Paul Foelsche to

contribute artefacts and photographs to International Exhibitions and had circulated the anthropological questionnaire prepared by the British ethnographer J.G. Frazer to Foelsche and other police officers throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory.[25] Peterswald directed several police collections to Stirling, including a small collection of artefacts and raw materials gathered by trooper J.R. Barlow at Tempe Downs, and another Fowlers Bay collection, gathered by F.H. Wells.[26] This comprised 'a small collection of weapons & curios procured from the Coast tribe of natives residing between Fowlers Bay & the West Australian border'. Wells informed Stirling without further explanation that he had 'also enclosed a perfect specimen of a human hand found in a wombat hole by me on the Nullarbor Plains'.[27]

Wells had earlier been stationed at the Andrewilla police station, south of Birdsville on the Diamantina River. Here he had collected artefacts later acquired by the South Australian Museum and published an important paper on the Aborigines of the region. It included a vocabulary of the little-known Karangura people.[28] Wells also sent ethnographic objects including two necklaces and a 'native bag' from Andrewilla to the private museum maintained at Way College by the Adelaide collector William Torr.[29]

The remote Andrewilla police station yielded a further collection of thirty-one objects in 1896, collected by Constable Dittmer. Like other police collectors, Dittmer's collection included Aboriginal plant foods, an indication that Stirling's official exhortation to collect in this area had been heeded. Dittmer wrote:

> I have the honour to inform you that I have forwarded from here to Hergott Springs thence by rail to Adelaide addressed to you one package containing Spears used by the Aborigines in this District, also one package containing Boomerangs etc used by the Aborigines in this District. I am collecting the various Native foods used by them, "viz" Nardoo, Pituri etc, which I will forward per first opportunity.[30]

At the turn of the century the Andrewilla police station generated more ethnographic material, in the form of Aboriginal place names recorded in response to yet another circular, this time from the Anthropological Society of New South Wales. Several replies to this circular, which was also sent to pastoralists throughout outback Queensland and New South Wales, were published in the Society's journal. The South Australian results were not published. These were mainly gathered from police troopers, drawn from localities as far apart as Rendelsham and Lake Alexandrina in the south-east, Fowlers Bay on the west coast, and the Flinders Ranges, the Diamantina and Cooper's Creek in the north-east.[31]

Police collections sometimes contained greater depth and variety than other frontier collections, a measure perhaps of official zeal combined with greater authority. As well as sacred objects, stone tools and raw materials were targeted by several police collectors. The Mannahill police trooper, E.G. Waterhouse (a respondent to the N.S.W. place names circular), probably went to the greatest lengths on the Museum's behalf. He levered an entire rock engraving from its position, several years before these carvings were threatened by more covert vandalism. His enthusiasm, detailed in the following letter, may have been largely explained by the fact that his father had been the South Australian Museum's first

Curator, Frederick Waterhouse:

> Sir, I am sending you by post, part of a native tattooe [sic] of a kangaroo's track which I obtained whilst on my leave at near Mannahill, where I know of numerous tattoes or rock carving of the natives, some of which are very well done. On the 14th inst. I tried to get some of them off the rocks, but owing to the tools I had giving way I had to give it up, as the rock was very hard and brittle. Trusting the specimen I am sending will be of interest as an anthropological specimen. It is about 3/4 track of the right part of the right foot of a Kangaroo. Some of these tracks are so nicely tattoed on the rocks that it is quite easy to distinguish the difference between the Kangaroo Euro Wallaby.[32]

The relation between the ethnographic zeal of particular police collectors and their intimidatory effect upon Aboriginal people is difficult to gauge. There is no doubt that in attempts to apprehend suspects implicated in cattle-killing or other misdemeanors, police destroyed or confiscated Aboriginal weapons. This activity was documented in southern South Australia during the 1840s and 1850s.[33] The correspondence of police-trooper Ernest Cowle and of Francis Gillen during the 1890s reveals that police raids in Central Australia were sometimes used to augment collections of sacred tjurunga once these objects became identified as desirable and collectable. As Mulvaney notes, on at least one occasion Cowle 'even interrogated his prisoners about ethnological matters; several prisoners set out from Mount Connor, each burdened with a pitchi [wooden container] for Spencer's museum'.[34]

Police Trooper W.H. Willshire openly admitted that his constant attempts to keep cattle killers in check resulted in collections of artefacts. Writing of a typical pursuit involving Aboriginal cattle killers Willshire observed that:

> sometimes the "rounding-up" process cannot be accomplished; the natives take to the ranges, and a hot pursuit follows. When half-way up the ranges the natives generally throw away their weapons if hardly pressed; sometimes they retain their spears and boomerangs, but not often; and it is only after one of these chases that there is a chance of collecting native weapons, by going back over the ground when the scrimmage is over.[35]

Native police participated actively in making these collections. Describing one affray on the Finke River Willshire wrote: 'I went back to my camp, and some of my lads came home the following day with a fine collection of spears and boomerangs - they had evidently been amongst them'.[36] During 1995 the South Australian Museum acquired several artefacts collected by Willshire from the Innamincka and Eyre Peninsula regions; these had been in his family since his death in 1925.[37] Willshire has been unambiguously painted as a villain in Australian history, yet the extent and content of his several publications dealing with Aboriginal culture and language in Central and Northern Australia indicate that his relations with Aboriginal people cannot be defined solely in terms of his grim record in enforcing the laws of property on behalf of pastoralists.[38]

The ambiguous status of the police collector was further exposed by Stirling's transcontinental expedition of 1891. It occurred immediately before the first concerted phase of collecting sacred objects began. The expedition itself was accompanied by the mounted police trooper W.G. South, who assisted

in making ethnographic and natural science collections. South and his colleague Willshire shared authority in Alice Springs over a 'corps of six trackers ... [whose] work consisted of hunting their ebony-faced colleagues who had been knocking over cattle with their boomerangs and spears'.[39] Stirling noted in his journal that there were very few Aborigines in the vicinity of the telegraph stations as the Vice-Regal party passed through, despite the intensity of the continuing drought which might have otherwise drawn groups in to obtain rations. According to Stirling part of the reason for this diffidence was the apprehension which Aborigines displayed towards the Governor: 'Most of them had cleared on a/c of Gov.s visit - He [is] looked upon as a sort of magnified policeman 'Big one Cop''.[40]

Reaction to the Willshire shootings at Tempe Downs just weeks before Stirling and Kintore's visit to the region no doubt reinforced memories of other confrontations - such as the 1874 shootings of Aborigines which followed the killing of two Barrow Creek telegraph station officers. T.G.H. Strehlow recorded that these events exerted an effect up and down the Line for many years.[41] Accordingly, Stirling asked the Barrow Creek police officer, William Bennett, to collect ethnographic material once the party had moved on. Stirling also noted the circumstances under which at least some of the Central Australian police ethnographers acquired their collections:

> [Bennett] has some native things & promises to get more when he goes out about natives who have been troublesome in cattle spearing lately - saw a wooden spear at T. Station taken out of one bullock speared within 3 miles of B. K. [Barrow Creek] Station.[42]

Strehlow was told by elderly Kaytetye men during the 1930s that Bennett had been well known for his involvement in reprisals against Aboriginal people in the region.[43] Despite this, Bennett's collection contains much greater variety than another Barrow Creek collector of the time, the telegraph operator John McKay. Bennett's collection, sent south to Stirling after the expedition, contained kangaroo-teeth and pearl-shell pendants, nose-pegs, nose-bones, feather plumes and 'charms' - suggesting that his engagement with Aborigines went beyond that of a frontier law-enforcer.[44]

Particular police stations became dependable sources of supply for the South Australian Museum, spanning periods during which individual police postings changed. This was true at the Andrewilla and Innamincka police stations in north-eastern South Australia. Another example was the Borroloola police station on the MacArthur River. Stirling received large collections during the early 1890s from the ex-customs official, police trooper and magistrate William G. Stretton and his colleague, Corporal Power. Stirling was also told about further items in Power's collection by Robert Giles, another Borroloola police collector and a successor to Power. Retired to Port MacDonnell in South Australia, Giles exhibited his own ethnographic collection and accompanying photographs of distinctively painted shields in the Adelaide Exhibition of 1910.[45] Responding to Stirling's interest in these photographs, he donated one of the shields, which Stirling described as a 'new type for our Ethnological Collection'. A few weeks later Stirling reported to Giles that he had shown the shield 'to Prof. Spencer who, with Mr Gillen, spent some time at

Borroloola but he had not seen the pattern amongst the local natives.[46]

A colleague of Paul Foelsche, police-trooper Robert Stott had hosted Spencer and Gillen at Borroloola during their enforced stay at the end of the 1901-1902 expedition. He gathered a well-documented collection of more than 200 objects for Stirling from 1908 until his posting south to Alice Springs in 1911. Stott became known for his ability to deal with Aboriginal issues less heavy-handedly than several of his predecessors and this may account for the fact that his collection included skeletal material which had been brought to him by Aboriginal people themselves. It included individual skulls as well as complete skeletons in log coffins.[47] Stirling's particular interest in this category of ethnographica had been evident since 1882, but was fuelled during 1893 by notes supplied by W.G. Stretton.[48]

In contrast to other collectors of the period, Stott displayed some sensitivity to the impact of European society upon Aboriginal material culture. His collection included a 'quantity of drawings by natives', ochre paintings of lizards, birds and fish made on the sides of small wooden packing cases. These paintings predated the bark painting collections which were made following Spencer's 1911 visit to Arnhem Land.

In a later donation made in conjunction with the Darwin journalist A.D. Gore, Stott forwarded six ceremonial head-dresses from the MacArthur River. This provides an indication that, as with Foelsche and Gillen, Aboriginal people at Borroloola had sufficient confidence in Stott to allow him to witness ceremonies and to collect associated material. In other respects Stott's collection conformed to most other frontier collections and, like several other police collectors, he included documented 'mementoes of the chase':

> Nearly the whole of the collection which I am sending have been secured from Coastal Natives who are in the habit of visiting the Sir Edward Pellew Islands ... stone spears & stone spear heads are from the Calvert & Robinson River, most of which were the property of a murderer named Pupelee, who during April last speared to death an unfortunate traveller named Thomas ... during my 25 years experience amongst the Natives of the N.T. this is the most brutal murder ... 3 tomahawks (stone) were secured from Desert Natives ... they are becoming very rare and hard to procure ... 8 skulls only two are complete ... one marked no.1 was brought to me by a native ... I shall with pleasure continue to collect Native articles which I consider may be of any assistance to you in the interest of science.[49]

The richness of Stott's collections may have prompted the South Australian Museum Committee to prepare a second circular soliciting objects from police and other officials on the fringe of European settlement. In December 1909, just months before the administration of the Northern Territory passed to the Commonwealth Government, the Board resolved 'that the Museum Director draft a circular to be sent to outlying stations and to Police Officers in outlying districts to create an interest in ethnological and other scientific articles which may be of interest in the National Collection'.[50]

There is no evidence that this circular was actually sent by Stirling: he may have considered that there was little point in soliciting for more artefacts until the crowded North Wing of the Museum was

replaced by the new East Wing, the foundation stone of which had been laid in 1908. Further police collections were received during the following decade though; Robert Giles' collection from Borroloola and a small collection contributed in 1916 by Inspector Bushell from Streaky Bay provide examples.

The correspondence of the police-trooper George 'Poddy' Aiston during and after his retirement from the South Australian police force provides a rare insight into the developing priorities and prejudices of a frontier collector during a period of massive change affecting Aboriginal people. Twenty years after the encouragement given to Aboriginal artefact production in the eastern Lake Eyre region by the ethnographic collecting of Lamb, Gason, Dittmer, Reuther and Hillier, Aiston's interest sparked a renewed burst of activity. Writing in 1923 to his long-time correspondent, the Melbourne stone tool collector Walter Gill, Aiston noted that '[s]ince I have revived interest in the blacks' tricks everybody is buying them and now - if you please - the [station] storekeepers are asking me to sell their stuff for them'.[51]

Based at Mungeranie police station on the Birdsville Track, and then at the nearby Mulka Store, Aiston stocked his private museum with local Aboriginal artefacts as well as weapons from around the world. The windows of his house were made from unused photographic plates, an indication of his second great passion - landscape and ethnographic photography.[52] Describing his museum to Gill, Aiston gave an indication of the sight which greeted the privileged visitor to his inner sanctum:

> I would like you to see my room - I have the guns all arranged in a rack across the south wall, those little arrows on a frame of 3 ply, a set of stone axes unknown mooras two big Arunta tools and various koolkee [stone tools] on another piece of 3 ply. Next to this is another frame holding all of my petrifications, Diprotodon teeth etc then the frame containing the tools, then in a recess near the door a board bolted onto the wall and holding 8 old pistols, then on another board bolted on to the wall are 9 swords, this is all on the west wall of the room.
>
> On the north wall, the old Persian helmet and shield (restored with a spike) I got the design from an illustration of a 14th century helmet that was very similar, then over the mantel a board bolted on and 3 flint locks and one percussion lock on the west side of the centre of the mantel, two horse bits in the centre, in between them that Royal marines badge, on the east side of the mantel four old revolvers, then over them on the wall 2 Arab spears and above the spears 2 trumpets 2 powder flasks, those chain mail gloves you sent me and between them a link saw that was used for cutting down pallisades. Then to the east of the mantel 4 bayonets, that little Jap sword and the Delhi knife.
>
> On the east wall there is not much, a 3 ply frame with about 50 cartridges, mostly dating from about 1850 to 1900, my South African mess tin and a walking stick gun, and the English arrows.[53]

Situated close to the Lutheran mission of Killalpaninna which closed in 1915, Aiston showed marked scepticism for the German ethnographers and their propensity for obtaining collections 'tainted' by culture contact. A 1923 letter to Gill revealed his commitment to an 'authentic' Aboriginal material culture:

> I am getting another collection of Aboriginal stuff for a collector - it is going to be hard as the old blacks are too old to make anything and the young ones do not know how, but I will get it ... I am afraid this will be about the last of the genuine stuff from this country - there are very few but the missionary blacks left now.[54]

Three years later Aiston underlined the urgency of the situation:

> I am gathering in any weapons belonging to the blacks that I can get hold of - in a very short time now there will be no one with the knowledge of how to make them left - I have one splendid old weapon maker here - he has made me some beautiful things - not with stone tools of course, although they were smoothed off with stone flakes.[55]

Aiston's concern with stone tools was illustrated through several published articles on the subject as well as his engagement to catalogue the Horn-Bowie collection in Canberra during 1931. It is an irony that his particular interest in one category of stone artefact, named by him as the 'pirri' point, led to the manufacture of a series of implements which would otherwise not have met his own strict standards of authenticity. Aiston's select group of artefact makers were encouraged to produce objects incorporating these stone artefacts, objects which had been abandoned in favour of metal equivalents decades earlier. During late 1926 Aiston informed Gill that '[m]y best tool maker, Jimmy - went away with a drover but I am expecting him back every day, he uses stone tools on everything that he makes for me and he has made me some lovely clubs and things'.[56]

Perhaps Aiston did not go to the lengths of police-trooper Ernest Cowle who, having collected five iron-bladed adzes for the Melbourne museum in 1900, reassured its director that he would have these 'replaced with flints'.[57] Aiston's control over his artefact makers was never absolute, as an extract from a 1927 letter to Gill makes clear:

> I have got a few Kundi Tuhlas for you and will send them directly it gets cool enough - I want the niggers to make me about 20 more and the contrary devils are all making shields - I don't want shields but they want to make them.[58]

Even so, Aiston was generally able to confine the productions of the Birdsville Track Aborigines within those traditions documented in his publications. His collection, mainly acquired through his widow following his death in 1943, contained few hints that Aboriginal people were engaging with contemporary realities. But the image conveyed in Aiston's published ethnographic photographs, of naked tribespeople engaged in tool-making and tribal life, was belied by the bulk of his unpublished photographs, revealing these individuals as stockmen and female domestics working within the European economy of the Birdsville Track. As tellingly, Aiston's correspondence shows that despite his commitment to an ahistorical Aboriginal tableau constructed through objects, photographs and text, he was occasionally gripped by the changes to Aboriginal artistic forms wrought in the historic period. In a letter to Gill during 1928 he admitted as much:

> I have a pair of carved boomerangs that I would like to send to you, but I would like to keep them myself if they have no appeal to you, one has three emus carved on one end, together with a dingo, on the other end is carved a mule, a camel and another dingo. The other kirra has a bullock, a kangaroo, and a rooster on one end, and a snake, a mare, a goanna, and a stallion on the other end. The centre of each is taken up by a symetrical arrangement of cross lines. They are of no value from an Anthropological point of view but are exceedingly interesting from an artistic point of view.[59]

Bound by notions of authenticity which excluded consideration of the accommodations which Aboriginal

people were making with European Australia, Aiston shared the perspective of other collectors and commentators of the 1920s and 1930s. The available demographic evidence supported the widely-held view that Aboriginal people were destined for extinction; Aiston's observations on material culture reinforced this view. Like the 'salvage ethnographers' of the period, his priorities were directed towards preserving representative 'sets' of material culture for posterity. Aiston estimated in 1929 that his own collection, comprising twenty-two types of wooden artefacts 'has taken me 20 years to collect and has cost me about L50 in actual cash'.[60]

He considered that it was still possible to obtain such a collection, 'for about twenty pounds worth of goods', but only by spending 'about a month' in one of the large bush camps which still existed, on the Diamantina or the Cooper. By this time though, the production of most categories of traditional artefacts was impelled by the European market rather than by internal Aboriginal economic forces. Aiston had contributed to this situation of course, and as the principal store-keeper on the Birdsville Track he found himself under constant pressure to offer a reasonable rate to Aboriginal artefact makers. Writing to Gill in 1921 he explained his dilemma:

> I knew that you did not realize the price one would have to pay for things obtained from the blacks ... the real reason of the apparent high cost is the high cost of living up here ... When one asks a blackfellow for anything he asks for flour, tea and sugar, and having no idea of the value he usually wants a lot - I at one time gave them rations instead of money - but found it cheaper to give them money - and they now go over to Mungerannie cattle station and buy rations with the money.[61]

In June 1929 Aiston sent a consignment of twenty-four boomerangs to Gill in Melbourne for re-sale, noting:

> I am sending you 24 kirras by this mail - I just got the last of them an hour ago ... Every damned nigger in the country is rushing me with them this last day or two.[62]

This artificial level of production was an inevitable consequence of Aiston's collecting efforts on behalf of Gill and other city-based 'secondary' collectors. It was the very criticism which Aiston had levelled at the Lutheran missionaries of Killalpaninna in relation to the production of toas.[63] Aiston's encouragement of stone tool production led to a proliferation of 'inauthentic' objects along the Birdsville Track, for which other buyers would be found even if he refused them:

> They bring me some awful things, stones set at all angles, and in many these have set kalara instead of tuhla, I refuse to buy them and they then take them to Mrs Morley at Mungeranie and she sends them in to the Adelaide Museum, they must be getting some awful rubbish. They have got hold of some commercial resin from somewhere (a lot was brought into the country for soap making) and a lot of the kundies they brought to me were fixed on with resin. It lasts about one hot season and then cracks to pieces.[64]

Despite his interest in particular objects reflecting artistic adaptations, such as carved animals or boomerangs with figurative carvings, Aiston did not consider this material to be of museum quality. He had observed its arrival at his two earlier police postings, Port Germein (north of Adelaide) and Tarcoola

(on the South Australian west coast) and affirmed that 'it has of course no ethnological value as it has been learnt since the advent of the white man'.[65]

Aiston's efforts to reconstruct the material culture of the Wangkangurru people through commissioning artefacts and documenting their use through photographs and textual descriptions predated the work of Norman B. Tindale at the South Australian Museum by several years. Despite its variance with the contemporary reality of the Birdsville Track, Aiston's construction of Aboriginal reality was eagerly consumed by scholars, collectors (including the South Australian Museum) and the wider public.

The enterprise was given its most elaborate expression during the two trips which Aiston made to Melbourne with Aboriginal craftsmen during 1929 and 1934. During the earlier trip, timed to coincide with the first Primitive Art exhibition in Australia, Aiston acted as mentor to an Arrernte man and a Kaytetye man who decorated themselves, danced, and made weapons on stage. Before their departure from Mulka, Aiston informed Gill that

> I will be in Melbourne by the express on July 4th. I am bringing Jack and a youngish Arunta man named Sandy, the latter is a very good workman and is willing to show all that he knows, Jack is a good wood worker but does not know much else. They are now preparing a supply of rough chopped boomerangs and pirrhas to take down and finish in Melbourne and are taking a supply of stone to make tools from if they can get it in time ... Sandy proposes to tie up their hair in the typical Arunta chignon and to paint his face, if it is warm enough he will also paint their bodies ... I don't think I can do better than the two I have, they both speak good English, which is rather a pity, but I meant that I had to sacrifice picturesqueness to ability. I think you will all be satisfied, I think the two will look wild enough when they are needed.[66]

Newspaper reviews of the 'Outback Exhibition' bore out Aiston's optimism; his ability to represent and interpret his Aboriginal charges to a metropolitan audience was matched by their own popularity.[67] The excursion was in the tradition of similar adventures organised by David Lindsay with his Warramunga guide Dick Kubadji during the Adelaide and Melbourne Exhibitions of the 1880s, or the visits made by the explorer R.T. Maurice and guide Mungena to Adelaide at the turn of the century.[68]

Aiston's letters to Gill provide a unique record of more than a decade of collecting in a region which, because of its remoteness, remained a frontier even as the Aboriginal population rapidly diminished.[69] Through his stone tool collecting Aiston estimated that he had sent 'tons of stuff out of this country' (referring to the Cooper's Creek region).[70] The flow of material abated during the decade; his correspondence is peppered with dispirited references to the passing of important old men and the consequent impact on material culture traditions. The new wave of carved wooden animals and tourist artefacts interested him, but not in ethnographic terms. By the late 1930s he was observing that there was very little of ethnographic interest to be found in the camps. The artefacts were 'more whitefella than blackfella' in his view:

> There is nothing more to be had from these blacks - I have emptied them right out. Even the stuff they make today is no good, weapons just chopped out anyhow, out of any wood, faults, knots, etc

> just roughed over. Some of them are bringing in kirras [boomerangs] with all sorts of animals carved on them, and they want such a devil of a price for them too, it is quite usual for them to ask 10/ for a kirra that is only firewood.[71]

Aware of his own failing health, Aiston's letters to Gill became more nostalgic in tone. He pondered the future of his own collection:

> I do not want to break up my Abo stuff. I have, to the best of my knowledge, the only complete collection of all the wooden implements, utensils and weapons used by any one group of tribes, there are hundreds of collections, but every one of them are mixed up. Weapons from one tribe are shown with utensils from another tribe hundreds of miles away. I have carefully selected the examples I have, and on the word of the old men (when they were alive) there is nothing more, made of wood, to add to my collection. To sell any of it would spoil its value, and I would rather keep it intact, and give it away than sell parts of it and spoil it.[72]

Despite his scepticism about the South Australian Museum for its apparent inability to distinguish authentic from inauthentic material, Aiston directed his wife to ensure that his collection passed to that institution on his death.[73]

It is surprising to find that Aiston's collection is less comprehensive than many frontier collections. Its preponderance of wooden artefacts and stone tools reflects his prolonged effort to record a material culture tradition defined almost entirely by men's weapons and tools. There is a dearth of representative items of clothing, decoration, women's utensils, ceremonial paraphernalia, native foods and raw materials. Aiston had supplied many other collectors with ethnographic material during his decades on the Birdsville Track; his collaborator G. Horne, his friend W.H. Gill, the stone tool collector S.R. Mitchell, and several overseas collectors and museums, including the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, all received material from him.

Gillen and the Telegraph Line Collectors

The chain of telegraph stations established throughout the north of South Australia and the Northern Territory developed their own distinct local histories of Aboriginal and European interaction. Contact with Aborigines had been discouraged from the initial survey expedition undertaken by Goyder during 1869. The same policy was implemented during the construction of the Overland Telegraph itself, from 1870 to 1872.[74] Even so, Aborigines and Europeans inevitably encountered each other and several objects arising from those exchanges were eventually acquired by the South Australian Museum.

Four hafted knives and a spearthrower from the Katherine region date from 1870, acquired by an anonymous member of the northern line party.[75] Most evocative of the encounter is a metal tomahawk, hafted in a wooden handle with plant resin. This was acquired by the Adelaide collector, A. Davis, from Charles Todd himself, the leader of the Overland Telegraph project. Davis described the object in the

following terms:

> Tomahawk made by the natives at Newcastle Waters on the Northern Line, from the footplate of an iron telegraph pole. The natives dug up the pole, broke the footplate and formed it into several tomahawks like this one. They sharpened it. Given me by C. Todd, C.M.G., S.A. 1884.[76]

Todd had already donated a small collection to the Museum by this time, consisting of '1 pair of native shoes, thread of native hair, 3 stone daggers, 1 pearl shell ornament, 1 piece of carved wood used in making a young man, 1 bean necklace, 1 bone to be worn in the nose, 1 ornament of white hair'[77].

Todd's donation of an artefact manufactured from the telegraph line's own structure provides a neat illustration of the frontier as a zone of interaction and innovation. Other collections revealed this syncretism, although most collectors avoided such objects with their 'degenerate' associations. Another exception was Richard M. Waddy, Secretary of the Adelaide General Post Office, who had received artefacts from remote telegraph officials. Responding to Stirling's request of mid-1890 for artefacts, he donated two spear points fashioned from a telegraph insulator, a stone spearpoint as an illustration of the original form, and a complete porcelain insulator.[78]

For several years after the Line's completion individual telegraph stations experienced uncertain periods of confrontation and accommodation, at least until protocols of acceptable behaviour were established with Aboriginal people. The attack with spears and boomerangs by Kaytetye men on the Barrow Creek station in 1874 resulted in the deaths of two Europeans despite the building's fortifications. Working in the Adelaide General Post Office, the young Francis Gillen received the morse code message sent by the dying station master, James Stapleton. An avid naturalist and a friend of the Darwin ethnographer, Paul Foelsche, Stapleton was visiting Barrow Creek on his way south from Katherine. The ensuing massacre of uninvolved Anmatyere people was led by Mounted Trooper Samuel Gason, himself a collector and ethnographer (discussed above). Pieces of sacred tjurunga smashed during these reprisals were later collected by T.G.H. Strehlow.[79]

The response to his 1890 circular to police and telegraph station operators convinced Stirling that the future of his Museum's ethnographic collections lay with the regions beyond the 'settled districts'. Areas such as the south-east of the colony, the Murray River, the Flinders Ranges, the West Coast and the country south of Port Augusta had all absorbed the effects of European settlement since at least the 1860s. This fact, coupled with Stirling's own tour along the telegraph line during 1891, ensured Central Australia's role as the richest source of telegraph station collections during ensuing decades. The pivotal collecting point in Central Australia became the Alice Springs telegraph station, particularly during the tenure of its colourful station-master, Francis J. Gillen.

Gillen had first journeyed to Central Australia as a telegraph station operator in 1875. His diary of that journey, made by horse and dray in the company of other telegraph operators, reveals the ordinary prejudices of his time towards the Aborigines encountered by his party. At the back of his diary though,

is a short vocabulary of Aranda words, an early indication of his commitment towards the ethnographic project.[80] His interest was further stimulated by the questionnaire sent throughout Australia during the early 1880s by the Victorian ethnographer Edward M. Curr. This resulted in a joint article concerning the languages of Aboriginal groups centred on Charlotte Waters telegraph station, Gillen's first long-term posting.[81] But Gillen's active commitment to fieldwork undertaken to elucidate particular anthropological problems appears to have crystallised through his meeting with Edward Stirling at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station during June 1891.

Gillen's anthropological partnership with Walter Baldwin Spencer was formed at the close of the Horn Expedition of 1894. Stirling had introduced the pair to each other and Spencer remained as Gillen's guest for three weeks, discussing the anthropology of the Aranda into the small hours in Gillen's 'convivial, smoke-filled den'.[82] Spencer and Gillen's partnership has understandably overshadowed other anthropological alliances in Central Australia of the period. The pair's student-mentor relationship, highlighted by Gillen's open deferral to Spencer as a learned anthropological authority, has deflected attention from the level of ethnographic curiosity expressed in collecting activities undertaken by telegraph line staff at Alice Springs, Barrow Creek, Tennant Creek and other stations along the 'line'. One such example was the telegraph operator William Hanley, one of Gillen's oldest friends in the Centre. His collection of artefacts gathered at Barrow Creek and Alice Springs prior to 1894 was donated to the South Australian Museum in 1945 by his widow.[83]

D.J. Mulvaney has referred to the web of intellectual, if not social, kinship which existed between telegraph and police officers of Central Australia at this time. This is illustrated partly by the family ties existing between Gillen and other telegraph and police ethnographers such as Besley, Byrne, and Field. As Mulvaney has noted, 'Gillen was effectively head of an extended family much larger than his own infant progeny'.[84] These family connections were through his wife Amelia rather than Gillen's own family. One of her brothers, Jack, worked in the Alice Springs telegraph station. Her cousin James Field was an operator at the Barrow Creek station and became a keen ethnographic collector.[85] So too did her step-brother, Pat Byrne, the police officer at Charlotte Waters. He was the first to publish on the Aboriginal practice of wearing emu-feather and hair-string kurdaitcha shoes for revenge killings and became an important natural history collector for Spencer following the Horn Expedition of 1894.[86]

Amelia Gillen and her family were from Mount Gambier and may have known another telegraph station collector from that area, John A.G. Little. Station-master at Robe from 1866, Little was transferred to the Northern Territory in 1871 as the Port Darwin station-master. He had the distinction of sending the first 'through signals' on the Overland Telegraph's connection the following year. A collection of spears and spearthrowers made from the vicinity of Darwin was donated by Little to the Mount Gambier Institute in 1890 and was subsequently acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1952.[87]

The collection records of the South Australian and Victorian state museums indicate that the

networks of Central Australian telegraph operators and police ethnographers extended throughout Central and Northern Australia and reached both southern capitals. In Adelaide and Melbourne these networks linked with others comprising private collectors and armchair ethnographers. Individuals such as Stirling or Spencer facilitated connections between these networks, but they were not the only points of contact. The intimate nature of colonial society saw to that. Moreover, collection records show that the manipulation of these metropolitan networks occurred in the bush as well as in the city.

Gillen was evidently a close friend of the Barrow Creek and Tennant Creek telegraph operator F.R.W. Scott. An album of Gillen's photographs presented to Scott appeared on the market during the late 1980s in Adelaide. Scott's direct interest in ethnography is illustrated by the fact that he sent artefacts, including thirty-two human hair-string tassels and belts, to another Adelaide collector, Dr Benjamin Poulton. Poulton was Gillen's surgeon in Adelaide and it is possible that he also attended to other telegraph station officers when they visited Adelaide. Poulton's collection, acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1903, included a hair sample (A32835), labelled 'Walyawalya, no.16' from Barrow Creek (presumably also collected by Scott), indicating an otherwise undocumented early specialisation in physical anthropology.[88] Scott discussed ethnographic matters with Stirling during the latter's frustrating attempts to summarise the anthropological results of the 1894 Horn Expedition. Gillen was jealous of this contact, fearing that Scott would reveal aspects of Aboriginal religious practice or social structure which the pair had discussed. Gillen expressed his fears to Spencer in April, 1896:

> I have an idea that Stirling has got hold of Scott and probably extracted some information from him. I discussed Nigger matters very freely with Scott ... when he was here with a view to interesting him in the subject. Like most bushmen he knew nothing about the nigs[,] not even that the Warramunga had 8 classes until I told him.[89]

Several other Central Australian officials developed their own relationships with metropolitan museums and collectors. The police-troopers Ernest Cowle and Pat Byrne and the telegraph officer James Field supplied Spencer at the National Museum of Victoria. Cowle was perhaps the most independent; his brother-in-law was the prominent South Australian politician and architect of Federation, Sir Josiah Symon, an avid ethnographic collector. Despite being a good friend of Gillen, Byrne and of Spencer, Cowle formed his own views on anthropology, describing Spencer and Gillen's *Native Tribes of Central Australia* as '"Grimm's Fairy Tales" up to date by S and G'.[90] Cowle was a firm supporter of Stirling's anthropological research immediately following the Horn Expedition and, like several other collectors in Central Australia, had reason to be grateful to Stirling for his medical advice. The police trooper revealed his misgivings about Gillen during correspondence with Stirling over the intricacies of the Aranda class system:

> You will have a formidable rival in Gillen in anything in the Aboriginal line, at present he intends discovering the origin of the tribes from the stones, he reckons he knows more about the Blacks than any other living man and any yarn he gets into his head is the only correct solution of anything. From the little you saw up here of how a/cs vary, you know how difficult it is to really bottom a custom or determine the real reason of anything, he simply gets hold of a version & goes

straight on & any man holding another is a fool.[91]

Cowle sent Stirling a table of class names gathered from the Aboriginal informant 'Racehorse' who had led Stirling and Winnecke to a cache of sacred objects during the Horn Expedition. Cowle assured Stirling of his support:

> I will not relax my efforts on this subject not only because I am anxious to oblige you but I am interested & don't like being baffled. My anxiety is chiefly to get the information in time to be of service to you. You certainly have the most difficult task of the Expedn to work up & one that will not show the real amount of time & labour expended on it. I will write to you next mail again on this subject. I have been getting the names of most parts outwardly of the human body, so far I have 40 or 50 which I will send you when properly checked & added to if of any use.[92]

Like Gillen, Cowle became disillusioned with Stirling's prevarications in the preparation of the Horn Expedition report. Cowle sent a few sacred objects to Stirling during 1894-1895, but the bulk of his ethnographic and natural history collecting was directed towards Spencer at the National Museum of Victoria. Other objects were passed directly to Gillen, as he recorded during 1897:

> I rec'd a nice little addition to my collection the other day[,] dilly bag of Kangaroo skin containing a lot of string things and a set - nine in number - of Arunquiltha sticks and bones[.] A dainty little lot which evidently belonged to some old villain - they were dropped by Niggers who were chased for Cattle Killing.[93]

The telegraph officer J. McKay, stationed variously at Tennant Creek, Barrow Creek, Powell Creek and Katherine River, also had independent connections with Adelaide society. He supplied Adelaide's Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Way, with ethnographic material.[94] Way and Sir Josiah Symon had been partners in an Adelaide legal practice during the 1870s. McKay sent a collection of 118 objects to Stirling following his visit to Barrow Creek telegraph station during 1891 in the company of the Earl of Kintore. The collection reveals the characteristic composition of most frontier collections - almost half of the collection consisted of men's weapons and tools, with the balance comprising items of clothing and ornament and ceremonial material, with a few women's utensils and raw materials making up the balance. No games and toys were included, nor were musical instruments, message sticks or any items reflecting culture contact or changing art traditions. In 1914 McKay supplied Stirling with white down from the portulaca bush and a complete Aboriginal beard to assist in the decoration of an Aboriginal manikin to be installed in the newly opened Aboriginal gallery at the South Australian Museum.[95]

Gillen's records establish the extent of his reliance upon rations and European commodities in building his ethnographic collections and natural history collections. Months after the Horn Expedition had passed through the region during 1894 he noted that Aborigines were still bringing in

> all sorts of trash for the "puff-fessa" [Spencer] & I dare not refuse anything lest they should tire of the collecting. I have already distributed most of Spencer's tobacco.[96]

The same certainly applied to the other telegraph station and police officers of Central Australia. With his wooden leg James Field would have found it difficult to collect the range of natural history specimens ('some probably new to science') without the assistance of Aboriginal people. Pat Byrne superintended a

network of some 150 Aborigines who combed the region around Charlotte Waters for small mammals.[97]

It is likely that many of the artefacts later acquired from these men by the South Australian Museum were made by Aboriginal people expressly for exchange purposes at the telegraph and police stations which also operated as ration depots. Several of the collections, notably those of Field, McKay and of course Gillen himself, were made over a period of time and with some discernment; they do not simply represent a quick sample gathered up and consigned south.

By 1906 Stirling's Museum Board had become conscious of the benefit derived from Central Australian telegraph officials during the previous decade and requested the Museum Committee to 'keep in touch with the Station masters on the Overland Telegraph Line with a view to adding to the Museum Collection of native weapons'.[98] Stirling responded that 'the Museum Director has for the last 8 or 10 years been in communication with the Station Masters on the Overland Telegraph line, and is now preparing fresh material for the Tennant's Creek Station'.[99] This 'collecting material', in the form of jars, boxes and preserving spirits, together with ten pounds of tobacco 'for exchange purposes' (costing L1-4-2), was forwarded by Stirling to the Deputy Postmaster General's office, for despatch to James Field at the Tennant Creek telegraph station.[100]

Field had met and befriended Baldwin Spencer during the Horn Expedition. Field's collecting efforts belied his earlier cynicism for Gillen's ethnographic enthusiasms. In a letter to Spencer in 1896 Field had complained that 'we are all sick of the name [ethnography] ... Never hear anything else mentioned and it is amusing to see him [Gillen] trying to corner people off to tell them something fresh he has discovered'.[101] By 1903 Field was collecting ethnographic and natural history specimens for the South Australian Museum, paying Aborigines for both in rations and tobacco. A 1905 donation was summarised by Stirling as including

> 8 mammals, 16 reptiles, 29 frogs, 9 fish, 70 birds eggs, 68 beetles, 13 bees & wasps, 5 bugs and a number of scorpions and spiders. Many of these are new to the collection, and some probably new to science.[102]

Field's 1903 sale of fifty-two artefacts to the Museum included sacred material, weapons, articles of clothing and raw materials such as '2 stones showing stages in the manufacture of axeheads'.[103] He sent more objects to Stirling during 1906, but reserved his main collection for sale to Spencer at the Melbourne Museum - a total of more than 600 artefacts from the Tennant Creek region.[104] In the meantime, his brother E.J. Field had acquired more than eighty Central Australian artefacts originally collected by Spencer and Gillen during their expeditions. This collection, including stone knives, red ochre, a shell ornament, a boomerang, clubs, wooden dishes, spears, spearthrowers, fire-sticks, tjurungas, and adzes, was acquired by the South Australian Museum in 1943.

Within South Australia itself, the telegraph stations of the 'Far North' and the west coast offered the best prospects for augmenting the Adelaide Museum's collections. These prospects were not

immediately realised following Stirling's 1890 circular. It took his further encouragement in 1906 for collections to materialise from these these regions. From the north Stirling obtained 'a rather unique collection of native articles' in that year, comprising sixty-six objects collected by the Oodnadatta telegraph operator J.R. Mack. Purchased for sixteen pounds, this collection showed the usual bias towards men's weapons and tools (forty-one items), but also included two play-sticks and women's objects such as a hair-string sling for carrying wooden containers and paper-bark for wrapping objects. Two tjurunga were included as well as feather ornaments and a rabbit-fur ceremonial 'apron'.[105] The collection had been assembled by Mack from his various telegraph postings between William Creek and Tennant Creek.

A larger collection from the Oodnadatta region was obtained in 1909 from the widow of the town's telegraph operator Albert Hewish. Until his death in 1898 Hewish had been a friend of Francis Gillen and was part of the extensive network of telegraph station collectors of the 1890s. Gillen had used him as an intermediary in his extensive correspondence with Baldwin Spencer.[106] It is not surprising that his collection was relatively more varied than others of the period from Central Australia. It contained fire-making sets, pearl-shell ornaments and thirty-four tjurunga as well as a wide range of tools and weapons. Women's and children's items and raw materials were less well represented.[107]

Until 1914 there had been very few acquisitions from telegraph stations on the western telegraph line, extending to Perth. As mentioned in Chapter Three, a few objects were donated by one of E.M. Curr's correspondents, W. Graham, a telegraph station operator at Eyre's Sandpatch in Western Australia. In August 1890 the Fowlers Bay telegraph operator H.S. Rumball had contributed a collection, but these objects originated from Innamincka and had been obtained from the station overseer W.B. Greenwood.[108] In 1914 the South Australian Museum's acquired its last large collection from a telegraph station. The retired Eucla telegraph station operator Andrew Clayer sold more than fifty wooden tools and weapons, message sticks and tjurunga to Stirling for ten pounds. This collection, which included sacred objects and returning boomerangs of 'recent manufacture', had been gathered during the late 1890s.[109]

During 1923 the young Charles P. Mountford brought a small telegraph-station collection to the Adelaide Museum from Darwin. Comprising wooden and glass-headed spears, a club, spearthrower and four stone knives, it had been gathered by the telegraph employee W.J. Ray.[110] The last collection deriving from the Overland Telegraph line to be acquired by the South Australian Museum seems to be that of J.A. Cashmore, an electrician who worked on the Line near Alice Springs during 1929. His collection of Aranda objects, including a tjurunga, a tapping stick, wooden container and sixteen other tools and weapons, was donated in 1977.[111]

Telegraph station officials often moved between different stations on tours of inspection or to take up other postings. This gave added variety to collections such as those assembled by Gillen, Mack or Hewish, but even these collections generally consisted of material which was either brought in by Aboriginal people or was manufactured in Aboriginal camps at the stations. With the exception of Gillen,

whose expeditionary collecting has been discussed, it was the police who were in the best position to obtain collections 'in the field'.

A few other Central Australian officials were able to take advantage of their mobility to make collections of this kind. The most prominent of these was Walter Herman, the South Australian official responsible for supervising the sinking of artesian bores along the Birdsville and Oodnadatta Tracks during the 1890s. His collection of 154 objects, purchased from his widow during 1906 for twenty pounds, included fifty-two boomerangs, twenty-three spears, six pairs of kurdaitcha shoes and eighteen sacred objects.[112] While these latter items may suggest Hermann's access to ceremonial activities, it is more likely that as a transient visitor to Central Australia he received them in trade.

Foelsche and the Northern Officials

Like Gillen in Central Australia, Paul Foelsche's role in the ethnography of Northern Australia was pivotal. His influence was felt at least a decade earlier though, following his commissions during the late 1870s to supply Waterhouse and South Australia's Special Commissioner, Guy Boothby, with natural history specimens, artefacts and photographs for the Philadelphia, Paris, Melbourne and Sydney Exhibitions.[113] Because of the competitive nature of these exhibitions Foelsche's instructions were unusually specific for the times. For the Paris Exhibition of 1878 for example, the Northern Territory's Special Commissioner, J.G. Knight, asked for a 'good collection [of] native weapons, fibres, nets, bags etc. & drawing on bark, also two or three skulls male and female. These are much valued by Ethnologists'.[114]

This was the first docmented occasion on which official European interest in Aboriginal bark paintings was revealed. Foelsche was also requested to supply ethnographic and landscape photographs and natural history specimens for the same exhibition. He was contacted by telegram on the same day with the following request:

> Can you get good sized photographs of natives, single and in groups for Paris Exhibition, also specimens of birds of the finch and other tribes. Hope you will be able to send me fine collection of exhibits etc to take with me to Paris.[115]

During this period Foelsche had also responded to several anthropological questionnaires, from Lorimer Fison and Alfred Howitt in 1874 and from Lewis Henry Morgan in 1876. Fison and Howitt's introductory letter set the tone for the style of ethnographic research and collecting undertaken by Foelsche. It read: 'the present enquiry is but a part of an extensive organised research which has been carried on in all parts of the globe during the past twenty years and which has done much to ascertain the various steps by which the human race has slowly and painfully changed from savagery, and advanced towards civilization'.[116] A further request came from Edward Curr during the 1880s to supply ethnographic detail and vocabularies

for his great work of synthesis, *The Australian Race* (1886-1887). Prior to his meeting with Stirling in 1891 Foelsche had responded to yet another questionnaire, this time from the author of *The Golden Bough*, James Frazer.

The police inspector's authoritative status was enhanced by his reputation as the Northern Territory's foremost photographer. Since acquiring photographic skills during the 1870s Foelsche won several awards at International Exhibitions for his landscape studies and portraits of Aborigines.[117] During 1874 Foelsche received a First Class Certificate for his photographs at the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition. His images of Palmerston, the Gold Fields and of 'Port Darwin natives' were sent to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in the following year.[118] With their accompanying details concerning age, sex, tribe and region, these portraits had as much in common with the emerging genre of police photography as with ethnography: in fact, Foelsche was one of the first in remote Australia to suggest the establishment of police photographic files.[119]

Like Gillen, Foelsche used his ethnographic and landscape photographs as a means of communicating with those of his peers with similar interests. In fact, Gillen's own albums contain some Foelsche photographs of Aboriginal people from the Darwin region. In 1911 Foelsche also presented an album of his photographs to the naturalist and pioneer woman ethnographer, Mrs Annie Richards.[120] J.B. Richards, her police trooper husband, had been posted to the Northern Territory from Fowlers Bay in South Australia during the 1890s, and the couple probably made Foelsche's acquaintance at that time.[121]

After more than a decade spent supplying other collectors and museums with specimens and information, Paul Foelsche contributed a substantial paper on'The Aborigines of North Australia' to the *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* in 1881. He was possibly assisted by his compatriot and Assistant Director of the South Australian Museum, Amandus Zietz. This article and his 1895 publication in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* contained a summary of the main items of material culture which Foelsche included in various collections sent by him to Adelaide.[122]

Foelsche's significance lies not only in the large numbers of artefacts and natural history specimens which he collected but in the fact that prior to Stirling's own field expeditions of the 1890s, this remotely located government official represented the foremost ethnographic authority available to the South Australian Museum. This became evident in 1889 when Zietz and Stirling approached him to collect particular categories of ethnographica rather than the unplanned miscellany which characterised most collections. Foelsche's contribution was crucial to efforts by Zietz and Stirling to transform their ethnographic holdings into a 'scientific collection'.

Zietz sent Foelsche two lists, one of Northern Territory artefacts in the museum collection for which further documentation was required, and another listing 'specimens required', which it was hoped Foelsche could provide (see Tables 2 and 3, below). Zietz justified the specific nature of his request in these terms:

I am directed by Dr Stirling (Chairman of Museum Committee) to write & ask your valuable assistance in completing our N.T. collection of native weapons etc. ... [it is] difficult to obtain reliable information respecting the names, uses & localities of Native weapons etc & as our collection is a scientific one and we intend at some future time to publish a full description of it with figures, I have taken the opportunity of asking you a number of questions accompanied with rough sketches ... the great importance of having as complete a national collection as possible must be my excuse.[123]

Table 2. Zietz's list of 'Specimens in the Museum collection' for which he required further documentation, 15 August, 1889.[124]

<u>Specimens in the Museum collection</u>

No.		
	1	Long Reed Spears, barbed. One, two & three prongs (a,b,c)
	2	" " " " One prong, double barbed.
	3	" " " " One prong, very long barbs.
	4	" " " With desert sandstone head.
	5	" " " Silicious slate head.
	6	" " " Slate head.
	7	" " " Wood head (imitation stone)
	8	Long Wood Spears
	9	" " " Single prong, barbed on one side, prong inserted in shaft.
	10	Short Reed Spears, used in revenge & for punishment.
	a	Long sword shaped Spear thrower, a lump of gum on end of handle.
	b	Long narrow Spear thrower, light wood.
	c	Large Canoes, trunk of a tree hollowed out.
	d	Models of N.T. bark canoes.
	e	Flat Clubs, heavy wood about 4 ft long, ornamented with white markings.
	f	Necklaces made of grass stems.
	g	Boomerangs ? with one end turned up.[125]
	h	Plaited grass armlets.
	I	Plaited bark belts.
		Photographs of N.T. natives.

I should also be glad if you could give the following information,
Native names of above.
Tribes to which they belong.
Locality.
Particulars respecting the purpose for which any of the above are used.

No. 4,5 & 6	(With wood shaft) I have received from Daly River, South Port, & Alice Springs, by what Tribes are these made & used.
No. 10	Are these used for any other purpose.
No. 3	With very long barbs, are these fancy spears only, or are they used in warfare?

Table 3. Zietz's 1889 'List of Specimens Required'.[126]

List of Specimens Required

Spear thrower for short Reed Spears
Spears mounted with Dingo teeth, Crab claws etc.
Boomerangs
Reed Trumpets
Round Waddies
Kangaroo Teeth Ornaments
Hair Ornament made of ducks bills, small birds heads etc.
Bark forehead ornament, painted white etc.
Bunches of white feathers fastened to a stick & worn in the hair
Tassels made of small tufts of feathers & worn as ornaments.
Finger rings made of plaited grass
Belts made of female human hair
A short pole painted red, white & yellow, used to mark native graves
Bone nose ornaments
Native wigs
Cutting & carving tools, stone knives etc.
Native rope, string etc.
Digging or yam sticks
Time beaters for Corrobboree
Drinking vessels, Food bowls, Bags & Baskets, Mats, Fishing utensils
Samples of fibre prepared by Natives, also the raw material
Resins or Gums used to mount Spear heads etc.
Specimens of Native food, seeds, etc.
Photographs of Native huts, Graves etc.

Foelsche responded to Zietz's request for additional documentation in precise terms, as reproduced below (Table 4). His numbers correspond to those in Table 2.

Table 4. Foelsche's annotated list of 'Specimens in the Museum Collection'[127]

No.	Native Name	Name of Tribe	Locality & for what purpose used
1a	jahluitma	Larrakeah	by all tribes who can procure the reed or bamboo for spear shafts - used for fighting
b	macacalitilik	"	ditto
c	mannawal	"	by all coast & river tribes used for fishing.
2	amarimber	"	all coast tribes in neighbourhood of Pt. Darwin. used for fighting.
3	anberthee	"	Port Darwin - merely ornamental
4	weedoo	"	by all tribes that can procure the stone
5			not known here, but I believe at Pt Essington
6	tangool	"	by all who can procure them, used for fighting
7	embelang	"	used for fighting in the neighbourhood of Pt Darwin
8	jalunboo	Unalla	Port Essington, Raffles Bay & neighborhood of. Fighting.
9	mannarnea	"	ditto
10	equilla	Larrakeah	by all coast & river tribes - used in [illeg] for punishment, also for killing game & in warfare
a	woolndock	Unalla	Port Essington and neighbouring tribes. Used for throwing all kinds of spears.
b	hillatta	Larrakiah	used by all tribes in the neighbourhood of Pt Darwin, for all kinds of spears.
c	marrima	"	all along north coast & on rivers
d	gunagura	"	Port Darwin & neighbourhood
e	mearrool	Unalla	Port Essington & Alligator Rivers
f	mangulma	Larrakeah	used by all tribes
g	never seen here		
h	see sample	and names	in my collection

In his reply to Zietz, Foelsche also offered to 'procure Northern Territory native dresses, weapons, ornaments etc, to complete the collection in the Museum'.[128] Given the number of collections which

Foelsche had already sent south from Darwin since the 1870s, his use of the term 'complete' is revealing. It is consistent with Stirling's assumption that an ethnographic collection could adequately represent Aboriginal culture, and that by gradually filling its gaps, the Museum Director could eventually exhibit what he was later to describe as 'all the objective relics of a vanished race'.[129]

Foelsche's carefully documented collection of 170 objects was received nine months later in May 1890. The accompanying inventory met all the criteria for scientific classification: each object's Aboriginal name, tribal affiliation and function was recorded in tabular form, much as the Museum's own Anthropology Registers were to appear twenty years later.[130] Foelsche's efforts provoked an immediate and grateful response from the Museum Committee who voted him an honorarium of twenty pounds 'in consideration of the valuable collection of native weapons and utensils which he sent to the Museum lately, also of the various contributions which he has sent at different times during many years'.[131]

A more telling response came from Stirling himself in the form of his decision to issue his letter of request for native weapons and utensils to police and telegraph officers throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory in mid-1890. Foelsche's sobering letter accompanying his collection may have been the catalyst for this initiative. Foelsche did not share the confidence of Ravenscroft or Gore in the unlimited ethnographic potential of the region; nearly two decades in the Territory had shown him how rapidly Aborigines could relinquish or modify their material culture. He wrote:

> it is now 9 months since I received your letter re assisting to complete your Museum collection of Native weapons, ornaments etc; the task is not so easy now as it was some years ago ... the natives in this neighbourhood have got too much dependent upon Europeans and have therefore no necessity for many of those articles used before the advent of the white man, hence such articles as cutting & carving tools, stone knives & tomahawks are not to be found except perhaps among some inland tribes...[132]

During 1889 Foelsche had suggested that Stirling contact his colleague, former police-trooper William G. Stretton, for additional ethnographic material.[133] Stretton had been a member of the original police force under Foelsche's command in the Northern Territory since 1869. He was nearly discharged from the Northern Territory Police Force in 1871, apparently on Foelsche's orders, after he had given an old pair of his uniform trousers to an Aboriginal man.[134] He remained as one of Foelsche's valued officers though and participated in at least one violent reprisal against Aborigines following the death of a European teamster in 1878.[135] Retired from the police force and stationed as a customs officer and sub-protector of Aborigines at Borroloola near the Gulf of Carpentaria, Stretton became known locally as a 'great authority on the aboriginals, especially those of the Gulf of Carpentaria'.[136]

Stretton contributed more than 100 well-documented ethnographic and natural history objects to the South Australian Museum during 1891 and 1892. His rough list of objects was transcribed by Foelsche and sent to Stirling with accompanying tribal affiliations and native names.[137] Stretton was also grateful for the opportunity of corresponding with Stirling about his own ethnographic research which he had

undertaken since 1888. He informed Stirling in 1893 that 'I intended writing to Mr Foelsche requesting him to secure me the honor of forwarding through you, my notes on the manners and customs of the natives of this district, with a view of having your assistance in the use of proper anatomical terms, in place of which I have been, through ignorance, compelled to use terms and expressions that would hardly do for publication'.[138]

Stirling soon recognised a promising source of ethnographic material in Stretton. The Museum Director also saw an opportunity to enlist Foelsche and Stretton in maintaining the flow of anthropological data from the frontier to Adelaide and more influential centres. During 1892 and 1893 he sent copies of J. G. Frazer's 'Questions on the manners, customs, religion, superstitions, etc, of uncivilised or semi-civilised peoples' to both officials.[139] Foelsche complained to Stirling that 'I cannot write on this subject except undisturbed and as a rule someone looks in every evening if it is only to have a yarn & a whisky.[140] Isolated at Borroloola, Stretton enjoyed more solitude. Full of enthusiasm for a new hobby he informed his Adelaide mentor that he would have 'much pleasure' in replying to Fraser's questions, and was soon able to report that 'having, for the past five years, carefully noted the peculiarities of these tribes, I have been able to arrive at a very correct solution of the questions submitted'.[141] Stretton sent his notes to Stirling in early 1893 for editing and these were subsequently published as a short paper in the Royal Society's *Transactions*.[142]

Foelsche garnered other significant collections for Stirling from Territory officials. Stirling had met the Daly Waters police officer F. Goss during the 1891 transcontinental expedition. On that occasion Stirling had personally collected a few objects from the Aboriginal camp there, and had arranged for Goss to send additional material to the Museum. Stirling's diary reads:

> About a dozen natives camped near - the poorest & dirtiest looking I have yet seen in Australia - women wear lock of hair plaited & hanging over forehead. Some have two front teeth knocked out ... got a few things out of their camp - Gosse [sic] had others all of which are to be sent to Foelsche when drays return.[143]

Goss forwarded a collection of forty-six objects to the South Australian Museum via Foelsche later that year. Foelsche carefully prepared the collection's documentation for Stirling in similar fashion to his own and Stretton's material.[144] Stirling's medical advice regarding the police officer's failing eyesight and his successful efforts to secure a transfer to Adelaide undoubtedly encouraged Goss's collecting efforts. His enthusiasm for the ethnographic enterprise did not match that of his colleagues in Central Australia though, as his letter to Stirling of August 1891 reveals:

> I should like to have sent a greater variety of native goods, but very little suffices for the needs of the Daly Waters blacks & they are either too indolent or stupid or both, to try & improve on, or add to the old things. In getting the names & uses of the weapons ornaments etc I have been at great pains to try & understand the natives, & to get them to understand me, & the little information that I have given you may I think be safely relied upon. I have endeavoured to get some information regarding their form & laws of government & of their social customs but it is

almost impossible to make them understand, one would need to speak the language to obtain any accurate knowledge of those subjects.[145]

Foelsche was at the authoritative centre of a network of northern Australian frontier officials which extended from Daly Waters to Borroloola and the Arnhem Land coast. The evidence suggests that these individuals regarded their ethnographic activities as an extension of their duty to the government which employed them, rather than as a separate hobby. The expectation that a conscientiously gathered collection of ethnographic and natural history material would not go unnoticed within the Adelaide hierarchy of influence which determined their careers may have been a leading factor in promoting the interests of the South Australian Museum on the northern frontier. Foelsche's hopes of securing a less demanding southern posting equivalent to his own rank of Inspector were never realised though, despite the impact of his ethnographic and photographic achievements within Australia and at international Exhibitions.[146] The lowly-ranked Goss, assisted by Edward Stirling, had more success in obtaining a southern posting.

A similar motive may have underpinned the collecting efforts of the customs officer Alfred Searcy, whose wife and children returned to Adelaide from Port Darwin for health reasons in 1890.[147] During the following year Searcy sent Stirling more than 140 Aboriginal artefacts gathered from his patrols among the Malay trepangers along the northern coast and from the MacArthur, Victoria and Katherine Rivers. Amandus Zietz reported to Stirling that this 'rich and instructive' collection contained

> many specimens new for the Museum Collection. Some of them are large and showy and add to the attractiveness of our large and unique australian Collection of Ethnology. Mr Searcy gives to each specimen the locality where obtained...[148]

Zietz's description of the collection reveals the usual preponderance of weapons, but the collection also included fishing nets, didjeridus, 'charm baskets', and a 'devil frightener' (bullroarer).[149] Searcy did not record Aboriginal language terms for the objects; his interest in collecting Aboriginal and natural history material was that of a hobbyist. He was a self-confessed 'curio fiend', and on his eventual return to Adelaide in 1896 became known not only for his published accounts of his Northern Territory escapades, but for the relics of these frontier adventures installed in his den, which had a 'distinct atmosphere of the Orient about it'.[150] Despite his raconteur style, his books contain few references to the circumstances under which he made collections. A rare exception lies in a newspaper article written pseudonymously under the byline 'Unohoo' in 1908, chronicling a collecting episode on Bathurst Island which followed his party's discovery of Aboriginal watercraft on an island beach:

> Two of the paddles and one of the balers were taken, and in order to square matters withthe owners we left a stock of tobacco in a bottle, some clay pipes and some red turkey twill .. I hope that when they came to balance up the exchange was considered a fair one.[151]

Paul Foelsche retired from the Northern Territory Police Force in 1904. After the turn of the century his role as both a collector and middleman for the South Australian Museum was increasingly assumed by his deputy, Sub-Inspector Nicholas Waters.[152] Most of Waters' collection of spears, canoes, woven bags and ornaments appears to have been obtained by him through other collectors. The Melville

Island buffalo shooter Joe Cooper supplied a range of material from 1909 to 1911, including human skulls. His 1909 consignment, for which he charged Waters two pounds, consisted of '1 bark canoe 12 feet long. 1 doz spears. 1/2 doz bark baskets, 5 human hair belts, 6 fancy armlets, 4 doz common armlets, 1 twohanded sword, 1 neck ornament (for dancing)'.[153]

The pearl fisherman and customs officer C.E. May had supplied Stirling with natural history specimens in 1907, employing Aborigines to collect birds eggs at Port Keats for flour, sugar, tobacco and clay pipes.[154] On his return to Darwin from Cape Ford and Port Keats in 1909 he passed a small ethnographic collection to Waters for consignment to Adelaide.[155] Waters packed these objects from Cooper and May with a further collection obtained from the trader, customs officer and trepanger Alfred Brown, 'the only white man on a thousand miles of coast between Darwin and Borroloola'.[156] Traded by Aborigines of the Liverpool River, Brown's collection of twenty-eight objects included a woman's stone knife, a coral necklace and a bag made from the 'ravellings of an old blanket'.[157]

The northern Australian ethnographic collections forwarded to the South Australian Museum by Paul Foelsche and Nicholas Waters were easily located by Edward Stirling within existing categories. The various objects later described as Aboriginal art were so infrequently acquired during this period that they could be accommodated under the heading of 'miscellany': bark paintings and wooden sculptures were leading examples. Until the Museum's East Wing was completed Stirling's main difficulty was to absorb these new collections within the cramped exhibition areas of the North Wing. He no longer held his former opinion, that Foelsche's efforts might 'complete' the Australian ethnographic collection. Through the web of remote collectors centred on Palmerston Stirling realised that despite the apparent imminence of the Aborigines' demise the potential for expanding his Museum's ethnographic collection remained untapped. He wrote to Waters in 1909, thanking him

> [for] quite a nice lot & from localities until now unrepresented in our Collection ... You would be obliging us very much if you will continue to bear the Museum in mind if any opportunity arises of getting things from out of the way places round your coast, mainland or islands & we shall always for that purpose be glad to bear any necessary expenses ... Does anyone ever go to Groote Island? That is a place from which we have never received anything....[158]

Several additional collections were assembled by Waters, for the cost of freight to Adelaide and enough tobacco to pay the Aborigines for the artefacts.[159]

Foelsche's retirement signalled the end of an untrammelled flow of collections from northern frontier officials. Subsequently it was more difficult to acquire collections of the depth and range assembled by Foelsche, Searcy, Waters and Stretton. One of the country's most prolific ethnographic collectors, Charles Mountford, returned from his term of employment with the Darwin postal service in 1923 without having collected any ethnographic material, although as mentioned, he later retrieved a collection of spears gathered prior to 1929 by post office employee Walter Ray.

Of equal importance in accounting for the relatively quick diminution of ethnographic collections

from northern frontier officials at this time was the Commonwealth's assumption of political control over the Northern Territory in 1911. From this time, the South Australian Museum's acquisition of ethnographic material from Territory officials became less assured and more dependent on circumstance. This had been the case with officials in other states for previous decades. Small collections were acquired fortuitously from the Queensland Aboriginal Protectors Walter Roth and Archibald Meston, for example. Roth's collection was made after a chance meeting with Edward Stirling in Adelaide during 1902, as discussed below. Meston's small collection of Fraser Island objects, mostly associated with his Aboriginal assistant Windandera, was donated by his daughter in 1963.[160]

The meteorologist Clement Wragge was perhaps the most intriguing of the northern frontier officials engaged in ethnographic collecting. The South Australian Museum purchased the pick of Wragge's collection of Queensland artefacts in 1899, but Wragge had been collecting in South Australia as early as the 1860s. He had gathered a collection of Flinders Ranges artefacts during his surveying work in the region during 1876 and took these artefacts with him on his return to England two years later. With an inheritance behind him he established a private museum in his home town of Stafford. Strongly interested in cartography, meteorology and the study of tides, he arranged the artefacts collected during his travels according to a schema based on Mercator's chart of the world.[161] He returned to Australia in 1883 to pursue his meteorological career, making a conditional gift of his museum to the town of Stafford.[162]

Wragge retained his interest in museums, applying for the position of Director at the South Australian Museum following Haacke's dismissal in 1883. In support of his application Wragge informed the Trustees that:

> I am the founder of the 'Wragge Museum' at Stafford, formed generally of zoological and ethnographical specimens collected by me in various parts of the world ... I possess testimonials as to ability, energy & special organizing powers that I feel sure would satisfy you ... I would do my very utmost in the interests of the Adelaide Museum ... I beg further to add that I would also undertake the position of collecting naturalist having had great experience in collecting and preserving zoological specimens ....[163]

The South Australian Government was unable to afford a salaried Museum Director at this time; Edward Stirling assumed the role of Honorary Director and Wragge continued to work as the Queensland Meteorologist. Despite his reputation for eccentricity and a fiery temper (he was dubbed 'Inclement Wragge'), he remained committed to an ambitious programme of establishing meteorological stations throughout outback Queensland during the 1890s. This brought him into contact with a large number of Aboriginal communities and he assembled a collection of several hundred Aboriginal artefacts during these visits. Many of the localities associated with the Wragge collection represent the main ration depots established by the Queensland Protectors of Aborigines of the 1890s and 1900s, Walter Roth and Archibald Meston.

Wragge promoted his collection vigorously, displaying an insider's knowledge of museological

parlance and priorities,:

> I contemplate disposing of the whole or part of my collection of Aboriginal weapons without exception the finest in Australia if not in existence as far as Queensland is concerned. Now I think that this collection should not be allowed to leave Australia, and I write to know if the Adelaide Museum or other Public Institution would like to secure them for South Australia at a fair value. All classified, with localities, native names etc.
>
> ... I have offered the collection to the British Museum but as yet there can be no reply.[164]

Stirling bargained with Wragge for a selection of 232 from the total of more than 1700 artefacts, of which two-thirds comprised spears, boomerangs and clubs. This selection was described by Wragge as comprising:

> the remaining bulk of my unique collection of Queensland weapons - every one of which [is] thoroughly genuine & obtained by me from the blacks during long tours of official inspection & travel.
>
> 20 Two-handed waddies (Gulf of Carpentaria & N.W. Queensland)
> 20 Shell wommeras (north Queensland & Peninsula)
> 20 Plain ditto
> 25 Dilly bags (various embracing cane, bark and net specimens)
> 15 Stone axe heads
> 2 Stone knives (Sturt's rite type)
> 10 Carved boomerangs (various & Georgina)
> 100 Plain boomerangs (various localities)
> Death bone & sheath (borders of Territory - very rare)
> 12 Large swords (Cardwell to Cairns region)
> 7 Large shields (ditto)
> 2 'Goosewing' boomerangs (Georgina)
> for the sum of L100 - your museum paying freight & I doing the packing. Details re localities, native names etc etc will be furnished.
> Please wire if accepted as others have applied.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> Clement L. Wragge, Govt. Meteorologist, Queensland.
>
> P.S. Do you want any spears? Cape York etc.?[165]

The eventual consignment sent by Wragge did not include the Aboriginal names, as promised, and was short to the extent of twenty boomerangs, three 'two-handed waddies', two 'large swords' and the 'death bone' ('mislaid'). In lieu of these items, Wragge included an extra 104 items, containing more variety than the original consignment. The additional items included ceremonial plumes, a bark blanket, necklaces, a game net, fire-sticks, a honey-stick and a range of spears.[166]

Wragge sold most of the remainder of his collection to the Queensland Museum and to the Australian Museum in Sydney. He retained more than 100 objects and took these with him to New Zealand where he took up a position as meteorologist in 1908. These artefacts were sold to the Auckland and Wellington Museums during 1912.[167]

Endnotes - Chapter Seven

1. E.C. Stirling to Inspector N. Waters, 31 August, 1909. GRG 19/11 SRO.

2. Waterhouse reported in 1877:

> A collection of native weapons have [sic] been received from W.A. [from a Mr. Webb] and from the North West Bend, some of which will be selected for the N.Y. Museum and some for the Paris Universal Exhibition for 1878 (Curator's Report, June 1877. GRG 19/168, SRO).

North West Bend was an alternative name for Morgan, where Ewens was stationed during the 1870s.

3. It is possible that Andrews received these objects from his former superior, Robert Torrens, during the latter's visit to Western Australia a few years earlier. See the *Public Service Review* (1899) 5(9): 3.

4. ADB 4: 192-93.

5. Curator's Report, December 1868. GRG 19/168, SRO. See also Jones file on Saunders.

6. Curator's Report, November 1871. GRG 19/168, SRO.

7. Curator's Report, July, 1873. GRG 19/168, SRO.

8. Curator's Report, April, 1870. GRG 19/168, SRO.

9. Curator's Report, October 1880, GRG 19/168, SRO.

10. Richards 1879-1880.

11. See Jones file on T.P. and A. Richards. For further discussion of A. Richards, see Chapter Nine.

12. Richards ms. See also Richards 1879-80; 1881-82.

13. AA298 Acc.184, no.28c, AASAM. Possum skin rugs, recorded from a large part of south-eastern Australia and as far north as the Flinders Ranges, are almost unrepresented in museum collections today.

14. Burdon to Zietz, 23 January, 1890. Stirling Papers, AA309, no.264, AASAM.

15. *Advertiser* 25 June, 1887, p.5e.

16. Besley to Police Commissioner, 12 November, 1881 GRG 5/2, SRO. Besley's suggestion was taken up three years later, with the appointment of six native police. See Commissioner of Police to Besley, 14 November, 1884, GRG 5/2, SRO.

17. Stirling to Kay, 12 June, 1890. AA298, Acc.184, no.63, AASAM.

18. Zietz to Stirling, 1 August 1890. AA298 Acc.159, no.14, AASAM.

19. See Jones file on Besley.

20. See Jones file on Gardiner. As for many of the collections documented in this chapter, the South Australian Museum Registers refer to only a small proportion of the artefacts received in Gardiner's donation. The full lists have been located in archival material elsewhere in the Museum or in the State Records Office.

21. Marshall to Stirling, 8 August, 1890. AA298, Acc.184, no.30, AASAM.

22. See Jones file on Marshall.

23. Gason 1874.

24. Gason to Stirling, August 1890. Stirling Papers, AA309, no.257, AASAM. See also Gason 1874; 1878.

25. Peterswald also assisted the Adelaide ethnographer and collector, Thomas Worsnop, in his initiative to induce David Lindsay to have ethnographic photographs taken during the Elder Expedition of 1891-92 (See Chapter Four). Peterswald's natural history donations to the South Australian Museum during the late 1880s are documented in *Notes upon Additions to the Museum* ('An Amateur Naturalist' 1889).

26. Barlow's collection cannot be fully traced. It included samples of honey ants and a spearthrower, donated during 1900. Barlow's widow donated eight seed necklaces and two time-beating sticks during 1946, originally collected at the Illamurta police station. See Jones files on J.R. Barlow; Mrs. J.R. Barlow.

27. Wells to Stirling, via Peterswald, 14 January, 1896. Specimen documentation file, F.H. Wells, SAM.

28. Wells 1894. Wells' linguistic contribution is discussed in Austin (1991). Only one of Wells' Andrewilla collection items can be identified today; a neck or head ornament made from galah feathers (A3815).

29. References to these donations appear in *The [Way College] Boomerang*, vol.1, no.1, September 1892; vol.1, no.2, December 1892; vol.1 no.3, March 1893. My attention was drawn to these references by Dr. R.C. Petersen. For a discussion of Torr's collections, see Chapter Nine.

30. Dittmer to Stirling, 1 June, 1896. AA298 Acc.184, no. 110, AASAM.

31. Copies filed in N.B. Tindale collection, AA338, AASAM.

32. Waterhouse to Tepper, 28 May, 1902. Specimen documentation file, E.G. Waterhouse, Anthropology Archives, South Australian Museum. Waterhouse collected animals for the South Australian Museum during the 1880s, but not Aboriginal artefacts; perhaps reflecting his father's lack of interest in ethnography. See Jones file on Waterhouse.

33. See Chapter One for Cawthorne's description of the destruction of Adelaide Plains artefacts by police during the 1840s. See also various references to the 1840s 'affrays on Leake's station' in the south-east of South Australia, during which artefacts were collected and burnt, contained in *Guide to Records*, vol. 2, pp.172-173; vol. 4, pp.603-605.

34. Mulvaney 1989: 139.

35. Willshire 1891: 19.

36. Willshire 1896: 21.

37. The objects were purchased at auction during 1995. See Jones file on Willshire.

38. See Mulvaney (1989) and his ADB entry on Willshire (ADB 12: 515) for several references to Willshire's career. Stapleton (1992) offers a defence.

39. *Register*, January 13, 1914, p.8. The journalist continued: 'Mr South never regarded it - bullock killing by the natives - as a crime. They did not kill for the mere mischief of it, but for food. And what was a beast or two in a big mob. Still, it would never have done to let the black know that ...'. Perhaps because of his sympathy, South was later

appointed as an Aboriginal Protector in the northern region of South Australia. See Jones file.

40. Stirling 1891 ms.

41. Strehlow 1971: 589-93.

42. Stirling 1891 ms.

43. Strehlow 1971: 592.

44. See Jones file on Bennett.

45. Giles wrote to Stirling, informing him of particular shields collected at Borroloola:

> The long square-ended decorated shields of the Northern Territory of which I have some photography on view in the Adelaide Exhibition, belonged to Corporal Power, late of Borroloola, N.T., who has since died. I do not know what became of them; but if you are very anxious to obtain them, or some of the same description, I can write to a friend who is still at Borroloola, and ask him to endeavour to collect some specimens of same. He may know what became of Corporal Power's. There is one shield amongst my curios in the exhibition which you are welcome to, if it would be any addition to the museum. (Giles to Stirling, 25 April, 1910. GRG 19/5/6498, SRO)

The 'friend' was probably the policeman, Robert Stott.

46. Stirling to Giles, 10 May, 1910; 25 May, 1910. GRG 19/11, vol.2, SRO.

47. Stott to Stirling, 30 October, 1909. 'Special Lists 1906-17', pp.63-67, AASAM. R.G. Kimber writes:

> He was firm yet humane in his attitude toward the Aborigines, encouraging his children to befriend them and to respect Aboriginal customs and beliefs; they gained fluency in the local Arrernte language [following Stott's posting to Alice Springs] (ADB 12: 112-133)

Note that Kimber suggests that Stott did not arrive at Borroloola until 1908. See Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 211.

48. A letter to the Northern Territory Government Resident refers to the South Australian Institute (Museum) asking for 'skulls and skeletons of Aborigines'. See A5202, 1882, GRS 11, SRO. See also, Stretton to Stirling, January, 1893. Stirling Papers, AA309, no.262, AASAM.

49. Stott to Stirling, 30 October, 1909. 'Special Lists 1906-17', pp.63-67, AASAM.

50. Minutes of the Museum Committee, 1 December, 1909. GRG 19/364, p.191, SRO.

51. Aiston to Gill, 14 April, 1923, MLS. For Aiston's biographical details, see Jones (1993b).

52. Information regarding Aiston's house received from Mrs J. Reynolds, Aiston's niece (pers. comm. 1986). The South Australian Museum holds a large collection of Aiston's original negatives and glass slides (AA3, AASAM).

53. Aiston to Gill, 29 June, 1928. In a later letter to Gill, Aiston wrote:

> I am glad you like my arrangement of weapons - the room is called the armory, the smoke room, the bally museum, and a few other names, one fellow reckons I have more in it than there is in the Adelaide museum. (Aiston to Gill, 22 September, 1928, MLS)

54. Aiston to Gill, 4 December, 1925; 3 April, 1926, MLS.

55. Aiston to Gill, 26 September, 1926, MLS.

56. Aiston to Gill, 19 October, 1926, MLS.

57. C.E. Cowle to W.B. Spencer, 31 August, 1900. Quoted in Mulvaney 1989: 113.

58. Aiston to Gill, 25 March, 1927, MLS.

59. Aiston to Gill, 14 December, 1928, MLS.

60. Aiston to Gill, 4 May, 1929, MLS.

61. Aiston to Gill, 5 July, 1921, MLS.

62. Aiston to Gill, 13 June, 1929, MLS.

63. See Jones & Sutton 1986.

64. Aiston to Gill, 25 November, 1932, MLS. In fact, there is no record of the South Australian Museum purchasing any objects from Mrs Morley.

65. Aiston to Gill, 3 April, 1933, MLS.

66. Aiston to Gill, 25 June, 1929, MLS.

67. For a photograph of Aiston with NooryWauka and Loycurrie ('painted up') at the Melbourne exhibition, see Jones & Sutton (1986: p.71).

68. For an account of Kubadji's relationship with Lindsay and his appearance at these Exhibitions, see Jones 1991a. Maurice had less success in his role as a chaperon, writing

> If I brought Mungina, One Musgrave, One Everard Range [Aborigine] to Adelaide I think all the information necessary could be obtained but I am dammed if I am going to publicly cart them about the city if any one will take charge of them & show them round garden museum etc I will pay their expenses but my last visit to Adelaide with blacks is a never to be forgotten experience - with the aid of whisky it was passable but on tonic - oh never! (Maurice

to Winnecke, 10 November, 1901, PRG 158/42, MLSA.)

69. See Jones 1991b for a demographic account of the region.

70. Aiston to Gill, 12 November, 1935, MLS.

71. Aiston to Gill, 8 January, 1936, MLS.

72. Aiston to Gill, 7 June, 1938, MLS.

73. This occurred during 1943. See Jones files on Aiston, Mrs. Aiston.

74. 'Overland Telegraph to Port Darwin. Instructions to Officers in charge of party sent out by Messrs Darwent & Dalwood to Port Darwin'. GRG 154/7, See also GRG 44/57, SRO.

75. See Jones file on Bulbeck.

76. Register entry for A3941. See Jones file on Davis. For an Aboriginal account of the destruction of a telegraph pole in order to obtain the iron footplate for use as an axe, see Koch (ed.) 1993: 20-21.

77. This collection was probably sent to Todd by a telegraph operator. The 'piece of carved wood used in making a young man' was undoubtedly a tjurunga, one of the first to be collected with this association. 'Donations 1882 - 88', p.23, SRSAM.

78. These objects were collected at the Hall's Creek telegraph station in north-western Australia. See Jones file on Richard Mackie Waddy.

79. Entry for 19 September, 1932, Strehlow Journal, AASAM. The Barrow Creek killings are documented in Strehlow (1971: 588-93). Gillen's role is noted in Mulvaney (1989: 120); further detail is given in Hill (1951: 132-33). An Aboriginal account is provided in Koch (ed.) (1993: 11-18).

80. See Jones 1995b. The original diary is held in the Fry Papers, AA105, AASAM.

81. Gillen and Warburton 1886.

82. ADB 7: 7. See also Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 131.

83. Gillen to Spencer, 16 November, 1894. Letter 3, PRMO. See Jones file on Hanley.

84. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 163.

85. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 163. Field collected ethnographic and natural history material for both the South Australian and Victorian Museums.

86. Byrne 1895. His natural history collecting efforts on behalf of Baldwin Spencer are recorded in Mulvaney & Calaby (1985: 121-22).

87. See Jones file on Little. Little's wife's brother, Charles Johnston, was station-master at Daly Waters, further evidence of the influence exerted throughout Overland Telegraph stations by families from the south-east of South Australia. He was speared by Aborigines in June 1875 near Roper River; Little led a reprisal party of telegraph station men. See NTDB vol.1: 188.

88. See Jones file on Poulton. On Poulton's death in 1921 his remaining collection was sold; some items were purchased by the collector Henry Savage and his wife and subsequently acquired by the South Australian Museum.

89. Gillen to Spencer, 25 April, 1896, Letter 20, PRMO.

90. Quoted in Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 129.

91. Cowle to Stirling, 16 November, 1894. Stirling Papers, AA309, no. 243, AASAM.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Gillen to Spencer, 10 September, 1897, Letter 31, PRMO.

94. This is deduced from a label attached to one of the objects received from Way's estate, reading 'no.382 J. McKay Barrow Ck.' This number may indicate that McKay's original collection was substantial. Several of Way's artefacts can be linked to this collection. See Jones files on McKay, Way.

95. See McKay's letters detailing his efforts to collect the down and Aboriginal 'hair and whiskers' in GRG 19/5/15868; 15625; 16041; 16145, SRO. See Jones (1983) for a reference to this obscure but revealing episode in Stirling's career as a museum collector. Having tried unsuccessfully to obtain the 'coiffure' from an Adelaide hairdresser, Stirling had contacted an official at the Port Augusta Gaol in 1910 'to obtain the hair and beard of an Australian native in its natural condition, that is as it exists in their usual semi-wild state' (Stirling to Becker, 25 April, 1910; 2 May, 1910, GRG 19/11, vol.2, SRO). For further details of McKay's collection, see Jones file.

96. Gillen to Stirling, 16 November, 1894. Stirling Papers, AA309, no.237, AASAM.

97. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 121-22; GRG 19/364/April 1905, p.386, SRO. References to Aboriginal people as natural history collectors are peppered throughout the zoological reports contained in the Horn Expedition Report.

98. Minutes of the Museum Committee, GRG 19/364 5 April, 1905, pp.385-386, SRO.

99. *Ibid.*

100. Minutes of the Museum Committee, May 1906, p.34, GRG 19/364, SRO.

101. Quoted in Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 169.

102. Minutes of the Museum Committee, August 1905, p.9. GRG 19/364, SRO.

103. AA298 Acc184, no.108, no.108a, AASAM.

104. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 249.

105. See Mack list, with sketches prepared by Stirling, AA298, Acc.184, no.29a-f, AASAM.

106. Gillen wrote to Spencer: 'If you should require quick replies to any questions at any time post the questions to Hewish and he will wire them on to me[.]' Gillen to Spencer, 7 November, 1895, Letter 15, PRMO.

107. See Jones file on Hewish.

108. Rumball's relationship with Greenwood is unclear. Rumball has also visited Corporal Burdon at Goolwa during 1890 and had encouraged him to collect artefacts for Zietz. See Jones files on Rumball, Burdon, Greenwood. During 1892 two artefacts were acquired from W.E. Rumball of Blinman, possibly a relative.

109. See Jones file on Clayer.

110. The collection remained unpacked until 1960. See Jones file on Knappstein.

111. See Jones file on Cashmore.

112. 'List of Native Articles purchased from Mrs Herman, Thornton St, Kensington, 13/2/06'. AA298, Acc.184, nos.86, 86a, AASAM.

113. For biographical details on Foelsche, see ADB 4: 192-93; NTDB, vol.1: 107-8.

114. J.G. Knight to Government Resident, 29 September, 1877. N.T. Government Resident, Inwards Correspondence, GRS 10, no.2322, SRO.

115. Boothby to E.H. Price, 29 September, 1877. N.T. Government Resident, Inwards Correspondence, GRS 10, no.2333, SRO.

116. Covering letter accompanying Fison and Howitt's circular, 21 August, 1874, addressed to the Government Resident, Palmerston. GRS 10, A505, SRO. The second circular, 'relative to the collection of Aboriginal Folklore', was received by the Government Resident in June, 1876. GRS 10, A1616, SRO.

117. The original negatives for these portraits are held in the Foelsche collection, AA96, AASAM. Foelsche received a diploma in 1890 from the Leipzig Ethnographical Society, presumably for his photography (See Letters sent by the Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Index, Misc. No.7, 14 December, 1890, GRS 2, SRO). It is thought that Foelsche learnt photographic skills from the pioneer South Australian photographer, Captain Samuel Sweet (R.J. Noye, pers. comm.). Reid's comment that Foelsche's reputation as a photographer seems justified 'more because of the quantity than the quality of his work' is insupportable (Reid 1990: 190).

118. *Official catalogue of the exhibits* 1875: 227. It is likely that Foelsche and Captain Sweet were the two unnamed photographers represented in the South Australian Court at the Intercolonial Exhibition, South Kensington, 1873. See *Catalogue of Exhibits in the South Australian Court*, 1873: 11-13.

119. Government Resident's Correspondence, A3711, 1878, GRS 11, SRO.

120. The album was acquired by the South Australian Museum during 1991. Foelsche papers, AA96, AASAM.

121. Richard's ethnographic collecting is mentioned earlier in this chapter.

122. Foelsche 1882.

123. AA298, Acc.184, nos. 53b, 30a, 42, AASAM.

124. AA298, Acc.184, nos. 42 & 30a, AASAM.

125. Zietz was referring here to the hooked boomerang, *wirlki*, still undocumented by museum ethnographers. Foelsche's response suggests that these artefacts, mainly used by Aborigines south of Katherine, were also unknown to him at this time.

126. AA298, Acc. 184, no. 30a, AASAM. Zietz and Stirling's rather idiosyncratic list seems to be based upon desiderata drawn from ethnographic publications relating to the Northern Territory.

127. AA298, Acc.184, no.101, AASAM.

128. Recorded in Minutes of Museum Committee, 4 October, 1889. GRG 19/364, SRO. See also Foelsche to Zietz, 18 September, 1889. AA298, Acc.184, no.65, AASAM.

129. 'Professor Stirling's Report on his Visit to Museums in America and Europe, 1902'. GRG 19/399/7, SRO.

130. 'Specimens of Native Ornaments [etc] Collected by Inspector Foelsche at Port Darwin', AA298, Acc.184, no.95, AASAM.

131. Minutes of Museum Committee, 1 August, 1890. GRG 19/364, SRO.

132. Foelsche to Stirling, 12 May, 1890. AA298, Acc.184, no.97, AASAM.

133. 'I think a note from the Museum authorities addressed W.G Stretton Borraloola [sic], requesting him to assist me in procuring specimens etc for the Museum will greatly encourage him.' Foelsche to Zietz, 18 September, 1889. AA298, Acc.184, no.63b, AASAM.

134. See B. Douglas, re discharge of Police Trooper Stretton, no.237, 1871. Incoming correspondence of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, GRS 3, Acc.791, SRO; Reid 1990: 42.

135. Reid 1990: 70. Stretton may have left the police force temporarily after the 'trousers incident', as Alfred Giles encountered him as a store-keeper at Daly Waters during March, 1871 (Giles 1995: 139).

136. *Observer*, 22 March, 1913, p.32.

137. There are two lists for Stretton's collection; one by Foelsche and another, less detailed, by Stretton. Foelsche's list includes his annotations for 'specimens [which] have never been seen before by Mr Foelsche on the north coast'. AA298, Acc.184, nos.98,99,100, AASAM. Foelsche forwarded another collection from Stretton in September 1892. See AA298, Acc.184, no.53, AASAM.

138. Stretton to Stirling, 18 January, 1893. AA309, no.262, AASAM.

139. Data from Foelsche and Stretton were incorporated within several of Frazer's publications of the 1890s and 1900s, including *The Golden Bough* (1890). Frazer taught at Stirling's old Cambridge college, Trinity. No correspondence between the two has been traced to date.

140. Foelsche to Stirling, 21 September, 1892. AA298, Acc.184, no.53, AASAM. Foelsche's paper which resulted from his replies to Frazer's questions was published in England in 1895 (Foelsche 1895).

141. Stretton to Stirling, 24 May, 1893. AA309, no.225, AASAM.

142. Aside from its general introduction stressing the Malay influence on the northern coast, an extensive vocabulary and a list of tribes and individuals, Stretton's paper was devoted to answering Frazer's questions. It did not contain any discussion of material culture (Stretton 1893).

143. Entry for 18 April, Stirling (1891) ms.

144. AA298, Acc.184, no.80a, AASAM. Goss's collection included pieces of flint, fire sticks, a spindle, ochre, a kangaroo teeth ornament, possum fur armbands, wallaby tail ornaments, a cockatoo feather head decoration, a nose bone, the beard of an Aboriginal man, a bunch of eaglehawk feathers, a shield, a spear, a vessel for carrying wild honey, a forehead band, a girdle covering and message sticks. These were collected from Daly Waters, Powell's Creek, Roper River, and Elsey (Goss to Stirling, 15 August, 1891. AA309, nos.165-66, AASAM).

145. Goss wrote:

> Thanks to your kindness my transfer to Adelaide has been approved & I expect to go South by the end of the year, it is real punishment for me to do any writing so I shall be very glad to get away & have my eyes seen to. (*Ibid)*

146. Reid 1990: 81.

147. NTDB vol.1: 260.

148. Zietz to Stirling, 6 February, 1891. AA298 Acc.159 no.11, AASAM.

149. 'Ethnological Specimens from the Northern Territory collected by Mr. A. Searcy, Jan. 1891'. AA298, Acc.184, no.92, AASAM.

150. E. Whitinton, preface to Searcy 1907: viii. See also Searcy 1905; 1911. For details of Searcy's career, see ADB 11:559-560.

151. Searcy 1908b [attrib.]: 5. Searcy may have visited the island in the company of the Adelaide collector, D.M. Sayers (q.v.). These men, together with Herbert Basedow and the buffalo shooter Joe Cooper, were probably the first ethnographers to collect from Tiwi people.

152. Waters had served in the Territory police force since 1883, became a sub-inspector under Foelsche in 1904, and was appointed as inspector in 1910. Gibbney & Smith 1987 vol.2: 329.

153. Cooper to Waters, 9 April, 1909. 'Special Lists 1906-17', p.44b, AASAM. Aboriginal skulls collected by Cooper are mentioned in his letter to Stirling of 31 January, 1911. GRG 19/5/7844, SRO.

154. Stirling to May, 19 January, 1907. GRG 19/4, SRO. Stirling asked May to collect Aboriginal skulls on behalf of the South Australian Museum but there is no record of May' response. See Stirling to May, 14 November, 1908; 9 March 1909, GRG 19/4, SRO.

155. See Jones file on May.

156. Hill 1951: 36.

157. 'Special Lists 1906-17', p.52, AASAM. Brown's career is discussed in Hill (1951: 36-39 *et seq.)*.

158. Stirling to Waters, 31 August, 1909. GRG 19/11 SRO.

159. Waters' letters to Stirling: 25 October, 1908; 20 April, 1909; 23 July, 1909; 19 November, 1909, GRG 19/4, SRO.

160. The donation also included a newspaper clipping book and a photograph album. See Jones file on Miss A. Stokes.

161. Loyau 1885: 95-97.

162. The collection is unknown in Stafford today and efforts to trace it have so far been unsuccessful.

163. Wragge to Trustees of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, 22 October, 1884. GRG 19/399/25, SRO.

164. Wragge to Curator, Museum, Adelaide, 19 May, 1899. AA298, Acc.184, no.88f, AASAM.

165. Wragge to Stirling, 7 August, 1899. AA298, Acc.184, no.90, AASAM.

166. See AA298, Acc.184, nos. 88c,d,e, AASAM. The original consignment is listed in nos. 88a,b.

167. Cooper 1989: 99, 107.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COLLECTORS OF THE FRONTIER - MISSIONARIES

In the centre of Australia it is only a few that have the confidence of wild natives. We speak also native dialects with those of whom & by we got the collection.[1]

The South Australian Museum's prominence in Central Australia during the 1890s drew another vital group of collectors into its sphere - missionaries. Remotely located throughout the Australian frontier, yet with strong connections to metropolitan centres, missionaries were well placed to collect ethnographic material. Although their moral authority may always have been uncertain, these individuals possessed considerable economic and political influence among Aboriginal groups. With government or church-supplied rations as currency they quickly established relations of reciprocity through which ethnographic objects were obtained as a matter of course.

Missionary collections of the 1890s to 1930s are the most revealing of the frontier collections. Their content illuminates the changes occurring within Aboriginal societies during this time, as well as the preoccupations of the mission collectors. Their propensity to collect and document domestic, religious and trading artefacts as well as conventional weapons distinguished these from most other frontier collectors. As a general rule, women's objects were also better represented among mission collections.

Missionary collectors facilitated innovation and change within Aboriginal material culture to a greater degree than any other group of collectors. This occurred partly without intent, through their encouragement of artefact production for sale to metropolitan centres. In addition, missionaries consciously promoted or introduced particular techniques of manufacture.

A large quantity of Pacific artefacts was obtained during the 1880s and 1890s by the South Australian Museum through Methodist and Anglican missionaries based in Adelaide.[2] These collections were rarely catalogued or described by their collectors and were mostly received by the Museum as miscellaneous consignments. In contrast, the various Lutheran collections of Aboriginal material received from the two main Central Australian missions of Killalpaninna and Hermannsburg after the turn of the century were models of ethnographic detail. The level of description applied to their collections was not only consistent with the efforts made by Lutheran missionaries to document the languages and beliefs of Aborigines; it also reflected their responsiveness to an emerging and sophisticated international market for ethnographica.

The propensity to collect and document ethnographic material was not exclusive to the 'mission-minded' Lutherans, but it had been evident in their South Australian pastoral work as early as the 1830s, as discussed in Chapter One.[3] South Australia became the Lutheran headquarters in Australia from the 1860s, but the first Lutheran ethnographic collections resulting from this second phase were not obtained until 1889. The retirement to Adelaide of W.F Schwarz, one of the founding missionaries at Hermannsburg Mission in the western MacDonnell Ranges, resulted in the Adelaide Museum's acquisition of his collection, probably through the Barossa Valley connections of Stirling's deputy, Amandus Zietz. During the following twenty years the Lutheran collections made by G.F. Schwarz of the Cape Bedford Mission in north Queensland, by Kempe, Heidenreich, Liebler, and Carl Strehlow from Hermannsburg, and by Reuther, Homann, and Riedel from Killalpaninna in South Australia joined these collections.

With the special attention paid to visual symbolism by missionaries, it is not surprising to find that several of the principal shifts in post-contact Aboriginal material culture took place within the environment of mission stations. This physical association does not appear to have been the critical factor. The emergence of bark paintings, wooden sculptures or toas as desirable categories seems to be more closely linked to the efforts by missionaries to harness artefact manufacture as a new source of income. It was this additional impetus, and the overt or indadvertent encouragement lent to innovation and experiment, which saw some missions reproduce, on a local scale, the broader effects to be wrought on Aboriginal material culture by the tourist industry after the Second World War.

In discussing the collections obtained by the South Australian Museum from missionary collectors it is useful to make a division between those collections formed in response to a perceived need (that of Western science through its museums), and those collections which were actively formed and promoted by missionaries as part of their own, or their mission's projects. The first category generally comprised collections formed by missionaries as occasional collectors. The second category implied a more focused commitment towards collecting.

Missionaries as occasional collectors

The South Australian Museum's collection is peppered with individual objects or small collections obtained by missionaries or clergymen and subsequently donated. The earliest example of a missionary collection was donated by George Taplin of the Point McLeay Mission on Lake Alexandrina. As well as natural history specimens it comprised 'various articles of matting, baskets, etc'.[4] By the early 1870s Taplin had realised that the coiled rush basketry produced by Lower Murray Aborigines was a potential source of income for the Mission. Subsequent collections were purchased by the Museum and, in the basketry

styles at least, revealed the influence of European taste.

Another early example was a gypsum widow's cap, 'made of pipe clay in successive layers, worn by natives after the death of a chief - from Blanchetown'.[5] This was donated in 1878 by Canon George Farr, the headmaster of the Collegiate School of St. Peter in Adelaide. Farr was also the chairman of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery from 1869 to 1886. Another widow's cap, from the Chowilla region on the River Murray was donated in 1898 by the Reverend Bussell, a missionary based at Murray Bridge.[6]

Implicit in these early collections was the notion, shared by many lay collectors, that the artefacts and natural history specimens contained in them represented a useful contribution to science. Until the 1890s there were few missionaries who considered that their knowledge of their collections was especially privileged or showed particular insight. That was a later development, particularly associated with the Lutheran missionary collectors.

The collection brought back to Adelaide by the retiring Hermannsburg missionary W.F. Schwarz in 1889 (donated in 1891) provides a good example of the type. Assistant Director Zietz described his acquisition of the Lutheran's collection on behalf of the Museum:

> On the 27th April I went to Tanunda to receive a valuable collection of Ethnological specimens which the Rev. Mr Schwarz had promised me for our Museum, & which he had collected in the neighbourhood of the river Finke, Central Australia. I received a large series of specimens most of which were unrepresented in our collection, some of them (native idols) are of great value as they are no longer made by the natives; Mr Schwarz kindly lent me these of which I had moulds made & shall be able to exhibit the casts ....[7]

These 'native idols' would have been tjurunga, among the first to be encountered by the South Australian Museum. Unfortunately, no trace remains of the casts made by Zietz. The Schwarz collection is now subsumed without obvious identification in the anonymous 'Old Collection'. A single item, comprising Aboriginal hair string, was donated by the co-founder of Hermannsburg Mission, A.H. Kempe. He had published in German on the Arrernte people as early as 1880, and in 1891 contributed a substantial paper dealing with the ' Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language Spoken by the Aborigines of the MacDonnell Ranges' to the *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia.*[8]

Few Australian mission collections were acquired during the 1890s, in contrast to the large number of Pacific mission collections. One exception was a model of a wurley from Point MacLeay Mission, donated in 1897 by the Superintendent, T.V. Sutton. During the early 1900s two collections were acquired from Queensland missionaries through the agency of Queensland's Northern Protector of Aborigines, Walter Roth. Most of Roth's own substantial and well-documented collection was acquired by the Australian Museum in Sydney in 1905.[9]

During Roth's 1902 visit to Adelaide Stirling secured a promise to obtain artefacts from Cape York Peninsula, poorly represented in the Museum collections at that time. A small number of spears and characteristic spearthrowers with baler-shell handles was subsequently sent to the Museum by Roth. These

were actually collected by G.F. Schwarz, the Lutheran missionary at Cape Bedford (later named Hope Valley, then Hopevale Mission) at Cape Bedford on Cape York Peninsula. The ten pounds advanced by Stirling to Roth for this purpose in 1902 encouraged further Schwarz material as a donation in 1906: four baskets, a long honey stick, nineteen dilly bags, twenty-four barbed spears, a pronged spear, two spearthrowers, a child's pubic tassel and an 'ornament made of square mother of pearl plates (worn around neck or forehead)' were received. The last was new to Stirling and he required Schwarz's reassurance that it was Australian.[10]

Roth was also instrumental in Stirling's 1902 acquisition of a collection of artefacts from Mapoon Mission on the north-west tip of Cape York Peninsula.[11] The Moravian missionary Nicholas Hey, who contributed an 'Elementary Grammar of the *Nggerikudi* language' to Roth's sixth *Ethnographic Bulletin*, sent a collection of thirty-three objects as a donation, together with their native names and ascribed uses. Three 'smoothing and graving tools' used in the preparation of wooden artefacts were of especial interest. Stirling's gratitude for this level of documentation was expressed in his reply to Hey:

> The parcel of native articles, which you were good enough to put together at the suggestion of Dr Roth, arrived here yesterday ... We are exceedingly pleased with them as the bundle contains several things which are new to our Australian collection ... your explanatory list makes everything perfectly clear.[12]

Hey also sent ethnographic collections to Germany during this period, to the Ethnographical Museum in Herrnhut (headquarters for the Moravian Mission) and to ethnographic museums in Dresden and Hamburg.[13]

Donations of missionary collections became rarer as missionaries recognised the commercial potential of Aboriginal artefacts. Three notable missionary collections acquired by the South Australian Museum went against this trend: the Matthews, Perriman and Love collections. Margaret (Gretta) Matthews was a daughter of Daniel Matthews, one of Australia's missionary pioneers and the founder of the Maloga Mission near Echuca.[14] Her varied collection of more than 200 artefacts derived from Goulburn Island and Manunka Mission near Mannum in South Australia, where her parents had established a mission in 1899. After leaving Manunka Mathews spent time as a missionary in Canada before travelling to Goulburn Island; this North American trip may have been facilitated by another missionary collector, the Lutheran Theodor Nickel. He had worked as a missionary among Mohican Indians before becoming president of the South Australan Lutheran Synod in 1902. His ethnographic collection includes Aboriginal material from Manunka Mission and other Australian localities, as well as from North America.[15]

Like the missionary George Taplin and his successors, the Matthews family had successfully encouraged Aborigines of the River Murray region to adapt their coiled-rush basketry technique for the European market. The resultant stylistic changes can be observed in the South Australian Museum's collection from Taplin's time onwards. Margaret ('Gretta') Matthews was responsible for another, more radical development in the new dynamism of Aboriginal material culture brought about since European

contact. In her attempts to encourage commercially viable activities among the women of Goulburn Island during the 1920s and early 1930s, she introduced them to the coiled-rush technique used by Aborigines of the Murray River and south-eastern Australia. The result was a new 'line' of basketry made with pandanus fibre, subsequently adopted by other Arnhem Land missions and marketed today as a traditional form.[16]

Matthews' donations of the 1920s also included some of the earliest bark paintings to be made for sale to Europeans. Several of these were subsequently exhibited at the Royal Society of Arts rooms in Adelaide during 1933, one of the earliest displays of Aboriginal material within a European art context.[17] This form of recognition undoubtedly encouraged the further development of bark painting and artefact manufacture at other Arnhem Land missions during the 1930s.[18] A further collection made by Matthews was donated by her family in 1954.[19]

H. L. (Leslie) Perriman was one of the first missionaries to work on Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The South Australian Museum had developed a special relationship with the Groote Eylandt Mission from first contact; Norman B. Tindale had accompanied the pioneering Church Missionary Society expedition there from the Roper River Mission in 1921 (see Chapter Eleven) and his links with the island facilitated the Museum's acquisition of several collections. Perriman's was the most important of these. Although the collection was not actually acquired until Perriman's retirement in 1970, it was formed as a result of an understanding with Tindale made soon after the missionary's arrival on the island in 1921.The collection consisted of more than 170 Groote Eylandt and Roper River secular and sacred objects, together with a series of photographs of their Aboriginal owners and makers and a copy of Perriman's notes on their manufacture and background.[20] Perriman's published reminiscences make it clear that, as on other missions, the traffic in artefacts and European goods was actively pursued by Aborigines and mission staff, each for their own ends:

> As the Groote Eylanders had not used money before, we started our own system. Tobacco was the common currency on the mainland among Aborigines ... it was agreed to limit the amount of tobacco to be used on the whole island to 23 sticks a week, and this worked very well.
> Each stick of tobacco was cut into four, each piece representing a penny. We arranged a chart system so that when Aborigines wished to purchase articles it was possible for them to see their savings grow like a thermometer ... How their faces would light up when someone brought up a large quantity of turtle shell and his thermometer rose rapidly! He might be saving up for a tomahawk costing five shillings!
> ... They brought us turtle shell and articles made by them which we would buy and resell at Thursday Island. The proceeds of these sales were used to buy tobacco (no CMS money was used for this purpose) and other things such as fencing wire which they used for their fish spears, 3" nails to make fish hooks, empty tins, butchers' knives and coloured cloth which was highly prized.[21]

Finally, the collection of the Presbyterian missionary J.R.B. Love reveals the extent to which the missionary enterprise overlapped with the emerging discipline of anthropology. Love had possibly the

widest field experience of any Australian missionary. His missionary career spanned thirty-five years and took him from the Flinders Ranges to Kunmunya in northern Western Australia, Mapoon on Cape York Peninsula, and to Ernabella in north-western South Australia. His small collection contains artefacts from most of these localities, as well as from others visited during his 1912-14 survey of mission localities for the Presbyterian Church.[22] One of these localities was Killalpaninna Mission on Cooper's Creek, shortly to be abandoned by the Lutherans. Love was struck by the contrasting value attached to material culture items by Aboriginal people under the conditions of European contact:

> I was surprised to find that the men and women would part freely with the old carved boomerangs and spears, but were unwilling to part with the everyday roughly made wona [digging stick] as it was of more practical use. I did not press for an inferior wona, as I valued the old boomerangs much more highly....[23]

Love's interest in material culture and other aspects of Aboriginal life persisted throughout his missionary career. His first anthropological publication, on the Worora people of north Western Australia, appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Society of South Australia*.[24] He was encouraged by Norman B. Tindale to join the Anthropological Society of South Australia as a corresponding member in 1926; a series of anthropological and linguistic publications followed until his death in 1947. Love sent a small collection of Worora artefacts to the British Museum during the 1920s.[25]

Missionaries as entrepeneurs

With the notable exception of the Aboriginal toas of Killalpaninna Mission, the emergence on Aboriginal missions of new forms of material culture, and their commercialisation, can generally be traced to the period between the two world wars. It is ironic that these new forms arose within a milieu ostensibly devoted to spiritual values, but which in fact generated new measures of value for material objects.

This impetus was most evident where missionaries gathered objects for sale, rather than donation to museums. The transformation of traditional basketry forms at George Taplin's Point MacLeay Mission on Lake Alexandrina provided an early example of the 'industrialisation' of artefact manufacture, but no attempt was ever made to produce a representative set of weapons and utensils. Objects made there were directed towards a craft market from the 1860s, with baskets, mats, and even hats becoming principal lines.[26] The progress of the Point MacLeay cottage industry may be best symbolised by the production, sixty years after the mission's establishment, of a basketry aeroplane for sale.[27]

Receipts from 'native handicrafts' represented an important contribution towards mission incomes in Australia, particularly during and after the Depression years. In the case of the Arnhem Land missions founded during the 1920s and 1930s, the rich painting traditions of the region were readily channelled into

the production of bark paintings, particularly after their popularisation by Charles Mountford during the 1940s and 1950s.[28] Museums were initially less interested in these items generated for a market than in artefacts representative of traditional hunting and gathering practices, or in sacred objects which missionaries were generally eager to pass out of the mission station milieu. R.M. and C.H. Berndt noted this practice particularly in the case of the Ooldea mission in western South Australia where, by 1941, "witch doctors' magic sticks", pointing bones, "murderers' feather-foot sandals", sacred boards and carved wooden creatures' had become objects of currency[29].

Kaparlgoo Mission, founded in partnership by Adelaide's St. Luke's Mission and the self-appointed missionary and bush cyclist A.H. Lennox, was well ahead of this broader trend. This 'native industrial mission' was established during 1899 on Gabarlgu Lagoon, west of the South Alligator River, about forty kilometres from the Arnhem Land coast.[30] The mission initially attracted numbers of Aborigines, sufficient to emply three missionaries by 1901, and developed an ambitious programme of self-sufficiency. Land was cleared and fenced, huts were built, fruit and vegetable plantations were established on the banks of the river and more than a thousand artefacts appear to have been consigned to southern collectors. By 1903 the enterprise had failed and the mission was abandoned.[31]

Unlike consignments from other missions which often represented a miscellany of items gathered together at odd times, the Kaparlgoo collections were prepared to order for collectors. It is likely that, as for Carl Strehlow's Hermannsburg collections discussed below, standard rates of barter were employed to obtain the material from the Aboriginal people of the region. According to a promotional piece in the *Observer* newspaper, the catalogued collections included

> various hunting and war weapons, ornaments, musical instruments and domestic utensils in common use among the aborigines, each article being numbered and having its native name attached, with a description of purpose for which it is intended. A fishing net made from banyan vine is called a "mallar", a nulli nulli, used in fighting, "mubobo", a stone spear "karn", and so on. The collection should prove attractive and instructive.[32]

Adelaide collectors seem to have purchased most of these Kaparlgoo 'sets', although the Western Australian ornithologist J.T. Tunney, and two New South Wales collectors (J.F. Connolly and Elsie Deacon) also obtained Kaparlgoo artefacts during the mission's short history.[33]

While this artefact industry appears to have been aimed squarely at the ethnographic collector, the opportunity to purchase Kaparlgoo 'sets' had undoubted appeal for collectors with philanthropic motives. A purchase not only guaranteed the collector an authentic range of weapons, utensils and ornaments, it helped to underwrite the work of the mission which might be expected to render such artefacts increasingly irrelevant. No evidence exists to clarify these motives, but the surviving documentation of those Kapalgoo collections which have been identified gives a remarkable insight into the web of connection which linked Adelaide's collectors early this century.

In 1902 the South Australian explorer and ethnographer R.T. Maurice purchased a collection from

Kaparlgoo and donated this to the South Australian Museum during the same year.[34] The hand-written list of sixty-two items accompanying the collection is identical to that accompanying another Kaparlgoo collection purchased by the Adelaide lawyer and collector Sir Josiah Symon.[35] Maurice's list is titled 'Collection E' on the reverse side, suggesting that at least five similar collections were produced for sale by the mission.[36] Four of these collections have been traced. During 1902 Maurice purchased and presented a collection of more than 730 Alligator River objects, presumably also from Kaparlgoo. The list accompanying this collection was probably prepared at the mission, but is in a different hand to the original Kaparlgoo lists; Aboriginal language terms were not included, but the objects were itemised and priced, as the following examples show:

60 Small plain Spears @ 3d	- 15s -
13 Charm-bags (plaited) @ 9d	- 9s 9d
30 Grass-stem necklaces @ 6d	- 15s -
74 Nose ornaments @ 1d	- 6s 2d[37]

Having already purchased one of the standard collections of sixty-two objects issued by the Kaparlgoo Mission, it appears that Maurice decided to obtain a much larger collection, perhaps on behalf of Charles Winnecke, his friend and fellow-collector. Winnecke died during 1902, bequeathing his collection to Maurice, who in turn donated the combined collection to the South Australian Museum.

On the original Kaparlgoo lists each of the sixty-two objects was numbered, given its Aboriginal name and European equivalent, and its original use. Individual prices were not listed. Most of the objects were utilitarian in nature, ranging from hafted axes to baskets and honey-sticks. No bark paintings or other carved objects indicating future trends in Arnhem Land material culture are evident. An iron-headed spear ('no.8') was included, with the annotation 'now mostly used'. Apart from that item, all the objects were representative of pre-European material culture, even apparently 'no.19', a 'yam stick, Korun, For digging yams & wife beating'. The only aberrant objects were 'no.30', a 'king's plume, Karoe, Worn in hair by chief (Emu feather)' and 'no.54', a 'king's sceptre - Jobul, Shows his authority' - clearly the paraphernalia associated with a ceremonial or ritual leader.[38]

The Kaparlgoo collections provide an early indication that mission collections tended to contain a greater proportion of domestic utensils (usually associated with women) than most other frontier collections. The Kaparlgoo collections included four different types of string, made from reeds, banyan vine, bark and hair, and eight varieties of baskets, each with a named use. Despite this, twelve types of spears were also listed, and several items of men's ceremonial material. The list was completed with advice on pronunciation of the Aboriginal terms: 'The native names are to be pronounced phonetically & accented syllable with emphasis also'.[39]

The South Australian Museum was to acquire more of the Kaparlgoo collections. During 1903 the public librarian and naturalist collector William Ifould exchanged a collection of thirty-one Kaparlgoo objects with the Museum, for ten spears, nine boomerangs and a club. His collection, 'all from the Alligator

River Mission, N.T.', contained

> 1 Large plaited mat, 1 bark belt, 1 palm leaf basket, 3 wooden knives, 1 feather plume (Eagle hawk), string [of] plaited rings, 1 forehead band, 1 finger ring, hank human hair string, kangaroo teeth ornament, human hair belt with parrot head, 5 plaited net bags, 1 corroboree ornament stick with feather tuft, 6 String arm-bands etc, 1 emu feather ornament, 2 wide plaited armlets, 4 narrow wrapped armlets.[40]

During April of 1903 a further unlisted collection of 'articles from the Alligator River', undoubtedly originating from Kaparlgoo, was obtained from the accountant R. Buring of Glen Osmond, Adelaide, in exchange for six 'common' spears.[41] An additional fourteen objects from a separate original Kaparlgoo collection were donated in 1919 by Richard Lindsay Johnson, great-grandson of George French Angas's sister Rosetta. Kaparlgoo artefacts also appeared in the collections of Johnson's father, James Howard Johnson, and his uncle, Edward Angas Johnson, both discussed in the following chapter. Artefacts from Edward Angas Johnson's collection, including Kaparlgoo items, were later acquired by Adelaide's Lord Mayor, Charles Glover and subsequently made their way to the Museum.[42] The ethnographic collection of Sir Samuel Way, Adelaide's Chief Justice, University Chancellor and long-time President of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, also contained spears from Kaparlgoo.[43]

In 1958 a further thirty-six objects corresponding precisely with Maurice's Kaparlgoo list were purchased from Mrs L.G. Rogers, together with other artefacts from various Australian and Pacific localities.[44] These objects had survived from another complete Kaparlgoo set of sixty-two objects. With the documentation obtained during the acquisition of the Rogers Collection came the name of the original purchaser, A. MacDiarmid, as well as correspondence casting light on another missionary collector.

Whatever the nature of MacDiarmid's connections with Kaparlgoo Mission, it seems that he maintained his links with missionary work, notably through the Presbyterian mission at Port George IV Sound, situated in Hanover Bay in north Western Australia. Rogers' papers contained a 1913 letter from the Adelaide collector Agnes Rennie (wife of the Professor of Chemistry, E.A. Rennie) to MacDiarmid, recording the arrival of a collection of artefacts sent by the Reverend Wilson of Port George IV:

> the native curios have arrived from Mr Wilson at Port George IV - 'Meingooniya' is the native name - pretty I think - the two parcels came together - one for me and one for my friend - that is you - I am charmed with the wee, cleverly made spear heads - the hair belts and feather affairs want airing first I'm afraid. I enclose a letter from Mr Wilson describing the curios ....[45]

Wilson's accompanying letter implied that he, like a number of missionary collectors, regarded the ethnographic project as part of a broader endeavour to understand and influence Aboriginal beliefs:

> I have sent you two belts. One is made of human hair and is worn by adults. These belts are highly valued ... I tried to secure better ones but the natives are not willing to barter ... As we are able to understand them better the more knowledge of their customs we shall gain ... At present the natives are away. Before they left I told them to bring me a lot more [stone knives].[46]

The extensive collection of north-eastern Arnhem Land artefacts formed by the non-demoninational missionary Harold Shepherdson during the 1920s and 1930s also conforms to this type.

Shepherdson met Norman B. Tindale at the South Australian Museum while on furlough during 1929 and undertook to collect on behalf of the Museum. It was probably the most advantageous of Tindale's many arrangements with prospective collectors. During the next six years Shepherdson prepared a meticulously documented collection of more than 1,000 artefacts from Elcho Island, Milingimbi and the Arnhem Land coast, at little more than the cost of cartage to Adelaide. Writing of Shepherdson's 1935 consignment, Tindale reported to the Museum Board that:

> L20 will cover Mr Shepherdson's expenditure in purchasing and transporting the material to Adelaide ... At an average price of 1/4d. per specimen this is an outstanding collection. There are types not represented in our collections and much material which could only otherwise be obtained by a lengthy Museum Expedition to the district.[47]

Shepherdson recorded Aboriginal names for the majority of the artefacts, and noted which were trade items, a major factor affecting Arnhem Land material culture which Tindale had become aware of since his 1921-22 Groote Eylandt expedition. Shepherdson's commitment to detail is illustrated in his note (rendered by Tindale in the Anthropology Register) for an Elcho Island ceremonial fighting spear barbed with stingray spines:

> *Warungul.* Only a few old men are permitted to make these; an unauthorised man who attempted to make one was speared. On Elcho Island 4 men permitted; psychological effect of possession very great; highly treasured. At Cape Stewart, Barera Tr[ibe], used commonly, not regarded as of special import.[48]

Shepherdson's collection represents a comprehensive inventory of pre-European material culture from the Arnhem Land coastal region and includes a large amount of well-documented ceremonial material. Only two `bark drawings' and two items incorporating European materials were among this collection though, a bare hint of the transformations soon to affect the art and artefacts of Arnhem Land.[49] Further artefacts from Shepherdson's collection were obtained from R. Silson in 1980, and from Shepherdson himself in 1992, a decade after his retirement and more than sixty years after his first collections were made.[50]

Shepherdson, Perriman and Matthews were each aware of the potential for supplementing their mission's income with payments derived from the sale of artefacts. Matthews seems to have been the most attuned to the commercial possibilities, but mainly to encourage the development of new or modified crafts which could usefully occupy Aboriginal people based at her Goulburn Island mission. A similar missionary collector was Annie Lock, a United Aborigines Mission worker with experience at Oodnadatta, McLaren Station (south of Tennant Creek), Sunday Island and Ooldea Mission, which she helped found during 1933 at the age of fifty-six.

At Ooldea the Aborigines who had previously congregated as beggars at the nearby siding when trains arrived were encouraged by Lock to negotiate new roles for themselves as traders. Complaints from railway passengers about the Aborigines accosting them resulted in a tour of inspection by Rev. J.H. Sexton of the Aborigines Friends Association who recommended 'that the natives be not prohibited from coming to the train at Ooldea, as their purpose is only to sell weapons of their own manufacture'.[51] In fact,

Lock's encouragement led directly to the development of an artefact industry at Ooldea, based around the manufacture of carved wooden animals, the first documented efflorescence of this craft form in Australia. Lock collected a few of these artefacts herself, including a carved wooden kangaroo - an early example of the transitional objects which came to take the place of functional material culture in transactions with tourists and travellers. Lock's small collection was donated by her husband after her death.[52] Lock's successor at Ooldea, Harrie Green, further promoted the industry to the extent that the train's Ooldea stop became a feature of the long journey across the Nullarbor:

> Even the wild men coming in from the spinifex country learnt to carve the wooden animals, and to repeat the two English words necessary for the sale of them: "two bob"... The money thus earned was spent in buying those amenities of civilization that had become dear to their hearts - red wool for their head bands, fruit and tinned meat and biscuits.[53]

Green ultimately became involved in the marketing of sacred objects obtained from Aborigines converging upon the Ooldea mission from the western desert. Aside from these acquisitions, often made covertly, he collected a variety of objects in the course of daily life, particularly through his official role as a dispenser of rations. Turner documented one of these transactions in the following terms:

> Here comes another man, wearing a bunch of cockatoo feathers in his hair. Seeing that we regard it with curiosity, he willingly sells it to us. We examine it, and marvel at its beautiful workmanship. Each feather is carefully stripped to make it more graceful, and the bunch is tied around a sharp-pointed stick, by which it is attached to the hair. Only fully-initiated men may wear such adornment.[54]

With the exception of Green and his transactions with tjurunga, none of these missionaries went out of their way to promote the sale of artefacts beyond the limited opportunities which presented themselves. In this respect they may be contrasted with three important Lutheran missionaries of Central Australia who gathered large collections for sale between 1900 and 1921, Johann Georg Reuther, Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Each of these men actively marketed their Aboriginal collections in Europe. Strehlow and Liebler shipped as many as 3,000 Aranda artefacts to Germany despite each having a consignment impounded by customs authorities during 1913. Reuther's collection of more than 1100 objects, including 400 toas and numerous plant specimens, was finally purchased by Stirling at the South Australian Museum during 1907, but only after Reuther had negotiated with museums in Berlin and London.

This level of entrepeneurial activity reflected more than self-promotion. It indicated that these missionaries were aware of their place in the unfolding schema of international ethnography. Collections of Diyari and Aranda objects were particularly appealing to British and European museums during the period after the turn of the century. These two Aboriginal groups had been brought to the forefront of attention through the publication of Howitt's 1904 *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, by Spencer and Gillen's publications since *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1897), and by the publications of Andrew Lang, J.G. Frazer and Emile Durkheim. The manners, customs and productions of these groups

had become intensely interesting to the emerging professions of anthropology and sociology; Strehlow, Liebler and Reuther were collecting the iconic objects of 'the iconic people of anthropology'.[55]

Strehlow and Reuther had graduated from the same mission school in Germany, the Neundettelsau Seminary. Here the students were taught to employ ethnographic research to communicate with Aborigines on their own terms, as a considered strategy for their eventual conversion to Christianity. As Reuther put it:

> Feeling my way into the mental world of these people, I searched through their legends and the god- and spirit-world of heathendom in an attempt to discover points of contact with the Christian faith and thereby destroy their pagan concepts. Indeed, it cost me much time and labour to become a Dieri to my Dieri people, for in my opinion, a missionary without a thorough knowledge of the language and customs of his people is, in the best instance, like a watch that works but without hands.[56]

In terms of the number of Aboriginal baptisms at Killalpaninna, Reuther's success was extremely limited. But if the level of his penetration into the 'mental world' of the Diyari could be measured by the fourteen volumes of his dictionary and manuscript of Diyari traditions, and by his ethnographic collection, Reuther stood in the front rank of missionary ethnographers.

Reuther's collection is significant for its level of documentation: each of his thousand ethnographic objects was named in the Diyari language and its particular use described, often in a paragraph or more of text. The collection was distinctive in another way; in contrast to almost every other Central Australian collection of the period most of the objects were unused before their acquisition by Reuther. They were custom-made for the collector. This accords with what is known of the origin of the toas. The full extent of Reuther's ethnographic collection as purchased by the South Australian Museum in 1907 did not exist during the years 1900 to 1903 when the mission was visited by three travellers and scientists with ethnographic interests.[57] By 1906 a newspaper article described Reuther's Killalpaninna house as 'a veritable museum. The passage contains over 1,000 pieces of native weapons, ornaments, and apparel, including 100 boomerangs, suspended from the ceiling'.[58]

Reuther made a concerted effort to generate his collection once he had become aware of the growing international market for Aboriginal objects from Central Australia. This trend is likely to have been clarified by mission visitors such as the German ethnologist Erhard Eylmann, the Scottish geologist J.W. Gregory and the Russian ornithologist A.L. Yaschenko. Eylmann gathered a significant amount of his large ethnographic collection at Killalpaninna in mid-1904, setting an example for Reuther.[59] Otto Siebert, Reuther's fellow missionary, returned to Germany in 1902 taking a large collection of ethnographic material with him for sale to the Anthropological Museum of Dresden.[60]

The potential for dealing in Aboriginal artefacts was certainly apparent to Reuther's ethnographic collaborator, the Killalpaninna schoolteacher, H.L. Hillier. An Englishman, Hillier visited his homeland during the late 1890s and again in 1905, just before Reuther's sale to the South Australian Museum. On

each occasion he took a supply of Diyari artefacts with him, selling more than 100 objects to the British Museum and to the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge.[61] Negotiations with these museums, and with other museums during his period at Hermannsburg Mission undoubtedly alerted Hillier to the fact that an international market for Aboriginal objects was burgeoning at this time. This awareness accounts for the fact that during his 1905 visit Hillier took his finely drawn watercolour sketches of Reuther's ethnographic collection to show to museum authorities. These sketches were presumably commissioned by Reuther to advertise his collection to potential purchasers.

In common with most other collectors of the period, Reuther neither documented the individual makers of artefacts in his collection, nor the means by which he obtained the artefacts. It can be assumed that, as is documented in Carl Strehlow's case, he used his position as the principal dispenser of rations and commodities to maximise the value of his exchanges with Aboriginal artisans. By 1900 the community at Killalpaninna had been exposed to European goods for more than a generation; sticks of tobacco no longer held the same appeal as on the frontier of contact. A.L. Yaschenko noted this during his 1903 visit to the mission, observing that he had 'bought a few things from the blacks for tobacco, but that currency seemed not to be as effectual here as I had been assured in Adelaide'.[62]

Subsequent contact between the two missions enabled a transfer of personnel to Hermannsburg, including the schoolteachers Hillier and later A.H. Vogelsang, both of whom had observed Reuther's successful negotiations with the South Australian Museum. Hillier did not compete directly with the marketing of collections by the Hermannsburg or Killalpaninna missionaries; he did not offer major collections to the South Australian Museum, nor to those European museums approached by Strehlow and Liebler.[63] During 1909 Hillier sold a collection of Hermannsburg objects to a British collector, Captain A.W.F. Fuller.[64] In 1910 he sold a further collection of 136 objects, comprising 'stone & woooden churingas, shields, decorations & other articles of the celebrated Arunta tribe of C. Australia' to the Australian Museum in Sydney.[65] Through his mother he sold a collection of Aranda objects to the Horniman Museum in London during the same year. Visiting Britain during 1911 after his final departure from Hermannsburg and Central Australia, he sold another large Aranda collection to the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.[66]

Carl Strehlow's collecting history can be interpreted against this background. He began his missionary career with Reuther at Killalpaninna and was largely responsible for the first translation of the New Testament into Diyari before being directed to take up a new position at the ailing Hermannsburg Mission west of Alice Springs. In contrast to Reuther, Hillier and his fellow missionary, Oskar Liebler, Strehlow was careful to protect his reputation against any imputation that he was exploiting his position for personal gain. He achieved this through a systematic and detailed documentation of his ethnographic transactions with Aborigines. In doing so, he placed on record some of the most remarkable evidence for the currency which underpinned the acquistion of ethnographic material on the Aboriginal and European

frontier.

Like other frontier collectors, Strehlow obtained his collections by exchanging European commodities of flour, tea and sugar.[67] These were shipped in bulk to the mission by regular camel trains. Strehlow's method was to pay Aborigines for artefacts and natural history specimens with defined measures of these commodities, supplementing the quantities ordinarily dispensed as rations. Strehlow then reimbursed the mission for the cost of these additional rations and the collection passed into his ownership, enabling him to retain the profit from its subsequent sale to German museums. There is an indication that Strehlow originally began his large-scale ethnographic collecting with more altruistic motives. He used the revenue from his first collection of sacred objects, assembled for the Frankfurt Museum in 1906, to purchase an altar cloth and an altar picture for the mission church.[68]

A pannikin of flour, a handful of tea and a handful of sugar comprised Strehlow's basic units of exchange with Aborigines, from his first ethnographic collection made during 1906 until one of his last collections, made during 1919. Three pannikins of flour weighed four pounds; a 112 pound sack of flour cost L1-10-0 or thirty shillings in 1906 and slightly less in 1919. Four to five handfuls of sugar weighed one pound; a 70 pound sack of sugar cost fifteen shillings in 1906, twenty-five shillings during 1913 and twenty-three shillings during 1919. Ten handfuls of tea weighed one pound which cost Strehlow one shilling and threepence during 1906 and one shilling and sixpence during 1919.

For the first collections, until 1913, Strehlow made his computations after the transactions were complete, on the basis of set values for each category of object. Thus, in 1908, a collection which comprised seventy-three tjurunga (each described in detail), a shield, thirty-one body decorations, twenty lots of seeds and berries with Aranda names, and twenty-four reptile specimens, he arrived at a figure of 704 pounds of flour, 184 pounds of sugar and twenty pounds of tea, with a total cost of L11-0-0. In 1910 he assembled a collection comprising 140 secular and ceremonial items, ninety tjurunga, forty-two named plant specimens and 300 named insect specimens. The artefacts were purchased for 1432 pounds of flour, 210 pounds of sugar and thirty-six pounds of tea; the plants for forty pounds of sugar and four pounds of tea; and the insects for seventy pounds of sugar and ten pounds of tea, totalling L15-18-0. These sums were immediately reimbursed to the Mission by Strehlow, allowing him to send the collections as his own to his ethnographic mentor, Baron Moritz von Leonhardi at the Frankfurt Museum. Leonhardi then sold the collections on Strehlow's behalf to other museums in Germany, for considerable profit. This profit allowed Carl and Frieda Strehlow and their children to return to Germany for holidays and ultimately for Frieda's children (with the exception of Theodor) to migrate to Germany following Carl's death during 1922.[69]

From 1913 Strehlow became more systematic in accounting for his collections, entering the quantities of flour, tea and sugar against each transaction in three columns. Flour was accorded primary value, then sugar, then tea. Sugar, which varied most in cost during the period, was entered in the second column. The values ascribed to individual categories of objects shifted to some extent during the period,

but as a general rule the value of tjurunga rested at between four to six pannikins of flour, about three handfuls of sugar and two handfuls of tea. The value of waninga head-dresses varied between six and ten pannikins of flour, about four handfuls of sugar and two handfuls of tea. Values for secular artefacts varied widely between one and five pannikins of flour; natural history specimens were paid for either in flour only (for example, four pannikins of flour for lizards in 1908), or in sugar and tea only (for example, in 1910). Even with these variations, in monetary terms a tjurunga cost Strehlow little more than a shilling throughout the period.[70]

There is no direct indication as to whether these exchanges were regarded as fair by Aborigines, or whether Strehlow negotiated much over individual items. His lists do show variation between values ascribed to similar items within each collection. An early list also reveals that Strehlow modified the exchange rate used for his first collection (four pannikins of flour for tjurunga and for the waninga head-dresses) to a higher rate, increasing the tjurunga measure to six handfuls and the waninga measure to twelve handfuls.[71]

Strehlow's actual profits from ethnographic dealing have not yet been quantified. He sold at least nine collections of Arrernte artefacts averaging 175 objects each, to German and Swiss museums betweeen 1906 and 1922. The total comprised more than 1600 individually documented objects, as well as several hundred plant, animal and geological specimens. This period coincided with the publication of his massive, multi-volume ethnographic work, *Die Aranda und Loritja-Stamme in Zentral Australien*, sponsored and published by von Leonhardi in Frankfurt. This fact imbues Strehlow's collecting with significance beyond that of other missionary collections of the period, as it is likely that many of the pieces which he carefully described for von Leonhardi were considered, if not actually figured, in that publication.

It was this flow of ethnographic material, as well as that sent to German museums by Strehlow's Oskar Liebler, which led to a change in the Australian customs regulations relating to ethnographic objects. The new restrictions were urged by Stirling at the South Australian Museum, following the initiative of his Victorian counterpart, Baldwin Spencer. The customs regulations were rapidly altered, so that by November 1913 a proclamation prohibited the 'export of articles of ethnological interest, except under certain conditions', at the discretion of the state museums.[72]

Two large collections gathered by Strehlow and Liebler were obtained by the South Australian Museum as a result of these regulations. Both were impounded in early 1914 at the Port Adelaide docks before being loaded aboard ship for Germany. A third shipment of Arrernte objects from Hermannsburg, was allowed to leave Australia after inspection by Stirling.[73] Strehlow unsuccessfully protested against the government's action, maintaining that his collection had been assembled before the regulations came into force.[74] His collection of 210 well documented Arrernte objects was nevertheless compulsorily acquired for one hundred pounds, seventy-seven pounds more than the amount which Strehlow had paid in rations for it. More than half of the collection comprised sacred or ceremonial objects; the remainder consisted of

fifty-nine men's weapons and tools, nine women's utensils, sixteen articles of clothing or decoration, eleven toys and six raw materials.

Strehlow's collection had been destined for the ethnographic museum in Koln, Germany. It had evidently been promised during Strehlow's 1910-1913 furlough in that country. Within five months of this collection's confiscation Strehlow had another ready. On this occasion he requested Stirling's permission to ship the collection. This collection, and other Strehlow collections in Dresden, Frankfurt and Bern were inspected and photographed by Norman Tindale during 1936. By the end of the Second World War many of the objects, together with much other Australian ethnographic material, had been destroyed by Allied bombing.[75]

Liebler's impounded ethnographic collection contained 320 objects, 100 objects more than Strehlow's. It was also more ethnographically representative, with two-thirds of the collection composed of an even selection of men's and women's objects, clothing and ornament, children's material and raw materials, supplementing the 100 sacred objects. Liebler was in Australia for less than four years, but in this time amassed documented collections of several hundred objects. These were sold by Liebler to museums in Vienna, Bern, Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart.[76] He also used Aranda artefacts and natural history specimens as objects of barter with the Adelaide merchant Frederick Scarfe during 1911. Scarfe passed these acquisitions, 'one case of curios, also one tin of reptiles which he received from Hermannsburg' to the Museum as a gift.[77] The collection contained sixty-one artefacts, including a number of tjurunga, spearthrowers, boomerangs, articles of clothing and ornaments. Each item was given its Aranda name and the tjurunga were identified with particular named caches where they had been kept by their Aboriginal custodians. Two items especially revealed the extent to which Liebler was sensitive as an ethnographer to the events which punctuated the daily life of Aboriginal people at Hermannsburg. The first was a broken spear, an item unlikely to have been collected by other frontier collectors, but with particular historical resonance. Liebler described it as

> [b]roken half of a spear with barbed wooden point attached, latter end of shaft missing. It was broken by a missionary in order to stop a fight. Arunta native name 'Tjatta', made of 'Thima' bush. The barb ('lunga') is fastened on with kangaroo sinews.[78]

The second was a hooked boomerang, 'Ilbagatagata', one of the very few frontier objects to arrive at the South Australian Museum accompanied by a 'biography'. Liebler noted that '[t]his boomerang was thrown at the enemy's temple but missed its mark and cracked when it struck one of the foot bones. It was then repaired with kangaroo sinews'.[79]

A photograph taken on the day of Liebler's departure from Hermannsburg on 24 November, 1913, shows the missionary and his wife setting off with their two camels, heavily loaded with boxes of ethnographic objects.[80] He clearly regarded his collection as a meal ticket for his family, but also, given its thorough documentation, as an investment in a future career as a missionary-ethnographer. A graduate of

Neuendettelsau Seminary like Strehlow and Reuther, Liebler considered that he could make a similar contribution to Australian ethnography. On his return to Germany he undertook further research on the Stuttgart collection, amounting to almost 700 objects, and published a catalogue during 1921.[81] Schlatter has documented Liebler's various ill-starred attempts to return to Australia as a missionary and ethnographer.[82]

Despite this, and perhaps because Liebler had only a limited grasp of English and was being recalled to Germany by the mission authorities, he was offered only fifty pounds for his collection. Writing in protest to Edward Stirling, Liebler gave some insight into the background of his collection of 'Aranda and Loritja specimens':

> I want seventy five pounds for it. In the centre of Australia it is only a few that have the confidence of wild natives. We speak also native dialects with those of whom & by we got the collection.[83]

Noting that Aborigines were bringing him objects for sale, Liebler's letter suggests that Aboriginal artefacts had become a significant part of the Hermannsburg mission economy in the pre-war period. This is confirmed absolutely by a letter written on 24 July, 1914 by Reverend Ludwig Kaibel, Chairman of the Mission Board, to Superintendent Martin Deinzer of the Neuendettelsau Seminary in Germany. Kaibel was writing in relation to Liebler's request for reimbursement of his fares back to Germany from Australia. The translation of this letter shows the extent to which Liebler's enthusiasm for collecting had taken him:

> The Board is very put out that he used a great part of his time in Hermannsburg carrying on a large-scale trade in aboriginal weapons, ceremonial decorations etc. with German museums, about which we knew nothing. As a consequence we have resolved to ban this trade once and for all. It is a morally questionable trade, for these things are manufactured by the aborigines in order to be sold. Liebler himself bought up hair from the hairdressers in Adelaide and before setting off, sent it to the Station for the aborigines to process and send back to him as ethnological artefacts. That's alright for a commercial agent, but not for our missionary.[84]

The lengths to which Strehlow and Liebler went in documenting their collections, to the extent of noting ancestors and sites associated with particular sacred objects, were unprecedented in Australian ethnography. This level of detail was a direct response to the demand for sophisticated ethnographic documentation by German museums, articulated particularly by von Leonhardi at the Frankfurt Museum. In the case of Strehlow, Liebler and Reuther, this documentation was transcribed into the Anthropology Registers of the South Australian Museum and set a new standard for describing Aboriginal sacred objects, unmatched until Norman Tindale's records of the 1930s.

It is worth noting that the mission collections from Central Australia contained very few objects acknowledged to be modified in response to European contact. The Killalpaninna toas were steadfastly interpreted as traditional objects with a documented function. These collections were explicitly representative of traditional culture in Central Australia; they lacked such objects as the 'piece of iron mounted native fashion' included in his collection by Paul Foelsche, or the metal-tipped spears which formed part of the Kaparlgoo collections. Transitional objects which hinted at the possibility of religious

syncretism did not find a place in missionary collections until the direct promotion of arts and craft industries on missions, which did not begin in earnest until after the Second World War.

Endnotes - Chapter Eight

1. Pastor Oskar Liebler to E.C. Stirling, 19 February, 1914. AA298, Acc.184, no.84f, AASAM.

2. Jones 1993a.

3. The Lutheran historian, Hebart, used the phrase 'mission-minded', quoted in Anderson (1984) ms.: 189.

4. Curator's Report, August 1864. GRG 19/168, SRO.

5. See Jones file. For details on Farr's career see ADB 4: 155.

6. See Jones file on Bussell.

7. Zietz report to Museum Committee, 1 May 1891, no.9a. AA298, Acc.159, AASAM.

8. The hair-string is registered as A1933, South Australian Museum. See Kempe 1880; 1883; 1891.

9. See Khan 1993.

10. See Jones file on G.F. Schwarz.

11. See Jones files on Roth, Schwarz, Hey.

12. Stirling to Hey, 13 August 1902. AA298, Acc.184, nos.109, 109a,b, AASAM. Hey's mission work is discussed by Loos (1988).

13. Some of Hey's Hamburg collection was acquired by the University Anthropological Institute in Zurich during 1919 (See Cooper 1989: 35, 39, 150)

14. Cato 1976; ADB 5: 226.

15. See Jones file on Nickel and ADB 11: 29.

16. Examples of baskets made in this style can be found in museum collections from localities such as Oenpelli, Maningrida and Goulburn Island itself. In a letter to the author Nancy Cato, the retired Oenpelli schoolteacher, Mrs. E. Harris described how she had pioneered the Oenpelli mat and basketry industry in 1933, after seeing a basket produced at Goulburn Island as a result of Matthews' tuition: 'Miss Matthews introduced the button hole stitch' (E. Harris to N. Cato, 10 June, 1993, copy supplied by N. Cato, 1994). See also Jones files on Norman and Matthews for Gretta Matthews' collection records.

17. A copy of the exhibit list is in the Matthews specimen documentation file, AASAM. The list also included paintings collected by H. Read and by Norman Tindale (from Groote Eylandt).

18. Groger-Wurm 1973: 4; Ryan 1990: 9-10.

19. See Jones file on H.A. Norman, G. Matthews. Matthews left Goulburn Island in 1933 after contracting leprosy.

20. See H.L. Perriman collection, AA248, AASAM. Perriman later donated his remaining collections to the National Museum of Victoria.

21. Perriman 1972: 44.

22. Love 1915.

23. Love 1912 ms.

24. Love 1917. For his other anthropological publications, see Greenway (1963).

25. Cooper 1989: 161.

26. See earlier newspaper references quoted in Chapter Three. An overview of the 'rush matting industry' at Point MacLeay may be found in the *Observer*, 13 March, 1909, p.18.

27. Sutton (ed.) 1988: 188.

28. See Jones 1988.

29. Berndt & Berndt 1951: 56.

30. See Cole 1988: 180; Swan & Lumsdon 1902-1903: 101-102. For an account of the mission's eccentric beginnings under the direction of Lennox, see the *Observer*, 22 December, 1900, p.16. Hodgson (1995) provides the fullest account of the mission's background and brief history.

31. See Cole 1985: 39-40; Swan & Lumsdon 1902-1903: 102-103.

32. *Observer*, 1 November, 1902, p.32.

33. Hodgson 1995: 61.

34. AA298, Acc.184, nos.79e, 106, AASAM. It appears that Maurice supplemented his 1902 donation with a further donation of Alligator River material during the following year. This second collection of 119 objects may also have derived from Karpalgoo. See 'Ethnological Specimens from the Alligator River, N.T., presented by R.T. Maurice Esq', AA298, Acc.184, no.79e, AASAM.

35. The Symon collection of sixty-two Kaparlgoo objects was later acquired by the Flinders Ranges pastoralist and ornithologist, J.W. Lindo, and is now in the National Museum of Australia collection (pers. comm. D. Kaus.).

36. The list is signed with the initials 'A.H.L.', (A.H. Lennox), one of the Kaparlgoo missionaries. See 'Catalogue of Native Curios of Kaparlgoo Mission', AA298, Acc.184, no.73, AASAM.

37. 'Price List of Alligator River Specimens', AA298, Acc.184, no.106, AASAM.

38. AA298, Acc.184, no.73, AASAM.

39. 'Catalogue of Native Curios of Kaparlgoo Mission', AA298, Acc.184, no.73, AASAM.

40. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.136, January 1903. SRSAM. Ifould became the principal librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales during 1912. ADB 9: 426-27.

41. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.137, 19 April, 1903, SRSAM.

42. See Jones files on E. Angas Johnson, J. Howard Johnson, R. Lindsay Johnson and C. Glover. Museum registration information for the Glover collection does not reveal the Angas Johnson connection; this is made clear in a letter from George Aiston to W.H. Gill, 16 June, 1924, MLS.

43. See Jones files on S.J. Way and Way Bequest.

44. The typed copy of the original Kaparlgoo list in the possession of Mrs Rogers exactly matches Maurice's 'Collection E' list. N.B. Tindale's pencilled annotation of March 1958 reads 'Some of the more perishable ones had disappeared. Mr A. McDiarmid was the original collector'. Tindale did not mean by this that McDiarmid was the field collector. See AA298, Acc.184, no.85d, AASAM; Tindale to Director, South Australian Museum, 26 February, 1958, Correspondence Files, AASAM.

45. Rennie to McDiarmid, 26 September, 1913. AA298, Acc.184, no.83, AASAM.

46. Wilson to Rennie, 20 August, 1913. AA298, Acc.184, no.83a, AASAM.

47. Tindale to Museum Board, 2 February, 1935, specimen documentation file, H.U. Shepherdson, AASAM.

48. Anthropology Register, entry for A16299, SAM.

49. Bark paintings, depicting honeycomb and a kangaroo, are registered as 16804-5. The two metal implements are registered as A22223-4, SAM.

50. See Jones files on Silson, Shepherdson.

51. Turner 1950: 30.

52. Lock herself donated stone tools from Ooldea in 1935. See Jones files on Johansen and Lock. Lock's mission work is discussed in Turner 1950; see also Koch (ed.) 1993: 102-105.

53. Turner 1950: 43.

54. *Ibid*: 152. This object does not form part of Green's collection in the South Australian Museum. That includes spearthrowers and fire-making apparatus, as well as a number of sacred objects. See Jones file on Green.

55. Phrase quoted by Mulvaney 1993: 105.

56. Scherer, quoted in Jones & Sutton 1986: 49.

57. Jones & Sutton 1986: 53.

58. Quoted in *ibid*: 57.

59. Bunzendahl 1938; Eylmann 1908.

60. C. Nobbs, pers. comm.

61. Jones 1985 ms; Cooper 1989: 167, 173. Hillier also sold a collection to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago in 1909. and a collection of Hermannsburg artefacts to the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh in 1911 (Cooper 1989: 187; 261; 232).

62. Yaschenko, quoted in Jones & Sutton 1986: 51. Yaschenko's collection was later acquired by the Mikluho-Maklay Institute of Ethnography in the Peter the Great Museum, St Petersburg. The collection contains eighty-one objects today, some of which were originally collected by Hillier, Reuther and E.C. Stirling (Cooper 1989: 306).

63. Hillier did sell natural history specimens to the South Australian Museum in 1900, 1905 to 1909, as well as a few ethnographic items. See for example, Hillier to Stirling, 12 December, 1906; 6 April, 1907, 1 July, 1907; 9 March, 1908; 3 April, 1909; 29 May, 1909, GRG 19/4, SRO.

64. The collection was subsequently acquired by the Field Museum in Chicago. See Cooper 1989: 261; Force & Force 1971.

65. Purchasing Schedule 12/1910, 2 May 1910, AMA.

66. Cooper 1989: 187; 232.

67. Strehlow did not employ tobacco as an item of barter; it was not supplied to the mission as rations.

68. List A, Carl Strehlow collection lists, AA315, AASAM.

69. I am grateful to Carl Strehlow's biographer, his grandson John, for this information gleaned from an examination of records belonging to von Leonhardi and to Carl Strehlow. Much work remains to be done, in matching Carl Strehlow's original lists with surviving collections preserved in German and Swiss museums. See Strehlow, J. 1995.

70. These figures are drawn from seven of Strehlow's collection lists prepared between 1906 and 1919, totalling more than 1,000 objects. AA315, AASAM.

71. Strehlow's second list contains computations according to both rates, but he seems to have used the second, higher rate in this and later transactions. List B, Carl Strehlow collection lists, AA315, AASAM.

72. Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 261.

73. See H. Muecke & Co. to Stirling, 11 February, 1914. AA298, Acc.184, no.84h, AASAM. Details of this third collection are not contained in the letter.

74. Strehlow to Stirling, 23 April, 1914. GRG 19/5/15823, SRO.

75. See Tindale, (1936-1937) ms. See also Cooper 1989: 39, 42, 139.

76. Cooper 1989: 2,52,56,60,139.

77. Scarfe to Adams, 19 January, 1912. GRG 19/5/9991, SRO. Scarfe was a director of the Adelaide retailer, Harris, Scarfe & Co. He had spent two years as a station-hand working for his uncle on Keeroongooloo Station, south-west Queensland. See Burgess 1907 vol.2: 581.

78. The object is registered as A530. 'List of Ethnological Specimens from Hermannsburg, C.A., presented by F. Scarfe, Esq.'. 'Special Lists 1906-17' pp.134c, AASAM.

79. The object is registered as A545, *ibid.*

80. See Jones & Sutton 1986, fig. 70.

81. Liebler 1921.

82. Schlatter 1985.

83. Liebler to Stirling, 19 February, 1914. AA298, Acc.184, no.84f, AASAM. Further context relating to Liebler's collection of sacred objects is given in Chapter Ten.

84. Kaibel to Deinzer, 24 July, 1914. Translation from copy of original, provided by John Strehlow, 14 August, 1995, C. Strehlow Papers, AA315, AASAM

CHAPTER NINE

COLLECTORS OF THE METROPOLIS - DEALERS, PRIVATE COLLECTORS and INSTITUTES

To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as exterior and foreign, on the other it must be marked as arising directly out of the immediate experience of its possessor[1].

Personally I value a thing more for the effort it cost me to get than for its intrinsic value ....[2]

The preceding chapters have dealt with those collectors for whom ethnographic objects were derived directly from their context of origin, the frontier. Most metropolitan collectors had either dissociated themselves from that experience or else had never known it. Indeed, for many of these collectors the frontier's proximity was unnecessary or even problematic, an uncomfortable reminder of the historical process of colonialism which had loosened the objects, placing them within the collector's reach. Writing of the antiquarian collector, analagous to the ethnographic collector in the sense that objects are equally regarded as displaced in time as well as in space, Stewart has observed:

> the antiquarian searches for an internal relation between past and present which is made possible by their absolute disruption ... In order to awaken the dead, the antiquarian must first manage to kill them.[3]

In Sontag's terms, colonial or post-colonial collectors have become

> engaged in a pious work of salvage. The course of modern history having already sapped the traditions and shattered the living wholes in which precious objects once found their place, the collector may now in good conscience go about excavating the choicer, more emblematic fragments.[4]

This latter observation applies particularly to the great energy invested by stone tool collectors in south-eastern Australia during the period between the two World Wars. For most of these collectors, their effort to construct a workable taxonomy of tool types, was directed at reconstructing an authentic Aboriginal past, independent of and unrelated to, the colonial present. In reconstituting ethnographic objects within collections, metropolitan collectors adopted typologies and arrangements which often defied the objects' original social context. For this they substituted more generalised characterisations of Aboriginality, evoking a primitive and warlike people with an inpenetrable and mysterious religious life.

Ironically, as Tom Griffiths has noted, two of the early pioneers in Australian prehistory, the Victorian collectors A.S. Kenyon and Charles Daley, were also prominent in documenting and promoting

Victoria's colonial and pastoral history.[5] Both men supplied ethnographic objects and stone tools to the South Australian Museum. Aside from the stone tools collected during forays from his native Bendigo, Daley's ethnographic collection was drawn from a wide range of Australian and Pacific localities and was obtained through correspondence and exchange with other collectors. In this sense, his collection mirrors those of several other metropolitan collectors active during the same period, incorporating a blend of stone tools acquired by the collector himself, supplemented by more exotic pieces from the ethnographic frontier, obtained through exchange and purchase.[6]

Dealers and private collectors redefined the objects which passed through their hands. Their primary referent was a notion of authenticity, attaching both to the objects 'as traces of authentic experience' and, by extrapolation, to collectors themselves. In authenticating the remote past of ethnographic objects, partly through the very act of collecting, the collector tended implicitly to discredit the present, described by Stewart as 'either too personal, too looming, or too alienating compared to the intimate and direct experience of contact which the souvenir has as its referent. This referent is authenticity'.[7] Stewart's point is that between the original context of objects and the model of authenticity constructed by the collector lies 'oblivion, a void marking a radical separation between past and present'.[8] In fact, that stark analysis may not be as sustainable when the original context of objects reveals a series of dialogues between Aborigines and collectors, rather than uncompromising appropriation.

Stewart's void may consist rather in a lack of knowledge about the fate of objects which have traversed the space between the collected and the collector. Previous chapters have examined that space in the region of the frontier itself. This chapter examines the histories of Aboriginal collections as they passed through other hands, often far removed from their original points of collection. In the process objects of the frontier became transformed into objects of the metropolis. The examination of that shift involves charting the physical movement of objects from the remote outback to the city itself, often within a short distance of their ultimate destination, in this case, the South Australian Museum. Ironically, the Museum's relation to ethnographic collections and collectors was often more direct when mediated by distance and the frontier itself, than by the complex networks and multiple agendas of metropolitan collectors.[9]

Metropolitan Dealers

Edward Stirling arrived at the Adelaide Museum at a time when Aboriginal artefacts had attained a value which made them interesting and important to those who collected them and to the public who visited the museum to see them. By the 1880s this commodity status manifested itself at almost every stage

in the 'life' of ethnographic objects. For the Aboriginal people who made and used them, artefacts acquired a new exchange value which enhanced their importance on the colonial frontier. Once acquired by European collectors and museums, the presentation of Aboriginal objects as specimens tended to reinforce, rather than diminish, their new cultural value. Aboriginal artefacts within Australian and overseas museums became recognised as benchmarks of cultural progress by which the level of civilisation of other societies could be measured. This characteristic was most obvious in international Exhibitions devoted to the achievements produced through industrialisation of the manufacturing process. From the 1870s to the 1890s a proliferation of journal articles and books on the 'arts and manufactures' of indigenous peoples reinforced this particular status.

Australian Aboriginal artefacts assumed greater international prominence as the social Darwinism of Spencer, Morgan and Sollas was expressed through International Exhibitions and museum displays. Pitt Rivers, Haddon and Tylor had each recognised that Aboriginal artefacts occupied a key role in the developing pattern of variability which provided the basis for notions of cultural evolution. International Exhibitions such as the Philadelphia Centenary Exhibition of 1876 and the Paris Exhibition of 1878 played their part in creating a growing market for ethnographic objects from all countries. By the late 1880s this international market was well represented by dealers in ethnographica who catered for private collectors as well as museums.

In Oxford and London during the 1890s and 1900s, the firms of J. Keggie, W.D. Webster and W.O. Oldman produced detailed illustrated catalogues of their ethnographic stock, which ranged from African masks to Australian boomerangs. Keggie's catalogues suggested the strength of prevailing social theory regarding artefacts and the progress of native peoples, with such titles as *Evolution of Industry, Ethnography, Folklore, Science etc. A Catalogue of Specimens etc for Museums and Collectors.*[10] These British firms, and others such as Gerrard's or Damon & Co. (specialising in natural history, casts of fossil skulls and prehistoric implements), attracted custom from museums across the world. Edward Stirling made a point of visiting the showrooms of Damon, Oldman and Webster during his periodic visits to England and was given a special allocation for these purchases by the Museum Committee. His regular custom encouraged Webster to offer the South Australian Museum the opportunity to buy selected objects removed by British officers during the sacking of Benin City in 1897. Webster had purchased hundreds of the Benin objects at the Foreign Office auction which followed the British punitive expedition.[11]

From the 1890s until the First World War the international trade in indigenous artefacts was controlled by Webster and a handful of other firms, mostly English and German. These firms sold artefacts from Asia, Africa, North and South America, the Pacific Islands and Australia. Betweeen them, Webster and Oldman sold Aboriginal artefacts to museums in Vienna, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leiden, London, Cambridge, Oxford, Chicago, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. Within Australasia itself, the two firms sold to museums in Wellington, Dunedin, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Their catalogues

show that Australian artefacts held a value comparable to the mid-range of African and Pacific artefacts.[12] The German firms of J. Umlauff and A. Dietrich sold to a similar range of museums in Europe, with less penetration of the American and Australasian markets.

Private dealers were also internationally prominent during the period. These individuals often began their careers as primary collectors, as in the case of the German dealer E. Clement, or as secondary collectors, as in the case of the Italian E. Giglioli. Clement made several collecting trips to Western Australia during the 1890s and after. This provided him with sufficient numbers of artefacts to make sales and exchanges with more than twenty different museums across Europe, North America and Australasia from the 1890s to the 1920s. He even sold 120 Western Australian artefacts to the Imperial Moscow Society for Natural Scientists.[13] Clement published his collection as a 'descriptive catalogue', together with 'Ethnographical notes on the Western Australian Aborigines' in Leiden during 1903.[14]

Giglioli had visited Australia during the 1870s. He specialised in the artefacts and language of the Diyari people of eastern Lake Eyre, publishing several papers in Florence and Rome on the subject. He corresponded with Edward Stirling during the 1890s and 1900s, finally publishing his Australian 'Collezione Etnografica' in 1911.[15] Giglioli was not strictly a dealer, as he obtained the bulk of his collections while employed by museums in Florence and Rome, but he did exchange items from these collections with other museums, in Paris and Leiden for example.

The Australian dealer Harry Stockdale epitomised the primary collector whose hobby became his passion, and then his business. A friend of the poet Adam Lindsay Gordon, his interest in Aboriginal artefacts and customs was aroused during the 1860s when he lived on his uncle's sheep station at Lake Hawdon in the south-east of South Australia. During 1885 he led an exploration expedition to the Kimberley and added greatly to his collection. Subsequent travels through northern Australia during the 1890s yielded enough artefacts to form a large private museum, supplemented by other Australian and south Pacific material. By 1901 he had become a dealer, based at Botany near Sydney. During June 1903 the sale of a large part of his ethnographic collection was cancelled after a fire destroyed his cottage 'and the whole of the specimens'.[16] Stockdale replenished his collection through expeditions to Arnhem Land and Melville Island, and continued to deal in ethnographica with the Australian Museum until at least 1907.[17]

Like Clement and Giglioli, Stockdale prepared catalogues of his collection, with carefully drawn sketches in the style of scientific illustrations.[18] His analysis and synthesis of material culture traits had analogues in the research of the Victorian 'magistrate with a museum', R.E. Johns, a friend and collaborator with the South Australian ethnographer, Thomas Worsnop (discussed below)[19]. During 1907 Stockdale published papers on the origin and antiquity of the boomerang, Melville Island graveposts, and weapons and implements. His interest in collecting and dealing waned after this time and during 1910 his daughter Annie offered his collection of Aboriginal and Pacific artefacts for sale to Stirling, sending a

catalogue. Stirling declined, and following Stockdale's death in 1919 the remaining collection was offered for sale once more, again unsuccessfully. The bulk of it was evenutally purchased by the Australian Museum in Sydney.[20]

Stockdale's business, apparently specialising entirely in ethnographic objects, was a rarity within Australia. Most firms dealt in natural history specimens as well and some extended their interest in this field to include taxidermy, tanning and even furrier work. The Melbourne natural history firm of Joseph Flatow was patronised by Amandus Zietz as Assistant Director of the South Australan Museum during the 1880s; it is likely that Flatow represented one more link in the extensive chain of German naturalists operating throughout south-eastern Australia. Zietz's 1889 purchase from Flatow included the following objects:

> 2 waddies (8/); 1 native belt (6/); 2 boomerangs (10/); 3 native bags (6/); 1 native dress (10/); 4 specimens native yarn (4/); 4 native necklaces (4/); 5 native bracelets (5/); 1 teeth necklace 4/); 1 seed ornament (5/); 1 spear (3/); 4 waddies from the Goulburn (24/).[21]

The Adelaide furrier and dealer in natural history specimens, Henry Lawrence, also dealt in Pacific and Australian ethnographica. Zietz and Stirling made several purchases, mainly comprising Pacific artefacts, from 1886 through to 1899. Most of the Australian purchases were described simply as 'native weapons'; geographic provenance was more likely to be attached to Pacific acquisitions.[22] Stirling also dealt with the Tasmanian curio dealer W.L. Williamson, based at Brown's River near Hobart. As a measure of the value attached to Tasmanian objects of any description at the turn of the century, Stirling sent Williamson the following artefacts in exchange for seventeen stone tools: four boomerangs, one sword-club, one club, a shield, four spears, two kurdaitcha shoes, a bean necklace, two string belts, a head ornament, two stone knives and one sheath.[23]

The most prominent Australian ethnographic dealership was the Sydney business of Tost and Rohu, established in 1870 and touted as 'The Only Genuine Curiosity Shop in Sydney'. Madame Jane Tost, the co-founder of the firm with her daughter Ada Rohu, was sister to Henry Ward, taxidermist to Audubon and Gould. As well as a range of taxidermy and related services, and 'live snakes!!' fed every Saturday evening, the firm undertook to make up 'hall trophies' for three pounds. Upstairs at 60 William Street, their private museum was confidently described as possessing 'the finest collection of Curios in the Colony ... Admission - Sixpence; to customers, Free'.[24] The firm's management wrote to the South Australian Museum in 1888, offering its services:

> If your Museum are in want of any Australian, New Guinea etc, native weapons, curios etc, we will be glad to make you up a collection from our stock, which we can safely say is the largest one in the Colony, that in our local Museum only excepted. We may state that a few months ago we made up a selection of Curios for a Museum in Germany amounting to 60 pounds.[25]

The firm's ethnographic collections were mainly from the Pacific Islands but Stirling and Zietz were still able to purchase Aboriginal objects of particular interest over a twenty year period from 1889 to 1909.

These included the following acquisition made in 1907, as described by Tost & Rohu:

> 1 old carved Healimon [shield], N.S.W. (2-10-0); 1 old Sword, Cairns, Qld (15-0); 1 old carved womerah, N.S.W. (1-0-0); 1 old Yachie club, N.S.W. (1-10-0) ... 2 Aboriginal glass spears, Broome, W.A. @ 17-6; ... 1 spear with stingray spines (1-0-0) ... 1 glass head spear (0-15-0); Set of long Fire sticks ornamented with jequirity seeds (0-12-6).[26]

Tost and Rohu's business was purchased in 1923 by the Sydney book-seller and ethnographic dealer, James Tyrrell, whose interest in ethnographica had dated from the immediate pre-war period. He had operated his business from Gawler Place in Adelaide then, before relocating it in Sydney. Pacific and Aboriginal objects had competed with European art and books in his Adelaide premises. He sold Pacific ethnographic material to the South Australian Museum during 1920. No direct acquisitions by the South Australian Museum from the store are recorded, although a south-west Queensland pituri bag purchased there by J.P. Tonkin was acquired from that collector in 1922.[27]

By 1929 Tyrrell's had accumulated 'many thousands of rare specimens collected during the last 60 years'. During the late 1920s the Australian Museum in Sydney made a selection of 148 of these, comprising mainly Pacific and Australian objects, but could not afford the purchase price. During 1929 Tyrrell's offered that selection to the Commonwealth Government for 281 pounds, but with the Great Depression looming this was an inauspicious time. James Tyrrell nevertheless made a strong pitch to the Minister for Home Affairs, incorporating references which were to become standard in ethnographic sale parlance during the twentieth century, such as the age, rarity and authenticity of the collection and the possibility of it leaving the country. Tyrrell wrote:

> it affords a splendid chance to secure an authentic lot as the nucleus for the Canberra Museum at a small cost ... we do not wish to offer them to American and other overseas collectors, but would prefer that they remain in the Commonwealth.[28]

Tyrell's eclecticism seemed to characterise other Adelaide ethnographic dealers, such as the bookseller and antiquarian Sydney Plint, the 'books, curios, and pictures' dealer F.S. Caterer, the bric-a-brac and antique dealer A.E. Marval or the furrier and naturalist Henry Lawrence. This apparently disparate combination of interests reflected the diverse content of private collectors' homes; animal trophies, antiques, books, maps, prints and ethnographic objects combined to suggest images of sophisticated urbanity and scholarship.

A number of smaller ethnographic dealers operated in Adelaide between the 1890s and the 1930s. Stirling and Zietz made several purchases, including Aboriginal weapons, a Canadian canoe and New Guinea spears, from the commercial agent W.H. Selway during the 1890s.[29] The department store John Martins & Co. operated a small curio section during the 1920s and some of this stock was purchased by the Adelaide dealer Miss Vera Wood. The South Australian Museum subsequently bought a total of 137 Australian, Pacific, Asian and European artefacts from her during the 1930s and 1940s. Miss Wood's stock was also derived from notable Adelaide collectors such as Simpson Newland, R.H. Pulleine, the

former police-trooper and Protector of Aborigines W.G. South, the Northern Territory's Medical Officer Cecil Strangman, and the author and inventor A.W. Dobbie.[30]

Most of the acquisitions from these dealers were isolated events, such as the 1895 purchase from Sydney Plint's 'Ye Olde Book Shoppe' in Pirie Street, Adelaide, of a collection of twenty-eight 'Australian native weapons and other articles'.[31] The long-term relationship forged by Zietz and Stirling with the dealer A.E. Marval stands as a contrast; more than thirty separate acquisitions of Aboriginal artefacts were made during the course of twenty-five years' trading from 1886 until 1910. Marval usually offered Stirling small lots, often less than a dozen weapons or utensils, with prices ranging from two to three pounds during the 1880s and 1890s to double that figure after the turn of the century.[32] Marval also handled large ethnographic sales; a major collection of Fijian objects was purchased from him by the collector James Angas Johnson and donated to the Museum in 1902. Marval's apprentice George Holman took over his master's business during the 1920s, but by then the link with the South Australian Museum had been broken.[33]

As suggested, few of these dealers retained more than cursory details of previous ownership or provenance of the objects passing through their hands. Exceptions can be noted. Miss Vera Wood's documentation of earlier collectors has been mentioned. Marval recorded the fact that a few of his Central Australian objects were obtained from the Barrow Creek telegraph operator J. McKay (who also supplied private collectors in Adelaide as well as the Museum directly). Marval also purchased the Victor Marra Newland collection of African ethnography in 1907 and sold this to the South Australian Museum. Another exception was a bundle of emu feathers wrapped with hair string 'from the other side of Arltunga fr[om] Mt Benstead Mine Claim, N.T.', probably obtained by the dealer F.S. Caterer from a prospector returning to Adelaide.[34]

Acquisition records suggest that the status of ethnographic objects among dealers was determined by their conformity to known 'types' rather than by the context of their collection. Notwithstanding this, ethnographic dealers played an integral part in forming and reshaping the histories of objects within a metropolitan context. They operated as clearing houses for frontier collectors returning to Adelaide with their collections, reinforced standards of authenticity set by museum professionals through exhibition and publication, and were largely responsible for establishing measures of commercial value for particular categories of objects. In their dealings with the South Australian Museum, and to a large degree with private collectors, these market values were not separable from ethnographic or scientific value. Standards of rarity, aesthetic form, levels of conformity to prevailing stereotypes about Aborigines, all combined to render the ethnographic market as a mirror of the scientific collecting priorities established by Stirling and Zietz, and later by Waite, Hale and Tindale. The dealers in Aboriginal artefacts provide one facet of this mirror; another is provided by the metropolitan collectors and their networks.

Metropolitan Collectors

To operate successfully within Australia, a private market in ethnographic objects required international validation and a connection with those networks of exchange which had already elevated African and Oriental antiquities to desirable status. International Exhibitions, particularly those mounted during the 1870s and 1880s, played a crucial role in this respect. Subsequent to these events, major ethnographic museums such as the Trocadero Museum, the American Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum used artefacts to construct models of 'primitive cultures' organised according to evolutionary principles. With their status thus defined, a vigorous international market in ethnographic objects was promoted, both by museums through exchanges and purchase, and by dealers and private collectors. The sales catalogues of such English firms as Webster, Oldman, Damon and Keggies established benchmark values for these transactions.

Wealthier and more committed private collectors subscribed to these catalogues and purchased items from them. These collectors further developed their priorities for selection through a small number of specialist publications devoted to ethnographic objects. Knight's 1880 publication on the 'savage weapons' at the Philadelphic Exhibition was an early example. Haddon's 1895 *Evolution in Art as Illustrated by the Life Histories of Designs* also fuelled the interest of collectors. The leading text for collectors of Pacific artefacts during the 1890s was the three-part, lavishly illustrated publication by Edge-Partington and Heape, the *Album of the Weapons, Ornaments, Articles of Dress, etc., of the Natives of the Pacific Islands*.[35] This volume contained the equivalent of 'type specimens' of Australian Aboriginal and Pacific Island material culture, albeit with a heavy concentration on weaponry. The Edge-Partington album not only delineated a series of collectable and desirable objects, it represented an authoritative statement about their authenticity. Through the album's text and illustration, collectable ethnographic objects were defined as truly old and original, uncontaminated by contact with European styles or materials. Objects such as adzes hafted with iron blades might be acquired by museums for the light which they cast upon processes of acculturation but had no place in the Edge-Partington album.

Thomas Worsnop's 1897 publication of *The Prehistoric Arts, Manufactures, Works, Weapons, etc. of the Aborigines of Australia* provided a less exclusive set of criteria for collectors. Worsnop prepared the book while Town Clerk of the City of Adelaide. His earlier career as a teamster in the north of South Australia had given him a grounding in the subject, but its content was drawn largely from secondary sources. These included frontier collectors such as the surveyor H.Y.L. Brown, the police-trooper Samuel Gason and the explorer Ernest Giles, authoritative ethnographers associated with the very first years of South Australian ethnography such as Sir George Grey and William Cawthorne (both still living in the 1890s), and more contemporary experts such as the noted Victorian collector R.E. Johns, Alfred

Howitt and the South Australian Museum's Amandus Zietz. These specialists assisted Worsnop in his description of the 'decorative arts' of the Australian Aborigines. His illustrated book examined rock art in some detail, but concentrated on the 'decorative arts' as they were manifested in artefacts, particularly weapons. He also discussed material incorporating European materials or designs - objects usually ignored by private collectors such as metal adzes and knives, decorated boomerangs or drawings on bark and paper.

Worsnop was a collector in his own right. During 1891 he donated artefacts and copies of rock art to the South Australian Museum. The Australian Museum in Sydney received several artefacts from Worsnop during 1895. Additional objects and manuscripts were bequeathed to the South Australian Museum on his death in January 1898. Ten objects from his collection were purchased in that year, from the dealer A.E. Marval and the private collector D.W. Melvin.[36] Twenty years later, fifteen more Worsnop objects were received through a donation from Miss E. Dyke, comprising spears, boomerangs, clubs, a spearthrower and a shield.[37]

Worsnop's justification for his detailed analysis of Aboriginal culture provides an insight into a factor motivating many city-based collectors during the late-nineteenth century - the impulse to explore another dimension of a new land:

> In any country, indeed, whether in civilised or in the most barbarous nations, wherever arms of offence or defence are to be found, there we may also look for the decorative arts, in a greater or lesser degree, for the adornment of the weapons of war or the chase ... this leading characteristic exists among all the tribes of our aborigines. Their shields, waddies, boomerangs, and throwing sticks are enriched by color or carving of a certain kind and value. Added to this there are in various parts of Australia, widely separated by land or sea, works of sculpture and art, decorative works of such peculiar cunning and handicraft, that perhaps few have had the opportunity of seeing.[38]

Worsnop's was the last major Australian publication aimed at the private collector. Its natural successors were those inventories and catalogues generated by museum professionals themselves, representing the first fruits of their attention towards the 'scientific arrangement' of ethnographic collections. In Britain, where the private hobby of ethnographic collecting rested on a deeper historical base, amateur publications continued to appear. Lieutenant Montague's *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races* ('fully illustrated by the author from specimens mostly in his collection'), was an example. Published in 1921, it contained a large chapter on Australian weapons. Montague observed that his book was published to meet a growing demand:

> Collecting such curiosities upon scientific lines is now being taken up to an increasing extent, and will undoubtedly become quite a fashionable hobby before long, causing the prices, already fairly high, to rise still further.The bargains of the last century are now rarely obtainable, though, unless one goes in for rarities such as ancient Maori productions, it is by no means too late to begin collecting ... No doubt ethnographical specimens will be faked as the demand for them increases, but at present they are imitated to a less extent than other things collected.[39]

The possession of ethnographic artefacts allowed private collectors to capture the flavour of a land and its

indigenous culture without having to experience the rigours of the frontier. These objects served as souvenirs for city-based collectors who had little opportunity or desire to experience the bush at first hand. But while the possession of artefacts may have allowed some collectors 'to authenticate a past or otherwise remote experience and, at the same time, to discredit the present', some other collectors, notably those making purchases from missions such as the Kaparlgoo Mission in Arnhem Land, may have perceived a role in moulding an alternative present for Aborigines.[40] Whatever the case, the trophy displays of city collectors helped to define perceptions of an authentic Aboriginal Australia, particularly after the 1880s. For metropolitan Australia the emerging Aboriginal 'problem', marked by the same rhetoric applied to the 'dangerous classes' and fringe populations of Europe and North America - loomed larger against that background.

Relationships between city-based collectors and the South Australian Museum varied widely. Several collectors had no contact at all with the Museum during their lifetimes. Others were in constant contact and sometimes exchanged pieces with Zietz, Stirling and later Tindale. During 1885 for example, Joseph Jena, the proprietor of the Earl of Zetland Hotel, offered an Aboriginal skull in exchange for spears, but the offer was declined, as 'spears are too valuable'.[41] Doctor Humphrey Marten, a colleague of Edward Stirling, exchanged ethnographic material which he had received from the Killalpaninna schoolteacher, Harry Hillier, in return for Aboriginal artefacts from across the country.[42] Exchanges of this kind, while rare, made it plain that the South Australian Museum did not operate in opposition to private collectors. As the following section illustrates, the vigour of these amateur ethnographers and naturalists belied the sentiment expressed at the time of the Museum's foundation, that 'many of our own colonists, who are known to possess miniature museums, will be anxious to incorporate them with the public collection'.[43]

During the period from the formation of the South Australian Museum until the Second World War, metropolitan collectors included those who had obtained artefacts directly from Aborigines on the frontier, as well as secondary collectors who may have inherited, purchased or bartered their objects. Even until the Second World War a characteristic of many important metropolitan collections was that at least a portion of them had been obtained directly from Aboriginal people, supplemented by additional material acquired through exchange or purchase. It was only after the 1920s that metropolitan collectors whose collections had been acquired entirely through secondary transactions emerged as a recognisable category. The shift was a gradual one, and there were several collections which combined both primary and secondary collecting.

Collections obtained on the frontiers of settlement held particular status for individuals and their families, representing a pioneering phase embedded in family tradition. Collections of this type were often originally displayed as trophies in hallways, studies or drawing rooms, sometimes remaining intact on the death of the collector for a generation or so, together with house and estate. Until the 1960s the South

Australian Museum was still receiving such collections, which had formed an integral part of Adelaide households for several generations, through widows or children left with the responsibility of finalising estates or rationalising possessions. Mrs P.R. Powell's 1959 donation of eleven objects from Central and Northern Australia is an example. These were collected in 1902 by her father, Frederick Price. With the collection came the single piece of information relating to the collection - that her father had seen one of the items in use, a pointing bone.[44] A collection from Peake Station near Oodnadatta, comprising a fighting pick, kangaroo teeth pendant, four headbands, a pearl shell pendant and a stone knife, was made during the 1890s by B.M. Mair and donated to the Museum in 1957 by his son, Angus Mair. A collection of spearthrowers and spears obtained by Paul Foelsche in Darwin during the 1880s was donated by his two grand-daughters some eighty years later. Perhaps the example of objects retained for the longest period within a family is provided by the donation of four Port Lincoln spears by R. Sinclair in 1974. These had been 'presented' to Sinclair's great-grandfather, James Sinclair by 'Port Lincoln tribesmen' in 1849, 125 years earlier.[45]

The city-based 'gentleman collector' emerges as a distinct type from the hundreds of individual examples represented in the South Australian Museum. As discussed below, many of these gentleman collectors were primarily interested in natural history as a pastime. Ethnographic collecting, and sometimes, publishing, represented a diverting sideline. Others, such as the businessman Lewis Napier Birks, whose collection of more than 250 Aboriginal, Pacific, African and North American artefacts was acquired in 1929 after his death, seemed dedicated to reconstructing their homes as museums of ethnography or antiquity. South Australia's Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Way, provides another example, with a collection spanning oriental antiquities and ethnographic objects, as well as a library of 14,000 volumes and the silverware and china more characteristic of Adelaide gentry.[46]

Women comprised at least 140 of the 750 individuals identified as donors or vendors of Australian ethnographic material collected before 1940. This figure is drawn from the prefix 'Mrs' or 'Miss' noted in the Anthropology Registers of the South Australian Museum; it is likely to be conservative. The proportion of significant collections among these, judged by content or quantity, is also about one-fifth: of 265 significant collections made before 1940, fifty were sold or donated by women. About two thirds of these women were donating collections made by their husbands, fathers or grandfathers. Examples include collections acquired from Miss A.E. Field and Miss M.E.A. Davidson, obtained by their fathers during A.A. Davidson's exploration of the Tanami Desert during the late 1890s, as discussed. During 1948 Miss A. Baldwin donated thirty-six Central Australian artefacts and eight South African artefacts collected by her father, Colonel R. Baldwin, a former Boer War staff officer and aide-de-camp to Winston Churchill.[47] In at least one instance separate collections made by a father and son were passed to a female relative and eventually acquired by the South Australian Museum. Miss E. Williams donated such a collection in 1949: 'the 20 Darwin area specimens were collected originally by the late Mr R.H.

Quartermaine Simons about 1895; ... the specimens from the vicinity of Ceduna ... were collected about 1920 by Mr W.Q. Simons'.[48]

Several of these collections have relevance for the history of Australian anthropology. Thus a collection of spears donated by Miss M. Parkhouse in 1952 was collected by the anthropologist and linguist Thomas Anstey Parkhouse during the 1880s and was referred to in his 1896 publication on the 'Native Tribes of Port Darwin and its Neighbourhood'.[49] In 1963 Miss A. Stokes donated a small but signficant collection of artefacts gathered by her father, Archibald Meston. He had been Queensland's Protector of Aborigines during the late 1890s and was the architect of that colony's Aboriginals Protection Act of 1897. The collection included a stone knife, a spear head, a bullroarer, three pearlshell ornaments, a shell ornament, a necklace, a pointing bone, a boomerang, two dugong teeth and a seed whistle. Several items were associated with Meston's chief Aboriginal guide and helper, the Fraser Island man, Windandera.[50]

Evidence identifying women as actual collectors is much rarer. Primary collectors who were women have been mentioned; these include Marianne Kreusler, Annie Richards, Daisy Bates, Gretta Mathews and Ursula McConnel. Katherine Langloh-Parker, author of several editions of *Australian Legendary Tales* and *The Euahlayi Tribe*, lived in Adelaide during the latter part of her life, but 'the native weapons with which the walls of her hall were hung, always so ugly and so dusty', were 'offered to the New South Wales Museum after her death'.[51] Two female collectors who were based in cities but nevertheless made field collections were the artist step-sisters Una and Violet Teague. They travelled to Hermannsburg during the early 1930s and became keen supporters of the mission, helping to organise an art exhibition in Melbourne to raise funds for the Koporilya water scheme. Una Teague purchased sacred tjurunga at the mission from the missionary F.W. Albrecht at this time; these were later donated to the South Australian Museum. Her step-sister Violet's collection included a sketchbook of early drawings by Albert Namatjira.[52] Other city-based female collectors included Mrs Agnes Rennie, wife of the Professor of Chemistry at the University of Adelaide, and the enigmatic Mrs K. Wills. Her collection was acquired from her husband after her death in 1959. Tindale acknowledged his

> kind presentation of the collection of ethnological specimens made by your late wife ... 39 ethnological specimens, principally from Western Australia, and 11 others from outside Australia. We are particularly glad to have the wayang figure from Bali, the set of armour from Cairo Citadel, as used by the men of the bodyguard of Mahomed Ali, and the rifle and powder flask taken after the battle of Omdurman in 1898.[53]

While metropolitan collectors may be characterised as those who obtained their collections second or third-hand, the category also extends to those who added to these collections through their own travels. For gentleman collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, informed travel and the accumulation of curios and artefacts were socially defining acts. This had been the case since the eighteenth century elevation of the Grand Tour as 'the most expensive form of education ever devised by European society'.[54] Gentlemanly travel was an essential ingredient for several members of the South Australian

Angas and Johnson families. Descended from the 'founding father' of the colony, George Fife Angas, the different branches of the family built large collections of artefacts drawn from Australia, Asia, the Pacific and other parts of the world. Several of these artefacts may have derived from the original collecting activities of George French Angas, the artist-ethnographer.

The South Australian Museum benefited from several acts of philanthropy by this family. While George French Angas himself apparently donated only natural history specimens to the Adelaide museum, his brother John Howard Angas made at least two separate ethnographic donations. In January 1875 he donated 'a shell ornament worn by natives in the Far North', possibly obtained during J.W. Lewis's Lake Eyre expedition of 1874, and in 1889 he donated a collection of more than thirty artefacts from the Darwin area.[55] One of Adelaide's wealthiest men, John Howard Angas was known as a philanthropist with an interest in sponsoring scientific and mission activities. Aware of this, Francis Gillen suggested to Baldwin Spencer that Angas be approached as a potential sponsor for their 1901 expedition.[56]

James Angas Johnson was the son of Rosetta Angas, sister to George French and John Howard Angas. Johnson and his two sons were primary, as well as secondary collectors, with ethnographic interests extending well beyond Australia. A successful land agent and accountant, James Angas Johnson donated a large Fijian ethnographic collection in 1901. A year later, just before his death, he purchased twenty-two Aboriginal objects from the dealer A.E. Marval and donated these together with a collection of more than 1,000 mineral specimens from Broken Hill. A further collection comprising more than 200 ethnographic objects from localities in Australia and the Pacific was acquired after his death, but his most valuable gift was his bequest of 159 of his uncle's original watercolour paintings of ethnographic scenes and landscapes to the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery. The collection was split during 1912, with the landscapes remaining with the Art Gallery and the bulk of the ethnographic works passing to the Museum.[57]

Johnson's eldest son, James Howard Johnson, collected ethnographic objects through Australian, Fijian, New Zealand, New Caledonian and South African sources. He was an active ethnographer for forty years, recording a detailed vocabulary of the Narungga people while managing the family's Yorke Peninsula pastoral property during the 1890s.[58] Several of his artefacts were obtained through other collectors. One of his prized pieces, a boomerang belonging to the Aboriginal 'outlaw' Logic, was obtained from the notorious disgraced police-trooper, W.H. Willshire. Both Johnson and his son, Richard Lindsay Johnson, donated artefacts to the Museum which had originally been part of collections obtained at the Kaparlgoo Mission in Arnhem Land, discussed in the previous chapter.[59] Johnson also collected artefacts directly from Aboriginal people in southern South Australia. By the 1890s this inevitably meant that such objects would bear some European influence; a factor which devalued their worth in the eyes of most collectors of the day. Johnson bridled against the restrictive interpretation of authenticity which Edward Stirling at the Museum applied to such artefacts, suggesting that this attitude had alienated numbers of 'would-be donors'. There is no doubt that Stirling and Zietz had become more selective in their purchases

of collections during the early 1900s, often rejecting pieces from collections offered for sale. Johnson wrote in pique of Stirling's cool reception of a possum-skin cloak commissioned from one of the last Narungga women with traditional knowledge:

> Dr Stirling had a par in our "great dailies" to the effect that the one the Museum had formerly possessed was sent with an exhibit to (I think) Indian Exhibition & someone souvenired it. Rug had to be untanned, but treated as niggers did to soften it & render it pliable, sewn with sinews, & no SHOT skins amongst the others, I wrote Louisa Eggerton few days later, & she made & sent the rug to me within two months... Dr Stirling saw a hole or two in the rug & was most annoyed, he said the holes proved the skins were shot & the rug was of little or no value. I told him they were holes caused by dog teeth, Louisa had assured me there were no shot skins amongst them... conceited scientific know-all ... sets up his opinion against that of the person who has secured the exhibit ... that has caused the loss of interest in the museum by numerous would-be donors.[60]

James Angas Johnson's second son, Dr Edward Angas Johnson, was an inveterate traveller and collected from localities in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), as well as from China, Egypt, Brazil, Mexico, Siberia, England and Scotland. His collection of about 150 Australian ethnographic objects was acquired gradually from 1900 until the 1950s.[61] Johnson was a great supporter of the Aboriginal writer, inventor and activist, David Unaipon, and employed him during 1930 to collect Aboriginal skulls and stone tools from the River Murray banks near Mildura. During the following year he employed Unaipon again, this time to assist him in 'tribal research' work.[62] A large sale of Johnson's ethnographic objects was held during 1926, but he and his wife continued to collect and to donate selectively to the Museum. His second wife made further donations following his death in 1951.

Medical naturalists and collectors

With his medical background and scholarly interest in natural history and ethnographic objects, Edward Angas Johnson fitted a distinct type of city-based collector.[63] In fact, more than twenty pre-1940 metropolitan collectors of significance were medical men. Several of their collections contained material from overseas localities, indicating the relative mobility of this profession both within and outside Australia.

Edward Stirling himself serves as a leading example of a 'medical naturalist'. For centuries medical men had been associated with the description and classification of the natural world; 'it was no accident' as Thomas writes, 'that nearly all the early botanists were doctors or apothecaries, preoccupied with the plants' uses and 'virtues''.[64] While he never published on the subject, Stirling was an avid amateur botanist and actively promoted the collection of plant foods and materials used by Aborigines. Tindale shared this interest, and was particularly supported in ethno-botanical collecting by the pathologist-naturalist John B. Cleland. Cleland contributed plant foods to the collections and published on ethno-

botanical subjects during his long association with the Board for Anthropological Research and the South Australian Museum.[65]

Several Adelaide medical collectors were naturalists first and ethnographers second. The amateur ornithologist and collector Dr A.M. Morgan has been mentioned. His ornithological fieldwork made him aware of the opportunities for stone tool collecting, and he shared this enthusiasm with many of the 'surface' collectors of the 1930s and 1940s, unexamined in this study. A contemporary of Morgan was the pharmaceutical chemist and notable lepidopterist Oswald Lower. Author of many papers on lepidoptera, he described the Elder Expedition's collections of this genera. Edgar Waite purchased his butterfly collection and the pick of his ethnographic collection for the South Australian Museum after Lower's death in 1925. Santa Cruz, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and various Australian localities, ranging from the MacDonnell Ranges to Milang, were represented. Lower was a close collaborator with the South Australian Museum's veteran entomologist Arthur Lea, also a keen ethnographic collector. Lea's predecessor, Otto Tepper, had contributed ethnographic material to the Museum during the 1890s.[66]

Dr John Joyce was an Adelaide eye surgeon who had raised his collection to the status of a small private museum housed in the 'Adelaide Eye Infirmary and Queen's Hospital' which he built and owned. His collection of natural history and ethnographic objects was sold at auction after he was declared insolvent in 1886. The Adelaide Museum purchased 'collections of coral, malachite, native weapons etc, the total cost being L21-2-6'.[67] Joyce's hospital was purchased by the Way College and became a school; its headmaster from 1892 was William G. Torr, another notable Adelaide collector.

Much of Torr's collection was obtained from boarders at Way College who brought objects to add to his collection from their homes at, for instance, Fowlers Bay, the Diamantina River and Millicent in South Australia. Some twenty of these objects were donated by Torr on the college's closure in 1903, together with natural history specimens. The ethnographic objects included an axehead, a 'stone for bruising seeds', necklaces, edible fungus, gum, wooden weapons, a net-bag, 'scraped stick ornaments' for ceremonies and a pointing stick.[68] Several of Torr's sources, such as the Andrewilla police trooper F.H. Wells, the mail contractor August Helling, the Angaston stone tool collector H. Marshall, the dealer Henry Lawrence or the collector C.B. Keen, also contributed directly to the South Australian Museum's collections during the period. An exception was S.J. Hillman, the most prolific of Torr's collectors. He supplied Aboriginal foods, weapons and sorcery objects from Fowlers Bay, together with detailed descriptions of their uses.[69]

Torr's collecting interests were founded in natural history. He was a keen collector of marine specimens and specialised in the study of chitons, publishing three papers on the subject.[70] His chief collaborator in this field was his cousin, the physician Sir Joseph Verco. A pioneer South Australian conchologist, Verco exemplified the medical naturalist of the period. As boys he and his brother had constructed a museum in their backyard, in which 'everything which took their fancy as curious or which

seemed in any way Scientific was gathered and arranged in place'.[71] Verco and Edward Stirling were co-founders of Adelaide's Medical School and the physician became a powerful supporter of the South Australian Museum during the 1890s, particularly in the fields of conchology and marine invertebrates.[72] Verco undertook dredging trips on the Museum's behalf in his brother's yacht, accompanied by Torr and Stirling. Verco's large private museum also contained ethnographic material from Africa (including Egypt), New Guinea and Australia and included objects collected by Torr. Most of its contents, including natural history material, was presented to the South Australian Museum in 1934 by his widow.

Verco's dredging ventures were pre-dated by those of another medical naturalist, Robert H. Pulleine. He collected a diverse range of natural history specimens, and became internationally renowned for his studies of the trapdoor spider and for a private botanical garden which contained more than a thousand succulents. Pulleine was a prodigy among medical naturalists of his time; with substantial publications in anthropology, archaeology, several branches of natural science and medicine, his interests extended well beyond those of a dilettante or hobbyist. He belonged to eighteen learned societies and was president of six.[73] Pulleine was one of the first scientists to consider archaeological methods relevant to the study of Australian Aborigines. Remembered for his statement that Tasmanian Aborigines were 'an unchanging people in an unchanging environment', Pulleine nevertheless promoted detailed archaeological investigations which surpassed previous efforts.[74]

Pulleine operated within several 'circles' of natural history and ethnographic collectors and in this sense epitomised the overlapping interests of Adelaide collectors. His case also demonstrates the capacity of a collection to assume a pedigree - a durable and documented identity lasting beyond a collector's life and beyond the collection's dispersal. Pulleine began collecting marine specimens and Aboriginal artefacts as a sixteen year-old in 1885, four years after his family's arrival in Adelaide. The artefacts were possibly obtained through contacts made by his father, a registrar of the South Australian School of Mines and Industries. The young Pulleine offered to exchange Aboriginal artefacts for mollusc specimens at the South Australian Museum, writing: 'I have in my possession a collection of about 30 spears 3 arrows and 1 war sword made by natives in the vicinity of Southport & the Daly River N.T. which I wish to exchange with the museum for any duplicate mollusca on hand'. This collection was eventually purchased for five shillings in 1886.[75]

Following his overseas training and establishment in 1907 as an ear, nose and throat specialist in Adelaide, Pulleine pursued his collecting interests, joining the circle of medical naturalists and anthropologists centred on Edward Stirling at the South Australian Museum. He became a close friend of another of Stirling's colleagues, the anatomist Archibald Watson, also an ethnographic collector. These associations led him to join the early anthropological expeditions to Central Australia mounted by the Board for Anthropological Research which had been established in the mid-1920s.[76] His ethnographic and archaeological collections already consisted of material gathered during expeditions to outback Queensland

and New South Wales, Tasmania and to Pacific Island localities. He supplemented these collections with material garnered through exchange with other ethnographic collectors in Adelaide.

Unlike many collectors who built a collection and then let it stand until it was eventually dispersed, Pulleine continually modified his collection, offering pieces to the South Australian Museum and to other museums and private collectors, and periodically adding to it through his own field collecting and by purchase and exchange. He first offered to sell his ethnographic collection to the South Australian Museum in 1911, for the record sum of 600 pounds. When the Museum declined he applied to send a portion of it to overseas buyers.[77] A large proportion of his collection was sold to the Ethnographic Museum of Sweden during the 1920s; smaller quantities were sold and exchanged with museums in Cambridge, San Diego and Leningrad.[78] Pulleine died in 1935, and 500 ethnographic objects, together with several hundred stone tools, were auctioned soon after. The South Australian Museum bought more than 560 Australian archaeological specimens, thirty-one Pacific and Asian objects and just three Aboriginal ethnographic objects from his collection at that sale. More of Pulleine's collection was displayed during the following year, in South Australia's Centenary Exhibition. Additional Aboriginal objects and some skeletal material were received during the 1940s and 1950s through Pulleine's widow.[79]

The sale of Pulleine's Australian and Pacific ethnographic artefacts in 1935 drew a range of buyers. Apart from the South Australian Museum itself, objects were purchased by the Adelaide dealer Vera Wood and by naturalist collector Dr Frederick L. Benham. In both cases these objects were subsequently acquired by the South Australian Museum. Many of Pulleine's artefacts were purchased by the Kyancutta Museum on Eyre Peninsula, where they were displayed until that institution was dismantled in 1972 and its collections sold at auction in Sydney. The South Australian Museum purchased material at that auction and so came to acquire objects still identified with the original collector nearly four decades after his death.[80] What is more, Pulleine himself had documented the origin of parts of his collection well enough so that these earlier 'biographies' accrued as his objects passed through the hands of other collectors. The Kyancutta collection contained Pulleine objects which had been originally collected by Daisy Bates and by F. Hewish for example; each represented in the South Australian Museum as primary collectors.

Pulleine's connection to the South Australian Museum may have existed independently of Edward Stirling but was certainly strengthened through that link. Stirling exerted considerable influence among his medical colleagues on behalf of his institution. An interest in anatomy and the place of the Australian Aborigine in human evolution, motivated much of this collecting. Doctors W.L. Cleland, R.H. Perks, J.E. Everard, R.S. Rogers, T. Borthwick and J. Desmond collected Aboriginal skeletal material rather than ethnographic objects during the period.[81] Fellow staff members at the University of Adelaide Medical School such as Professor Archibald Watson and Dr Benjamin Poulton (surgeon to Francis Gillen), and students and colleagues such as Pulleine, William Ramsay Smith, R. Humphrey Marten, Alan Lendon,

Leonard Seabrook, and Philip Shanahan each collected ethnographic material from the 1890s onward.[82] Pulleine, Marten and Smith were the most active of these, maintaining large personal collections and periodically exchanging material with Stirling.

Marten, a pioneer in neuro-surgery in Adelaide, was also Stirling's physician. A member of his practice since 1902 was Henry Simpson Newland, son of the pastoralist-ethnographer Simpson Newland, part of whose ethnographic collection was eventually obtained by the South Australian Museum in 1970.[83] In 1902 Marten donated twenty-three Central Australian objects, including tjurunga and a widow's mourning chaplet, in exchange for nineteen Aboriginal weapons, two New Britain clubs and twelve New Guinea arrows.[84] Marten received collections from several sources, including the Central Australian police trooper Ernest Cowle, the explorer R.T. Maurice and, most significantly, the Killalpaninna and Hermannsburg mission schoolteacher and ethnographer, H.J. Hillier. During 1908 Marten donated one of Hillier's collections, including 104 Hermannsburg objects, to the University Museum at Cambridge, *alma mater* to Stirling and himself.[85]

The Edinburgh-trained pathologist and physician William Ramsay Smith provides a complex example of the medical naturalist.[86] His collection of sixty ethnographic objects from Australia, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea was donated to the Museum on his death during 1934; he had previously donated a small African collection during 1906.[87] His photographic collection, dating from the 1890s to 1910, documents Australian and Pacific localities, with a core of physical anthropological studies. It was supplemented by a series of 200 of Paul Foelsche's original glass-negative portraits of Aboriginal people which Smith was able to secure from the elderly Foelsche during a visit to Darwin in 1909. Ramsay Smith's notes contained a revealing observation about Folesche's photographs which had won prizes in international Exhibitions of 1870s. He wrote:

> it is to be noted that many of the natives were compelled to coat themselves with charcoal dust before being photographed. The resultant matte effect gives the natives an unusual appearance.[88]

Ramsay Smith was one of a group of Adelaide physicians whose interest and publications in physical anthropology located the city within an international exchange network for Aboriginal skeletal material.[89] Employed as Adelaide's City Coroner, he took an active part in this trade at the turn of the century, supplying his former medical school in Edinburgh with Aboriginal and Chinese skeletal and body parts. He was arrested for these activities in 1903 but was subsequently exonerated. The trial exposed the dissension among the city's medical fraternity which had been caused by the Royal Adelaide Hospital strike of 1896; Ramsay Smith had been appointed to the Hospital as a physician to break the strike and many regarded him as a traitor. Although criticised for allowing 'his zeal in the cause of science to outrun his judgement', the charges were dismissed by a Board of Inquiry which included William Torr. Stirling was a prominent witness for the defence; Francis Gillen wrote later that 'Stirling's evidence helped him perhaps more than anyone else's'.[90] Smith's defence lawyer was Sir Josiah Symon, ethnographic collector and a

cousin of the Central Australian police trooper, Ernest Cowle. Not surprisingly, Ramsay Smith did not have full support from the Adelaide medical fraternity; another important medical collector, Benjamin Poulton, spoke out against him.[91]

Ramsay Smith continued to provide Edinburgh and the Wellcome Medical Museum with Aboriginal and other skeletal material after his trial.[92] Stirling's support for him was tested during 1911 when Ramsay Smith attempted to divert Aboriginal skeletal material exhumed from the Swanport burial site under Stirling's direction.[93] These events, taking place in Adelaide during the first decade of the century, suggest that Aboriginal skeletal material had attained the status of circulating capital among museums and universities, similar to that accrued by particular Australian natural history species and fossils during the nineteenth century.[94] The fierce competition for obtaining skeletal material, illustrated in the tussle over the Swanport material, carries an echo of the race for sacred objects on the Central Australian frontier. A year before the Swanport discovery Edward Stirling wrote to his friend and medical colleague Archibald Watson (also heavily involved in the international traffic in skeletal material), thanking him for the donation of a further two skulls and stating his aim:

> Dear Watson,
> Thank you for the two Australian skulls you have been good enough to add to our collection. Will you kindly let me know as soon as you can the localities whence they came? This brings our Australian crania up to 221 & I would be glad if you will help me to make the number up to 250 before I die.[95]

Despite his firm grounding in science (he had taught natural history and zoology at the University of Edinburgh and published papers on physical anthropology[96]), Smith achieved most success as a popular travel writer. His genre was that of Herbert Basedow, whose collecting interests he shared directly, or of other published collectors, such as Alfred Searcy, S.A. White, or Charles Chewings. His book *In Southern Seas. Wanderings of a Naturalist*, published in 1924, shared their picturesque view of Aboriginal life as a quaint survival of prehistoric times, documented through a series of defining cultural practices and artefacts and set against romantic landscape images. The genre marked the 1920s as a period in which the tourist began to supplant the ethnographer in adding to the record of Aboriginal life, particularly in Central Australia. In this respect it is worth noting that Smith's ethnographic collection included examples of gypsum carvings made by the Arrernte man, Jim Kite Erliakiliakirra, a guide to Spencer and Gillen's 1901-1902 expedition. These objects represent some of the first documented examples of Aboriginal response to Central Australian tourism.[97]

Writers and journalists as collectors

Smith's role in the interpretation of Aboriginal culture and Australian landscape was supported

by many other travellers of the period. Here the line between expeditionary collecting and more casual, individual excursions was often blurred: Smith collected several of his Australian objects while on official business as the principal medical officer in South Australia, but obtained others during his cruises to North Australia and beyond. Edward Stirling, Herbert Basedow, Baldwin Spencer and later, Norman Tindale, provide examples of scientifically oriented collectors who also published journalistic accounts of their collecting expeditions.

In fact several important collectors began their careers as journalists. The most prominent example was Daisy Bates, whose contact with Aborigines had been motivated through a journalistic assignment. She published an estimated 270 newspaper articles concerning Aboriginal life, several concerning material culture directly.[98] The Palmerston-based customs official Alfred Searcy donated a collection of 140 artefacts from the northern coasts during 1901. In his youth he had been indentured as a journalist with the *Advertiser* and from the mid-1890s he began publishing a series of newspaper articles and books centred on his adventures as a customs official.[99] During his exploration of the Gulf of Carpentaria region during 1883, the writer and journalist Ernest Favenc collected an Aboriginal skeleton which he subsequently donated to the South Australian Museum.[100] Arthur Vogan, author of *The Black Police* (1890) and scientific papers on Aborigines and archaeology, contributed a small ethnographic collection made while accompanying the 1885 Fly River expedition.[101]

Through third parties the South Australian Museum acquired Aboriginal artefacts from the collection of a South Australian writer and inventor of the period, A.W. Dobbie (author of *Rough Notes of a Traveller* (1890).[102] Other ethnographic objects were acquired from the Darwin-based journalist, Charles Dewhirst Gore and from the Renmark-based journalist, H. Taylor.[103] After the 1920s the growth in Australian travel writing yielded additional collections of note. The collection of the journalist H. Butler, obtained in 1974, was made during the 1920s; spears, spearheads, clubs, a paperbark basket, and a skull were among the thirty-four objects. One of the spears 'was thrown at Mr Butler, while two groups of Aboriginals [were] engaged in skirmish close to Darwin'.[104]

The German travel-writer Walter Geisler journeyed extensively in Australia from 1925 to 1927. An expedition from Adelaide to the Kimberley was the feature of his visit, and became the focus of his subsequent book.[105] This included several photographs of Aboriginal people and discussions of their social situation and cultural life. Not surprisingly, Geisler's most prolonged exposure to Aboriginal life was at Hermannsburg Lutheran mission. His guide there was Hermann Heinrich, responsible for arranging the itinerary of the Board for Anthropological Research expedition there during August 1929. Heinrich was a collector in his own right, obtaining large numbers of artefacts in exchange for tobacco.[106] He evidently arranged for Geisler to gather a sizeable collection. Numbering more than 160 weapons and utensils, it was eventually sold to the South Australian Museum in 1946 by a relative.[107] More precise details regarding the acquisition of artefacts at Hermansburg at this time were supplied by another visiting author, the

psychologist Stanley Porteus. He visited in 1929, at the close of a long drought which forced many Aboriginal people from the western desert regions into the mission settlement. That fact may have accounted for the circumstances under which he obtained his collection:

> After the girls and boys had been locked up in their respective dormitories for the night ... we would walk over towards the store-room and soon some dark forms would disengage themselves from the deeper shadows and come hesitantly forward. It would be some of the men with implements, weapons or churinga to sell or exchange for the mission stores of tea, sugar and flour. In this way I was able to acquire a fine collection of aboriginal weapons and tools.[108]

Six boomerangs and spears donated in 1962 by the journalist and author Ernestine Hill were collected during the 1920s by her uncle, a policeman based in the Tanami and Arnhem Land. Hill recalled:

> [h]e had to visit Arnhem Land at certain periods to try and ascertain the number of tribes and how many in each. This was not an easy assignment but he had many thrilling tales ... The articles passed on were given by the natives of Arnhem Land on some of his trips. He seemed to have the knack of making friends with them and no doubt this was a great honour they bestowed upon him.[109]

The prolific author and naturalist Charles Barrett donated just one object to the South Australian Museum - a decorated human skull from Milingimbi in Arnhem Land - yet it is clear from his publications that he collected additional ethnographic material. He went to some pains in his writings to emphasise that this material was obtained through barter or by gift, rather than through coercion or subterfuge. The skull provides one example:

> We were firing questions at our hosts, as we sat in the shade of a tamarind tree. A native approached, carrying a paper-bark bundle about the size of a Rugby football. He spoke a few words in Kopapingo. I understood only one - lia, but it was the key word. Raiiwola had brought me a painted human skull![110]

Like most collectors, Barrett was apparently unaware of his own influence on the production or generation of artefacts in Aboriginal communities. In his writings, and those of other authors such as William Hatfield, Colin Simpson or George Farwell, ethnographic objects played a given, unproblematic role, marking the authenticity of their own experiences. For these writers to acknowledge that these objects were generated in response to their presence was to admit the possibility that they had not sufficiently defined the reality of Aboriginal life. Barrett could write confidently, therefore, that

> Bark paintings are easily obtainable from the natives of North Australia - two or three sticks of tobacco will purchase a good specimen. And these primitive paintings - genuine ones not done for sale - are worth acquiring.[111]

Just as ethnographic objects were incorporated by museums into the construction of Australian natural history and ethnography, these authors used objects in creating their own versions of the country through which they travelled. For this category of collector more than any other perhaps, Aboriginal artefacts were an essential part of the 'transculturation of indigenous knowledge into European knowledge, which lies at the heart of the imperial or colonial narrative'.[112]

Collectors' Catalogues

For many collectors, the creation of a catalogue enabled them to redefine newly-acquired objects as their own while recording their previous histories. The lengths to which some metropolitan collectors went to catalogue their collections is a cogent reminder of the value accruing to objects through the cumulative processes of collection. George Aiston put the matter succinctly:

> Everything is of value until the other fellow gets it and he at once commences to disparage it. It is the love of bargaining that most people seem to live for. Personally I value a thing more for the effort it cost me to get than for its intrinsic value, and with my own collection, every piece has its own personal history to me that makes it valuable, Gill gave me that, Pern that, Dr Horne something else, Colin McKenzie something else, and so on, and I get quite a thrill remembering the circumstances in which each piece came into my possession.[113]

Adelaide's first Lord Mayor, Charles Glover, was one such collector. Also a keen bibliophile, he housed his books and artefacts in style in his North Adelaide mansion. Glover obtained many well-documented objects from northern South Australia and Central Australia through primary collectors such as Aiston and Charles Chewings, and acquired an important collection of northern Australian ceremonial material from the secondary collector, Dr E. Angas Johnson. Other primary collectors represented in Glover's collection included the South Australian surveyor, Theodor E. Day.[114] Glover's collection was catalogued, but he was dependent for the accuracy of this listing on his suppliers; Aiston was the most meticulous of these and had scant respect for the rest of Glover's collection. He wrote:

> He has a great lot of stuff (aboriginal) but it is all anyhow[.] moths and silverfish have riddled all of the feather work and all of the stones have been broken off the kundi tuhlas [adzes]. A lot of stuff wrongly described - for instance - he has a lot of painted corroboree head decorations that are described as churinga - they are not even holed to take a string - and a man would need to be about 15 feet high to swing them - but some one noted the similarity of their markings to a churinga and so named them.[115]

Glover died in 1936 and his collection was eventually auctioned in Sydney during 1970; the South Australian Museum obtained 129 Aboriginal artefacts and nine Melanesian objects.

Several city-based collectors demonstrated this capacity of an artefact collection to be defined in social terms - a collection of biographies and anecdotes, representing a set of encounters with other collectors as much as a sampling of Aboriginal material culture. Adelaide's medical collectors seemed to display this characteristic to a pronounced degree. The Adelaide draper Henry Savage provides another clear example. His collection of nearly 1,000 artefacts was composed of almost equal quantities of Aboriginal and Pacific artefacts (360 and 380 respectively); the remainder consisted of almost 200 ethnographic and historic artefacts from Asia, Africa, North and South America, Europe and Australia. Information regarding the earlier histories of their objects was recorded by Savage and his children in a catalogue, transferred to the South Australian Museum on the collection's purchase in 1954. The Museum's readiness to purchase the entire collection derived from this depth of documentation.[116]

In contrast to a large proportion of Pulleine's collection for example, or the Chewings collection offered to the Museum in 1921, Savage carefully recorded the origin of most of his objects. The collection's foundation lay in artefacts acquired through his role as president, chairman or secretary of the local branch of the London Missionary Society from the early 1900s through to the early 1920s. His journeys to Papua, Samoa and other Pacific Islands yielded 'a most interesting collection of curios, native weapons and photographs'.[117] During the 1920s Savage's attention turned to making collections of stone tools during field excursions south of Adelaide and to Kangaroo Island, and he began obtaining ethnographic artefacts from other private collectors, dealers and Bruce's and Stevens' Auction Marts. These acquisitions were supplemented through occasional direct contact with Aboriginal people, such as during his trip to the Nullarbor Plain in 1921. During 1923 Savage purchased objects from the estate of the surgeon Benjamin Poulton, a former colleague of Edward Stirling and a noted medical collector.[118] Occupying pride of place in the collection was a boomerang made by 'King Billie of the Millicent Tribe [in] about 1872 ... Boomerang made of sheoak root. Carved the shape before cutting root from tree. Pres. by Mr Black in Jan. 1937'.[119] Two eagle feather plumes in the collection were originally collected by Stephen King, former member of Stuart's Central Australian expedition; these objects were apparently obtained at Moralana Station in the Flinders Ranges during 1898.[120] Savage died during the mid-1930s and the collection apparently passed to his youngest son, from whose widow it was purchased in 1954.

In its profile of types, the Savage collection of Aboriginal artefacts conformed to the dominant pattern of frontier collections assembled during the study period. Of the 360 objects, 175 were men's weapons and tools; just seventeen were women's implements. Ninety lots of stone tools were represented, one skull, thirty-three items of dress and ornament, twenty-seven items of ceremonial paraphernalia, fifteen sacred objects,, two musical instruments, one message stick, one toy basket, one play-stick and one example of adaptive 'art' (a carved pipe). No raw materials or Aboriginal foods were included.[121] With an overwhelming preponderance of weaponry and traditional objects, the Savage collection reflected the strength of prevailing notions of authenticity during the 1920s and beyond. Despite the late purchase of artefacts from Arnhem Land missions during 1952 and 1953 the collection did not include any examples of bark paintings or sculptures.

With its catalogued entries, formal arrangement by object type, and record of previous collectors, the Savages' artefact collection aspired to the status of a private museum. Registered almost as a single bloc on its acquisition by the South Australian Museum in 1954, this characteristic of the collection is still evident today. Although obsolete, the Savages' catalogue numbers were transferred into the Anthropology Registers. This regard for the former integrity of collections was rarely reflected with earlier acquisitions by the South Australian Museum, or other museum and institute collections discussed below.

Suburban and Country Institute Collections

At the time of the foundation of the South Australian Institute Museum, there were already ten Institutes in active existence, mostly catering for the literary tastes of their constituents, but also representing the disparate characteristics of British mechanics institutes, as centres of socialisation and instruction.[122] Given the broad interests and activities of their patrons and backers, and the relative 'gentrification' of the Institutes, it was inevitable that their walls, benches and cupboards would attract a share of artefacts and natural history specimens, just as in the drawing rooms and halls of clubs and country residences. Yet in contrast to the close working relationship between the Public Library and suburban and country Institutes, the South Australian Museum developed few formal or informal affiliations to promote or manage these collections.

The Institutes gathered ethnographic material in a largely haphazard manner, mirroring the early years of the Adelaide Museum itself. During the 1880s and 1890s the Museum's Assistant Director Amandus Zietz was able to informally assess the collections of two of the largest Institutes, at Gawler and Port Adelaide. Some items were transferred to Adelaide on these occasions, and as late as 1919 the Adelaide Museum obtained the 'skeleton of a Chinook' [Native American] in exchange with the Port Adelaide Institute.[123]

The Institute collections represent a variation upon the example of metropolitan, secondary collectors discussed in the previous section. They were augmented through a combination of genuine ethnographic interest shown by locally based travellers and naturalists and a steady accretion of donations made by those marking their civic commitment to an emerging community. A good example lay in the donation to the Enfield Institute of a boomerang, a shield and two clubs by the Ragless family, pioneers of the Enfield district and owners of Callana station near Lake Callabonna. These objects were subsequently passed to the South Australian Museum in 1913.[124]

One of the earliest and most significant of South Australia's country institutes was the Gawler Institute, first founded in 1848 and consolidated in 1857, a year after the foundation of the South Australian Institute. The Gawler Institute's first Curator, Richard Schomburgk, was to become a famous South Australian botanist. He was succeeded by another Barossa Valley German, Otto Wehrstedt, who had prepared a detailed catalogue of the collections by 1881.[125] The collection was weighted towards natural history, particularly ornithology, conchology and mineralogy, but also contained more than two hundred ethnographic objects. These were catalogued revealingly, under the heading 'Fijian and other Curiosities', an indication of the priorities still applying to ethnographic collecting during the 1880s. The collections also several contained Aboriginal objects of great significance, such as a 70 metre-long emu net found by Richard Holland in a cave near the Darling River during the 1850s.

The collection undoubtedly also included material from the northern Adelaide Plains and Mount Lofty Ranges. Amandus Zietz's inspection of the collection during the 1880s revealed that there were 'numbers of 'South Australian' weapons, basketwork etc which will possibly prove on investigation to be of the types used by the extinct local tribes'.[126]

A basket made by a local Aboriginal woman of the Gawler district was one such example, donated by Miss Jane Pile before her marriage in January 1863 to the explorer, John McKinlay. Some of the ethnographic items were obtained for the South Australian Museum by Amandus Zietz during the late 1880s on a loan basis; the remainder, amounting to more than 100 objects from Australia, the Pacific, Asia and Africa, were acquired permanently in 1928.[127] By this time the Gawler Institute's ethnographic collection was largely abandoned.

The imposing Mount Gambier Institute building was constructed during the late 1860s. It attracted collections from its own hinterland in the south-east of South Australia and Western Victoria, as well as from returned travellers who had collected further afield. Like the Gawler and Port Adelaide Institute collections, the Mount Gambier collection contained a number of objects from the 'South Sea islands' - particularly from Fiji and the Solomon Islands.[128] Among the returned travellers were the Northern Territory telegraph official J.A.G. Little and Walter Harrison, who presented the Institute in 1889 with spears obtained from the 'Larrakeah tribe' of the Darwin region and a spear found on Melville Island - one of the first ethnographic objects to be collected from this locality.[129] Few details survived regarding collectors contributing artefacts from the vicinity of Mount Gambier itself. An exception was an early donation of a stone axehead by Thomas Williams in 1868. Frances Davison, a keen supporter of the Institute museum and several-times mayor of Mount Gambier, donated two boomerangs, a spearthrower and two spears from Central Australia in 1897; it is unlikely that he was the original collector. In 1911 he donated Aboriginal skeletal material directly to the South Australian Museum and in 1931, following his death, his widow donated five boomerangs and ten stone axeheads to the Museum from the Mount Gambier region.[130]

By the time that Herbert Hale inspected the Mount Gambier collection as South Australian Museum Director during 1944, the Institute itself had become a picture theatre and the collection was stored in damp conditions beneath the stage. Eleven objects were lent to the South Australian Museum by the Corporation at this time; a further 123 ethnographic objects were lodged in Adelaide on long-term loan during 1952. Twenty-four of the total number of objects were from the Pacific islands and Asia. Of the 119 Australian ethnographic objects, 116 were men's weapons or tools, one was a carved baobab nut from north-western Australia, one was a stone axehead, and one was a play-stick. No women's objects had survived in the collection, perhaps because of the perishable nature of basketry and fibre material.[131]

A similar history of decline is associated with the collection of more than 400 ethnographic objects purchased from the Port Adelaide Institute by the South Australian Museum in 1959. Founded in 1852,

this was the largest and most prosperous of the South Australian Institutes, particularly from its formal inauguration in a new and imposing building in 1876 until the turn of the century - the period in which the ethnographic collections were formed. Pride of place was given to nautical exhibits, especially ship models, but a significant proportion of the ethnographic collections had been obtained by 1876. This is evident from a contemporary account of the inauguration celebrations:

> The centre of the museum room was occupied by a large stand of pot plants which added much to the effect of the scene. Over the door was a collection of spears, arrows and war clubs pertaining to savagedom arranged in a neat design.[132]

In its early years the Port Adelaide Institute benefited from proximity to the shipping trade which formed and sustained the local community. Artefacts and collections deposited by travellers returning from the Pacific Islands, Africa and North America constituted almost half of the ethnographic acquisitions from the 1870s onward.[133] Notable among these were New Caledonian and New Hebrides (Vanuatu) objects presented by E. Hodgson. One object of note was an Egyptian mummy cloth, 'unrolled at the British Museum in about 1860', donated in 1880 by Edwin Sawtell, a 'nautical optician' based at the Port.

Named collectors were associated with approximately half of the Institute's 229 Australian ethnographic objects. Among these, the earliest record relates to a collection of a dozen bamboo spears collected in northern Australia by G.B. Scott in 1876. Three 'circumcision knives', stone with plant resin handles, were donated by C.J. Matthews from Strangways Springs Telegraph Station, probably during the 1880s. Dr Percival Bollen, a medical practitioner based at Port Adelaide, lent a rare grass mat made by Aborigines of the Diamantina River in north-eastern South Australia at around the turn of the century.[134] Captain John Lewis donated a single kurdaitcha shoe. Spencer J. Skipper, who wrote under the pen-name 'Hugh Kalyptus' for the satirical journal 'Pasquin' during the 1860s and prepared the shipping reports in daily newspapers, donated a northern Australian spear-thrower.[135] Skipper was the son of John Michael Skipper, a noted painter of Aboriginal life in South Australia. In 1936 another South Australian artist, the eccentric James Ferries, donated five of his Aboriginal portraits.[136]

Judging from photographs of the museum taken during the 1890s, the Port Adelaide ethnographic collection remained peripheral to the nautical and natural history exhibits. But even confined to the walls and lobby areas, the collection was considered important enough by the Institute's historian of 1902, who wrote:

> The ethnological specimens in the Museum, particularly those relating to the native tribes of Australia, are exceedingly interesting, as showing to some degree their mode of life and their attainments in the arts of peace and war. Pointing sticks, a stone knife from Central Australia, belts of bark worn by the Northern Territory natives as a protection against spears, sticks used by the aborigines of South Australia for crushing seed, stone axes, and other implements form an undeniably splendid collection. Some shields, beautifully carved, are almost priceless possessions, and among other exhibits of this class may be mentioned native mourning caps made of clay, spearheads and waddies for killing wild geese, and necklaces and armlets worn by native girls in

> the Far North. These are objects which won't be replaced, for the blacks are rapidly dying out with the advance of civilization.[137]

This solicitude was matched by curatorial attention, at least during the last decades of the century. Several honorary curators attended to the collections from the 1870s onward. The first of these, Miss Lizzie Thomsett, was also responsible for selling the South Australian Museum a collection of fossils and 'curios' from Australia, Burma and Fiji in 1891.[138] The collections were assessed and 're-labelled' during the 1890s by Amandus Zietz from the South Australian Museum. By the 1920s though, the Institute Museum had ceased active collecting, refusing all gifts 'except those of a definite scientific or educational value'.[139] The South Australian Museum was again contacted to advise on the collections and this time the Director, Edgar Waite, recommended that the Institute confine its efforts to the maintenance of a nautical and local history collection. His advice that the natural history and ethnographic collections be relocated to the South Australian Museum was accepted by the Committee, but was not acted upon until 1959.[140]

Despite intense local support these Institute collections never achieved the scientific, professional footing of their city cousin; they lacked the essential curatorial expertise linked to sustaining national and international networks of research. Inevitably, the museological role of the Institutes remained similar to that of the private collector, involving at best the numerical cataloguing of disparate items, occasionally enhanced by details of provenance. As the individuals associated with these collections grew older or withdrew from the scene, the collections themselves fell into disarray. The Institute's priorities lay with the provision of library services to local communities, rendering these ethnographic collections increasingly archaic and irrelevant by the mid-twentieth century.[141]

For its part, in acquiring three important Institute collections the South Australian Museum relocated more than 1,000 ethnographic objects, gathered largely incidentally by a broad range of metropolitan and frontier collectors, within the discipline of a new, taxonomically ordered context.

Endnotes - Chapter Nine

1. Stewart 1984: 147.

2. Aiston to Gill, 1 April, 1935, MLS.

3. Stewart 1993: 143.

4. Sontag 1977: 76.

5. Griffiths 1996: 158-168. Most of Kenyon's collection is in the Museum of Victoria. See Jones files on Kenyon and Daley. This thesis does not examine stone tool collectors in any detail.

6. Several Victorian stone tool collectors, notably W.H. Gill, Sydney Pern, George Horne, Charles Daley, Alfred Kenyon, and S.R. Mitchell, corresponded with, and obtained artefacts from, George Aiston, discussed in Chapter Seven. More than any other stone tool collector, Aiston had a keen awareness of contemporary Aboriginal attitudes toward and knowledge of stone tool making. Aiston's influence on these metropolitan collectors' theories has not been measured.

7. *Ibid*: 139. Stewart draws upon analyses of the ethnographic object and the souvenir provoked by Baudrillard's *Le systeme des Objets* (1968).

8. *Ibid*: 139.

9. The important issue of the effect of the growing stature of the South Australian Museum's ethnographic collection on the motivations and specialisations of private collectors has not been examined in this thesis. The issue is touched on by Gascoigne (1994: 116) in relation to the early development of the British Museum.

10. Keggie n.d.

11. See Webster 1895-1901.

12. Oldman 1908; 1943; 1976; Webster 1895-1901.

13. These figures are drawn from Cooper (1989) and from Jones (1985) ms. For Clement's sale to Moscow, see Cooper (1989: 309).

14. Clement 1903.

15. Giglioli 1911.

16. Curators' Reports to the Trustees, June, 1903. Series 24, 1881-1918, AMA.

17. See Curators' Reports to the Trustees, November, 1903; March, November, 1904; January, June, 1907. Series 24, 1881-1918, AMA. Stockdale's Melville Island material was probably obtained through the buffalo shooter Joe Cooper.

18. Stockdale's meticulously drawn notebooks and catalogues, with titles such as 'Australian Aboriginal Decorative Arts, Manufacture and Native Fashions with Illustrations of Harry Stockdale. 1-32.' 'The Australian Aborigines: Their Weapons, Offensive & Defensive. Their Manners & Customs, Ceremonies & Superstitions. Written & Illus by H. Stockdale 1-17', are held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney (Stockdale ms).

19. Johns' diaries, scrapbooks and papers are held in the La Trobe Library and the archives of the Museum of Victoria (Johns mss). His work is further discussed in Cooper (1981) and Griffiths (1996).

20. A. Stockdale to Stirling, 22 March, 1910, GRG 19/5/29783; 30132. A. Stockdale to South Australian Museum, 22 & 27 March, 1920; 11 May, 1920, GRG 19/5/29783; 30031; 30132, SRO.

21. Minutes of Museum Committee, 1 February, 1889. GRG 19/364, p.59, SRO.

22. See Jones file on Lawrence. This family business eventually evolved into a tobacconist's and souvenir shop and still operates. A sign on the outside wall of the Rundle Street shop, advertising souvenirs and 'native artefacts' was painted over during the 1980s.

23. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.122, 21 March, 1900, SRSAM.

24. Other attractions at the premises included a

> [b]eautiful wax tableau of 11 figures, representing a scene in the life of Sir Walter Raleigh.
> Electrical Machines, Working Model Circus, Mechanical Figures, Galvanic Batteries, and other curiosities too numerous to mention.

Envelope containing Tost & Rohu correspondence, notes, cards etc. GRG 19/168, SRO.

25. Item in an envelope containing Tost & Rohu correspondence, cards and notes. Tost & Rohu to Kay, 27 February, 1888 GRG 19/168, SRO. Stirling's acquisition which followed this offer is detailed on a loose sheet in the volume of 'Exchanges, 1888-1921', SRSAM. During 1996 Sydney's MacLeay Museum mounted an exhibition dealing with female taxidermists in Sydney, including Tost and Rohu.

26. 'Special Lists 1906-17', p.21, AA298, AASAM. The Tost and Rohu collection was eventually purchased by Tyrell's bookshop in Sydney and was offered for sale to the Commonwealth Government in 1929. See CRSA1, 1929/1896, AAC.

27. This item is registered as A12411. Tyrrell's interest in ethnographic objects may have been partly explained by his marriage to the daughter of a museum curator in 1898. See ADB 13: 300.

28. See James Tyrrell to Hon. C.S.A. Abbott, n.d., 1929, 29/1886, AAC. Tyrrell's list also refers to 'stone-cut' wooden artefacts, a marker of authenticity which is still actively employed, often without basis, by dealers and collectors during the late twentieth century.

29. See Jones file on Selway.

30. See Jones file on V. Wood.

31. Minutes of Museum Committee, 2 August, 1895. GRG 19/364, p.404-5, SRO. A further acquisition from Plint of a 'carved ceremonial axe' (probably a Pacific object) followed during 1897.

32. See Jones file on Marval. During this period the average price paid by Stirling and Zietz for a boomerang remained at about four shillings; for a spear, three to ten shillings; a shield, twelve shillings; a woman's bag or dish, four shillings; an armlet, threepence; a tjurunga, twenty shillings.

33. Some ethnographic material was purchased from Holman during the 1950s. The bulk of his stock was sold in Sydney during the 1960s, although his Adelaide premises were sold to another antique dealer, Moghul Antiques. See Jones files on Holman, Marval.

34. 'List of Boxes and Contents', p.22, AA298, AASAM.

35. Knight 1880; Haddon 1895; Edge-Partington & Heape 1890; 1893; 1898.

36. See Jones files on Marval and Melvin. For details of Worsnop's life see ADB 6: 440.

37. See Jones files on Worsnop and Dyke.

38. Worsnop 1897: 16.

39. Montague 1921: 2-3. Montague's book was compiled from articles published in the gentleman's magazine, *The Bazaar*.

40. Stewart 1984: 139.

41. See Curator's Report, January 12, 1885. GRG 19/364/163, SRO. But the skull, and a swallow's nest and egg were exchanged later that year for two ostrich eggs ('Donations Book 1882-88', Exchange no.2, p.275, SRSAM). See also Jones file on Jena.

42. The exchange material offered by Stirling included items from the recently purchased Wragge collection from Queensland. See Jones file on Marten.

43. Attributed to the Institute Board at its first meeting in October 1857 (quoted in Hale 1956: 7).

44. Collection registered as A51977 - A51987. Her father may have been the same Frederick Price who donated a pair of kurdaitcha shoes during 1892, in exchange for a shield, a boomerang, and six spears. See 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no. 75, 4 October, 1892, SRSAM.

45. See Jones files on Mair, Andrews and Cook, and Sinclair. Files on E. Burge and D. Weston provide examples of other collections held within families for several decades.

46. See Jones file on Way, Way Bequest; Burgess 1907: 247.

47. See Jones file on Baldwin.

48. See Jones file on E. Williams.

49. Parkhouse 1895. See Jones file on Parkhouse.

50. See Jones file on Stokes.

51. Muir 1982: 163, 165. Parker met Daisy Bates in Adelaide. Her father, Henry Field, owned Sandringham Station on the Georgina River in Queensland, and her brother, William George Field, contributed articles on Aboriginal languages and customs of that region to the journal, *Science of Man*.

52. See Jones file on U. Teague and V. Mace. The sketchbook (AA199, AASAM) is discussed and figured in Jones (1992b).

53. Tindale to Wills, 3 January, 1957. Specimen documentation file, K. Wills, AASAM.

54. J.H. Plumb, quoted in Gascoigne 1994: 61.

55. Curator's Report, January, 1875, GRG 19/168, SRO. See also 'Donations Book 3', p.10.; 'Museum Diary, October 1874 to March 1880', entry for January 1875; 'Donations Book 'B', 1886-90', entry for July 1889, SRSAM.

56. Gillen wrote: 'there are two men who would probably do so[,] viz Angas and Barr Smith, both very rich'. See Gillen to
Spencer, 21 June, 1901, Letter 62, PRMO. See entry on Angas in ADB 3: 36-38.

59. See Jones file on J. Howard Johnson.

60. The cloak was eventually purchased, nevertheless. See specimen documentation file for A6409, AASAM.

61. See Jones file on E. Angas Johnson and see ADB 9: 492-93.

62. See Jones file on Unaipon, and Jones (1990).

63. Johnson's successor as City of Adelaide medical officer was the anthropologist and collector H.K. Fry, discussed in Chapter Thirteen (see Jones 1996b). Johnson's friendship with Unaipon was shared by William Ramsay Smith and Herbert Basedow, also Adelaide-based medical ethnographers. Like Johnson, Basedow undertook post-doctoral work at Gottingen, one of the European centres for physical anthropology. See ADB 9: 492.

64. Thomas 1983: 53.

65. See Jones file on Cleland; ADB 8: 23. Cleland's father was Stirling's colleague and a contributor to the Museum's collections.

66. See Jones files on Lower, Lea and Tepper.

67. The collection included at least some Pacific material. It is now subsumed within the 'Old Collection' and is probably untraceable. See Minutes of the Museum Committee, 5 February, 1886, GRG 19/364, p.232, SRO. Joyce is referred to in Loyau 1885: 177.

68. See Jones file on Torr, including data on his pupil's collections supplied from *The [Way College] Boomerang* (1892-1903) by Torr's biographer, Dr R.C. Petersen. See also ADB 12: 244.

69. See *The [Way College] Boomerang*, vol.3, no.7, March 1898; vol.3, no.10, December 1898; vol.4, no.2, June 1889.

70. ADB 12: 244-45.

71. Verco 1963: 67.

72. Hale 1956: 67, 84-85.

73. ADB 11: 306.

74. See Horton 1991: 95, 138. Note that Pulleine's 1930 publication on Aboriginal physiology contained a refutation of the prevailing view that Aborigines represented 'the most primitive type of man still existing' (Pulleine 1930).

75. The localities mentioned were close to mining operations within his father's administrative purview. See Pulleine to Robert Kay, 13 April, 1885. AA298 Acc.159 no.21b, AASAM; Minutes of the Museum Committee, September, 1886, GRG 19/364, p.269, SRO.

76. See Jones 1987.

77. Pulleine to Stirling, 7 June, 1911; 18 May, 1914. GRG 19/5/8613; 16042, SRO.

78. The San Diego collection was received from the Stockholm Museum; Cooper 1989: 134, 173, 295, 308. Pulleine also sent ethnographic material overseas during 1914: see Minutes of the Museum Committee, 3 June, 1914, GRG 19/364 p.373, SRO.

79. Another twenty or so Pulleine objects were registered during the 1940s and 1950s; these may either have been purchased at the 1935 Pulleine sale or were acquired through his widow. See Jones files on Pulleine and Mrs R.H. Pulleine.

78. The San Diego collection was received from the Stockholm Museum; Cooper 1989: 134, 173, 295, 308. Pulleine also sent ethnographic material overseas during 1914: see Minutes of the Museum Committee, 3 June, 1914, GRG 19/364 p.373, SRO.

79. Another twenty or so Pulleine objects were registered during the 1940s and 1950s; these may either have been purchased at the 1935 Pulleine sale or were acquired through his widow. See Jones files on Pulleine and Mrs R.H. Pulleine.

80. See Jones file on James Lawson Pty. Ltd.

81. These collections and the subject of skeletal collecting generally, are not treated within this thesis.

82. See Jones files on these collectors. Seabrook's collection was not obtained until many years later, through the agency of Dr Archibald Grenfell Price. Seabrook had served as acting Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory during 1902.

83. See Jones file on E. Carpenter. The extensive African ethnographic collection of V. Marra Newland, another son of Simpson Newland, was also acquired by the Museum.

84. 'Exchanges 1888-1921', no.132, 17 February, 1902. SRSAM.

85. Stirling made several donations to the University Museum at Cambridge. Hillier also sold material to Cambridge, using his mother as intermediary. Hillier may have been encouraged to direct material to Cambridge by Marten. See Jones 1985 ms.; Cooper 1989: 173.

86. ADB 11: 674-75. Note that several points in this biographical entry require revision. The Aboriginal writer David Unaipon, rather than Ramsay Smith, may have been the principal author for *Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines* (Smith 1932; see Jones 1990: 304). The main collection of Ramsay Smith's photographs is held in the South Australian Museum, not the Mortlock Library; they do not represent the 'only pictorial record' of the Murray River Aborigines.

87. See Jones file for details of Smith donations. N.B. Tindale inspected Smith's collection during 1934 and noted that it included 182 Aboriginal, Oceanic and African skulls, as well as eighty-six hair samples (Report, 30 November, 1934, specimen documentation file for Smith, SAM). The hair samples were acquired on Smith's death, but only seven of the skulls were received by the South Australian Museum.

88. Smith papers, AA263, AASAM.

89. Almost no historical analysis of this episode in South Australian history has been undertaken. For discussion of E.P. Ramsay's activities at Sydney's Australian Museum as a collector of skeletal material and body parts, see Turnbull (1991).

90. See Gillen to Spencer, 28 September, 1903, Letter 180, PRMO.

91. Report of Board of Inquiry re Dr. Ramsay Smith, *SAPP* 37, 1903: 1-4. The trial was closely reported in the Adelaide press during September, 1903.

92. Record cards relating to Australian Aborigines, University of Edinburgh Anatomy Collection, AASAM. See also Turnbull 1991: 7; Turnbull (1991); Cooper 1989: 151, 245.

93. The affair is documented in docket 49/1911: 'Aboriginal remains found at Swanport near Murray Bridge', GRG19/55, SRO. For his account of the excavation, see Stirling (1911).

94. Turnbull 1991.

95. Stirling to Watson, 2 February, 1910. GRG 19/11 vol.2, p.16. In fact, with the Swanport material Stirling more than doubled his figure.

96. Smith 1903; 1907.

97. Kite's work is partially documented by Jones (in Sutton (ed.) 1988: 198-99). It is possible that Smith obtained some of his ethnographic material from Herbert Basedow. Basedow was the principal promotor of Kite's work. Both Smith and Basedow were outsiders in Adelaide's medical and anthropology circles.

98. ADB 7: 208-209.

99. ADB 11: 559-560. Searcy's newspaper articles provided the foundation for his publications (See Searcy 1911). Examples of the articles are contained in Searcy's papers (Searcy ms.).

100. See ADB 4: 160.

101. This collection, comprising one boomerang (ostensibly from Thursday Island) a women's dress and seven headdresses from central New Guinea, was probably sent to the South Australian Museum at the completion of the expedition through the agency of another expedition member, W. Haacke, the former Curator of the South Australian Institute Museum. Vogan made further ethnographic collections and was later active in commenting upon Aboriginal issues in Arnhem Land. See CRS A1, 1935/3934, AAC.

102. See Jones files on V.M. Wood and H. Williams. Dobbie had been elected as a member of South Australia's Royal Society during 1880.

103. See Jones files on these collectors.

104. Anthropology Register entry for items A58005, A64352-85.

105. Geisler 1927.

106. Geisler 1927: 153.

107. The collection, registered as A35532-A35715, was purchased from a 'Mrs Geisler'. Geisler mentions his contact with the Barossa Valley Germans while in South Australia, but does not refer to relatives. It may be that one of his relatives, possibly his wife, travelled to Adelaide immediately after the Second World War.

108. Porteus 1931: 135. Porteus's collection is now held in the Berenice Bishop Museum, Hawaii. Porteus donated two Hawaiian skulls and an adze to the South Australian Museum; the skulls were repatriated in 1992.

109. Specimen documentation file for E.M. Hill, A55817-22, SAM.

110. Barrett 1946: 60. See also pp. 81,106.

111. Barrett 1942: 21.

112. Fox 1994: 9.

113. Aiston to Gill, 1 April, 1935, MLS.

114. Day was appointed as the clerk and surveyor in charge of the Vermin Branch of the Lands Department in 1900. His collections were probably made in the Flinders Ranges.

115. Aiston to Gill, 17 June, 1924, MLS.

116. In this respect the Savages' collection may be contrasted with the collection of Australian and Pacific artefacts assembled by Ivan and A.R. Monjean during the 1920s and 1930s. This was also catalogued as a private museum, but scant details of provenance. The collection of seventy-nine objects was donated in 1955; details relating to the Monjeans' collecting activities were obtained from Mrs Monjean during 1994. See Jones file.

117. *Express and Journal*, 21 October 1933, p.4.See also *The Honorary Magistrate* August, 1920, p.796, for a brief report of Savage's participation in a London Missionary Society 'delegation' to Papua and Samoa.

118. Central Australian objects among these were probably originally collected by F.R. Scott, a telegraph operator who supplied Poulton with ethnographic objects. See Jones file on Poulton.

119. See Anthropology Register entry for A46236, Savage Collection a.225.

120. See Anthropology Register entries for A46311, Savage Collection a.133.

121. See Jones file on the Savage collection.

122. See Talbot 1992. Talbot's history is explicitly directed towards documenting the role of institutes within the history of South Australia's library system; no mention is made of natural history or ethnographic collections.

123. See entry for A11431, Anthropology Register. For earlier acquisitions from the Gawler Institute Museum, see Jones file.

124. See Jones file on Enfield Institute.

125. 'Catalogue of the Gawler Institute, prepared by Otto Wehrstedt, March 1881', SRSAM.

126. Zietz report contained within N.B. Tindale file on the Gawler Institute Collection, AA338, Acc.83, AASAM.

127. See Jones files on Gawler Institute Collection, Gawler Museum.

128. See Jones file on the Mount Gambier Institute and Corporation collections; see also A34161-34171; A44239-44371, Anthropology Registers, SAM.

129. See Anthropology Register entries for A44264-A44270.

130. See Jones files on Mrs E. Davison and F. Davison.

131. See Jones files on Mount Gambier Institute and Mount Gambier Corporation.

132. Meleng 1902: 32. See also Horton (1902).

133. The collection purchased by the South Australian Museum contains 403 ethnographic objects, of which 174 are non-Australian. Of these, 138 are from Pacific islands, twenty are South Africa ('Zulu' and 'Kaffir'), eleven are from Asia, three from Europe, one is from Egypt and one is from the Middle East. See Jones file on the Port Adelaide Institute.

134. See *ibid* for references to these collectors.

135. See *The Critic*, 12 September 1903, p.13.

136. Two of Ferries' subjects, Frank Fletcher and Fred Murray, had sold artefacts to Norman Tindale of the South Australian Museum in previous years. See for example, A16631-32 (two woven mats by Fletcher) and A13020-21, A26232 (two boomerangs and a wooden figure carved by Murray), SAM.

137. Meleng 1902: 59.

138. The fossils (and perhaps the other items) were probably obtained by Miss Thomsett's father, a contractor who had assisted in the construction of the Port Adelaide Institute and who had interests as a naturalist. Miss E. Henderson replaced Miss Thomsett as curator when she married a 'Mr Hanley' in 1895. Fifty years later the South Australian Museum received a collection of Australian artefacts from a 'Mrs Hanley', the former Miss Thomsett. See Jones files on Thomsett, Hanley.

139. Page 1981: 161.

140. *Ibid*: 163.

141. Candy (Candy & Laurent (eds.) 1994: 13) writes: 'lacking either formal policies to guide collection-building or professional curatorial care, many of these collections degenerated into dusty and moth-eaten jumbles, reminiscent of an unsorted garage sale, and were eventually thrown out or broken up'.

CHAPTER TEN

COLLECTING THE SACRED

I knew also, before setting out on the Horn Expedition, that special value was attached to them, that they were made objects of mystery and concealment, and that they had some kind of connection with important rites and ceremonies. These facts made me very anxious to gain further information concerning them ....[1]

During the course of the last century no other Aboriginal object has excited as much conjecture, been more desired or commanded a higher price than the *tjurunga* of Central Australia. The controversy surrounding collections such as that of T.G.H. Strehlow during the 1980s and 1990s has helped to elevate these objects to allegorical status.

The gradual definition of the tjurunga as the most sacred Australian object had two effects. One was to forge a definition of authentic Aboriginal culture by reference to these objects and the mystery surrounding them. This process in turn reinforced European stereotypes of Aboriginal culture as monolithic, unchanging and tradition-centred, even as Aboriginal people were adapting to enforced changes and redefining their cultural references. A corollary of this was a second effect, the emergence of an assumption that the Aboriginal force of attachment to tjurunga was so powerful that any European acquisition of these objects must have been, by definition, a form of theft.

This twin characterisation, of Aboriginal culture as passive and ill-prepared for change, and of European culture as aggressively hegemonic, rests upon a mistaken premise. Regarded through the compound lens of the numerous and varied transactions which brought European collectors and Aborigines together, the colonial frontier was never a stark boundary between cultures. As the previous chapters have suggested, it is better described as a complex zone of engagement. Within this zone objects were acquired by European collectors through a variety of circumstances ranging from theft and pilfering through to more equal transactions and outright gifts. The South Australian Museum's collection of some 2,000 tjurunga collected since 1890 bears witness to a similar range of events. An analogy might be drawn with the traffic in sacred relics in medieval Europe, discussed by Patrick Geary. Like tjurunga, these relics were regarded as 'found', not manufactured. And as for Central Australian tjurunga, 'gift, theft and commerce were all modes for the movement of sacra'.[2]

While tjurunga theft has been documented from the time of the Horn Expedition, Aboriginal people were not always passive prey for European collectors' avarice - like other artefacts, tjurunga were deployed as vital commodities by Aboriginal people at crucial stages in their dealings with Europeans on the Central Australian frontier.

Tjurunga have been descibed by anthropologists in paradoxical terms, as 'treasured possessions', as well as objects which resist notions of private property. T.G.H. Strehlow explored this paradox further than most, concentrating upon the vexed question of 'tjurunga ownership'.[3] He observed that tjurunga were often in constant circulation between groups and that these transitions marked, and were marked by, ceremonial activity and significant meetings. Gillen's 1890s correspondence with Spencer indicates the extent to which Europeans could become enmeshed in these transactions, although such exchanges or gifts involving tjurunga were never observed to take place during interactions between nineteenth-century explorers and Aboriginal people. Gillen's experiences, and those of field anthropologists such as Strehlow and Tindale, or missionaries such as Ernest Kramer, reflect a strikingly different level of frontier engagement.[4]

European interest in Aboriginal society and culture has proceeded fitfully. Each phase of interest, concentrating on a separate aspect of that society, has focused attention upon particular attributes. In several instances these have taken the form of material objects. An early interest in linguistics for what it might reveal about Aboriginal origins and connections with other societies generated a multiplicity of word-lists and vocabularies. The interest in Aborigines as exemplars of primitive mankind generated the bulk of artefacts in private and public collections, particularly as evolutionism gained acceptance. As this broad interest focused upon attributes of Aboriginal society such as communication, artistic expression, and religion, particular categories of artefacts became elevated. In several cases the attention from museums and collectors spawned new forms produced by Aboriginal people as objectifications of this heightened interest in their culture. Thus the attention directed towards message-sticks as Aboriginal devices of communication can be said to account for the appearance of the Killalpaninna Mission toas in 1904.[5] The transformation after 1910 of painted sheets of bark used for shelter and in ceremonies into the marketable and collectable form of bark paintings represents another example of this process. In both cases these forms are still generally perceived by Europeans to represent traditional, ahistorical material culture, despite the clear evidence for cultural dynamism which they provide.

The identification of particular attributes of Aboriginal culture with categories of objects was integral to the museological era which spanned the half-century from the 1880s to the 1930s. Institutional and private collectors sustained and fuelled their interest in Aboriginal material culture by incorporating the expanding taxonomies within their classifications. The validation by museums of new taxonomic categories occurred during this period as a natural process of revelation, a predictable result of scientists extending their research in a new field, just as in the natural sciences. In this sense Edward Stirling's

published reference to the toas as a class of object 'new to science' was no different from his revelation of the existence of the Central Australian marsupial mole (*Notoryctes typhlops*).[6]

The identification and classification of the Central Australian tjurunga provides a graphic example of the way in which a single Aboriginal object provided the key for an understanding of a previously unexamined aspect of Aboriginal culture. The attention which this object received from collectors after the 1890s stands in stark contrast to the previous three decades during which it was unknown or largely ignored by Central Australian explorers and pastoralists. To take one example, P. St. Barbe Ayliffe's collection of Musgrave Ranges artefacts was described by Stirling after its acquisition during March 1890 as 'a nearly complete Collection of ethnological Specimens from one Tribe ... of great scientific value'.[7] It contained no sacred objects.

While there is no direct evidence to suggest that tjurunga were manufactured in significant numbers to meet burgeoning European demand after the 1890s, there is little doubt that Aboriginal attitudes towards this category of object were, as in the case of bark paintings and sculptural objects, fundamentally affected. The history of the collection of these objects allows some insight into these transformations.

Discovering Tjurunga

George French Angas's 1845 watercolour sketch of a Port Lincoln wooden bullroarer, supplemented by data obtained from the Lutheran missionary Clamor Schurmann, stands as the earliest record of its type.[8] Very few sacred objects of any durability were seen by collectors of Aboriginal objects in the settled regions of Australia during the early and mid-nineteenth century. This did not just reflect a lack of interest by collectors; the embodiment of individual links to Dreaming events and actors in these regions was relatively intangible in comparison to the Central Australian situation. As Peterson writes: '[i]t is clear that men and women seriously involved with local ceremonial life deliberately accumulated huge bodies of religious knowledge in the form of songs, designs, dances, stories, and myths, and that men in Central Australia accumulated large numbers of sacred boards and other objects'.[9] An unexamined issue is that of whether, during the course of several centuries, the manufacture of tjurunga to cater for an ever-changing population of Aboriginal individuals, resulted in an actual surplus of these objects. That surplus would account for, in some measure at least, the large numbers gathered by particular European collectors.

The focus of the distribution and use of stone tjurunga, the most desired of this class of objects, lay in the MacDonnell Ranges of Central Australia, home of the Arrernte groups. Europeans began arriving in Arrernte country during the 1870s. The Alice Springs Telegraph Station commenced operations in 1872 and the Lutheran Mission at Hermannsburg, 100 kilometres to the west, was founded in 1877. The

missionaries celebrated the occasion of their first Christian baptisms a decade later.

T.G.H. Strehlow estimated the combined Arrernte population in 1870 at about 2600. By 1935, three generations later, it had dropped to about a fifth of that number, 500 individuals.[10] By 1935 also, well over 1000 Arrernte tjurunga were stored in the South Australian Museum, and another 500 were housed in the Museum of Victoria.[11] While there is no necessary correlation between the two sets of figures, it is clear that the single factor of European intervention in Central Australia and the simple and complex effects of that intervention accounted both for the declining Arrernte population and the growing collections in Adelaide and Melbourne.

It was not until the 1870s that Europeans began to encounter and make tentative descriptions of Central Australian sacred objects. The first discoveries were accidental, made during the phase of exploration centred on the western interior of Australia which followed the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line. It was this region, more particularly the MacDonnell Ranges and the deserts to the west, in which Aboriginal religious practice involving encoded stone and wooden slabs or tablets known as tjurunga was centred. The concerted attention paid to this region of Australia by explorers during the 1870s inevitably provoked the gradual revelation of these objects.

The Overland Telegraph Line and its stations became either the starting point or the destination of several expeditions during the 1870s and it is fitting perhaps, that the telegraph construction party itself may have been responsible for making the first collection of tjurunga. In January 1879, the South Australian Museum received several stone tjurunga as a donation from the medical officer attached to Todd's Overland Telegraph Construction Party, Dr Frederick E. Renner. If acquired during the telegraph construction itself, these objects may have been collected by Renner as early as 1870. They comprised 'ceremonial basaltic stones worked by the natives from Gorge nr. Alice's Springs (Temple Bar) & ditto schist from Mt Boothy [Boothby] Reynolds Range also a flint spear head'.[12] An indication that the tjurunga were discovered *in situ* is contained in the Museum Curator's report which noted the acquisition of these 'large flat stones worked by the natives found near Alice's Springs & from Mt Boothby, Reynolds Range'.[13]

The journals of the explorers Peter Egerton Warburton, John Forrest, and Ernest Giles each made reference to sacred objects, without comprehending their significance. During June 1873 Warburton made the first recorded discovery and collection of stone tjurunga, during his western traverse through the south-western part of the Tanami Desert. His journal entry reads:

> I sent the camels on, and went with one companion to the top of a small ironstone hill; the view was anything but cheerful. Found two stone slabs marked, and a round stone hidden in a hole on the top of the hill; brought them away as curiosities....[14]

Warburton reflected upon the significance of the objects, struck by the notion that they contained meaning of some kind, but was unprepared to make any hypothetical connection between them and living Aboriginal inhabitants. Publishing the journal during the same year, he added his own editorial comment:

> These slabs were thin, flat stones, measuring about fifteen inches by six, of an oblong shape, and rounded at the ends. They were marked with unintelligible scrawls, and were secreted in a hole from whence Colonel Warburton ferreted them out, in company with a spherical stone about the size of an orange. No clue could be gained as to what they meant, or why they were deposited there. Unfortunately, these interesting objects had to be thrown away before the termination of the journey.[15]

At his Camp 62, approximately 300 kilometres west of the Western Australian and South Australian border, John Forrest made the following observation on 15 July, 1874:

> We also found about a dozen pieces of wood, some six feet long and three to seven inches wide, and carved and trimmed up. All around were stones put up in the forked trees. I believe it is where the rite of circumcision is performed.[16]

Forrest did not record the collection of these objects. Further south, the explorer Ernest Giles came across a similar cache of decorated sacred boards during October 1875, as described in Chapter Four. With no inkling of their significance he assumed that these were 'two-handed swords'.[17] Again, no record of their collection was made.

An 1879 article describing seven 'Zauberholzer' ('wooden charms'), published in Germany by Richard Schomburgk (Director of the Adelaide Botanical Gardens), appears to be the first published reference to tjurunga, and the first to contain illustrations of these objects.[18] The objects may have been those referred to by Giles during his 1875 expedition. Like Warburton and other explorers of the period, Giles collected botanical specimens for Ferdinand von Mueller and may have used Schomburgk as an intermediary. Schomburgk's article noted that no Australian museum possessed examples of these objects at the time of publication, a clear indication that he had sent the seven 'Zauberholzer' out of the country. Ethnographic material collected by Schomburgk survives today in Vienna and Berlin.[19] In a note appended to Schomburgk's article the German ethnologist Rudolph Virchow observed that tjurunga had earlier been received by von Mueller in Australia, presumably from exploring expeditions which were supplying him with botanical specimens regularly by the 1870s. Schomburgk's assertion regarding Australian museum collections was incorrect at the time of publication, at least so far as the objects donated by Renner to the South Australian Museum were concerned.

Schomburgk's 1879 article was followed a year later by two notices on the subject of tjurunga in the *Journal of the Royal Society of South Australia*. The first concerned a set of rubbings of 'native wooden weapons showing incised ornament' which had been forwarded 'from the interior'. These were exhibited at a Royal Society meeting, attended by the Museum's Curator, Frederick Waterhouse, and by the University of Adelaide's Professor of Natural Science, Ralph Tate. In the first documented attempt to interpret the designs on tjurunga the unnamed collector of these rubbings had suggested that 'the concentric rings indicated the practice of sun worship by the people who ... carved them'.[20] Ralph Tate, who was to become a member of the 1894 Horn Expedition which was responsible for a documented theft of tjurunga in the MacDonnell Ranges, exhibited two examples of these objects at the same meeting. These had been

sent by a Mr Canham, of Stuart's Creek, south-west of Lake Eyre. Tate was unwilling to credit the tjurunga designs with any religious significance, but considered that their very symmetry precluded 'untutored' Aborigines from consideration as the makers:

> He rejected the notion that the figures are symbols, and held the opinion that they were intended for ornament. The two specimens exhibited showed a symmetry of pattern of at least three styles, and he said that symmetry is the first aim of barbarous nations in their attempt at ornamentation, whilst symbolic characters are to a very large extent dissimilar. To further speculate on their meaning, he considered, must be labour thrown away, and he very much doubted if they can be regarded as the production of the untutored aboriginal.[21]

A further donation of tjurunga, described by Amandus Zietz as 'magic wands with carved emblems' was made during November 1880 by Charles Tuckfield of Alice Springs. The provenance of additional ethnographic material donated by him, from Alice Springs, Barrow Creek and Finniss Springs, suggests an association with the Overland Telegraph Line.[22]

The Melbourne-based ethnologist Alfred Howitt was the first to discuss the broader significance of tjurunga and bullroarers in the ceremonial life of Aborigines. His examples were drawn from eastern Australia though, where tjurunga, as such, was not found. He first documented the bullroarer's role among the Kurnai of eastern Australia in 1884.[23] After Schomburgk and Tate, further published reference to the tjurunga of Central Australia was not made until 1891. In that year one of the pioneer Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg, Louis Schulze, defined the objects in their religious context for the first time. He wrote:

> the natives possess small disks of slate and wood, about as large as the hand, called tjurunga arkanoa (festival plates), which are secreted in caves and which neither woman nor child must see. Upon these various markings are engraved, which the respective old man to whom they belong alone understands, describing the whole meaning of his tjurunga, as to its origin and purport.[24]

This reference would finally have brought the objects to the attention of Edward Stirling at the South Australian Museum, if he was not already aware of them.

The references made by Zietz and Schultze to 'magic wands' and `festival plates' provide examples of the plethora of terms used to describe these objects before 'tjurunga' or 'churinga' became the accepted nomenclature, fixed by Stirling, Gillen and Spencer. In the collection lists and correspondence received by the South Australian Museum during the 1890s more than a dozen terms and phrases were applied to tjurunga. An early reference was made by the Assistant Director, Amandus Zietz, in an 1891 description of a collection obtained from another Hermannsburg missionary, W.F. Schwarz. Referring to scarcity as a measure of worth, Zietz described the tjurunga as 'native idols ... of great value as they are no longer made by the natives'.[25]

Other descriptive terms used for tjurunga during the 1890s included 'nigger stones', 'sacred woods', 'stone charms', 'birth stones', 'totem sticks', 'corroboree stones', 'corroboree badges', 'sacred emblems', 'descriptive sticks', 'soul stones', 'totem tablet stones', 'ceremonial boards', 'dream stones' and 'native

religious specimens'. With its jumble of inspiration deriving from North American, African, Asian, Ancient Greek and other sources, this varied terminology reflected the incapacity of European collectors in Australia to assimilate the significance of tjurungas beyond an initial, gross level of response. While the religious character of tjurunga and the connection with individual totemic affiliations was partly discerned, none of these terms reveal any inkling of the complexities of Aboriginal land relationships. This has greater significance when it is considered that tjurungas were already being removed from sacred storehouses by European stockmen employed on the new pastoral leases covering Arrernte territory at this time.

By the 1890s some pastoralists in Central Australia had become aware of Aboriginal sacred objects and in a few cases were tempted by the possibility of obtaining examples. Writing to the newly-appointed Secretary of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery in 1889, the pastoralist John Bagot related that he had

> seen with the natives in the neighbourhood of the Peake a large flat implement - made of similar wood to the large boomerang - but straight instead of curved - upon this flat stick (about 5 inches wide) were worked various ornamental devices in coloured clays, & it was used in their most important & mysterious ceremonies & dances (& not in the ordinary corroberries). The implement I refer to was carried by one of the chief men of the tribe, being held with both hands behind the back & the lower end being passed through the girdle worn by the performer. After the ceremony the implement was conveyed away to a secret place by its two custodians & the locality is constantly changed to prevent the place of hiding being discovered. I learnt that it was usually hidden on the top of high hills ... I tried to get possession of the implement I speak of at the Peake, but nothing would induce the natives to part with it.[26]

Three Tjurunga Collectors - Gillen, Cowle and Maurice

It is significant that no tjurunga made their way south to Adelaide to the Museum collections during the 1880s. A combination of factors may explain this. For complex reasons it apparently took more than a decade after first contact in the region for Aboriginal men to take the decision to begin trading their religious objects for flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, and steel axes. The 1880s was the most significant period of conflict, following initial contact. It was the decade in which the Mounted Constables Willshire and Wurmbrand etched the term 'dispersal' into the vocabularies of southern newspaper editors. An estimated 500 to 1000 Aboriginal people were shot in the Alice Springs pastoral district during the decade.[27] As Willshire himself later wrote: 'It's no use mincing matters - the Martini-Henry carbines at the critical moment were talking English in the silent majesty of those eternal rocks'.[28] During the relative peace which followed F.J. Gillen's arrest of Willshire for murder in February 1891, it is hardly surprising that a demoralised Arrernte population, anxious for an accommodation with European pastoralists and station managers, should have begun exchanging sacred objects for European artefacts and foodstuffs. One of the

first acquisitions of tjurunga by the South Australian Museum was received later in 1891 from R.F. Thornton, manager of Tempe Downs Station, scene of Willshire's last outrage in the region.

A week or so after Gillen's arrest of Willshire, the Museum Director, Edward Stirling, and South Australia's Governor, the Earl of Kintore, passed through Alice Springs. Among the 511 Aboriginal artefacts collected on this expedition Stirling brought back five objects described as 'corrobboree sticks', collected together with five 'corrobborree caps' at Alice Springs, apparently after a ceremonial performance organised by F.J. Gillen.[29] The 'sticks' may have been tjurunga; collected twenty years before the Museum's registration system was instituted by Stirling, their documented identity was not maintained. If they were tjurunga, they were probably the first such objects in the Museum's collection. Stirling's form letter of 1890 had not mentioned tjurunga, nor any other ceremonial material as such. The explanation for this omission does not lie in any oversight by museum collectors - their voraciousness was constrained only by the fact that these secret-sacred objects were still being carefully concealed by their Aboriginal custodians.

Stirling's meeting with Gillen during this 1891 expedition was of historic importance. As well as establishing a fruitful collecting relationship with the South Australian Museum, it provided the opportunity for Stirling to introduce Gillen to W. Baldwin Spencer three years later, on the occasion of the Horn Scientific Expedition. That subsequent encounter was the basis for the most famous partnership in Australian anthropological history, generating a series of classic publications. The first of these, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), included the first lengthy account of Arrernte sacred objects and ceremonies. But it was Edward Stirling's 'Anthropology' chapter in the *Report* of the 1894 Horn Expedition, published in 1896, which first brought tjurunga to the attention of scholars, collectors, and the public. According to his own account Stirling had already become aware of tjurunga by the time of the expedition. As he wrote in 1896:

> I knew also, before setting out on the Horn Expedition, that special value was attached to them, that they were made objects of mystery and concealment, and that they had some kind of connection with important rites and ceremonies. These facts made me very anxious to gain further information concerning them ....'[30]

It was the persistence of Stirling and the expedition's surveyor Charles Winnecke, later to become an avid collector of tjurunga, which secured these objects during the expedition. While Spencer and other members of the party were absent on a side-trip to Ayers Rock, Winnecke cajoled an Aboriginal guide, Racehorse, into revealing the location of a tjurunga storehouse near Haasts Bluff. According to Winnecke the existence of the site had been known to Europeans for some time:

> Many expeditions have started in search of this cave, but hitherto all have failed to find it, as nothing would induce the local natives to betray its whereabouts ... In the evening I questioned him [Racehorse], and, after a vast amount of evasion, elicited the information that a large number of corrobboree stones were hidden in a cave in the ranges to the eastward. I obtained knowledge of the exact position of this cave, and as these rare and interesting stones are of especial interest and

value to the ethnological department I have determined to visit this spot tomorrow.[31]

Of the sixty carved wooden boards and fifteen incised stones in the cave, Stirling and Winnecke removed over half the former and all of the latter, substituting 'tomahawks, large knives, and other things in their place, sufficient commercially to make the transaction an equitable exchange'.[32] The 'longed for curiosities' were divided between Stirling and Spencer for their respective museum collections. Stirling also documented his acquisition at Tempe Downs of 'smaller and less important sticks of the "bull-roarer" type'.[33] It is likely to have been these objects, or a few of them, which came into the geologist James Watt's possession and which were subsequently acquired by T.G.H. Strehlow after Watt's death in 1959.

Writing to Stirling in October 1894, Gillen reported that his own collection of stone tjurunga had 'been much increased' during the few weeks since the expedition's conclusion, but that Racehorse, the Aboriginal guide, faced an uncertain future, ironically forced to rely upon the protection of some of the principal perpetrators of tjurunga theft in the region: 'I hear Racehorse has had to seek permanent police protectn through showing your party where those chooringa (which you ruthlessly robbed!!) were deposited'.[34] While Gillen's correspondence suggests that Racehorse was still alive in 1897, T.G.H. Strehlow's 1930s' informants confirmed that he was eventually executed for his betrayal of the cache's locality.[35]

Stirling's account of the significance of tjurunga was eclipsed as soon as it was published. Gillen wrote to Spencer in August, 1896:

> I shall scorch Stirling about there being in his opinion "no great novelties to be discovered"[.] The Churinga are more than symbolic of the totems[,] they are symbols of the dead ancestors of these people[.][36]

Gillen was strongly motivated by the perception, shared with Spencer, that the stones would reveal a key to the mysteries of Aboriginal social structure and religion. Stirling was rigorously excluded from the unfolding conjecture which Gillen's letters to Spencer document during the months following the Horn Expedition. Despite this, he gathered every hint and crumb of information released by Gillen, and acknowledged the latter's superior knowledge.[37]

The Horn Expedition's collecting exploits were rapidly surpassed by Gillen, Cowle and other enthusiastic Central Australian officials. Even so, Stirling and Winnecke's combined account of their adventure stands as the first documented instance of a concerted effort by European scientists to target and collect particular Aboriginal objects. It marked a new phase in the history of artefact collecting in Australia. Spencer later wrote of this incident:

> It is regrettable that the true nature of the objects thus hidden away in a cave was not known at that time. We learned, later on, that the loss of these Churinga was very severely felt and mourned over by the natives, who remained in camp for two weeks, smearing their bodies over with pipeclay, the emblem of mourning ... The loss of Churinga is the most significant evil that could befall any local group ... Whatever may be the reason for it, the fact remains that on the few occasions on which we could find out that the Pertalchera had been robbed, the aggressors were white men. On

> each occasion also the natives killed the member of the tribe who had shown the spot to the white men.[38]

Three years elapsed between the Horn Expedition and Spencer and Gillen's realisation of the cultural and religious significance of tjurunga. Gillen had amassed a personal collection of over a hundred objects by the end of 1894, most stored in the inner sanctum of his den.[39] Arrernte men were well aware of the favour Gillen had done them in ridding the area of Mounted Constable Willshire, and the status which Gillen acquired through this action gave him the power to deal with sacred objects in a way previously unknown to Europeans in Central Australia. His curiosity about the function of tjurunga led him to explore several dimensions of their possible use. During 1896, for example, when Gillen was anxious to obtain advice on ceremonial rain-making from particular elders living at Arltunga, he was advised by a local elder to send two messengers with tjurunga stones wrapped in Emu feathers 'in approved fashion'. Gillen produced these stones from his own collection and in due course the Arltunga elders arrived, 'and were received by me with open arms; after clothing them they visited my den where ... they admired and I think Envied my collection'.[40]

Gillen was probably the first European to be invited to inspect tjurunga caches and to observe the ceremonies associated with these visits. On at least one occasion he witnessed a tjurunga being made, later sending an engraving tool to Spencer in Melbourne:

> Next mail I will send you the tool used for making Churinga - jaw bone of Opossum with incisor left in[.] I got several from an old fellow out at Mt Hay and sat with him for half an hour while he was making a Churinga - terribly slow work it was too .[41]

Taken by itself, this privileged status does not account for the rate of Gillen's acquisition of ceremonial artefacts, nor for the ceremonies which he witnessed and recorded at the Alice Springs telegraph station. The crucial point is that Gillen, as Strehlow was to do, had become a participant in Arrernte systems of reciprocity. This fact remains, despite the structural imbalance of colonial power relations in Central Australia, and despite Gillen's occasional abuse of the trust in which he was held. During 1895 he had reported to Spencer that

> [a] deputation of greasy Udnaorigurta brethren just ... informed me that they are prepared to allow me to photograph a corroboree this afternoon in return for a blowout of flour, tea & sugar. I have accepted their terms, generously adding sundry half sticks of tobacco if their get up be satisfactory.[42]

Gillen became an adept manipulator of the power of European commodities in eliciting both ceremonies and artefacts from Arrernte people, even succeeding in having the site of the epic Arrernte *ingkura* festival transferred from Imanda to Alice Springs itself. His official status as a distributor of government rations meant that he could manipulate these stocks to provide traditional payments, or *tjauerilja* toward this festival, which was recorded by Spencer and Gillen and lasted from September 1896 to February 1897.[43]

These transactions over sacred objects and ceremonies did not occur only within the confines of the telegraph station; as in Aboriginal custom, Gillen's network of reciprocity extended across large areas

of country. Shortly after Spencer's departure from Alice Springs after the Horn Expedition, Gillen wrote informing him that he had

> got a splendid lot of stone Chooringa together since you left including some from the Kytiche tribe[,] Barrow Creek ... Some Glen Helen natives are now En route with a selection from the tribe inhabiting that locality ... I have learnt that a number of Chooringa belonging to the Chichida tribe are deposited in a cave known to one of my Niggers and situated about 105 miles North West of here and I am about to arrange a little expedition to annex the whole collection.[44]

This and other accounts by Gillen make it plain that tjurunga were willingly brought to him over long distances, even as he contemplated 'annexing' objects apparently without sanction.

Gillen's motives for collecting were not entirely academic. Spencer sold a number of tjurunga to overseas museums on Gillen's behalf, augmenting the telegraph station master's income which was often in jeopardy through his stock-market ventures. Writing to Spencer in November 1895, Gillen proposed that '[i]f you succeed in disposing of those Chooringa stones to the Anthrop Institute [in London] I shall go in for a full plate camera ... and try my hand at taking Corroborees by Magnesium light'.[45] But if tjurunga-collecting was a means to an end, in Gillen's case the end was anthropology itself, not (to his wife's frustration) material well-being. As he confided to Spencer in May 1897, his ambition was to 'establish a record of the tribes right through the continent from the settled districts in the South to the settlements on the Northern Coast'. To realise this in the face of firm domestic opposition Gillen needed money: 'Holy Alcheringa what a collection I could get together if Providence would only move Tattersall in the right direction'.[46]

Lacking this intervention, Gillen enlisted other telegraph station staff in his tjurunga-collecting activities. During late 1895 his brother-in-law, Jack Besley, went with a group of 'hakea totem' Aborigines to 'get the stones from the hiding place about 40 miles N.N.E. of here [Alice Springs]'.[47] The Illamurta police-trooper Ernest Cowle became Gillen's and Spencer's main agent, conducting several raids on tjurunga store-houses during the period.

There seems little doubt that Cowle regarded this practice as consistent with his official brief to maintain an authoritative presence throughout the region. In fact, Gillen's letters make it clear that tjurunga collecting was employed as a means of social control during the 1890s. Referring to Cowle's exploits during July 1896, Gillen reported to Spencer that:

> he brought me no end of Churinga sticks and some stones[,] he has swooped down on several of their store houses and made a clean sweep of everything he could lay his hands on[.] I was of course glad to get the Sticks but I know with what great concern the Niggers will feel their loss and I have asked him not to do any more robbing unless in the way of punishment for serious offences such as cattle killing etc.[48]

Another example was documented by Gillen during August, 1896, when he wrote:

> I have in my possession the irula sticks used at the Mt Burrell ceremony[.] Cowle raided the store house and brought them in to me some time ago.[49]

More humane than his predecessors, Cowle's actions were nevertheless unclouded by sentiment. In a letter

to Spencer, he wrote: 'I am not advocating shooting for a moment in the so-called good old style but they should be made to respect the law of the land that has been taken from them'.[50] Cowle supplied Gillen with tjurunga until his posting to Moonta during 1899, and continued to supply Spencer at the Melbourne Museum until at least 1902.[51]

The allure of these objects was undimmed by the 1897 reprisal killing of an old man who had revealed the locality of a storehouse to Cowle. `This', Gillen confided to Spencer, `upset me terribly':

> I would not have it happen for 100 pounds and I am going to write Cowle strongly about the tjurunga business, there must be no more ertatulnga robberies. I bitterly regret ever having countenanced such a thing and can only say that I did so when in ignorance of what they meant to the natives - to fully realize this one requires to go as I did a few weeks ago ... and watch them reverently handling their treasures.[52]

As a result of this incident Gillen advised Cowle to return certain tjurunga to individual Aboriginal men. Gillen did not cease collecting tjurunga, but his letters to Spencer suggest that he no longer actively solicited the objects. During his next trip away from Alice Springs he was given three tjurunga by 'Yarumpa people', but was 'scrupulously careful not to hint that I wanted any and those I got were an entirely spontaneous offering'.[53]

Until 1897 Spencer and Gillen were, according to their records, the only white men who had seen tjurunga handled and used in ceremonies by the Arrernte.[54] Others, such as Warburton, Giles or Larry Wells, leader of the 1896-1897 Calvert Expedition, encountered the objects during their explorations, but gained only peripheral insights into their use. Wells' published account of his discovery of wooden bullroarers at Joanna Spring was informed by Gillen's descriptions:

> I found two bundles, each consisting of about 20 flat pieces of carved wood, with holes at one end. Thse ranged from very old ones to some made recently. They were hidden beneat some bushes with a bunch of leaves placed under either bundle to protect it from the ravages of whte ants. These pieces of wood are used during some of their mystic ceremonies, and, I believe, are similar to those described by Mr Gillen ("Bullroarers"). My boys informed me that they were used during the time of the initiation of young men, when a new one is made for each candidate; the old ones, they said, belonged to the old men. They are variously carved, and appear not to have had much usage, though weatherworn in proportion to their age. In all probability they are kept as records.[55]

The correspondence between Gillen and Spencer at this time is imbued with the secrecy surrounding the urgent task of unravelling the mysteries of Aboriginal ceremonial practice. Spencer and Gillen's definition of the Alcheringa as the paradigm for the Dreaming concept was arrived at during this period; tjurunga became a vital element in its construction. Terms such as `mysteries', the `key', `unlocking', occur with regularity in their correspondence, as do references to excluding other ethnographers from their quest, men like Edward Stirling, Erhard Eylmann and R.H. Mathews. Gillen drew others into his shared conspiracy, even from outside his circle of Centralian colleagues. The Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg proved unlikely allies. Gillen informed Spencer during 1896 that 'the missionaries have promised me that they would not give any information they got hold of to anyone else'.[56]

Gillen's most intense period of speculation came during and after his contribution to the Horn Expedition Report, as he became aware that his insights into the significance of tjurunga transcended those of the official anthropologist, Stirling himself. Gillen and Spencer realised that their investigations of these objects were taking them into uncharted anthropological territory: 'we are daily getting deeper into the mysterys [sic] of Aboriginal life and the deeper we get the clearer & more easy it will be to accomplish the work'.[57]. Gillen later gloated over this to his colleague:

> Wasn't it a great piece of luck that no one else ever thought of working out these stones[.] They always had a peculiar fascination for me and I shudder to think how little I would have got to know about them without your guiding brain - your seething brain - I reckon it would have seethed abit [sic] if old Stirling or Eylmann had got in ahead of us.[58]

Spencer and Gillen's notion that there were defined Aboriginal `secrets' which could be unlocked with a magic key was an identifiable characteristic of Australian and international anthropology of the period. Indeed the belief in a single element or artefact holding the key to a complex of challenging problems was not just the province of anthropology, or archaeology or psychology. It also found expression in the popular literature of the time, notably in those 'imperial texts', the novels of Rider Haggard. The Rider Haggard ethos, thriving today in the cinema, in which brave European men journey through forbidding country to unearth treasures and unlock mysteries to which even the savage tribes who guard them have lost the key, is revealed repeatedly in the diaries and correspondence of men such as Gillen and his main rival in tjurunga collecting, Richard Threlwall Maurice.

Maurice, the wealthy son of one of South Australia's richest landholders, Price Maurice, became a partner and confidante of Charles Winnecke, the Horn Expedition's surveyor. Winnecke's tjurunga exploit on that expedition evidently whetted his appetite for more excursions, but poor health prevented him from taking an active part in these. Instead, he provided his friend Maurice, a freelance explorer of independent means, with meticulously drawn maps and instructions to collect a range of natural historical, mineralogical and ethnographic material. Maurice made a series of expeditions from his base at Fowlers Bay during the 1890s. From 1896, when the description of the Horn Expedition tjurunga was published, until 1906, these expeditions had tjurunga collecting as their central theme.[59]

Maurice's search for the exotic led naturally to his quest for sacred objects. He and Winnecke shared Spencer and Gillen's belief that these objects, once decoded, might give vital clues as to the origins and distant history of the Aborigines. Lacking the scholarship or the application of his competitors, Maurice nevertheless had a distinctive notion of how this mystery might be solved:

> These interesting and intricate problems require a little thought. I think with the aid of my aboriginal notes, together with the dream stones, blacks, and sign language, to be able to connect them through Buddistic [sic] manipulations to the Asiatics & verify the theories of Eyre one of our most sensible & practical students in the Aboriginal customs etc.[60]

In another letter to Winnecke came Maurice's suggestion that 'the reason of young men making is as yet a mystery probably a Asiatic custom the reason for which is lost but may eventually be traced through the

dream stones'.[61] Gillen was not alone in positing that a 'key' to Aboriginal mysteries could be discovered in items of their material culture.

Maurice and Winnecke's partnership bears clear comparison with Spencer and Gillen's collaboration: a senior, qualified partner directed the field research of a gifted amateur conscious of his limitations. Winnecke's active encouragement of Maurice's data and specimen collecting and Maurice's eager responses mirror Spencer and Gillen's relationship. 'I do so hope', Maurice wrote to Winnecke in March 1899, 'you will be satisfied with my endeavours to collect information regarding the secret workings of the aboriginals'.[62] To Winnecke's suggestion that he assist Maurice with the publication of his data on the Aborigines, Maurice responded:

> Gillen & Spencer's scientific description of the semi-civilized Arunta tribe could not be surpassed. I have not the brains or patience to write a readable book and unless it could be made truly worth reading from the fact that the information was truly correct in every sense I would have nothing to do with it.[63]

Maurice had no direct contact with either Gillen or Spencer. He was undoubtedly influenced in this regard by Winnecke, who had fallen out with other members of the Horn Expedition of 1894.[64] Maurice did correspond with the ethnologist R.H. Mathews though, and informed Winnecke of this contact during 1900:

> Have written pages of blacks information to a man called Mathews in New South Wales who appears interested in the Australian Aboriginals. His questions to say the least are somewhat funny but then so are many of the town-bred investigators.[65]

Maurice's expedition to Central Australia in November and December 1898 provides a clear insight into his collecting methods and priorities. Accompanied by two Aboriginal guides from the Gawler Ranges and a camel team loaded with collecting gear and barter goods, Maurice reached the vicinity of Engoordina (Horseshoe Bend) on the Finke River in mid-November. It is clear from his correspondence with Winnecke before this trip began that Maurice had little notion of the form or function of tjurunga, interpreting Aboriginal references to tjurunga encoding Snake Dreamings as actual stone snakes, and so on. Outlining his programme to Winnecke, he wrote:

> Now to the future the programme is as follows: 1st. Obtain those stone snakes. 2nd. See the three sacred dream caves where I shall see the prints in stone of their hands & knees where ages ago they used to retire to dream - whatever that may be.[66]

Maurice soon appreciated his mistake and within the following four weeks he had witnessed several restricted ceremonies, including the native cat ceremony of Jay Creek (later recorded by Strehlow) and saw the part which tjurunga played in these events. His haul of stone tjurunga grew so heavy that in his correspondence from Hermannsburg to Winnecke he expressed concern that his camel team would be unable to transport it back to Fowlers Bay: 'the camels won't stand the stones at present & I know they will have a struggle with the weight they will carry away from here'.[67]

As a freelance explorer and collector Maurice was unencumbered by the standards of the scientific establishment. His notes on tjurunga show that he was largely self-taught and was learning as he went. The

mere rumour of another available cache of tjurunga was enough to stir him into action. On December 1st he wrote to Winnecke:

> Since leaving 'The Bend' I have obtained 'dream stones' all along and seen caves ... Tomorrow I am going to make a flying visit to the Fish Ponds [on the Finke] where some precious green stones & caves are guarded by blacks. The blacks hide their 'dream stones' in the most extraordinary places & two blacks are told off to guard each of these places - all lubras found near are killed. Besides obtaining these stones, I have witnessed the peculiar performances attached to their going to these places & their taking them out & putting them back.[68]

Maurice's reference to guards posted to watch over sacred storehouses does not accord with what is known of traditional practice, in which clear and readily enforced taboos relating to these sites were sufficient to prevent pilfering or trespass. In view of the status of the area surrounding these storehouses as a sanctuary in which no food could be hunted or gathered, it is likely that these guards were a recent phenomenon, temporary sentries posted when it was known that Europeans were about. The question of how Maurice was able to obtain tjurunga despite these guards and without apparent bloodshed, is more difficult. An answer may lie in the fact that each storehouse contained what might be termed 'active' and 'inactive' tjurunga - those which embodied living individuals and those which were dormant until a newly born individual's conception site coincided with that embodied by the tjurunga. It is possible to imagine Aboriginal men who would not part with tjurunga embodying living people, being prepared to barter these 'inactive' tjurunga for European goods. It is quite evident though, that Maurice either ignored or did not comprehend these niceties. He was gripped by the romance of the chase and saw the possibility of outdoing Gillen at his own game.

Maurice's correspondence indicates that Gillen continued to collect sacred objects even after his 1897 'revelation' about their significance. During November 1898 Maurice wrote to Winnecke of his successes at Horseshoe Bend on the Finke:

> This afternoon I am to be taken to a cave where there is a big stone (dream stone) which Mr Gillon [sic] has not seen ... These blacks are very easy to work and Bob [Maurice's Aboriginal guide] is very anxious for me to beat Mr Gillon in specimen getting. I am bound to secrecy not to tell Gillon ... I am running Gillon close & as far as the Bend is concerned two (2) better.[69]

During early December 1898 Maurice was brought some tjurunga by Aboriginal (presumably Arrernte) men, 'the whole of the sacred stones of Eura'. He observed that 'the bush blacks returned with the stones & said Gillon [sic] has got one like the smallest of the set of Eura'.[70]

Two months later the large tjurunga at Horseshoe Bend still eluded Maurice. He wrote to Winnecke: 'We must try and get that big stone at the Horse Shoe Bend, it is the dream stone of all dream stones but its such a weight & kept so carefully guarded - a bag of flour won't buy it'.[71]

On a later expedition, in the vicinity of Lake Amadeus, Maurice showed that, unlike Gillen, increasing knowledge of the tjurunga's place within Aboriginal culture did not dampen his collecting spirit. His unpublished account of the expedition, titled 'Across the Great Thirst Land', contains this entry:

> we packed up and restarted after adding to our party one of the men whom we found camped on this spot, and who said he would take us to another water called Poorquinna, en route to which were concealed some sacred native relics of which he was the guardian. I promised him through Munjena, a big reward if he would procure some of these precious relics. I obtained a few, one of which was subsequently valued in Adelaide at L200 but a celebrated ethnologist [likely to have been Gillen] stated that my life would not be worth a moment's purchase were I to return to the spot, firstly because I had seen it, and secondly because I had taken away one of the sacred relics.[72]

Despite gathering several camel-loads of tjurunga, Maurice was frustrated by Cowle's influence in Central Australia. During January 1900 he expressed doubt that he would obtain many 'till I am out of Cowle's track - he appears to have been all over the country & ought to have a good collection of Dream stones'.[73] In fact Maurice had already discovered another collecting field, so far untouched by competitors. His 1898-99 expedition had taken him though the Everard and Musgrave Ranges and had resulted in a collection of sacred stones as well as secular artefacts.[74] In a buoyant letter to Winnecke dated 4 August 1901, following an expedition to the Musgrave Ranges, he wrote:

> There are no fresh specimens to my knowledge so intend sending them to the Museum. Next winter I sincerely hope to get a good collection as I intend tackling the north country with blacks if all goes well ... They promise next winter to collect the whole Musgrave tribe, show me the sacred stones, the cutting [circumcision] etc & they particularly want me to join them in visiting the Tomkinson and Mann Range ... & killing the cheeky blacks.[75]

Like Gillen, who eventually donated or sold much of his collection to the South Australian Museum (as well as to the National Museum of Victoria), Maurice was to lodge his collection in Edward Stirling's care. In the meantime, he shared Gillen's perception of the Adelaide Museum as a place for surplus objects from the private collection which he and Winnecke were building.

Maurice succeeded in keeping his collecting excursions secret from Gillen; the latter apparently only became aware of these after reading the details of Maurice's donation of his own and Winnecke's collections to the South Australian Museum during December 1902.[76] Gillen wrote to Spencer:

> Stirling has poached the whole of Winnecke's collection ... It would be interesting to Know how Maurice came by those very fine Ceremonial Churinga. I suppose he stumbled upon an Ertnatulinga and lifted the lot. You and I have been too scrupulous.[77]

Crisis or Accommodation: The Acquisition of Tjurunga at Hermannsburg during the 1920s and 1930s

One of the earliest characterisations of tjurunga, those collected by the Hermannsburg missionary W.F. Schwarz, was as 'native idols'. On the contested ground between the Aboriginal societies of Central Australia which focused their expression of sacrality in objects, and a European religion which defined itself in opposition to idolatry, it was inevitable that tjurunga would become prominent and controversial

elements. Lutheranism at Hermannsburg was quick to marginalise Aboriginal ceremonial practice and sacred objects as problematic, beyond toleration. Carl Strehlow's rejection of the tenets of Arrernte religion was such that he refused to witness any ceremonies at all and banned all performances from the mission 'block'.

Faced with this bewildering intransigence, the strict maintenance of religious and ceremonial practice among the Arrernte during the 1920s and 1930s was extremely difficult. This fact was documented by T.G.H. Strehlow in his published and unpublished writings. Arrernte men had other, uncomfortable choices thrust upon them. With the unwavering opposition of the Lutherans towards 'tjurunga worship' on the one hand, and the growing interest of metropolitan collectors on the other, it is not surprising to find that tjurunga became negotiable commodities for many Arrernte during this period. The circulation of tjurunga, previously bounded within the domain of Central Australia's sacred topographies, began to spill into the undefined territory of European transactions. Gifts, barter and outright sale of tjurunga all assisted in expanding the interactions between Arrernte and Europeans.

Even further, particular individuals such as Albert Namatjira negotiated, not just with the objects themselves, but with their form, content and symbolism. Tjurunga designs became incorporated within Aboriginal art produced for European consumption during the 1930s, an early indicator of the Western Desert painting movement. The largest irony was that the Lutherans themselves became directly involved in projecting the tjurunga and its sacred meaning into the European world.

Like Spencer and Gillen, Cowle, Byrne, Maurice and Stirling, the Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg became drawn into the competition for knowledge of Arrernte ceremonial life. Pastor Carl Strehlow, father of T.G.H. Strehlow, was the main participant, following his transfer from the Lutheran Mission on Cooper's Creek in 1895. Like his fellow missionary at Killalpaninna, Pastor Reuther, Strehlow's motives in gaining access to ceremonial knowledge were initially a reflection of his training as a Lutheran missionary. Reuther's justification of his ethnographic researches could be applied equally to Strehlow: 'in my opinion, a missionary without a thorough knowledge of the language and customs of his people, is, in the best instance, like a watch that works but without hands'.[78]

And so during his first years at Hermannsburg Strehlow gave services in the Arrernte language, worked on an Arrernte translation of the New Testament, and forbad increase, rain-making and other ceremonies in the vicinity of the Mission. In the words of his son, Carl Strehlow `tried to crush all ceremonies with every means at his disposal until 1904'.[79] His campaign against Arrernte religion focused on the concept of the Alcheringa, of which the tjurunga were the touch-stones. During this period tjurunga came to symbolise the old religious beliefs which were under frontal attack from the mission. Aware of their potency, Carl Strehlow confiscated tjurunga when the opportunity arose and sold them to German museums, using the money on at least one occasion in a symmetrical substitution to purchase altar cloths and vestments for the mission church. During the next thirty years, the act of passing tjurunga to the

missionaries was transparently an act of capitulation, rather than adjustment. A clear choice was being made.

Even after 1904, when Carl Strehlow softened his stand considerably against Arrernte religion, and took an active interest in recording aspects of it, older Arrernte men continued to bring their tjurunga to him. The South Australian Museum's collection, obtained from Strehlow in 1914, contains more than ninety sacred objects. When Strehlow took three years furlough from 1910-1913, his place was taken by Oskar Liebler, described by T.G.H. Strehlow in *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* as `a born comedian who lacked all sense of humour ... [who] ... quickly became a laughing stock to his dark congregation'.[80] This did not prevent Liebler from amassing a remarkably comprehensive collection of more than 2,000 secular and sacred artefacts during his brief stay at the Mission, which he sold to British and German museums as well as to the South Australian Museum. It seems clear that with the decline of ceremonial life and the tremendous uncertainties of the new European regime in Central Australia, Arrernte people at Hermannsburg were seeking solidity in their relations with Europeans by trafficking in their most valued possessions.

Liebler described his acquisition of tjurunga in his quaint English: 'As never the blacks show ceremonial tjurunga marks to white strangers nor their wifes, they only in dark nights secretly bring those seldom specimen articles to us to sell it for money or for large amounts of rations'.[81] Liebler went to considerable lengths to document those tjurunga which he obtained. He was among the first collectors to make specific reference to the links between tjurunga and particular sites, ascribing the objects in his collection to specific, named caches and, more significantly, recognising that individual Aboriginal people 'belonged' to tjurunga, rather than *vice versa*. One of his tjurunga descriptions, sent to Stirling in February 1914, read:

> He belongs to a stone churinga = tjurunga with nice carvings [drawn] this is the nest of the flying ants, [drawing] = the road of the ants. He is from the place iluntja and is called "Tonanga" Totem of the flying ants. Iluntja is in the MacDon Ranges near Mr Ragatts Cattle Station: Glen Helen which layes north or jinerala (= in the north) of Hermannsburg, our Finke River Mission Station
> ...
> tjurunga stones are called dalkara.[82]

While the very existence of the Arrernte people had been threatened by violence during the 1880s, the following decade saw a series of incursions on the traditions and religious life of these people. At no time during this period were the Arrernte united as a bloc against European influence, nor did the various European groups and individuals present themselves to Aborigines as a single, invasive entity. T.G.H. Strehlow has done more than anyone to describe the shifting pattern of alignments among the Arrernte sub-groups during this period of intense stress. It was inevitable, as the evidence in Maurice's correspondence suggests, that Aboriginal people would align themselves with and against various Europeans as opportunities arose, particularly when those opportunities arose in the process of obtaining access to

Aboriginal ceremonial knowledge.

Following Carl Strehlow's death in 1922 and the appointment of F.W. Albrecht in 1925, the mission's fight against Arremte religious practice continued in earnest. According to T.G.H. Strehlow, `tjurunga worship' was publicly ridiculed at Hermannsburg. Whereas his predecessors had apparently respected the requirement of secrecy which applied to tjurunga, Albrecht displayed the objects which he had been given by old men on the verandah of his house, somewhat like trophies, and made them available for sale to the small but growing numbers of white visitors and tourists who passed through the mission. The psychologist Stanley Porteus observed this during his time spent at the mission in 1929. He considered the factors involved to be the economic pressures on the Arremte resulting from the long drought of the 1920s and the likelihood that certain tjurunga had 'passed into the possession of surviving totems' who may not have valued them 'to the same degree as they value their own'.[83]

Porteus also considered the rise of Christianity among the Arremte, but did not consider this a major factor in the sale of tjurunga to Europeans, confessing that 'their disposal for gain is still somewhat surprising'.[84] Despite this, the historical sources suggest religious adjustment as an important explanation during Albrecht's era, coupled with a form of economic opportunism on the part of Aboriginal men, which had manifested itself during Strehlow and Liebler's time. Albrecht's biographer describes a typical transaction during the early 1930s:

> he sat with old Loritja men to write down the stories connected with the tjurungas they sometimes brought to the store to sell, noticing the eagerness in their eyes and voices as they explained the stones and their engravings. Sometimes they became so unconscious of their surroundings that, in the midst of speaking Aranda, they would lapse into Loritja without realising it. As he gently reminded them to tell him the story in Aranda, he asked himself if they would ever be so gripped by Christianity as to speak of it with such zeal.[85]

As the most visible sign of this fundamental adjustment to the 'New Way' these tjurunga next appeared on the verandah of Albrecht's house at Hermannsburg or in the mission store, joining other curios which were available for sale. In June 1928, when Albrecht asked for an offering as an expression of gratitude for the arrival of Carl Strehlow's Arremte New Testament, he was astonished by the numbers of artefacts brought to him:

'Spears, boomerangs, shields, stone axes, stone knives, strings of human hair, red bean necklaces and some sacred artefacts were brought in as the days passed and many expressed their happiness in being able to bring such an offering to God'.[86] The private possessions, including the most secret objects, of particular Arremte individuals, became public, operating as generic indicators of an entire culture.

There was little active resistance from the Arremte ceremonial leaders to this process, although it is worth noting that many years later Strehlow recorded the fact that Arremte elders believed that the scurvy epidemic of 1929 was direct retribution for allowing Albrecht to open sacred storehouses.[87] But the main ceremonial leader for the Hermannsburg site, Loatjira, had left the mission during Carl Strehlow's

time rather than capitulate to the missionary's edict on ceremonies and had returned only as a very old man. As T.G.H. Strehlow put it, with the

> shocking depopulation of the Aranda area since the coming of the whites, all Aranda men in the 1920s - and certainly after the coming of the railway line to Alice Springs in 1929 - must have asked themselves, was there any use in learning verses, or performing acts, when not only the old religion but the whole of the Aranda population seemed destined to perish within another thirty years or so. Disasters such as the Spanish Influenza epidemic in 1919 and the Scurvy Epidemic at Hermannsburg in 1928/29 shook everyone's faith in survival itself....[88]

In a letter to the press Albrecht himself wrote:

> They are drifting in because the white man's teaching is shaking their religious beliefs, and undermining their social organization. Their unbounded faith in magic is being shattered by the ridicule that the whites pour into them. The native has arrived at the stage when he willingly parts with his most sacred *tjurunga* and other ceremonial objects to the whites for a little tea or sugar, flour or clothing, and having done so means the end of his old beliefs and of ever reviving them again.[89]

The combination of a cowed and battered Arrernte population at Hermannsburg during the 1920s and the arrival of an energetic, uncompromising missionary underlined the extent of the dilemma facing young Arrernte men. By the late 1920s Albrecht had an additional strategem - the small band of `native evangelists' who practised their new Christianity with a vigour which seems to parallel that of the native police in previous decades. These men, more than the missionaries themselves, selected tjurunga as a target.

In 1927 an Australia-wide outcry greeted the news that members of a tourist party of returned servicemen (Reso), travelling by motor-car convoy from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs, had removed a number of tjurunga from a storehouse near Ooraminna after being led there by an Aboriginal guide in the company of the Oodnadatta policeman. The tjurunga had been taken back to Melbourne by the group. Subsequent public appeals by the Archbishop of Melbourne, other church leaders and even the President of Melbourne's Prehistoric Club, could not secure their return and a member of the group, D.H. Dureau, ultimately lodged the objects in the Melbourne Museum. This 'sacrilegious vandalism', as the ethnographer Herbert Basedow termed it, was defended by the Oodnadatta policeman, Virgo, who maintained that it was 'a misnomer to call the objects "sacred stones" as they do not appertain to God or any religion, and are not holy'.[90]

The episode is analogous with the Horn Expedition's desecration of the Haasts Bluff cache, a generation earlier. In contrast though, the Reso incident was seized upon by the Melbourne and Adelaide media; it was possibly the first occasion on which European collectors of Aboriginal objects were publicly criticised for their actions. The journalists' enthusiasm for the issue obscured their view of its complexities. Writing from the Birdsville Track, the collector and retired police-trooper George Aiston was dismissive of official attempts to prevent the acquisition of tjurunga by collectors in cases where Aboriginal people themselves were initiating these transactions: ' No good will be done by the argument ... the only thing is that now the churingas will be buried in the sand and so lost for ever as the different clans or sections die

out'.[91]

The Reso incident may be contrasted with events taking place over the following two years at Hermannsburg, in which the Aboriginal evangelist Blind Moses exhorted his people to give up their tjurunga in a sermon entitled 'Churinga or Christ?'.[92] This initiative was reported in the *Observer* as the 'black evangelist['s] ... shrewd blow at the whole framework of magic which supports native law and custom'.[93] The Manangananga Cave episode of early 1928, engineered by Pastor F.W. Albrecht soon after his arrival at Hermannsburg, was a more extraordinary event, symbolising the sweeping changes which had occurred within a generation.

This cave, a storehouse for tjurunga, lies about two kilometres north of Hermannsburg. Carl Strehlow, even at his most repressive, had respected its sanctity and the fact that it was forbidden to women and children. Albrecht saw the symbolic value in breaking its taboo and after consulting his evangelists and other elders, arranged for the entire population of Hermannsburg to hold a Sunday service and picnic at the site. The tjurunga were taken from the cave and placed before the congregation, a fire was made under a large copper brought from the mission, and the people drank tea and sang hymns. Blind Moses gave his 'Churinga or Christ?' sermon, and Albrecht preached also, about Moses and Aaron and the Golden Calf, likening tjurunga to the Golden Calf. In the words of an Arrernte woman recalling the event many years later,

> Everybody was watching, man and woman and young girls and young boys ... everybody watching for the cave, little bit frightened. Before service, took stones out and put them on the ground. Everybody sat in big circle, and stones were put in the middle ... First time we bin see that stone ... Old man [Albrecht] start those opening words. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, then everybody relax, we start to sing hymn. Then he preached about Moses and Aaron and the golden calf. Tjurungas were like the golden calf. Old man preach and everybody look up, yes, that's really true ... We bin think about God make us free. Yes, stones very frightening for Aboriginal people, that's why Pastor Albrecht go there....[94]

The Manangananga Cave episode undoubtedly succeeded as a highly charged and cathartic event intended to reinforce the power of Christianity to liberate the Arrernte from the apparent tyranny of their own religion. Five years later, when T.G.H. Strehlow accompanied the Hermannsburg population on another pilgrimage to the site, he observed that:

> No visible trace of timidity had remained even amongst the oldest people there present. This is only the second visit of the congregation hither since the knaribatas permitted this bulwark to fall. They have also decided, just a short while ago, to abandon the marriage-class system, so as not to prevent people from marrying who have no class-husband or wife available.[95]

The period from 1928-1934 saw an accelerated erosion of the influence of traditional religion at Hermannsburg. Significantly, this period also witnessed the most concentrated scrutiny directed towards Hermannsburg by visitors, researchers and collectors in its history. The outstanding feature was the combined attention paid to the mission by Melbourne and Adelaide-based artists and anthropologists. Arthur Murch, the Teague sisters and Jessie Traill preceded Rex Battarbee as artists with a particular

interest in the Centre's landscapes. The mission was also visited by the German anthropologist Geza Roheim during 1928, by the Adelaide-based Board for Anthropological Research during 1929, by the ethno-musicologist Harold Davies and the psychologist Porteus, and then by T.G.H. Strehlow during 1932 on his first return to Central Australia since his father's death. Other visitors, collectors and travel-writers such as A.S. Kenyon, S.R. Mitchell and R.H. Croll, helped to blur the distinction between the aesthetic concerns of the artists and the applied research of the anthropologists.

In Albrecht's view the anthropologists were a subversive presence, prepared to reward individuals for objects and performances of songs and ceremonies (Harold Davies paid one shilling per song for example). But the work of these researchers was tolerated and even actively assisted by Albrecht, who was confident that their elicitation and encouragement of traditional song and ceremony would not jeopardise the Arrernte's Christian destiny and, indeed, would help to publicise the mission's financial dilemma. J.B. Cleland of the Board for Anthropological Research combined with the Melbourne artists in helping to raise funds for the Koporilja pipe-line venture which made the mission self-sufficient in potable water for the first time.[96] Albrecht's encouragement of traditional and new crafts at Hermannsburg should be seen in this context. While Tindale purchased large numbers of traditional Arrernte artefacts, including many tjurunga, from Albrecht and the Hermannsburg school-teacher, H.A. Heinrich, a new trade was developing in poker-work objects, particularly mulga plaques and boomerangs. Faced with the obvious disparity between the traditional and the recent, these objects were ignored by Tindale. His focus was on the Arrernte's past traditions and to that end he had brought with him from the Museum more than 100 tjurunga which had been collected by Winnecke, Maurice, Gillen and others at least three decades earlier. A newspaper report noted that 'interesting confirmatory data were obtained by exhibiting these to old Arunta and Luritya men. In most cases the information agreed in all essentials with that collected with the specimens'.[97]

Even if museum anthropologists were able to maintain it, the gap between the categories of traditional and recent artefacts rapidly narrowed. During the 1930s the contradictions which lay beneath the surface of Arrernte social practice in the mission environment generated a series of anomalous transactions between Aborigines and Europeans. Sacred objects became commodities for tourists, and tourist art took on some of the characteristics of sacred objects. Sixteen tjurunga, objects which had been forbidden to the sight of women, passed easily into the hands of the Melbourne artist Una Teague on her visit to Hermannsburg in 1933.[98] A few months later the founder of Ernabella Mission, Charles Duguid, visited Hermannsburg and purchased the following items at the cash store: 'a snake skin for 5s [shillings], two stone knives at 2s each, a message stick for 6d, and two ceremonial beaters for 2s 3d ... some of the women's fancywork for 19s 6d and three stone tjurungas for 15s, together with their stories which Albrecht wrote out for him'.[99] It was at this time that Albert Namatjira began experimenting with poker-work mulga plaques depicting tjurunga designs.[100]

By 1931 Arrernte men were manufacturing tjurunga for sale to tourists in Alice Springs. Informed

by his network of outback acquaintances and resolutely committed to standards of authenticity, the Birdsville Track store-keeper George Aiston confided to a friend:

> A lot of that stuff you are getting from Hermannsburg is made while you wait and is absolutely meaningless, any young blackfellow will make you a Churinga or a phalllic stone or a stone god if you tell him what you want up there now. The whole of the blacks in that district are spoiled and anything that comes from there now is almost sure to be faked.[101]

Strehlow later wrote of the 'feeling of hopelessness which accounted for failure of men who were still in their twenties and thirties in the 1930s to take any care in preserving even the tjurunga that had been entrusted to their care by their anxious elders, when failing in health'.'[102]

Despite this, the passing of tjurunga to missionaries or to tourists, together with other forms of religious accommodation, can be regarded not only as a reaction to social change, but, where that change was viewed by Aboriginal people as positive, as a means of facilitating it. During his 1932 trip through Northern Arrernte country, T.G.H. Strehlow's cameleer Tom Ljonga reported to him that

> the men everywhere wanted to sell their tjurunga to the whites, and to settle down like white men: the only reason for their walkabout was their duty to protect the sacred caves. Now they would sell not newly manufactured tjurunga but the really old treasures made by the erilknabata, so that they could change their old ways of living....[103]

Witnessing these historic decisions, Strehlow could do no more than acquiesce and undertake to preserve the objects safely, while recording the deep frustration and sadness of those involved. He wrote in his journal:

> the Tjilpa man had given Tom [Ljonga] a slightly different version of the Jiramba tradition this morning; and Tom was thoroughly disgusted: 'Many countries, many stories, many lies', he exclaimed. In fact, what was the use of tjurunga in the caves? He was disillusioned, and strangely moved, like a white man who has felt everything that he relied on giving way under his feet. 'Sell the tjurunga, I say, sell them, get rid of them. They won't make manna while they are lying in the caves; sell them to the whites and get some manna that way'.[104]

Mission policy at Lutheran Hermannsburg during the 1930s differed markedly from that of the Presbyterian Mission at Ernabella, where it was assumed from its foundation in 1936 that 'there should be no compulsion in religion; that Christian living should be exemplified by the white missionaries in their daily life and that it be left to the aborigines to make the change if they judged our way better than theirs'.[105] This approach was emphatically rejected at Hermannsburg. According to the policy which Albrecht inherited from his predecessor, Carl Strehlow, Aboriginal people were forbidden from taking part in ceremonies if and when they became Christians. While there were occasions between 1928 and 1934 when Albrecht allowed brief expressions of Arrernte traditional religion at Hermannsburg, these were strictly associated with external stimuli and provoked strong protests from Aboriginal Christians and reinforced Albrecht's determination to continue his ban on these activities.[106]

While ethnographic collectors played a crucial role in separating tjurunga and other ceremonial paraphernalia from their original sacred contexts, making them available for radically different uses, the

process was hastened by the attention paid to sacred objects by European collectors, artists and designers. During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s the concentric circle motif of the Arrernte tjurunga found its way onto a wide range of secular European objects, from book covers and ceramics to caravan curtains. Perhaps the most public incorporation of Aboriginal sacred motifs within European design forms occurred with the commissioning of bas-relief sculpture panels on the upper walls of Sydney's Central Station saloon bar.

The incorporation of Aboriginal symbols within European art and design had an added poignancy which was reflected most strongly in the work of the Victorian artist and sculptor, William Ricketts. Ricketts had visited Hermannsburg during the mid-1930s and had spent time there with T.G.H. Strehlow, from whom he learnt first-hand of the virtual cessation of Arrernte ceremonial life. His Dandenongs 'sanctuary' with its clay sculptures still reflects this 1930s perception of a doomed race, noble in defeat[107]. Among the numerous clay sculptures of Arrernte men, women, children and native animals are entwined tjurunga motifs, serving both as markers of authenticity and as epitaphs. In one remarkable, forceful sculpture an Arrernte Jesus hangs crucified on a cross made of engraved tjurunga.

Despite their best efforts, Ricketts, Preston and other artists and museum curators who incorporated sacred objects within their exhibitions were assisting in a seemingly inevitable process which accompanied the modern colonial experience. The appropriation, desanctification, and subsequent incorporation of Arrernte tjurunga and their motifs within European contexts illustrates this process. As Kubler has expressed it:

> The triumph of one culture over another is usually marked by the virtual cessation of the art of the vanquished, and its replacement by the art of the conqueror. When the offending objects and monuments finally cease to correspond to any living behaviour, they become symbolically inert. They then are 'safe' to play with in recombinations emptied of previous vital meanings, as in tourist souvenirs, antiquarian reconstructions, or archaizing revivals.[108]

There is a core of truth in this analysis when applied to the Arrernte situation. Ceremonial life did greatly diminish in the region, particularly after the 1930s. T.G.H. Strehlow worked harder and harder to elicit ceremonial performances for the following four decades. More than that, young men such as Albert Namatjira actively participated in the process of making tjurunga 'symbolically inert', by manufacturing souvenir replicas, or by calling for the surrender of these objects to the missionaries and to collectors.[109]

There seems no question that Arrernte leaders came to regret some of the religious concessions which they had made during the 1920s and 1930s. By 1955 for example, the taboo on Mananganaga Cave was in place again; its violation was being suggested as the cause of the devastating scurvy epidemic which had occurred at Hermannsburg during 1929.[110] It is worth noting that Albert Namatjira, whose main totemic centre was Mananganaga Cave, lost a child to scurvy during this epidemic.[111]

Rapacity and Solicitude

In characterising the attitudes of tjurunga collectors to their objects during the period from the 1890s to the 1930s an evident shift may be detected. In several collectors, notably Gillen and Spencer, this change took barely three years. The realisation of the significance which tjurunga held for Aborigines caused several collectors to reflect on their own motives. Where this occurred, the rapacity of some collectors, through which the acquistion of objects was justified by any lengths, was at least partly replaced by a solicitude for the cultural loss which these transactions represented to Aboriginal people.

Incidents such as the Reso Affair of 1927 crystallised these thoughts for several collectors. Herbert Basedow, who had single-mindedly pursued the acquisition of 'phallic stones' during his previous expeditions, spoke out publicly for the return of the Reso tjurunga.[112] Basedow's assumption that these particular objects were 'live' rather than 'dead' or abandoned was supported by the Victorian ethnographer/collector, A.S. Kenyon, who undertook a campaign for their return. He inspected the Reso tjurunga in Melbourne and stated that they 'were greased and hence 'alive'. Being kept 'soft', i.e. good tempered or fed, is I understand the abo. explanation'. Kenyon's correspondence on the subject with the Adelaide geologist L. Keith Ward represents one of the first attempts to deal thoughtfully with the vexed question of the destiny of sacred objects whose original context might never be retrieved. His provocative suggestion that many of the tjurunga in museums might have been ceremonially 'dead' at the time of their collection has still not been adequately addressed. He wrote: 'As to 'dead' Churingas I have a dozen or more, our Museum say a hundred or two and yours [Adelaide] about a thousand, some at least of which are the usual Mission Station fakes'.[113]

Writing in 1932, Daisy Bates indicated that her acquisition of tjurunga and bullroarers, which had proceeded at Ooldea since at least 1919, was not undertaken lightly. Bates' own claim that she was not 'a curio collector' appear to be largely borne out, although she inevitably acquired sacred material over the years. The background to this collecting has been detailed above. During 1932, when she realised that her time at Ooldea was drawing to a close and that she should find a more secure home for the objects which had been passed to her, she finally broke her own rule against selling objects to museums. In her efforts to explain the weight of this decision to the South Australian Museum Director, Herbert Hale, she gave one of the few extant accounts of the transfer of sacred objects:

> the making of these things takes some time. The wood must be picked from root or stem, then chipped and chipped to the desired thinness. Then rounded and pointed and trimmed along the sides (the point is the face and the broad end the head of the totem) and the grooving of the totem symbol (or symbols) will be done by two or three whose totems are associated with each other. There is always a little ceremony connected with the presentation. They bring the larra, get some green small branches usually of mallee if it is near, and place the larra face downward (grooving downward) on its green bed. Then more green branches are placed on top, each man holds a green

branch in his hand. Then one comes and with a sort of "st" (hist) draws my attention, and when I go out, he rubs his nose with one or two fingers. I follow him to the place where the larra is lying, picking a green branch off a tree as I go. The others are sitting down round the larra, I go to it and squat down, and "flicking" my branch along it for a little. At this they "shiver" a little because the spirit of the totem symbols is either going into my heart with the other totem spirits, or is going out of my heart into the larra as mine. I presently catch hold of it and turn it over. Then we talk of the totem groovings and each man shows me his work on it and names the symbols. There is always this little ceremony, and when they come with these things, when I hear the "st", whatever work I am doing, I drop and go at once to them. These little observances mean a great deal to these poor fellows. There must be no hurry or the spirit of the totem within the larra might be angry (bee'gain'yi angry). I carry it gently in my boughshed, and give them the promised payment, no matter how many may come and all go away quite satisfied.[114]

As with T.G.H. Strehlow and George Aiston, an element of Bates' solicitude for 'her' natives lay in the fact that as each year passed she lost more of her old Aboriginal friends and confidantes. This fact and her own ageing (she was seventy-two years old when she wrote the letter above), as much as the obvious changes being wrought throughout the outback landscape by mechanisation and steady European expansion, may account for her solicitude. Bates knew also that the same Aboriginal men who solemnly passed sacred objects to her were 'jumping the rattler' to visit stations along the East-West line where ceremonial life was being actively pursued. Her role was not to engage in or document such activity, but to preserve the objects and lore entrusted to her. This task had become increasingly hazardous during the late 1920s and 1930s, when even the railway staff ('those spoon-fed railway men') posed a threat to Bates' carefully guarded cache and her discreet efforts to forward objects to the Museum.

The issue of misappropriated sacred objects was sufficiently prominent during the 1930s for the motives of vendors to be officially questioned. While Albrecht's sales of tjurunga at Hermannsburg were never scrutinised, the same did not apply with the emerging artefact trade at Ooldea. This was probably due to the fact that journalists had already drawn attention to the exploitation of Aboriginal fringe camps along the East-West railway line during the 1930s and 1940s. As superintendent responsible for the Ooldea Mission which was established on Daisy Bates' departure in 1934, Harrie Green became the principal vendor of sacred objects in the region. He wrote to the Board for Anthropological Research member and collector, Professor T.H. Johnston, offering tjurunga to the Museum:

we are wondering if you are requiring any real genuine curios, which have not just been made for sale. We are in a position to provide these if you are interested.

Just recently we acquired a few very fine specimens of the native totem poles, known as Yinna. These are particularly sacred to the men only and these we have here are decorated with native paintings in some cases including smears of human blood. They range in size from 30" up to 7ft. and are priced at 3/6 to 10/6 F.O.R. Ooldea. These have definitely been in use among the tribes in their corroborees for a long while and we were very fortunate to get them.

We are also enclosing our list of the usual native curios and can also obtain practically anything genuine if given enough time.[115]

These, and a further set of sacred boards were purchased by the Museum, but in 1951 Tindale and J.B.

Cleland visited Ooldea to investigate claims that Green may have been 'exploiting the natives through the sale of ethnographic objects'. Tindale completed a report to the Protector of Aborigines on this subject. He reported: 'Although the missionaries have been led to believe that the natives are surrendering their totemic objects because they have decided to embrace Christianity it would appear ... that this is not likely to be the full explanation'.[116]

George Aiston, who began his ethnographic collecting after his return from the Boer War, was another whose awareness of the significance of sacred objects altered his attitudes toward collecting. He related his early enthusiasm for obtaining sacred objects on the west coast of South Australia:

> I remember distinctly old Meeli (the then head man) taking me secretly to show me his own churinga, it was made of wood, and was hidden in a cave. I tried to buy it from him but he would not hear of it, but finally I gave him a razor that had been issued to me in Africa - it was made of hoop iron, but what the steel lacked in quality was more than made up in decoration, it was covered all over with Masonic Signs -Meeli made me a churinga as [close] as he could to his own and brought it to me at night.[117]

On the Birdsville Track during the mid-1920s, Aiston became familiar with the 'moora' stones associated with eastern Lake Eyre ancestral beings, objects which, in his own words, made his mouth water.[118] His attitude towards the collection of these objects became more reflective following the Reso Affair. He wrote:

> I have always treated that [sic] sacred customs of the blacks in the same way as I would treat those of the whites ... It is no sacrilege to pillage a sacred cave of the blacks or to camp camels on a Moora's home, or even to use the Moora's humpy to make a damper, but if one entered a church and casually took a picture or one of the communion cups and used one of the benches to cook a damper there would be a yowl.[119]

Speaking of two *mura* stones which he had been given, Aiston admitted that he had been 'exceptionally honoured' and that such transactions were closely linked to the passing of the older generation, as Strehlow was to document:

> you cannot imagine how they value them, neither money, food nor threats will induce them to part with them ... The younger men of today would sell all of the Mooras in the country if they could get them.[120]

In contrast to Strehlow, whose collecting appeared to have benefited from a corporate decision by Arrernte elders to entrust him with their objects, Aiston confided in his friend Walter Gill that the Wangkangurru, Ngameni and Diyari elders seemed prepared to consign their sacred objects to oblivion:

> Our blacks had Mooras which are the same as Churinga, but I am not going to force them to sell, if they offer them I will buy them and will let you have them for what they cost, and if you do not want them I will sell them to someone else, but you will have the first offer. But they hang to them very tightly. The only store house they used was the sand and there is a lot of sand.[121]

An example of one of these rare acquisitions occurred in 1933, when Aiston was approached by an elderly female custodian of two sacred stones. Aiston sent the stones on to Gill, in exchange for some chain mail armour:

> I would very much like to have it [chain mail] and am sending the Mooras by this mail. These Mooras [2 cylcons red ochred, with hair string] belonged to Appatoongana, the female is nameless,

> but they both belong to the dragon lizard Murdu, the name of the large one is Mandru Mankana and it means that he was the same on both sides, his back looked just as his front.
> The old gin who brought these to me was one of the old wild people, she told me that all of this Mooras people were dead but she had greased them in case they might be angry with her for selling them to me, she was very frightened until she got them put away, she ran away when I started to unwrap them.[122]

Referring again to the Reso incident, and similar instances of theft, Aiston stated his attitude to the problem. For the insight which this passage gives into the sensibilities of one of Australia's most important ethnographic collectors of the period, it is worth quoting in full. His comments were again addressed to Gill:

> You are perfectly right in all that you say about the taking of the sacred objects from the Abos and as far as I am concerned I have no fault whatever to find with the people who get them after they are taken - my whole objection is to the so-called Protectors who take them in the first place. These objects represent the last line of defence to the poor devils and when they are gone they are people without a home or object - if they were bought from the real owners it would not matter so much, the owners would only sell the spares - that is of murdus that had or were dying out - and would still keep the one that represented his own immediate line, but the white people get them from boys, women, or anyone who can tell of their hiding place and reward the thieves with possibly a tin of jam or a bit of sugar. The poor devil who really owns them descends at once from being the head of his totem to become a hanger on to some other totem with which he is more or less distantly related. More than likely the traitor who sold them is killed, sooner or later.
> I had plenty of chances in the old days to get them in the same way, but pity and respect for their feelings kept me from it and it does hurt to hear of them being ruthlessly gathered up and sent down to be sold as curiosities. To the white people they are only bits of slate, rudely carved, to the nigger they represent all that he has lived for.
> Possibly it would be better to preserve them - I believe I am in favor [sic] of so doing - but it would mean a lot of mental torture to the owners. I have tried to persuade them that it would be better for them to store their Mooras where they could be looked after, and where there would be no danger of them being lost, but they are so terribly afraid that some unauthorised person will get hold of them and will either insult or hurt the moora or will make him so angry that he will take it out of his proper caretaker.[123]

Aiston's letters to Gill illuminate the problematic territory negotiated by conscientious collectors of sacred objects. This territory was generally unexplored by city-based, secondary collectors, for whom the emblematically authentic character of these objects justified the method of their acquisition. The behaviour of collectors such as Aiston, Gillen and Strehlow does not fit easily between the rapacity of more clearly drawn 'types' of collectors such as Maurice and the paternalist solicitude of Daisy Bates, whose careful regard evokes her own phrase, 'smoothing the dying pillow'.

The tjurunga collections in Australian and overseas museums, like ethnographic collections in general, have rarely been 'interrogated' by historians. The evidence discussed here suggests that this process of enquiry will reveal not just a range of motivations and actions on the part of European collectors, but also complex and varying explanations for Aboriginal roles in these transactions.

Endnotes - Chapter Ten

1. Stirling 1896: 76.

2. Geary 1986.

3. Strehlow 1947: 139-71.

4. Tindale's numerous references to obtaining tjurunga are documented in his field diaries. These have not been referred to in this chapter. Gifts of tjurunga received by Kramer during the 1930s are noted in his field diaries, also held in AASAM.

5. Jones & Sutton 1986.

6. Stirling & Waite 1919; Stirling 1891.

7. See Jones file on Ayliffe.

8. See Angas 1847a: plate 27; 1847b: 113; 116.

9. Peterson 1993: 868.

10. Strehlow Journal, Book 32, p.128. Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

11. Meehan (ed) 1986.

12. 'Museum Diary, October 1874 to April 1880', January 1879, SRSAM.

13. Curator's Report, January 1879, GRG 19/168, SRO. Ernestine Hill mentions 'genial Dr Renner, who travelled the thousand miles between [Renner Springs, south of Newcastle Waters and Doctor's Stones, south-west of Alice Springs, both named after him] up and down with a medicine chest and a bottle of rum in a buggy, to safeguard the health of Todd's Men' (Hill 1951: 110).

14. Warburton 1875: 181.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Forrest 1875: 209.

17. Giles 1875b: 9.

18. Schomburgk 1879a.

19. Cooper 1989: 5, 57.

20. Royal Society of South Australia 1880: xxiii.

21. *Ibid:* xxiv.

22. Curator's Report for November 1880, GRG 19/168, SRO; entry for December 1880, 'Accessions Diary 1880 - 82', SRSAM; Jones file on Tuckfield. Note that documentation of the acquisitions from Renner, Canham and Tuckfield has not been preserved in the Museum Registers.

23. Howitt 1884.

24. Schultze 1891: 242.

25. Zietz to Museum Committee, 1 May, 1891. AA298 Acc.159, no.9a, AASAM. Schwarz retired from Hermannsburg in 1889.

26. Bagot to Kay, 27 April, 1888. Bagot specimen documentation file, AASAM.

27. This figure is based on research by R. Kimber and is quoted in Mulvaney (1989: 128).

28. Willshire 1896: 40-41.

29. *Annual Report, Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, 1890-1891*, Government Printer, Adelaide.

30. Stirling 1896: 76.

31. Winnecke 1897: 42.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Stirling 1896: 78.

34. Gillen to Stirling, 13 October, 1894, AA309, nos.234-35, AASAM.

35. Strehlow makes this claim in his account of the Horn Expedition incident, see Strehlow 1970: 120. Despite this, Gillen's correspondence with Spencer indicates that an Aboriginal man named Racehorse was still alive during the late 1890s.

36. Gillen to Spencer, August 1896, Letter 24, PRMO.

37. Stirling wrote generously that Gillen's information, which had been shared with Spencer but was unavailable to him before the Horn Expedition's Report, had 'been acquired since he [Gillen] wrote his paper which accompanies this report' (Stirling 1896: 76).

38. Spencer & Gillen 1927, vol.1: 101, 110-111.

39. Gillen to Spencer, 16 November, 1894, Letter 3; 13 March, 1896, Letter 18, PRMO.

40. Gillen to Spencer, 13 March, 1896, Letter 18, PRMO.

41. Gillen to Spencer, 10 September, 1897, Letter 31, PRMO. For accounts of other visits see for example, Gillen to Spencer, 18 June, 1897, 7 August, 1898, Letters 29, 42.

42. Gillen to Spencer, 7 November, 1895, Letter 15, PRMO.

43. Strehlow 1971: 378.

44. Gillen to Spencer, 8 September, 1894, Letter 1, PRMO. In reference to this cache, Gillen wrote three months later: 'Got 25 in one haul from a spot 130 miles North of here'. Gillen to Spencer, 16 November, 1894, Letter 3, PRMO.

45. Gillen to Spencer, 7 November, 1895, Letter 15, PRMO.

46. Tattersalls was the name of a major lottery of the period. Gillen to Spencer, 6 May, 1897, Letter 28, PRMO.

47. Gillen to Spencer, 7 November, 1895, Letter 15, PRMO.

48. Gillen to Spencer, 14 July, 1896, Letter 23, PRMO. Gillen first recorded that Cowle was 'collecting Chooringa for me' during November, 1895. See Gillen to Spencer, 7 November, 1895, Letter 15, PRMO.

49. Gillen to Spencer, August, 1896, Letter 24, PRMO.

50. Quoted in Mulvaney & Calaby 1985: 130.

51. For additional detail on Cowle's tjurunga collecting, see Mulvaney 1989: 138-139; 247.

52. Gillen to Spencer, 30 July, 1897, Letter 30, PRMO.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Spencer to Balfour, 2 December, 1897, Box 4, folder 3, W.B. Spencer Correspondence, PRMO. R.T. Maurice is likely to have been the next European to wittingly observe these practices, as documented below.

55. Wells 1897-1898: 169-170.

56. Gillen to Spencer, 5 June, 1896, Letter 22, PRMO.

57. Gillen to Spencer, 25 April, 1896, Letter 20, PRMO.

58. Gillen to Spencer, 10 September, 1897, Letter 31, PRMO.

59. Maurice Papers, PRG 762, MLSA. See also Gara 1994.

60. The Eyre referred to was Edward John Eyre, the explorer and 1840s Protector of Aborigines in South Australia. Maurice to Winnecke, 31 December, 1898. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/22, MLSA.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Maurice to Winnecke, 10 March, 1899. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/24, MLSA.

63. Maurice to Winnecke, 10 November, 1901. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/42, MLSA.

64. These events are discussed in Jones (1996d).

65. Maurice to Winnecke, 20 July, 1900. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/33, MLSA.

66. Maurice to Winnecke, 9 October, 1898. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/19, MLSA.

67. Maurice to Winnecke, 8 January, 1900. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/23, MLSA.

68. Maurice to Winnecke, 1 December, 1898. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/20, MLSA.

69. Maurice to Winnecke, 17 November, 1898, *ibid.*

70. Maurice to Winnecke, 3 December, 1898; Maurice notes, 9 December, 1898. Maurice papers, PRG 762/158/21, MLSA. For a further comment on Gillen, see Maurice to Winnecke, 31 December, 1898, PRG 762/158/22, MLSA.

71. Maurice to Winnecke, 7 January, 1899. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/20, MLSA. As Carl Strehlow's computations reveal, even two decades later later a bag of flour had the purchasing power of more than twenty tjurunga (see Chapter Eight).

72. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/52 part 2, p.3, MLSA.

73. Maurice to Winnecke, 8 January, 1900. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/23, MLSA.

74. Maurice to Winnecke, 17 August, 1899. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/25, MLSA.

75. Maurice to Winnecke, 4 August, 1901. Maurice Papers, PRG 762/158/40, MLSA.

76. The donation was noted in the Minutes of the Museum Committee, 3 December, 1902, p.313, GRG 19/364, SRO.

77. Gillen to Spencer, 18 December, 1902, Letter 152, PRMO.

78. Quoted in Jones & Sutton 1986: 49.

79. Strehlow Journal, Book 32, May 1964, p.128. Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

80. Strehlow 1969: 11-12.

81. Liebler to Stirling, 19 September, 1914. AA298 Acc.184, no.84, AASAM.

82. Liebler to Stirling, 19 February, 1914. AA298 Acc.184, no.84d, AASAM.

83. Porteus 1931: 137. For an description of Porteus's acquisition of tjurunga at Hermannsburg, see Chapter Nine.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Henson 1992: 82. Albrecht documented these tjurunga in a handwritten volume, titled 'Tjuringa Stories' (Albrecht n.d. ms.).

86. Henson 1992: 33.

87. Entry for 17 October, 1949. Book 14, Strehlow Journals, Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

88. Strehlow Journal, Book 32, May 1964, p.128. Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

89. Quoted in Chewings 1937: 147.

90. Basedow 1927. The matter is further discussed in GRG 5/2/1927/1898, SRO.

91. Aiston to Gill, 5 November, 1927, MLS.

92. Undocumented newspaper clipping ca. 1927, titled 'Aruntas Give Up Their Churingas. Swayed by Black Evangelist', 'Anthropology Newspaper Clippings, 1913-1961', vol.5, AASAM.

93. 'Mystery Stones of the Aruntas Cast Aside for Revivalist'. *Observer* 1 March, 1930, p.13d,e. See also Porteus 1931: 138 for a description of Moses' activities in this regard.

94. Henson 1992: 54.

95. Strehlow Journals, Book 1, April 17, 1932, p.9, AASAM. A generation later, in 1955, the taboo on Mananganganga Cave had apparently been reinstated. On the occasion of Strehlow's second visit to the site, he discovered that he was the sole *ratapa* man able to chant the verses for this place. Strehlow Journals, July 12, 1955, Strehlow Research Centre.

96. See, for example, Henson 1992: 88. The episode is also discussed in Hardy, Megaw & Megaw (eds.) 1992.

97. 'Central Australian University Expedition Returns. Much Valuable Data Secured.' *The Chronicle* 29 August, 1929, p.56; further articles on p.58; 8 August, 1929, p.50 (photograph, p.47). See also Tindale (1929) ms.

98. See Jones file on Teague. Teague was the half-sister of the Melbourne artist Violet Teague; both became actively involved in organising the support of Melbourne artists and intellectuals for fund-raising for the Koporilya water scheme.

99. Henson 1992: 88.

100. See Jones (1992b) for a fuller discussion of these issues.

101. Aiston to Gill, 26 May, 1931, MLS.

102. Strehlow Journals, Book 32, 1964, p.129, Strehlow Research Centre.

103. Strehlow Journals, Book 1, May 28, 1932, p.23, Strehlow Research Centre.

104. Strehlow Journals, Book 1, May 24 1932, p.22, Strehlow Research Centre.

105. Duguid, C. 'The first ten years', as quoted in Hilliard 1968: 181. T.G.H. Strehlow observed that

> Ernabella profited from the past mistakes of many earlier Australian missionary settlements. Above all, it avoided the heavy handicap of starting out as an anachronistic theocracy. (Hilliard 1968: 8)

106. See Albrecht 1977; Strehlow Journals, Book 14, p.30, AASAM.
T.G.H. Strehlow becomes the most anomalous figure in all these developments. The son of the man remembered as an authoritarian figure who had outlawed ceremonial activity and confiscated tjurunga, T.G.H. Strehlow encouraged the performance of ceremonial acts, knowing that their future was immediately threatened, but with the doleful responsibility of recording them for a future when as he put it in his diaries, 'a dreadful silence will descend on Central Australia for ever'. Yet at the same time, the anthropologist attended church at Hermannsburg and even organised a commercial recording of the hymns by the Hermannsburg Men's Choir.

107. This is despite Ricketts' own expressions of optimism for a new future for both Europeans and Aborigines in Australia, contained for example in a 1940s catalogue of his work:

> ...he regards his work [as] a mission to interpret the spiritual background - the Alchera or "beckoning dream-world" of the aboriginal Australians to the white Australians, so that the latter, too, may come to see the divine shimmering through all the common things of life, and begin to reverence [sic] anew the beauty of trees, the bush creatures and the aboriginals and their ancient culture, instead of thoughtlessly destroying them as heretofore. (Ricketts, n.d.)

108. Kubler 1971: 213.

109. For an earlier version of this chapter, incorporating an analysis of Namatjira's role in 'desanctifying'sacred objects, see Jones (1992b).

110. Strehlow Journals, Book 14, October 2, 1949, p.17; Book 19, July 12, 1955, Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

111. Albrecht 1959 ms.

112. Basedow helped organise a deputation to the South Australian government regarding the Reso theft during August 1927. He was strongly supported in this action by the Aboriginal inventor and activist, David Unaipon. See Jones file on Unaipon; Jones 1990.

113. A.S. Kenyon to L. Keith Ward, 30 August, 1927, Kenyon Papers, La Trobe Library, Melbourne. Ward remained adamant that the Reso tjurunga were 'dead' and that a museum should provide their ultimate home. After initially refusing to accept them, these objects were eventually received by the Trustees of the National Museum of Victoria, and are registered as nos. 36974-92 under the name of the collector, D.H. Dureau. See Pescott 1954: 129.

114. D. Bates to J.B. Cleland, 20 March, 1932. Bates papers, AA23, AASAM.

115. H. Green to N.B. Tindale, 26 May, 1939, H. Green specimen documentation file, AASAM.

116. Report by Tindale 18 May, 1951, *ibid.*

117. Aiston to Gill, 26 September, 1923, MLS.

118. Aiston to Gill, 26 September, 1926, MLS.

119. Aiston to Gill, 31 March, 1928, MLS.

120. *Ibid*; Aiston to Gill, 24 July, 1928, MLS.

121. Aiston to Gill, 31 March, 1928; 7 February, 1930, MLS.

122. Aiston to Gill, 25 June, 1933, MLS.

123. Aiston to Gill, 23 March, 1930, MLS.

INTRODUCTION TO PART THREE

THE ANATOMY OF A COLLECTION (CHAPTERS ELEVEN TO THIRTEEN)

The evidence from the encounters documented in the second part of this thesis suggests that the Museum derived maximum benefit from the collecting process when its own staff were involved as intermediaries who could influence the content of collections or better still, as participants during collecting expeditions. Stirling's experience on the Horn Expedition of 1894, during which he was able to identify and document new categories of collectable objects, provides the clearest example. Baldwin Spencer's role as an informed ethnographic collector during that expedition and during later expeditions with Francis Gillen, benefited both the Adelaide and Melbourne museums to an even greater degree. The Spencer-Gillen partnership had demonstrated, almost at the close of the museum age, the applicability of the emerging craft of social anthropology to the ethnographic subject. With Gillen's death in 1910, Stirling's retirement in 1913, and South Australia's relinquishment of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth in 1911, it appeared that the link between Australian museum ethnography and the ethnographic frontier had been broken.

That apparent disjunction became a reality during the 1920s and 1930s as social anthropology gathered strength as a university-based pursuit, without any necessary connection to museums or their collections. That Adelaide provided an exception to this pattern was due to a combination of factors touched upon in this section's first chapter. Outweighing any other factor was the influence of Norman B. Tindale, naturalist-turned-anthropologist. Supported by the Board for Anthropological Research and Adelaide's network of amateur ethnographers, Tindale forged a careeer as a salvage ethnographer informed by the principles and working practices of natural science. His voracious collecting and meticulous documentation resulted in an Indian summer for museum ethnography in South Australia which extended even beyond the Second World War, the boundary of this study. Tindale's success arose partly through his ability to comprehend and apply new principles of social anthropological analysis to an apparently well-worn theme. He and other members of the Board for Anthropological Research also grasped the potential of an ecological approach to the ethnographic subject. That approach, it might be argued, was less accessible to the graduates in social anthropology emerging from the University of Sydney. The ecological approach, combined with Tindale's relentlessly detailed salvage ethnography, bolstered Adelaide's status as the centre for the country's key ethnographic collection.

This study began with an analysis of the repository for these ethnographic objects, the South Australian Museum itself. It traced the history of the collecting process in the light of the fact that for several decades after its foundation, the Museum was not equipped, curatorially or conceptually, to receive the flow of ethnographic material generated by the colonial frontier.
Aboriginal objects were undervalued and were often exchanged for more highly regarded natural history material, at least until the 1880s and 1890s. By the close of Edward Stirling's directorship though, the South Australian Museum had accommodated the anthropological project as an integral part of its collecting and exhibiting brief. The various collections, separately acquired during the previous thirty or forty years now formed an entity in itself, with its own exhibition space and subdivisions, its interpretive texts and protocols.

The final chapter of this thesis explores the profile and anatomy of this reconstituted entity, the total collection. It does so by examining its main features and by analysing some of the ways in which it was presented to the public during the period immediately following the opening of the Stirling Gallery in 1914, within the Museum's newly opened East Wing. The readiness of the institution to absorb ethnographic objects within its broader project had predated any formal acquisition or collecting policies. Even so, the development of a formal registration process for anthropological objects, in concert with those developed for zoological, mineralogical and palaeontological collections, confirmed both a sanctioned status for museum ethnography and the responsibility which the museum authorities now assumed for a creating new publicly visible order out of its collections. For museum curators and the public, the double process of registration and exhibition revealed and verified the ethnographic legitimacy of Aboriginal artefacts, within established systems of museological practice. In Stirling's time, these systems were evolutionist, modified by diffusionist models which enabled some analysis of similar cultural traits appearing in different geographical regions. Tindale modified Stirling's exhibition of Aboriginal artefacts only slightly during the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting in his approach the 'culture area' hypothesis advanced most strongly by Alfred Kroeber and Clark Wissler. After Wissler's visit to Adelaide in 1925 as part of a Rockefeller Foundation investigating the feasibility of establishing a Chair of Anthropology at an Australian university, Tindale and the Board for Anthropological Research adopted a more ecologically-focused approach to the issue of culture. This manifested itself most clearly in Tindale's detailed registration of his field collections.[1]

Susan Stewart has described the emptiness which lies between the original context of cultural material and the models of authenticity constructed by collectors or museums as an 'oblivion, a void marking a radical separation between past and present'.[2] Museums and their curators have filled that void with their own reconstructions of culture and history, manipulating ethnographic objects within that space, to fit these models. This thesis has explored that void, and found it instead to be a rich field of data and historical events, revealing the traces of many encounters between collectors and Aboriginal people. It is, nonetheless, a little-explored field. During recent decades the paucity of information about that aspect of anthropological and colonial history has combined with a set of assumptions about the cultural polarity of the colonial frontier

to redefine most ethnographic collections as 'cultural property', implicitly misappropriated and awaiting its repatriation to rightful owners.

In illuminating many of the circumstances under which the world's largest collection of Aboriginal artefacts was acquired, this thesis puts a case for a different interpretation, one in which the specific histories of acquisition may redefine our view of the objects themselves. Rather than standing as mute, ahistorical representatives of a culture and a people, the artefact collections examined in this study have been integrally involved in the complex history of the Australian frontier.

Recent historiography has underlined the extent to which ethnographic artefacts may be said to be a product, not only of indigenous people, but of ethnographers themselves, 'by virtue of being defined, segmented, detached and carted away ... for disciplines make their objects and in the process make themselves'.[3] This fact underpins the category shifts undergone by ethnographic objects as they have been repositioned, from ethnographic to art-culture 'circuits'.[4] The uneasy transitions involved in this process are not discussed here, falling largely outside the period covered by this thesis.[5] The decade of debate and analysis since William Rubin's "'Primitivism' in 20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern" exhibition has rendered the ethnographer's role in 'constructing' the anthropological subject so transparent that few ethnographic exhibitions have since proceeded without genuine attempts at collaborative partnerships with indigenous people. But while the ethnographic object may be reasonably characterised in this sense as an artefact of the ethnographer and of museological practice, there is danger in applying this analysis broadly. In the first place, the ethnographer's role in constructing ethnographic objects has varied to a greater or lesser extent depending on the category of object involved. A spear, for example, is self-evidently a spear even when removed from its original context. The ethnographer has less licence in constructing its role in Aboriginal society than in the case of an object such as a tjurunga or a bark painting, which carry multiple associations. The meaning of such objects has the potential to shift to a greater extent within the museum context, particularly as themes such as religion and art have become elevated within ethnographic discourse.

Secondly, to concentrate upon the ethnographer's role once an object has been collected by a museum may raise an artificial barrier between contexts of origin and interpretation. This study draws upon two examples - the carved burial poles of Melville and Bathurst Islands, and the toas of Killalpaninna - to argue that ethnographers themselves do not always have a lien on defining, or redefining ethnographic objects. In fact, the confidence of museum ethnographers in their capacity to reveal and describe ethnographic reality may have diminished their ability to notice how Aboriginal people had already modified their material culture in response to European presence and a developing market.

The case of the toas provides an early example of a tendency, now familiar, to interpret cultural data according to prevailing assumptions about authenticity and tradition, rather than to interrogate the historical circumstances surrounding the fabrication of these objects. The subsequent exposure of 'ethnographic myths'

is an argument for exploring and questioning those definitions of authenticity and tradition. It also suggests the need for revisiting the site of those misunderstandings, the frontier of collection.

Endnotes

1. Jones 1987.

2. Stewart 1984: 139.

3. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991: 387.

4. See Clifford (1994) for a model of this process.

5. See Jones (1988) for an analysis of changing European perceptions of Aboriginal art.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A NEW IMPERATIVE: NORMAN B. TINDALE'S SALVAGE ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE 'IDEA BEHIND THE ARTIFACT'

Bought from the natives various spears ... some other bags, firesticks, a hardwood wooden smoother and a woomera ... We took photos of the camp and of a native ... called Tilkoana, making a dilly bag from Livistona leaf fibre and wattle bark fibre ... Obtained some native words from a Port Stewart native. The temperature today was 100 [degrees] F.[1]

Tindale and the Adelaide context

From the early 1890s the published output of South Australian work under Stirling's direction reflected an emerging local tradition of anthropology. Another peculiarly Adelaide influence had a vital effect. This was the informal discussion and transmission of ideas took place among the city's scientific community. The development of the scientific professions in South Australia was characterised by an interplay of linked interests and personalities, a 'centred eclecticism' which persisted into the 1960s.[2] As well as the gamut of meeting places found in other colonial towns and cities, such as the Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society, the Adelaide Club, university halls and private homes, Adelaide offered its scholars and researchers the close proximity of all its main cultural institutions. With its university, hospital, library, museum, art gallery, and zoological and botanical gardens all within a short walk on or near North Terrace, the city encouraged contact and discussion across the fields of science and the humanities.

Edward Stirling, zoologist, medical professor, parliamentarian and social reformer, ethnologist and museum director, was an outstanding product of these diverse influences. His own variant of the prevailing strain of evolutionary anthropology was learnt at Cambridge (Francis Darwin was a close student friend) and was applied most notably during his time as ethnologist with the Horn Expedition of 1894 in the company of Baldwin Spencer. Anthropological discussion and activity in Adelaide was centred on the Museum and it was Stirling as its Director who set the tone of the South Australian approach to this subject from the 1880s until the end of the First World War. Stirling's association with significant amateurs in the field such as Francis Gillen, Joe Cooper and Paul Foelsche preceded Baldwin Spencer's involvement. But despite his opportunities, Stirling showed little interest in using these contacts to explore and develop anthropological issues. Conversely, the publication of controversial works such as Lang's *Secret of the*

Totem (1905), which provoked argument between Tylor, Spencer, Fraser, Howitt and their followers, had little impact in Adelaide.

Stirling's main legacy lies not so much in his original contributions to anthropological knowledge and debate as in the stimulus which he gave to interdisciplinary knowledge focusing on Aboriginal studies. Using the Museum as a base he involved other Adelaide medical specialists and scientists with interests in Australian Aboriginal racial origins and physiology. These individuals included Professor R.E. Rennie (Chemistry), Dr William Ramsay Smith (City Coroner and author of *In Southern Seas* (1924) and *Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines* (1930)), Professor Archibald Watson (Anatomy), Dr A.A. Lendon (physician), Dr. W.L. Cleland (City Coroner and father of J.B. Cleland), and Dr Robert Pulleine (surgeon).[3] All shared an interest in the racial origins, physiology and behaviour of the Aborigines. Most contributed significantly to the Museum collections, not only in the physical anthropological and ethnographic areas, but in natural science as well. With Stirling's encouragement, several of these individuals undertook research on the Museum's physical anthropology collections, particularly the Aboriginal crania. Tindale later referred to the fact that certain University of Adelaide staff, particularly from the Medical School, were able to use the Museum during the 1920s as an informal club and research centre, to the point of being supplied with their own keys.[4] This informality applied also in Stirling's time, with his Medical School colleagues Watson and Lendon.[5]

Stirling's professional base was in medicine and his primary ethnographic studies reflected this interest.His supervision of the salvage excavation of Aboriginal burials at Swanport near Murray Bridge during 1911, and the publication which resulted, were crucial events in the South Australian Museum's anthropological history.[6] Not only did the recovery of the Swanport material double the Museum's physical anthropological collections; it provided scientists with the opportunity to undertake research on the largest single group of Aboriginal burials known. It was the existence of this collection, as much as any other factor, which encouraged the University physical anthropologists to maintain their connections with the Museum after Stirling's death, leading to the formation of the Board for Anthropological Research as a combined research initiative with a bias towards physical anthropology.

Stirling retired as Museum Director during 1912. It might have been expected that the zoological priorities of his successor, Edgar Ravenswood Waite, a recognised expert in reptilia and amphibia, would have overwhelmed the vulnerable Ethnology Department. This did not occur for two main reasons. In the first place, Stirling was appointed as Honorary Curator of Ethnology in 1914 and remained an active worker until his death in 1919. He oversaw the transfer of the Aboriginal collections from the North Wing to the Australian Court of the newly constructed East Wing, a process which was largely complete by 1916. During this period he also advocated and presided over the purchase of significant ethnographic material, such as the Liebler and Strehlow collections and the Reuther manuscript.

Secondly, Waite himself displayed an unanticipated enthusiasm for ethnography, both within and

outside Australia. Two years after his leadership of the 1916 expedition to the Strzelecki and Cooper Creeks he led the Museum's ambitious collecting expedition to New Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland. This expedition was Stirling's initiative, but Waite made the most of his collecting opportunities, both in natural history and ethnography. The expedition returned with more than six tons of specimens and objects, including rare New Ireland *malanggan* carvings.[7] In addition to acting as co-author with Stirling in a major descriptive paper on the Aboriginal sculptures or *toas* in 1919, Waite published two other short papers on Aboriginal material culture during the early 1920s.[8] Arguably though, his most important contribution to Australian anthropology was the encouragement which he gave the Museum's twenty-year old Assistant Entomologist, Norman B. Tindale, to broaden the scope of his 1921-1922 Groote Eylandt expedition to include anthropology.

Without Tindale's contribution it is likely that Adelaide's anthropological project would have become haphazard and diffuse from the time of Stirling's death. Tindale aside, the strong emphasis on physical anthropology shown by influential members of the Board for Anthropological Research during the 1920s and 1930s lacked a counterbalancing concern for material culture and social anthropology. On the other hand, the depth and quality of Tindale's contribution to these fields owed a great deal to the structured research programmes instituted by the Board's annual expeditions. These programmes have been discussed elsewhere, but the important influence of Frederic Wood Jones should be noted.[9]

Wood Jones succeeded Stirling's colleague Archibald Watson as Professor of Anatomy at the University of Adelaide during 1919. He had already gained a reputation as a physical anthropologist, having undertaken the archaeological survey of Nubia for the Egyptian Government prior to the opening of the Aswan Dam, together with Grafton Elliot Smith, the Australian-born anatomist.[10] Elliot Smith's extreme theory of cultural diffusion, founded on the notion that all human civilization had diffused from Egypt, was developed at that time.[11] Unike the influential British anthropologist, W.H.R. Rivers, who was converted to Elliot Smith's 'Egyptcentric diffusionism', Wood Jones was apparently uninfluenced by the theory; his eccentricity was reserved for an unshakeable Lamarckian interpretation of evolution.[12]

Wood Jones' eclecticism and diverse abilities contributed to his international standing in later years. During the twelve years prior to his Adelaide appointment he had conducted intensive research into the formation and growth of coral atolls (producing a standard work on the subject), had undertaken the Nubian survey, lectured and published in anatomy, and had maintained his interest in all aspects of natural history. During his seven years in Adelaide he published important papers on the pouch embryos of marsupials and on physical anthropology and Aboriginal stone tools. Like Stirling and Spencer, his focus on these apparently diverse fronts was maintained through an allegiance to the unifying field of evolutionary biological science.

Within months of Wood Jones' arrival in Adelaide he had assumed Stirling's role as the focus for the city's anthropological research interests. Lendon and Pulleine were encouraged to pursue their private

research projects at the Museum. These men were joined by younger members of the Medical School, notably Raphael West Cilento and Thomas Draper Campbell, later to take a leading role in the Board for Anthropological Research.[13] Wood Jones introduced Campbell to the problem of Aboriginal dentition and Campbell began his influential thesis on the subject in 1921, pioneering Adelaide's role as a leading centre of dental anthropology.[14]

With his background in physical anthropology and archaeology it was not surprising that Wood Jones began contributing actively to South Australian anthropology shortly after his arrival. He was appointed as Honorary Curator of Anthropology in 1919.[15] During the following year he began to catalogue and index the Aboriginal skulls in accordance with a system inaugurated at the 1920 Pan-Pacific Scientific Congress in Honolulu, at which he represented the South Australian Museum.[16] Wood Jones showed greater enthusiasm for field studies of Aborigines than Stirling and was more systematic in his attempts to obtain information. Between 1921 and 1925 he undertook three expeditions to remote parts of western South Australia, two in the company of T.D. Campbell. These trips foreshadowed the expeditions of the Board for Anthropological Research with their cross-disciplinary interests and the first application of rigorous anthropometric techniques, but no attempt, at this stage, was made to link these researches with Tindale's anthropological foray to Groote Eylandt.[17] In 1923 Campbell was appointed as Honorary Assistant Curator of Anthropology on the basis of his work on Aboriginal dentition and on stone tools.[18]

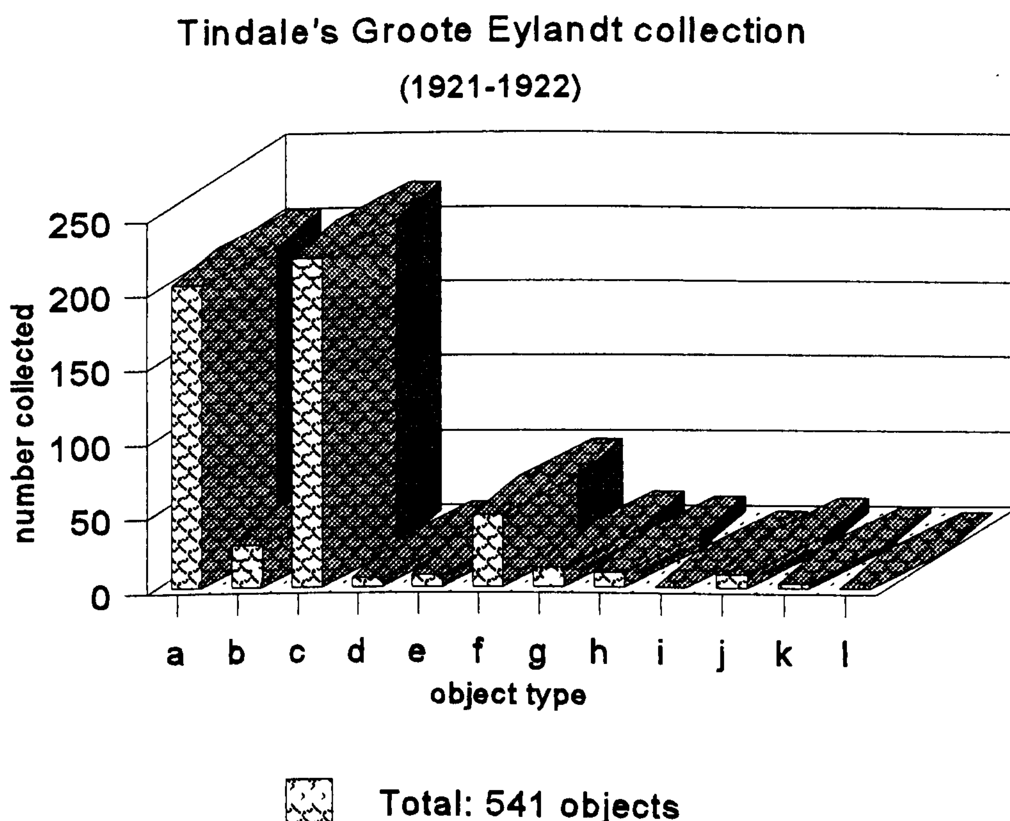
Most importantly, Wood Jones' international connections and standing enabled him to present Adelaide as a crucial centre for Aboriginal studies during discussions with the Rockefeller Foundation in 1925. During the following year the Board for Anthropological Research and the Anthropological Society of South Australia began operations, providing a fertile ground for the germination of a new strain of Australian anthropology, led by Norman B. Tindale. Tindale's key involvement in both new organisations, combined with his scientific training and his commitment to the South Australian Museum as a collecting institution, soon paid dividends in the form of meticulously documented artefact collections.

Tindale's involvement in the 1921-1922 Groote Eylandt expedition and the 1926-27 Princess Charlotte Bay expedition (in which he was joined by Herbert Hale), was pivotal in delineating a new role for anthropology within the South Australian Museum. As the Museum's anthropological project became redefined during the 1920s, ethnographic collecting assumed even greater significance than in Stirling's day.

Tindale's was a monumental career in anthropology, spanning five decades of field and survey work across Australia.[19] His sixteen month Groote Eylandt and Roper River expedition enabled him to live and work with Aboriginal people for a total period of twelve months, longer than any other field encounter of his career.[20] This expedition also yielded one of the largest collections of artefacts (more than 500) obtained on any of his expeditions. The bias in this collection is worth noting, in view of Tindale's later eclecticism. Interest in surface archaeological material was not at all evident, nor was an interest in

collecting samples of Aboriginal foods. Most of the women's utensils collected were from a side-trip to Mountain Creek Cave, near Roper River; fewer than ten Groote Eylandt women's utensils were obtained. The explanation for this lay in the fact that the Groote Eylandt men kept the women almost completely out of sight. As illustrated below in Table 5, the great majority of objects were men's weapons and tools, clothing and ornament, in stark contrast to the well balanced distribution of men's and women's artefacts achieved by Tindale five years later at Princess Charlotte Bay (see below).[21]

Table 5 Tindale's Groote Eylandt collection (549 objects), categorised by type.



Numbers collected: a-203; b-28; c-221; d-6 ; e-8; f-48; g-13; h-10; i-0 ; j-9; k-3; l-0

Key

a	**men's weapons & tools**	**g**	**sacred objects**
b	**women's utensils**	**h**	**'art' objects (bark paintings etc)**
c	**dress & ornament**	**i**	**stone tools (archaeological)**
d	**games, toys (adults' & children's)**	**j**	**foods and materials (including ochre)**
e	**musical instruments, message sticks**	**k**	**skeletal material**
f	**ceremonial paraphernalia (sacred & secular)**	**l**	**casts, hair samples**

Tindale went to Groote Eylandt as a naturalist, and returned as one. His career metamorphosis took place well after his return to Adelaide, when his synthesis of anthropological data for publication made him aware of the openings and challenges which the new field offered. In particular, when his notions of fixed and distinct tribal boundaries were dismissed by the South Australian Museum Director, Edgar Waite, Tindale realised that his data on this subject suggested a new paradigm in ways of regarding and describing Aboriginal Australia.[22]

Tindale became a force in Australian anthropology mainly through the sheer weight of data collected and his demonstrated enthusiasm for placing this data within a continental context. In the process he was grudgingly allowed credit by academically trained social anthropologists for his analysis of social groupings and his documentation of Aboriginal mythologies. These specialists recognised that his work in this area did not stem from a shared commitment to their own analyses of ahistorical social processes. It came instead from Tindale's credo as a 'salvage ethnographer' in the tradition established by such American ethnographers as Frank Hamilton Cushing and Franz Boas. Curtis Hinsley has described the salvage ethnographer's approach as 'a unique blend of scientific interest, wistfulness and guilt', but this characterisation may also apply to natural scientists, in their concerted elicitation of data about the natural environment and the threatened biological world.[23] Tindale's emergence as a salvage ethnographer from a natural science background placed him in the same company as Alfred Cort Haddon, Baldwin Spencer, or more appositely, Franz Boas.[24] But despite sharing his relativist perspective, placing ethnographic objects within their specific cultural contexts, Tindale never repudiated evolutionist theory as Boas had done. In fact, Tindale's application of natural science taxonomic principles to ethnographic collections and exhibitions, together with his commitment to building a full catalogue of Aboriginal tribal groups, more clearly echoed the career and achievements of the Smithsonian Institution's Otis B. Mason.[25]

Tindale's presence on the 1921-1922 Groote Eylandt expedition was fortuitous in several respects. Despite being the largest Australian island, Groote Eylandt had not been visited by a zoologist, nor by a botanist since Mathew Flinders' voyage.[26] In his letter supporting the proposal, the Museum Entomologist, Arthur Lea, emphasised this unique opportunity:

> The island was recently traversed by two missionaries, the Revs. H.E. Warren and A.J. Dyer, and their published account of it ... renders it certain that many mammals, birds, fishes, insects and other invertebrates are to be obtained in considerable numbers, and everything obtained would constitute a record; the ethnological objects should also be of considerable interest as there is not one from the island in any museum.[27]

The South Australian Museum allowed Tindale a year's leave of absence to undertake the expedition. The opportunity had arisen independently of the Museum though, through Tindale's family background in Salvation Army missionary activity. This had brought him into contact with the Church Missionary Society of Australia and Tasmania, which was extending its mission work from a base at Roper River to Groote Eylandt. Tindale was engaged by the Society for twelve months to assist in the establishment of a home

on Groote Eylandt for half-caste children from the mainland. He was to be given time to collect for the South Australian Museum, which would purchase his specimens at the completion of the trip.[28]

Realising that Tindale's proposed expedition held considerable ethnographic potential, Edgar Waite directed him to visit Melbourne for the purpose of obtaining an outline of anthropological field practice from Baldwin Spencer. Spencer gave Tindale two crucial pieces of advice. The first was in tangible form: Spencer's own copy of the 1912 edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*. Tindale took this with him on the expedition.[29] The second was Spencer's direction to Tindale to keep a daily record of his experiences, 'even if the following day's events prove you wrong'.[30] Tindale subsequently maintained this practice for the rest of his life.[31]

Tindale's readiness to collect ethnographic material during his Groote Eylandt expedition may be explained primarily in terms of his training and background as a natural scientist (specifically, an entomologist), rather than in the light of his later career as an anthropologist. The range and depth of data retrieved by him included photographs, documentary records of sites, rituals, languages, kinship, as well as contemporary and ancient artefacts, ceremonial objects, and skeletal material. All of this, together with 5,000 insects, 150 bird species, botanical specimens, fish, reptiles and mammals, was collected with the aim of reconstructing Groote Eylandt's 'historical present', if not its past. A similar aim, albeit more explicitly influenced by evolutionary principles, informed the work of his senior colleagues in various branches of natural science at the South Australian Museum.

That Tindale's Groote Eylandt objectives were oriented toward natural history rather than anthropology is evident from the instructions issued to him before his departure, as well as from his own journal.[32] In his letter of 25 November, 1920 to the Museum Director, negotiating terms for his leave, Tindale confirmed this point: 'My main idea in entering into this agreement was to be enabled to study and collect natural history specimens'.[33] Anthropological material was to be obtained during the course of his natural history collecting. This process was to be facilitated if only because it was well understood that Aboriginal people would themselves be Tindale's main means of acquiring natural history specimens. The issue of which were the most effective goods for trading with the Aborigines therefore became of central importance. Reaching Melbourne en route to Groote Eylandt in May 1921, Tindale had an opportunity to list the trade goods recommended to him by another expedition member:

> Was introduced to Mr Joynt, who gave me suggestions.
>
> Black stick trade tobacco
> Beads, reds, blues. 10 lbs.
> 2 doz. pocket knives, 2 bladed
> 1/2 doz. tomahawks
> Very cheap gawdy [sic] prints
> 1/2 doz Cotton blankets.[34]

Further advice was given in Sydney, by the Australian Museum's Conchologist, Charles Hedley, a veteran

of many collecting expeditions:

> He suggests that one of the best articles of trade is boiled lollies. Being something not usually known, they are greatly appreciated. In trading with Australian blacks, have variety of stuff, display only part at first. When excitement is keen, and they are selling stuff buy all you can, as once they cool off they will not sell. Get a head man apart, show him some stuff, and thus get many things otherwise not seen. If good stuff [is] hard to get [it] often pays to buy up lesser stuff, even spending 3/ or 4/ worth of trade, after which very often cupidity is aroused and one gets a chance. Any article of personal apparel, is one of the best trade articles. Wear several articles of trade and the blacks will prize them tenfold. An aid to quick identification in talking to blacks. Have in a tube a frog, beetle, grasshopper etc. Draw attention to these, show trade and get an idea of exchange. Children are best for collecting as more easily satisfied, are keen eyed and have no sense of dignity as even a blackfellow has at collecting insects etc!! The natives will be able to trap many small animals for one. Ceremonial weapons and decorated stuff is hard to get.[35]

In the event, Tindale used tobacco sticks ('toby') as his main currency, obtaining his first ethnographic objects, an ornament, some spears, a decorated paddle, a hair belt and an anchor rope, soon after reaching Groote Eylandt, on July 7, 1921.[36] At this stage the wages for a day's labour were fixed at half a stick of tobacco and a tin of flour.[37] The acquisition of larger items, such as a canoe obtained from a Bickerton Island man named Bent, entailed more complex negotiations: 'They expected some flour, perhaps owing to Mr Warren [in charge of the nearby Roper River mission] having bought former ones with flour. Gave them a blanket worth L1, a 7/6 skinning knife, 6 sticks tobacco and dozen or two fishhooks'.[38] These ethnographic transactions were usually straightforward, initiated by Aboriginal men themselves who brought objects to Tindale for exchange, as on August 9, 1921:

> About 4 pm the 'Soldier mob' of blackfellows turned up, about 15 or 20 of them, all painted up and brought a lot of painted spears, including 4 stone headed spears, carefully wrapped in paperbark to prevent losing edge off stone. They were a prize and were soon under the Holly's [expedition boat] hatches.[39]

There were three categories of objects which Groote Eylandt Aborigines were reluctant to exchange with Tindale. These categories applied to varying degrees elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia. The first comprised objects which, in themselves, represented rare commodities on the island or which could not be readily replaced. Suitable stone for spears and other implements, for example, had to pass through several tribal groups before reaching the Ingura people: 'the natives could not be induced to part with them except for metal equivalents'.[40] Red ochre was also unobtainable on the island and was traded there from the interior of Arnhem Land: 'Considerable inducement was necessary to procure it'.[41] Tindale was perturbed to discover that the large dugout canoe which he had purchased from the Yetiba Aborigines and used on his collecting forays was subsequently 'stolen' for their use. It was finally recovered and sent to Adelaide three years later.[42] On another occasion he was asked to pass back a didjeridu which he had earlier collected, so that it could be used that evening.[43]

The second category consisted of secret ceremonial objects. Once Tindale had made his interest in these objects clear they were brought to him for exchange, but by old men only, and then wrapped in

paperbark under cover of night.[44] In his published report Tindale noted that 'the young initiates and several of the younger men were confined to the camp under the care of an old man' when he photographed men with the carved and decorated slabs associated with initiation rites.[45] In a letter to the Museum Director from Roper River in September 1921, Tindale reported that 'great secrecy was entailed in the handing over' of one of these objects. Further such objects, he wrote, '[w]e have tried to obtain ... from the old men, & hope yet to obtain.'[46]

The third category consisted of human remains. In contrast to Basedow, who seemed able to acquire skulls and skeletons with impunity, Tindale had little success on Groote Eylandt. On 5 January 1922 he noted in his journal that after familiarising himself with the human skeleton through 'Gray's Anatomy' he had broached the subject of acquiring skeletal material:

> [I] am beginning to learn the nerves of the bones now. It will be useful if I do any ethnological work later on. Have tried to get the blacks interested in the exchange of skulls for tobacco but no success so far.[47]

On 5 April 1922 he did acquire skeletal material at a burial site on nearby Connexion Island, with the agreement of a Groote Eylandt man. On the same island two days later Tindale discovered a burial cylinder containing the bones of a child. He was permitted to collect the cylinder but 'later the bones of the child were asked for, and were returned'.[48]

Tindale had little opportunity to familiarise himself with the material culture of the region before leaving South Australia. It was not until the voyage back to Adelaide began that he was able to read Spencer and Gillen's *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, for example, and he made no journal reference to other relevant literature such as Basedow's 1907 report on the 'Western Coastal Tribes' or his 1913 Bathurst Island publication. This shortcoming is revealingly apparent from Tindale's account of the party's discovery of a ceremonial ground, possibly a burial site, on Winchelsea Island. Tindale's use of the terms 'temples', 'idols' and 'gods' to describe the objects encountered there not only indicates his rudimentary grasp of the literature at that stage; it supplies an insight into the particular religious background which informed his first anthropological fieldwork.

Tindale's commitment to the work of the Church Missionary Society is evident from his journal, and was made explicit in his formal agreement with the Society.[49] The third clause of that agreement also established Tindale's ethnographic role as a priority for the Society's mission work:

> (3) In view of the fact that we propose to publish a book dealing with the people of the Island, and the Mission, and characteristics of the Island itself, we should esteem it a priviledge [sic] if you could contribute something as a result of your investigations towards this publication, and that we might mention your name in connection with the publication. This may not take place for two years, but will, I think, be a valuable and useful work when produced.[50]

This requirement was also an important factor in his decision to begin eliciting language terms from the various Aboriginal informants whom he came to know during the expedition. He had been partly trained for this linguistic work in Adelaide, receiving some direction from Edward Stirling and the botanist linguist,

J.M. Black, as well as from Baldwin Spencer.[51] Mid-way through the expedition Tindale was able to communicate at a basic level with Aborigines on Groote Eylandt, and by the end he had accumulated several vocabularies of 300 words and more.[52] In this respect Tindale was, in the case of the Mara, Alawa and Ingura languages, supplementing the work of the missionaries themselves.

Tindale's role as a mission worker directly benefited his collection of ethnographic specimens in at least two instances. On the first occasion, the Roper River missionary having determined that the wooden sculptures discovered on the island represented 'gods', Tindale noted that 'Mr W [Warren] has persuaded some blackfellows to bring down 6 gods from the temple huts at the river E of Bartulamba'.[53] These objects were later added to Tindale's collection. A second instance resulted from the Aboriginal removal of wire for use as spear prongs, from the fence surrounding the mission compound. In November 1921 it was agreed that a fine of 50 spears would apply in further cases, and on 8 March 1922, Tindale was able to record that he had

> [w]rapped up mob of Groote spears. Selected 14 good spears out of a big bundle of about 150 received as punishment for stealing of wire last December. Included was a double sided barb spear, the first I have seen.[54]

Tindale's published interpretation of the carved poles and the ceremonial ground from which they were obtained was entirely different. By that time (three years later) he had read widely and was able to describe the site's associations with initiation rites. 'The poles', as he wrote, 'are not regarded as idols'.[55] If the missionaries and his own religious background occasionally forced Tindale to hasty conclusions in the field, his scientific curiosity soon led him into an area which was to become one of his great strengths as a salvage ethnographer. This was an investigation of material culture traits, and the light which these could cast on relationships between tribal groups. As he acquired ethnographic material, as with natural history specimens, Tindale was careful to observe the points of similarity and distinction between like objects, and to account for these. His acquisition of spears at Roper River on 29 October 1921 reveals this developing aptitude:

> Purchased five stone headed spears of [sic] 'Neighbour'. 'Wally' brought 4 stringybark spears also. These last were identical with Groote spears and from enquiries Neighbour says they came from Rose R. way in exchange for stone headed ones. The stone headed ones on Groote have the softwood handles, and as the blacks said they come from the mainland, no doubt they must be exchanged for hardwood spears. Neighbour's stone spears he said he got out Hodgson Downs way. ... For each I gave a [tobacco] stick trade.[56]

These notes represent the earliest indication in Tindale's work of his grasp of the significance of ethnographic objects as social indicators, keys to be used to unlock relationships between Aboriginal groups.[57] His understanding of this role for material culture items caused him to set standards for documentation rarely matched by other collectors in his time. For Tindale the distinctiveness of Aboriginal tribal groups was thrown into focus by this aspect of material culture. By late February 1922, Tindale had prepared his first map of Aboriginal tribes, centred on the Roper River area.[58]

Such insights were rare at this stage of Tindale's career; he was mostly content to follow the suggestions for documenting material culture as laid down in *Notes and Queries*. After his first period of two months fieldwork on Groote Eylandt, broken by a stay at Roper River, Tindale returned to the island in late November, 1921. This time he was more attuned to the ethnographic potential ahead of him:

> Greater knowledge of the blacks' language and customs enabled me now to ask for native articles of interest, & to get them to collect mammals etc for me. A few days before Xmas the blackfellows mustered to the number of 50 or 60, arriving in two parties, the Ingura proper from the E. side of Groote Eylandt, their rival camp being of Bickerton I. and Bertulumbu Bay blacks. They were laden with spears and there were several fights between the two camps, detailed notes of which I have preserved. After stopping a big row on Christmas Eve we had to supervise a spear throwing at daylight on Christmas Day during which I took several photos of the combatants, unfortunately underexposed owing to the early hour. After these fights (which are of the nature of family feuds) I was able to purchase some 50 spears of various types...[59]

During this second period Tindale documented several processes of manufacture, involving 'blowing sticks' (didjeridu), bark canoes, spears, fishing lines and string, and spearthrowers.[60] The objects were collected and series of relevant photographs were published with his report.

Through continual exposure to the same forms of objects offered for barter, Tindale became sensitive to the issue of authenticity. He realised that many of the objects being offered were made especially for barter, as on March 10, 1922:

> I bought sometime ago a wooden nose ring from Aru and since then every day he takes out another one and tries to sell it. Today he painted one up and wanted two bits for it. However I have 1/2 a dozen wooden ones now, all cut seemingly from the same soft wood that they make pipes of.[61]

This was so much the case that Tindale made a special point of noting that a mat acquired from one of his main informants, Jellani, was 'of genuine native make for personal use; not for trade'.[62] On another occasion, it was the fact that he had been brought objects in secrecy that convinced him of their authenticity:

> After dark two old men came off with a small waddy for sale and a wand made of feathers fixed to a stick. They were told to bring them in the morning but they didn't want to as the young men might see them. So the wrappings came off and it became mine. It is a new one and probably made for sale, but the secrecy of its sale makes it in a way as good as an old one.[63]

Tindale singled out the Groote Eylandt spearthrowers or 'womeras' as being especially vulnerable to what he would later describe in his publications as 'degeneration'. These were among the first and last objects acquired by him on the island. Tindale acquired thirteen decorated spearthrowers for the South Australian Museum, but the Aboriginal men at Yetiba made quantities more for Warren, who intended to take them south for sale:

> They have made mobs of the ornamental ones for Mr Warren and I have picked out some of the best. They are beginning to grossly exaggerate the proportion of the handle, to give more surface for decoration.[64]

Tindale's own notes for hints to be followed on later trips include a reference to this issue:

> Put a check on too rapid a purchase of one kind of thing. If don't, e.g. 'womeras' the type and style

becomes grossly exaggerated and the workmanship poor. Got my best native stuff after fights and corroborees when everything the chaps had had been painted up.[65]

In fact, a good proportion of the objects collected by Tindale was decorated, giving the lie to Charles Hedley's advice to him on setting out from Sydney. Tindale was disturbed by this fact at first, finding it difficult to accept that canoe paddles or dugong harpoons would ordinarily be painted:

> They often brought up newly painted paddles for sale. Even the blade is painted, but one would not expect to see such except in those made to sell and yet I have seen dugong spears, canoes and paddles all bearing ancient marks of painting.[66]

Later he was to note that 'the old men seem to paint up everything they use, pipes, womeras, spears, tins etc ... Even the old beef tin had a design like the sun on the bottom of it'.[67]

Tindale devoted a section to 'pictorial art' in his published report, but confined himself to a descriptive account of the pigments, techniques and subjects which characterised the designs found on artefacts, rock shelters and bark huts. The fact that he collected a small number of bark paintings at Yetiba is not mentioned in his publication, despite their appearance in one of the photographs. Tindale regarded these objects at the time not only as ethnographically insignificant, but also, possibly, as a product of European contact. They were awkwardly documented in the South Australian Museum's Anthropology Register as four 'Native drawings on bark'.[68] His diary entry for 16 April describes this acquisition, made shortly before his departure from Groote Eylandt: 'I was drawing pictures for them today on a piece of paper and so several got pieces of bark and painted up figures of canoes etc, similar to the ones on the walls of the cave on E. side'.[69] Tindale was probably unaware that he was a witness to, if not a participant in, a transforming process by which Aboriginal art was to become accessible to a European market.[70]

As Tindale's stay on Groote Eylandt drew to an end, it became his concern to obtain sufficient natural history specimens which sharpened his efforts, rather than any awareness of deficiencies in his ethnographic collection. If his readiness to make enquiries about the objects which he was brought by Aboriginal men can be taken as a measure of his potential as an anthropologist, his apparent lack of interest about other fundamental questions indicates the distance which still lay ahead. During his year-long exposure to the Ingura people of Groote Eylandt for example, Tindale did not meet a single Aboriginal woman, nor, apparently, did he attempt to locate their camp or enquire about them. He collected fewer than ten women's utensils, in comparison to more than 200 men's weapons and tools. His only near encounter with Groote Eylandt women was on 29 November, 1921, when he caught a glimpse of a small foraging party near the mission:

> crossing a dry creek [we] saw ahead of us an old man, two lubras and one or two piccaninnies. The old man espied us and turning with shouts ran off followed by the lubras, who ran with their heads turned to catch a glimpse of 'the to them most probably' 1st white men. These are the first Groote women and children I have seen. I left a stick of toby within a circle on ground as I am glad to be able to say I had seen Groote women and children.[71]

Any artefacts made by women, such as 'some curious string belts with design in them made by the women',

were obtained through the men.[72] It was not until his return to Adelaide that he gleaned details about the women of Groote Eylandt, through correspondence with the missionaries who first made contact with them several years after Tindale's fieldwork.[73]

After negotiating a severe storm, near-shipwreck and six weeks delay, Tindale reached Adelaide on 19 August 1922. He was to receive the sum of L285-8-9 from the Museum Board for his zoological and ethnographic specimens, representing six times his annual salary as Entomologist's Assistant.[74] The valuation of the ethnographic objects comprised almost half of this sum (L130-10-0); the insects were valued at L98-10-9, birds at L31-11-0, birds' eggs at L1-17-6, mammals at L13-0-0, reptiles at L3-5-0, fishes at L1-0-6, shells at 5-4-0[75], and invertebrates at 10 shillings. Despite Tindale's misgivings during the expedition itself, the natural history collections were recognised as 'splendid' by the Museum Committee in a formal resolution.[76] Tindale could not have hoped for more authoritative approval for the ethnographic collection than he received from Baldwin Spencer, who visited Adelaide at the time of the valuation: 'He was greatly interested in the collection, which contains many types hitherto unknown and specimens of which he hopes he may acquire from the duplicates by exchange'.[77]

Tindale was back in his old job as Entomologist's Assistant shortly after his return, leaving little time for absorbing or reevaluating his field experiences. The complex course of Tindale's career during the 1920s and 1930s has been well charted by Walter.[78] As she indicates, Tindale still regarded himself as primarily a zoologist in the period following his return, but took every opportunity to gain additional anthropological experience. This was particularly the case as his reading broadened to enable him to prepare his Groote Eylandt material for publication.

Tindale and Hale at Princess Charlotte Bay, 1926-1927

During November and December of 1924 Tindale completed an expedition to the Northern Flinders Ranges with his colleague, Herbert Hale, primarily to study the fauna of that region. Inevitably, Tindale pursued ethnographic subjects, working for short periods with Wailpi (Adnjamathanha) people, who also supplied the pair with natural history specimens and information. Few ethnographic specimens were collected, but Hale and Tindale gathered enough information, particularly on rock engravings and rock paintings, for a scientific paper to be published in the following year.[79]

Hale was a specialist in marine invertebrates by training, but he also showed considerable enthusiasm for ethnography, particularly the documentation of rock art. This was demonstrated during the Flinders Ranges expedition. Hale was given an opportunity to develop the interest further when, in December, 1926, the Board of Governors sent Hale and Tindale on a collecting expedition to Princess

Charlotte Bay on the east coast of southern Cape York Peninsula. The primary objective was to obtain faunal specimens from the region, but the Board was well aware that the pair would pursue ethnological opportunities when they arose. Their two-part publication describing the Aborigines of Princess Charlotte Bay appeared in 1933 and 1934. It consisted of 'notes ... gathered in the intervals of marine and general zoological research, which fact serves as an excuse for, and an explanation of, their incompleteness'.[80]

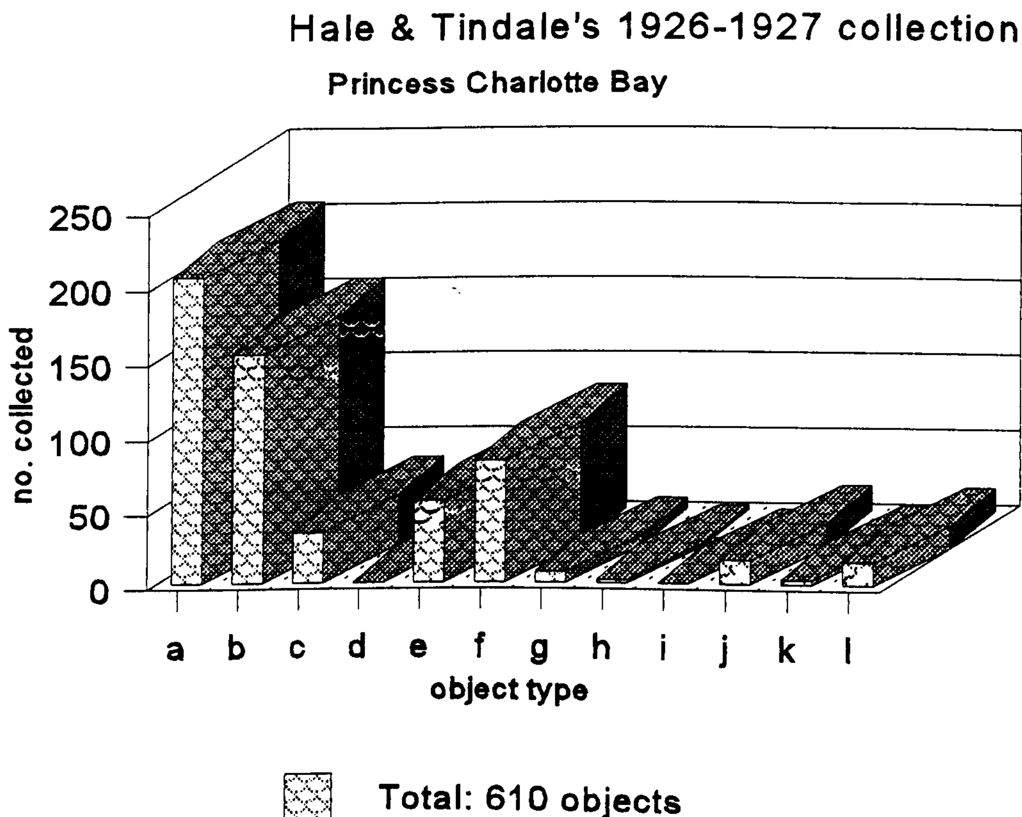
Tindale had collected more than 500 ethnographic objects during his seven months on Groote Eylandt. Most of these were documented as to their tribal group, but further details, such as the individual names for objects, and the names of their makers, are either to be gleaned from his journal and published reports, or (in the latter case) were not usually recorded. Entries for particular objects in the Museum's Anthropology Register referred most often to a particular month in Tindale's journal and occasionally to a particular day. In contrast, Tindale and Hale spent barely a month at Princess Charlotte Bay but collected more than 600 objects, to an impressive level of documentation. These objects and their main categories are summarised below, in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6 List of objects collected by Herbert Hale and Norman B. Tindale at Princess Charlotte Bay, 1926-27. [81]

123 spears
17 spearthrowers
10 firesticks
shield
axe
18 pipes
4 wooden pounders
3 canes for collecting honey
4 fishing nets
16 headpads
6 baskets
1 bark dish
3 shell cooking vessels
6 decorated turtle heads
1 painted turtle bone
1 sandstone block with painting
66 dilly bags
32 grass baskets
material for baskets
3 grinding stones
bird wing fan
3 fibre
grass for string
3 sinews
20 spear smoothers
9 shell drinking vessels
7 womera shells
8 shell pendants
20 necklets
dance rattle
2 armlets
3 ornamental strings
4 tooth gravers
1 stick for lancing boils
4 gouges for nuts
nose ornament
human bone implement for pandanus fibre
2 digging implements for lily roots
gum for hafting spears
harpoon head
palm wood spear point
2 decorated rain markers
50 message sticks
2 pubic tassels
pandanus fruit
bone implement for pandanus fruit
hand axe
3 land shells for food
fruit
3 nut whistles
womera peg
wallaby sinews
fibre
7 gum
2 pipeclay
7 red ochre samples
2 beeswax
candlenuts
whetstone
string from unravelled flour bags
2 message sticks
55 mourning strings
2 mourning capes
2 mourning caps
3 mourning tablets
mourning pendant
pubic tassel of deceased girl
6 mourning strings
2 mourning staffs
5 dilly bags
3 wrapped hair bundles
bundle of hair from dead man
mourning tablet
2 spear smoothers
palm-frond paint brush
digging stick

dilly bag King plate of Laura Deighton tribe 2 dugong skulls	Skeleton of Wapinarinji skull & lower jaw of 'Taylor' 15 hair samples	single outrigger canoe

Table 7 Hale and Tindale's Princess Charlotte Bay collection (610 objects), categorised by type.



Numbers collected: a-205; b-154; c-34; d-; e-55; f-82; g-7; h-2; i-; j-16; k-3; l-15

Key

a	men's weapons & tools	g	sacred objects
b	women's utensils	h	'art' objects (painted stone, bone)
c	dress & ornament	i	stone tools (archaeological)
d	games, toys (adults' & children's)	j	foods and materials (including ochre)
e	musical instruments, message sticks	k	skeletal material
f	ceremonial paraphernalia (sacred & secular)	l	casts, hair samples

Each object was registered with details of the date on which it was collected, and most often with the name of the maker or owner and their tribal affiliation. This was facilitated by the practice of allocating registration numbers to the objects as they were collected. Tindale made use of this numbering system in his 'Notes on our Ethnological Takings' at the back of his journal, referring to particular objects which were not otherwise documented. An example is A13840, described by Tindale as:

> Dance rattle worn by [female] on leg at playabout dances described herein. Made from seed cases of "match box" tree which are cut in half when soft. When dried and strung on string they give a musical rattling which adds effectively to the rhythm of the dance. Worn on the leg just above the knee by the women and girls who take part in the "playabout" dances. This example was obtained from a young woman "Ngarena" by name.[82]

This item was among about 40 objects collected by Hale and Tindale on 4 February, 1927 at Port Stewart. Tindale noted this event in his journal in the following terms:

> Went up to the camp with Tommy [a Port Stewart man] to purchase as much material as possible. Spent 6 hours bartering and got quite a lot of material of special interest.[83]

Hale's diary reveals that the pair worked independently in bartering for and documenting individual items. Tindale's notes for that afternoon include a passing reference to palm leaf baskets, for example, four of which were obtained:

> The palm spathe provides a very efficient basket. It is sometimes used for journeys.[84]

The Anthropology Register refers specifically to a basket collected on that day (A13647) known as 'olku' and used as a cradle. Hale's notes supply the detail:

> When the natives are making a long journey they carry their babies in a basket ("Olku") made of palm leaf. Photographed a baby in one of these & then purchased the basket.[85]

This particular photograph was published in Hale & Tindale (1934) and is preserved in Hale's diary, together with others including his photograph of the owner, Nangoyonomo, a Baranguan man, carrying the basket (with his child in it) along a 'native pad'. This was published in the 1933 article, without specific reference to the basket or its owner.[86] The documentation of material culture by Hale and Tindale did not end at that point. The pair had taken a motion picture camera with them and successfully shot several hundred feet of 16mm film, later edited into the 400 feet long, 'Natives of Princess Charlotte Bay'. Reference to both men's journals indicates that each was responsible for important footage relating to material culture. As well as a sequence depicting Nagoyonomo carrying the palm-leaf 'cradle' containing his baby, this included footage of spear-throwing, canoe launching, 'grinding a baler shell to make a womera ornament and lighting a fire with the long fire-sticks, standing up to do it'.[87]

Each of the objects collected by Hale and Tindale was obtained by barter. As on Groote Eylandt, tobacco was the main medium of exchange, with flour, tea and other European items providing a variation when required. Hale and Tindale noted the importance of tobacco as a commodity within the Princess Charlotte Bay communities in their 1934 publication:

> When ample tobacco is available smoking is indulged in to excess until the supply is exhausted

> or considerably depleted. Even small children smoke, often to such an extent that they become drugged or sick. The practice seems to be a newly acquired one, and appears to have entirely supplanted any earlier forms of narcotics that may have been indulged in.[88]

Following his experience on Groote Eylandt, Tindale also took a supply of fencing wire on the expedition, to be exchanged with Aborigines for use as prongs for their fishing spears.[89] An unexpected commodity was generated by Hale and Tindale through their photographic studies of Aboriginal people. Hale observed the 'cast off papers from our Kodak films are picked up by the gins who wear them around their waists'.[90]

Hale and Tindale's first exchange, on Flinders Island on 4 January, 1927, was made with flour and tobacco for 'several dilly bags'. On the following day '[s]everal natives brought up dilly bags, pearl necklets and grass bead strings'.[91] The cycle of bartering had begun. On 5 January Hale wrote that 'The natives have sold us a few dilly bags, a canoe & some neck ornaments & we are in hopes of getting more from them'.[92] His expectations were fulfilled five days later by another substantial exchange. Hale's notes indicate that these apparently straightforward economic transactions also involved some degree of social reciprocity, or at least an expectation of involvement in ceremonial events:

> Between 5 & 7 pm the natives brought us much material in the way of dilly bags, bamboo tobacco pipes, dance ornaments & so on; in all we bought about 40 articles for tobacco. This evening our presence was requested at a corroboree dance so we went across to the camp soon after dark. The young men and women went through several descriptive dances, shaving, clearing roads, the seagull dance etc.[93]

The single outrigger canoe mentioned by Hale was purchased, after repairs, on 7 January for '1 bag of flour, some sugar, tea and tobacco'.[94] As with the canoe collected by Tindale on Groote Eylandt, this was the single most expensive item acquired during the expedition. On the same day Hale and Tindale obtained a range of material, acquisitions which triggered the level of documentation which was to distinguish their ethnographic collection. Tindale made the following notes:

> Bought from the natives various spears from Stanley Island, some imported from the trade route via the shores of Pr. Charlotte Bay from the Pt. Stewart distict (Enchinga) also a womera from the same island, some other bags, firesticks, a hardwood wooden smoother and a woomera [sic] from Flinders Island and Cape Melville. We took photos of the camp and of a native of Flinders Island, [female], called Tilkoana, making a dilly bag from Livistona leaf fibre and wattle bark fibre. The bag was supported obliquely between two sticks stuck obliquely into the sand away from her. The bark fibre was kept soaking in water and as required was spun into a two stranded string by rolling on the right thigh. About 6 feet of this was prepared, the excess being wound loosely around the two sticks until sufficient had been prepared. The work started from the mouth of the bag and progressed to the bottom. Obtained some native words from a Port Stewart native. The temperature today was 100 [degrees] F.[95]

Tindale's trade route investigations which developed from this acquisition of spears were incorporated into the 1934 publication, as were the notes which he and Hale made on string bag manufacture. Several other processes falling under the heading of 'native industries'' were documented and relevant objects or specimens obtained. The processes included the manufacture of spearthrowers, spears and fishing nets and preparation of mangrove fruit for eating.

In contrast to the Groote Eylandt people, the Aborigines of Princess Charlotte Bay had experienced intermittent contact with Europeans for many years, and were not unfamiliar with the collecting activities of ethnographers. In light of this, Hale recorded his acquisition of two rare sting-ray barbed spears with some satisfaction:

> This afternoon Charlie Hungry gave me two spears set with sting ray spines in exchange for a white drill coat. He told me these were made at Bathurst Head and are poisoned with a vegetable poison, so that "supposin' that one chuck at man, him die, close up quickly". Charlie says he has refused to part with these spears; he has been asked for them several times by white men & only gave them to me because I am "good mate belonga me"; he didn't want to take the coat in the end![96]

The Aborigines of the area were steadily being drawn into the European economy of the Barrier Reef, particularly the pearling and trepang fisheries. This had removed a large number of the able-bodied men from the coastal communities, striking 'a deep blow at the whole social fabric'.[97] One result was that the Aboriginal camps were becoming increasingly reliant upon European commodities. Combined with the scarcity of bush food brought about through prolonged dry conditions, this gave Hale and Tindale a greater opportunity for obtaining ethnographic material. A week after their arrival on Flinders Island, Hale noted that:

> The natives are very short of food & are willing to sell many valued objects they would not hitherto part with, for a pannikin of flour from Morey's store [the ethnographers' base camp]. Their natural foods are running short.[98]

Reaching Port Stewart on the mainland at the end of January, the Museum workers discovered that Japanese beche-de-mer fishermen had preceded them, distributing flour among the Aborigines, 'with a view to roping them in as crews & divers'.[99] As a result, Hale and Tindale had some difficulty in obtaining help with their own natural history collecting and expected that they 'would not be able to secure weapons & utensils as cheaply as would be the case were the natives flour and tobacco hungry'.[100] Within a week Hale was able to record a more satisfactory result:

> Directly after breakfast we made down to the camps on the sandspit with a bag of flour, tea and sugar ... The natives are now hungry again so we had a good time. We went first to the eastern camp. We bought many spears, baskets, bags, mourning tablets, spear smoothers etc. ...[101]

By the time Hale and Tindale left Flinders Island for Port Stewart they had run out of tobacco supplies, but still had enough flour to barter. When the boat arrived offshore to pick them up the pair were in the middle of a bartering session: 'After 15 mins more rapid work we told the natives to fetch all remaining material they wanted to exchange for flour to the end of the sand spit in an hour'.[102] Reflecting on the variety and number of objects acquired during their last days on the island (nearly 350 objects were obtained from February 3rd to 6th, 1927), Hale observed that:

> The Flinders Island people are hungry and in exchange for flour etc have been scouring the camp for specimens. We have pretty well cleaned them up, & nothing of much interest remains.[103]

The purchasing power of desirable European commodities brought the full range of ethnographic objects

within the reach of the two scientists. As with Groote Eylandt Aborigines, there were certain categories with which the Princess Charlotte Bay people were less ready to part: rare commodities, certain ceremonial objects, and human remains or objects associated with them. Objects from each of these categories would have been difficult or, in the latter case, impossible to replace. In contrast, most of the everyday utensils, weapons and items of ornament or clothing would have been readily replaced in the days or weeks following the expedition.

In the first category, Hale and Tindale independently observed the value attached to grinding stones by Aboriginal men of Port Stewart. These had to be obtained through trade from the vicinity of Coen, 80 kilometres away. Tindale's account of bartering for one of these objects (A13765), on 2 February, 1927, reads as follows:

> The natives seem more interested in us now. The stone mill is chiefly used for grinding baler shells for womera handles and for crushing colours for painting. As there is no natural stone within 50 miles of the place, it has been brought a long way, much used and treasured; in fact it was too important for [sic] to be sold for tobacco; the owner wanted money (two bob!!). [104]

Resin from the gum of the bloodwood tree was another coveted item (A13859), used as a fixative in making spears and spearthrowers: this was obtained by barter 'with some difficulty'.[105]

Hale and Tindale had various opportunities to acquire objects of the second category - ceremonial material of a non-restricted kind - particularly following performances of dances at their Flinders Island camp. These opportunities were expanded when their expected departure from the island was delayed for three weeks by the effect of a major cyclone in the Cooktown area. During this period they used their dinghy to reach nearby Bathurst Head and Stanley Island, documenting rock paintings previously unrecorded by Europeans. These paintings were described in their 1934 publication, largely from Hale's notes and illustrations.[106] On Stanley Island, accompanied by Aboriginal people, they discovered a cache of two dozen painted turtle heads in a large rock-shelter containing rock paintings. The pair later discovered from Wondal, the last male survivor of the island's inhabitants, that these were significant objects, relating to the initiation of young men:

> when a young man killed his first turtle there was a big feast at which the boy was praised and told he was a man. The boy then painted the skull of the animal he had captured and it was stowed away with the other skulls. One of these we picked out and brought away was the one which Wondal himself killed some years ago.[107]

Another painted turtle skull, hung in a tree as a charm to attract turtles to shore, was collected during Hale a visit to Bathurst Head three days later, on 18 January, 1927.[108] Two decorated wooden 'rain making slabs' (A13862-3), hung near wells during times of drought, were bartered to Tindale by Towar'min of the Mutumui people, on 4 February, 1927. No objections were made to the acquisition of any of these items.

This category of material overlapped with the third, that of human remains, particularly where objects associated with burial and mourning were concerned. As on Groote Eylandt, no deaths occurred among Aboriginal people during the Princess Charlotte Bay expedition, but sufficient time had elapsed

since earlier funeral ceremonies for particular objects to be made available to the ethnographers. Hale wrote:

> We have been fortunate, for at both Bathurst Head and Port Stewart, deaths have occurred not so very long ago. When the natives learned our wishes they looked for the mourning paraphernalia which we have secured & which was apparently according to custom thrown away somewhere, & is therefore not perhaps in the best of condition.[109]

He and Tindale obtained a wide selection of mourning strings, wooden tablets and even decorated wands associated with these ceremonies.[110] During a beach collecting trip on 20 January they were allowed to collect and document a pile of funerary goods, abandoned on the completion of ceremonies for Yerkungar, a young Flinders Island girl who had died two years earlier. Permission was given by her uncle, Wondal, the owner of the turtle skull.[111]

Hale and Tindale were also permitted to exhume two skeletons of known individuals for whom the funerary rites had been completed. The first of these, a Margaret River man called Wapinarinji, had died in a fight more than twelve years earlier and had been buried vertically in a crouched position, lashed to a pole. His skeleton was sold to Hale and Tindale by Ennan, his son, who also participated in the exhumation at Bathurst Head and posed in the burial position for a photograph.[112] The second exhumation was of the body of a Normanton man named 'Taylor', who had been buried three months earlier at Port Stewart. Only the skull and lower jaw were collected.[113] Other physical remains associated with the dead were obtained in the form of human hair 'amulets' which were worn during the period of mourning. These were not easily obtained: Hale recorded that a Port Stewart man wearing one of these amulets 'declined to let us have it as it "belong dead fellow"'.[114] Significantly, neither Tindale nor Hale commented on the similar degree of difficulty experienced in obtaining these items and the hair samples which they were collecting for physical anthropological purposes. Hale noted the reason for his lack of success in this branch of collecting: 'In three cases they informed me that if I cut the hair off a person, & took it a long way off, then the person from which it was taken would die'.[115] Tindale was apparently able to conquer these scruples, obtaining samples on Flinders Island and at Port Stewart from fourteen individuals, paying them with 'small quantities of tea, sugar, flour & tobacco'.[116]

Tindale did not take any anthropometric apparatus with him on the Princess Charlotte Bay expedition, and made no detailed measurements of Aborigines as Stirling or Spencer had done on their expeditions, and as had been recommended in *Notes and Queries*. Despite this, his notes on stature and skin colouration, his collection of hair samples and his series of twenty Aboriginal face and profile portraits were incorporated within the 1933 publication in a section titled 'Types of People'.[117] This element had not been present in his Groote Eylandt work: it signalled a realignment of his role in the wider anthropological project being undertaken in South Australia.

Tindale's role as a museum collector

A comparison of the Anthropology Register entries prepared by Tindale following his Groote Eylandt and North Queensland expeditions gives the best indication of how the process of collecting ethnographic objects had become integral to his broader anthropological project. Just as it was considered essential to record precise details of collection for natural science specimens, so most of Hale and Tindale's Princess Charlotte Bay objects were documented to a level which enabled them to be located within their cultural milieu, well after they had been physically removed from it. Hale and Tindale's written notes were the primary source for this documentation. On the Northern Queensland expedition they were supplemented by more extensive photographic records than on Groote Eylandt, and also by motion picture film. Despite its isolated use by ethnographers such as Baldwin Spencer during the 1901-1902 expedition, or Brooke-Nicholls on the Birdsville Track during 1922, this medium had not yet been accepted as a standard tool of field ethnographers. With his successful production of a film documenting the material culture and daily life of Princess Charlotte Bay Aborigines, Tindale was well placed to promote this form of documentation on the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions of the 1930s.

Other contrasts between the two expeditions are evident, both in the range and depth of data obtained. Tindale had paid relatively little attention to obtaining genealogies on the Groote Eylandt expedition: these became a major preoccupation during the Queensland fieldwork, although they were not published. Both Tindale and Hale spent time interviewing Aboriginal people on this subject.[118] Tindale also went to greater lengths to obtain information about totemic affiliations. Additionally, the 1933 publication contained a table of kinship terminology which he arranged according to the template developed by H. Kenneth Fry, the Oxford-trained Adelaide anthropologist and member of the Board for Anthropological Research.[119] Tindale's linguistic researches during the Queensland expedition extended well beyond his 1921-22 work. As well as recording word lists, he attempted some analysis of the different dialects and languages encountered, noting similarities and differences.[120]

The addition of physical anthropological data to Tindale's 1926-27 collecting activities was possibly the most striking indication of how the South Australian Museum's anthropological project had widened since his Groote Eylandt expedition. It also signalled Tindale's readiness to mould his working practices to those of his future colleagues in the field - the Board for Anthropological Research. Tindale's numbered portraits of Princess Charlotte Bay people indicated a new specificity in anthropological dealings with Aborigines, reflected in his careful documentation of individual objects. As his later work showed, this focus was directed at discovering an individual's relationship to what Tindale was to identify as the primary social unit of Aboriginal Australia - the 'tribe'.[121] For Tindale, his Board for Anthropological Research colleagues, and his main collaborator from the late 1930s, Joseph Birdsell, the 'tribe' could be

analysed not only in terms of its social and material culture traits, but physiologically and genetically also, against a distinct geographical or territorial background. This realisation impelled much of the work of the Board for Anthropological Research, directing them to mount expeditions to remote areas of Central Australia to collect a wide range of material, social, and physiological evidence of the relationship of Aboriginal groups with their territory and with each other.

Endnotes - Chapter Eleven

1. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 20-21. For Hale's account of the same procedure, together with photographs, see Hale (1926-27 ms: 62).

2. See Twidale, *et al* (eds.) 1986 for numerous examples of these associations and linkages in the natural sciences in South Australia.

3. Cleland stressed the requirements of physical anthropological research in his 1899 address to the Royal Society (Cleland 1899).

4. N.B. Tindale, pers. comm. 1985.

5. Tindale, pers. comm., 1985. Indeed, evidence suggests that the links with Watson and Lendon were more tangible. Both had deposited Aboriginal remains with the Museum deriving from their work in the Anatomy School.

6. Stirling 1911.

7. Jones 1992c. Note that further acquisitions of ethnographic material resulted from the contacts made by Waite during this expedition.

8. Stirling & Waite 1919; Waite 1923; Waite 1924. For Waite's role in the establishment of the Museum's scientific journal, see Jones (1995b).

9. For a history of the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions, see Jones (1987).

10. Wood Jones earnt Elliot Smith's friendship and esteem during the Nubian survey. Elliot Smith wrote to Arthur Keith after its completion:

> What a mess there would have been in Nubia if I had not Wood Jones! For I know no other man who could have tackled the stupendous task there as he has done.

Elliot Smith subsequently asked Wood Jones to lecture on anatomy with him at the University of Manchester in 1909. (Christophers 1974: xv, xxix)

11. ADB 9: 510. See Elkin & Macintosh (1974) for biographical essays on Elliot Smith and assessments of his contribution to theories of evolution and cultural diffusion.

12. Rivers' reputation was severely damaged by his conversion to Elliot Smith's diffusionism. Nevertheless, lectures given by Elliot Smith's protege William Perry at the University of London during the late 1920s rivalled Malinowski's for their appeal among the student body. See Stocking (1983: 111); Kuper (1988: 163n). Despite Wood Jones' heretical belief in the principles of Lamarckian evolution, his anatomical and zoological research, particularly into Australian marsupials, was internationally acknowledged.

13. Several of Stirling's medical students of the 1880s and 1890s engaged in ethnographic collecting as a hobby. Dr Leonard Seabrook and Dr Philip Shanahan are two examples (see Jones files on Grenfell Price and Shanahan collections; Jones 1984).

14. Campbell 1925.

15. It is probable that part of the reason for Wood Jones leaving his teaching position in the Women's Medical School in London for a post in Adelaide was the opportunity to work on the collection of Aboriginal crania, largely assembled by Edward Stirling. Stirling's colleague in the University of Adelaide's Medical School, Sir Henry Newland, was given authority to select the new Professor. Newland's father, a pioneer pastoralist, had published on Aboriginal matters during the 1880s and had collected ethnographic objects. See Sir Arthur Keith's obituary for Wood Jones,

in Christophers (1974: xvi).

16. Hale 1956: 131. The system was that developed by the physical anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka in 1921.

17. Jones & Campbell 1924.

18. Hale 1956: 131.

19. Jones 1996

20. In fact, a decade before the intensive fieldwork method became entrenched in anthropological practice, Tindale's field experience was probably unmatched. Carl Lumholtz had spent fourteen months with Queensland Aborigines, from 1881 to 1882, but made no systematic collections or observations (ADB 5: 109).

21. See Tindale, N.B. (1921-22) ms. for detail on these collections. Tindale's Groote Eylandt collection is registered in three blocs: A12413-724, A12741-900, A16533-5.

22. Pers. comm. N.B. Tindale, 1985.

23. Hinsley 1981: 23. The combination of scientific interest and wistfulness is evident in the historical sources; guilt is encountered less often.

24. Of Spencer and Haddon, Stocking writes: 'Both became interested in ethnographic data while carrying on zoological fieldwork; capitalising permanently on their newfound interest, both ended their careers as anthropologists'. (Stocking 1983: 74-75)

25. See Hinsley 1981: 86.

26. Coincidentally though, Tindale's arrival on Groote Eylandt in July 1921 was preceded by a small ornithological collecting expedition organised by the New South Wales collector, H.L. White.

27. Lea to Director of South Australian Museum, 25 November, 1920. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO. For the missionaries' published report, see Warren (1918).

28. The official agreement between Tindale and the South Australian Museum is contained in GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO. Background to the Church Missionary Society's establishment of the Groote Eylandt Mission, and Tindale's role in it, is discussed in Cole, (ed.) 1972.

29. Walter 1988: 54.

30. Pers. comm., N.B. Tindale, 1985.

31. Spencer also advised Tindale on the best method of language transcription, based on the internationally accepted 'Geographic I'. See Walter 1988: 54.

32. 'Mr Tindale's object in applying for a year's leave of absence is to collect natural history specimens on Groote Eylandt and adjacent localities....' A.M. Lea to Director of South Australian Museum, 25 November, 1920. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

33. Tindale to Director, South Australian Museum, 25 November, 1920. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

34. Tindale 1921-22 ms: 2.

35. *Ibid:* 23.

36. *Ibid*: 118-19. The 'matchbox bean ornament' is not mentioned in the journal entry but was registered as A12863 in the South Australian Museum collection with Tindale's note that it was 'the first article obtained from the Groote Eylanders'.

37. *Ibid:* 141.

38. *Ibid*: 220.

39. *Ibid*: 145.

40. Tindale 1925: 98.

41. Tindale 1926: 116.

42. See correspondence between Museum staff and the shipping company, Burns Philp & Co., in GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

43. Tindale wrote:

> Not only is the drone-pipe used by the natives in ceremonial dances and to pass idle hours of the day, but [it] is the almost invariable accompaniment to their sleep. In a sleeping camp, as one player becomes tired, he wakes the one next to him, who continues in his place. So necessary is this music to the natives that on one occasion at Yetiba a party of them who lacked a drone-pipe were unable to sleep, and waking me, begged the loan of one from my collection. The next morning the manufacture of a new one was witnessed. (Tindale 1925: 92)

44. See for example, Tindale, 1921-22 ms: 159.

45. Tindale 1925: 87, 70 (figs. 29 & 30). One incomplete skull and two lower jaws from Groote Eylandt are registered as nos. A16533-5. Illustrated in Tindale 1925: 75, fig.24.

46. Tindale to Director, South Australian Museum, 4 September, 1921. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

47. Tindale, 1921-22 ms.: 240. Tindale wrote that 'there is said to be a cave in the hills behind Angoroko devoted to skulls, but the natives would neither indicate its position nor produce the skulls' (Tindale 1925: 75).

48. Tindale 1925: 74-75. For the journal record of this discovery, see Tindale, 1921-22 ms.: 303.

49. At an early stage, before leave was granted by the South Australian Museum, it was necessary for the Director to reassure his Board that Tindale did not intend to take up a permanent position with the Society. Waite wrote: 'As to the possibility of his not returning at the completion of the leave, I have questioned Mr. Tindale closely on this point, and he assures me that his object in desiring to go to Groote Eylandt is not primarily in regard to church work but to gain field knowledge and to make collections of Natural History for which the opportunity now offered is quite exceptional' (Director to Chairman, Museum Committee, 26 November, 1920. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO).

50. Seafield Deuchar to Tindale, 4 December, 1920. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

51. Walter 1988 ms: 52.

52. Tindale recorded vocabularies in the Mara, Alawa, Ngandi, Ingura and Rembaranga languages. Tindale, 1921-22 ms.: 288(Ngandi); 290(Ingura); 291(Rembaranga); 317(Mara, Alawa).

53. *Ibid*: 141.

54. *Ibid:* 206, 282.

55. Tindale 1925: 84-90, 87.

56. Tindale, 1921-22 ms.: 191. Tindale's acquisition of these stone-headed spears in exchange for tobacco may be contrasted with his greater difficulty in obtaining them on Groote Eylandt itself.

57. Tindale's progress on this front brought far quicker results than his halting investigation of social phenomena alone. At this stage, this can be attributed to his lack of reading in social anthropology. It was not until he had been at Groote Eylandt and Roper River for six months that he made the following journal entry, on 12 January, 1922: '[I] learnt that the boys were in two lots [moieties] ... It seems to mean some totem arrangement ... I was wondering if this was the same thing as I read of recently' (*ibid.* 247).

58. The full application of Tindale's documentary method to the subject of spears made, traded and used by the tribal groups studied during the 1921-22 expedition appears in Tindale (1925: 92-98). The map appears in Tindale (1921-22 ms: 276).

59. Tindale to Director, South Australian Museum, 30 May, 1922. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

60. Tindale 1921-22 ms.: 145, 219-20, 256-7, 286-7, 312.

61. *Ibid:* 284.

62. *Ibid:* 147.

63. Tindale used the term 'waddy' to refer to carved wooden objects, such as the 'gods' - the large carved poles encountered shortly after his arrival at Groote Island (*ibid.:* 159).

64. *Ibid:* 310.

65. *Ibid:* 299.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid:* 312.

68. Registered as A12864-7, SAM. A12868 is described as 'Native drawing on wood'.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Tindale did include photographs and drawings of Groote Eylandt rock art in his published reports (Tindale 1926: 118, 120), as well as photographs of two paintings on ironwood slabs (*ibid:* 133, figs. 64a & b). These latter were ceremonial objects rather than bark paintings. Bark paintings appeared in a photographed captioned 'Men painting weapons and bark' (*ibid:* 118, fig. 62).

71. Tindale, 1921-22 ms.: 207-8.

72. *Ibid:* 291. On 10 April, 1922, Tindale recorded a further instance: 'Got a nice dilly bag, some more armlets and another belt, all made, apparently, according to enquiries, by the women folk' (*ibid:* 308).

73. The Groote Eylandt men went to extraordinary measures to protect their women against outsiders, cloistering them in isolated camps under the control of old men. Tindale attributed this situation to the small number of women on the island, as well as depredations carried out in historic times by the Malay trepangers who had, until recently, been the only outsiders to visit the island. In his published article Tindale wrote:

> after several years of mission work, the natives were induced to bring a party of their women to a place near Yetiba, and Mrs Dyer ventured with the old men to where they were hiding. She found them to be timid and shy, hiding at first completely behind hinged sheets of stringy bark, with which each was provided. (Tindale 1925: 67, 72; Tindale 1926: 131, 134; See also Walter 1988: 73)

74. After deducting advances and the cost of Museum materials, Tindale was paid L162-3-2. General Secretary, Board of Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, to Tindale, 26 October, 1923. GRG19/55/1921/232, SRO. Tindale recalled that this made 'a little sensation' and that the Museum Board was 'nonplussed' (quoted in Walter 1988: 75).

75. These figures were arrived at by adding the valuations from the two consignments of specimens sent south by Tindale. Both valuations, signed by Edgar Waite, Museum Director, are contained within the single docket, GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

76. General Secretary, Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery to Tindale, 26 October, 1922. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

77. Director, South Australian Museum, to Chairman, Museum Committee, 3 October, 1922. GRG 19/55/1921/232, SRO.

78. Walter 1988.

79. Hale & Tindale 1925. The paper appeared in the same issue of the *Records of the South Australian Museum* as Tindale's first Groote Eylandt paper.

80. Hale & Tindale 1933: 64.

81. The 610 objects are registered in a single sequence, from A13450-14059.

82. Tindale, N.B. 1926-27 ms, AASAM. For an illustration of the object, see fig. 200 in Hale & Tindale 1934: 140.

83. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 46.

84. *Ibid*: 48.

85. Hale 1926-27 ms: 166.

86. This was published without specific reference to the basket or its owner. The photograph is simply captioned 'Native pad, coast of Princess Charlotte Bay' (Hale & Tindale 1933: 68, fig.3). Tindale recorded the name of the father and the baby as Nungurali. See Tindale 1926-27 ms: 50.

87. See for example, *ibid:* 21,24,47,52; Hale 1926-27 ms: 55,65,68.

88. Hale & Tindale 1934: 144.

89. N.B. Tindale, pers. comm., 1985.

90. Hale 1926-27 ms: 58.

91. The dilly bag registered as A13671 is recorded as having been collected on 4 January, 1927. Another eight dilly bags (A13665-72, A13674-5) were recorded as collected during January and a few of these may also have been obtained that day. See Tindale 1926-27 ms: 17.

92. Hale 1926-27 ms: 48.

93. *Ibid:* 72. Tindale's notes read:

> In the evening we visited the camp at the invitation of the natives to see play about dances. We purchased several native articles and turned in about 11 pm after doing some fishing, working on the reef with a light and finally settling a row between Charlie Hungry and his lubra ....

(Tindale 1926-27 ms: 24)

94. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 20. Tindale's documentation of the types of canoes and manufacturing techniques involved was published in Hale & Tindale (1934: 117-21).

95. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 20-21. For Hale's account of the same procedure, together with photographs, see Hale (1926-27 ms: 62).

96. Charlie Hungry's expressed opinion of Hale may have been influenced by the part which he and Tindale played in resolving a dispute between Hungry and his wife on the evening of 10 January (See *ibid:* 98; Tindale 1926-27 ms: 24).

97. Hale & Tindale 1933: 85.

98. Hale 1926-27 ms: 84.

99. *Ibid*: 154.

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid:* 174-75.

102. *Ibid*: 178.

103. *Ibid*: 184.

104. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 44. Hale's account reads:

> The natives attach considerable value to these stones. The owner would not part with this stone for tea or tobacco - it was too valuable a possession - but agreed to sell it for 2/- (Hale 1926-27 ms: 160).

105. *Ibid:* 177. See also Hale & Tindale 1933: 103-104.

106. Hale made meticulous colour copies of the paintings and interviewed Aboriginal people about the meaning of particular motifs. See Hale 1926-27 ms 86-94, 103, 107-116; Hale & Tindale 1934: 146-56.

107. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 33-34. Wondal did not accompany Hale, Tindale and three Aboriginal people to the island on their visit, on 14 January, 1927. Hale recorded considerable detail about this practice, and noted the fact that Wondal's first turtle kill had occurred 'when he was a boy and his father - the king of the Stanley Island section - was still alive' (Hale 1926-27 ms: 96-97). Five turtle skulls were collected from the Endaen rock-shelter, later registered (beginning with Wondal's) as A13658-62, and discussed in Hale and Tindale 1933: 84-85.

108. Registered as A13663. See Hale 1926-27 ms: 12.

109. *Ibid:* 182.

110. See for example, A13952-14006, A14016-21 (60 mourning strings from Port Stewart, Flinders Island, Barrow Point, Cape Melville and Bathurst Head people), A14031 (widow's wooden mourning tablet from Port Stewart), and A14035-6 (mourning staffs carried at Port Stewart and Flinders Island funeral ceremonies).

111. These objects, comprising a woven mourning cap and cape, three rectangular mourning tablets, a mourning pendant containing hair of the deceased, the deceased's pubic covering, six mourning strings and five dilly bags, are registered as A14009-26. Hale and Tindale each recorded the discovery of these items in their journals, as well as in Hale & Tindale 1933: 97-98.

112. Tindale 1926-27 ms: 35-36. Hale's journal contains a fuller account of the exhumation and burial characteristics, together with photographs. The published account seems to have been based mainly on Hale's notes (see Hale 1926-27 ms: 118-20; Hale & Tindale 1933: 95-97). The skeleton was registered as A14042.

113. Hale noted that the 'body was in too bad condition to handle so we took off the head & filled in the grave again'. (Hale 1926-27 ms: 144). The skull was registered as A14043.

114. *Ibid:* 160.

115. *Ibid*: 166.

116. *Ibid*: 58. The samples are registered as A14045-58 and are discussed in Hale & Tindale (1933: 71).

117. Hale & Tindale 1933: 71-76.

118. Hale 1926-27 ms: 50; Tindale 1926-27 ms: 33, 36, 37, 45, 55.

119. Hale & Tindale 1933: 81; See also Jones 1996b.

120. On 3 February, 1927, for example, Tindale noted:

> After lunch wrote up Rocky dialect of the Pt. Stewart language obtained from Tommy; most of words are common to natives from N. of Night Island down to Pt. Stewart but there are two dialects at least and a few words change. It is safe to amalgamate Night I. to Pt. Stewart words as forming one language. (Tindale 1926-27 ms: 46, 53). Tindale's comparative language material was published in Hale & Tindale 1934: 158-71.

121. Tindale 1940; Tindale 1974.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SHIFTING OBJECTS

Every object must have its significance, representing a certain fact, or providing evidence of an important discovery.[1]

If ethnographic museums ... have been bad for our science, it is because they have perpetuated the ancient illusion that what they offer is complete knowledge of material things.[2]

During the century which followed South Australia's foundation as a colony, there were two crucial periods of ethnographic collecting linked to professional anthropological activity. The first took recognisable shape during the 1880s and continued until the First World War. South Australian initiatives formed part of broader national and international trends during this period. The second period, between the two World Wars, marked Adelaide as a distinctive centre of collection and research at a time when museum anthropology elsewhere in Australia had become inward-looking, concerned with maintaining and interpreting existing collections.

The anthropological research undertaken during the first period may be characterised as an attempt to broadly define Aboriginal society and its attributes (including its objects), rather than to analyse it in detail. It was accompanied by the contributions of a large number of collectors operating on the frontier of Aboriginal and European contact. Many of these collectors were influenced by priorities and criteria established by the pioneer museum anthropologists: Robert Etheridge at the Australian Musem, Walter Baldwin Spencer at the National Museum of Victoria, and Edward Stirling at the South Australian Museum. The other Australian museums were also builiding their ethnographic collections during this period, although not to the same degree as Adelaide. Similar trends were evident elsewhere in the world, and were accompanied by a pronounced increase in museum construction. For this reason the period has been described as the 'museological era'.[3] The American ethnographer Otis Mason had defined the era's ethos during its first decade when he proclaimed in 1887 that '[e]very object must have its significance, representing a certain fact, or providing evidence of an important discovery'.[4]

The creation of the first Australian Chair of Anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1926, followed by the death in 1928 of Australia's foremost museum-based anthropologist, Baldwin Spencer, signalled a long period of decline in Australian museum ethnography. Internationally the picture was the same. The unquestioned faith in the documentary role of ethnographic objects and the capacity of museum

ethnographers to manipulate and interpret that role was critically eroded in Britain, Europe and North America. The French folklorist Arnold van Gennep expressed the new scepticism about museum ethnography in 1914:

> if ethnographic museums ... have been bad for our science, it is because they have perpetuated the ancient illusion that what they offer is complete knowledge of material things. From about the 1890s the ethnographers imagined that in filling cases with objects carefully labelled and provided with their native name, in arranging these objects beneath glass, and in describing them in specialist journals with fine detail and illustrations, they are advancing ethnography...[5]

The metaphoric capacity of ethnographic objects to express the nature and extent of 'primitive culture' was increasingly rendered obsolete by social anthropology' development as an applied, investigative science. Museum cthnology was marginal to this project, which sited its operations in the field and reported results to university departments, rather than to museum boards. As marginal players museum curators were left to arrange and rearrange their collections to no apparent effect while anthropology made its way as an independent profession. Yet there were important exceptions to this trend, internationally as in Australia.

The historian Nelia Dias has shown how the French anthropologists Paul Rivet and Georges-Henri Riviere were able to combine the interests of the Trocadéro Museum, precursor of the Musee de l'Homme, with those of an emerging, fieldwork-based social anthropology. In stark contrast to the anthropology taught by Radcliffe Brown and Elkin at the University of Sydney, the Institut d'Ethnologie's co-founder Marcel Mauss regarded a ethnographic collection as a vital element in the anthropological project. His 1931 *Instructions sommaires pour les collecteurs d'objets ethnographiques* supplied the justification:

> Because of the need that has always driven men to imprint the traces of their activity on matter, nearly all phenomena of collective life are capable of expression in given objects. A collection of objects systematically gathered is thus a rich gathering of admissible evidence [*pieces a conviction*]. Their collection creates archives more revealing and sure than written records, since these are authentic, autonomous objects which cannot have been fabricated for the needs of the case, and which thus characterise types of civilisations better than anything else.[6]

Under the leadership of Marcel Griaule, the Institute's 1931-1932 Mission Dakar-Djibouti yielded 3,500 objects for the Trocadéro Museum, as well as a wealth of photographs, documents and recordings. These elements were essential to the overall project, described by James Clifford as 'the intensive documentation of a unified cultural area'.[7]

The revitalisation of French museum ethnography during the 1920s and 1930s had its direct, contemporaneous parallel in South Australia. Despite distinct local influences and traditions, Adelaide anthropology shared some fundamental aspects with its French counterpart. A strong base in empirical, physical anthropological research and collection, an integrated intellectual-scientific community and a commitment to intensive, team-based fieldwork can be mentioned. Beyond these factors Adelaide anthropology of the 1920s and 1930s was moulded into its distinctive form by individuals such as Frederic Wood Jones and Norman B. Tindale.

In contrast, the Australian Museum in Sydney, the National Museum of Victoria, and the Queensland Museum each lacked leadership in the field of anthropology during the 1920s and 1930s. At the Australian Museum, Robert Etheridge had promoted the acquisition, research and display of ethnographic collections from 1887 until his retirement in 1917, spanning the same period as Edward Stirling. His successor, the mineralogist and palaeontologist Charles Anderson, displayed little enthusiasm for the subject during his term, despite his role as President of the Anthropological Society of New South Wales. William Thorpe, who served as Ethnologist under Anderson, directed most of his attention towards maintaining the Anthropology Registers, until his archaeological excavations at Burrill Lake shortly before his retirement in 1932. During the 1930s Thorpe's successors, Elsie Brammell and Frederick McCarthy, were unable to undertake any field research other than archaeological investigations.[8]

The year 1917 also marked the end of an active period in Queensland museum anthropology with the retirement of Ronald Hamlyn-Harris, a keen ethnographer. He had almost doubled the Australian ethnographic collections during his six-year term, receiving several hundred objects as a result of a circular sent to police officers, missionaries and teachers, similar to that prepared by Edward Stirling in Adelaide twenty years earlier. These were to be the 'last major field collections of Queensland Aboriginal material culture made for the museum before the mid-1970s'.[9] As at the Australian Museum, his replacement was also a palaeontologist, Heber Longman. Longman published a paper on human crania in the Museum *Memoirs* in 1918, and continued to collect Aboriginal skeletal material. But apart from recommending the production of a catalogue of his Museum's ethnographic collection in 1918 (with Malinowski as the suggested author), Longman was unable to mount more than a holding operation for the term of his directorship until 1945. The South Australian Museum, under Herbert Hale, benefited on at least two occasions from the Queensland Museum's relative inadequacy as a repository for ethnographic material, obtaining a rare Mornington Island raft in 1944, and the McConnel collection of Cape York ethnographica in 1948.[10]

In Victoria, Baldwin Spencer exerted a diminishing influence over the collecting policy and management of the ethnographic branch of the National Museum throughout the 1920s. On his death in 1928 the zoologist James Kershaw was appointed as the Museum's first salaried director. Like his Sydney and Brisbane counterparts, Kershaw took no active role in anthropological collecting or research.[11] Victorian ethnographic activity was largely channelled into stone tool collecting and analysis during the following decade. Even so, several of these collectors preferred Adelaide as a repository and at least two important Victorian stone tool collections were acquired by the South Australian Museum during this time.

A similar pattern may be detected in other Australian states where the decline in ethnographic collecting by museums was accompanied by a corresponding rise in stone tool collecting. These collectors proliferated during the 1920s in each state, but particularly in New South Wales, Victoria and in South Australia itself. While social anthropology was becoming professionalised and increasingly inaccessible

to the amateur during this period, stone tool collecting from surface sites remained the fertile province of the amateur. It required no training beyond the facility to recognise basic taxonomies of shape and size. More significantly perhaps, it required no contact with Aboriginal people. In fact, stone tool collecting during the 1920s and 1930s was centred upon those parts of south-eastern Australia where Aboriginal people had undergone the greatest demographic decline. Stone tool collectors worked in the comparative tradition of the nineteenth century armchair ethnographers, in which analysis was often incidental to the main goal, that of accumulating an impressive range and depth of specimens and data.[12]

During the 1920s informal networks of stone tool collectors were gradually formed into official clubs and societies. With the exception of Adelaide's Anthropological Society (founded as the first in Australia in 1926), these societies were noticeably historicist and evolutionist in their interests. A 'quest for origins' was the dominant theme. Ethnographic records from the nineteenth century, stone tool classification and a growing number of archaeological investigations characterised the business transacted at these society meetings. Contemporary social circumstances in Aboriginal communities, either in remote regions or in the fringe settlements of south-eastern Australia, were rarely discussed. And if the gulf betweeen an 'authentic', 'traditional' past and the marginalised Aboriginal societies of 1920s and 1930s Australia was emphasised by this bias, social anthropologists working within the ahistorical paradigm of structural functionalism did little to bridge it. The disjunction between Aboriginal past and present was exacerbated when systematic archaeological research began in Australia with Tindale's excavation of the Devon Downs rockshelter on the Murray River during 1929.[13] This disjunction mirrored the slippage which occurred between museum ethnography and social anthropology: the one looking back to a timeless past, the other engaged within a timeless, or at least ahistorical present. The extent of the rift can be measured by the operation of the criterion of authenticity within ethnographic collections at this time. Categories of ethnographic objects generated through the milieu of the colonial frontier were either rejected as tourist knick-knacks or were absorbed (in the case of bark paintings and toas) as authentic and traditional objects with a documentary role. There was no middle ground. The possibility that such objects represented innovation and adaptation on the part of Aboriginal people was rarely, if ever, entertained.[14] Obvious examples of adaptation, such as artefacts incorporating metal and glass, were regarded ambivalently, suggesting both the decay of pristine savagery and the capacity of Aboriginal society to absorb civilising influences. It was only the gradual recognition of tourist craft and art which loosened this standard of authenticity.[15]

Australian museums shared this attitude towards their Aboriginal objects, exhibiting them as historically prior to and separate from contemporary Aboriginal societies, rather than within the synchronic realm of social anthropology. In doing so, museums contributed to their further alienation from academic anthropology and its increasingly powerful practitioners. The historic or diachronic paradigm encompassed evolutionism and diffusionism, two outmoded methodologies which complemented each other despite their

apparent conflict.[16] As an explanation for forms of apparent cultural difference the principles of evolutionism had been demonstrated in ethnographic museums most plainly by Edward Tylor. It was this aspect of museum ethnography which was most explicitly rejected by social anthropologists, particularly by Radcliffe Brown and Elkin within Australia.

The second methodology, that of cultural diffusion, was disseminated in varying forms by Wilhelm Schmidt in Germany, Paul Rivet in France, Clark Wissler and Alfred Kroeber in the United States, and Elliot Smith in Britain. The theory won several converts from the evolutionist fold, notably W.H.R. Rivers.[17] The diffusionist explanation for cultural difference relied on the notion that material culture traits and social institutions had been transmitted throughout the world by migratory movements throughout history. This led many museum ethnographers to reanalyse the collections under their care, searching for analogies of form and style in objects from different cultures and to propose radical conjunctions, such as that between Australian Aborigines and the Indians of Tierra del Fuego.[18]

As with explanations of separate evolution, cultural diffusion was a means of illuminating historical, rather than contemporary processes. By the early twentieth century ethnographic museums throughout the world revealed a sympathy for both schemes of explanation. Objects were arranged according to evolutionary and geographic/diffusionist schema, in many instances within the same exhibition hall.[19] Both were progressivist and developmental in their fundamental assumptions, based on the received truth that simple forms preceded more complex forms and that these processes of sophistication occurred differentially throughout the world, allowing great civilizations to coexist with savagery. In presenting a vignette of one lowly extreme, that of the Australian Aborigine, the status of the West was implicitly confirmed to a museum public.[20]

The visitor to each of the major metropolitan Australian museums during the 1920s and 1930s would not have observed any difference between the style of their Australian ethnographic exhibits. Contrasts lay in the work being undertaken behind the scenes and in the field. Largely through their lack of support for anthropological staff and their interests, the Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane museums remained committed to a late-nineteenth century model of museum ethnography. In the process, these museums were largely abandoned by academic anthropology. In the meantime, operating away from the influence of the Sydney academy, the Adelaide workers were able to develop their own distinctive blend, drawing upon natural science models and the diachronic schemes of evolutionism and cultural diffusion, as well as the emerging theory and practice of social anthropology.

Adelaide was uniquely placed to make a distinct contribution to museum anthropology during the 1920s and 1930s. This was firstly because of the commitment shown to the subject by successive directors, to the degree that the anthropology had remained as an integral part of the South Australian Museum's wider project. Herbert Hale became Director of the South Australian Museum in 1931, following the sudden death of Edgar Waite in 1928.[21] Hale was the third Director in succession to take a serious interest

in South Australian museum-based anthropology. Like his predecessor Hale not only took an active part in field anthropology himself, but backed the efforts of his staff in this area.[22] The appointment of Norman Tindale as Ethnologist in 1928 and the recruitment of Tindale and Hale to the membership of the Board for Anthropological Research during that year clearly signalled that commitment.

A further reason lay in the base of support for Adelaide anthropology expressed through a network of amateur and professional ethnographers and natural historians. This network was directly responsible for the emergence of the group which would transform the South Australian anthropological scene during the 1920s and 1930s - the Board for Anthropological Research. The Board's collaboration with the South Australian Museum set the stage for an anthropological project, unique in Australia, in which physical anthropology, traditional museum ethnography and the new concerns of social anthropology would merge.

Internationally, the trend away from technology and material culture studies had become pronounced by the second decade of this century. During 1914 the American museum anthropologist Clark Wissler (later to become an enthusiastic advocate for Adelaide-based anthropology), complained that the study of these topics had become 'quite out of fashion'.[23] In his 1913 assessment of trends in international anthropology, W.H.R. Rivers had suggested that the traditional research interests of the generalist anthropologists should now be put aside, 'either because their data was less immediately endangered (in the case of archeology [sic]) or because pursuing them risked destroying the rapport necessary for intensive sociological study (in the case of material culture and physical anthropology)'.[24] As Bean writes:

> A fundamental change in the epistemological status of material culture was underway. The differences between peoples were no longer seen to inhere in things (for example, blood and brain size, weapons and costumes). Culture was disentangled from race. The significance of artefacts was to be found in related beliefs and social processes.[25]

It was university departments, rather than museums, which would become the crucial sites of action for an emerging profession which focused its attention upon social organisation, language and ceremony. 'Intensive study' by individual fieldworkers was the new *modus operandi*. The careful collection and description of artefacts, so central to the museum ethnographer's role during the 1880s and 1890s in Australia as in Europe and North America, was now regarded as a peripheral activity. Pfaffenberger writes:

> In anthropology's quest for professionalism, material-culture studies came to stand for all that was academically embarrassing: extreme and conjectural forms of diffusionist and evolutionary explanation, armchair anthropology, "field work" undertaken by amateurs on collecting holidays, and the simplistic interpretation of artefacts shorn of their social and cultural context ... For anthropology, jettisoning material cultural studies was a necessary step in establishing the scientific basis, the intellectual appeal, and the distinctive subject matter of the discipline.[26]

This analysis applied in Australian anthropology, at least in the eastern states. As the histories of the Melbourne and Sydney museums show, the 1920s and 1930s were the decades in which the discipline of anthropology separated itself from museums and their ethnographic collections. Particularly under the

professorship of A.P. Elkin, university anthropology promoted specialists in social structure and theory.[27] Those exceptional graduates who were able to combine these interests with material culture studies, such as Ursula McConnel and Donald Thomson, emphatically placed their collections away from Sydney, in Adelaide and Melbourne.

Although Sydney's dominance in Australian anthropology was never threatened during the 1920s and 1930s, the Adelaide school actively promoted an alternative view of the discipline. Physical anthropology and material culture (two elements of anthropological research identified by Rivers as dispensable) were basic ingredients in the blend of anthropology practised by the South Australian Museum and the affiliated Board for Anthropological Research from 1925 until the Second World War[28]. But rather than rejecting the sociological approach to anthropology, proclaimed by Elkin and his students as the only acceptable orthodoxy, the Board for Anthropological Research attempted to absorb that methodology within a wider project, the study of Aborigines within their environmental milieu. The Board's broad aim, sustained by multi-disciplinary participation, was actively discouraged by the Sydney school as outdated and unrealistic.

As the essential structural functionalist, Bronislaw Malinowski has often been invoked to illustrate the extent of anthropology's paradigm shift away from a traditional concern with objects. But while Malinowski pronounced against 'the purely technological enthusiasms' displayed by many museum ethnographers, there is evidence that he did so in order to mark a territory for the valid pursuit of material culture, rather than to dismiss it altogether as 'dry, even intellectually arid and boring'.[29] His 1916 attack on data-gathering for its own sake applied equally to his own field. He wrote:

> The often fragmentary, incoherent nature of much of the present ethnological material is due to the cult of 'pure fact'. As if it were possible to wrap up in a blanket a certain number of 'facts as you find them' and bring them back for the home student to generalize upon and to build up his theoretical constructions upon ... Only laws and generalizations are scientific facts, and field work consists only and exclusively in the interpretation of the chaotic social reality, in subordinating it to general rules.[30]

In fact Malinowski recognised the potential for material culture studies, informed by principles of social anthropology. Material culture was integral to his own definition of 'culture'.[31] Although there is no direct evidence of his involvement with the South Australian Museum's ethnographic collection during 1914 sojourn in Adelaide, he stayed at the Mt. Lofty home of Edward Stirling, who read and edited the manuscript of his first anthropological publication, 'The Natives of Mailu'.[32] More significantly, while at the National Museum of Victoria in the same year, Malinowski agreed to select and catalogue Trobriand Island ethnographic objects from the collection of his former teacher, C.G. Seligman.[33]

Through this interest in material culture Malinowski suggested an accommodation between the traditional concerns of museum-based ethnography and the developing discipline of social anthropology. For A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and A.P. Elkin, leaders of the discipline in Australia during the 1920s and

1930s, the main sticking point was their perception that museum ethnography was inextricably linked to evolutionist principles. While this may have been a valid characterisation of 1890s museum ethnography, it no longer held for the 1920s. Despite this, Australian academic anthropology was to avoid museum ethnography and material culture studies for most of the twentieth century. While evolutionist theory has seen some of its status restored, 'the mud seems to have stuck more to artifacts and their study'.[34]

There is no doubt that Australian social anthropologists, led by Radcliffe-Brown and Elkin, helped to marginalise the museum's role in material culture studies and ethnography. To focus on this though, is to ignore the weakness of the museum response. Most Australian museums were unable to extend their own natural science models to encompass the paradigms of social anthropology. Indeed, the period also saw an increasing trend towards specialisation among natural scientists. Adelaide provides a major exception, largely through the agency of Norman B. Tindale. His career, like that of A.C. Haddon, Franz Boas and C. Hart Merriam in America, was dominated by the natural science paradigm. Material culture collecting and analysis were rarely ends in themselves for these workers, but the primacy of data remained a defining characteristic. Smith has observed this of Boas's work:

> This exhaustive collection of data which seems at the time to have little or no connection with any specific problem is peculiarly a feature of the natural history approach. Interest lies not in systems per se, but in "the surrounding world" ... hypotheses ... do not come from systematic thought but from systematically ordered data.[35]

In pursuing unfashionable investigations and in gathering collections which reflected this commitment to a wide field of data, Tindale and the Adelaide school endured either adverse criticism or a lack of recognition from Sydney and Melbourne anthropologists during the 1930s. Recent commentators on the period have restored some balance to the picture, but accept that the Adelaide school was fundamentally disadvantaged by a lack of training in the social anthropological sphere, and that its research results were consequently less useful.[36] There is cause to question the basis for this unfavourable comparison. Focusing upon social process, anthropologists left most Australian museum collections and their curators to confront their own image - that of dusty relics with a peripheral relevance to culture. But in retaining a generalist, multi-disciplinary approach through the 1920s and 1930s, members of the Adelaide school treated material culture and technological issues as a facet of Aboriginal culture to be studied within a broader environmental context.

Championing the new orthodoxy, Elkin and most of his Sydney students were convinced of the need to narrow the anthropological focus. Two of Elkin's students defied this trend. Donald Thomson's analysis of Arnhem Land material culture provided a model of its applicability to social analysis, exemplified by his publication, in 1949, of *Economic Structure and the Ceremonial Exchange Cycle in Arnhem Land*.[37] Thomson's extensive and well-documented collections from North and Central Australia were later acquired by the National Museum of Victoria.[38] Ursula McConnel's fieldwork on Cape York Peninsula during the late 1920s and early 1930s was partially influenced by by Norman Tindale's material

culture studies. While her earlier publications concentrated on social aspects, she was one of the first Australian scholars to discuss traditional Aboriginal motifs and designs as 'art'. She later pursued her research into material culture, publishing the results under Tindale's sponsorship in the *Records of the South Australian Museum* during 1953 and lodging her collection of more than 300 well-documented objects there at the same time.[39] Conscious of Elkin's lack of regard for material culture collections, she formalised this deposit in 1951:

> I've had a letter from Prof. Elkin, in it he speaks of my collection going to the Sydney University. He knows quite well that I want it to be in a Museum where I myself and the public generally can have access to the published specimens. The University has no claim on it whatsoever and if you are publishing it in your records I trust it will remain where it is now.[40]

McConnel and Thomson provided exceptions to the 'continued insouciance' with which most Anglo-American anthropologists regarded the study of material culture and technology during the inter-war period. As Pfaffenberger observed: '[b]y jettisoning material-culture studies in the early 20th century, anthropology lost one means of developing a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to culture'.[41] This analysis may be applied to many of the graduates in social anthropology emerging from the University of Sydney anthropology department under Radcliffe Brown and Elkin. The broad focus of the 'Adelaide school', based at the South Australian Museum and centred in the activities of the Board for Anthropological Research, offered a stark contrast in attitude towards ethnographic objects and their documentation. Partly because of the Board's oppositional stance in relation to Elkin's marginalising approach towards them, the 'biographies' of ethnographic objects assumed greater significance than at any previous time in the Museum's history. The role of objects as witnesses to social processes justified the attention paid to their collection by Tindale, Cleland, Campbell, Fry and others.[42] Years later, a renaissance in material culture studies during the 1980s and 1990s has at least partly vindicated the Adelaide school's methodology.[43]

Accepting that Adelaide anthropology during the 1920s and 1930s was distinguished from its Sydney counterpart by a 'holistic' character and a natural historical approach, it would be easy to account for this by referring to the diverse backgrounds of its participants. Understandably, the medical men and natural scientists who comprised the Board for Anthropological Research membership had broader interests than the graduates of Elkin's Sydney Department. There is a deeper explanation. The Board's activities and research were impelled at least at one level, by an urge to trace and understand the linkages between the social life of Aborigines, their physical and cultural characteristics and the surrounding environment. Sydney-based academic anthropology was sustained by structuralist theory which indicated to its practitioners and audience that ahistorical analysis of social groups was a primary goal, rather than localised and historically based descriptions of a range of physical, sociological, and environmental characteristics. In this sense Adelaide anthropological practice derived its vigour from its eclecticism. A range of data, each constituting a 'record', was pursued without necessary regard to its ready synthesis.

The notion of a 'record', a term often employed by Tindale, carries implications more readily understood by natural scientists than by social anthropologists. The term suggests the solidity of a scientific 'specimen', an item of data which may not be necessarily understood by the collector but which is available for later researchers. As noted, the French anthropologists Marcel Griaule and Marcel Mauss displayed a similar attitude towards a 'documentary system' of anthropology in which objects were perceived as reliable 'witnesses'. In this sense, the statement by the German anthropologists A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, that 'what is culture is the idea behind the artefact', would have gained the support of most advocates of material culture studies.[44]

This was so even of anthropologists like Boas, Haddon, or C. Hart Merriam, who had forged their careers from a natural science base. For Merriam, the Californian naturalist-ethnographer, '[b]askets were the perfect symbol of features [he] felt most important ... they were direct embodiments of the floral environments in which their makers resided, and differences in technique, design, and materials represented potential differences between the peoples'.[45] Merriam's attention ranged across the spectrum of culture in an apparently anachronistic fashion, evocative of nineteenth-century generalists. Like Tindale, Merriam did not record neat, ahistorical ethnographies,

> based on two months of fieldwork, sanctified by an adherence to the obligatory laundry list of cultural categories. Rather, the constellation of [artefacts and specimens,] field notes, photographs, articles - and especially his daily Journal - reveal a process of enquiry marked by its quality of description and unending curiosity ... Merriam provides a longitudinal perspective rarely seen in Californian ethnography.[46]

This attention towards a wide range of data, including objects, literary texts, visual records and vocabularies, underpinned a great deal of the salvage ethnography undertaken by Tindale and members of the Board for Anthropological Research. It accounts for the eclecticism of their field activities and the sheer bulk of data and objects which they collected. Further, it reveals an attitude founded on the primacy of data before theory.

Salvage ethnography found its roots in the diverse and interrelated projects of a nineteenth-century natural history museum. In Adelaide's case it had been expressed as early as the 1840s, in the ethnographic record gathered by George French Angas, who foresaw 'the gradual advance of British colonization, [which] like a mighty flood, will have swept before it all traces of the past'.[47] The imperative to gather a collection before it was too late informed the early, magpie-like accumulations of the Institute Museum, particularly in the natural history field, and underpinned the major acquisition initiatives undertaken by Stirling during the 1890s. More particularly, a sense of this urgency underpinned much of the activity of private collectors and provided a basis for the construction of criteria of authenticity which continue to influence the ethnographic market and museum exhibitions today.

The vagaries of that market and the style and content of museum exhibitions have not been analysed in this study. Nevertheless, both phenomena are sustained to different degrees by their relationship

to the 'collection', a grid of types and variations which has been arranged in museums to reflect a coherent account of Aboriginal material culture. In Stirling's time, the collection's coherence was that of a jigsaw puzzle; once the extent of the puzzle's figure became evident the imperative was clear - to obtain as many of the missing pieces as possible. Museum ethnography generally fell out of favour once anthropologists understood that the 'figure'of Aboriginal culture existed independently of these objects. In that sense, Tindale's achievement lay in his ability to incorporate ethnographic objects within the broader project of Australian anthropology, to pursue their role as mute witnesses to social processes.

Ethnographic artefacts have played successive roles in the history of anthropology, marking a series of shifts in the way in which the 'Other' has been interpreted and portrayed. During the 1840s a single object, such as an Adelaide Plains shield, may have served as a metaphor for Australian Aborigines, as an undifferentiated people. During the international Exhibitions of the late nineteenth century, this shield may have been further represented as a particular weapon, emblematic of a tribal group. Adapted to a museum setting during this period, that shield may have been ranked in degrees of evolutionary sophistication next to other Aboriginal shields. During the 1920s the shield may have served as a regional marker of difference between tribal groups, or as evidence for the diffusion of cultural traits between those groups. Later, the ochres and patterns used to decorate the shield may have become incorporated into analyses centring on the Aboriginal art styles. But neither Stirling, his predecessors or contemporaries, Tindale, nor the collectors who supplied the South Australian Museum during the 'museological era', were attuned to another, fundamental aspect which has formed the main subject of this thesis. That is the extent to which individual artefacts and collections may cast light on the particular relationships and broader processes which projected them from the Aboriginal into the European sphere.

Endnotes - Chapter Twelve

1. Mason 1887: 239.

2. Van Gennep 1914: 21, quoted in Dias 1991: 100.

3. The phrase 'museological era' is used by Sturtevant (1969), who placed its end at about 1920, when a new class of academically trained professionals replaced museum curators as the principal practitioners of anthropology.

4. Mason 1887: 239.

5. Van Gennep 1914: 21, quoted in Dias 1991: 100.

6. Mauss (1931), quoted in Clifford 1983: 66-67.

7. Clifford 1988: 56.

8. Strahan 1979: 61-71, 147-48.

9. Mather 1986: 208-209.

10. *Ibid*: 56-58; 211-13.

11. Pescott 1954: 77-78, 134.

12. The history of this pursuit has received little attention. Notable exceptions are contained in Julie Carter's unpublished thesis (1980 ms), a study of the career of the Victorian amateur archaeologist, S.R. Mitchell, and in Griffiths' 1996 overview of Victoria's 'stone age' (Griffiths 1996: 55-85). See also Horton 1991.

13. Hale & Tindale 1930. Despite the fact that Tindale's model of 'culture succession' linked with the historic period, it did so via a phase identified by Tindale as 'degenerate', in which skills such as fine re-touching of small stone tools were apparently lost. See also Tindale (1957).

14. These issues are discussed further in Jones 1988; Jones 1992e; Jones & Sutton 1986.

15. See Jones 1992e.

16. See Stocking 1984: 136.

17. See Kuper 1988: 162-65.

18. The principles of cultural diffusion and its application to the Australia/Tierra del Fuego case are discussed in Jones 1989.

19. This was the case in the South Australian Museum's Stirling Gallery, installed by Edward Stirling in 1915.

20. See Price (1989); Torgovnik (1990), for wide-ranging discussions of this theme.

21. Hale 1956: 138.

22. As well as his participation in the 1925 Flinders Ranges and Princess Charlotte Bay expeditions, Hale collaborated with Tindale in the 1929 archaeological excavations at Devon Downs on the Murray River, and joined Board for Anthropological Research members for Expeditions E,F,H,I and M.

23. Wissler (1914: 447), quoted in Pfaffenberger (1992: 491).

24. Rivers, quoted in Stocking (1983: 92).

25. Bean 1987: 552.

26. Pfaffenberger 1992: 491-92.

27. See Mulvaney 1987b; 1993; Peterson 1990.

28. See Jones (1987) for an historical analysis of the Board's origins and activities.

29. Malinowski is quoted in Pfaffenberger (1992: 491-92). Pfaffenberger enlists Malinowski in this way despite arguing a convincing case for the restitution of material culture studies.

30. Malinowski 1916: 419.

31. 'It obviously is the integral whole consisting of implements and consumers' goods, of constitutional charters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs'. (Malinowski 1944: 36)

32. Malinowski 1915. The original manuscript of this article, annotated by Edward Stirling, is held in the Anthropology Archives, South Australian Museum (AA204). Young (1988) analyses the Mailu article and discusses Malinowski's Adelaide sojourn.

33. Pescott 1954: 114. As late as 1937 Malinowski was mentioned as the possible author of a catalogue of the Queensland Museum's Papuan collection. See Mather 1986: 211.

34. P. Sillitoe, quoted in Pfaffenberger (1992: 492).

35. Smith, M. 1959: 54. For an account of Merriam's 'natural history approach' to ethnography, with many parallels to Tindale, see Griset 1993. George Stocking has argued that Boas' approach reflected his humanistic as much as his scientific training:

> Boas, Stocking suggests, attempted to establish a body of material equivalent to that which European humanistic scholars had at their disposal; artefacts which reflected the art and industry of cultures, literary texts which illustrated the life and history of a people and grammatical material which expressed their "genius". (Urry 1984: 43)

36. See Mulvaney 1987; 1993; Peterson 1990.

37. Thomson 1949.

38. See Ramsay, E.G. (comp.) 1987.

39. McConnel 1935; 1953.

40. McConnel to Tindale, 10 January, 1951. McConnel Papers, AA199, AASAM.

41. Pfaffenberger 1992: 492, 513.

42. I use the phrase 'biographies of objects' in the sense employed by Kopytoff (1986). The characterisation of objects as cultural 'witnesses', elements in a 'documentary' system, was earlier used by the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1931: 6-7).

43. See Miller 1983, Pfaffenberger 1991, for examples.

44. Quoted in Pfaffenberger 1992: 492.

45. Griset 1993: 38. For an analysis of Haddon's 'conversion' from natural science to anthropology, see Urry (1993: 61-82).

46. *Ibid*: 38-39.

47. Angas 1847a (preface).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ANATOMY OF A COLLECTION

'the space of the collection is a complex interplay of exposure and hiding, organization and the chaos of infinity ... ...it is the museum, not the library, which must serve as the central metaphor of the collection; it is the museum, in its representativeness, which strives for authenticity and for closure of all space and temporality within the context at hand.[1]

The efforts of natural scientists to build a composite image of the Australian environment during the nineteenth century was founded upon the collection of museum specimens. The construction of Aboriginal Australia from a miscellany of observations, objects and images began considerably later. From the 1880s until the rise of social anthropology, the leading collaborators in this project were museum ethnographers trained in natural science. It followed that they would adapt the theories and techniques of natural science for their new venture. While ethnographic objects formed an apparently discrete body of data, their classification and analysis was often identical to natural scientific methodologies. Not surprisingly, nineteenth-century evolutionism increasingly imbued ethnographic theory and practice.

Ethnographic collecting and cataloguing followed the natural science model during the second half of the nineteenth century, and evolutionism came to dominate anthropological discourse. E.B. Tylor made this connection explicit as early as 1871: 'Just as the catalogue of all the species of plants and animals of a district represents its flora and fauna, so the list of all the items of the general life of a people represent that whole which we call its culture'.[2] The American anthropologist Franz Boas rejected evolutionism as a basic premise, but nevertheless espoused an explicitly natural historical approach to cultural studies:

> In natural sciences we are accustomed to demand a classification of phenomena expressed in a concise and unambiguous terminology. The same term should have the same meaning everywhere. We should like to see the same in anthropology. As long as we do not overstep the limits of one culture we are able to classify its features in a clear and definite terminology.[3]

Evolutionism had deep enough roots in anthropological theory and practice to survive the upheaval as social anthropology abandoned museums for universities during the 1920s. Indeed, the anthropologist Johannes Fabian has maintained that natural history and anthropology shared the same frame, in which a particular conception of historical time served effectively to marginalise the cultural 'Other':

> Natural history - a notion unthinkable until the coextensiveness of Time and Space had been accepted - was based on a thoroughly spatialized conception of Time and provided the paradigm for anthropology as the science of cultural evolution. Its manifest concerns were progress and 'history', but its theories and methods, inspired by geology, comparative anatomy, and related

scientific disciplines, were taxonomic, rather than genetic-processual.[4]
Taxonomy, based on Linnaeus's scheme, was the trellis on which the growth of natural history museums could be trained, enabling each branch of the collections, from entomology to ethnology, to reach its fullest and most visible extent. To use another metaphor, coined by the historian Nelia Dias in reference to the Trocadero Museum in Paris, ethnographic objects were 'tributaries of the diverse streams of a classification system'.[5] The individual object, like the natural history specimen, occupied a documentary role in this system, referring not only to its original context but to its position relative to other objects. In this way a great miscellany of natural and artificial curiosities became reduced to a known, ordered series of 'types' and associated characters, a series which in itself constituted a self-defining entity, the collection.

Within the fiction of natural history museums, as Stewart terms it, nature existed 'all at once'. In these museums, it was 'the Linnaean system which articulates the identities of plants, for example, and not the other way around'.[6] The same may be said of the identities of ethnographic objects. The British tradition of museum ethnography contructed and manipulated a 'network of related generalizations' by means of the comparative method established by the evolutionist Tylor at the Pitt Rivers Museum.[7] The 'phenomena of Culture', wrote Tylor, 'may be classified and arranged, stage by stage, in a probable order of evolution'. Pitt Rivers himself had attended lectures on Darwinian theory during the 1860s and considered that his own ethnographic collecting and classification methods were parallel to Darwin's, as Chapman has observed: 'Just as natural history collections conveyed the order and evolution of the natural world, so his collection showed a parallel evolution within the realm of human technology'.[8]

Edward Said underlines the strength of this connection between natural science and anthropology which, to late twentieth century museum visitors, often seem strange bedfellows, united by shared architectural space alone:

> In natural history, in anthropology, in cultural generalization, a type had a particular *character* which provided the observer with a designation and, as Foucault says, 'a controlled derivation'. These types and characters belonged to a system, a network of related generalizations.[9]

Ethnographic types and characters were as crucial to the European construction of Aboriginal Australia as to the 'Orientalism' identified by Said.[10] The Orient had become familiar to Europeans during the nineteenth century through a proliferation of motifs in literature, architecture, visual art, design, and cuisine, as well as in museum collections. Aboriginal Australia, in contrast, was defined primarily by anthropological texts and ethnographic museums until well into the twentieth century. Dots, circles and cross-hatching had no evocative force in the decorative arts until at least the 1930s.

The power of ethnographic objects to represent a consolidated image of Aboriginal Australia was maximised from the time that museums were able to interpret their collections through exhibitions based on taxonomic principles, until this coherence began to be systematically challenged by other accounts, notably photo-journalism and television. James Clifford has noted that the twentieth-century fragmentation of a coherent view of 'primitive' societies was paralleled by the rise of surrealism, itself an indicator of a

fracture in the west's self-perception:

> Unlike the exoticism of the nineteenth century, which departed from a more or less confident cultural order in search of a temporary *frisson*, a circumscribed experience of the bizarre, modern surrealism and ethnography began with a reality deeply in question. Others appeared now as serious human alternatives; modern cultural relativism became possible ... The ethnographic surrealist, unlike either the typical art critic or anthropologist of the period, delights in cultural impurities and disturbing syncretisms.[11]

Insulated from the impact of the 'modern cultural relativism' emanating from the newly established Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, the South Australian Museum and the Board for Anthropological Research continued to promote a coherent, taxonomically ordered presentation of Aboriginal culture. The Museum's Anthropology Registers provided the basis of this taxonomy.

Catalogues and Lists

Museum collections represented the cultural 'Other' through their organisation and display, processes which depended upon curatorial selection of objects and accompanying texts from a repertoire of standard typologies. The emergence of this repertoire has its own international and national histories, strongly linked to the advances forced by the international Exhibitions. Through all the currents of change over the decades it was the museum's catalogue, or register, which anchored this repertoire. As Curator of the Australian Museum, E.P. Ramsay had adopted the country's first museum cataloguing system during 1876. This was recommenced following the Garden Palace fire of 1882. Separate Ethnology Registers ('E' Series) were instituted in 1886.[12] The Queensland Museum began using separate anthropology registers in 1892, while in Melbourne the 'X' series of anthropology registers date from 1888.[13]
Adelaide's register system, based on those of the Sydney and Melbourne, was not implemented until 1911.

Sydney and Melbourne were also leaders in producing published catalogues of their collections. The Australian Museum in Sydney had produced its first published catalogue as early as 1837, and its *Guide to the Contents of the Australian Museum* was published in 1883 and revised in 1890.[14] The National Museum of Victoria set the standard for published ethnographic catalogues though; Baldwin Spencer produced his illustrated *Guide to the Australian Ethnographical Collection* in 1900, with revisions in 1914 and 1920.[15] As these guides make plain, Spencer's ethnographic exhibition was scientifically arranged, principally according to type, with regional variation.

Adelaide's experience was well-intentioned but much less successful. During 1863 Frederick Waterhouse was directed by the Museum Committee to produce a 'descriptive catalogue' of the collections, but neither he nor his successors did so.[16] A key factor was Waterhouse's inability to lay the collection out satisfactorily in his cramped quarters. In contrast to Sydney and Melbourne's purpose-built

institutions, the Adelaide museum was an appendage to a larger institution until it gained its own separate building in the 1890s. By that time, the collections had already outgrown their new accommodation. Waterhouse's complaint to his Board in 1866 may equally have applied for the five following decades:

> The rooms appropriated to the Museum are & have been for a considerable space of time too small to hold the collection of specimens, illustrating the various branches of Natural History, which has been accumulated. The cases are crowded to such a degree that classification or enumeration are impossible, in addition to which the Curator has many specimens of great value and interest which he cannot place in the Museum at all.[17]

Edward Stirling had planned to produce a published guide to the Museum's exhibited collections in 1898, working largely from the gallery labels. This would have preceded Baldwin Spencer's 1901 *Guide to the Ethnological Collections* at the Melbourne Museum. Unfortunately Stirling was aware that just four years after the opening of the new North Wing the demands on collection space meant that such a guide would soon be obsolete:

> in consequence of the limited space in the Museum, many of the specimens cannot be regarded as permanently located in their present positions, and that if a guide book were printed, its utility would be largely reduced, if the specimens referred to in it were shifted ... the labelling of the specimens (both with name-labels and descriptive labels) which is the stepping stone to a guide book, should be proceeded with as fast as possible ... the publication of a guide book should be deferred till the conditions for issuing it are more favourable.[18]

During a visit to Adelaide in 1899 Francis Gillen noted the sense of frustration at this lack of progress felt by Amandus Zietz, Stirling's Assistant Director. From the late 1880s Zietz had been responsible for exhibiting important ethnographic acquisitions at regular meetings of the Royal Society in Adelaide and was well aware of ethnographic nomenclature and classificatory models. He obviously knew of Spencer's initiatives in reorganising the Melbourne collections for exhibition. Gillen wrote:

> Zeitz [sic] has heard of the way you are arranging your ethnological things and would like to follow your example but hinted that he had no say in the matter[.] I dont think he and Stirling are altogether a happy family.[19]

In fact, Stirling had the best intentions regarding the organisation and display of the Adelaide ethnographic collections. As he explained to his Board in mounting an argument against staff reductions in 1898, his total staff, including preparators and attendants, numbered seven individuals, compared to twenty-seven at the Australian Museum. It was 'now inadequate to cope with the work in hand', which included registering and storing several thousand artefacts obtained during the previous decade, considerably more than the Sydney and Melbourne Museums had received during the same period.[20] During Gillen's visit in October, 1899, Stirling showed him the Wragge collection of 315 Queensland artefacts, purchased a few weeks earlier. While the Museum's dire financial position improved slightly after the turn of the century, the flood of acquisitions continued unabated. Stirling's eventual implementation of the new registration system in 1911 should be seen against that background.

As a Museum Committee member during the 1880s, Stirling had become aware of the obvious

deficiencies in the museum's organisation and documentation of its collections. In 1884 the Committee tabled a letter from J.G.O. Tepper, a staff member, stating that 'he has not been able to label the ethnological collection satisfactorily (to himself) on account of the want of sufficient information as to the names, uses, localities etc. of the different articles'.[21] A directive from Stirling as Chairman of the the Museum Committee in 1892 established a regular procedure for registration, by which 'specimens reaching the Museum, of whatsoever description, shall in the first place be submitted for registration to the Assistant Museum Director [Amandus Zietz], who will then transfer them to the Officer having charge of the department to which they belong'.[22]

This directive led to the eventual compilation of 'List Books' for the main constituent parts of the ethnographic collections. Each Book in turn comprised lists of objects prepared by Zietz and Stirling under the typological headings summarised below, in Table 8. With the exception of the non-Australian material in Books 7, 13, 14 and 15, these lists became the basis for Stirling's division of the collection for exhibition in the new East Wing. The Museum Registers were adopted in the meantime, and Stirling and Zietz transcribed the new registration numbers from those Registers, to the List Books.

TABLE 8 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM LIST BOOKS[23]

1	**Message Sticks; Articles of Native Workmanship in which Materials of Civilisation have been Used; etc**
2	**Nets; Mats; Digging Sticks; Carrying Sticks; Canoes**
3	**Ceremonial Objects**
4	**Clothing & Ornament; Native Foods; Nose Pegs, Bone Pins, Needles, Bodkins, Awls; Stone & Glass Spear-heads; Charms & Objects used in Magic; Native Pigments**
5	**Bags, baskets & food vessels; Grinding & Pounding Stones**
6	**Music; Games & Amusements**
7	**Stone Implements - New Zealand, New Guinea, India, Denmark, Iceland, Egypt, Somaliland, France, Italy, British, Lime Spatulas, New Guinea.**
8	**Spears**
9	**Stone Implements**
10	**Ceremonial Objects (Reuther, Strehlow, Liebler & others)**
11	**Objects associated with Death, Burial & Mourning**
12	**Skeletal material**
13	**New Guinea**
14	**Fiji**
15	**New Britain; Solomon Islands; Santa Cruz; New Hebrides; Samoa, Tonga, Hervey Islands; New Zealand, Admiralty Islands, Gilbert Islands.**
16	**Native Foods, Water Supplies & Beverages; Stimulants, Narcotics; Native Pigments; Native Cements; Fire Making.**
17	**String & Cordage; Spindles; Materials used for Various Purposes.**
18	**Ceremonial Shields, Fighting Shields; Boomerangs (Egyptian, Indian & Australian); Spear-throwers**
19	**Boomerangs; Clubs; Kandries.**
20	**Churingas; Toas**

Several of the List Books contain Stirling's marked-up copy for the exhibition labels which remained unaltered in the Gallery until it was dismantled in 1982. A surviving list, hand-written by Stirling, provides an inventory of the Aboriginal objects in this exhibition as of mid-July, 1916. When the tjurungas and the Killalpaninna toas were transferred from the old exhibition gallery in the North Wing the total figure was expanded to about 6,500 objects. Stirling's full list, and the main categories displayed, are reproduced in Tables 9 and 10.

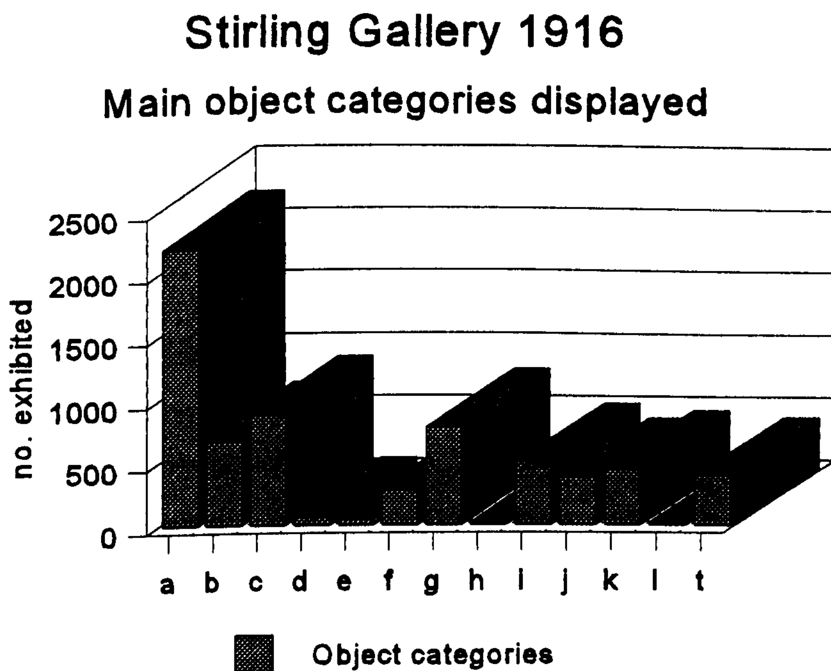
By 1916, when the Australian Court was fully installed in the new East Wing, Stirling's main aim had apparently been achieved: the description and display of Australia's largest collection of Aboriginal ethnography. The additional task of transferring the information from gallery labels to a guide book was probably beyond him at this stage, just three years before his death in 1919 at the age of 71. Stirling's exhibition, confirmed formally as the Stirling Gallery by means of a memorial plaque designed by Gustave Barnes, remained substantially intact for the following six decades, until it was dismantled in 1982.

TABLE 9 STIRLING'S SUMMARY OF SPECIMENS ON EXHIBITION, 1 JULY 1916

Item	Number	Item	Number
Native Foods	196	Stone Chisels	12
Water Supplies	12	Stone Implements of Primitive Type	35
Stimulants, Narcotics	48	Tasmanian stone implements	81
Native Pigments	88	Miscellaneous implements	21
Cements & Adhesive Substances	36	Manufact. iron adapted	
Fire Making	31	to native purposes	26
String Lines (Animal)	53	Message sticks	23
" " (Vegetable)	75	Articles of native workmanship	
Spindles	33	in which materials	
Grinding & Pounding Stones	56	of civilization have been used.	40
Bark Food Vessels	30	Miscellaneous articles	10
Melville Is. Baskets	29	Games & Amusements	47
Dilly Bags	146	Catscradles	21
Biting Bags	16	Music	33
Woven Baskets	127	Objects associated with death & burial:	
Pitchies (hardwood)	53	Grave Posts	17
" (softwood)	51	Bark Baskets	2
Other Food Vessels	10	Widows' Caps & Kopi Stones	48
Headrings for carrying pitchies	6	Other mourning objects	17
Pitchi slings	4	Mourning rings	103
Palm leaf baskets	19	Mourning armlets	19
Shells for carrying water	9	Coffins	2
Cast of skull for carrying water	1		
Stone axes (hafted)	58	Spears	438
" " (unhafted)	173	Fighting Shields	136
Wedges	18	Spearthrowers	152
Hammers & Hammer stones	88	Melville Is. Clubs	63
Stone & Glass Spearheads	123	Kurdaitcha Shoes	22
Flaked Stone Knives	140		
Flaked Stone Fighting Picks	19	Charms & objects of magic	117

Articles used in connection with medicine men	6
Ceremonial Objects	260
Corroboree Caps & Decorations	83
Ready but not placed:	
Spears	150
Boomerangs	425
Clubs	411
Clothing & Ornament	120
Bark Belts	22
Ring Belts	20
Waist Belts	68
Aprons etc	89
Necklaces	127
Chignons	18
Kangaroo Teeth Ornaments	45
Jequirity Seed Ornaments	22
Chest & Shoulder Bands	20
Arm Rings	52
Feather Plumes	59
Pendants	46
Lonka Lonka	58
Chain Pendants	7
Taquoinga	8
Nose pegs etc	94
Materials used for various purposes	6
Wallets	14
Skulls & Skeletons	450
Miscellaneous odd specimens	50
TOTAL	5610
Churingas	460
Toas	c.400
GRAND TOTAL	c.6470

Table 10 Division of exhibited objects by category, Stirling Gallery



(Table 10, contd.)
Numbers of objects exhibited:
a-2199; b-676; c-876; d-68; e-56; f-280; g-776; h-20; I-500; j-386; k-450; l-20; t-400

	Key
a	**men's weapons & tools**
b	**women's utensils**
c	**dress & ornament**
d	**games, toys (adults' & children's)**
e	**musical instruments, message sticks**
f	**ceremonial paraphernalia (sacred & secular)**
g	**sacred objects (mainly tjurunga, poles, stones)**
h	**'art' objects**
i	**stone tools (mainly surface archaeological)**
j	**foods & materials (including ochre, some stone)**
k	**skeletal material**
l	**casts, hair samples**
t	**toas**

The profile of object types revealed in Table 10 reflects the results of a concerted twenty-five year collection programme undertaken by Stirling and the South Australian Museum. Assessed against the list of desiderata prepared by Stirling and Zietz in 1889 (see Table 2) and the priorities listed by Stirling in his 1890 form letter (see Chapter Three), there are several points to note. Given the evidence relating to encounters between Aborigines and Europeans on the frontier, the large proportion of men's weapons and tools reflects the fact that collectors tended to meet and deal with Aboriginal men, rather than women. Stirling did not actively seek sacred objects such as tjurunga or ceremonial paraphernalia until after the Horn Expedition of 1894, referring only to 'charms and ornaments' in his 1890 letter. Their large representation in the Gallery indicates the extent to which they became a focus of attention for collectors.[1] The prominence of skeletal material in the Gallery (not treated in this study) is a reflection of Stirling's growing interest in this field, peaking with the discovery of the Swanport burial ground just prior to the gallery installation. Especially notable is the lack of any distinct category of Aboriginal art: the Killalpaninna toas were displayed as 'message posts' and there were apparently no bark paintings on display. This category was to burgeon only when mission-based craft enterprises began marketing their work after the late 1920s and 1930s, as discussed in Chapter Eight.

The Registration System

The major disadvantage of the List Books was their fragmentary nature, and the fact that their contents were not itemised numerically. From 1911 the numbers of particular objects listed in these books were re-allocated under Stirling's direction to suit the new Anthropological Registers which were used for all future cataloguing of the collection. Registers for the Mammal, Bird, Fish, Insect, Fossil and Mineral collections were initiated in the same year. Stirling was following a standard set by the British Museum of Natural History and adopted in the Australian Museum (1883), National Museum of Victoria (1888) and the Queensland Museum (1911). Under this system, each museum specimen received a number prefixed by a letter denoting its collection status: 'O' for ornithology, 'E' for entomology, 'A' for anthropology. Details relating to an object or specimen's provenance and collector were to be entered in each Register.

In March 1911 the Museum Committee noted the adoption of the new system 'under which Museum specimens are now registered as they are received, and a metal label attached to each specimen directs one to the specimen's registration number, a reference to which will supply all particulars regarding the specimen'.[24] The documentation of individual specimens now provided the means for the 'systematic classification' of the entire collection. The Australian Museum's Robert Etheridge explained the methodology to his Board in 1898: 'bringing like with like, and separating the duplicates. Each specimen was, in addition to its registration tag, supplied with a locality label'.[25]

The registration process ensured that each object received a new, museological identity, marking a critical shift in the 'biographies' of collections and objects. As a matter of course collections were now fragmented into the main categories of object types. Objects were no longer contained within the boundaries of a particular collector's tastes or taxonomy. Within a short time the Anthropology Registers of the South Australian Museum revealed the tension existing between the collection as an entity and its constituent parts. While museum cataloguers such as J.W. Conroy had little difficulty in registering quantities of boomerangs, clubs, shields, wooden containers or tjurunga as distinct blocs including examples from a range of different collectors, Norman Tindale later preferred to register his own collections, and those of other ethnographic collectors, as undivided wholes.

With the physical division of collections came the loss of a collection's historical integrity. Prior to 1911 this fragmentation had occurred only as Edward Stirling had drawn upon collections for exhibition purposes. Collections had otherwise remained relatively intact in storage, as evidenced by lists of the 1890s, describing the contents of boxes stored in the Museum's North Wing.[26] Stirling wrote of this process in 1915:

> This work has involved the unpacking of many boxes of specimens that have been sealed up for, in some cases, as long as 10 years. I can say very confidently that when all the [ethnographic] material in the Museum is set out - or rather I should say, when as much of it as possible is set out,

for there will be no room for display of all of it - it will form a collection that, within its limits, will be unsurpassed. It can now be seen how advantageous have been the various purchases of large collections that have been made from time to time during the past 20 years, for these comprise articles which will, as regards certain districts at least, never be collected again.[27]

In contrast to the List Books, the Anthropology Registers were arranged numerically rather than by object type. Both the List Books and Registers recorded the collector's name, place of collection, and date of registration. The date of collection, that crucial link between episodes in the biography of an object, was mostly unrecorded. This dissociation of ethnographic objects from their original context and from the circumstances which led to their collection was not made explicit. Instead, objects were re-contextualised within a taxonomic, ahistorical framework set by museum practitioners and influential collectors.

Particular collections which contained previously undocumented categories of objects, such as the Reuther toas from Killalpaninna Mission, gained importance from their characterisation as 'type specimens', by which other, similar objects could be defined. The term was also applied to collections, such as the entire Reuther collection, which appeared to characterise the complete material culture of a region. Putting the case to the Museum Committee for the purchase of the Reuther Collection in 1906, Edward Stirling stressed this point:

[it contained] 1100 specimens and was offered for L450. The Director explained that this would work out at about 8/ an article - it was not cheap but the collection was a complete one of the Cooper's Creek neighbourhood. Such a collection could not be made again, and this work represented the work of a missionary for about 20 years who had been associated with the natives all that time. The Collection would go to Germany if the Committee declined the offer, and he thought as the money was available [through the Morgan Thomas bequest] that the Committee ought not to allow such a fine collection of type specimens to leave the country.[28]

The elaboration of terms to fit types which were identified by collectors took little account of actual use of these tools by Aboriginal people. This was most apparent in the rapid construction of a taxonomic framework for Aboriginal stone tools by collectors during the 1920s and 1930s. The point was well articulated by the collector George Aiston, a supplier of city collectors. He wrote to Walter Gill in 1932:

Even Mitchell, good man that he is, carries it too far, he has a glorious collection, from a collector's point of view, but not half as good as yours from an Aboriginal point of view, and which is the more important. The collector's point of view does not appeal to me, it has no anthropological value, so I find it hard to appreciate the necessity of separating the tools into sub classes, a scraper was a scraper, no more, no less, and the fact that the end or side or bottom or top was used was just because the best edge was presented on the part that was used, some rare pieces had a sharp edge all round and so became circular, they look very pretty, but - they were only ordinary scrapers.[29]

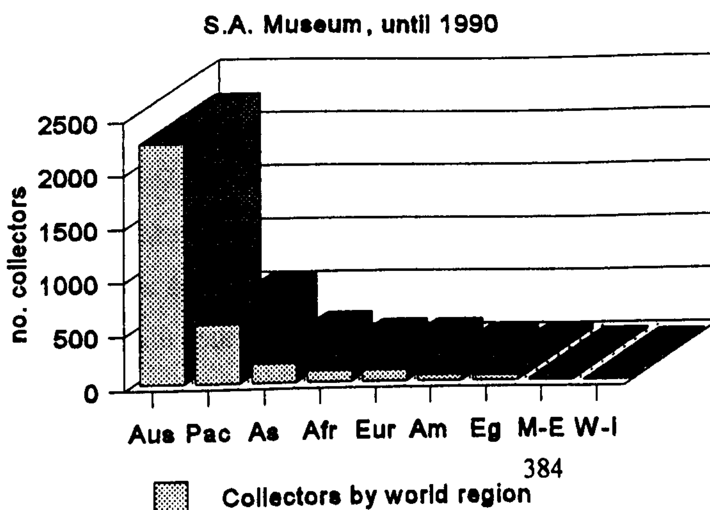
A similar tendency to construct or reconstruct an apparently complete and coherent picture of culture through objects found expression in persistent attempts to locate Aborigines within an ahistorical present. The anthropological literature of the 1930s is proof that this tendency was not confined to museums or their staff, but it was nevertheless a salient characteristic of the published work of N.B. Tindale, C.P. Mountford, and others. Writing of cultural groups which had undergone fundamental

breakdown of religious, social and material culture structures, these ethnographers documented practices as though those structures were still intact. The illusion was made tangible for the public within the Museum itself, through lifelike dioramas and exhibition text.

The Anatomy of a Collection

The anthropology collections of the South Australian Museum number some 74,000 registered items, including almost 20,000 non-Australian objects.[30] A further estimated two million archaeological specimens, mainly comprising stone tools, are held in the collection. This study has identified more than 3200 individual collectors as contributing to these total collections during the course of the Museum's history, until 1990. Ethnographic objects collected from living Aboriginal people number approximately 30,000 (including stone tools collected within an ethnographic context), for which more than 1200 individual collectors have been responsible. A similar number of collectors, approximately 1150, have been responsible for collecting the Aboriginal stone tools and skeletal material not included within this study. This figure can be further divided into a total of more than 600 stone tool collectors (contributing from one to several thousand objects) and more than 500 skeletal collectors (contributing from one to several hundred objects). An overlap of approximately 10% between these categories of collectors occurs, applying particularly to larger collections. Several hundred ethnographic collectors included stone tools and/or skeletal material within their collections. The balance of collectors, numbering approximately 1000, were responsible for the non-Australian ethnographic collections, as indicated in Table 11.

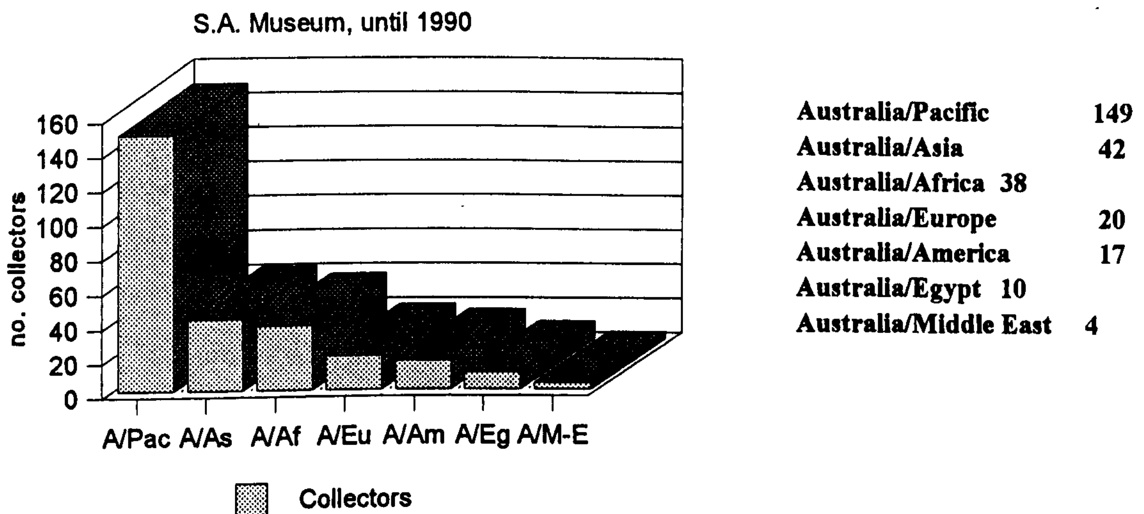
Table 11 South Australian anthropology and archaeology collectors, by world region: period until 1990.



Australia	**2235**
Pacific	**548**
Asia	**179**
Africa	**103**
Europe	**102**
America	**57**
Egypt	**48**
Middle East	**10**
West Indies	**1**

A large number of collectors of Aboriginal material also included ethnographic material from other countries in their collections. As might be expected, the overlap between Australian and Pacific ethnographic collecting is more pronounced than for other regions. These figures are listed in Table 12 below.

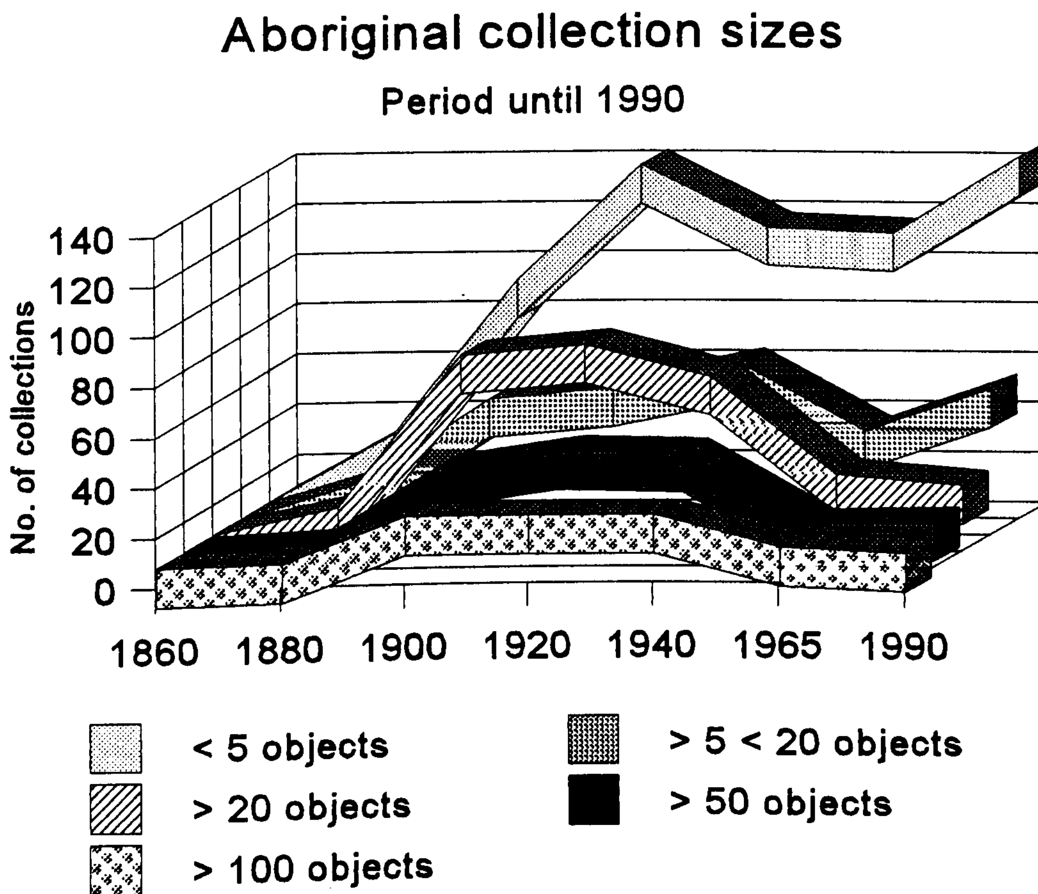
Table 12 Overlap between South Australian Museum collectors of Australian and foreign ethnographic material: period until 1990.



Of the South Australian Museum's collections of Aboriginal ethnographic material, more than three-quarters were collected before the Second World War, and particularly from the 1890s until the 1930s. These proportional quantities are reflected in the breakdown of collectors operating in the various periods. 741 of the 1166 Australian ethnographic collectors were active before 1940, and 693 of these were collecting in the sixty-year period between 1880 and 1940. This period's dominance in the history of ethnographic collecting is reflected in the fact that while a total of fifty-two collectors have contributed collections numbering more than 100 Aboriginal objects, only ten of these collections were obtained by their collectors in the half-century after 1940 and all but four of the fifty-two collectors were active before that date.[31] These figures are reflected in Table 13 and accompanying data, which document the dates of original collection, not just dates of acquisition by the South Australian Museum.

While the total number of individual collectors has been maintained during the period since 1965, as reflected in Table 14, this has been accompanied by a decrease in the average size of collections. Thus in the fifty years after 1940, just nineteen collections containing more than fifty objects were obtained by the Museum in contrast to 106 collections of this size during the sixty years before 1940.

Table 13 Aboriginal collection sizes plotted throughout the South Australian Museum' history[32].



More than 100 objects	
Pre 1880	1
1880-1900	19
1900-1920	19
1920-1940	19
1940-1965	6
1965-1990	4

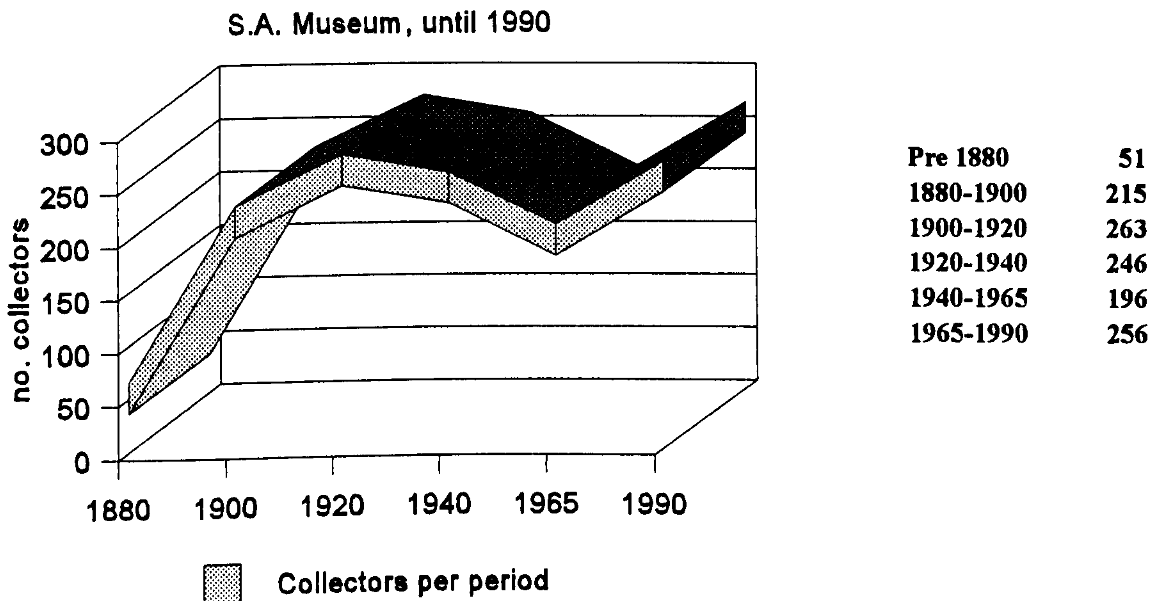
More than 50 objects	
Pre 1880	2
1880-1900	31
1900-1920	38
1920-1940	37
1940-1965	9
1965-1990	10

More than 20 objects	
Pre 1880	10
1880-1900	70
1900-1920	74
1920-1940	61
1940-1965	22
1965-1990	18

Between 5 and 20 objects	
Pre 1880	14
1880-1900	46
1900-1920	50
1920-1940	60
1940-1965	33
1965-1990	50

Fewer than 5 objects	
Pre 1880	26
1880-1900	87
1900-1920	133
1920-1940	108
1940-1965	106
1965-1990	137

Table 14 Totals of Collectors of Aboriginal material, according to period of activity



A general pattern emerges from these statistics. A relatively small group of important collectors arose during the 1890s and held sway during the following three decades, gradually giving way to a more diverse patchwork of less significant collectors. The trend had its parallel in the decline of museum anthropology itself during this period, reflecting a scepticism emanating from academically based anthropology as to the capacity of ethnographic collections to adequately represent Aboriginal cultures.

This scepticism arose primarily from the assumption that ethnographic museums lacked the capacity to

analyse or even address the structures or processes within Aboriginal societies. This criticism may have been well-founded in the case of Edward Stirling; it was less applicable to the work of Norman Tindale, as the previous chapter indicates. A more sustainable criticism, that ethnographic museums denied Aborigines the autonomy and power of historical agency in the colonial situation, applied equally to academic anthropology throughout this period. The crucial role of ethnographic artefacts as objects which revealed the history of Aboriginal and European interaction, was blurred or overlooked altogether in the presentation of ethnographic displays.

Shifting objects

Like other *fin-de-siecle* ethnographers Stirling was acutely aware of the changes overtaking Aboriginal societies across Australia. This awareness prompted his 1911 proposal to State Premiers of the publication of a 'comprehensive work on Australian Ethnology', to be produced under his editorship, in collaboration with other Australian museums. The proposal was put to the Prime Minister but gained no political support.[33] Stirling's acceptance of the apparent inevitability of Aboriginal extinction often surfaced in his correspondence and reports in which, for example, he characterised the museum collection as containing 'all the objective relics of a vanished race'.[34] This awareness of a decisive moment in history did not alter the fact that, for him as for other museum curators, Aboriginal objects were exemplars of generalised cultural events or processes rather than particular historical situations. Moreover, the role of individual collectors or the museum itself in acquiring these objects was largely ignored or subsumed.[35]

The point is underscored by the fact that Stirling's exhibition labels were almost always written in the present tense as though Aboriginal people continued to make and use the artefacts shown. His general descriptive label for 'Food and Water Vessels' was a typical example:

> A variety of vessels are used throughout Australia for the collection, storage or transport of water or food. These may be classified according to the material from which they are made. Thus we find such vessels manufactured from Wood, Bark, Leaves and Fruit, Skins of Animals, Shells and Human Skulls. Specimens of all these varieties will be found under special labels.[36]

The durable impression was created in the gallery that particular Aboriginal groups mentioned were still living traditionally and using the artefacts as described. Stirling's label describing the diorama of a 'Native Encampment on the River Murray', a region radically transformed by European contact since the 1850s, illustrates this:

> The painted background represents a characteristic portion of the Lower Murray, showing abrupt cliffs on the one side and a reed-covered swamp on the other.
>
> On the right, in the middle foreground, is a large Gum tree, from which a sheet of bark has, long previously, been stripped for making a canoe, and a boat thus constructed is seen on the water. A

> real bark canoe, or Mungo, probably the last of its kind upon the river, is exhibited in the base of the case behind. At the foot of the tree is a portable fireplace, consisting of a bark trough containing a bed of clay on which the fire can be kept burning and carried from camp to camp.
> In the foreground is a native group. The man to the right is engaged in kindling fire, by twirling one stick upon another, in preparation for cooking food upon the stone hearth in front of him, and scattered around are the remains of previous meals - mussels, 'turtle', etc. Alongside of him are lying various weapons used by the Lower Murray natives - bark shields, spears, spear-thrower, boomerang, and clubs.
> Facing this man is a kneeling lubra, carrying her piccaninny on the back, supported by a mat made of interwoven rushes and stringybark fibre, and holding a digging stick in her hand, which she also uses to stir the fire. Near her are rush baskets of the characteristic Narrinyeri pattern.
> At the edge of the river bank stands a man in the attitude of spearing a fish, and two tame dingo puppies are showing an interest in the proceedings of their owners.[37]

In those isolated examples where Stirling added historical information to his labels an acknowledgement of technological change was limited. Sociological change was not referred to at all. Underlying any discussion of European contact was an assumption of the degeneration which would inevitably follow. This logic consolidated the status of toas, wooden sculptures and bark paintings as 'traditional' material culture items rather than allowing their interpretation as innovative forms reflecting the changes confronting Aboriginal societies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Killalpaninna toas provide the most striking example of this elision. Confronted with a collection of 400 'sign-posts', each differently sculpted or carved, conforming neither to documented form or function in Aboriginal tradition, Stirling's response was unequivocal. In 1906, when the missionary J.G. Reuther offered the collection to him, the capacity of Aboriginal people to produce innovative objects, particularly in the artistic field, was unrecognised. It was to be another five years before Baldwin Spencer made the first significant collection of bark paintings. Stirling's board paid the unprecedented sum of 400 pounds for the toas and the remainder of Reuther's ethnographic collection on the basis that these remarkable objects represented an exciting extension of European knowledge about Aborigines, rather than what has since been recognised as an exciting extension of the Aboriginal repertoire of material culture. Prior to publishing a selection of the toas in his Annual Report for 1908, Stirling wrote to Reuther confirming their official significance:

> It would be clearly stated that you were the discover of these things and that all our information is derived from you. The object ... is to make known a class of articles which are new to this museum and unknown I believe elsewhere.[38]

The only historical change which museum curators of the period were prepared to ascribe to Aboriginal material culture was regressive, a negative result of European contact. This attitude was made explicit in Stirling's 1913 exhibition label for 'Articles of Native Workmanship in which Materials of Civilization have been Wholly or Partly Used':

> In recent years contact with the white man has led to an increasing tendency for Australian aboriginals to utilise in their handiwork the materials and tools of civilization. This case contains a variety of native-made articles in which such materials have been used, and, as will be seen, the adoption of its methods and materials cause degeneration of native art ....[39]

During 1899 Stirling had discarded several Aboriginal artefacts from the collection due to this 'degeneration'. They comprised '6 bags worked in different patterns of coloured wool, from Birdsville, Queensland & Kopperamanna - Ejected from the collection, being valueless'.[40] Stirling's identification of a 'degenerate art' had its analogue in contemporary attitudes towards Aboriginal people, who, like objects, were also perceived to be contaminated through European contact. His efforts to retrieve an authentic record of Aboriginal material culture in the face of social dislocation were mirrored in the gathering controversy over the 'Aboriginal problem', in which images of authenticity and contamination were routinely enlisted. As his ethnological successor at the South Australian Museum, Norman Tindale not only maintained and extended Stirling's taxonomic ordered exhibit, but also became a central figure in official efforts to define a solution for the 'Aboriginal problem'. Tindale's extensive 'Survey of the Half-Caste Problem in South Australia' (1940-41) attempted to deal with a complex sociological problem by adapting the familiar evolutionist framework of scientific classification to the analysis of contemporary populations of Aboriginal people.

Tindale applied his ideas about 'cultural chronology' equally to archaeological, sociological and ethnographic data. His 1931 acquisition of a shield, a dish and a carved animal collected on the Transcontinental Railway line near Ooldea in South Australia is a case in point. He noted that these objects, decorated with pokerwork, showed a 'style alteration due to superimposition of ideas from W. Australia on [an] older stratum of Pt Augusta-Kimba mixed bloods & natives'.[41] The same approach was evident in his encouragement of the production of a series of artefacts made in the traditional style by the Tangane man, Clarence Long (Milerum) during the 1930s.[42] This activity, together with ethnographic film-making documenting the techniques of manufacture, fitted within the ethos of salvage ethnography which informed the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions of the period. Tindale's project was to locate and document an 'older stratum', penetrating beneath layers of apparently inauthentic and contaminated cultural practice.

Within the context of museum classification and exhibition though, taxonomy rarely engaged with history. As long as the central concern of museums was to collect, rather than to interpret their objects for particular research purposes, the date and circumstance of collection were of secondary importance. In the case of natural science material, information about the date of specimen collection became significant only when curators began placing their collections at the service of particular research projects involving, for example, threatened species. Until they were overtaken during the middle decades of this century by social anthropology and archaeology, material-culture studies were characterised by a similar approach. The time-frame applied to the collections was that of the researchers themselves, as expressed in the texts of late nineteenth-century progressivist evolutionism.

In their rejection of museum-based ethnography the practitioners in these new human sciences (particularly archaeology) signalled a readiness to engage with Aboriginal society in historical terms. Yet

it now seems clear that Australian archaeology, marked in the modern period by Tindale's 1929 excavation at Devon Downs in South Australia, has also been characterised by its allegiance to an evolutionist paradigm. Tindale's involvement in archaeology, as with other practitioners from museum backgrounds, illustrates this proposition.[43] Despite efforts to distance themselves from the evolutionist underpinnings of museum ethnography, social anthropologists continued to perpetuate a view of other cultures governed by the same perspective as their predecessors. This tendency reflects the dominance of the profession by the natural science episteme since the nineteenth century. Before that, as Fabian writes: '[p]rotoanthropologists of the Renaissance and Enlightenment *philosophes* often accepted the simultaneity or temporal coexistence of savagery and civilization because they were convinced of the cultural, merely conventional nature of the differences they perceived: evolutionary anthropologists made difference 'natural', the inevitable outcome of the operation of natural laws...'.[44] The synchronic discourse which has framed social anthropologists' analyses of contemporary Aboriginal societies has masked what Fabian describes as 'a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse'.[45] Images of a 'land that time forgot' and of an Aboriginal 'dreamtime' separated from mainstream Australian society have proliferated during the past century. Anthropological discourse has tended to strengthen these images rather than diminish or demystify them, but prior to the emergence of that discourse it was probably museum ethnography itself which represented the most prominent expression of this construction of cultural difference.

For museums and their curators, the accumulation of Aboriginal objects in museums during the half century of the 'museological era' from the 1870s to the 1920s was a straightforward process. Through their acknowledged role as individual 'documents' these objects provided vital information about Aboriginal society and at the same time underlined its fundamental difference from European society. This was achieved taxonomically, by classifying Aboriginal objects within the encompassing paradigm of natural history. The categories created for Aboriginal objects did not always accommodate them comfortably, particularly when those objects exemplified the historical tensions of the contact period.

In the ordinary course of events collectors and museums could circumvent these tensions by being more selective in their elevation of authentic objects. Even so, collectors were confronted by the issue of cultural change when Aboriginal people themselves began incoporating European materials within the production of their 'traditional' artefacts. The addition of metal to the Aboriginal repertoire of wood-working tools can variously be regarded as a sign of European domination and as an opportunity for experiment and innovation within Aboriginal traditions of material culture. Despite Edward Stirling's commitment to an inventory of traditional Aboriginal material culture, metal objects could not be ignored. He added the category to his taxonomy of Aboriginal objects ('List Book 1', above). The regret at the Aboriginal abandonment of stone for metal tools was perhaps best expressed by one of Stirling's remotely-based collectors, the pioneering pastoralist Alfred Giles who established Springvale Station near Katherine

in the Northern Territory. A member of the Overland Telegraph Survey Expedition of 1870-1872, Giles had observed the readiness with which Aborigines commandeered any surplus metal associated with his party. On June 3rd, 1871, Giles and his party passed an abandoned wagon 200 miles south of Darwin, 'nearly new and perfectly sound'. Five weeks later, on July 6th, Giles noted that 'it was a perfect wreck, cut and hacked about, all iron bolts and clamps having been carried away by the savages, who prized any iron or metal work, and converted it into knives, tomahawk blades, and spear-points'.[46] Two decades later, Giles wrote to Stirling on the subject:

> With regard to your request to be furnished with native weapons you are quite right as to the increasing difficulty of procuring these articles, especially with regard to articles of the 'Stone Age'. Iron dray tires, horseshoes and shear blades are now sharpened on sandstone rocks by the natives themselves. Does it not seem remarkable that at the moment when they rejoice at the dawn (to them) of the iron age (not through their own efforts) but by the wonderful advance of our own race, we should now be anxious to exchange our iron and even silver and gold (by barter) for their discarded stone![47]

Paradoxically, in certain areas of Australia the use of metal tools actually resulted in an increase in the quantity and range of 'traditional' artefacts in the short term, as well as entirely new categories of objects. This was rarely acknowledged by collectors, or even rejected, as by Carl Lumholtz during the 1880s:

> After becoming acquainted with the use of iron, the black man makes but little use of his wooden weapons and implements, and strange to say, does not make them so nicely as formerly, when his tools were inferior. He also takes less pains with all kinds of carving.[48]

Lumholtz's claim is belied by the apparent explosion in the manufacture of finely carved boomerangs and clubs in the eastern Lake Eyre region after 1890 until the First World War. The increase in stone knife manufacture in Central Australia at the turn of the century and the development of an artefact trade along the East-West railway line during the 1920s and 1930s provide further contrasting examples of post-European resurgence in Aboriginal material culture.

More illustrative of a European propensity to maintain and even expand the category of authenticity in the face of Aboriginal innovation are the wooden carvings produced in and adjacent to Arnhem Land during the early and mid-twentieth century. Despite a considerable body of evidence to suggest that the grave posts of Melville and Bathurst Island represented innovative adapatations by Aborigines exposed to Malay and European contact, these objects were collected and described by museums as traditional and authentic. Ronald Berndt has documented the fact that Malay trepangers made metal tools available to Aboriginal populations along the Arnhem Land coast since the eighteenth century. As a consequence sculptural work was already being produced at the time of European arrival which was uncharacteristic of Aboriginal material culture inland. Mountford's collection of carved figures from Melville Island, Yirrkala and other localities during the 1940s provides some indication of the extent to which even greater access to Euroepean metal tools had modified the material culture of the region.[49] His research confirmed that the carving techniques were learnt from Malay trepangers, probably during the

nineteenth century. But like Basedow, Berndt, Spencer and others, Mountford regarded the carvings themselves as representing traditional Aboriginal subjects, related to mortuary practice and ceremony.[50]

The Adelaide doctor and anthropologist H. Kenneth Fry recorded a markedly different interpretation when he visited Melville Island in 1913. His unpublished notes indicate that these objects had become the vehicle for a new layer of extraneous cultural reference which might have radically altered their reception by museums of the period had it been widely known. Fry sketched the *pukumani* carvings and recorded their meanings on 11 March, 1913:

> Grave posts are made & put in circle near grave. Then posts placed on grave. Grave posts are in no definite arrangement. All those seen carved with hatchet. No very ancient posts seen. They are called Taka Pulawi & Wora blackfellow. Common shapes:
> hat; hat & swag; mast of boat; crutch of boom. bird;
> fishes tail; window of house at Pt. Darwin; Platters or wheelbarrow.[51]

As a footnote to his observations he noted the historical importance of steel axes as commodities among the Melville and Bathurst Islanders. He referred to Lieutenant Roe's 1824 observation that '[t]hese Indians made repeated signs for hatchets, which they called *paaco-paaco*' and to P.P. King's comment that Melville Island natives repeatedly asked for axes by imitating the act of chopping.[52]

Fry's observation of the significance ascribed to the *pukamani* poles by Tiwi people and his notes on the associated ceremonies with European themes provides a compelling example of the way in which the frontier provided a common frame for the actions of Aboriginal and European people. Yet, as examples like the *toas* of Killalpaninna Mission show, that notion was resisted strongly during the 'museological era' from the 1870s to the 1930s. The notion of the primitive was sustained by the perception that the world views of Aboriginal people and Europeans did not overlap, a perception intricately bound up in the realities and assumptions of colonialism.

Arnhem Land bark paintings and the toa sculptures of Killalpaninna Mission provide early examples of the Aboriginal response to the European appetite for those forms of Aboriginal 'art' and artefacts which conformed to categories already consumed in the West.[53] The shaping of collectors' taste for Aboriginal artefacts was conditioned by the formation of a broader aesthetic involving objects of the 'Other'. In Europe the elegance and mystique of Chinoisserie and Oriental design was counterbalanced by the rude primitivism of Aboriginal tools and weaponry. Each was a component of a construction against which the European imagination defined itself. The fact that in Adelaide, as in other colonial and metropolitan capitals, Oriental objects became consolidated within an art gallery, leaving objects of hunter-gatherer cultures to be exhibited in a museum with natural history specimens, hints at both the fluidity and inertia associated with the West's classification of cultures.

In their tangible and enduring form, ethnographic objects seem to defie the illusory craft of the anthropologist, expressed during 1881 by the German ethnographer, Adolf Bastian in these terms:

> For us, primitive societies (*Naturvolker*) are ephemeral ... inasmuch as they exist for us all. At the

very instant they become known to us they are doomed.[54]

Yet the institutional solidity of museums and assumptions about the unchanging nature of their exhibits belie the numerous shifts which ethnographic objects have undergone. Many of these changes have occurred outside the scope of this study, in the period since the Second World War, particularly in the realm of Aboriginal art. But even an object as apparently enduring as the boomerang has been subject to changes in status and definition. This quintessential object demonstrates the European propensity for appropriating the symbolic properties of ethnographic artefacts together with the objects themselves.[55]

The example of the boomerang confounds the notion of Aboriginal objects as artefacts wrested by Europeans from a culture separate in time and space. Even sacred objects became negotiable within the zone of contact. This attribute of ethnographic objects has been overlooked by many historians and anthropologists. Standard historiographies have characterised Aboriginal and European relations in terms of conflict and polarity, without observing the counterbalancing forces of accommodation and compromise. That emphasis has obscured the reality of the frontier as a field which, despite the unequal power relations prevailing there, unified Aboriginal and European interests as much as polarised them. By necessity, both had to operate within each other's fields of influence. Objects played a crucial role in these encounters, from the first meetings of Aborigines and explorers to the transactions of pearlers and pastoralists for Aboriginal labour. Cohn has described this engagement for colonialist history in general:

> Whites everywhere came into other people's worlds with models and logics, means of representation, forms of knowledge and action, with which they adapted to the construction of new environments, peopled by new 'others'. By the same token these 'others' had to restructure their worlds to encompass the fact of white domination and their own powerlessness. Hence, one of the primary subject matters of an historical anthropology or an anthropological history is, to use Balandier's term, the colonial situation. This is not to be viewed as 'impact', not as 'culture contact', nor is it to be viewed through a methodology that seeks to sort what is introduced from what is indigenous. It is rather to be viewed as a situation in which the European colonialist and the indigene are united in one analytic field ....[56]

The approach has been applied to one aspect of material culture in which influences from apparently polarised cultures can readily be seen to merge - that of tourist art. The genre is an obvious example of 'a medium through which diverse cultures come into contact with each other and are transmitted and preserved'.[57] In recent times the soapstone carvings of the Inuit, the wooden masks of the Fang and the acrylic paintings of Western Desert Aborigines have each demonstrated this capacity.[58] The anthropologist Jules-Rosette has suggested that a body of tourist art may operate as a complete semiotic system in itself; it 'mirrors the consumers' perceptions and reveals the artists' perceptions of what consumers want'.[59] Within this sphere also, notions of authenticity may persist and be negotiated to a solution by producers and consumers.

A similar analysis may be applied to an ethnographic collection such as that of the South Australian Museum. Ostensibly assembled to provide an objective account of another culture, the collection

may also be regarded as a complex mirror, producing images not just of the cultural 'Other', but of European collectors and the specific transactions which generated the collection's objects. This capacity transcends the circumscribed semiotic role for objects identified, for instance, by commentators such as Said, Miller, or Kenneth Coutts-Smith. Said has described the way in which objects have helped to 'fix' perceptions of cultural difference between Europe and Asia, particularly during the nineteenth century.[60] In the process the 'Orient' was constructed in the minds of Europeans much as the 'Aborigine' was constructed in the minds of Australians. Miller has elaborated this view, describing a process 'by which objects as objectifications come to fix as material forms, images of the relationship between societies, in which one society produces for the other an image that society has of itself'.[61]

Cultural colonialism, in Kenneth Coutts-Smith's analysis, is an ideology which accommodates the notion that spoils of war might include ethnographic and art objects as proof of conquest and territorial sovereignty. It also represents, in his view,

> the conscious attempt to appropriate and to incorporate into the body of European culture the diverse cultures, not only of the whole world, but also of the whole of history ... There would seem little doubt that the expanding European military and economic imperialism from the early nineteenth century onwards is paralleled and echoed within a developing structure of cultural colonialism.[62]

The model of cultural colonialism has been invoked as a remorseless one-sided process in which Europeans have assimilated ethnographic objects equally with other spoils of conquest on their own terms. Susan Hiller has extended the metaphor: 'Nothing indigestible is consumed; no ideas or information that would shift or dissolve 'our' preconceptions about the makers of those 'other' cultures nourish this body'.[63] Examples of Aboriginal objects such as the boomerang seem to fit this defining role, contributing to a stereotypical and fixed image of Aboriginal society. But even this object reveals an ambiguous history, accompanying a continual redefinition of Aboriginal culture on Aboriginal and on European terms.[64]

There are other more elusive examples. The shifting status of sacred objects, 'art' objects and tourist artefacts are cases in point, not always resulting from 'taxonomic shifts' imposed by European arbiters. These are more readily accommodated by Jules-Rosette's and Cohn's analyses, suggesting the image of the frontier as a zone of gradual and innovative acculturation rather than of outright conflict and total conquest. Jennings' analysis of the colonial period in North America also seems apposite, accepting his argument that the accepted model of a ruthless European conquest of Native Americans is excessive and should be replaced by a more complex account of gradual acculturation of both groups. This account emphasises a mingling of cultural traits and the emergence of a society dominated by transplanted Europeans but modified by a persistent Indian subculture.[65]

A more sympathetic European view of Aboriginal culture accompanied a change in attitudes towards Aboriginal objects and their classification at the close of the 'museological era'. The growing interest in Aboriginal art during the 1940s and 1950s, particularly expressed by specialists like Charles

Mountford who were marginal to anthropology's central concerns, represented an expansion of European scholarship into previously unexplored categories. It also indicated a readiness to accept that Aboriginal people had not 'dropped out of history altogether in order to occupy a twilight zone between nature and culture', confined within the ahistorical taxonomies defined by museums.[66] They could be encountered on other ground - including that which Aboriginal people themselves had been obliged to explore as a result of European interest in their culture. This was the ground of innovation, cultural experimentation - and even, using the phrase adopted by Mountford, of 'art for art's sake'.[67]

Endnotes - Chapter Thirteen

1. Stewart 1993: 156, 161.

2. Tylor 1871: 8.

3. Boas 1943: 314.

4. Fabian 1983: 147.

5. Dias 1991: 99.

6. Stewart 1993: 162.

7. Tylor 1871: 6-7.

8. Chapman 1985: 20.

9. Said 1978: 119.

10. Said 1978: 119. Said quotes Foucault in discussing the 'controlled derivation' of types and characters:

> all designation must be accomplished by means of a certain relation to all other possible designations. To know what properly appertains to one individual is to have before one the classification - or the possibility of classifying - all others. (*ibid*)

11. Clifford 1981: 542, 549. See also Miller 1991: 67.

12. Specht 1980: 10; Strahan 1979: 149.

13. Mather 1986: 208; pers. comm. M. Lakic, M. Raberts, 1996.

14. Bennett 1887; Anon 1883.

15. Spencer 1901; 1914; 1922.

16. See Curator's Reports for November 1863 *et seq.*, GRG 19/168, SRO. The October 1886 Board meeting for the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery resolved 'that it is desirable that the Museum Curator should commence the preparation of a descriptive Catalogue of the Museum, with a view to the same being printed hereafter'(Minutes of South Australian Institute Board, 29 October, 1866, p.39. GRG 19/14, vol.3, SRO). The Queensland Museum also failed to produce a guide to its anthropology collections, although it did commence its cataloguing system relatively early, under the direction of Charles de Vis, in 1892 (Mather 1986: 208).

17. Minute Books of the South Australian Institute, vol.3, 22 September, 1866. GRG 19/14, SRO.

18. Report from the Museum Director, Minutes of Museum Committee, 25 March, 1898. GRG 19/364, SRO.

19. Gillen to Spencer, 11 October, 1899. Letter 57, PRMO. Zietz and Stirling had experienced several *contretemps* during the early 1890s. Zietz's role in exhibiting acquisitions to the Royal Society was noted in the Society's Transactions, such as in this entry, for 1890 (p.250): 'A. Zietz showed ... specimens of *yuntha*, being oval pieces of wood used by the young male aborigines in certain of their ceremonies. Also a painted wooden post sent by Inspector Foelsche from the Northern Territory. It was used to mark the ground for holding a corroboree in honour of the dead'.

20. Report from the Museum Director, Minutes of Museum Committee, 2 November, 1898. GRG 19/364, SRO.

21. Minutes of Museum Committee, 11 December, 1884. GRG 19/364, SRO.

22. This initiative arose from a report from the Assistant Museum Director 'on the unsatisfactory working of the present arrangements for the registration of the receipt of specimens'. Minutes of Museum Committee, 5 August, 1892. GRG 19/364, SRO.

23. AA298, AASAM. This is a summarised listing only.

24. Minutes of Museum Committee, 1 March, 1911. GRG 19/364, SRO.

25. Etheridge report to Board, Australian Museum, November, 1898, Series 24, AMA.

26. For example, one of these lists of boxes refers to case no. 1, containing 'Boomerangs, Hermann Collection; Queensland weapons purchased from G.H. Birt; part of Wragge Collection', case no.2, containing 'Central and Northern Austrlaian Ethnological articles, charms etc, from F.J. Gillen', and so on. 'List of Boxes and Contents stored in Museum Store Rooms', AA298, Acc.158, AASAM.

27. Stirling to Museum Committee, quoted in Hale 1956: 105.

28. Minutes of the Museum Committee, 2 October, 1907. GRG 19/364, p.97, SRO.

29. Aiston to Gill, 6 July, 1932. In a later letter, Aiston wrote:

> Personally I value a thing more for the effort it cost me to get than for its intrinsic value, and with my own collection, every piece has its own personal history to me that makes it valuable, Gill gave me that, Pern that, Dr Horne something else, Colin McKenzie something else, and so on, and I get quite a thrill remembering the circumstances in which each piece came into my possession. (Aiston to

Gill, 1 April, 1935, MLS)

30. These include nearly 30,000 Aboriginal stone tools, a minority of which are documented as having been used by living people (most archaeological material is catalogued independently of the Registers).

31. The four other collectors - Tindale, Mountford, Edwards and Kimber - either worked for the Museum or were associated with it. Tindale made separate collections totalling more than 100 objects both before and after 1940 and for that reason has been counted twice.

32. These figures have been extracted from a Q&A database prepared from an analysis of the South Australian Museum Anthropology Registers and archival material (concerning otherwise undocumented collectors). See Jones 1996 ms.

33. See Minutes of Museum Committee, 4 December, 1912. GRG 19/364, SRO.

34. 'Professor Stirling's report on his visit to Museums in America and Europe, 1902'. GRG 19/399/7, SRO.

35. This effect was exacerbated further in the case of an estimated 1700 objects whose documentation had been lost prior to registration. These objects, acquired at any time in the Museum's history before 1911 and spanning Australian and foreign ethnology collections, were simply registered as belonging to the 'Old Collection'. A further estimated 1500 objects have no details of provenance recorded against them in the Anthropology Registers. A large proportion of these probably belong to the 'Old Collection'.

36. Example from List Book 21 'Labels Partly Prepared, Notes for Labels'. AA298, AASAM.

37. Label from Stirling Gallery exhibition dismantled in 1982. AA298, AASAM. The diorama scene contained three figures dating from as early as the 1880s. One of them, the spear-fisherman, can be identified from a photograph of the South Australian Museum's exhibit for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in Calcutta, 1887-88. See Jones 1983.

38. Stirling to Reuther, 14 October, 1908, quoted in Jones & Sutton (1986: 58).

39. Label from Stirling Gallery exhibition dismantled in 1982. AA298, AASAM.

40. 'Museum Diary, 1883-1918', 2 August 1899, p.65, SRSAM.

41. Tindale's note on objects registered as A29371-3. Tindale himself collected 'degenerate' objects during the Board for Anthropological Research expedition to Koonibba on South Australia's west coast during 1928. These items are registered as AA14194-5, 14200, 14207-10.

42. ADB 10: 499.

43. In Tindale's case this connection was explicit, as expressed in his elaboration of a 'cultural sequence'.

44. Fabian 1983: 147.

45. *Ibid*: 31.

46. Giles 1995: 85, 92.

47. Giles to Stirling, 12 July, 1890. AA298, Acc.184, no.69, AASAM.

48. Lumholtz 1889: 336. A marked preference for wooden objects thought to have been made with stone tools has been a feature of auction-room discussions about Aboriginal objects for at least the past twenty years. This observation has been made personally and drawn from discussions with collectors and dealers in Adelaide.

49. This collection is held in the South Australian Museum. For Mountford's discussion of Arnhem Land wooden carvings, see Mountford 1956: 416-19. Other notable collections of Arnhem Land carvings have been made by Ronald Berndt, Wilbur Chaseling, and Edward Ruhe.

50. Mountford, writing during the 1940s, did at least allow for the fact that Aboriginal carvers could be inspired by European subjects. He noted the fact that the Yirrkala artist, Mauwulan, carved a mortuary post to resemble King George V on learning of his death. The post was presented to the Australian Museum in Sydney by the Yirrkala missionary, Wilbur Chaseling. *Ibid*: 417.

51. Fry 1923 ms. Fry's typed notes from his trip to Melville Island, contained in the same series, refer to the seventh post as 'Obviously phallic. Called wheelbarrow (giggling)'. An analogy between these carvings and the figurative *toa* sculptures of the Lake Eyre region, produced during the same period, might be fruitfully pursued.

52. King 1827, vol.1: 111; vol.2: 240. Quoted by Fry in his typescript account of Melville and Bathurst Island visit, H.K. Fry Papers, AA105, Acc.225, AASAM. See also Fry 1949; 1950. Fry made a collection of these posts, donating them to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

53.See Jones 1988; Jones & Sutton 1986.

54. Bastian 1881: 63.

55. Jones 1992d; Jones 1996c.

56. Cohn 1980: 217-18.

57. Jules-Rosette 1984: 3.

58. Carpenter (1976) presents a succinct analysis of this process as it relates to the Inuit.

59. Jules-Rosette 1984: 3.

60. Said 1978.

61. Miller 1991: 60.

62. Coutts-Smith 1991: 24.

63. Hiller 1991: 11.

64. See Jones 1992d; Jones 1992e.

65. Jennings 1975. Jennings (1982) pursues the case.
For James Clifford's reference to 'taxonomic shift' see Clifford (1985).

66. Bennett 1995: 77.

67. For a discussion of this shift in attitude towards Aboriginal art by Europeans, and Mountford's role in engineering that shift, see Jones 1988.

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Abbreviations

AAC	Australian Archives, Canberra
AASAM	Anthropology Archives, South Australian Museum
ADB	*Australian Dictionary of Biography*
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AMA	Australian Museum Archives, Sydney
ANL	Australian National Library, Canberra
MLS	Mitchell Library, Sydney
MLSA	Mortlock Library of South Australiana
NTDB	*Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography*
PRMO	Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford
SAM	South Australian Museum, Adelaide
SAPP	South Australian Parliamentary Papers
SOED	*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*
SRO	State Records Office, South Australia
SRSAM	Strong Room, South Australian Museum

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