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Collecting En Route: An Exploration of the Ethnographic Collection of Gertrude Emily Benham

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**COLLECTING EN ROUTE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC
COLLECTION OF GERTRUDE EMILY BENHAM**

by

CATHERINE CUMMINGS

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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Catherine Cummings

Collecting En Route: An Exploration of the Ethnographic Collection of Gertrude Emily Benham.

Abstract

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century the collecting of objects from colonized countries and their subsequent display in western museums was widespread throughout Western Europe. How and why these collections were made, the processes of collection, and by whom, has only recently begun to be addressed. This thesis is an exploration of the ethnographic collection of Gertrude Emily Benham (1867-1938) who made eight voyages independently around the world from 1904 until 1938, during which time she amassed a collection of approximately eight hundred objects, which she donated to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery in 1935. It considers how and why she formed her collection and how, as an amateur and marginalised collector, she can be located within discourses on ethnographic collecting. The thesis is organised by geographical regions in order to address the different contact zones of colonialism as well as to contextualise Benham within the cultural milieu in which she collected and the global collection of objects that she collected. An interdisciplinary perspective was employed to create a dialogue between anthropology, geography, museology, postcolonial and feminist theory to address the complex issues of colonial collecting. Benham is located within a range of intersecting histories: colonialism, travel, collecting, and gender. This study is the first in-depth examination of Benham as a collector and adds to the knowledge and understanding of Benham and her collection in Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery. It contributes to the discourse on ethnographic collectors and collecting and in doing so

it acknowledges the agency and contribution of marginal collectors to resituate them as a central and intrinsic component in the formation of the ethnographic museum. In addition, and central to this, is the agency and role of indigenous people in forming ethnographic collections. The thesis offers a foundation for further research into women ethnographic collectors and a more nuanced and inclusive account of ethnographic collecting.

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List of Acronyms

AHRC: Arts and Humanities Research Council

BM: British Museum, London

BMNH: British Museum Natural History, London

CPRR: Canadian Pacific Railroad

LMS: London Missionary Society

MAA: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge

NHM: Natural History Museum, London

NMAI: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institute, Washington

PCMAG: Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

PRM: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

PWDRO: Plymouth and West Devon Records Office

RAI: Royal Anthropological Institute, London

RAMM: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

RGS: Royal Geographical Society, London

UEA: University of East Anglia

V&A: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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This thesis is dedicated to the creativity and resilience of the indigenous cultures around the world that made the objects Gertrude Benham collected.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the University of Plymouth. A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included a postgraduate course in Research Methodologies.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes and a paper was published.

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July 2009 – *The Passion of Travel and Constructing the Self: ‘Emotion in Motion: the Passion of Tourism, Travel and Movement’* (2009). Leeds Metropolitan University.

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October 2009 – ‘*Colonial Collecting and Gender in the Collection of Gertrude E. Benham (1867-1938)*’. *Going Public: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Presenting Women’s History*. Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, Canada.

June 2011 – *Entanglement and Complexity in Colonial Collecting: Gertrude E. Benham (1867-1938)*: University of Plymouth – History of Art Seminar presentation

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Conferences and Seminars Attended

October 2008 - *Collecting Thoughts - About Collecting* by Johannes Fabian, University College London.

May 2009 – *The Arts of West Papua*, British Museum, London.

November 2009 - *Making the Space of History: Photography and Survey 1885-1914* by Elizabeth Edwards, University College London.

April 2010 - The Museum Ethnographer’s Group Conference (MEG), Reading University.

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Figure1. Gertrude Emily Benham (1867-1938)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

Figure 2. World Map of the British Empire outlined in pink c.1910 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions

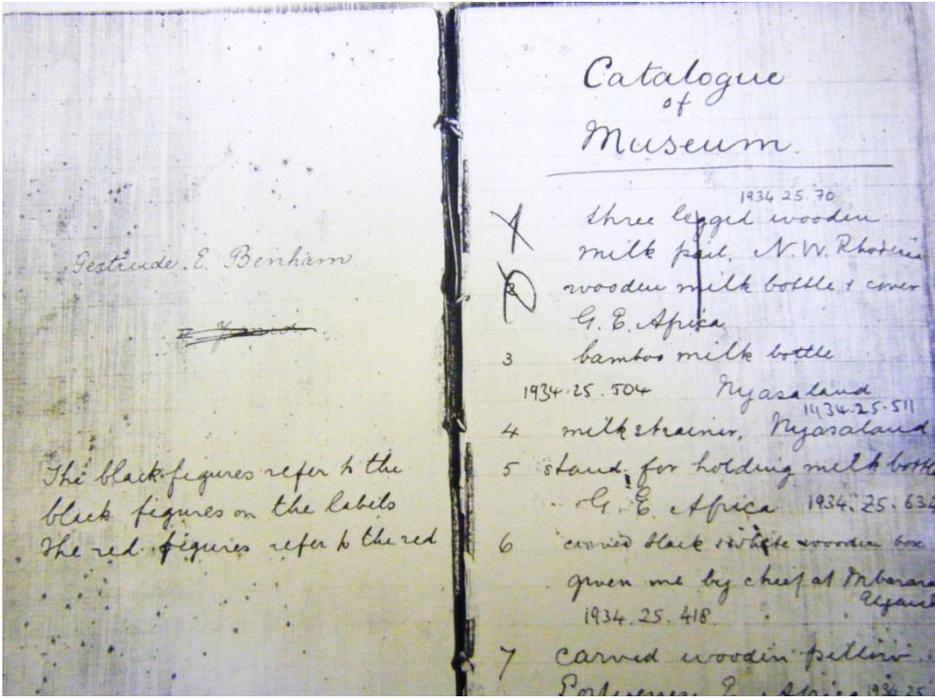


Figure 3. Gertrude Benham's *Catalogue of Museum*.

Author's photograph permission of Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery.

Introduction

To the Plymouth Museum all my curios and objects collected by me in my travels and all my mountain studies in water colour on condition that the same shall not be separated but shall be exhibited together and form a permanent collection called 'The Benham Collection'.¹

In 1935 Gertrude Emily Benham (1867-1938) donated a collection of eight hundred ethnographic objects to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (thereafter PCMAG). Benham travelled the globe eight times between 1904 and 1938 during which time she amassed her collection of objects. After she completed her sixth world trip in Plymouth in 1928 Benham visited PCMAG and offered them her collection which was accepted and subsequently accessioned by the museum in 1935. Her collection remained packed until the 1980s but it was not until 2009 that a selection of her objects was included in a permanent display in the new World Cultures Gallery, *Bringing the World to Plymouth*, at PCMAG. This study is the first in depth examination of Benham as a collector.

Benham [Fig. 1] was an independent traveller, mountaineer, botanist, landscape painter, and collector who travelled alone, spent more than thirty years walking the world and climbed more than 300 peaks of 10,000ft (3,281 m) or over, and in 1909 was acclaimed as the first woman to climb Mount Kilimanjaro at 19,000ft (5,667 m).² In 1908 she 'tramped' across South America, she walked across the continent of Africa three times and spent many months living and walking across the Himalayas. She claimed to have travelled to every part of the British Empire except Tristan de Cunha, and travelled on a budget of £250 year, a small sum in comparison to some other travellers and collectors

¹ The Benham Bequest, PCMAG: Benham Archive.

² Benham only reached the second highest peak. The first British woman recognised as achieving the summit was Sheila Macdonald in 1927. Benham, however, was the first woman and the first British citizen to climb Mount Kilimanjaro (Howgego 2009).

of her era. On retirement she planned to settle down in her bungalow at Lyme Regis, Dorset, to write and organise her collection of objects at PCMAG, but she died unexpectedly at sea off the east coast of Africa in 1938 on her eighth world trip.³

Benham's collection was made during the height of the British Empire and the expansion of British colonies throughout the world [Fig. 2]. The collecting of objects from other places dates back to the explorations and colonization of the New World in the sixteenth century and the voyages of discovery by Captain James Cook in the eighteenth century. The objectives for these journeys included the mapping and surveying of new lands and the scientific and empirical gathering of supporting data. Botanists collected natural history and artists made visual observations of nature, the landscape and the people.⁴ The collecting of ethnographic objects was considered supplementary to these activities at the time.⁵ However, with the rapid expansion of the British Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century, and influenced by evolutionary theory, the collecting of objects by westerners from colonized countries, in some cases, took on a new, more aggressive impetus to become a political 'tool' of the colonial project, as 'evidence' of their lack of technological progression and civilization in relation to the West. In addition to this was the phenomenon of the Victorian and Edwardian 'imperial lady traveller' when independent and ambitious women left Britain to travel and explore the world.⁶

From the perspective of an effective history (Foucault 1972), Benham can be positioned as part of this trajectory of travel, exploration and collecting but can also be considered

³ See Appendix 1 for a list of her eight world journeys.

⁴ For an account of the artists' role on these voyages see Rudiger Joppien and Bernard Smith, (1985) *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages: Volume 1, The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771*, New Haven and London.

⁵ The ethnographic objects that were collected are now reconsidered as being of central importance to these voyages in bartering for provisions and in establishing and maintaining relationships between Europeans and indigenous communities (Thomas 1991, Newall 2005, Henare 2005, Owen 2006).

⁶ For example, Mary Kingsley, Marianne North, Gertrude Bell, and Isabella Bird.

as revealing “the nuances, ambiguities and points of fracture of that trajectory” (Edwards 2001: 30).

Benham collected alone and independent of a systematic agenda⁷ and a private collection such as hers may be (mis)understood as merely being personal to the collector (Baudrillard 1968, Stewart 1993, Belk 1994, Pearce 1995). This study suggests that her collecting was not just for personal reasons but that it was considered and had a social intention and as such it is also a reflection of the wider political, social and economic contexts in which she collected (Pearce 1995, O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000, Shelton 2001a, Gosden and Knowles 2001). However, it can be argued that Benham and her collection were not just a reflection of the colonial times and milieu in which she collected but that ethnographic collecting instantiated those circumstances – it brought those circumstances into being – and it contributed to the construction of those very circumstances. The collecting of objects was not just a peripheral coincidence of colonialism but was central to it (Henare 2005). Colonial collecting was not an isolated or neutral activity and the period in which Benham collected locates her in a much larger temporal and spatial period and trajectory of collecting as “the very act of collecting has a political or ideological or aesthetic dimension which cannot be overlooked” (Vergo 1991: 2). Benham’s collecting can be described as a form of ‘distributed agency’ which is the idea that people cannot act on their own as “they require the scaffolding of other people and things to make actions happen in the world” (Byrne et. al. 2011). This study is concerned with why and how Benham formed her collection, what motivated her to collect, and what factors, social, political, and cultural, were involved. As such it addresses Benham’s personal motivations and methods of

⁷ Systematic collecting implies collecting to some sort of scheme, with taxonomy in mind to demonstrate certain principles. This will be discussed further in the thesis.

collecting or the poetics of collecting as well as the politics of collecting or the social milieu in which she collected (Pearce 1995).

Ethnographic Collectors

Historically, within the discourse on colonial collecting and museology, there has been an emphasis on fieldwork and on the design and construction of ethnographic exhibitions but less on collectors and the process of collection. In 1985, George Stocking, in his book *Objects and Others*, commented, “We would have liked an article on the actual processes of collection of objects” (Stocking 1985:13). Thomas (1991) questioned the lack of research on collectors and stated, “We must ask ourselves why these objects were acquired and what their collectors thought they were doing” (Thomas 1991: 126). Since then there have been shifts in the discourse of collecting to an emphasis on collectors. Alison Brown acknowledges that the collecting of objects from colonized countries has a long history which dates back to the first cross cultural-contact and states, “Until relatively recently, however, the rationale behind the creation of these collections has received scant attention in museological literature” (Brown 1998: 33) and acknowledged that “collections history is currently the focus of much attention in Material Culture Studies” (Brown 1998: 33), which testifies to the increased interest in collectors. Researching the collector and the collection can be “an interrogative act” (Rowlands in Shelton 2001a: 7).

This study draws on this research but extends it to include not just an analysis of the collector but also the objects in the collection and the relationship between Benham and her objects, their “mutual constructedness ... the way in which both persons and things, through their shared embeddedness in social relations act to make each other what they are, in a dynamic continual relationship” (Dudley 2012: 2). It endeavours to examine

the conditions in which Benham formed her collection of objects from around the world and questions the factors, internal and external, which allowed the collecting of objects from colonized and/or imperialised countries:

It is an instructive exercise to take any collection or group of associated museum objects and ask not ‘What are they?’ and ‘What can this tell us?’, which are the usual museum questions, but rather, ‘When and how was the collection formed?’, ‘Who formed it?’ and ‘Why did this person/these people choose to assemble these objects?’(Pearce 1992: 116).

In relation to the Benham collection this forms one of the aims and intentions of this study.

Within the discourse on ethnographic collection history this new emphasis on the collector is concomitant with the postcolonial recognition that the indigenous people from whom the objects were collected had agency and power in the collecting process. Colonial trade and transactions were reciprocal and entangled between the colonizer and the colonized.⁸ The discourse, however, is problematic and two omissions have been identified in the present study and I will deal with these separately. Firstly, although recent research has addressed the paucity of research on collectors some modes of collecting (and therefore the collector) have been more highly valued than others, “with few exceptions, museum-based scholarship still prefers collectors who were committed to some systematic form of acquisition, those to whom it can attribute a disinterested motivation and/or a scientific pedigree” (Shelton 2001a: 13). With the rise of the scientific discipline of anthropology and the emergence of the professional collector in the nineteenth century, collections considered ‘scientific’ and ‘professional’ have been

⁸ See Thomas 1991; O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000; Shelton 2001a, 2001b; Gosden and Knowles 2001.

contrasted with so-called private ‘amateur’ collectors activities even though these terms have become “ increasingly more ambiguous” (Shelton 2001a: 13). The result of this typology, however, is that the amateur collector remains relatively ignored even though they have made substantial contributions to ethnographic museums; yet, these same contributors have been less valued in favour of professional or systematic collectors.⁹ Benham, as a woman, was not trained in science or anthropology and was situated outside of these discourses and could not have been considered a professional collector but one of the very numerous amateur collectors. These terms have been used to describe different collectors and can have an impact on how a collector is perceived and valued. Since the late twentieth century post-structuralist critiques have questioned the positivism of nineteenth century Anglo-European foundations of some human ‘sciences’ such as anthropology, as well as the authoritative and totalising notions of scientific objective knowledge as ‘truth’. These critiques have revealed knowledge as a social construction, a fiction, in which meaning is no longer fixed and immutable but open to multiple interpretations contingent on particular circumstances. From this perspective the terms professional and amateur can be deconstructed to reveal the system of knowledge in which they were constructed. This study questions the relevance of these terms today but it does not ignore the distinction between them as they are historically specific and were applied at a time when scientific authority and scholarly knowledge and other ‘human’ universals were embedded in objects and professional collections were considered more authoritative and important than so-called passionate, private collecting.¹⁰

⁹ Professional collectors were those who collected scientifically and systematically usually for a museum and includes General Augustus H. F. L. Pitt Rivers, Emil Torday, Alfred Cort Haddon and Edward Tylor and tended to be anthropologists and/or museum curators. The vast amount of so called amateur collectors includes sailors, traders, travellers, missionaries etc. who did not have a scientific education and therefore had a subordinate role in an established scientific hierarchy (O’Brien 2010: 34). The emergence of the professional collector is discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁰ For example see Levell’s post-structuralist critique of Exeter’s RAMM histories (Levell 2001).

From a post-colonial perspective this study, therefore, aims to demonstrate that these binary terms may be too limited for a postcolonial era in which multiplicity, polyvocality and diversity are said to be celebrated and argues that the terms are interrelated, permeable and ambiguous. It further suggests that Benham, as a collector, fits neither category but occupies an interstitial, liminal space (Bhabha 1994), that has the potential to open up new spaces for further research on the marginal amateur collector and that so-called amateur collectors, such as Benham, made an important contribution to ethnography and museum anthropology.

The second omission in the discourse relates to gender and the paucity of women ethnographic collectors. The discourse on collectors is mainly “dead, white, rich, males” (Petch 2004: 130). There were many different types of collectors and contexts for collecting including missionaries, anthropologists, military expeditions, colonial administrators and scientific expeditions. However the discourse on colonial collecting, exchange and encounter is essentially a male discourse of heroic feats, expeditions, and exploration as well as plunder and looting. This exposes a crucial tension between Benham as a female collector and the masculine discourse of colonialism. This not only marginalizes the amateur collector but women collectors are almost non-existent in the discourse which could be said to be ‘silent’ regarding women (Shelton 2001a).¹¹ According to Shelton (2001a) collectors operate in a complex, liminal terrain. For an Edwardian woman collector such as Benham this is more complicated as not only is she marginalized in terms of the status of collectors generally but also due to her gender which is marginalized within patriarchy and occupies what Maddrell has termed a ‘complex location’ (Maddrell 2009). From a feminist postcolonial perspective, Benham

¹¹ Exceptions include Shelton (2001a; 2001b) who includes chapters on women collectors and Chantal Knowles who has addressed the collecting of the anthropologist Beatrice Blackwood (Gosden and Knowles 2001).

as both an amateur and a woman collector could be said to have undergone a ‘double-discrimination’.

Gender is a cultural construct that is experienced and expressed in different ways (Levine 2007). During the course of this research it became clear that many women made ethnographic collections yet have remained largely ignored and this has the potential for further research.¹² Gender is very complex issue which is intrinsically combined with factors such as class and race (Pratt 1992, Mills 1993, Maddrell 2009). This study acknowledges that gender did have an impact and shaped how people such as Benham, behaved and experienced the world. Within patriarchal Edwardian England women had the capacity to subvert and resist male domination and this study acknowledges the “complex interaction of historical processes involving notions of power, gender, and embodied selfhood” (Hoskins 1998: 15). The intention of the study is to investigate and analyse Benham as a collector first, asking how and why her collection was formed, determining her motivations to collect, identifying the type of objects she collected and evaluating her subsequent decision to make a donation of her collection to PCMAG. It argues that Benham does not conform to the existing discourse and questions where an independent female traveller and ethnographic collector can be situated into this wider discourse.

Benham as Collector

In addition to her collection Benham left a small notebook, a *Catalogue of Museum* [Fig 3] which lists the objects she collected and the places where she collected them from [see Appendix 2 and 4]. Very occasionally she states how she obtained them, and even rarer, she states how they were used or worn. She made her collection in many

¹² For example, in a research project on collectors at the Pitt Rivers Museum from 1884-1945, Alison Petch analysed 3,444 collectors. Of these 527 (15 per cent) were identified as female (Petch 2004: 131).

different ways and “carried calico, needles and other things which the natives appreciate in return for food.”¹³ In addition to barter, some were found, some were gifts, but most were bought and she stated, “A large proportion of the curios have been bought with money, earned by my embroidery, and also travelling steerage when possible and spending the difference in fares on the museum.”¹⁴ Benham therefore bought most of her objects with money but this had been *earned* from her embroidery which positions her ethnographic collection as one which was formed through her own creative act of making and positions it as a particularly feminine form of exchange.¹⁵ According to Pearce (1995) the “style of collecting is, in terms of gender, as significant as the content of the collection” (Pearce 1995:222). It also implies that Benham deliberately collected with an intention and I will be dealing with this in the thesis as it is important to my interpretation and the meaning and significance of her collection. Benham’s style of collecting differs greatly from other types of collecting in particular the ‘plunder and looting’ narrative of colonial collecting associated with the military and punitive raids such as that of Benin or ‘armchair’ collecting such as that of Pitt Rivers.¹⁶

Within collecting theory there is a hierarchy which distinguishes between collecting and consuming and women have historically been positioned as consumers of bibelots (Saisselin 1985). Collecting has been distinguished from accumulating, (Baekeland 1994; Baudrillard 1968), and women collectors have been denigrated as consumers of trinkets or frivolous and domestic objects (Sachko Macleod 2008). The colonies have been understood as a ‘masculine space’ and ‘no place for a woman’ (Callaway 1987; Chaudhuri and Strobel 1992). Benham’s travels and collecting transgresses these

¹³ Benham quoted in the *Natal Times*, April 19, 1927.

¹⁴ Letter from Benham to the curator Alfred Caddie at PCMAG, 27 February 1935.PCMAG: Benham Archives.

¹⁵ Benham does not record what she made or who she sold to.

¹⁶ Pitt Rivers made most of his collection from a vast network of collectors including traders, dealers, and missionaries who brought back object from the colonies to England. Collectors who did not visit the countries the objects were collected from are described as ‘armchair’ collectors.

ideas/constructed notions and this study questions whether Benham's collection is a 'collection of souvenirs' (Stewart 1993: 135), an 'idiosyncratic assemblage' (Levell 2001: 186), and considers how it can be interpreted and understood today.

One of the methods chosen to do this is through the material objects themselves which can embody the personality, passion, interests, desires and memories of the collector (Shelton 2001a). However it is also concerned with how Benham as a collector is valued as well as how the objects she collected are valued. Objects, as well as the collector, are a central concern of this study. It is not just collectors that have been marginalised but some objects that are considered 'authentic' have been, and still are, more highly valued than others even though this has been questioned and challenged.¹⁷

Pearce (1995) discusses the politics of collecting and issues of authenticity in relation to value. She suggests that the 'inauthentic' object is undervalued based on value judgements which are political and ideological. These judgements, however, are, by implication, transferred onto the collector as, "it is those who collect this stuff [who] are themselves trivial and trashy, possessed of neither moral, aesthetic, nor intellectual sensibilities" (Pearce 1995: 305). Thus the type of objects a collector collects can infer the type of collector they are, and how they themselves are valued, and demonstrates how collected objects can have an impact on the status of the collector.¹⁸

Within this study, Benham's objects are examined and critiqued in terms of the value placed upon them and I argue that all objects, regardless of whether they are deemed 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' can be understood as "documenting processes of

¹⁷ For example see Graburn (1976), Stewart (1993), Pearce (1995), Phillips and Steiner (1999), Phillips (1998), Corbey (2000), Hitchcock and Teague (2000), Poulter (2011).

¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has addressed the constructing of the self through the maintenance of a cultural hierarchy through taste based on class and western notions of high and low culture but does not address collecting which is what this thesis is concerned with.

intercultural exchange and acculturation” (Corbey 2000: 35). Benham collected a diverse range of objects but the highest proportion is those relating to personal adornment and containers which are mainly domestic [see Appendix 3]. If the types of objects Benham collected have been undervalued does this mean that she, as a collector, is undervalued? Igor Kopytoff has considered objects as having a biography and suggests that similar questions can be asked about objects and humans, and the resulting answers can “make salient what might otherwise remain obscure” (Kopytoff 1986: 67).

Together, these arguments for understanding Benham as a collector in terms of professional or amateur, consumer or collector, and understanding her collection of objects as authentic or inauthentic and art or craft, impacts on how Benham is viewed as a collector. These terms are not representative of the cultures that produced the objects but are reflective of Western categories and the social construction and limitations of knowledge. From a postcolonial and critically engaged perspective, by analysing these dichotomies and the criteria on which they are based, it can be argued that Benham, as a collector and her collection of objects, can be situated within the dominant discourse of ethnographic collecting, albeit in a more nuanced, complex and inclusive position that takes into account issues of gender, the so called amateur collector and the value of all ethnographic objects.

Implications of the Study

This study is situated as part of current research which addresses the individual collector but it extends this research further by addressing the amateur collector and gender imbalance in ethnographic collection studies with a focus on one female collector. Studying the collector can have several implications. Knowledge of the collector highlights the way in which the objects were collected and the dominant ideologies of

the time in which they were collected, it adds to the narrative of the objects and in doing so can enrich the collection (Shelton 2001a). Each collection is an individual creation, based on the values and desires of the collector as well as the external contexts, the milieu and the attitudes of the time in which the collection was made. Addressing social, political and cultural issues allows for an understanding of the contexts of indigenous people along with their originating community and the role, power and agency they played in the collecting process. However, emphasis on the European collector can reveal more about western desires and tastes than the supposed exotic ‘other’ it was meant to expose (Clifford 1988). In a research project into collectors at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Alison Petch states that research into collectors has “become central to the way in which the Museum now conceives its collections...it allows the collections to be seen in a particular way and examined in a particular light” (Petch 2004: 129). This can result in more information on the object and she further states, “The more information that is known about an object the better, of course, as the object itself becomes more useful to researchers and more interesting to museum visitors” (Petch 2004: 129).¹⁹

Studying and researching a collector and his/her collections, can lead to new forms of knowledge about the collectors themselves, about the objects they collected, and the political, social and cultural milieu in which they were collected. As Alison Brown has stated “these collections reveal much about collecting as a phenomena and as a manifestation of imperialism” (Brown 1998: 33). Collectors and collecting in the colonies had an enormous impact on the material culture of indigenous peoples. A focus on the collector, how they acquired their objects, and the types of objects they collected, can give insights into the values and desires of westerners and also that of the agency of

¹⁹ This initial research on the collectors has led to a larger ESRC-funded project, ‘The Relational Museum’. See Gosden & Larson (2007) for a detailed account.

indigenous people in adapting and producing objects that were then in demand. This can raise issues and further categories for analysis such as authenticity, transculturation, and tourist art. The intention of the study of Benham's collecting is to extend the existing discourse on colonial collecting to offer a more nuanced, complex, and inclusive account of colonial collecting. It is intended to form a foundation on which further research into marginalized collectors, amateurs and women, can be undertaken.²⁰

Methodology

A range of primary and secondary research has been undertaken for this study and due to the complexity of the study a range of methods has been employed rather than privileging one over the other. Although this is not a collaborative study a close working relationship with staff at PCMAG enabled and enriched this research. Research has been carried out in the archives of PCMAG which hold letters and correspondence from and to Benham, through newspapers which published articles on Benham, and articles she wrote herself. Visits have been undertaken to the Archives of the Royal Geographical Society, the Natural History Museum and the British Library which have archival records relating to Benham. In addition to this, visits to other collections in museums in the UK and abroad have been undertaken along with interviews with curatorial staff and correspondence with ethnographic specialists who have analysed and commented on Benham's collection. In exploring Benham as a collector through the types of objects she collected it was necessary to have an understanding of specific objects from the four continents that she collected from and my methodology included contacting specialists in ethnography from different areas. For the North American objects primary research was undertaken at the Royal Alberta Museum, Alberta,

²⁰ This is already beginning to be addressed. In 2009 the Museum Ethnographers Group Conference was entitled *Amateur Passions/Professional Practice: Ethnography Collectors and Collections*. The papers for this were published in the *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, Number 23, 2010. See specifically Lucie Carreau 2010 and Aoife O'Brien 2010.

Edmonton, Canada, The Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Canada, and through correspondence with staff at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. Ruth B. Phillips²¹ and Trudy Nicks generously commented on the objects.²² Steven Hooper, Director and Professor of Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Lucie Carreau, Research Associate at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology assessed the Fijian collection. Emma Poulter, British Museum, commented on the West African collection, Catherine Elliot, British Museum, assessed the South African objects. Emma Martin, Head of Ethnology and Curator of Asia Collections at National Museums, Liverpool, commented on the Tibetan objects. Len Pole, an independent ethnographer, curator and author undertook a comparative analysis of the Benham collection.²³

The actual objects in the collection have been analysed in order to attempt to understand Benham as a collector and as such this can be considered as a material approach.

Colonialism itself can be considered as a material project, whether through the collecting of raw minerals and materials from colonized lands or the collecting of their material objects. Ethnographic collections are part of this material world and it was through material objects that “human relations were realised, in the sense of being made real, by producing, exchanging and using objects” (Gosden and Knowles 2001: xxi).

The objects that Benham collected reveal her taste and “identifying the taste of the collector, which can be gauged from their choice of objects, is an important aspect of

²¹ Ruth B. Phillip is author of *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998 and with Christopher B. Steiner (eds.) (1999) *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press. She holds the Canada Research Chair in Modern Culture at Carleton University, Ontario, Canada.

²² Trudy Nicks is Senior Curator of Anthropology at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto and Associate Professor of Anthropology at McMaster University. She has curated and published on First Nation Peoples and wrote the introduction to Peers, Laura and Brown, Alison, K., (2003) *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.

²³ Pole (2012) Unpublished report. PCMAG: Benham Archives. The commission to undertake this research was generously supported by Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery and Plymouth City Council.

the study of collections” (Pomian 1990: 4). It is through the type of objects that Benham collected along with the existing documentation that allows for an insight into her system of value and her preference for some objects and not others. The archival documents and letters by Benham are limited and she did not record her collecting activities except for a small notebook, her *Catalogue of Museum*, in which she listed her objects [see Appendix 4 for a transcription of this].²⁴ This lack of sources can be problematic but “if we regard objects as documents in themselves, it is remarkable how much is revealed about collectors as individuals and about collecting as a cultural phenomenon” (Brown 1998: 35). The trade and collecting of objects was reciprocal and the power and agency of indigenous people and communities has to be taken into account in any study of ethnographic collecting (Thomas 1991; 1994a, O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000, Gosden and Larson 2001, Henare 2005).

What indigenous people themselves thought about the collecting and transformation of their material culture is beyond the scope of this study but the omission is acknowledged, not only from a practical point of view, but the time and in-depth study it would take for the knowledge required to understand and translate different cultural and philosophical paradigms. However, the indigenous agency and power of originating communities resonates throughout the study through an analysis of the objects Benham collected which contain the materials, technologies, and skills of those who made and used them. A selection of objects from communities around the world will be examined in more detail and include North America, the South Pacific, Africa, and parts of Asia (Himalayas, Tibet and Taiwan).

²⁴ The whereabouts of Benham’s sketches, painting, photographs, and diaries are unknown and have not been located to date.

Framework

Collecting in itself is a complex cultural phenomenon motivated by a configuration of factors and cannot be reduced to single factors (Van der Grijp 2006). An interdisciplinary approach has been adopted for this study to reflect the complexities involved in colonial collecting. This is based on my own background in art history and cultural studies but has also been informed by anthropology, geography, museum studies, collecting theory, postcolonial theory as well as feminist postcolonial theory. Benham's collection can therefore be conceptualised as a site of intersection of various disciplines relating to its formation and subsequent donation. As Shelton states:

The growth of collections history and critical museology, which have applied insights from anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, history, critical theory, and other disciplines provide the basis for a much more sophisticated understanding and appraisal of museums and their collections (Shelton 2001a: 17).

I suggest that colonial collecting is even more complex as it is implicated in imperialist expansion policies and political ideologies as well as institutional ideologies, issues of representation and the construction of specific forms of knowledge. Colonial collecting was a political act from which Benham cannot be separated and her motivations for collecting have to be understood within this context (Stocking 1985, Clifford 1988, Thomas 1991, Coombes 1994a, O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000, Gosden and Knowles 2001).

Some collections are "imbued with a definite sense of purpose" (Brown 1998: 38). Benham stated that she wanted her collection "to be of use to students" (Hessell-Tiltman 1935:94) which implies a quest for knowledge and education which was concurrent with imperial ideology, colonialism and museology in the second half of the

nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century and which I suggest gives the collection an intentionality. I suggest that her intention to donate it to a museum for educational purposes was also intended as a symbolic extended-self and as a form of immortality (Belk 1988; 1995; 2006), a personal legacy for recognition, as well as evidence of her travels and achievements.

Benham's collection can be considered as a 'materialisation' of her values and desires (Bell and Geismar 2009). The concept of materialisation allows for a processual view of objects, "their making, use, and disassembling that constitutes their biographies, their social lives" (Bell and Geismar 2009: 6, *pace* Appadurai 1986). This approach has been mapped onto this study and follows the 'social life' of the Benham collection: how her collection was formed (or its making), her motivations and methods of collecting (how she used the collection), and Benham's donation to PCMAG where it now lives (its continuing life as objects en route).²⁵ Belk's research into collecting as the extended-self has been employed in this study to explain Benham's motivations for collecting and her subsequent donation to PCMAG (Belk 1988; 1995; 2006). The concept of materialisation was chosen as it intrinsically connects Benham to her objects and the objects to Benham to gain an understanding of her as a collector which I suggest is reflected through the type of objects she selected and valued. The study, therefore analyses Benham as a personality and the construction of her identity through collecting, as well as analysing some of the objects she collected and suggests that she was, and remains, entangled with them (Thomas 1991).

Mary Louise Pratt's postcolonial concept of the contact zone can be usefully applied to support the geographic structure and themes of this study. Pratt describes the contact

²⁵ En route has been employed as it implies movement both of Benham and her objects and also in relation to the shifting and indeterminate nature of meaning of both the collector and the collection.

zone as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (Pratt 1992:4). The idea of the contact zone is not a unified concept but varies in different times and places and therefore can usefully be applied to Benham over her experiences of the various contact zones in the different places and times she collected between 1904-1938.²⁶ A contact perspective allows for the “interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters” (Pratt 1992: 7) which allows for an acknowledgment of indigenous agency in the formation of European collections and that collecting involved not just the Western collector but also the indigenous makers and traders. The ‘contact zone’ has also been applied to ethnographic museums (Clifford 1997) and this can be mapped onto Benham’s collection today in PCMAG. Pratt’s concept of ‘transculturation’ is also appropriate as it is a “phenomenon of the contact zone” (Pratt 1992: 6) and is usefully applied to acknowledge that colonized people had their own agency in selecting materials and objects from the colonizers and can reveal their adaptation and creativity.

Foucault’s notion of an ‘effective’ history is intrinsic to the study (Foucault 1972). He suggests that the production of knowledge and the formation of disciplines are never innocent but enmeshed within relations of power. This power produces inclusions and exclusions. Within this study this can be applied to the development of the disciplines of anthropology and geography and the specific forms of scientific knowledge in the emergence of the professional anthropologist and the professional geographer. These professions and their associated knowledges worked to exclude those who did not have access to this knowledge including women. Foucault positions history and knowledge as unstable and rejects the idea of history as a clear continuous narrative of events and instead posits the idea that it is discontinuous with omissions and marginalisations and,

²⁶ The notion of the ‘contact zone’ has been expanded by Sara Mills (1993) who suggests that this was a gendered ‘contact zone’.

“it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations” (Foucault 1972: 6).

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is pertinent to the study in terms of the construction of a stereotypical Other in relation to the West in which the Orient became an object of knowledge by the Occident, “suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind” (Said 1978: 7). This worked to construct a European identity that was considered to be superior to all other non-European cultures and which allowed the West to dominate and manage the Orient “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period” (Said 1978: 3). For Said, the Orient is “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (Said 1978: 1) and can be mapped onto Benham’s travels in the colonies and her collecting of the ‘exotic’ objects of Others.²⁷

Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘hybridity’ and ‘third space’ is useful in questioning dualistic categories and binary terms such as professional and amateur in relation to collectors and issues of authenticity in relation to objects. It disrupts ideas of ‘fixity’ and allows for the opening up of spaces other than established categories and therefore new forms of cultural meaning and production. In terms of objects, meaning is plural, ambiguous, and contingent, which reveals the mutability of objects and that, “objects are not what they are made to be but what they have become” (Thomas 1991: 4). These ‘in-between’

²⁷ Reina Lewis has criticised Said and his masculine view of colonial power and suggests that Western women did not have access to an implicitly male position of Western superiority and that their gaze was less degrading (Lewis 1996).

spaces provide a critical terrain to locate Benham as a collector and the objects she collected.

Structure and Scope of the Study

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Benham's collection is its extensive geographic scope. Indeed, it may be difficult to find a comparative collection of a similar geographic scope that was personally collected by the collector.²⁸ Most accounts of collectors focus on the male collector, in one specific place at one specific time. This study differs from and extends these accounts and highlights the complex and multiple levels and factors involved in colonial collecting. In addressing a collection of approximately eight hundred objects that was formed over a span of thirty four years and over four continents posed its own difficulties and not all objects and not all places she collected from could be addressed within the scope of the study. Some objects have been chosen for more in-depth analysis to make the project manageable as it was not the intention of the study to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the whole collection. Although dealing with the vast geographic scope of Benham's collection was a challenge it actually informed the structure of the study. Rather than concentrate on objects from one place that Benham collected from, it celebrates the diversity of a global collection and includes specific commentary on objects from across the globe taking in North America, Oceania, Africa and Asia and thus following the objects in Benham's collection en route and presents a "multiplicity of narratives" (Thomas 1991: 6). This has allowed for a consideration of the different levels of colonialism and trade in the different places she visited.

²⁸ Len Pole: personal communication. He suggests that other ethnographic collections which have a similar geographic scope to Benham were made by so called 'armchair' collectors: they did not travel to the places they collected from but rather collected from other people such as dealers and travelers.

The structure of the study follows a journey: mapping the terrain and route of Benham's travels and also of the objects she collected. Appadurai's theory that objects have 'social lives' (1986) is pertinent and relevant for this study in that allows for an analysis not just of Benham's life and travels and the milieu in which she collected, but also of the objects she collected and their travels. The meaning of an object is contingent on time, place and people and it changes and shifts according to circumstances at the time, and Benham's objects are on their own journey still and have been subject to different changes in their meaning. Benham, in her thirty-four years of collecting and travelling through every part of the British Empire, also moved through different countries, different social situations, and different levels of colonialism. Thomas (1991; 1994) has highlighted that colonialism is not a unified and universal concept but consisted of different levels, at different times, in different places and as such there were many 'colonialisms'. Taking a 'geographic' structure or journey allows for addressing the four continents that Benham travelled to, the different objects she collected, and allows for an account of the diversity involved in making world-wide trips. A geographic structure also conforms to Appadurai's notion that objects have 'social lives' and histories (Appadurai 1986), and Kopytoff's notion that objects, as well as people, have 'biographies' (Kopytoff 1986) and objects, as well as people, travel and in doing so go through different transformations during their life.

Chapter 1, 'Mapping the Terrain' is intended to give an overview of the field of collecting studies and colonial collecting in order to locate Benham within the discourse of collecting and ethnographic collecting. It provides a context for this study to show where it fits into the existing body of knowledge and to show how the subject has been studied previously. It outlines the discourse on colonial collecting and the recent emphasis on the collector but also identifies gaps and omissions in this literature which

this study addresses. This chapter also introduces the theoretical framework in which this study is located and justifies the interdisciplinary approach taken.

Chapter 2 considers Benham as an Edwardian Lady traveller. It highlights her natural history collecting and the move to ethnographic collecting along with her ambitions and desire for recognition. Like so many collectors before her, Benham collected natural history specimens and corresponded with the British Museum (Natural History) (thereafter BMNH) whose archives demonstrate that she sent many examples of flora and fauna to them and they in response sent her rolls of film to take photographs which have not, to date, been located. Correspondence for several years with the Royal Geographical Society (thereafter RGS) reveals her ambition to become a member and this would have recognised her travelling and mountaineering achievements. She was consistently refused and reasons can be attributed to her gender as well as lack of scientific training. This chapter highlights the relationship between science, natural history collecting, the emergence of systematic collecting, anthropology and museums and questions the role of gender and the impact on Benham as a woman collector.

Chapter 3 considers Benham, as a collector in the contact zone of North America as this was her first journey out of Europe in 1904 and is significant as it is the genesis of her ethnographic collecting. Firstly it gives a brief historical account of western colonization and the impact this had on First Nations people and their material culture. Benham travelled at a time when the tourist industry was being developed with the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway which can also be situated as part of the infrastructure of colonialism. Benham collected four objects and research reveals them as being highly probable that they were made-for-sale to tourists. Benham collected two beaded bags, one with a geometric motif and the other with a flower motif and these are

discussed in terms of ‘transculturation in the contact zone’ (Pratt 1992), and the feminine and the floral (Phillips 1998). The objects are discussed in terms of ‘objects of ‘adaptation’ rather than ‘acculturation’ (Graburn 1976). The chapter aims to demonstrate the entanglement of the colonizer, the colonized, and the collector in the production and consumption of objects and demonstrates that meaning is not static but is fluid, plural and contingent on spatio-temporal circumstances.

Chapter 4 considers Benham as a collector in the contact zone of Oceania with specific emphasis on her collection from Fiji. An outline of the colonization of Fiji is given with emphasis on collecting by Constance Gordon Cumming and Baron von Hugel whose collection formed the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Some of the objects Benham collected are considered important and significant objects in the life and culture of Fiji and can be considered ‘authentic’. What knowledge would Benham have had in order to collect the objects and how, as an itinerant traveller and mobile collector, would she have obtained them? What does this reveal about Benham as a collector?

Benham travelled to Africa on several occasions and walked across the continent three times. Chapter 5 initially addresses the contact zone and colonial politics in Africa and the ideological imaginings of Africa in the minds of the British public (Coombes 1994) to assess Benham’s motivations for travelling there and the knowledge and understanding of what Africa, (as a vast group of several peoples and nations of colonized people), and what African objects, might have meant to her. The highest numbers of objects collected from Africa were Akan goldweights and beaded necklaces. A discussion on issues of ‘authenticity’ and ‘souvenir’ art as well as whether those objects are stylistic hybrids (Phillips 1998)) challenges and critiques notions of

authenticity. How did Benham obtain her objects? What informed her choice? How is the meaning of the 'hybrid' object affected and what does this say about the West and about Benham as a collector?

Chapter 6 focuses on Benham as a collector in the contact zone of Asia and her sojourn into Tibet in 1925 and (possibly) in 1929. It then addresses the only photograph in Benham's collection which she collected in Formosa (now Taiwan). She spent many months in and around towns and villages in the Himalayas, followed the 'pilgrim route' and collected objects. Tibet was closed to foreigners at the time and Benham was continually refused official permission to enter the country until 1925. Benham's collection includes 47 objects which have been identified by PCMAG as Tibetan. Trade routes between Tibet and north east India had been established for centuries before the arrival of Europeans and objects flowed between them thus blurring the distinction between where an object was made and where it was collected from. The chapter begins with a brief history of Tibet and the Younghusband expedition into Tibet in 1904 and the European fascination with the Orient. What type of objects did Benham collect from here and how might she have obtained them? What were her motivations for going to Tibet when she had the rest of the world to explore? There is only one photograph in Benham's collection which represents a "Woman of Savage" and this is analysed in relation to the construction of the 'other' and visual anthropology. The photograph is discussed as a 'materialisation' of Benham's interest in women's role in society and textiles. Said's concept of Orientalism is invoked to understand the relationship between the Occidental and the Oriental and the western fascination with India and Tibet. Benham is discussed as an 'oriental flâneuse' and her collecting is located as part of an Orientalist discourse.

Chapter 7 addresses Benham's donation and its institutional life in the contact zone of PCMAG. It begins with her first visit to the museum in 1928 and the subsequent correspondence and negotiations for her donation and aims to understand why she chose to donate it to PCMAG and the possible reasons why they accepted it. The museum subsequently acquired her collection in 1935. During this research two images of Benham were discovered, one in 1928, probably taken on her visit to Plymouth, and the other in 1935 supervising the delivery of her collection to PCMAG. The chapter considers the implications of the shift from private collector to public institution and the significance and impact of her donation on Benham's status as a collector. So called amateur collectors made substantial contributions to museums and the chapter questions the dichotomy of the terms professional and amateur to consider where Benham can be situated. The collection is now part of the permanent World Cultures Gallery at PCMAG and the chapter follows the social life of the collection which is now beyond Benham, and in invoking the concept of the relational museum (Gosden and Larson 2007) it suggests that it is also beyond PCMAG and that it is still en route.

Chapter 8 summarizes and evaluates Benham as a collector and discusses where she can be located as a collector. It summarizes her position in relation to the different types of ethnographic collector and her motivations to form her collection are discussed. It considers whether her gender had an impact on her collection as well as the agency of indigenous people. Finally, from a postcolonial perspective, it argues that Benham, in terms of ethnographic collectors, occupies an 'in-between space'.

Conclusion

A selection of Benham's objects are now on display in the World Cultures gallery in PCMAG and Benham is represented as a key collector.²⁹ They are not inert, static objects but embody the past in the present through their material and physical qualities, through the processes and techniques of their making and manufacture, through being collected by Benham and through their display. Emphasis on the collector can produce a narrative to enrich the collection but Benham, as a collector and the objects she collected, have had little scholarly research undertaken on them. This study is a corrective to this and with their new display in PCMAG it is relevant and timely for the Benham collection to understand her as a collector and for the possibility of new narratives to emerge. Studying the collector and the collection produces a relationship between them, "how persons make things and things make persons" (Tilley *et.al.* 2006) and as Amiria Henare has stated, "To understand them we must follow the movements of things, tracing the unfolding of their lives across time, and examine the histories that brought them into our presence and into museums, the stratigraphy of contemporary collections" (Henare 2005: 9). This is the basis of this study.

²⁹ A selection of Benham's objects are included in the World Cultures website and can be accessed through PCMAG's website: www.plymouthmuseum.gov.uk.

Chapter 1. Mapping The Terrain

Collect: from Latin *Colligere*, to gather together.³⁰
Amateur: from Latin *Amare*, to love.³¹

Introduction

This chapter maps the existing literature in the field of both collecting as a social practice and colonial collecting in the second half of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century. In attempting to provide a context for Benham as a person as well as a collector many different texts were consulted during the research for this interdisciplinary study. Susan Pearce, who has been at the forefront of collecting studies, has recognised the need for collecting to be investigated from a range of different perspectives in order to understand “social life as a whole” (Pearce 1995:3). In addressing the question ‘why do we collect’ Belk (1995) suggests that there is no single motivation to explain such a widespread phenomenon and that there is no single means of deriving pleasure from collecting that will pertain to all collectors and all collectibles. As Van der Grijp (2006) has stated, collecting cannot be reduced to single factors but is motivated by a configuration of them. In view of this complexity and heterogeneity of the collecting process in mind, my study will approach the collecting activities of Benham and the interpretation of what she amassed from a number of differing perspectives and analytical propositions in attempting to produce an inclusionary history. For example, one starting point may be from the perspective of Benham’s gender, and in analyzing women’s role in culture Maddrell states, “An inclusionary history needs to combine different approaches – combine feminist with materialist,

³⁰ Beverley Gordon suggests that the word ‘collect’ is relatively neutral but its interpretations are not so neutral (Gordon 2006).

³¹ www.oxforddictionaries.com

postmodern and postcolonial forms of analysis in order to begin to understand the complexities of their lives and character of the work they produced” (Maddrell 2009: 9). This chapter addresses the main themes of this study. Firstly, using collecting theory, it considers how collecting has been defined and the difference between collecting and hoarding. It addresses collecting as a social phenomenon, collecting as a personal practice, and the possible private motivations why people collect. This is in order to understand Benham as an individual collector and the relationship of collecting to the construction of her identity, or the ‘poetics’ of collecting. It then goes on to consider the motivations for collecting, this includes collecting as the ‘symbolic extended-self’, as a form of immortality (Belk 1988, 1995, 2006) and collecting as a ‘materialisation’ of Benham’s values, desires and her mode-of-being in the world (Bell and Geismar 2009).

The chapter then specifically considers ethnographic collecting which involved not only the personal and poetic but also the cultural and political, the ‘politics’ of collecting (Pearce 1995). The study is concerned with a specific individual ethnographic collection and is not intended as a detailed account of colonialism and its ideological, political agenda although this is intrinsic to, and has informed and shaped this study.

Ethnographic collecting in the colonies was as diverse and heterogeneous as other forms of collecting, and European collecting of the material culture of colonized countries was not neutral or innocent but was a political act (Stocking 1985; Thomas 1991; Pearce 1995; O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000; Gosden and Knowles 2001).

Historically, the discourse on colonialism and collecting has emphasized issues in critical museology and the representation of non-western objects, but recent research has focused on the Western collector him/herself which this study contributes to. The

chapter discusses different types of collectors in an attempt to locate Gertrude Benham within the existing discourse but her example has often proved elusive when seen under the strict guise of a ‘colonial’ collector. Two omissions in the literature are highlighted and the chapter discusses how collectors have been described in terms of ‘professional’ or ‘amateur’, the professional being more highly valued. The emergence of the professionalization of systematic collecting is discussed in relation to the emergence of the ‘scientific’ discipline of anthropology and ethnographic museums, whose curators were mostly anthropologists (Stocking 1985). Within this emphasis on science, ‘curiosities’ became ‘scientific specimens.’ These terms, which were constructed through a system of value and in the quest for the production of a particular form of knowledge, are critiqued and problematized as is the role of ‘science’ in their construction.

Benham collected a diverse range of objects from all parts of the world. Objects were central to colonial trade and exchange and the collecting of them became a phenomena and a part of imperial duty. The chapter addresses issues of authenticity, the souvenir, and tourist art which have undergone shifts in value and acknowledges that the type and status of the object collected can impact on the status of the collector.

Finally the chapter discusses gender as the second omission in the literature. Women’s access to education and training was limited particularly in relation to ‘science’ and therefore Benham’s gender as a woman collector impacted on her access to knowledge and therefore to her status as a collector.

1.1 Collectors and Collecting

Benham collected at a time when the British Empire had reached its apogee and the phenomenon of collecting the material culture of colonized countries was at its zenith.³²

Although she was an independent traveller and explorer, Benham's practice of collecting was not an isolated activity but one that was enmeshed within the workings of a larger set of practices of ethnographic collecting, "Collecting cannot be understood as an isolated activity, but one that was deeply embedded in the overall set of colonial relations pertaining at the time" (Gosden and Knowles 2001: 9). Benham was part of a much broader and bigger set of collecting activities by many westerners in colonial culture and her collection can be considered as the product of the complexity of discursive practices that generated its formation (Coombes 1994). The collecting of objects from the colonies involved a whole network of people and a specific social world, and Benham, by collecting and being a collector, became part of that world (Van der Grijp 2006: 189). Colonial collecting involved an 'encounter' and this positions Benham's collecting as a 'colonial encounter' and as an 'entanglement' (Thomas 1991), and as such can be considered as a political act.

Collecting as a social phenomenon has been accompanied by a growing field of critical theory mainly within the discipline of Material Culture Studies and Museum Studies which has developed academically from merely describing collections to understanding the process and practice of collecting itself to an emphasis on the collector (Pearce 1992, 1994, 1995; Stewart 1993; Elsner and Cardinal 1994; Baudrillard 1968, 1994; Belk 1995, 1998; Martin 1999).

³² O'Hanlon and Welsch (2000) place this period between 1870 and 1930.

The work of Susan Pearce has been influential to this study. Collecting as a complex human activity is difficult to define in simple terms and there have been many different definitions of collecting, each emphasising a different point. Pearce (1995: 4) defines collecting as:

A set of things which people do, as an aspect of individual and social practice which is important in the public and private life as a means of constructing the way in which [Europeans] relate to the material world and so build [their] lives.

Pearce positions collecting as a crucial part of social life and experience, as an aspect of individual and social practice which helps us to build our lives through our relationship with the material world, therefore an investigation into collecting, is essentially an investigation into an aspect of human experience (Pearce 1995). According to Pearce:

Our relationship with the material world of things is crucial to our lives because without them our lives could not happen, and collecting is a fundamentally significant aspect of this complex and fascinating relationship (Pearce 1995: 3).

This is germane in relation to this ‘material historical’ study which positions Benham’s collection as an intrinsic and essential part of her life, the construction of her identity and her *mode-of-being* in the world (Bell and Geismar 2009) through the material objects she collected.

Belk (2006: 535) defines collecting as “The process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as a part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences.” This definition is useful in

that it separates collecting from ordinary consumption as the objects have been removed from ordinary functional use, or what Appadurai (1986) has termed ‘de-commodification,’ and they have been placed as part of a ‘set’ or collection. The notion of ‘selectively’ acquiring the objects distinguishes it as a ‘collection’ rather than an accumulation of objects; as a collection rather than a hoard if the objects are non-identical. If the objects are “valued for their contribution to a set using either aesthetic or ‘scientific’ criteria, then they are indeed a collection” (Belk 2006: 535). As long as the objects were once selectively acquired in order to form part of a set of non-identical objects, the collection can outlive the collector. Indeed this possibility of symbolic immortality through the continued existence of the collection is a goal of some collectors (Belk 2006: 535).

Baekeland (1994) discusses what a collector is and is not and for him a collector differs from a mere accumulator. An accumulator passively and uncritically amasses an assortment of things which have no apparent symbolic significance and that may be useful in the future or what Baudrillard (1968, 1994) has referred to as a ‘magpie act’ – a heaping up of material with no kind of internal classification. In contrast to this a collector actively seeks out certain kinds of objects which interest them and which collectors take pleasure in having and in exhibiting and tends to use the collection to enhance self-definition. Collected objects are selected to be collected as they have a symbolic significance for the collector who has assigned some kind of value to the objects and this according to Baudrillard (1968, 1994) is linked with, and exposes the collector’s self-identity.

The difference between accumulating and collecting, however, is not clear cut and Baekeland (1994: 20) points out that some collectors buy uncritically and in such large

quantities that they resemble accumulators. Conversely, some begin as accumulators and eventually start to discriminate and become collectors (Baudrillard 1968: 113). Belk (1995) differentiates collecting from other forms of consumption in that it involves forming a set of things. Collecting is not 'hoarding' or 'accumulating' things but it is non-utilitarian and he suggests that it is a "highly passionate form of consumption (not like buying peas)" (Belk 1995: 66).

1.2 Motivations: The Extended Self and Immortality

Benham did not collect for monetary purposes or as a professional collector so what motivated her to collect? The motives for collecting are diverse and complex and have been interrogated in a number of ways: as part of our human psychology as an act of sublimation (Baekeland 1981); as disillusionment with life, a substitution for human relations and a longing for security and personal triumph (Muensterberger 1995); and as regression to the anal stage of childhood, a surrogate of sexual desire, as a mirror of the self and as an narcissistic act (Baudrillard 1994).³³

The psychological perspective has relevance for collecting studies in certain cases but has not been chosen as a main approach for this study due to its emphasis on the individual subject and can be criticised for reducing the activity of collecting to unresolved, personal childhood factors and fails to address why everyone is not a collector. More importantly, and particularly for this study, it does not address important social, economic or political factors such as colonialism or the advent of mass tourism, nor does it include the material (object) world with which this study is

³³ Naomi Schor has criticised Baudrillard's account of collecting for his preoccupation on the (male) phallus which by its very emphasis, excludes women as collectors (Schor in Elsner and Cardinal 1994).

concerned.³⁴ Motivations for collecting include the construction of identity through the material world. Collecting has been theorized as expressing identity and values (Baudrillard 1968; Stewart 1993; Pearce 1992, 1994, 1995; Elsner and Cardinal 1994), as expressing taste and as a process of distinction through which class, gender, ethnicity can mark difference to others (Bourdieu 1984), as constructing a narrative of experience (Bal 1994), associated with western identity formation (Stewart 1993; Clifford 1988; Pomian 1990) and as a desire to transmit knowledge to others (Van der Grijp 2006: 173).

One of the earliest theorists to address how objects reflect and differentiate the taste and status of a person through their material consumption is the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In his chapter 'The Aristocracy of Culture', Bourdieu describes taste as "one of the most vital stakes in the struggles fought in the field of the dominant class and the field of cultural production" (Bourdieu 1984: 164). His theory is based mainly on class and on modern consumer culture and doesn't address the subjective and inward motives of collecting, and as Pearce (1995) has noted, "class based differences matter less in the collecting process" (Pearce 1995: 412).

Elsner and Cardinal (1994) states "As one becomes conscious of one's self, one becomes a conscious collector of identity; projecting one's being onto the objects" (Elsner and Cardinal 1994: 3). Susan Stewart also regards collecting as part of the collector's identity:

³⁴ Susan Pearce is cautious about the psychological analysis of collecting which she suggests can place too much emphasis on the first two syllables of the word 'analysis' (Pearce 1995:6). Feminist postcolonial theory also rejects psychoanalytical models in dealing with colonialism as it does not address the material conditions of invasion, exploitation and plunder (Lewis and Mills 2003).

When objects are defined in terms of their use value, they serve as extensions of the body into the environment, but when objects are defined by the collection, such an extension is inverted, serving to subsume the environment to a scenario of the personal. The ultimate term in the series that marks the collection is the 'self', the articulation of the collector's own identity (Stewart 1993: 162).

In discussing Benham and the construction of her identity through collecting it has to be acknowledged that individuals have “multiple identities, allegorical personas, and complex hidden agendas” (Hoskins 1998: 1) and that the 'self' and the 'other' are both fictions and constructions that were actively played out within colonialism (Clifford 1988). In discussing ethnographic texts Clifford suggests that the resulting subjectivities “are constructed domains of truth, serious fictions” (Clifford 1988: 10). Benham collected for thirty four years and throughout this time it has to be assumed that her identity and motivations for collecting may have shifted and changed according to different circumstances and milieu. Collecting can also be used as a subversion of social norms “outside the boundaries of social recognition arises the myth of the pioneering, the experimental collector whose vocation may be to parody orthodox connoisseurship, to challenge expectations of social behaviour” (Elsner and Cardinal 1994:3).

In relation to colonial collecting Clifford (1988) suggests that anthropological collections and display were crucial in the formation of a western identity, “In the West, collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture and authenticity” (Clifford 1986:238). The construction of the other meant a simultaneous construction of the self (Cole 1985: xi). Eva Rovers states:

Collecting appeals to the need people feel to create a world of their own, which they can control, and it provides an opportunity for the construction and communication of an identity. A collection can in fact be regarded as an adaptable extension of the self and a confirmation of the collector's own existence (Rovers 2009: 160).

The idea of collecting as definition of the self, the need for recognition, and to forge a distinctive identity is for Eva Rovers probably “the strongest driving force behind every collection” (Rovers 2009: 159).

One of the major motives for collecting is the need on the part of collectors for immortality and posterity such as leaving their intact collections bearing their name to famous museums (Belk 1988; Baekeland 1994; Pearce 1995). It is not, however, just the collector but the objects which also achieve immortality through being collected and through being donated to a museum, “They cease to be living goods working in the world and become reified thoughts and feelings...they are made to withdraw from daily life in order to enable another order of life to come about” (Pearce 1995:24). This other *life* or *extended life* of the objects exists in them being firstly part of a collection, and then part of a museum collection, taking part in its institutional life where the object obtains a ‘sacred’ status and achieves immortality (Pearce 1995). Appadurai has referred to this as a ‘diversion’: collected objects undergo a ‘diversion’ firstly through being collected, and secondly by being donated to a museum (Appadurai 1986) which is apt in relation to this thesis.

The construction of an identity through collecting and gaining immortality is also part of what Russell Belk (1988, 1995, 2006) has referred to as collecting as the ‘symbolic extended-self.’ Although based on contemporary consumer studies, Belk’s notion of collecting as the *extended-self* and as a form of *immortality* has been employed in this study as it allows for an understanding of Benham, her motivation for collecting, the construction of her identity through collecting, her relationship with the objects she collected and her donation to PCMAG to achieve immortality. Belk discusses collections as non-verbal communication in the way that they transmit messages about

the collector such as their economic or cultural status and states that, “in all these claims is the implication that the collector’s self truly is extended and enlarged by his or her collection” (Belk 1995: 90).

Benham’s collection can be situated within what Susan Stewart refers to as an “appurtenance or appendage, the part that is a whole, the addition to the body, which forms an attachment, transforming the very boundary, or outline of the self” (Stewart 1993: xi). Objects in a sense are brought into the body boundary and used as an extension of self. However, although useful and pertinent to this study in many of its ramifications, this theory is limited in that it is very individualistic and only accounts for the personal rather than the collective motive for collecting. Greg Noble (2004) extends Belk’s formulation as objects as extended-self to include them in terms of “participation in temporal and spatial networks of relationships, experience and objects through which being is preserved and extended” (Noble 2004: 239). This positions Benham as a collector and the objects she collected as being part of a web of relationships across time and place, and her objects can be said to “bear the extensive presence of others” (Noble 2004: 239).³⁵ Benham’s bequest to PCMAG states that she wanted the collection to be shown in its entirety and that it should be named ‘The Benham Collection’, a manifestation of the notion of collecting as the extended self and thus, immortalising her name. Benham is now a key figure in PCMAG World Cultures gallery *Bringing the World to Plymouth*.

³⁵ Joel B. Cohen (1989) has also criticised the notion of the extended-self as he asserts that the ‘self’ is “embodied in a transcendental concept” (Cohen 1989: 125). However, he suggests that if the concept of the extended-self is reduced to motivational or behavioural than it can indeed be a useful applied explanation.

1.3 Collecting as Materialisation

As outlined in the introduction, the analysis of Benham through her collection of objects situates this study as a material approach and, “collecting and collections are part of our dynamic relationship with the material world” (Pearce 1995: 33). Bell and Geismar (2009) consider the notion of *materialisation* as:

The dynamic process by which persons and things are inter-related....to capture the vitality of the lived processes by which ideas of objectivity and subjectivity, persons and things, minds and bodies are entangled (Bell and Geismar 2009:3).

They assert that social relationships, desires, values and identity are embodied within ‘things’ and that they are “vehicles of social connection and exchange” (Bell & Geismar 2009: 4). They suggest that colonial contact and collecting “were and are crucial grounds for processes of materialisation” (Bell and Geismar 2009: 13). This was, however, not just for the colonizers, but also for indigenous colonized people and their response to the “economic inequities of contact, collection and colonialism” (Bell and Geismar 2009: 14).³⁶

These ideas can be used to explore Benham as a collector and how the objects she *selected* ‘materialise’ her desires, system of value, and give an insight into her identity as an itinerant, woman collector. This is important to this study as it considers the interrelation between Benham and the material objects she collected, “how things that people make, make people” (Miller 2005: 38). This can be applied to Benham’s *making* of her collection and how the collection today, *makes* Benham.

³⁶ They suggest that ‘*material culture*’ and ‘*materiality*’ are static terms and argue that these differs from ‘*materialisation*’ which is “an on-going process whereby concepts, beliefs and desires are given *form* that are then *transformed* and *transforming* in their social deployment” (Bell and Geismar 2009:4).

The concept of materialisation is important in that it allows for the indigenous responses to objects, to their creativity and adaptation subsequent to contact with outsiders as well as the continuous reconfigurations of objects by colonized peoples. Mary Louise Pratt has referred to this as '*transculturation*', the acknowledgement of how marginal and colonized countries determined what, and to what extent, materials, processes and technologies were absorbed into their culture and reflects their power and agency in trade and exchange, but more importantly it considers that indigenous people had their own agendas and that the colonizers did not have the control that they thought they had (Pratt 1992).

1.4 Ethnographic Collecting

From the sixteenth century and the period of new European exploration of the globe, Europeans collected objects from newly discovered lands in Oceania, Asia, Africa and the Americas. These were private collections which testified to the wealth and status of the collector and were valued for being rare, exotic and extraordinary and were exhibited in what was called 'Cabinets of Curiosities'. Pomian (1990) defines curiosity in terms of desire and passion, "a desire to see, to learn or possess rare, new, secret or remarkable things" (Pomian 1990:17). Pomian gives a detailed analysis of the use of the word 'curiosity' and the 'curious' collector from the sixteenth century and its manifestation in Cabinets of Curiosity or *cabinet curieux*, until its demise or "the taming of curiosity" (Pomian 1990: 64) in the second half of the seventeenth century with the development of modern science. Shelton (1994) has reviewed the ontological and aesthetic categories that provided the criteria by which the New World objects were evaluated and states that these Cabinets of Curiosities became the "allegorical mirror reflecting a perfect and completed picture of the world" (Shelton 1994:185). Greenblatt (1980) discusses how the curiosities were categorised as marvellous and Europeans

responded to new discovered lands such as America with wonder and curiosity. The objects, colonial souvenirs, and curios were valued for their ability to dazzle, amaze, show wealth and status, taste and learning. The materials and craftsmanship were admired for being unique and spectacular.³⁷

In the collecting of natural and artificial curiosities on early enlightenment voyages to the New World from the sixteenth century, objects were central in forming and maintaining relationships (Thomas 1991, 1994b; Newall 2003; Owens 2006). Owens suggests that the motivation for collecting on early expeditions in the early nineteenth century was to establish and maintain good relations with the indigenous communities. The collecting and bartering of artefacts had a central role in establishing these relationships, and ships and expeditions stocked up with trade goods specifically for the purpose of barter.

The attitude towards the material culture of the New World was retained up until the second half of the nineteenth century in what has been termed ‘the museum age’ when they underwent a taxonomic shift. The nineteenth century witnessed radical social reforms particularly in the education and edification of the public and this was concomitant with a proliferation of museums whose role became increasingly pedagogic.³⁸ Bennett (1995), influenced by Foucault, addresses the genealogy of the modern public museum and positions it as an apparatus of power and an ‘instrument of

³⁷ George Stocking (1985) dates the emergence of the renaissance ‘Cabinets of Curiosities’ (forerunners of the modern museum) as contemporaneous with the age of exploration and discovery and cites the 1520s and the time of the Mexican conquest by Cortez who sent back treasures from the ‘New World’ as a foundational moment. The collection of the Tradescants in the seventeenth century was one of the founding collections of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the first museum in England, established in 1683 and The British Museum, founded in 1753, had received ethnographic objects from the Cook expedition in the late eighteenth century (Stocking 1985).

³⁸ Annie Coombes suggests that the 1902 Education Act resulted in museums creating a self-appointed role within the state’s educational programme. 1902 was also year that a concerted effort was made to promote a homogenous national identity in which museums became a useful tool in the service of colonial administration as a site of the production of scientific knowledge (Coombes 1994:111).

government' (Bennett 1995:23). This development coincided with the expansion of the British Empire, the collection of artefacts from the new colonies in what has been described as the 'Scramble for Africa', and the emerging new scientific disciplines of anthropology and ethnography. The objects were no longer exotic curiosities but underwent a taxonomic shift to become a source of information, as scientific specimens to show an earlier stage of human development based on evolutionary assumptions about race and culture. This shift, which was essentially part of an imperialist domination from the centre against those who existed at the peripheries, was supported and validated by the new scientific discipline of anthropology which served to give an illusion of rational, objective truth (Stocking 1985; Chapman 1985; Clifford 1988). Salvage ethnography, the practice of collecting objects from cultures that were about to disappear, was used as one of the reasons to justify colonial collecting. According to Chris Steiner, salvage collecting or the concept of the 'death of culture' was used by early anthropology as a means of legitimating its burgeoning status as a science of preservation, where artefacts stood as visible symbols salvaged from the ravages of a decaying modern world (Steiner 1994). In a discussion on the tensions between private collecting and official collecting Buschmann (2000) suggests that the salvage paradigm in colonial collecting was used to lend scientific status to indigenous objects "which became known over the course of the nineteenth century as 'ethnographica' (Buschmann 2000: 56) and the purpose of this was for museum curators to distinguish their collecting from that of curiosities or curios. These salvaged objects of disappearing cultures were understood as the last pure authentic objects, exactly the type of objects that were in demand by museums.³⁹

³⁹ The 'salvage' paradigm was ironic in that cultures and their material were disappearing mainly due to European colonization. Missionaries, for example, banned certain practices which did not fit in with Christianity and this resulted in many objects becoming obsolete.

Annie Coombes (1994) has addressed the powerful institutional strategies of museums and how they were implicated in the promotion and maintenance of a cultural self-identity and how the ethnographic collections in museums were used as a vehicle in imperialist domination and control. The material brought back to England was regarded as “a demeaning category of ‘trophy’ or ‘curiosity’ over this period” (Coombes 1994:2). The British public did not have to travel in order to be aware of the expansion of the empire or to have a colonial encounter. Coombes suggests that this discourse and representation was all around them in everyday life, through national and local exhibitions and daily reports in the popular press. Popular literature, adventure stories and narratives of exploration played a fundamental role in the representation of the ‘other’.⁴⁰ Benham always carried a copy of Kipling’s *Kim*, the adventure story of a young boy involved in espionage in British India.⁴¹

This shift in the status of the object from curiosity to scientific specimen was concomitant with the emergence of the scientific discipline of anthropology and the development of ethnographic museums in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴² Clifford questions how objects such as ‘curiosities,’ ‘souvenirs,’ and ‘ethnographic objects,’ were distinguished and assigned value at different historical moments (Clifford 1988:221).

Museums are dependent on collections and the history of collections is intrinsic to museum history. The development of the scientific discipline of anthropology in the mid nineteenth century was concomitant with the development of ethnographic

⁴⁰ Travel literature was extremely popular and many explorers and travellers wrote accounts of their journeys and experiences e.g. Henry Morton Stanley, Mary Kingsley, Alexandra David-Neel.

⁴¹ Rudyard Kipling published *Kim* as a children’s novel (Kipling, R. (1901) *Kim*, London: Macmillan & Co).

⁴² In the twentieth century some selected ‘ethnographic’ objects also underwent a further shift to that of a ‘work of art’ but this was dependent on western categories of what constituted art.

museums and the systematic collecting of objects from the colonies. Stocking (1985) has addressed the crucial and problematic relationship between anthropology and museums “when anthropology entered its institutional homeland” (Sturtevant 1969, quoted in Stocking 1985). This relationship between anthropology and museums included the professionalization of anthropology as a scientific discipline and at the same time the professionalization of museum curators who were mostly anthropologists and when museums were “the most important single institutional employers of anthropologists” (Stocking 1985: 114).⁴³ This professionalization also included collectors and resulted in a distinct category of the systematic ethnographic /anthropologist collector who was a scientifically trained professional as opposed to other amateur collectors who were untrained.⁴⁴

Benham’s practice of collecting can be situated as part of this trajectory and as such is entangled in the political, social and cultural aspects of colonialism, as Thomas states,

Exchange is always, in the first instance, a political process, one in which wider relationships are expressed and negotiated in a personal encounter. Hence the particular characteristics of transactions at once reflect and constitute social relationships between both groups and individuals (Thomas 1991:7).

1.5 The Return of the Subject⁴⁵

Recent studies of colonial collecting have taken as their investigation the collectors themselves as subjects (Shelton 2001a, 2001b; Gosden and Knowles 2001; O’Hanlon

⁴³ Stocking states that Sturtevant places the ‘Museum Period’ between 1840 and 1890 although “the great period of museum anthropology only really began in the 1890s” (Stocking 1985: 8) and this for Stocking has always been problematic. In other words, European collections really grew after the period of greatest colonization of the world.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Thomas claims that science was not the separate and distinct discipline as it might appear to be and that the ‘passionate’ in collecting was never evacuated (Thomas 1994: 118).

⁴⁵ This is Shelton’s phrase (Shelton 2001a: 11).

and Welsch 2000) and emphasise the biography of the collector as being intrinsic to an understanding of their practice of collecting and their collections.

The *Return of the Subject* is Shelton's phrase for discussing the emphasis of research and the growing literature on European collectors. His two volume edited texts, *Collectors: Expression of Self and Other* (2001a) and *Collectors: Individuals and Institutions* (2001b) were seminal in introducing a range of texts based on collectors and collecting and addressing the paucity of research on colonial collectors. Shelton (2001a) asserts that historically ethnographic museums have effectively effaced the individual biographies of their collectors to the extent that they have been erased from previous accounts of collecting. He states:

Museum classifications of collections by subject divisions eludes their distinctive biographies and significant relationship with their former owner's personal and unique encounter with the world; an encounter which inevitably testifies to a specific historical relationship between the local and the 'other' (Shelton 2001a:10).

Shelton acknowledges the development of collections history and critical museology which focus on exhibitions which demonstrate the subjective motivations for collecting. New approaches such as anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, history and critical theory have resulted in a more sophisticated understanding of museums and their collections. He states:

The richest and most pertinent of discourses which sets the person in his or her social and cultural milieu can be extracted from even the smallest of collections, consciously and unselfishly preserved and cared for by museums and other institutions (Shelton 2001a:18).

Shelton (2001a) highlights the intellectual distance and sometimes physical segregation between collectors and museum staff. The collection, which embodies the passion, interests, desires and memories of the collector, is set against an “idealised bureaucratic regime exercising a detached mastery over the legitimizing narratives it attaches to its holdings” (Shelton 2001a: 12). The museum is compared to the disciplinary regime of a penitentiary, its practice being through control and authority which ignores the personality, acquisition desires, and memories invested in the objects by their former owners.⁴⁶

The achievement of acquisitive desire places the collector, alongside his collection, in an interstitial space, between the valuable and the invaluable, between past and present, between the near and the far, between reason and passion, between serial rationality and the fragments of memory, between absence and presence (Shelton 2001a: 12).

This emphasis on the collector is further exemplified in titles such as O’Hanlon and Welsch’s *Hunting the Gatherers* (2000) who suggests that this field of study is overlooked with emphasis on the ‘before’ collecting (fieldwork) and the ‘after’ collecting (museum exhibitions) and highlights the importance of the study of the practice of collecting, which, they suggest can reveal information and new knowledge of the processes of colonization. O’Hanlon and Welsch have identified different types of collectors: the category of primary collectors refers to those collections made by explicit intellectual design. Secondary collecting, in partial contrast, are those examples made when collecting was a goal, but one subordinate to some other or ‘a secondary consideration’ to something else. Lastly, concomitant collectors are those that arise

⁴⁶ Helen Gardner (2000) suggests that the lack of attention to collectors was due to early anthropology and the use of objects as ‘scientific’ evidence of racial progression and evolution which was embedded in the ideology of colonialism and was considered so self-sufficient it was not concerned with the conditions in which they were collected or who they were collected by.

incidentally as a by-product from other activities. These are not mutually exclusive and most collectors are likely to be compounds of several of these categories.

It would be easy to assume that Benham's collection was a concomitant one, as a by-product incidental of her travels and mountaineering and it may have initially been this. Benham's collecting, however, had a goal and intentionality and can be considered as secondary although in retrospect she herself may have considered it primary. Benham travelled and collected over a thirty four year span and during this time the status of her collecting shifted. When she initially collected it was concomitant to her travels and mountaineering but this soon became secondary as she had a goal and intentionality for it to be of use to students and to donate it to a museum. In addition to this with her ageing and being unable to continue mountaineering, I suggest that collecting for Benham became primary collecting: it was an intellectual pursuit in the production of knowledge for students.

O'Hanlon and Welsch further distinguish between the mobile and stationary collector. Stationary collectors are collectors who collect from a settler base and have spent time in the community, whereas mobile collecting refers to collecting done in transit, such as from a ship. They acknowledge that these may be ideal types but they can have important implications on the type of artefacts acquired and their level of documentation (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2009: 16). They suggest that stationary collectors have a higher chance of collecting a full range of local material culture than a mobile collector, however, stationary collecting increases the influence of the local community on the collector and the collection (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 16). This is pertinent in considering the types of objects Benham collected as her status as a traveller may have affected this.

Gosden and Knowles in their book *Collecting Colonialism* (2001) place importance on reconstructing the intellectual and institutional histories of individual collectors as well as analysing the collection as this can have important effects on their collection. They position the history of the individual as well as the historical processes of colonialism and the practice of colonial collecting in a distinct historical framework. They state:

The collectors themselves are documented through their own recording activity and we need to take their intellectual interests, institutional histories, economic resources and social skills into account in understanding what they collected and why (Gosden and Knowles 2001: xx).

For them, the history of the collector can have an important effect on their collection, how they were perceived historically and how they are perceived today. These were important issues in exploring Benham as a collector, her personal interests such as mountaineering, botany, painting and needlework as well as her gender and financial situation.

1.6 Magpies, Plunderers and Trophy Hunters⁴⁷

There were many different types of colonial collector and collections were formed in many different ways. Within the discourse on colonial collecting and the *return of the subject* emphasis has, however, been placed on certain collectors considered professional and systematic and these have been privileged in favour of so called amateur collectors:

with few exceptions museum-based scholarship still prefers collectors who were committed to some systematic form of acquisition, those to whom it can attribute a disinterested motivation or a scientific pedigree...while the magpies, adventurers, plunderers, and trophy

⁴⁷ This is Shelton's phrase (2001a: 13).

hunters have been incorporated and obscured within the wider histories of the repositories which hold their collections (Shelton 2001a: 13).⁴⁸

This paucity of research on so-called amateur collectors is surprising considering the extent to which museums relied on them for their collections. Professional collecting was associated with scientific endeavour and objective, scholarly knowledge. Collectors such as Benham and many like her such as missionaries and colonial administrators were not scientifically trained and as such were positioned on the margins of scientific ethnographic collecting or as Shelton has referred to them as “magpies, plunderers, and trophy hunters and as amateurs” (Shelton 2001a: 13).

Clifford (1988) has addressed the emergence of the distinction between the professional and amateur anthropologist around 1883 when Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917)⁴⁹ worked to encourage the systematic collecting of ethnographic data by ‘professionals’ who had been academically trained. However Pearce (1992) asserts that it can be traced back to the Renaissance, as part of the scientific revolution in the late seventeenth century and as an intrinsic part of the development of the natural sciences:

‘Systematics’ is a term drawn from biology, botany and geology where it means the practice of taxonomy, the ability to compare and contrast selected specimens in order to distinguish the fine detail which divides one species from another, and so carry out identification (Pearce 1992: 84).

The emergence of a particular form of ethnographic authority was based on scientific validation and the emergence of the professional ethnographer/ anthropologist

⁴⁸ Shelton cites Franz Boas, Alfred Cort Haddon, Emil Torday, Alfred Maudsley, Augustus Franks and Pitt Rivers among the scientific collectors (Shelton 2001a: 13).

⁴⁹ Tylor was an anthropologist and is famous for his contribution to the development of the science of social anthropology at Oxford University.

fieldworker as opposed to the missionary, the administrator, the trader and the traveller whose knowledge was not informed by the best scientific hypothesis or sufficient neutrality:

The collection of data now undertaken by academically trained natural scientists defining themselves as anthropologists and this new style of research was clearly distinct from that of missionaries and other amateurs in the field (Clifford 1988: 28).

This was associated with a particular form of ethnographic knowledge: one that was scientifically validated and based on objectivity and neutrality.

This professional status was the antithesis of the amateur, the missionary, the administrator, the trader, and the traveller whose knowledge was based on subjective intuition and led to an “attack on amateurism in the field” (Clifford 1988: 26).⁵⁰ The role of the ethnologist/anthropologist involved the collecting of data and the collecting of material culture as part of that data. This notion of the professional ethnographer/anthropologist who was also a collector can be mapped onto collectors who were either ‘professional’ in that they collected in a ‘systematic’ and rational way or as ‘amateurs’ who collected without any ‘internal classification’ (Baudrillard 1994) or rational objective. Benham, who referred to her collection as ‘curios’ and as a woman and a traveller, was positioned outside of the academic scientifically trained anthropologists and collectors and could only have been positioned as ‘amateur’. There was no other position for her at that time. This study questions the relevance of these binary terms in understanding a collector such as Benham today. From a postcolonial

⁵⁰ Clifford suggests that the Torres Straits Expedition led by Alfred Cort Haddon in 1899 exemplified the move towards professional anthropology and that A. R. Radcliffe-Brown who held the first chair in Social Anthropology at Oxford in 1937 epitomised the scientific professional anthropologist.

perspective the work of Homi Bhabha (1994) was informative for insights into hybridity, mimicry, and his theories which allow for an interstitial 'third space' in the production of knowledge and questioning of binary terms. Feminist postcolonial theory (Reina Lewis and Sara Mills 2003) was also consulted due to their critique of male postcolonial theory which they assert avoids issues of gender.

In discussing professional and amateur collectors Shelton draws on Susan Pearce for understanding the modes of collectors and the need to distinguish between 'souvenir', 'fetishistic,' and 'systematic' collectors. The souvenir is 'memorabilia', a sort of 'trophy', deeply embedded in the personal, they are memories of a romanticized past, what Pearce refers to as the 'tears of things' (Pearce 1992:72). A souvenir collection is one that is intensely personal and associated with memories and nostalgia. Stewart states that "when one wants to disparage the souvenir, one says that it is not authentic" (Stewart 1993: 159) and in distinguishing between the souvenir and the collection she states, "Desire is ordered, arranged, and manipulated, not fathomless as in the nostalgia of the souvenir" (Stewart 1993: 163). Fetishistic collections, on the other hand, are strategies of desire, where the collector invests a possessive, energy towards them and projects their desires onto the object (Pearce 1992:84).

Both souvenir and fetish collectors are concerned with subjective, personal feelings. In contrast to this systematic collectors have a more objective, intellectual approach to collecting and these, according to Pearce have been more valued:

For well over two centuries systematic collecting, both inside and outside museums, has in all its different manifestations, in the various disciplines been accorded an intellectual primacy, which seems to derive from its apparent capacity to demonstrate understanding rather than feeling, and so to extend out control of the world (Pearce 1992:84).

Pearce suggests that systematic collecting is associated with science and with objectivity and as an intellectual male pursuit.⁵¹ This distinction between these categories of collectors is important in understanding collectors and how they are perceived. The systematic collector is professional and collects in scientifically ordered patterns according to rational principles. In contrast, so-called amateur collectors and women collectors who were not trained in the sciences were positioned outside of this and could not be anything but amateur due to their lack of scientific training. These distinctions, however, between the systematic professional collector and the subjective passionate amateur, have been challenged. It is now acknowledged that collecting was a two-way, reciprocal process and that Western collectors were often dependent on what was available for sale and that “selecting objects in a rational, ‘objective’ manner was, in most cases, impossible” (ter Keurs 2007:1). From a post-structuralist perspective, this study analyses the type of collector Benham was when the passionate, the personal, and the subjective are devalued in favour of the rational, the systematic, and the objective.

The term *Colonial Collecting* is itself problematic for Thomas (1991, 1994, 1997) in that it can imply one form of practice within colonialism, that of the collecting of material objects by Europeans from colonized peoples. The notion of collecting involves a form of transaction which also implies an encounter with indigenous people and this encounter took many different diverse forms. Thomas suggests that the colonial encounter was entangled and full of contradictions and much literature refers to theft, looting and plunder; but it is not just about the military, soldiers, and violence but much more complicated, complex and full of ambiguities. Thomas rejects the ‘fatal impact’ accounts of colonialism, and whilst acknowledging the insidious nature of

⁵¹ For example Augustus Henry Pitt Rivers (1827-1900) who was influenced by Darwin’s theories of social evolution. Objects or ‘specimens’ were selected according to their ‘type’ in the development of a sequence to demonstrate their relationship in human evolution.

colonialism, colonial trade had mutual benefits for all parties and was reciprocal (Thomas 1991, 1994, 1997). Ter Keurs (2007), however, points out that the act of colonial collecting and the nature of relationships were often military and the pioneers of colonial expansion and ethnographical collecting were often one and the same.⁵² This study considers the complex entanglements of a woman collector not engaged in any form of violence or coercion. Indeed Benham refused to carry a gun or arm herself even though she was often advised to do so (Benham quoted in Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 83) and therefore exemplifies a different form of colonial collecting than that of theft and looting. Benham made her collection mainly from money earned by the sale of her embroidery, and as such, it was a financial transaction which was reciprocal and which did not involve coercion. However, trade between the colonizer and colonized was unequal. This study acknowledges the problematic terms ‘colonial encounter’ and ‘colonial collecting’ and situates them as plural, highly complex and contingent rather than as unitary and fixed concepts (Thomas 1991, 1994).

Benham, as a woman and a traveller, was positioned outside of the academic, scientifically trained anthropologists and collectors and could only have been positioned as amateur. At the time there was no other position for her and therefore her collection could be understood as a ‘jumble of curiosities’ (Coombes 1994a) or ‘exotica’ (Clifford 1988: 135) due to its lack of scientific classification and documentation.⁵³

⁵² The planning of International exhibitions and World Fairs also drove the need to collect and display the arts and cultures of those colonized.

⁵³ Clifford gives the example that before it became the Musée de l' Homme, the Trocadéro in Paris, prior to 1930, was a ‘jumble of exotica’ as it lacked up-to-date scientific pedagogic vision and the disorder of the museum made it a place where one could encounter curiosities and fetishized objects. Objects were mislabelled and misclassified (Clifford 1988: 135).

In 2009 the Museum Ethnographers Group held a conference on collectors and collecting entitled *Amateur Passions/Professional Practice*.⁵⁴ The theme addressed the professional and amateur collector and highlighted the distinction between them: a professional was to practice, usually based on the scientific, rational and objective mode of collecting whereas the amateur is associated with the passions and therefore with the personal and the subjective.⁵⁵ Amateur collectors, however, made important contributions to museums and this division was questioned: the amateur collector could also be a passionate professional albeit not in the sense of scientific anthropology (O'Brien 2010) and the amateur could be transformed into a professional collector (Carreau 2010).⁵⁶ These terms may have been relevant at the time but how relevant are they in a postcolonial, diverse world?

Benham, as a collector, does not fit with the narrative of colonial collecting as a practice of amassing objects of plunder and looting, nor does she fit the professional or amateur status of collector. How can a collector such as Benham, who sits outside of these modes, be situated within the discourse on colonial collecting? Is her collection a collection of souvenirs?

1.7 The 'Real Thing': Authenticity and Value⁵⁷

Many different types of objects have been collected over time but those considered authentic have been valued more highly than those considered inauthentic such as souvenirs and objects made for tourist. As discussed in the introduction, objects, as well

⁵⁴ A paper on Gertrude Benham was presented by the author at this conference.

⁵⁵ The word 'amateur' stems from the Latin *amare* 'to love' which involves the passions (www.oxforddictionaries.com)

⁵⁶ An 'amateur' collection is made by an individual located outside a museum or academic discourse ...they are "unsuited to a museum discourse based around notions of science and education and based on systematic and rationalized collecting practices" (Carreau 2010: 41). In contrast to this professional collecting is an intellectual systematic and rational pursuit.

⁵⁷ 'The Real Thing' is Susan Pearce's phrase (Pearce 1994: 20).

the collector, are a central concern of this study, as are the type of objects collected and how they are valued which can in turn impact on how the collector is valued. Benham collected a diverse range of objects including tourist objects, which are considered by some as inauthentic, as well as so called authentic objects.

Since Nelson Graburn's seminal work on 'tourist art' in 1976 the status and category of ethnographic objects has been questioned and challenged in terms of the souvenir, tourist art and authenticity and these categories have been challenged by a range of authors (Jules-Rosette 1984; Stanley 1989; Stewart 1993; Phillips 1998; Phillips and Steiner 1999; Corbey 2000; Poulter 2011) in a debate which is on-going today.

However, they do not take into account the different types of collector who collected these different authentic or inauthentic objects. In the museum, objects can be seen as evidence and are viewed as "the power of the real thing" (Pearce 1994: 20).

Ruth Phillips (1998) rejects the whole notion of authenticity and the salvage paradigm of collecting due to the fact that it dismisses other types of art and objects such as souvenir or tourist art and in doing so she asserts that it misses the opportunity to understand why the producing cultures made them, the changes in their society, their adaptation and their creativity, or in other words, their agency. Corbey (2000) highlights the fact that in the nineteenth century curiosities or 'curios' referred to things "made by native peoples for their own use or to things especially to be sold or bartered to westerners" (Corbey 2000: 24). However, his main point is that objects that were unavailable or were not for sale were "often commissioned by Westerners." (Corbey 2000: 24). This challenges and complicates the notion of the pure authentic object as it was difficult to tell which objects had been used and which had been made specifically for sale to Westerners thereby questioning the status of all ethnographic objects in

Western museums. Emma Poulter's research into the West African collections at Manchester Museum reveals the important part played by souvenir or made-for-sale objects in shaping networks of meaning, understanding and memory between West Africa and England. She describes made-for-sale objects as 'anomalies' rather than "embodied representations demonstrative of changing dynamics in operation at the interface between cultures" (Poulter 2011:266). The production of souvenir or made-for-sale objects reflects the demand and desire of both the collector and the producer of the objects although the emergence of these objects was initiated by the Western collector. Her work adds to a body of research that re-contextualises souvenir objects in western museums as "valuable indicators of the formation and transmission of meaning, identity and memory across cultural boundaries at particular times and places" (Poulter 2011: 267).

The notion of authenticity is based on a system of value and categories. Kopytoff, in a discussion of the 'cultural biography of things' makes the analogy between people having a biography and things (objects) having a biography.⁵⁸ A person's biography is linked to their identity and an object's biography is linked to its valuation and that both of these, identity and valuation, are constructed and both are subjected to an "uncertain world of categories" (Kopytoff 1986: 90). Identity is multiple, fluid and shifting, sometimes conflicting and it is impossible to "choose between them". The same applies to objects: the identity and valuation of an object is subject to "various singularizations of it, of classifications and reclassifications ... As with persons, the drama here lies in the uncertainty of valuation and of identity" (Kopytoff 1986: 90). Value, for Appadurai

⁵⁸ The *cultural biography* of things (Kopytoff 1986) is different to the *social life* of things (Appadurai 1986). *Cultural biography* refers to a specific object (or collection in this case) whereas the *social life* is the larger social history of which it is intrinsically a part. They are however, interrelated as the larger social life which undergoes shifts and changes over time has an impact on the specific trajectory of things.

is political “the politics of value is in many contexts a politics of knowledge”

(Appadurai 1986: 6).

The authenticity of objects is contingent on age and rarity and who is doing the interpretation. Henare (2005) suggests that ‘ethnological souvenirs’, impure or hybrid objects have an ambivalent status in museums today:

They are valued for their age or exoticism, but, where it is known that they were produced for the tourist market, they may be regarded as inferior examples of workmanship, less precious than those manufactured for native use (Henare 2005: 197).⁵⁹

For Appadurai this notion of authenticity is a ‘strategy of diversion,’ and tourist art, for him, is a prime example of this:

Objects produced for aesthetic, ceremonial, or sumptuary use in small, face-to-face communities are transformed culturally, economically, and socially by the tastes, markets and ideologies of larger economies (Appadurai 1986: 26 *pace* Graburn 1976).⁶⁰

In discussing issues of authenticity objects that have cross-cultural influence have been described as hybrid and these objects are less valued but as Thomas (1997) states “hybridity should not be associated with a lack of authenticity” (Thomas 1997: 11).

Clifford poses the question “What criteria validate an authentic cultural or artistic product?” and suggests that cultural or artistic authenticity has as much to do with an

⁵⁹ For example, Buschmann (2000) describes how German ethnological museums employed commercial companies to collect on their behalf and discusses the tension as a result of this. Adolf Bastian, founder of the Royal Museum of Ethnography in Berlin in 1866 would only allow ‘authentic’ specimens into his museum – unadulterated objects that were free from western influence. This, however, is a contentious issue and many examples of so called ‘authentic’ objects have been found to have been made for tourists.

⁶⁰ The making of collections of any sort, including tourist art, is, for Appadurai, the best example of the ‘diversion’ of objects (Appadurai 1986:28).

inventive present as with a past, its objectification, preservation or revival” (Clifford 1988: 221, 222). From a postcolonial perspective this thesis is concerned with authenticity as an ambivalent third space, one in which cultural meaning is not fixed, and how the processes of categorisation and difference of objects were constructed – how this reveals colonial power. The authentic object is considered as a fantasy of origin (Bhabha 1994). No culture and no objects can be ‘pure’. This allows for a transgression of these categories to allow for other possibilities (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha states that all forms of culture are in a process of hybridity and in this study this is applied to objects.

1.8 A Gendered Discourse

In addition to the lack of recognition given to amateur collectors, another omission in the discourse of colonial collecting is gender. According to Thomas (1991) colonial discourse is “profoundly gendered” (Thomas 1991: 3).⁶¹ In addition, he suggests that colonial literature is unstable and has questioned how reliable it is, “Colonial literature occludes not only the voices of the colonized, but those of many colonizers as well – because they are disreputable, because they are women or simply because they are ordinary and working-class” (Thomas 1994: 159). Shelton (2001a) states:

Alongside the effacement of the personalities of the collectors...reigns a notable silence regarding gender. In the absence of comparative historical case studies on male and female collectors, typological generalisations have flourished. Many of the distinctions made between male and female collectors, based on domestic and scientific acquisition or emotionally invested and disinterested collecting, follow easily recognisable and discredited stereotypes (Shelton 2001a:17).

⁶¹ James Clifford states that “the inclusion in all collections reflect wider cultural rules – of rational taxonomy, of gender, of aesthetics” (Clifford 1988:218), yet his wide-ranging and influential book does not include women collectors or address issues of gender.

Within Collecting Studies the relationship between gender and collecting has been addressed (Stewart 1993; Belk and Wallendorf 1994; Pearce 1992, 1994, 1995; Potvin and Myzelev 2009; Gordon 2006), in the literature on colonial collecting (Martinez and Ames 1997; Shelton 2001a and 2001b; Levell 2001; Cheang 2001) and individual women collectors are beginning to be acknowledged.⁶² However, although these texts include women collectors, they remain limited in that they do not engage with the politics and ideology of gender identity and how gender may have had an impact on the types of objects each collector collected.⁶³ They do, however, address how the objects the women collected construct and materialise their ‘feminine’ identity, thus exemplifying the interrelationship of objects and people and Miller’s statement that people make things and things make people.⁶⁴

Susan Pearce addresses the notion of gender in collecting and poses the crucial questions: “Why are there seen to have been relatively few ‘major’ women collectors with ‘important’ material and why there are fewer women collectors than men (regardless of the character of the collection), and why is there an apparent lack of public recognition and esteem?” She states, “Traditional wisdom takes a predictable view by assuming that women who do collect in the grand manner do so because they are more masculine” (Pearce 1995:4). She concludes that the fact that:

⁶²For example, women collectors revealed during the course of this research include: Ida Wench and Edith Sunderland (Nick Stanley 1989); Mary Alicia Owen and Margaret Hasluck (Alison Brown 1998); Philla Davis (Andrew West 2001); Beatrice Blackwood (Gosden and Knowles 2001); Lady Ellen Thomas-Stanford (Cheang 2001); Brenda Zara Seligman (Levell 2001); Mary Edith Durham (Mackenzie 2001); Miss Jeanne Walschot (Wastiau 2001); Dorothy Woodman, Beryl Power and Ursula Graham Bower (West 2001)

⁶³ Jane Haggis, in a feminist postcolonial account of women missionaries warns against simply recuperating and reclaiming woman’s voice and adding women to the history of male discourse but asserts that this needs a deeper interrogation into how this came about in the first place: the ideologies of inclusion and exclusion (Haggis 2003).

⁶⁴ Gendered objects have been the topic of research (Marilyn Strathern 1988; Maureen Mackenzie 1992) but there is no literature to date which brings together the themes of gendered objects and gendered collections with gendered collectors.

Women have not collected on a grand scale is linked just as much with 'essential' female characteristics of non-aggression and domestic limitation as it is with restricted access to funds, space and male worlds of meeting places ...it terms of gender it seems that, traditionally at least, collecting partakes of the same broad character as society in general (Pearce 1992: 60).

Cultural historian Remy G. Saisselin offers historical insights into why even a woman of means might not have been perceived as a 'serious' collector and concludes that in 1880 France, "women were consumers of objects; men were collectors. Women bought to decorate and for the sheer joy of buying, but men had a vision for their collections, and viewed their collections as an ensemble with a philosophy behind it" (Saisselin 1984: 68). Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby 1944 suggested that:

Grand-scale collecting almost always calls for aggressive and material ambition to a degree uncharacteristic of women, aside from women's historic economic position. Those who came within hailing distance of collecting giants were women who seemed to exhibit the masculine strain of a highly developed competitiveness, although this in no way detracts from the position of women as amateurs (Rigby and Rigby (1944) in Martinez and Ames 1997: 9).

Within collecting theory Pearce (1998) has investigated the cultural assumptions surrounding gender and the construction of gender roles in society and suggests that there is empirical evidence to suggest that "Men and women do in general collect quite different kinds of material" (Pearce 1998: 150). Belk (1998) found that "women tend to collect self-referential and decorative material while male collecting is geared more to control and domination" (Belk cited in Pearce 1998: 174).

However, these conclusions are argued against by Gosden and Knowles who undertook a comparative study of ethnographic fieldworkers both male and female in which one

male John Todd, collected a high percentage of woman's skirts and ornaments and Beatrice Blackwood's collection was dominated by stone tools. They conclude that this "confounds any straightforward notion of how gender might bias collecting" (Gosden and Knowles 2001: 129). But Beatrice Blackwood was an anthropologist who systematically collected according to the requirements of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. This highlights the notion of gender bias in ethnographic collections as complex and problematic.

In a re-evaluation and analysis on the collection of Brenda Seligman (1882-1965) and her husband Charles Seligman (1873-1940) Nicky Levell addresses the themes of taste, knowledge, gender and collecting and questions how the cultural practice of collecting serves to reflect as well as construct gender identities. Levell outlines the distinctions within gendered collections which she suggests positions male collecting as "scientific, rational, serious activity in contrast to women's collecting which is articulated as feminine, non-rational and based on relational and emotional responses to the material world" (Levell 2001:78). Men's collecting is understood as systematic, and is associated with education and the public sphere whereas women's collecting is based on the aesthetic and domestic sphere. In discussing Charles Seligman's aesthetic sensibility to his collection and the knowledge and seriousness of Brenda, Levell effectively argues that this casts doubt on these bi-polarised gendered interpretations.

In investigating gender and collecting, Sarah Cheang analyses the collection of the Dogs of Fo by Ellen Thomas Stanford (1848-1932), and addresses what she considers to be the marginalisation of this large collection and questions its positioning within a gendered history of collecting and collections. She asks "whether it is the creation and maintenance of complementary and gendered discourses of professional public

collecting and amateur private accumulation that this collection's elision, its resistance to interpretation, has been grounded" (Cheang 2001:56).

Cheang identifies two effects of the dichotomy between masculine, public professionalism and feminine, domestic amateurism. The museum institution provides an educational alibi for extravagant spending and activities which mimic museum practices: cataloguing, classifying and labelling, which connotes a 'good' collection (Belk 1995: 73-77; Pomian 1990:43). Feminine collecting, if disassociated from the museum becomes 'bad' collecting. Secondly, if museums, as professional institutions act to authenticate collections, then a definition of collecting mitigates against the very existence of a feminine collectors (Cheang 2001). However, Cheang acknowledges that this is not universal and that men can collect in feminine ways and females can collect in masculine ways but highlights the fact that femininities and masculinities are ideologically and socially constructed. This is pertinent to this study in assessing collectors as professional or amateur and directly confronts the problems that can occur when this binary, hierarchical way of thinking is applied to collectors.

In addressing Benham as a woman collector this study is part of the emerging discourse that includes women ethnographic collectors. It also has to be acknowledged that in addressing different ethnographic collectors, male collectors have also been marginalised due to their status as amateur and as such, although gender resonates throughout this study, it is also part of a wider interdisciplinary approach to address the complexity of colonial collecting. Avril Maddrell (2009) has addressed the complexity of gender in geography and travel and suggests that gender was one of the most significant categories in terms of their access to education and employment, as well as being contextual to the production and reception of their work. She emphasises that it is

important to recognise that women in different places at different times know and experience the world, including their gender, in different ways (Maddrell 2009).

1.9 The Social Life of a Collection

Appadurai's theory that objects, like people have 'social lives' allows for the notion of process and movement, for shifts and changes in meaning for both the collector and the collection (Appadurai 1986). For this study Benham and her collection of objects is not considered a static entity and cannot be understood as having a single fixed meaning at one point in time, but rather through the dynamic and shifting processes objects, like people, can be understood differently at different times and in different places (Kopytoff 1986). In this sense the objects Benham collected are understood as being active and as having agency. This theory has influenced the temporal structure of this study in addressing Benham during her thirty four years of collecting and how she and her collecting of objects shifted during this time. In addition it allows for the spatial approach to this study in that Benham collected from four different continents and encountered different attitudes and behaviours in the different places she visited. Thomas (1994) asserts that colonialism is not a unified and universal concept but there were many different levels and types of colonialism. The spatial scope of this study allows for this variation and differentiation of meaning of Benham as a collector and the collection. Appadurai's theory allows for objects to be 'culturally redefined', specifically objects sold and collected from other cultures by Westerners that have undergone a 'diversion' from their expected life history to become part of a Western collection. It allows for the objects to travel through time and places, to develop their own life histories and to undergo different systems of value and meanings (Henare 2005). This processual perspective allows for an examination of Benham's practice of collecting in the different places she visited, the shift from her private collection to its

institutional life in PCMAG in which the collection undergoes another diversion in its life and a transformation of meaning from private collection to public museum. More importantly it allows for the possibility of future diversions and transformations to become something else beyond Benham, beyond the museum and beyond contemporary thought on ethnographic collections. In short, it allows for Benham's objects to continue on their journey, to continue to be 'en-route'.

1.10 Literature on Gertrude Benham

In 1935 Benham gave a rare interview to Marjorie Hessel-Tiltman which was published as a chapter 'Knitting Seven Times Round the World' in her book *Women in Modern Adventure* (1935) and this has been intrinsic to understanding Benham. She recalled thirty years of travelling, her encounters with other people and this gives an insight into her personality, her attitude to the indigenous people she met and her sometimes antagonistic relationship with other British settlers. She gave an account of living off the land in places she visited and eating local food. Unfortunately she very rarely mentions her collecting except to say that she hoped it to "be of use to students" (Benham in Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 94).

In 2009 PCMAG in collaboration with the author Raymond John Howgego published a biography on Benham, *'A Very Quiet and Harmless Traveller': Gertrude Emily Benham (1867-1938)*. Howgego undertook detailed research into Benham's life and traced her travels and what she referred to as her 'tramps'. This is an invaluable and excellent source of biographical information on Benham and describes the mountains she climbed and details of her travels and the geographic locations she visited.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted different perspectives on collecting and collectors. All these perspectives are valid and important and to some extent interrelate with each other, but the focus of the thesis is to attempt to understand the motivation and methods of a woman ethnographic collector within the colonial period 1904-1938 and within the politics of colonial collecting. It highlighted that colonialism was a materialistic project and the centrality of objects in colonialism was a crucial aspects of trade and in establishing relationships. Collecting became an important part of Benham's life and her collecting can be understood as a trajectory extending out of earlier voyages that collected and brought back objects from the New World albeit a different form.

It raised questions as to the status of collectors such as amateur and professional and discussed how and when these distinctions emerged and the impact that they had on both people as collectors and on the objects collected. This included the difference between systematic collecting and the role of science in the emerging discipline of anthropology and the professionalization of anthropologists, museums curators and collectors. Different types of collectors were discussed and demonstrated that professional collectors have been more highly valued by museum than that of the amateur collector.

At the time Gertrude Benham collected she could not have been considered as a professional collector as she was not academically or scientifically educated and could only be considered as an amateur. Indeed at the time of her donation she could have been seen as an eccentric and as an 'imperial lady traveller' who collected a 'jumble of curiosities'. From a postcolonial perspective this study questions the relevance of these constructions professional and amateur in discussing and valuing collectors today.

The shift in the status and value of the collector is concomitant with the shift in status and value of objects. Objects once considered exotic and as curiosities, underwent a taxonomic shift in the second-half of the nineteenth century to become ethnographic specimens and were thought of as embodying knowledge regarding racial types based on Darwinian evolutionary theory. In the twentieth century some of these objects underwent another shift to become works of art based on a Western classification system of what constituted art. These shifts in value and status are related to power and are considered as ideological and political constructions. Objects were also discussed in terms of authenticity and it was demonstrated that these have been more highly valued than that of so called inauthentic objects such as souvenirs and tourist art. These are highly contested terms which have been challenged and are important in that the value and status of objects can reflect the value and status of the collector.

The chapter highlighted that gender in colonial collecting has been under-researched and the emphasis in this study on a woman collector aims to extend the discourse for a more inclusionary and more nuanced history of colonial collecting. How can Benham be located with the discourse? She did not collect for financial reasons and her objects are not ‘trophy’ of colonial domination. Can Benham’s collection be described as a souvenir collection? Was it a form of ‘salvage ethnography? Is it a systematic collection?

The following chapters discuss Gertrude Benham as a collector and her collection of objects as she travelled around the world following the social life and cultural biography of Benham and her collection en-route.

DIED.....
RESIGNED.....
REMOVED.....

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CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDATE FOR ELECTION

Name Gertrude Emily Benham

Description Traveler

Residence 8 Victoria Mansions West Hampstead

being desirous of becoming a Fellow of the ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY,
We, the undersigned, recommend her as a suitable candidate for election.

Dated this 10th day of May 1916

J. K. [Signature] F.R.G.S. (From personal knowledge)

Arthur P. Hill F.R.G.S.

Qualifications.—(The Proposer should state the Geographical Work or qualifications of the Candidate.)

as crossed Africa from S. to N. & W. to E. Traveled into the Himalayas, Japan, New Guinea, the Pacific Islands & many other places & scenery & made valuable ethnological collections.

Received May 12 1916 Proposed 22 May 1916 Elected 5 June 1916

be elected without payment of Entrance Fee.
vide Council Minutes of 5 May 16

Figure 4. Gertrude Emily Benham: Certificate of Candidate for Election for the Royal Geographical Society ('RGS-IBG Archives' Ref: 'Fellowship Certificates/Benham, Gertrude'). Author's photograph. Copyright and courtesy RGS.

Chapter 2. Gertrude Benham En Route.

Travel is so much more than movement across space; activities as diverse as...collecting...are frequently self-fashioning exercises that decompose and recompose the traveller.⁶⁵

Gertrude Benham, a lady who may be the greatest traveller of all living Englishwomen yet who is so little known.⁶⁶

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with Gertrude Benham as an Imperial lady traveller,⁶⁷ her relationship with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and as a collector of natural history for the British Museum (Natural History) which was then part of the British Museum (BMNH).⁶⁸ Women travellers were a phenomenon in Victorian and Edwardian England and the chapter addresses Benham's world travels within the social milieu of the time. Firstly it questions Benham's motivation to travel and leave a comfortable home in England and how this is to be contextualized within the role of women within the British Empire in the first decade of the twentieth century. Apart from a small notebook which she titled *Catalogue of Museum*, Benham did not leave any documentation recording the development of her collection, reasons why she collected, or her motivations to collect. The few articles she wrote and her letters emphasise her travels, mountaineering accomplishments and natural history collecting, and only rarely indicated that she collected objects. To gain any understanding at all of her motivations it is through the small correspondence she left and the objects themselves that perhaps her 'intentions' as a collector can be revealed. In a rare interview with Benham, Marjorie Hessel-Tiltman wrote that Benham was "a lady who

⁶⁵ Thomas 1994a: 5.

⁶⁶ Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 79.

⁶⁷ This was (and is) a generic term for Victorian and Edwardian women travellers who travelled at the height of the British Empire.

⁶⁸ The Natural History Museum was a department of The British Museum (BMNH) founded on the collection of Sir Hans Sloane and established in 1753. It became the Natural History Museum (NHM) in 1992.

may be the greatest traveller of all living Englishwomen yet who is so little known” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 79).⁶⁹ Nearly eighty years later surprisingly still little is known. Secondly, Benham corresponded for several years with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) from 1913-1918, and her letters reveal her ambition to become a member as this would have recognised her travelling and mountaineering achievements. The chapter addresses the role of geography and the production of a specific form of codified, scientific geographical knowledge which aimed to professionalize the discipline and how this worked to exclude women. Thirdly as well as collecting ‘curios’ Benham also collected botanical specimens of flora and fauna for the BMNH to whom she sent specimens. From the early voyages in the eighteenth century, many collectors of natural history also collected objects which were subsequently defined as ethnography and this chapter analyses the relationship between both types of collecting in relation to Benham as a collector. Science, gender and the quest for scientific knowledge of geographic lands, people and natural history are underlying themes in the chapter.

2.1 Benham: An Imperial Lady Traveller

Gertrude Benham spent thirty four years travelling the world, climbing mountains and collecting objects from 1904 when she was aged thirty seven, until her death at sea in 1938 on her eighth world trip⁷⁰ [see Appendix 1]. As with many other women travellers, Benham began travelling after the death of her parents when she was left a small inheritance.⁷¹ She did not have an aristocratic background but her family were

⁶⁹ This interview was published as an article, ‘Knitting Seven Times Round the World: The Thirty Years’ Travels of Gertrude Benham’ published in *Women in Modern Adventure* by Marjorie Hessell-Tiltman, 1935.

⁷⁰ Benham’s obituary was published in *The Times*, December 16, 1938.

⁷¹ For account of Benham’s family and background see Howgego (2009). The British Library have two books on the Benham family: Benham, Stanley, J. *Under Five Generations: The Story of Benham and Sons* (1937), BL Shelfmark: 8232.cc.49 and Chivers, Robin Rayment *The Benham Family in Australia*, published by the author, 1970. BL Shelfmark: X700/5259.

middle-class, lived in London and could afford servants. Benham's travels and collecting were self-financed (Howgego 2009). But why would a woman like Benham give up a comfortable life in England to spend the rest of her life as an itinerant traveller, 'tramping' all around the world? Benham's letters reveal a loneliness and disillusionment with life in England as well as with modernization and industrialization. In 1916 Benham met a colonial officer Selwyn Grier who was stationed at Bauchi in Northern Nigeria who recorded his meeting with her. Benham explained to him why she travelled. Grier wrote:

To put it boldly, it was sheer loneliness – she said she had no relations who took the slightest interest in her – that she had spent most of her time looking after a brother who used to leave her to spend all her evenings as well as her days alone and finally, having a small income of her own, she started wandering, got bitten with it, and for eight years has been wandering all over the world (Birkett 2004: 12).⁷²

The motivations for travel are wide ranging, varied and complex and include personal as well as social reasons. To travel was a personal cultural life choice made by Benham but this can be contextualised within the social, economic and political milieu in Victorian and Edwardian England at the time when travel, particularly for women, had become a social phenomenon. Dea Birkett states that the period was referred to 'the age of the lady adventurer', that the women were described as 'globetrotteresses' and "by the 1880s "female travellers, explorers and mountaineers had ceased to be a rare occurrence" (Birkett 2004: 120).⁷³ The Royal Geographical Society published *Hints to*

⁷² Benham is also mentioned in another diary. Frederick Young, an ivory hunter in the Belgian/German Congo wrote that he met her on March 15, 1913 and that she was on a walking trip from Kano in Nigeria to Chinde. (Letter from Mrs Helen Slattery to Fiona Pitt, Keeper of Human History, PCMAG, 15 November 2006. (PCMAG: Benham Archives).

⁷³ For example, famous travellers include Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird, Gertrude Bell, Marianne North, Freya Stark, Constance Gordon-Cumming, and Edith Durham. Many women wrote books about their travels and were famous in their own lifetime and some were also collectors. For example, Mary Kingsley travelled to Africa and wrote her book, *Travels in West Africa* in 1897. Ironically, she only travelled to Africa on two occasions. Her ethnographic collection is in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Constance

Women Travellers in 1889 which stated:

Even in the most remote parts of the world, where, a generation ago, they would not have ventured, ladies now travel in perfect security and with every advantage ... continental travel has been so thrown open to women, that it is the most ordinary of experiences now to find abroad ladies travelling alone, or in parties of twos and threes, and the sight is too common even to excite remark (Campbell Davidson 1889: 254).⁷⁴

Feminist theories on motivation to travel include ideas such as empowerment and self-knowledge (Domosh 1990), expanding self-awareness and autonomy (Pomeroy 2005), and freedom from domestic duties (Blunt 1994: 63). This is particularly pertinent to Benham who began to travel after the death of her parents when she was freed from looking after them and was left a small income.

Benham stated that she travelled to most of the British Empire. Victorian and Edwardian England witnessed the expansion of the British Empire to the extent that Britain had colonized nearly twenty-five percent of the world's surface by the first decades of the twentieth century. This expansion of the empire coincided with the growth of travel, explorers, expeditions, colonial administrators, adventurers and travellers who left England to travel the globe. However, these developments have been interpreted as being as masculinist and imperialist. Women, such as Benham, however, also benefited and were able to take advantage of the opportunities of colonialism, for example new travel routes, the development of the tourist industry, new systems of communication for money transactions, and places to stay such as missionary schools.

As Gosden and Larson (2007:175) have highlighted, "colonialism was an intensely

Gordon-Cumming travelled to many parts of the world and her collection is in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University and in the National Museum of Scotland.

⁷⁴ *Hints to Women Travellers* (1889) was the corollary of *Hints to Travellers, Scientific and General* which was published by the Royal Geographic Society (RGS) between 1854 and 1934 as a guide to those who proposed to explore a wild country with advice on which astronomical and scientific outfit he [sic] would need. By the 6th edition published in 1889, various sections were revised to include 'Anthropology' and 'Geography' which demonstrates their increasing association with science and professionalization. In contrast, *Hints to Women Travellers* was aimed at the fashionable 'tour' with advice on issues such as which gown to wear.

material process, structured through exchange and industry, and shaped by transportation and communication systems, religious ritual, clothing regulations, changes to the built environment and so on.” These new technologies compressed perceptions of time, space and distance and enabled the bourgeoisie to “traverse the world, to visit distant realities and encounter oriental cultures in the ‘real’” (Levell 2000: 11). Pomeroy states, “A measure of freedom was somewhat easier to achieve by women who travelled abroad where more relaxed social conventions allowed them greater leeway in charting their own identities” (Pomeroy 2005:2). Domosh (1990) emphasises the empowerment of women and locates this within the colonial power structure. Sara Mills argues that the racial status constructed by colonial discourses of difference overcame the gender inferiority created by patriarchal discourses of difference (Mills quoted in Blunt 1994:36). Travelling within colonized countries, women’s gender became secondary to their race, and they experienced a type of power and control as a representative of the white race and colonizers.

Benham had personal as well as social reasons for travel. Her letters reveal her dislike of modernity and mechanization and she only travelled by steam boat or on foot and she criticized the industrialization and mechanization of modernity yet it was the progress of modernity that allowed her to travel to such far- away places. She stated, “I walk everywhere. I do not care for riding, and I dislike motor-cars ... I travel, when possible, in cargo steamers, and when abroad live on the country. That is, I eat what the people eat” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 82-83).

Within Edwardian patriarchal society there were specific notions of what constituted women’s role. The idea of exploration and the spirit of adventure, as well as the idea of ‘wanderlust’ was seen at the beginning of the twentieth century as a specifically

‘masculine’ attribute while women were positioned as domestic and conservative.

(Pomeroy 2005; Maddrell 2009). Benham, and many other women travellers, testify to the fact that ‘wanderlust’ is not gender specific and challenge the stereotype of the domesticated, sessile, woman. In an interview with the *Daily News* in 1928 Benham stated:

I am a lone wanderer. I have no home in the sense that is generally understood and so there is nothing to prevent me enjoying to the uttermost the spirit of wanderlust that has entered my soul. I am never lonely. How can I be when there is so much to see and admire in the world?⁷⁵

She cherished the isolation and solitude of the Himalayan mountains and she wrote of being stunned at hearing the news of the first world war⁷⁶ which meant that she would have to return to England and civilization and stated in an earlier letter:

I do not like returning to civilization after the wilds of Africa and I find the nearer to civilization the less friendly and sociable people become and I miss the general hospitality I found almost everywhere in Africa ... I feel much more at home in the jungle than in a town.⁷⁷

Benham had an ambivalent relationship with expectations that constituted femininity. On the one hand she conformed to notions of feminine behaviour through her dress and needlework and on the other she shunned conventional expectations through her travels and mountaineering. Several of her letters refer to her interest in needlework, for example, in an interview in 1928 she stated:

When I am in camp I sketch, and when I am tired of sketching and painting I indulge in that very feminine pastime of embroidery.

⁷⁵ *The Daily News*, January 30, 1928 (interview in Plymouth).

⁷⁶ Letter from Benham to Keltie, 20 August 1914: RGS Archives

⁷⁷ Letter from Benham to Keltie, 9 January 1914: RGS Archives.

Besides, I make my own clothes, and when you travel through bush, roughing it as I do, there is a great deal of darning and repair work necessary if one is to keep one's outfit up to date and presentable ... I wear just an ordinary khaki skirt, putees, strong shoes, and a pith helmet. In addition I have a sunshade and an umbrella – not very warlike weapons.⁷⁸

Benham always carried a bible, a pocket Shakespeare, Doddridge-Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, Kipling's *Kim*, an umbrella, her knitting, and a supply of calico and needles to barter for food and 'curios', "She carried coloco (sic), needles and other things which natives appreciate in return for food".⁷⁹ In 1935 she recalled that she visited Plymouth Museum in 1928 and offered her collection of 'curios' to them which they accepted:

I was a little surprised to find that this collection was valued by their expert at a thousand pounds. "I am hoping that it will be of use to students. I am told that my sketches of mountains all over the world will be valuable in the same way. They show the contrast of geological formations (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 94).

This was a rare reference to her collection which indicates that knowledge was one of her motivations for collecting and her 'intention' for it. It also emphasizes the geographical nature of her sketches which she hoped would contribute to geographical knowledge.

Many women overcame dangerous situations and issues such as disease, injury and wild animals which enabled them to prove their ability and stamina in the face of adversity.

Benham never carried a firearm and in an interview in 1935 when asked about the dangers of wildlife she stated, "They never troubled me. True, one night four lions

⁷⁸ *The Daily News*, January 30, 1928 (interview in Plymouth). Maura Benham, a relative of Gertrude, recalled that in 1960 on a visit to Hong Kong, an English Army wife told her that she remembered Miss Benham stayed with her family when she was a child in Central Africa, and Miss Benham was knitting her stockings. (Letter from Maura Benham to PCMAG, 10 March, 1984: Benham Archives, PCMAG).

⁷⁹ *The Natal Times*, April 19, 1927. Benham was on her sixth trip around the world.

came nosing round my tent, but they did me no harm and went away ... I have never used firearms in my life. I have never even carried a pistol though often begged to do so” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 83). When asked if she had any trouble with the natives she replied:

None whatever. On the contrary, very much kindness. Often, when I approached a village, the chief would come out to meet me, and would offer me food and quarters. The natives are like the wild things. If they see a big safari approaching they get nervous. These people, they think, will eat up the country. A solitary woman is different. They welcome her (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 83).

This demonstrates Benham’s empowerment, authority and fearlessness in a colonial situation but is also ambivalent. She likens the natives to wild animals and exposes a colonial attitude to the people, at the same time depending on them for food and shelter. This fearlessness and bravery is often associated with masculine attributes but the irony was that most of the male travellers and explorers carried an arsenal of weapons to protect themselves. Benham’s lack of protection was a firm belief in herself as a white European female: the vulnerability of her gender, signified by her skirt and clothing and an unquestioning and uncritical confidence in the authority of her race, signified by the colour of her skin. This testifies to the complexities of gender as a category as argued by Foster and Mills who state that “gender is not the sole defining factor but interacts with other variables such as race, age, and class” (Foster and Mills 2002: 1-3).

In an article in the *Daily Mail* 1928 Benham recalled her climb of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1909 and the difficulties she had with porters who refused to continue. After pleading with them to no avail she stated “I put the white woman’s prestige in my pocket and

shouldered the bags myself.”⁸⁰ The porters eventually relented. This demonstrates that Benham was aware she was in a privileged position as a white European woman in the colonies. Blunt (1994) suggests that women experienced ambivalence between a dichotomy between colonial self and colonized other, that constructions of subjectivity involve gender, race, and class and that women travellers moved within the different spatiality of patriarchal and imperialist discourses. Women existed in a relation of subordination to western man and in relation of domination toward “non-western” men and women” (Shohat quoted in Blunt 1994:37).

Benham did not write or record her travels nor publish ‘travel’ books like so many other female travellers such as Mary Kingsley, who famously wrote about her travels to Africa, and is therefore not included in the history of women, travel and colonialism. Indeed Benham stated “I prefer the tramping to writing.”⁸¹ In 2004 an exhibition of portraits of famous women explorers was held at the National Gallery to celebrate their achievements. Benham was not included as she did not have her portrait painted but the book to accompany the exhibition includes a first short chapter and photograph of Gertrude Benham and states, “her journeys were pioneering, her ambition huge, her achievements remarkable, but Miss Benham has left scant trace of her paths through the world” (Birkett 2004: 12).⁸²

2.2 Benham and The Royal Geographical Society

Benham corresponded with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) regarding her travels and requested to become a member. By the time she wrote her first letter in 1913, Benham had travelled extensively and had walked across Africa twice. In a letter to

⁸⁰ Gertrude Benham ‘Walking Across Africa’ *The Daily Mail*, February 13, 1928.

⁸¹ Letter from Benham to J.S. Keltie, 29 August 1916. RGS Archives.

⁸² Driver highlights that famous, celebrated explorers became so, not only due to their own endeavours but also to a network of literary editors and popular journalism as well as to institutions such as the RGS (Driver 2001: 9).

John Scott Keltie, the secretary of the RGS in 1913, Benham described her second walk across Africa, from Nigeria on the north-west coast to Chinde on the south-east coast.⁸³

She wrote:

I wish I could do something to qualify for one of the RGS medals, but I fear my funds would not permit much in the way of exploration and also I wish I could turn my travelling capabilities to some good account. If the RGS ever needs an economical traveller to collect information, plants insects or anything that I could do, please think of me, as I fear if I take a house when I return to England, as I must do, to collect my things back, that I shall then not be able to afford any more travels.⁸⁴

Benham continued that she had made sketches and had taken photographs which she had sent back to England to be developed. Keltie replied to Benham:

You have really done a most wonderful journey, single handed and a woman. It is really wonderful how you managed, and how you managed to do so much on so little. A mere man would probably have spent a thousand or two on a similar journey and not been so successful.⁸⁵

In the same letter Keltie advised her that when next home in England to undertake instruction in “acquiring knowledge of geology, botany and zoology and you might do something really useful for geography”, and in her request for a medal, he stated, “You say you wish you could qualify for one of the Society’s Medals. Well, there is no reason why a woman should not do so.”⁸⁶ In 1914 Benham wrote again to Keltie:

⁸³ Benham also sent an account of this journey ‘On Foot Across Africa’ to *The Times* which was published on 29 November, 1913. Howgego (2009) gives a detailed account of this trip.

⁸⁴ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, 28 October, 1913: RGS Archives.

⁸⁵ Letter from John Scott Keltie to Benham, 29 November, 1913: RGS Archives.

⁸⁶ Lady Jane Franklin was the first woman to be awarded a Patrons Gold Medal by RGS in 1860. As women were not admitted to the Society it had to be accepted by a former president Sir Roderick Murchison on her behalf (Birkett 2004: 69).

If you ever think there is anything I could do to qualify for one of the society's medals, please let me know. I feel that I have already done much to spread the knowledge of geography as people often tell me they have learnt more from me than they have done in schools or in books.⁸⁷

In a letter dated 20 August, 1914, Benham again wrote to Keltie describing her 'tramp' through the Himalayas from Simla to Srinagar. She described the scenery in the Bhutna and Chaudra valleys as magnificent, and she stated "I made many sketches, 43 on all the journey, so I hope I shall be able to exhibit them when I next return."⁸⁸

Benham indicated that she had taken photographs but that these had not been successful, the first film pack had been faulty, and light had got in on the others even though she had made efforts to keep it in the shade. She described her annoyance at this and stated, "It is very annoying as I cannot repeat these photos and I wanted them to illustrate a book and lecture. I quite hope to write up my travels when I can."⁸⁹ In this letter Benham also reveals that she kept a regular diary and it can be assumed that this would have formed the basis of her book. In the same letter Benham again asked for employment with the RGS:

I wish I could get some employment from the RGS or the Colonial or Foreign Office ... If you can, will you speak about me to the Colonial and Foreign Office as I am sure I can travel more cheaply than most men, if only they could find me some employment.

In this letter Benham also stated that she received a letter from a friend of Keltie but could not make out the signature and therefore did not reply but she thought it was 'The Authors Syndicate'. No more letters refer to this but they must have been interested in

⁸⁷ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, 9 January, 1914: RGS Archives.

⁸⁸ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, 20 August, 1914: RGS Archives.

⁸⁹ Letter from Benham to Keltie, 20 August, 1914: RGS Archives.

the potential of publishing her book. In addition to this Keltie recommended Benham to contact the 'Field' as this journal published travel narratives.⁹⁰ In this and many of her letters Benham regularly referred to her financial hardship and difficulty in affording her journeys. She stated that the cost of trip from Simla to Srinagar was £26 and that this included curios. Keltie replied to Benham in September 1914 stating that he would be interested to see her sketches and that he thought she had all the material for an interesting book. He advised her that the best way to do this would be through 'The Author's Syndicate' and suggested the man who wrote to her was W. M. Colles, the director.⁹¹ Keltie further advised her that there was no employment for her with the RGS but for her to make an appointment with the Colonial or Foreign Office on her next return to England. In addition he suggested that she might try to get into Tibet which was politically, geographically, and culturally isolated from the outside world at that time.⁹² India and Tibet had been immortalised in Victorian and Edwardian literature such as Kipling's *Kim*, an adventure spy story set against the politics of the Great Game and Benham always carried a copy of the book with her.⁹³

Benham spent the war years frustrated in London. She kept up correspondence with Keltie at the RGS and in a letter dated 23 April 1916 she requested an appointment to visit him and wrote that she had been busy "arranging my flat and unpacking all my curios and treasures. I hope you will come here and see them some day." Not long after, on 2 May 1916 she wrote to Keltie again asking to be allowed to join the RGS without an entrance fee and wrote, "At present I do not feel able to afford it and yet I should very much like to be associated with the society and I think my travels render me

⁹⁰ The *Field* is a country and sports journal which was founded in 1853 and is still published today.

⁹¹ William Morris Colles (1855-1926) was a prominent literary agent in London and corresponded with authors such as Arnold Bennett, Somerset Maugham, Rider Haggard and Sir James Barrie.

⁹² Benham's trip to Tibet is discussed in Chapter 6.

⁹³ The 'Great Game' refers to the political conflict between the British and Russia in their quest to dominate and control India. This is discussed in chapter 6 which addresses Benham's travels in Asia.

eligible for admission.”⁹⁴ This ambition to gain an RGS medal, her plans to write a book, to keep a regular diary of events, and to give lectures indicates strongly that Benham wanted to be taken seriously and professionally as a traveller, explorer and writer. It is evident that she was also actively collecting her ethnographic objects or curios and had been since her first travels in 1904.

Throughout Europe geographical societies were founded in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the RGS in London was founded in 1830.⁹⁵ Maddrell (2009) has addressed the question of women’s membership of male dominated scientific institutions such as the RGS. There were many intrepid female explorers who contributed to geographical knowledge and the exclusion of women resulted in a very public debate in 1892-3 regarding the admission of women at a time when Queen Victoria was Patron of the Society even though the question of women’s membership had been discussed as early as 1847 (Maddrell 2009).⁹⁶ In 1893 twenty two women were admitted to the RGS but no more would be admitted until 1913, exactly the time when Benham began to correspond with John Scott Keltie.

This exclusion of women was also part of an attempt by John Scott Keltie to ‘masculinize’ the discipline of geography as a male pursuit. In 1885 Keltie reported on the state of geographical science for the RGS and concluded that it was not a ‘manly science’ and that it was perceived in the same way that botany was, as a suitable pursuit for women. The objective was to increase the status of geography as an adjunct to the interests of the state, commerce and scientific exploration and to position it within the intellectual and scientific world. To allow women to be part of this world would be to

⁹⁴ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, 23 April, 1916: RGS Archives.

⁹⁵ In 1830 almost all of the 460 members were men of high social standing (Maddrell 2009: 28).

⁹⁶ The debate was apparently sparked by the world traveller Isabella Bird who was invited to speak at the RGS but who highlighted the hypocrisy of this when she was not allowed to become a member.

weaken this new intellectual position for the discipline (Maddrell 2009: 330).⁹⁷ The objection to women becoming members included their lack of scientific training and members such as the traveller George Curzon considered the admission of women members as undesirable and referred to them as female ‘Globetrotteresses’ and stated, “We contest in total the general capability of women to contribute to scientific knowledge ... their sex and their training render them equally unfitted for exploration” (Curzon quoted in Maddrell 2009: 32). The London RGS excluded women until 1913 even though regional geographic societies admitted them.⁹⁸

When Benham wrote her first letter to Keltie at the RGS the debate about women’s membership was still being contested but eventually in 1913 the first cohort of one hundred and sixty-three women were admitted as members.⁹⁹ Isabella Bird and Mary Kingsley had no wish to become members (Maddrell 2009). Mary Kingsley stressed her lack of scientific education and experience of surveying and stated “I have never found a point or taken an observation or in fact done any surveying work that entitles me to be called a geographer.” Keltie encouraged Kingsley to write a paper for the council’s consideration and although accepted had to be read by men (Maddrell 2009: 89).

Women made substantial contributions to geographical knowledge but this knowledge was not always scientific and objective but more personal, descriptive and anecdotal. But it was an era which emphasized scientific knowledge, and scientific geography included taking measurements and surveying, and those that did not comply with this

⁹⁷ The explorer Henry Morton Stanley argued the case for women’s membership on the basis that they could be trained “to contribute to filling in the blanks on maps” (Maddrell 2009: 33).

⁹⁸ Women were members of the Royal Scottish and Manchester Geographical Societies from their foundation in 1884, Tyneside (1887), Liverpool (1891), Southampton (1897), and Hull (1910) geographical societies and the Royal Geographical Society, London, belatedly from 1913 (Maddrell 2009).

⁹⁹ It was not just women that were excluded from the RGS: men were also excluded if they did not reach the standard of scientific geography and some women were against women becoming members.

type of knowledge were excluded.¹⁰⁰ To encourage this ‘new’ scientific knowledge the RGS published *Hints to Travellers, Scientific and General* from 1854-1934 (discussed above) which encouraged the gathering of empirical data and observation of the ‘lower’ races:

It is the duty of every civilized traveller in countries newly opened up to research to collect facts, pure unvarnished facts, for the information of those leading minds of the age who by dint of great experience, can ably generalise from the details contributed from diverse sources (Johnston in *Hints to Travellers*, 6th edition 1889: 398 quoted in Urry 1972: 45).

Anthropology was included as a section in the sixth edition, written by Edward Burnett Tylor, (1832-1917), who was a proponent of the science of social anthropology and who was influenced by the ideas of cultural evolutionism.¹⁰¹ He described the inferiority of some races and recommended the traveller to observe, measure and record them to establish ‘facts’ and to collect ‘data’ to determine their differences from the European. Tylor suggested that the traveller should consult The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) manual, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* for greater detail on anthropology.¹⁰² It is not known whether Benham was aware of these publications although her interest in the RGS would suggest that she was.

Benham was eventually elected as a fellow of the RGS in 1916, the fee being waived in view of the “topographical value of your studies of mountain scenery in all parts of the world”¹⁰³ [Fig. 4]. On the certificate Benham is described as a traveller and in the section which asks for information on the geographical work or qualifications of the

¹⁰⁰ In the 6th edition of *Hints to Travellers, Scientific and General* (1889) John Scott Keltie wrote the section on Geography (Freshfield 1889).

¹⁰¹ In 1896 Tylor became the first professor of Anthropology at Oxford University.

¹⁰² Four editions of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* were published between 1870 and 1920 to cater for the “demand of a wider range of factual material on other cultures ... and to reflect the changing attitude as to what constituted ethnographic ‘facts’ (Urry1972: 45).

¹⁰³ Letter from John Scott Keltie to Benham 9 May, 1916: RGS Archives.

candidate it reads, “Has crossed Africa from S. to N. and W. to E. Travelled in the Himalayas, Japan, New Guinea, the Pacific Islands. Made many sketches of scenery & made interesting ethnological collection. Received May 12 1916, Proposed 22 May 1916, Elected 5 June 1916.” It further notes that Benham is to be elected without payment of Entrance Fee as agreed in the Council Minutes, May 1916. It was signed by J.S. Keltie and seconded by Arthur R. Hinks.¹⁰⁴

On 15 May, 1916 Benham wrote to Hinks to thank him and Keltie for their support in signing her nomination. However in a letter written to Benham from Hinks on 19 June, 1916 it is apparent that Benham had asked for her Fellowship to be deferred until the end of the year but Hinks advised her to reconsider this decision and to accept it now as she had been elected. On 30 June 1916 Benham, who was still in London, wrote to Keltie and stated “I am at present making a catalogue of my Museum things and have already got up to 430. I hope you will let me know when you can come and see them.”¹⁰⁵ Benham’s collection consists of nearly eight hundred objects and this demonstrates that most of her collecting was done in the first twelve years. Benham called in to see Keltie at the RGS in Kensington Gore on 29 August 1916 but as he was not there she left a note instead along with library books and an article on the volcanoes of Africa that she had written with her own sketches to illustrate it. She hoped that it would be published in the RGS Journal which was edited by Hinks and Keltie. The RGS did not respond to this for nearly five months. In a letter dated 5 January 1917 which accompanied the returned article and watercolour sketches on the volcanoes of Africa, Hinks asserts that he, and Dr. Keltie, had independently concluded that the paper was not of sufficient geographical interest for publication in the Journal. He does,

¹⁰⁴ Arthur Robert Hinks (1873-1945) was an astronomer and geographer and was assistant secretary to Keltie in 1912, finally succeeding him in 1915. They were both editors of the *Geographical Journal* until 1917. John Scott Keltie was knighted in 1918.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, 30 June 1916: RGS Archives.

however, say that some passages had been marked up and he would like to use them as a note in the Journal and if she agreed to this to return the manuscript to him. What happened next is uncertain but by 17 January 1917 Benham wrote to Keltie to confirm that she had resigned her fellowship of the RGS.¹⁰⁶ She argued that other prominent explorers such as Sir John Kirk had complimented her on her travels and accomplishments and that she felt annoyed at the way the present secretary (who was Hinks) had treated her journeys, climbing, sketches, and writing and therefore, as she was planning to travel again, it would best to give up the fellowship. Keltie responded by highlighting the fact that she had been admitted without entrance fee and that he could not remember any precedent to this. He further stated that as a woman in her position she could have studied the native people that she came into contact with but the only results of her travels were sketches and a collection of curios. He suggested that her article would be more suited to an ordinary magazine or could be the basis of a book like Mary Hall¹⁰⁷ had done than to write for the RGS.¹⁰⁸ From March 1917 until May 1918 the only correspondence with the RGS is repeated requests for the return of her manuscript of the volcanoes of Africa which were obviously mislaid and never returned.

By rejecting Benham's article Keltie and Hinks were implying that Benham did not write scientifically enough to be included in the RGS Journal. This distinction between scientific writing, travel writing and the different forms of knowledge produced, has been addressed by Mary Louise Pratt (1992) who suggests that it also represents a shift in European "planetary consciousness" (Pratt 1992: 9). According to Pratt, this shift occurred due to two factors in the mid eighteenth century or specifically in 1735.

¹⁰⁶ In the top right corner of The Certificate of Election reads "Resigned 1916."

¹⁰⁷ Mary Hall was the first woman to cross Africa from south to north in 1905 and wrote a book *A Woman's Trek from Cape to Cairo* in 1907.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Keltie to Benham, 19 January 1917: RGS Archives.

Firstly, witnessed in the publication of Carl Linne's *The System of Nature* (1735)¹⁰⁹ which promoted the emergence of natural history as a structure of knowledge, and secondly the move toward interior exploration of lands rather than maritime, coastal exploration. For Pratt, this was exemplified in the La Condamine expedition in 1735 which was the first scientific exploration into the interior of South America and which would become one of Europe's "most conspicuous instruments of expansion ... and a source of some of the most powerful ideational and ideological apparatuses through which European citizenries related themselves to other parts of the world" (Pratt 1992: 23). The accounts of the La Condamine expedition exemplify the heterogeneous and diverse ways in which writing was produced in the mid-eighteenth century:

Oral text, written texts, lost texts, secret texts, texts appropriated, abridged, translated, anthologized, and plagiarized; letters, reports, survival tales, civic description, navigational narrative, monsters and marvels, medicinal treatises, academic polemics, old myths replayed and reversed (Pratt 1992: 23).

The expedition marked the onset of an era of scientific travel, exploration and new forms of knowledge but also marked the transformation of travel writing, based on survival stories and descriptions of land and how it became disassociated with those of scientific reports and empirical data. This distinction between scientific accounts which were privileged over other forms of writing can be considered as one of the reasons why Benham's article was not accepted by the RGS as it was not 'scientific' enough.¹¹⁰ One of the main influences on this was Linnaeus' classificatory system and the emergence of natural history as a science.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Linne (Latin: Linnaeus) was a twenty-eight year old Swedish naturalist. The *System of Nature* (1735) would have a lasting impact not just on travel writing but on the overall ways Europeans citizenries made, and made sense of, their place on the planet (Pratt 1992: 24).

¹¹⁰ Interestingly, when Benham referred to her sketches and painting of mountain views and landscapes she emphasised the 'geographical' nature of them. For example, in an article by Benham, published by *The Times*, Johannesburg, March 21, 1937, when she was on her eighth trip around the world and her fourth journey across Africa, she stresses that her interests in mountains are more geographic than artistic.

2.3 Collecting Natural History

Whilst en route Benham collected and sent specimens of flora and fauna to the botanist and curator Alfred Barton Rendle at the BMNH. The first indication of Benham collecting natural history was on her first trip outside of Europe to North America 1904 where she recalled in an interview in 1935 that she went flower hunting with other tourists near Lake Louise, “I was lucky enough to find a little saxifrage which was previously unknown” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 81). This was in addition to her ethnographic collecting as she collected four objects on this trip.¹¹¹ The BMNH (now NHM) archives have three letters sent in 1919, 1920 and 1921.¹¹²

The first (known) letter sent in 1919¹¹³ was to accompany a parcel of specimens she sent to them and included four pages which listed one hundred and ninety three plants and flowers she sent.¹¹⁴ The letter was sent at the end of a trip in the Himalayas from Naini Tal to Srinagar in Kashmir and she described that she found primulas and saxifrages and hoped to find something of interest. In the letter she explained that they are pressed very roughly and that she has had a hard time with sketching, writing and camp work in addition to the daily march which was generally eight to nine hours or more each day. Two servants which she had engaged in Naini Tal had deserted her after five weeks and she was left alone with one servant. Displeased, she had to set up camp and cook as well as doing her sketching, botany and writing. Benham’s use of the word ‘botany’ is insightful as she was associating herself with a scientific discipline as well

¹¹¹ These four objects are discussed in Chapter 3.

¹¹² The correspondence is in the NHM archive file CB8, Benham, Miss G. E. Letter (15 October 1919): DF400/15/2, Letter 28 July 1920: DF 400/16/3, and the Letter 4 August 1921: DF400/17/2. It is apparent that there was other correspondence as these refer to other communication between them but the whereabouts are unknown. Visit 19/08/2009.

¹¹³ Interestingly, Benham correspondence with the RGS stops in 1918 and begins with the BMNH in 1919.

¹¹⁴ The flowers have not been located. Howgego suggests that her collection of 12,000 botanical specimens may survive somewhere in the archives of the NHM (Howgego 2009: 36). Current staff have no knowledge of them and the only files on Benham are the ones with correspondence with Rendle. (personal communication – visit to NHM 19/08/2009).

as a professional institution. She requested Rendle to send her a few rolls of film “for photographing the giant lobelias as you asked me” which suggests that there was previous correspondence between them and an intentionality to collect natural history. She described her camera as being the quarter plate size and she requested two or three rolls (six in a roll) and assured him that she would try to get some good photographs.¹¹⁵ She concluded the letter by asking Rendle to let her know if the flowers had arrived.¹¹⁶

Her letter of 1920 was sent from Nairobi on 28 July where she thanked him for the three rolls of film which were waiting for her in Mombasa and expressed her relief that the Himalayan flowers had been safely received by him. She concluded that she intended to search for flowers on Mount Elgon. The third letter was sent from Durban 4 August 1921, and again this was to accompany a parcel of flowers that she had gathered in the Drakensberg and Zululand.¹¹⁷

Benham’s communication with the BMNH demonstrates her intention to collect in a number of disciplinary categories and her ambition to be part of a wider professional community, and this networking with a respected national institution would have given her a particular status. Many years later, even though she had not collected or corresponded with the BMNH for a long time, she would use the connection as a form of reference and credentials to gain entry into Tibet (Howgego 2009: 41 and 49).

The collecting of natural history was part of the earliest forms of collecting. Early ‘cabinets of curiosities’ or *wunderkammern* exhibited all rare examples of objects

¹¹⁵ Benham bought her camera from Houghton and Sons, London but does not describe the make.

¹¹⁶ The letter has a note written at the top which states that the parcel had been received on 2 November 1919 and that three rolls of film were sent on 30 March 1920. Rendle obviously replied to Benham but his correspondence to Benham is missing.

¹¹⁷ This is on the east coast of South Africa.

regardless of whether they were natural or artificial curiosities.¹¹⁸ The oldest Cabinet of Curiosity in England was formed by John Tradescant the elder (c. 1570s-1638) who collected botanical specimens, as well as zoological and ethnological items although these latter objects, referred to either as *artificialia* or *naturalia* had not been categorized in any modern systematic manner at that time as it was prior to ‘scientific’ classification in the eighteenth century. This collection was acquired by Elias Ashmole (1673-1729) and eventually formed the foundation collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford between 1678-1683.¹¹⁹

Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) founder of the British Museum and seventeenth-century scientist, collected natural history, particularly botanical specimens. J. C. H. King (1994) has addressed Sloane and his scholarly scientific collection and systematic documentation of his acquisitions. In the seventeenth century, science was “God’s own instrument of truth. Man as an object of nature, was to be explained by principles of natural science” (King 1994: 228). “At the British Museum ... little systematic ethnographical cataloguing was undertaken between the foundation of the Museum in 1683 and the commencement of the first register in 1861” (King 1994: 229).¹²⁰ Sloane’s collection consisted of natural and artificial objects but in the early eighteenth century natural history collecting was considered more important than ethnography, as King states that “the ‘artificial curiosities’ were simply appendages to scientific materials” (King 1994: 233) and that they were a subsidiary to natural history. The scientific, in this instance, refers to natural history, specifically to botany. It is not until the objects brought back from Captain Cook’s voyages in the late eighteenth century that

¹¹⁸ George Stocking states that “The renaissance humanist “cabinet of curiosities” – the commonly accepted prototype of the modern museum – emerged contemporaneously with the age of discovery and exploration (Stocking 1985: 6).

¹¹⁹ For a good account of a seventeenth century collector see Stephen Bann’s (1992) account of the collector John Bargrave.

¹²⁰ It is generally accepted that Sloane’s catalogues date to between c.1685 and the 1740s (King in MacGregor 1994: 228).

ethnographic objects became a source of public interest (King 1994). The publication of Linnaeus' book in 1735, with his new taxonomy for classifying plants to produce an order in the natural world, and the emergence of natural history as a science had wider repercussions in many aspects of human life:

This development of natural history was constituted through writing but also through practices such as artists' specialization in botanical and zoological drawings amateur and professional societies of all kinds sprung up locally, nationally, and internationally; natural history collections acquired commercial as well as prestige value; botanical gardens became large-scale public spectacles (Pratt 1992: 29).¹²¹

The new knowledge-building project of natural history marked the beginning of collecting natural history on a global scale and produced “a form of objective knowledge and truth about the natural world” (Pearce 1995: 124) and “natural history collecting became a passion” (Pearce 1995: 125).

The second half of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation in scientific endeavour and exploration to discover new lands and to expand the British Empire, and as such these voyages of explorations were intrinsic to Imperial policies:

It is no accident that the areas prioritized for exploration were of economic importance and also the subjects of competitor interest ... it is also no accident that expeditions left England with clear instructions

¹²¹ Pratt reminds us that this systemization of nature in the eighteenth century “coincides with the height of the slave trade, the plantation system, colonial genocide in North America and South Africa, slave rebellions in the Andes, the Caribbean, North America and elsewhere” (Pratt 1992: 36). She suggests that these were experiments in the systemization of human life and the standardization of production and people. The many forms of collecting during the period were also forms of extraction just like the raw materials that were extracted to support industrial capitalism.

for scientific observation and discovery sanctioned by the Admiralty and the Royal Society (Owen 2006: 100).¹²²

These expeditions carried out geographical surveys but they were usually accompanied by a natural scientist just as Cook and his scientific team had to collect natural history specimens.

On his first voyage on the *Endeavour*, which left Plymouth on 26 August 1768, Cook was accompanied by Joseph Banks¹²³ and Dr. Solander “the first, a gentleman of ample fortune, the other an accomplished disciple of Linnaeus, both of them distinguished in the learned world and for their extensive and accurate knowledge of Natural History” (Cook in Hawksworth 1777: xxii).¹²⁴ Johann Reinhold Foster (1729-1798) and his son Georg were appointed as naturalists on Cook’s second voyage on the *Resolution* and made substantial collections of flora and fauna as well as collections of objects.¹²⁵

Collecting on these voyages was prolific, and the crew from high status staff to sailors were avid collectors and competition was fierce. The natural specimens, however, were considered more important than artificial ones and there was no official authorization to collect objects (Newall 2003, 2005; Owen 2006; Thomas 1991, 1994b, 2003).

The collecting of curiosities or ethnographic objects alongside natural history highlights the importance and centrality of objects in trade. The trade and collecting of objects from colonized countries was one of the most important ways of developing

¹²² Owen records that between 1816-59, approximately thirty expedition set sail to with the intention, not only of scientific discovery and to collect, record and document Natural History, but also to expand new territories in the name of the British Empire and Imperialist expansion (Owen 2006).

¹²³ He eventually became Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) and was President of the Royal Society and director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

¹²⁴ Captain James Cooks Journals Vols. 2 and 3 published by John Hawkesworth in MDCCLXXVII (1777) are in PCMAG Cottonian Collection Ref. CB527. Cooks voyages are part of Plymouth’s maritime history: all three of Cooks voyages set sail from Plymouth. The first voyage in the *Endeavour* in 1768, the second voyage in the *Resolution* in 1772, and the third in the *Discovery* in 1776.

¹²⁵ The Forster ethnographic collection is part of the Cook Collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

relationships, and, in fact, objects can be placed as central to European and indigenous relations during this period (Thomas 1991; O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000; Shelton 2000; Gosden and Larson 2007; Bell and Geismar 2009). Indeed without the urge to collect the objects from other cultures by Europeans and the enthusiasm of indigenous people to collect and trade European objects, relations would have been much more difficult. This idea of the ‘materialisation’ of objects, the dynamic role of the relation between objects and humans is a crucial aspect of understanding colonial collecting, as “things (all types of objects) became a means by which various sets of cross cultural encounters ensued, relations began and ideas proliferated” (Bell & Geismar 2009: 8). Janet Owen suggests that the collecting of natural history specimens was concomitant with ethnographic collecting and gives the example of the first substantial collection of ethnographic objects of Alaskan Eskimo communities collected by the Arctic explorer Sir Edward Belcher’s expedition on the *Blossom* during the 1820s. The expedition was headed by Captain Frederick William Beechey and although the emphasis was on exploration and natural history collecting, Owens points out that the collecting of ethnographic objects was an intrinsic part of this on most of the expeditions “to support the fledging study of ethnology” (Owens 2006: 12). Accounts by the crew suggest that they had a real scientific curiosity as well as the need to maintain relations and secure provisions for the ship, and “copious records of scientific endeavour were brought home in journals, artworks, memories and boxes of natural history and ethnographic specimens” (Owens 2006: 10).¹²⁶

The science of ethnology had not yet been developed and the category of ‘ethnographical’ collections had not yet been established. Stocking pinpoints to the date

¹²⁶ Owen states that the British Museum exhibited material brought back from voyages and exhibited them geographically. The public, however, were not interested in the cultures from where objects originated but were more interested in their exoticism and difference from their own European identity (Owen 2006).

“1840 that a specifically ‘ethnographical’ collection was established” (Stocking 1985:7). The ‘Ethnology Society’ was founded in Paris in 1839, in New York in 1842 and in London 1843. The London Ethnology Society eventually became the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1871, and then the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) in 1907. The first establishment of an anthropological museum was the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in 1866 and the rest of the nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation of museums which became known as the ‘Museum Period’ and when anthropology entered its “institutional homeland” (Stocking 1985: 6-7).¹²⁷ So it is demonstrated that although these early expeditions had territorial and scientific objectives, particularly the collecting of Natural History, the collecting of material culture was an intrinsic part of them.

The historical connection between collecting natural history and what became known as ethnographic collecting and the emphasis on scientific knowledge continued into the nineteenth century. O’Hanlon and Welsch (2000) discuss a variety of collectors from 1870s-1930s and suggests that they all had a scientific education in common (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 9). However most of them had an interest in, and collected, natural history, “such individuals saw natural history and ethnography as part of a continuum, and it is important to recall that their collections of the former were often as large, if not larger, than those of the latter. (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 9).

The publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* in 1859, influenced by Linnaeus’ taxonomy, made comparisons between the natural world and human history. The

¹²⁷ Sturtevant situates this era of museum development from 1840s to 1890: Stocking places the period of museum anthropology as beginning in the 1890s and by this time the university had also become a dominating institution for museum anthropology.

principle of taxonomy and hierarchical development in the natural sciences was applied to human evolution and development and were used to justify imperial expansion:

Concepts of taxonomy became ideas of typology by means of which human artefacts could be classified and allotted their respective places in the scheme of things, while ideas of technological progress, equated with moral progress, offered a satisfactory yardstick against which human communities could be judged and ordered (Pearce 1995: 136).

One of the ways that this was manifested was in the display of ethnographic objects in museums, world fairs and exhibitions. An example of this is the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theory, which displayed the material objects of other cultures in a hierarchical taxonomic system whereby objects became evidence of human evolution and progression.¹²⁸ “The notion that natural and sociocultural data should be considered within a common frame of reference is one of the underpinning ideas of evolutionism” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 10). The authors state that the earlier collectors broadly accepted evolutionary ideas although this was in different ways and on different levels. Although evolutionary theory was evolving itself the authors further suggest that the later collectors (such as the anthropologist Malinowski) did not altogether repudiate evolutionary beliefs.

When Benham began collecting in 1904, her attitude to collecting was similar to those which her generation had inherited from the late nineteenth century and she collected both natural history and material objects of other cultures. Collecting natural history in tropical countries was problematic in terms of preservation and in sending them to England and there is no known extant correspondence between Benham and Rendle at the BMNH after 1921. Benham, however, continued to form her ethnographic

¹²⁸ For an account of the development of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, see Chapman in Stocking (1985).

collection and many of the objects she collected demonstrate her interest in natural history. For example, she collected many necklaces from all over the world and these were obviously of interest to her. Many of these are made from natural materials such as shells, stone beads, seeds, animal teeth, amber, coral, turquoise, lapis-lazuli, cornelian, and malachite. For example, Benham collected six maireener shell necklaces from Tasmania,¹²⁹ [Fig.5], a seed bag from Honolulu,¹³⁰ [Fig. 6], and a flax bag from New Zealand.¹³¹ [Fig.7]. She collected jewellery made from bone and plant material such as an ivory bracelet from Central Africa¹³² [Fig. 8], and she always wore an ivory bracelet and a woven one from an elephant's tail. Some objects are made from a composite of natural and man-made materials such as a plaited sweetgrass necklace with European glass beads from North America.¹³³ Her collection also includes many baskets and fans made from botanical material such as grasses, bark and raffia which are woven and plaited. Her interest in natural history is also shown in the collection of fragments of volcanic lava from around the world, for example Japan (1934.25. 807), Kaderusi, Lake Kivu, Zaire in Central Africa (1934.25.806) and from Hawaii (1934.25.808) and a rare item such as an edible bird's nest eaten by the Chinese (1934.25.336) which would not be out of place in a cabinet of curiosity.

¹²⁹ These are recorded as PCMAG 1934.25.33; 34;35;36;37; 43. The making of these shell necklaces has always been the role of women, and today women stringers still have 'ownership' of the cultural tradition. Many necklaces were found in burial pits and the oldest recorded is about 1800 years old. To present-day Tasmanian Aboriginal people, they represent significant cultural links to the past and are considered unique treasures. (Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania: www.utas.edu.au). The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter had a maireener necklace thought to have belonged to Truganini, the last woman and member of her community, and repatriated it in 1997. It is now in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. (Museum Association Statement on Repatriation of cultural property).

¹³⁰ PCMAG 1934.25.56.

¹³¹ PCMAG 1934.25.276.

¹³² PCMAG 1934.25.400.

¹³³ PCMAG 1934.25.670. This is discussed in chapter 4.



Figure 5. Maireener Shell
Necklace, Tasmania (1934.25.36)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure. 6 Seed Bag, Honolulu
(1934.25.56)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 7. Flax bag from New
Zealand (1934.25.276)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG



Figure 8. Ivory bracelet, Central
Africa (1934.25.400)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed Gertrude Benham as an imperial lady traveller contextualized within the milieu in which she travelled and the motivations for travel. Benham was an independent traveller and had a strong character. It has been shown that Benham began her ethnographic and natural history collecting from her trip in 1904. In addition, this chapter demonstrated that Benham was ambitious in her desire for recognition, witnessed in her attempt to achieve this through her correspondence and becoming a Fellow of the RGS, and subsequently through her relationship with the BMNH to whom she corresponded and sent specimens. By collecting natural history Benham was continuing the totalizing classificatory schema which emerged in the mid eighteenth century with the publication of Linnaeus' *Systema Natura* which "launched a European knowledge-building enterprise of unprecedented scale and appeal ... and which marked the beginning of collecting natural history on a global scale" (Pratt 1992: 25). In collecting of natural history as well as drawing and painting botanical sketches and landscapes, taking photographs, writing letters, keeping a diary for the potential to publish and give lectures, Benham contributed to the idea that "knowledges exist not as static accumulations of facts, bits, or bytes, but as human activities, tangles of verbal and non-verbal practices" (Pratt 1992: 29). Benham was, however, sketching the British Empire and her collection can be understood as a form of extraction of the material culture of colonized countries and as such entangles her within the social, cultural and political conditions in which she collected. Her interest in natural history is reflected in some of the ethnographic objects she collected thus demonstrating the entanglement between people and things and materialising her values and desires (Bell and Geismar 2009). The development of natural history coincided with a new era of scientific exploration into the interior of lands rather than the previous maritime and coastal exploration. It served to assist in the search for lands to colonize and the expanding

search for new and exploitable raw materials to supply a Western industrial capitalist economy. The role of science was intrinsic to this and “natural history conceived of the world as a chaos out of which the scientist *produced* an order” (Pratt 1992: 30).

Benham’s correspondence with the BMNH, and the building up of a relationship with Rendle to support her collecting, can be understood as her desire to work in a professional way for a major museum as well as to gain professional recognition. Her relationship with the RGS was, as with many other travellers, antagonistic, due to her gender and the lack of so-called scientific geographical knowledge which was highly valued and highly gendered at the time. Women, as well as some men, were historically marginalised as producers and subjects of geographical knowledge because their views or activities did not conform to standards of what was acceptable as scientific geography. The boundaries of who counts as a geographer is a political decision within the discipline and what counted as legitimate geographical knowledge was decided on by a few select men (Domosh 1991; Maddrell 2009). As Gillian Rose states, “Geography, whatever it was, was almost always done by men” (Rose 1993: 414). This can also be applied to the discipline of anthropology and the scientific ‘professionalization’ of the discipline as discussed in Chapter 1. Benham had not been educated or trained in science and therefore as both traveller and collector was positioned outside of these newly professionalized disciplines. Driver, however, highlights the unsettled and heterogeneous nature of geographical knowledge in the nineteenth century and asserts that it cannot be assumed that there was “a neat distinction between the discourses of adventurous travel and scientific exploration” and that “the business of the scientific explorer was not always, or easily, distinguished from that of the ... missionary, the trader, or the imperial pioneer” (Driver 2001: 2). As an independent, itinerant traveller, mountaineer and collector of natural history and

ethnography, Benham was transgressing codes of femininity and masculinity as they were constructed at the time in the colonies and in England and this highlights the complex location of Benham as a collector.

Like many explorers and collectors Benham's collecting of natural history was concomitant with her collecting of ethnographic objects. She revealed to Keltie at the RGS that by 1916 she had collected 430 objects and this demonstrates that Benham had made nearly half her collection before the First World War in the twelve years between 1904-16 as stated above. The second half of the collection would be made in the next twenty six years when she resumed her travels after the war. This highlights that this initial period of travel was the most prolific in terms of collecting, but more importantly it demonstrates that she had intentions to donate her collection to a museum and had begun to document it, to order and organise it, and this indicates an attempt to 'professionalize' her collecting because its collection within a museum would also institutionalise it.

I propose that Benham collected ethnographic objects in order to gain recognition of her efforts and achievements in her life and that her travels and collecting were a form of self-fashioning (Greenblatt 1980; Thomas 1994a: 5). By associating with professional national institutions such as the RGS and the BMNH, Benham was extending herself through these networks. She was not seriously considered within geography and her mountaineering feats went largely unnoticed. She collected Natural History, but again this was not taken seriously. Collecting flora and fauna was also difficult as the organic plant material did not survive the environmental conditions and needed specialist attention in order to preserve it. As with the voyages of Captain Cook and the collecting of ethnographic material alongside natural history, the nineteenth century phenomena of

collecting the material culture of colonized countries was another option for Benham to achieve some recognition and to give her a sense of identity in the world. Benham travelled and collected in an age of science, not in an age of curiosity, and the developing disciplines of geography and anthropology were increasingly based on scientific knowledge and professional practices and Benham's gender and lack of scientific training excluded and marginalised her from these. However, as Mona Domosh points out that although women were "denied institutional context, women were in a sense more free in their travels, and more explicitly aware of their subjective goals" (Domosh 1991: 98). This can be applied to Benham whom I suggest was less restricted in her collecting than systematic collectors as she was not restrained by any museum, institutional, or anthropological agenda. Thus, she could make selections and decisions based on a more intuitive sensibility and according to her own personal interests.

Her travelling and mountaineering were contrasted with those who were scientific professional geographers and her collecting of curios was contrasted with those who were scientific professional ethnographers. These distinctions were an attempt to claim a certain authoritative knowledge. Thomas questions the notion that science justified the imperial expansion and states, "it would seem closer to the mark to suggest that imperialism legitimized science" (Thomas 1994b:116) and questions the extent that it was not such a distinct discipline that it was thought to be and states that:

The effort to privilege scientific interests in curiosities hardly seems, however, to have been coherent or efficacious ... Curiosity remained a deeply contentious field. Even the triumph of capitalism did not enable this shadow of commerce to transcend the ambiguous licence of an endless, rapacious, unstable and competitive pursuit of novel objects (Thomas 1994b:136).

Benham's collection was non-systematic and non-scientific and therefore has more of an affinity with collections made prior to the publication of Linnaeus' *Systema Natura* in 1753 rather than with the schema of classification and professional systematic collections made in the nineteenth century. The next four chapters consider Benham's travels and collecting en route around the world.

Figure 9. Map of Western Canada. Benham visited Banff, Lake Louise, Lake Moraine, Yoho National Park and Rogers Pass. Copyright Davenport Maps Ltd. The map has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Chapter 3. Benham: A Collector in North America

Collecting has been structured by the desires of colonial powers to understand and control goods of colonized peoples, by the gifts given in diplomatic exchanges, by symmetrical and asymmetrical power relationships, and by the desire of newly established disciplines such as anthropology to save, salvage, and preserve the ‘vanishing’ natives.¹

Having accomplished the rite of passage of a pilgrimage to the most sacred place in the North American landscape, the tourist, in the act of consuming ... assumes a new identity and a new name. He, or she, is transformed into a Native of North America, appropriating the place formerly occupied by the Indian.²

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with Benham in the contact zone of North America [Fig. 9]. According to Benham, this was her first trip (outside of Europe) in 1904 and she can be considered as a tourist, a mountaineer, a collector of natural history and a collector of material culture. This trip is important in that not only was it Benham’s first trip outside of Europe but it was also the beginning of her collection and the source of the first known objects she collected [see Appendix 5]. Her trip lasted from the spring until the autumn 1904, and although she made seven complete world trips she did not return to North America.

This chapter gives a brief outline of North American history and trade, and discusses the colonization of the region by the West and how it was redefined as a tourist destination in the second half of the nineteenth century. First Nations people had been represented to the British public through national and international exhibitions of their material

¹ Parezo 2002: 222.

² Phillips 1998: 43.

culture and through the circulation of images. The chapter considers why Benham and other tourists travelled to North America as an appropriate destination for the inquisitive or science-minded traveller. It then goes on to consider trade between First Nation people and Europeans. This includes Benham's collection of objects, and questions her selection of objects, the types of objects she collected and why, and what the objects may have represented to her. It considers the objects as 'tourist art', and as 'souvenirs', which involve issues of authenticity. In avoiding the 'fatal impact' theory (Thomas 1991; 1994) it considers collecting as a two-way process and acknowledges the power, control, and agency of First Nations people in the trading of objects and in the production of tourist art which can be interpreted as acts of resistance and survival. Finally, the chapter considers the different meanings that objects may have had for the different 'actors' involved: What meaning did these objects have for Benham as a white, middle-class British woman? What meaning did they have for the British colonizers? And what meaning did they have for First Nations people?³ It aims to show that meaning and value are not fixed and static but fluid and contingent on time and place and that value and meaning are culture bound and differ at different times and in different places and therefore this chapter considers the perspectives of the colonized (First Nations peoples), the colonizer (Europeans), and the collector (Gertrude Benham) as adding to the fluid and ever-changing sense of the meaning of these collected objects as they were transformed from the initial meanings of those who made them to the different interpretations by Western collectors and colonizers..

3.1 The Contact Zone: North America

In an interview in 1935 Benham was asked about her trip to Canada and responded:

³ Names are problematic. *First Nations* is now common Canadian usage (Cole 1985: xvi).

After my parents death I was left with a small income and I had also saved a little money. With this I determined to visit the Rockies. I reached Banff in the spring of 1904 and early in June moved to a chalet on Lake Louise ... at first I tramped on the lower levels flower-hunting in company with other tourists ... I spent the whole summer climbing in the Rockies and Selkirks, and greatly enjoyed it⁴

Howgego records that she moved to Lake Moraine in order to climb, returned to Lake Louise and then to the National Yoho Park. In September 1904 she stayed at Glacier House in British Columbia, a hotel built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in Rogers Pass. In August she moved west to the Selkirk range (Howgego 2009: 12).

When Benham visited Canada in 1904 the First Nations people had undergone considerable contact from the fifteenth century with colonization and assimilation mainly by the French, Spanish, and British. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Europeans developed an extensive trade in fur and made large settlements of European colonies. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was formed in 1670 and traded knives, kettles, beads, needles and blankets, mainly in exchange for fur. By 1763, after the Seven Years' War with France, Britain was the main European power and controlled most of the commerce and lucrative fur trade. Early explorers of North America included George Vancouver (1757-1798), an English naval officer, whose expedition in 1791-1795 opened up the North American Pacific Coast to colonization.⁵

During the nineteenth century the increased commercial trade and demand for fur and land by Europeans settlers led to increased conflict with First Nations People. Between 1871 and 1921 eleven treaties were signed between the First Nations and the dominium

⁴ Hessel-Tiltman 1935:80-81. For full description of her mountaineering adventures in North America see Hessel-Tiltman (1935) and Howgego (2009).

⁵ Vancouver had accompanied Captain Cook on his second voyage (1772-1775) and third voyage (1776-1780).

of Canada which effectively secured the ownership of land in the northwest for the British.⁶ Throughout the nineteenth century the buffalo on whom the Native American relied for food and other sustenance gradually decreased, mainly due to the fur trade and commercial hunters as well as the ‘splitting’ of the herd by the Transcontinental Railway built by the Americans in 1876. After 1870 the increased demand for fur and leather drastically impacted on the decline of the buffalo. In addition to this the US government, in an attempt to break Native American resistance to western settlement, created a policy to eradicate the buffalo altogether and thus eliminate the main food source of the Native Americans. By the mid-1870s the Plains buffalo was extinct in Canada. The new lands obtained by the Canadian Dominion were controlled into townships and also allowed for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPRR) linking Ontario and British Columbia completed in 1885. By 1870 Native Americans had been forced off their land and confined to live in reserves, to take up agriculture and to receive a Western education as part of an assimilation programme. The Indian Act of 1876 banned many aspects of traditional cultural life such as spiritual and religious ceremonies including the potlatch and the Sundance. The area which Benham visited in Banff in Alberta was part of the Canadian Plains or prairies, which stretched westward to include Saskatchewan and Manitoba with a varied environment including the Rocky Mountains and grasslands. Plains people in the area of Alberta are the Stoney (Nakoda) and also include the Blackfoot, Crees and Ojibwas and the Metis, a mixed race group, developed from inter-cultural marriage between First Nations People and Europeans. The buffalo was their main source of food and fur which they traded with Europeans “Trade was the central component of relations between First Nations’ people on the Plains and Europeans” (King 1999: 229). This trade, however, also

⁶ Treaty 11, the last treaty signed in 1921 was signed due to the discovery of oil at Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories (King 1999: 245). This is an example of how colonialism was intrinsically linked to commercial and capitalist interests.

brought European diseases to which the Plains people were not immune and by the 1780s the Plains population had been halved (King 1999).

In 1885 the CPRR transcontinental railway which ran from the east to the west coast, was completed and this set the foundation for further immigration, goods and tourism.⁷ Rail travel became one of the most important factors in the rapid expansion of tourism.⁷ of souvenir production and sales. First nations people saw the advantages of this and “train stations became important sites for souvenir selling” (Phillips 1998: 34).

Canadian travel and tourism was promoted through a discourse of the picturesque, the sublime and wonder of the Rocky Mountains, the beauty of the great lakes, and as a place for outdoor activities such as mountain climbing.⁸ The Canadian government founded Banff National Park in 1885 and Glacier and Yoho National Parks in 1886 and they became a major tourist attraction and famous for adventure and mountaineering.⁹

This development of tourism can appear to be natural and innocent but it was due to colonialism and the dispossession of First Nations land and traditions. Tourism incorporates all aspects of social life – natural and cultural and “No person or agency is officially responsible for the worldwide proliferation of tourist attractions. They have appeared naturally, each seeming to respond to localized causes” (MacCannell 1999: 45) and this allows for the tourist to ignore the politics of travel and tourism. This deliberate innocence conforms to Pratt’s notion of ‘anti-conquest’, an ideological strategy of innocence which is at the same time a form of hegemony and allows for “he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (Pratt 1992: 7). People flocked to

⁷ This new infrastructure was directly linked to the intensive colonization of North America and the expansion of the British Empire.

⁸ Travellers to North American included English women and in 1879 Isabella Bird published *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* London: John Murray. Travel was, however, out of the reach of most working class people in England.

⁹ First Nations people were excluded from Banff National Park from 1890-1920 and were officially welcomed back in 2010 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Park (Binnema and Niemi (2006).

see this new British dominion and this would have an impact on the production and consumption of First Nations art and artefacts by Westerners.

The incarnation of wilderness was a key symbol of national identity but this wilderness was 'primitive' and also included First Nations people as 'primitive' (Phillips and Steiner 1999).¹⁰ During the mid-eighteenth century the image of the 'Indian' became firmly embedded in the imagination of Europeans. Stephanie Pratt has addressed the circulation of Indian images through the artist George Catlin and their representation throughout Europe in the mid- nineteenth century and how this, along with exhibitions and world fairs, ensured that the Indian was 'disciplined and organised' for white consumption as a romanticized ideal of the 'noble savage' on the one hand, and something to be avoided on the other (Pratt 2013).¹¹ Throughout the second-half of the nineteenth century, through Western colonial displays and exhibitions of First Nations material culture, objects became a metonym for the whole culture and this was reinforced through a scientific paradigm "whether represented in portrait format or in items of material culture the indigenous presence was mediated via systems of display that made it amenable to the dominant power" (Pratt 2013: 21). Colonial discourse produced the "colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (Bhabha 1994: 23). Appadurai (1986) has suggested that the same questions that are asked of people can be asked of objects and it was not just the Native American people who became stereotyped but also their objects, namely moccasins and beads. The market for American Indian souvenirs became well established and prolific, and it was porcupine quillwork and beadwork that became

¹⁰ Today the Glacier National Park and Banff in Alberta are still described as a world of primitive wilderness (www.BCparks.glacier).

¹¹ Catlin exhibited his collection at Bullock's Egyptian Hall in London in 1840 and throughout the British Isles in 1842. From 1842 to 1846 he exhibited his paintings along with groups of Ojibwe (Anishinaabeg) Indians, whose appearance, dress and performance recreated American Indian culture for Western audiences (Pratt 2013).

equated with notions of 'Indianness' in the minds of European and other consuming cultures (Phillips 1998; Bol 1999: 225).

When Benham visited Canada in 1904 Banff was a bustling town and hotels had been set up for tourists such as the Canadian Pacific Railway Hotel and the Banff Spring Hotel. The local paper *The Crag and Canyon*, founded by Norman Luxton (1876-1962) advertised local attractions and places of interest such as tours into the National Parks and the Lakes.¹² He was also was the proprietor of the 'Sign of the Goat' curio shop, opened in 1902, which specialised in Stoney Indian handicrafts [Fig.10]. Benham referred to herself as a tourist but she was in Canada from the spring until October 1904 and achieved many mountaineering successes, four of which were first ascents. Benham wrote about her ascents of Mounts Lefroy and Victoria and this was published in the *Crag and Canyon* newspaper, Banff on Saturday July 16, 1904.¹³ Benham also climbed Mount Assiniboine and her account of this was published in the *Canadian Alpine Journal* in 1907, three years after her visit. In this article Benham describes the group of people she travelled with who were all men and she stated, "In the evening they made camp and had a meal and this over, and everything washed and tidied up, we sat and rested for a while before retiring to bed, the men enjoying their pipes, while I knitted."¹⁴ knitted."¹⁴ This statement demonstrates that Benham retained notions of femininity both both in the gendered activities of smoking (male) and knitting (women) and reflects the Victorian

¹² In an 1904 edition of *The Crag and Canyon* adverts include a range of different stores for merchandise, groceries, confectionary, upholstery and a 'Curiosity Store' which was also the Post Office, and sold stationary, fishing tackle, souvenirs and mountain views of Banff and Eastman's Kodak cameras (*Crag and Canyon*, July 16, 1904).

¹³ Three peaks in the Selkirk range of mountains are named 'Truda Peaks' in recognition of Gertrude Benham. For a full account of her mountaineering achievements see Smith (1989) and Howgego (2009).

¹⁴ *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1, 1907, p.90.

and Edwardian separation of gendered space: men retired to the smoking room.¹⁵ In another article, written from Glacier House, Glacier, British Columbia¹⁶ September 28, 1904 and published in the *Alpine Journal* in November 1904 she records her ascents of the Ten Peaks and Mount Fay. The first of the Ten Peaks was named ‘Hiji’ (Benham’s spelling. The correct spelling was Heejee). Benham records, “In this country, where nearly all the peaks are named after persons, it is a relief to find a few with other names, but the quaint name of Hiji has since been changed to Mount Fay.”¹⁷ This demonstrates the extent of Western colonization in the Rockies, the obliteration of the language of First Nation people and the renaming of land after westerners which Benham laments. Benham’s comment is one of ‘otherness’, highlighting the difference of the First Nation people to that of the colonial Westerners who renamed land and places.

Benham’s wish to be the first to conquer mountains is part of a colonial rhetoric of ‘discovery’ and of the ‘unknown’ which was the discourse of the British Empire, of going where no one had gone before, ‘conquering unchartered lands’ and Benham in her ‘discovery’ of natural history and her determination to climb mountains that had not been ascended before can be situated as part of this discourse of discovery which Pratt has termed ‘monarch-of-all-I-survey’ (Pratt 1992: 202).

3.2 Benham as Collector

The collecting of First Nation’s objects has been well documented (Cole 1985; Phillips 1998; Phillips and Steiner 1999; Parezo 2004; Berlo 1992; Berlo and Phillips 1998) and “from the beginning, Europeans have both haphazardly and systematically collected art

¹⁵ Benham also challenged these conventions through her independence in travelling and achievements in mountaineering and this demonstrates that Benham was complicit with, but also resisted, constructions of femininity and social conventions.

¹⁶ Glacier House was a hotel built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in Rogers Pass. Today it is still a tourist and adventure destination.

¹⁷ This was named after Professor Charles Fay, a professional mountaineer who was disgruntled by being beaten to the first successful ascent of the mountain by Benham.

produced by North American people” (Parezo 2004: 221)¹⁸ Benham collected four objects from North America, two beaded bags, a birchbark box, and a necklace which can be said to be the genesis of her ethnographic collecting. Whether she collected these as souvenirs (she refers to herself as a tourist) or as an intention to form a collection, is not known as she did not record her detailed activities when engaging with ethnographic collecting. Benham’s notebook or her *Catalogue of Museum* [see Appendix 4] lists the objects and the place they were collected but she does not say how she obtained them.

Figure 11 is a beaded bag made from soft hide decorated with blue glass beads in a stepped geometric design.¹⁹ The background colour is blue and the back of the bag is undecorated. King suggests that the stepped geometric design is characteristic of the northern Plains (King 1999: 237). The Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton has a bag similar to this geometric bag and their records state that it was probably made by the Stoney Indians.²⁰ Their provenance records state that it was collected by Mickey Ryan who with his brother Pat ran the Ryan Brothers Transportation Company in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Ryan was interested in Indian artefacts and employed Indians in his company. He was known to have purchased Indian artefacts from Phillip H. Godsell, an inspector of the HBC and also from Norman K. Luxton of Banff. Another similar bag in their collections is a solidly beaded bag with a stepped geometric pattern and they have provenanced this to the Assiniboine.²¹ Research at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington suggests

¹⁸ The earliest collection of Canadian Plains in the British Museum was acquired by a soldier, Major George Seton (1819-1905), made when he served in the Royal Canadian Rifles from 1853-1858 as protection for the Hudson Bay Company.

¹⁹ PCMAG 1934.25.576.

²⁰ Royal Alberta Museum Archives H91.89.17. The Nakoda (people of the mountains) First Nation people were renamed Stoney Indians by Westerners due to their cooking method with stones. Their land is south west Alberta, east of Banff National Park in the Rocky Mountains. Their close neighbours are the Assiniboine.

²¹ Royal Alberta Museum Archives H67.221.9. The information was kindly provided by Susan Berry, Curator of Ethnology and Ruth McConnell, Assistant Curator of Ethnology on a visit 15/10/2009.

that Benham's bag is probably Assiniboine, circa. 1900, and looks like it was brand new when collected which indicates that it was made specifically for tourists.²²

The second bag Benham collected is a beaded bag with soft hide decorated with pink and blue glass beads on one side and green and red beads on the other, with a simplified floral motif [Fig. 12].²³ The bottom has feather or skin attached. Feathers, according to Ruth B. Phillips, were part of medicine bundles, ritual dress and ceremonial acts and their inclusion could indicate continuity with older ritual beliefs and practices (Phillips 1998: 181). The Assiniboine and the Stoney Indians had similar floral designs on garments and accessories and some garments have geometric designs on one side and floral on the other. The NMAI has identified it as Assiniboine or Plains Cree, probably c.1890-1900.²⁴

3.3 The Floral and the Feminine

The most prolific objects sold to tourists were decorated bags and purses due to their popularity with Victorian women (Phillips 1998: 247). First Nations people had used bags for centuries before the arrival of Europeans. They were made from hide and initially decorated with porcupine quills and later glass beads, and were used to hold personal items such as tobacco or medicine bundles. Ruth Phillips (1998) has traced the changing style of bags after cultural contact and has identified the influence of bandolier or shoulder bags used by European soldiers on First Nation designs. She suggests that in the later part of the nineteenth century, with more invasive colonialism and the development of tourism, bags became smaller and rounder reflecting Western Victorian

²² Patricia L. Nietfeld, Supervisory Collections Manager at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), email correspondence 21/09/2010.

²³ PCMAG 1935.25.578.

²⁴ Email from Patricia L. Nietfeld, Supervisory Collections Manager at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, 2/09/2010.



Glenbow Archives NA-3026-37

Figure 10. Sign of the Goat Trading Store, Banff. Copyright and courtesy of Glenbow Museum Archives.



Figure 11. Geometric Beaded Bag with plain back, Stoney/Nakoda, Banff (1934.25.576). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG



Figure 12. Beaded Bag with Floral Design, Banff (1935.25.578). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG



Figure 12. Reverse

taste. Images of flowers dominated the decoration of objects and the adoption of floral motifs was one of the most rapid and drastic changes which changed the visual culture of Native North American art.²⁵ The floral motifs replaced “earlier indigenous traditions that featured geometric motifs and figurative depictions of the *manitos* who bless human beings” (Phillips 1998: 155). The main outside audience for these objects were white middle-class Westerners.

This transformation of First Nations objects, both for themselves and the objects made for trade, resulted in different meanings and resulted in the design of bags that continued First Nations traditions as well as catering for Western tastes in floral design (Phillips 1998). In western art practice naturalistic representation and flowers were an important way to represent the beauty of the natural world and this was absent in First Nations art. Flowers were ubiquitous in all levels of Western visual culture and therefore the adoption of floral motifs by First Nation people was understood by some as a sign of their progress and civilizing. This ‘inclusion’ of Western motifs was, to some, not considered ‘original’ objects but hybrid, a loss of authenticity, although still a sign of civilization (Phillips 1998: 162).²⁶

In the mid-nineteenth century with the development of cultural evolutionism there were distinct categories of what constituted Western civilized art and so called ‘primitive’ art. The floral motif was associated with civilization and western art, and the incorporation of these motifs into so called ‘primitive’ art and hybrid styles, threatened the distinct categories of the primitive and civilized. Some ethnographers attempting to record the

²⁵ The introduction of floral design alongside the geometric happened slowly over centuries and can be dated back to at least two centuries with early contact with Europeans and trade, particularly with floral chintz textiles that were coveted by indigenous people who adopted the floral designs (Phillips 1998).

²⁶ The Metis designed their own distinctive designs which were a mixture of native and European forms, techniques and materials. King states that this was due to the Roman Catholic, French-Canadian education of women in floral embroidery (King 1999: 241).

lifestyles and art of First Nations people saw this as degenerate, a corruptive influence and a loss of originality. An acceptance of floral imagery would have disrupted the modernist notion of 'primitive' art as static and frozen in history rather than celebrating the dynamic and adaptive potential of indigenous art (Phillips 1998). This perspective conforms to the cultural evolutionist paradigm at the time which served to keep indigenous people as unchanging backward primitives, and as Other to the progressive and dynamic west.²⁷ The adoption of floral imagery on First Nations products signified their new political status in the second half of the nineteenth century. The popularity of floral designs increased particularly after the American Civil War, a period which witnessed demands for First Nation land, the removal of indigenous people into reserves and assimilation policies which aimed to eliminate their traditions and culture.

Within western visual culture the floral was associated with femininity and with crafts and Phillips interprets the wearing of floral clothing and accessories by First Nation men and women as a sign of their conformity and "of their acceptance of a submissive and feminine role in the context of the wider society" (Phillips 1998: 193). In addition to this it signified First Nation people as a minority ethnic group similar to other immigrant northern Europeans who had highly decorated clothing and objects such as the Ukrainians and "this self-representation through floral imagery can be regarded as a conscious choice, one that formed part of a strategy for survival" (Phillips 1998: 195). The clothing signified their difference from western people and positioned and maintained them as 'Other'.²⁸ Some anthropologists and collectors, under the 'salvage paradigm' of collecting understood the adoption of Western design as a corruption of First Nations indigenous art and a loss of authenticity while others understood it as

²⁷ The anthropologist and museum curator Alfred Cort Haddon in his book *Evolution in Art* (1895) "believed that geometric ornamentation was a symptom of non-complex societies and would therefore appear at the lower end of the evolutionary scale" (Küchler and Were 2005: 38).

²⁸ From a western perspective, the floral was associated with crafts and the feminine, and was not as highly valued as the arts.

an outcome of the civilizing process. “Like Haddon, the founders of North American ethnology regarded the adoption of floral iconography by north-eastern Aboriginal groups as positive evidence of progress towards Christianization, civilization and assimilation” (Phillips 1998: 162). However, other views regarded the floral motif as ‘suspicious’, degenerate and corrupted (Phillips 1998). The adoption of floral motifs, however, can also be interpreted as a form of passive resistance on the part of First Nations people. Flowers, plants, and berries are all important aspects of North American indigenous cosmology and the flower was a part of plant life which was closely connected to human life and revered by First Nations people. The incorporation of the flower can be understood as a continuation of their belief system at a time when their rituals and systems of belief were being obliterated (Phillips 1998). The irony of this situation was not understood by Western colonizers who, through misrecognition, failed to acknowledge the First Nation worldview, their cosmologies or their systems of knowledge.

The flower motif on the bag that Benham collected is not intricate but is fairly simplified and stylized and this may be due to stylistic changes as well as economic factors, “economic forces lead not only to changes in size, but also to simplification of form and decoration – the fewer steps that are involved, the more the artisan will be able to produce (Graburn 1976: 15).²⁹ Benham, as an artist, retained her sense of femininity throughout her travels and expressed herself through needlework and embroidery which she sold and bartered for food and ‘curios’ – to use her terms of reference. According to the visual conventions of Edwardian constructions or notions of femininity and their association with floral imagery, it may be assumed that her embroidery was probably based on floral designs. In this sense, Benham, as a white British woman and First

²⁹ Simplification is aided by the fact that the buyer does not know the meaning of the omitted detail ... or may not even be aware that there was more to the traditional objects (Graburn 1976: 15).

Nations people, in their use of the flower motifs, were both positioned as inferior within dominant western patriarchal ideology and society.

3.4 Beads and Baskets

A third object that Benham collected is a necklace made from woven sweetgrass decorated with glass beads³⁰ [Fig.13]. Sweetgrass grows on the Plains in Canada and is used in First Nations ceremonies as a ‘smudge’ along with tobacco, sage and cedarwood. ‘Smudging’ is a ritual carried out before prayers or religious ceremonies to cleanse and purify the spirit of the people and the atmosphere to create or restore harmony. The Royal Alberta Museum have several similar sweetgrass necklaces which are mainly Assiniboine and Cree³¹ but there is hardly any information on them or how they were collected.³² One of them is Nakoda and was formerly owned by a missionary missionary at Morley. The curatorial remarks states:

Dennis Paul, a Nakoda individual, spoke with his seventy-eight year old mother about the importance of woven grass necklaces. According to Mr Paul’s mother, her great grandmother would make these long necklaces out of sweetgrass. His mother said that “it was our fashion and ornament for special occasions. At times they were used for ceremonies, but they were also used for dressing up for outings”³³

³⁰ PCMAG 1934.25.670.

³¹ The Plains Cree are one of the largest groups of First Nation people and include the Blackfoot (Niitsitapi). After Treaty 7 in 1877 they were allocated land for ‘reserves’ in South Alberta. H77.80.1 (Assiniboine) was collected from Norman Luxton at his Trading Post in Banff in the early 1930s; H88.94.107 (Assiniboine), Doug Light collection; H88.94.108 (Assiniboine), acquired from the Curly family, Mosquito Reserve, 1948. One of them (H94.50.89) (Cree) was collected by Paul Croze a French artist and writer who visited western Canada in 1928, 1930 and 1931. This artefact was displayed in 1931 at the Trocadero Museum of Ethnography, Paris, in an exhibition *Indians of Yesterday and Today*. Catalogue No. 168. Royal Alberta Museum Archives visit 15/10/2009.

³² There are no sweetgrass necklaces in the BM collections (email Jim Hamell 06/11/2012), in PRM (email Julia Nicolson 29/10/2012), in MAA (email Rachel Hand 07/11/2012) in RAMM (email Tony Eccles 09/11/2012) or in Liverpool Museum (email Joanna Ostapkowicz 14/11/2012).

³³ Royal Alberta Museum Archives H02.10.12. Visit 26/10/2009.

The NMAI have three sweetgrass necklaces, the provenance of which are Assiniboine (or Stoney/Nakoda).³⁴ One of these was collected in 1904 by a CPRR guide near Banff and has green and yellow beading and is Assiniboine or Stoney/Nakoda.³⁵ They have no further information on the necklaces but suggest that they are not ceremonial due to the fact that they were sold to railroad travellers and workers and that sweetgrass, in spite of its ceremonial functions, was also commonly used in tourist items such as baskets.³⁶

On a research visit to The Glenbow Museum Calgary, Canada it was discovered that they have a substantial collection of sweetgrass necklaces but little research has been undertaken on them and therefore no information is available as to who made them or when and by whom they were worn. Figure 14 shows a Stoney/ Nakoda woman wearing one c.1910.³⁷ Gerald Conaty, Director of Indigenous Studies at the Glenbow, suggests that they are predominantly in the Nakoda (Stoney) collections and he thinks they are particular to that culture. He regularly works with Nakoda people and elders but none has expressed concern about how they are stored or about their presence in the museum and therefore suggests that they are not sacred.³⁸

The fourth object Benham collected was a small box made from birchbark and

³⁴NMAI Catalogue Number 149271.000 (Assiniboine) is a plain woven sweetgrass with no beads and was collected by Donald A. Cadzow (1894-1960) (an NMI staff member), in 1926 and the provenance is recorded as 'Jack Pine, Alexis and Wabamun Reservations, (Paul First Nations), Northern Alberta, Canada. NMAI Catalogue Number 191237.000 is of braided sweetgrass with beadwork ornament in blue yellow and white beads collected in 1936 and the provenance is recorded as Stoney Indians, Kootney Plains, Alberta, Canada.

³⁵ NMAI Catalogue Number 002257.000.

³⁶ Email correspondence from Patricia L Nietfield, Collections Manager, NMAI, 16/09/2010.

³⁷ Thanks to Ruth McConnell at the Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada for this image.

³⁸ Email correspondence with Gerald Conaty Director of Indigenous Studies, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada, 24/04/2012.



Figure13. Sweetgrass Necklace, with beading, Banff , Canada (1934.25.670) Courtesy and copyright PCMAG

Figure14. Betty Hunter (Nakoda/ Stoney) wearing a sweetgrass necklace with beading. Photographed by Harry Pollard c. 1910. Image has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

decorated with porcupine quillwork with a floral design on the lid³⁹ [Fig 15]. Birchbark baskets were common souvenir items, “We do not know exactly when artists began to apply quill embroidery to the bodies of their bark containers or when floral motifs first appeared” (Phillips 1998: 170). Phillips dates the earliest type of quill embroidered bark ware to the early 1820s but the trade proliferated due to an expanded market in curiosities.⁴⁰

Patricia Neitfeld at the NMAI suggests that Benham’s box was probably from further east than the Alberta Rockies in Ontario or eastern Manitoba (or Michigan in the US) and attributes it to the Chippewa/Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) (or at any rate from the Great Lakes Area) also suggests it was probably new when collected.⁴¹ She suggests that the date range for this type of box is broad as they are still made today and virtually all were made for sale to tourists.⁴² Benham may have collected it from Great Lakes Indians themselves if they were selling in Banff, or more likely, from the CPRR who sold Indian crafts at their hotels and railway stations and if Benham was travelling across Canada she may have obtained it further east along the railroad route.⁴³ Ruth B. Phillips states that the box is “certainly Ojibwe (or Anishinaabe as is more commonly used) and probably from Ontario.” She further suggests that it looks like a production sponsored

³⁹ PCMAG 1934.25.180. Benham records in her *Catalogue of Museum* another two baskets “348 and 349 baskets made by N American Indians. North Bend, Canada.” These have been crossed out, presumably by Benham. North Bend is in British Columbia and had a CPRR hotel. In addition to this she records another basket “355 small basket & lid. Indian work. Vancouver.” These are all unlocated and not on the current PCMAG database.

⁴⁰ This is based on her research into collections from soldiers in the 1812 war that do not contain examples of either of these styles (Phillips 1998: 171).

⁴¹ Email correspondence Patricia L. Nietfeld, Collections Manager, 21/09/2010.

⁴² Sir Hans Sloane collected birchbark baskets. His catalogue in the British Museum reads “a nest of Olagans or thirty Basketts made with Birch Bark & adorne’d wt: Porcupine quills given me by Capt: Middleton who’ brought them from Hudson Bay”. (King in MacGregor 1994: 239). The largest collections of Great Lakes birchbark boxes are those by Martin Pitzer, Museum fur Volkerkunde, Vienna made in the 1850s and Father Edward Purbrick at Stonyhurst College in 1879 (on loan to the British Museum since 1977 with permanent acquisition in 2003).

⁴³ Email from Patricia L. Nietfeld, Collections Manager, NMAI, 21/09/2010.

by the Indian Affairs Department shipped for sale to tourist sites across Canada.

She states that there are similar items in the Royal Alberta Museum including a mat with similar quillwork that is labelled “Jasper Park, Canada” on the front and stamped on the back “made in Canada by Ojibwe Tribe, Shawanaga Reserve.” (Shawanaga is on Georgian Bay, Lake Huron).⁴⁴ The Anishinaabe are known for their birchbark canoes and objects so this supports the area in which Benham’s box was made and testifies to the fact that objects can reflect a region’s raw materials, in this case sweetgrass from the plains and birchbark from the woodlands (Parezo 2004: 209).



Figure 15. Birchbark box with porcupine quill decoration and floral lid, North America. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

⁴⁴ Email correspondence with Ruth B. Phillips, 15/05/2012. Trudy Nicks supports this suggestion.

Throughout the Great Lakes missionaries also promoted the production of birchbark and held craft shows to promote and sell First Nations goods to support missionary work. The birchbark boxes represented familiarity and strangeness – the novel use of unusual organic material coupled with familiar floral designs to appeal to western taste for the exotic but not too unfamiliar to identify with, “almost the same but not quite” (Bhabha 1994: 86). From a postcolonial perspective, the potential of the hybrid is its ability to traverse both cultures, and as such, it disrupts ideas of ‘fixity’ and allows for the opening up of spaces other than established categories, and therefore new forms of cultural meaning and production (Bhabha 1994).

The irony that the First Nations incorporated floral motifs into their designs due to their cosmology rather than merely adapting Western designs in order to appear to be ‘civilized’ can also be applied to beadwork. Beads were used as trade items from the earliest explorers and beaded objects made by First Nations people became metonyms for the whole culture when exhibited in Britain. The adoption of new materials was not just an assimilation of Western materials and technology but can be interpreted as a strategy for survival on the behalf of First Nations people. As Graburn states:

All societies that are in contact with each other eventually exchange materials, items and ideas. Foreign materials are substituted for hard to obtain native objects, such as imported beads for porcupine quills, freeing artists from the problems of gathering and preparation and allowing them to concentrate on design and execution – and greater production (Graburn 1976: 11).

The use of porcupine quills for decoration was labour intensive and time-consuming. The introduction of European beads allowed First Nation people to increase their production of objects and therefore increase revenue from made-for-sale objects to Westerners and so contribute to their economy.

Clara Sue Kidwell (2004) has discussed the relation between native and non-native systems of knowledge and how the exchange of objects can result in new forms of knowledge. The lack of understanding of the others' system of knowledge can result in misunderstandings and misconceptions. For example the introduction of beads was not just due to the First Nations fascination with them as exotic objects but that they were "similar to objects that had spiritual powers in Indian cultures" (Kidwell 2004: 89). The glass beads were similar to crystals, which were used in divining because they projected light and shifted the perspective of things viewed through them. They replaced wampum beads which were labour intensive in needing to drill them from hard clam shells and which had sacred significance in First Nations culture. "Confronted with the unfamiliar, Indians found ways to put European technology into their own systems of thought" (Kidwell 2004: 89).⁴⁵ The glass bead, for First Nation people, had significance as analogy and metaphor, "A European bead was like a wampum bead; the wampum bead is both a physical object and metaphorical embodiment of human thought, speech and action" (Kidwell 2004: 89). In this sense, the bead can therefore reflect different systems of knowledge, systems of value and beliefs. The Hudson Bay Company had a lucrative trade in beads with First Nations from the eighteenth century at least but the indigenous peoples absorbed them into their systems of knowledge and used them to decorate objects for themselves and to make objects of trade demonstrating their adaptation and creativity.

3.5 Authenticity: Collecting 'The Real Thing'

When Benham travelled to Canada there had been a long history of western influence which gained momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century with the rise of tourism and the demand for 'exotic' objects. Authenticity, the notion of a 'pure' original

⁴⁵ Glass beads were mainly from Venice and later from Eastern Europe.

object, in contrast to a 'hybrid' object which had probably been made-for-sale, was a key concern for all buyers, and even tourists who purchased artefacts wanted them to be genuine. However, in general, tourists were less concerned with authenticity in relation to collectors who sought out authentic objects, even though they may have been mistaken (Lee 1999, MacCannell 1999). In discussing foreign 'exotic' art Graburn states:

One gains prestige by association with these objects, whether they are souvenirs or expensive imports; there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism, etc. that these arts symbolize; at the same time there is the nostalgic input of the handmade in a "plastic" world (Graburn 1976: 3).

For Susan Stewart the acquisition of exotic objects as souvenirs is the equivalent to a form of 'taming' and as a referent to the self which reveals more about the values of the Western collector:

In most souvenirs of the exotic, however, the metaphor in operation is again one of taming; the souvenir retains its signifying capacity only in a generalized sense, losing its specific referent and eventually pointing to an abstracted otherness that describes the possessor ... an exoticism of the self (Stewart 1993: 148).

The tourist demand for objects, as with collectors, creates and determines the types of objects designed and sold which is distinct from authentic traditional crafts which are valued for being objects made for, and used by, First Nations people.⁴⁶ This however involves an irony:

⁴⁶ Demand, according to Appadurai, is politicized, "the collecting of others objects can be seen as a direct "politicization of demand" and its subsequent display as an instrument of "finely tuned social messages" (Appadurai 1986: 33).

As for tourist souvenirs themselves, they increasingly tend in both form and content to be shaped by the expectations of the tourist market that will consume them ... Ironically, objects that are originally valued by tourists precisely because of their connections to a traditional holistic, and paradisaal culture are transformed, exaggerated, and modified by the fluctuating demands of that same tourist market (Stewart 1993: 149-150).

Some objects, however, were made for use by First Nations as well as being made-for-sale which complicates issues of authenticity based on an objects use-value.

In discussing the objects that Benham collected it is important to acknowledge what she did not collect. Her objects are not ceremonial or sacred as these would have a different political and social value:

Every society has a symbolic inventory of objects that are precluded from being commoditized and alienated in any way from their original purpose. Some of these prohibitions are cultural and upheld collectively, the objects labelled as sacred or cultural patrimony (Parezo 2004: 225).⁴⁷

Although this indicates the agency and control of First Nations people in trade but it also has to be acknowledged that by the late 1800s European colonizers and missionaries had banned or severely restricted traditional spiritual life including ceremonies and rituals as well as traditional healing. This resulted in the decline of many types of objects such as medicine bundles, and this lack of certain objects shaped Western collections and therefore it is not surprising that Benham did not collect this type of object.

⁴⁷ Susan Pearce explains that, in the West, the status of objects, when removed from the world of goods into a collection, are taken out of the economic circulation and placed within the category of the 'sacred'. This is further enhanced when the collection is donated to and accepted by a museum, an institution which gives authority to the collection and 'immortality' to the collector (Pearce 1995).

3.6 The Zone of the Transcultural

The adaptation of North American objects to incorporate western floral imagery and materials can be located in Mary Louise Pratt's notion of 'Transculturation', a phenomenon of the contact zone which addresses how marginal groups can select aspects of the dominant culture and decide what to use, what not to use and how to use it (Pratt 1992). It "describes how marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant culture" (Pratt 1992: 6), in this instance the way in which First Nations people decided to absorb some forms of Western design and materials such as beads and floral imagery, and used it to their own ends and advantages in a quiet but powerful way. For example, they decided to accept or reject beads to replace the traditional method of porcupine quillwork decoration and in doing so were able to produce more goods at a faster rate than having to prepare and dye the porcupine quills, thus generating more goods for themselves and for the tourist trade. This can be understood as not the arts of acculturation but one of adaptation and demonstrates the survival strategies of indigenous peoples (Graburn 1976). Graburn discusses the effects on arts and artefacts due to cross-cultural contact and highlights the fact that it is not just arts that are made for external use, such as souvenirs and tourist art that changes, but functional and non-commercial arts that also changes due to the introduction of new materials and processes. This also has to acknowledge the fact that even without these new materials, changes in form and content would, and did, happen due to the creativity of indigenous people themselves, their own creative freedom to experiment, and that this change was always (and is) a continuous and on-going process. The reverse process of transculturation has to be acknowledged in that Westerners also adopted techniques and materials of First Nations and demonstrates that colonialism had effects on both the colonized and colonizer, albeit in different ways and on different levels. This is qualified by the admission that the marginal group, although they cannot control

what is sometimes forced upon them, can exert their own power and agency by determining “to varying extents what they absorb into their culture and what they use it for” (Pratt 1992: 6).

As discussed, the objects had different meanings for different groups and can be interpreted from these different perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of the western colonizer, the objects produced, and in particular the adoption of the floral motif, were a materialisation of the assimilation and civilizing of First Nations people and therefore indicated the success of the colonial project and the power of the British Empire. Within Victorian Britain and the theory of cultural evolution, the objects in the West were used as ‘specimens’ to demonstrate the progress of the people to becoming civilized, particularly in the adoption of the floral motifs. First Nations people were represented as industrious and productive and therefore assimilated into Western culture. Within Victorian imperialist ideology, First Nations people were redefined from ‘savage’ to ‘civilized’ and so testified to the success of colonialism. Some Westerners, however, saw this as a corruption of the pure authentic First Nations product. The irony of this was that it was the effect of colonial power itself that produced a hybridization of objects (Bhabha 1994: 112). This, however, was a hegemonic Eurocentric perspective and was not as straightforward as it may have once been understood and within a post-colonial era there are other factors and other voices to be considered.

Secondly, in contrast to the colonizers’ perspective, for First Nations peoples, the production of these objects contributed to their survival, financially and culturally, the flower motif fitted into their cosmology and spiritual ritual as a continuation of their relationship between nature and culture and their respect for the natural world which had ensured the survival of their people for thousands of years before European contact.

The adoption of Western techniques, materials and aesthetic by colonized peoples can be interpreted as a form of ‘camouflage’ or what Bhabha refers to as ‘mimicry’:

The effect of mimicry is camouflage ... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare (Jacques Lacan quoted in Bhabha 1994: 85).

First Nations’ objects which incorporated Western designs were a camouflage to the dominant culture who assumed that through the adoption of their materials and designs, the ‘native’ was becoming ‘civilized’ and their mission a success. Although the relationship and the power between colonizer and colonized always remained asymmetrical, this position contradicts and challenges early discourses of colonialism which were based on a ‘fatal impact’ narrative, and instead, it highlights a form of passive resistance, albeit silent, of indigenous people that went largely unnoticed by colonizers at the time, and exemplifies how First Nations shaped their own objects and decided how to represent themselves to the West.

The production of the objects, the mimicry and the transculturation of them, were, however, a form of strategic social action and agency by a colonized people in response to the demand for their products by the colonizers both settlers and later, tourists. They can also be interpreted as a materialisation of their creativity and aesthetics. First Nations people identified potential markets for their productions and exploited the situation to their own ends as a strategy for survival in the face of increasing colonialism, dispossession and domination.

Thirdly, for a collector such as Benham, the beaded objects and the basket signified the stereotype of 'Indianness' and attested to the "collectors' longings for an imaginary "contact-traditional" stage of culture at some frozen time in the "ethnographic present" (Fabian 1983). "In this fantasy time Plains Indians can continue to exist while the realities of Indian reservation life can be ignored entirely" (Graburn in Phillips and Steiner 1999: 345). Even though the objects that Benham collected had no signs of use or wear, which indicates that they were new, this did not matter or interfere with this culturally constructed fantasy. Dean MacCannell in his analysis of tourism suggests that the search for the authentic 'Other' and a quest for authenticity was the outcome of disillusionment with industrialization and mass production (MacCannell 1989).⁴⁸ Benham eschewed industrialization and modernization and therefore the objects may have represented the idea of the pre-modern. The paradox was, however, that travel and tourism were markers of the modern.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Benham's collecting of objects can be understood against the political background of oppression, assimilation and dispossession of First Nations people as well as in the debates regarding authenticity and the status of souvenir art. But it can also be understood in the light of the agency, innovation and survival of First Nations peoples under adverse colonial conditions. Benham's trip to North America was her first outside of Europe and the objects she collected can be considered as the genesis of her collection and as such the beginning of the articulation of her own identity (Stewart 1993: 162). Benham stated that her main objective was to climb the Rockies and she did not comment on the fact that she intended to collect on her trip, so her collecting can be

⁴⁸ The term 'tourist' is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with their obviously inauthentic experience (MacCannell 1989: 94).

⁴⁹ Molly Lee (1999:273) discusses Alaskan Native art particularly Indian Baskets and how they became a symbol of anti-modernism.

understood as secondary to her travels and mountaineering (O'Hanlon and Welsh 2001). Collections can begin in different ways for different people and "the study of collectors makes it clear that collections can creep up on people unawares until the moment of realization" (Pearce 1992: 49). Why did Benham select these objects and what value might they have had for her?

The objects Benham collected were decorative, small and easily portable, and, as discussed, they were most probably made for the tourist market and were readily available.⁵⁰ By 1904 the tourist trade in First Nations objects was well established and prolific and the design of objects had undergone transformations so it can be assumed that she did not collect them in order to 'salvage' them, the idea that the culture was dying out and objects needed to be rescued by Europeans. She may have bought them from a curio shop, a hotel or a railroad station although as she travelled through the region it not inconceivable that she bought them direct from First Nations people themselves. It is not known, however, if Benham simply collected them as souvenirs as a tourist or whether she had any intentions to form a collection at this point in her travels, but it was not a systematic collection and "souvenirs, in contrast to collectables, are valuable only to those who buy them ... how better to immortalize the "authentic Other" than by taking home something made by his or her own hands" (Lee 1999: 270). It is the tangible piece of evidence of a specific time and place and evidence of their experience. In terms of authenticity Lee, (*pace* MacCannell 1976), suggests that tourists were the least discriminating regarding notions of authenticity or whether the objects had been made specifically for tourists. More serious collectors sought out native people themselves to buy from them but tourists mainly bought from curio shops. Susan

⁵⁰ Benham own *Catalogue of Museum* records "353 small model of moccasins. Banff". These are unlocated and are not on the current database. Moccasin represented the very essence of Indianness (Phillips 1998; Phillips and Steiner 1999).

Stewart (1993) has discussed the notion of the souvenir on a personal level as 'nostalgia' for 'being there' (Stewart 1993: 135). The souvenir therefore contracts the world in order to expand the personal (Stewart 1993: xii) "Thus such objects satisfy the nostalgic desire for use value at the same time that they provide an exoticism of the self" (Stewart 1993: 148). The collecting of objects reveal more about Benham and Western values and taste than they do about the culture from which they were collected (Clifford 1988).

Even though this chapter has established that Benham's objects were probably made for tourists, they should not be dismissed as lacking in authenticity and authority as:

Authority lies not in the property of the object itself, but in the very process of collection, which inscribes the moment of acquisition, the character and qualities that are associated with the object in both the individual and collective memories ... each generation reclassifies the arts of world cultures in order to set high against low, authentic against touristic, traditional against new, genuine against spurious ... authenticity is an illusion (Phillips & Steiner 1999: 19).

The objects Benham collected may have been made for sale as well as for use by First Nations people. In addressing value Pearce (1992) states that 'rarity' is a value particularly if it is exotic and has to be brought a long way. The objects Benham collected may not have been rare in North America at the time she collected them but they would have been rare and 'exotic' in England and this may be one reason why she bought them. If authenticity is based on the rare and the idea that they were made for use by indigenous people then this complicates notions of authenticity. In some sense all objects can be said to be 'authentic' as they are made in, and reflect the specific

social, economic, and political circumstances in which they were produced and consumed.⁵¹

The production of First Nations commodities demonstrate the adaptation and resourcefulness of a people whose lifestyle and culture were on the verge of extinction and reflects the agency of that culture in strategies which ensured their survival. Their adoption of Western materials and adaptation of Western designs demonstrates that “borrowing, imitating, and adopting foreign ideas is not the preserve of the modernist” (Stanley 1989: 120). In discussing notions of hybridity Annie Coombes states that:

The many manifestations of creative transculturation by those assigned to the margins do potentially provide productive interruptions to the West’s complacent assurance of the universality of its own cultural values (Coombes 1994a: 217).

From a postcolonial perspective, Pratt states that the “Imperial metropolis tends to see itself as determining the periphery – it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis” (Pratt 1992: 6). Beaded bags and birchbark boxes decorated with quillwork continue to be produced today. Native people have continued to produce art and have maintained aspects of their culture and traditions and they, as Clifford states, “have not, as predicted, disappeared into modernity’s homogenizing stream or into the national melting pot ... master narratives of cultural disappearance and salvage could be replaced by stories of revival, remembrance and struggle” (Clifford 1991: 214).

⁵¹ In discussing whether Benham’s objects were ‘souvenirs’ or ‘fetishes’ or ‘scientific specimens’ Lee suggests that these categories are contingent on different taste cultures and that they meant different things to different people at different times. However in the twentieth century with the aestheticizing of non-western art, these categories were subsumed under the rubric of ‘Native Art’ (Lee 1999: 280).

In considering Benham's selection of objects one of the cultural factors which may have influenced her is the Arts and Crafts movement in England whose ideology was based on the appreciation of the 'hand-made' aesthetic, skills, processes and technologies. Benham's objects were intricately hand-made with meticulous attention to detail and can be said to be the antithesis of industrially-made objects in the West. The notion of the handmade object can have associations with the myth of the 'primitive' and a romantic idea of a simpler way of life – one that had been lost in the industrial West with its emphasis on progress and mass production which for some, resulted in shoddy manufactured goods, "The idea of a pristine, uncontaminated, culture served romantic Western primitivists seeking an escape from their own industrial modernity" (Cole 1985: xi). The irony of the demand for the handmade exotic object resulted in the transformations of those very objects and this hybridity rendered them less valued, "Ironically, objects that are originally valued by tourists precisely because of their connections to a traditional holistic, and paradisaal culture are transformed, exaggerated, and modified by the fluctuating demands of that same tourist market" (Stewart 1993: 150).

By the time Benham collected her objects First Nation beaded objects and the use of materials had already become stereotypical objects which signified 'Indianness' and tangible proof of exotic travel. The souvenir is an essential element in the structure of tour experience – a necessary marker or concrete evidence of ephemeral experience that has been consumed (MacCannell 1976), "thus such objects satisfy the nostalgic desire for use value at the same time that they provide an exoticism of the self" (Stewart 1993: 148). Benham was constructing herself through the collecting of the objects and in doing so her collection is also what Clifford refers to as part of the construction of a

Western identity in relation to First Nation people's difference and alterity (Clifford 1988).

The intricate beadwork on the bags Benham collected may have reflected her own interest in needlework and embroidery which can be assumed was also based on floral designs and nature and corresponded to her interest in collecting flowers on her trip to Lake Louise, "The Victorian admiration for naturalism in art is intimately connected to the obsession of the age with natural history" (Phillips 1998: 161). The composite use of materials in the sweetgrass necklace, and her collecting of objects made from organic plant material, such as birchbark and porcupine quills, materialises her interest in Natural History. In this sense, Benham can be placed alongside the early voyagers and explorers of the eighteenth century, as discussed in Chapter 2, who collected natural history alongside 'ethnographic' collecting which was considered secondary to this.

According to Phillips (1998) gender had an impact on market-orientated arts and she suggests that they were mostly made and consumed by women and were classified as 'crafts', "at the edges of the canonically correct and the typologically pure" (Phillips 1998: x).⁵² Ruth McConnell at the Royal Alberta Museum supports this and states that:

Almost all of the material in any Aboriginal collection that is clothing (moccasins, garments, bags, etc.), or shelters (tipis, tents, backrests, liners), would have been made by women. Men would have made hunting, fishing, warfare equipment and some ceremonial material such as pipes ... even earlier than 1904 women used the situation (western travellers looking for souvenir items to purchase) as an opportunity to make a bit of money, or more realistically, a trade of goods.⁵³

⁵² Van der Grijp (2006), Naomi Schor (1994) have addressed the 'decorative mania' in collecting, specifically in relation to the objects women collect. Maureen Mackenzie (1992) considers Androgynous Objects. See Katharine Martinez, & Kenneth L. Ames, (1997) for gender in material culture.

⁵³ Email from Ruth McConnell, Royal Alberta Museum, Canada, 05/10/2009.

This highlights not only gender in production and collecting, but also the agency of First Nations women as entrepreneurs in a colonial situation.⁵⁴ Marsha C. Bol, in a discussion of the collecting of North American Plains' tourist art, states that men collected "male war trophy and status signifiers, such as feather "war" bonnets and hair fringed shirts, which were often referred to as "scalp" shirts (Bol 1999: 224). Benham's bags and necklace could be considered gendered feminised decorative objects – however this is only a Western perspective as highly elaborate and decorative Indian artefacts, including those with floral decoration, were worn by First Nation men.⁵⁵ The association of women with crafts within Western patriarchal ideology, however, renders them less valued than that of 'art'. In considering Benham's selection of objects it has to be acknowledged that First Nation people were an intrinsic part of the decision-making process and had their own strategies and policies for trade. Based on a history of trade and tourism in the second half of the nineteenth century they had their own knowledge of what objects were in demand and they decided what to make for trade to tourists, what not to make, and what not to sell. Ruth Phillips highlights that any analysis of North American artefacts, whether floral or other stylistically hybrid forms, that it is not just about the:

Westernization of Native material culture, but also the way in which the economic power and respect that derived from successful commodity production could support aboriginal resistance to assimilation (Phillips 1998: 159).

The power of the colonizer resulted in a 'slippage' in meaning, an interstitial space which allowed for the agency and power of First Nations people. The colonists' will to

⁵⁴ The history of the role of indigenous women as producers in colonialism has yet to be written.

⁵⁵ The negative effects of this, within a patriarchal colonialist discourse, was to 'feminize' First Nation men as weak and as dependent as women (Phillips 1998).

complete the civilizing mission was never achieved as there always is resistance, external and internal, and debates are still on-going today (Bhabha 1994).

Benham's collecting of the objects entangled her in the economic, politics and cultural contexts in which the objects were produced and consumed. The colonial and political situation which was the foundation for the development of tourism, was represented through discursive strategies which rendered it natural, and tourists such as Benham could visit places such as North America which were contact zones of colonial violence and maintain a distanced innocent gaze, what Pratt (1994) has referred to as 'anti-conquest', a strategy of innocence, which at the same time was hegemonic. It would be easy to suggest that Benham was an innocent tourist but as demonstrated, the circumstances in which she travelled and collected were entangled in a contact situation which came about through the ideology and politics of colonialism and the expansion of the British Empire. The collecting of objects (whether considered authentic or inauthentic) was an intrinsic part of this. Benham's objects in PCMAG materialise a specific time and place, the politics and culture of colonialism and of collecting. Benham, as well as the museum were, and remain, entangled with this (Thomas 1991). The objects Benham collected had, and have, a 'biography' of their own (Appadurai 1986) as they move through their production, whether made for functional use by First Nation peoples, or for the tourist trade, their consumption through exchange, in this case, their collecting by Benham and her subsequent donation of them to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery. At each stage of its life objects undergo changes in meaning and value and this is culturally constructed and contingent on the taste of the culture and demonstrates that 'authenticity' is not a unified concept (Lee 1999: 281). Her collecting can also be seen as part of the entanglement of western demand for indigenous products,

the phenomena of ethnographic collecting, and the growing collections of First Nations objects in Western museums in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Benham left North America in autumn 1904, and wrote:

I stayed until winter began to close down, when I went on to New Zealand, *via* Fiji, and from there to Australia, *via* Tasmania. From Australia I went to Japan, where I tramped and climbed, returning to England *via* India, Egypt, and Corsica. That ended my first journey (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 82).

Figure16. Map of Pacific Islands.
Map has been removed due to Copyright
restrictions.

Chapter 4. Benham: A Collector in Oceania

An exotic collection which concerns any part of ... the Pacific invariably contains intricately carved paddles from the Cook and Astral Islands, mushroom clubs from Fiji, lengths of tapa (bark) cloth from across a wide island range, greenstone pieces from New Zealand, carved canoe prows from the Solomons, ceremonial dress made with feathers and pearl shell from, especially, Hawaii and Tahiti, kava bowls (for serving a specially prepared drink) and carved clubs, bowls and equipment for consuming betel-nut from New Guinea.⁵⁶

Introduction

This chapter initially addresses the contact zone of Oceania and gives an overview of the politics of colonialism in the Pacific to give a context to the history of trade and collecting. It addresses early explorers and collectors in the Pacific to highlight the centrality of objects in trade and colonialism. The barter and exchange of objects was the fundamental basis for establishing and maintaining relationships and eventually political economic and cultural dominance and control of indigenous people by Europeans. As in the previous chapter, attention will be paid to Benham as a collector and her poetics of collecting as well as the wider networks of colonial entanglement and the politics of collecting.

Benham collected from many of the islands in the Pacific but in order to make the study manageable, the island of Fiji has been chosen due to the objects that Benham collected and to the existing knowledge available [see Appendix 6]. The chapter discusses the colonization of Fiji in the nineteenth century, particularly, by analysing collectors such as Baron Anatole Von Hugel and Constance Gordon Cumming, to gain an insight into collecting, trade and the level of colonialism in Fiji. The effects of trade on Fijian

⁵⁶ Pearce 1995: 329.

culture and society is discussed along with the role and agency of the Fijians which might be viewed as comparative to the situations which held in North America and Canada as was discussed in the previous chapter. The role of missionaries had a significant impact on the islands of the Pacific and elsewhere and their role as collectors, as well as iconoclasts is discussed. Benham did not record when or where she went on the island, how long she stayed, or whether she had just stopped off from a ship en route to somewhere else.

The chapter also considers a selection of objects that she collected: a presentation whale tooth (*tabua*), a bamboo headrest, a model drum (*lali*) and a ‘cannibal’ fork. Some of these objects are embedded within Fijian ontology and cosmology and the chapter addresses the importance of the material object in social life and how objects and people (or humans and non-humans) become ‘entangled’ socially, politically, and culturally. The notion of entanglement positions colonial history as a linked or entangled history and addresses the reciprocal nature of colonial exchange and in doing so allows for the agency and power of indigenous people in trade with western collectors (Thomas 1991). The chapter questions the impact of European collecting on Fijian culture and this raises questions about Benham as a collector. Why did she collect these objects and what might have informed her selection? How, as an itinerant collector, might she have acquired them?

Finally, Benham as a collector is discussed through the material objects she collected. What might these objects have meant to Benham as a collector? It suggests that her collection from Fiji represents a shift in her collecting from that of collecting as a tourist, to collecting with a cognitive and educational intentionality.

4.1 The Contact Zone: Oceania

In October 1904 Benham left the Canadian Rockies for Vancouver and crossed the Pacific to New Zealand calling at Fiji (1904) en route and arriving in Christchurch, South Island in January 1905. She returned to England at the end of 1906 via India, Egypt, and Corsica, thus ending her first world trip (Howgego 2009) [see Appendix 1]. Her second trip was undertaken between 1907 and 1909 when she visited Japan, South America and South Africa. Her third trip lasted from 1909-1913 when she spent time in India and the Pacific and then made her second trip to Africa. Howgego suggests that she spent time in India during 1910-11 and then travelled to the islands of the South Pacific. He records that on 24 December 1911 she was in Papeete, Tahiti where she is recorded in a passenger list as boarding the RMS Tahiti, “a cargo ship bound for San Francisco” (Howgego 2009: 25). Apart from a brief stopover in Fiji in 1904, and a possible excursion to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) in the closing years of her life, this, according to Howgego, was Benham’s sole documented visit to the islands of Oceania, then known as the South Sea Islands. However, he further states that, “She may have returned there in 1923, when she is known to have visited Australia, but her other Pacific crossings seem to have taken the more northerly route” (Howgego 2009: 25).

During the 1830s the Pacific was carved up into a tripartite classification by the French explorer Jules Dumont D’Urville and named Polynesia (many islands), Melanesia (black Islands), and Micronesia (small islands) (Hooper 2006)¹ [Fig. 16]. Benham’s *Catalogue of Museum* records the places where she obtained her Pacific objects but no date is included, so whether she returned to Fiji, how long she spent there, or whether

¹Polynesia consists of a geographical triangle in the Eastern Pacific with New Zealand at the southerly point, Hawaii at the North and Easter Islands in the east. The Western islands include Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Society Islands including Tahiti, the Cook Islands, the Marquesas, the Taumotus, and the Austral Islands (D’Alleva 1998:16). This carving up and naming of the Pacific has been criticized as a western colonial construction (Thomas 1991 and 1997).

she briefly stopped off en route is unknown. Her *Catalogue* reveals that she collected from many of the islands in the Pacific and these are as follows: In Melanesia (Fiji, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands)², in Polynesia (Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, Samoa, and Tubuaeran) and in Australasia (Tasmania, New Zealand and Australia) [see Appendix 6]. She may have visited Fiji and collected at this time. She left New Zealand in autumn 1905 and travelled to Tasmania and Australia. Benham collected six maireener shell necklaces from Tasmania, probably made at this time. They are small conical kelp shells much prized by Tasmanian Aboriginal women and are still made today³ [Fig 5].

Early collectors to the Pacific include Captain James Cook (1728-1779). Cook's journals reveal much about his initial contact and trade with the Pacific islanders.⁴ He was accompanied by the botanist Joseph Banks (1743-1820) on his first voyage, who amassed a large collection of natural history and 'artificial curiosities'.⁵ There was an intention on the part of the Admiralty to obtain examples of manufactures or other evidence of the cultures being contacted and this was part of the ideology of scientific institutions such as the Royal Society.⁶ The sailors were also avid collectors and Cook's journals reveal the phenomena of collecting and shift in how the practice of collecting became 'scientific' or 'professional' but the sailors retained a passion for

² Fiji borders eastern Melanesia and western Polynesia. Sometimes it is included in Melanesia and other times it is included in Polynesia. The database at PCMAG include it as part of Melanesia.

³ (www.tmag.tas.gov.au) (PCMAG 1934.25.33-1; 1934.25.34-1; 1934.25.35-1; 1934.25.36-1; 1934.25.37-1; 1934.25.43-1). In 1997 the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter repatriated a maireener shell necklace and bracelet to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. It was thought to have belonged to Trunganini who was thought to have been the last survivor of her tribe.

⁴ Adrienne Kaeppler has undertaken detailed research on Cook's voyages and collections (Kaeppler 1978).

⁵ Sir Joseph Banks' collection was given to Sir Hans Sloane and was one of the founding collections of the British Museum. Other collectors on Cook's voyages include botanists Daniel Solander and Johann and George Forster.

⁶ The Royal Society was founded in London in 1660 as an institution for science and learning.

curiosities.⁷ Nicholas Thomas (1994b) describes how, in relation to ‘scientific’ collecting (rational collecting for objective knowledge), collecting for curiosities became associated with commercial pursuits and was viewed as a form of indulgence, an infantile attitude and a form of bad taste. Legitimate inquisitiveness was acceptable but curiosity became associated with the feminine, unstable and lacking in authority – an irrational passion, “passionate curiosity is particularly crucial for the vocabulary of collecting in Britain in the late eighteenth century” (Thomas 1994b: 116).⁸ In the eighteenth century ‘curiosity’ referred to both the person, their intellect, and their desire, as well as to objects. In the nineteenth century, in contrast, ‘a curio’ was more immediately legible as a sign of idolatry or cannibalism ... as expression of a savage condition, a barbaric stage of development (Thomas 1994b: 122). Adrienne Kaeppler has investigated the Pacific collections of objects from Cook’s voyages and highlights that on their return to England in the eighteenth century the ‘artificial curiosities’ were not considered as important as the botanical or zoological. They did however, circulate as objects of prestige and were used as gifts in establishing and maintaining relationships and networks, just as they had done in the Pacific (Kaeppler 1978).⁹ These early explorers, such as Cook and Vancouver exchanged European goods for essential commodities such as fresh water, and later settlers used trade and objects for forging good relationships with the indigenous people. However, once water and food had been obtained ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’ curiosities (manufactured objects) were in demand (Hooper 2006).¹⁰ On their return to Britain the display and arrangement of

⁷ This dichotomy between collectors of science and those of curiosities was embedded in gender and class class distinctions. Sailors were not considered professional or scientific.

⁸ Nicholas Thomas critiques this view of science and suggests that the scientific was infused with notions of curiosity, “curiosity, collecting, and curiosities and licentiousness were uncomfortably connected, despite the best efforts of scientist to represent their interests in terms from which passion was evacuated” (Thomas 1994b: 118).

⁹ The earliest recorded object brought back to Europe from Polynesia was a canoe from Nukutavake in Tuamotus, collected in June 1767 and accessioned by the British Museum in 1771 (Hooper 2006: 22).

¹⁰ The terms ‘artificial’ and ‘curiosity’ did not have negative connotations at this period. Artificial referred to man-made objects in contrast to natural history, and curiosity meant something worthy of attention (Hooper 2006: 30).

artificial curiosities in the eighteenth century, “was a key intellectual methodology in the development of proto-anthropological theory” (Henare 2005: 43).

Important and substantial collections of Pacific material include the U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-42, led by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, which reached the Pacific Islands in 1839. The collection of objects from this expedition led to the formation of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington (Viola and Margolis 1985).¹¹ A large collection of Pacific objects was made by A. C. Haddon during the Torres Straits expedition in collaboration with the University of Cambridge in 1898. This was an important expedition in establishing the professional discipline of anthropology.¹²

This centrality of objects has been interpreted as a fundamental factor in and as a foundation for colonial relations to take place and therefore the West’s entanglement, not only with indigenous people, but also with their objects (Thomas 1991). Contact with Europeans did not bring about instant transformations of material culture of the islanders and indigenous knowledge was not completely eradicated. Islanders were experienced traders and had their own agendas for trade and the early phases of their entanglement with Westerners were “grounded in local cultural and political agendas, rather than naïveté” (Thomas 1991: 88). Early Western traders bartered for natural resources such as sandalwood, tortoiseshell and beche-de-mer, the adoption of new materials and tools by the islanders was gradual, and the innovative forms that were produced were no less indigenous to the islands than were the so called ‘pure’ objects gathered by Cook on his voyages (Henare 2005).¹³

¹¹ Adrienne Kaeppler states that 1,202 objects from Fiji were collected (Kaeppler 1985: 121).

¹² The collections are in MAA and the BM. The expedition was reported in six volumes edited by Haddon between 1901-1935 *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits 1901-35*.

¹³ The idea of the ‘pure’ authentic object slowly developed during the nineteenth century with increasing colonization, Western contact and the introduction of Western materials. Salvage collecting developed as a response to cultures that were disappearing as a result of colonization.

4.2 Collecting in Fiji

The first recorded sightings of Fiji by Europeans were in 1643 by Dutch Captain Abel Tasman, in 1774 by Captain James Cook, and in 1789 Captain William Bligh. There were, however, no European settlers until the early nineteenth century and this has been explained as being due to the hostile, war-like reputation of the Fijians and the barrier reefs surrounding the island which made it difficult for ships to anchor (Hooper and Roth 1990).¹⁴

Catholic and Wesleyan Missionaries arrived in the mid- 1820s and their zealous civilizing mission to convert the islanders to Christianity had an enormous impact on Fijian society and culture. They can be considered as part of the colonial process of converting and controlling people, not in a directly military or physical way, but in a more ideologically invasive way in interfering with Fijian culture such as religion, dress, dance, and language, which in many cases were banned or permanently altered. Fiji was annexed to the British Empire in October 1874 when the Fijian chiefs ceded authority to them.¹⁵ Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon (1829-1912) was appointed first Governor in June 1875 until 1880 and lived at Government House near Levuka on the island of Ovalau which had hotels and stores and was the main place for white settlers at the time.¹⁶ His entourage included the collector Constance Gordon Cumming (1837-1924). Baron Anatole von Hugel (1854-1928), was already in Fiji at this time. He sailed from Plymouth on 7 July and arrived at Melbourne on 26 September 1874 and was resident in Fiji for two and a half years from 1875-1877. During this time he made

¹⁴ In the early nineteenth century the 'Fijians' were not a homogenous group. There was no country called Fiji with a central authority, and so many generalisations about the area have to be made with care. The name Fiji is derived from the Tongan pronunciation (Fisi) of the first part of the name of the main island in the region, Viti Levu. The Fijian name for Fiji is Viti (Hooper and Roth 1990: xxvii).

¹⁵ At the end of 1850s resident Europeans did not exceed one hundred but by 1870 this had increased to over two thousand (Hooper and Roth 1990: xxv).

¹⁶ Gordon's governmentship was criticised and praised as he introduced indirect rule to Fiji and introduced legislation which prevented further land sales to outsiders which upset Europeans but can be considered as in the best long-term interest of Fijians. British rule was also opposed by the mountain chiefs in the interior of Viti Levu (Hooper and Roth 1990: xxvi).

a substantial collection of Fijian material culture along with detailed documentation and on his return to England became the first curator at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University (MAA) in 1884.¹⁷ He was invited to live at Government House and records the Governor's appreciation of the "scientific value of ethnological collections" and describes how collecting became contagious by all staying at the house where a large collection of objects were amassed and used to decorate the house and wrote, "Soon every room in Nasova had something of the Museum look about it" (Hooper and Roth 1990: 105). This enthusiasm for collecting Fijian objects resulted in a local store becoming a 'curiosity shop' and the prices of object increased rapidly in a short space of time.¹⁸ All the residents became avid collectors of Fijian material culture and donated collections to MAA.

European contact had brought devastation as well as disease and a measles epidemic in 1875 devastated the population of Fiji. Constance Gordon Cumming estimated that it killed a third of the population, 40,000 out of the 120 0000 and lamented "this death and measles, marking the beginning of British rule for ever as a time of misery" (Gordon Cumming 1885: 24). Under the notion of 'salvage' ethnography it was thought that the customs and culture of Fiji would soon disappear and that it was of urgent importance to collect as much of their material culture as possible before it completely disappeared. Von Hugel believed this to be of pressing scientific importance, for at that time it was considered that, even if the Fijians did not follow the Tasmanians into extinction, their culture would soon be radically altered.¹⁹

¹⁷ According to Hooper and Roth (1990), the main motive for the Baron's travels and writing about Fijians was to make an ethnographic collection.

¹⁸ Thomas suggests that in some places in the Pacific, the production of a form of 'tourist art' began as early as 1770 or not long afterwards (Thomas 1995:18).

¹⁹ This was not the case in Fiji and although many European goods were introduced, there is still "considerable cultural continuity" and the Fiji Museum in Suva currently houses one of the finest Fijian ethnographical collections in the world (Hooper and Roth 1990: xxiii).

Sometimes a limited amount of objects were offered for sale, for example on one occasion Von Hugel was only offered women's fibre skirts (liku) for barter in exchange for cloth and he explains this as being due to their conversion to Christianity which had rendered them obsolete. This was a form of 'salvage collecting'. Von Hugel bought a variety of objects including clubs, spears and yaquona dishes, and in return traded items including knives, fish-hooks, tobacco, coloured cotton cloth, reels of cotton thread and needles, glass beads, pipes, and vermillion powder. He recalled that, "pins and especially needles, were immensely admired although most in demand were knives, cloth and tobacco" (Von Hugel in Hooper and Roth 1990: 27).²⁰ Some Fijians refused to trade and sometimes he could not persuade people to bring him anything. On another occasion he records that he tried to negotiate for a yaquona bowl but it was refused even though he offered several fathoms of cloth in return for it (Hooper and Roth 1990: 68).

The Fijian islanders were aware of trade and quality and knew what they wanted in return:

They generally ask for strong knives, or so many fathoms of very wide strong white calico, in preference to money, and are very discriminating as to quality, having learnt by sad experience how worthless are the cheap Manchester fabrics sent to these isles for trade with natives are mere whitened shams, made up with dressing, and useless when washed (Gordon Cumming 1885: 81).

The trading of artefacts and collecting by Westerners had an impact on Fijian culture and society as early as the 1870s. Constance Gordon Cumming lamented the effects of trade and commented:

²⁰ Von Hugel's collection is in MAA along with sketches by Constance Gordon Cumming. Her collection of objects is in the National Museum Scotland, Edinburgh.

But alas for the vulgarising influence of contact with white men!... islanders have sold their own admirable ornaments and wear instead trashy English necklaces, with perhaps a circular tin looking-glass attached, or an old cotton-reel in the ear instead of a rudely carved earring. Lamentable change, seen most forcible as almost all the fine old clubs and beautifully carved spears have been bought up, and miserable sticks and nondescript articles-including old European battle-axes-take their place (Gordon Cumming 1885: 91).

She compares this to the nearby island of Tonga where:

everything native is dying out. To encourage the import of foreign goods, the people are *forbidden by law to make or wear native clothes*, and they are encouraged to make themselves objects of ridicule by adopting European dress. Imagine Parisian bonnets and absurd hats on these picturesque heads (Gordon Cumming 1885: 144).

Von Hugel praises the fact that the civilising process of the Fijian has partly taken place but stated:

One cannot help lamenting over its many drawbacks-one of the greatest, in stamping out the peculiarities of the people. What can be more hideously absurd than a Fijian family sitting round a table, wearing European clothing and enjoying their tea out of a tin kettle and china cups by the aid of 'silver lamp'...This came to my head as I saw with pain the beautiful Fijian house disfigured by a vulgar chest of draws and the noble old fireplace taken up by a hideous stove with a long chimney...It quite saddened me (Von Hugel in Hooper and Roth 1990: 106).

Baron von Hugel also records the effect of trading away their material culture and at one meke²¹ he states, that the dance was not a success as it should have been a war

²¹ The meke is the traditional dance of Fiji. Some meke were considered undesirable and banned by missionaries who encouraged them to retain their games and dances but only the ones they thought suitable and innocent (Gordon Cumming 1885).

dance and the dancers should have had clubs but these had been bartered away and they used reeds instead which “made their savage bounds and war-like manoeuvres seem ridiculously purposeless” (Von Hugel in Hooper and Roth 1990: 39). He fails to recognise the paradox of his own entanglement with this as he collected many clubs himself which he discusses throughout his journals so, on the one hand he laments the loss, and on the other, he has contributed to it. His collecting would probably have been justified and rationalised through the ideology of European superiority and the gathering of specimens for scientific knowledge.

Missionaries from the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Methodist Mission arrived in the 1820s (Hooper 2006). Missionaries made substantial collections and some had connections with museum curators specifically for the purpose of collecting.²² Missionaries channelled huge quantities of material into the Western world but they also played another, quite opposite role – that of iconoclasts. They regularly destroyed and burnt objects they did not approve of such as idols (Corbey 2000: 61).²³ The extent of the missionary invasion in Fiji and the impact on their society was noted by Constance Gordon Cumming who recorded that the villagers were required to give funds to the missionary teacher and to pay for the upkeep of the missionary school. Many Fijians converted to Christianity and in order to pay these required funds they traded their good and treasures to Europeans in exchange for money. In this sense, the motivation of some Fijians to trade their heirlooms was to

²² Ethnographic objects collected by Christian missionaries are in museums around the world. “Although some pieces are now in Pacific metropolitan centres, such as Pape’ete, Honolulu, Suva, and Auckland, a large proportion are in overseas collections, especially in Britain, Germany, France, and the United States” (Kaepler 2008: 3).

²³ Corbey suggests that this practice of destroying anything considered as idolatry, hideous or monstrous objects, can be traced back to the sixteenth century by Portuguese missionaries in the Congo and the beginning of the nineteenth century by the London Missionary Society (LMS) in Polynesia (Corbey 2000).

financially support the aims of the Christian missions.²⁴ Gordon Cumming stated that this situation provided opportunities to collect rare household and family treasures (Gordon Cumming 1885: 87). In discussing Pacific collections Hooper (2006) states that the collecting of curiosities was not to be seen as the amassing of ‘trophies’, as this did not involve warfare or conquest, but that trophy collecting was more the aim of Christian missionaries as this could be seen as a trophy ridding the heathens of their idols:

Those religious objects which were not destroyed by zealous converts under the direction of the missionaries were collected as trophies for dispatch to missionary museums in Europe. Here they functioned as performance indicators ... and as vehicles for fundraising campaigns in which the public was presented with the grotesque horrors of idolatry and encouraged to support the continuing mission work (Hooper 2006: 27).

Missionaries attempted to wipe out traditions but did not achieve this totally. There was a wide ranging reaction to colonial rule which is testimony to the intransigence of the islanders’ resistance to colonial rule: some Fijians resisted colonial rule, others accepted it and practiced Christianity but at same time kept up their own beliefs and traditions, and others accepted Christianity totally.

4.3 Collecting Tabua

Trade was already a flourishing part of Fijian life by the time Benham arrived in 1904 and objects were easily obtained from local stores as they were made specifically for the tourist market. As early as 1875 Von Hugel commented on this move into the commercialisation of Fijian goods and records that islanders had set up ‘curiosity shops’

²⁴ The donors who gave a large contribution had their name appear in a printed list and so there was a competitive edge and prestige associated with this offering of money.

for tourists as early as 1875, “Levuka storekeepers discovered that they could supply von Hugel with articles of native manufacture and so made the sale of ‘curios’ a regular branch of trade” (Hooper and Roth 1990: 105). Missionary stations also collected indigenous objects and some of these are known to have had ‘specimen markets’ aimed at tourists and collectors (Gosden and Larson 2007).

PCMAG database records twelve objects that Benham collected from Fiji [see Appendix 6]. Her *Catalogue of Museum*, as with many other collectors, reveals little about the objects except for a simple description, and place collected. Sometimes she includes the function of the object or what it symbolised but this is a rare occurrence. The date of acquisition is not included so it is unclear whether Benham made her collection on her first visit to Fiji or at a later stage in her travels.

Benham collected a presentation sperm whale tooth (or *tabua* (pronounced tambua which originally meant ‘sacred object’²⁵ [Fig.17]. It is approximately 20cm long and has two holes drilled at either side for a cord, *watabu* of sinnet (plaited coconut or pandanus fibre) to be attached. The watabu cord is not attached to the whale tooth directly but through small cotton ties and this is not unusual.²⁶ Tabua are presentation, ritual objects and very significant in Fijian culture historically and today.

Fijian religious ontology is based on belief in sacred prohibitions (*tabu*), and *mana* (spiritual power). Whale teeth are valued throughout Oceania but in Fiji they are considered ‘chiefly items’ (*kavakaturanga*), the most precious and highest value and the

²⁵ PCMAG 1934.25.479x.

²⁶This type of cord is sometimes attached to the lugs of Fijian *yaqona* (kava) bowls. They are plaited from coir (coconut husk fibre). The fact that the cord is attached by small cotton ties is similar to most *tabua* in museum collections and was added in Fiji rather than Europe (Email from Lucie Carreau, MAA, 20/09/2012).



Figure17. Whale Tooth (*tabua*), Fiji (1934.25.479x)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

ownership of a whale's tooth signifies the owner's high status and prestige of the highest rank in society. Fijian society operated through a system of complex ceremonies in which presentations of valuables were exchanged. They functioned as the repository of mana (spiritual power) and they were 'chiefly items' only owned by chiefs of the highest rank and chiefs were traditionally buried with their *tabua*. They are considered as an esteemed gift but they are not held for long by one chief but only temporarily as they are always in exchange "within Fijian society, ceremonies of presentation are an important part of communal life: The person is recursively created through cycles of presentations (Thomas 1991:68).²⁷

Older and larger teeth were more valued by Fijians than small ones. *Tabua* are polished with turmeric and smoked to give them a dark rich patina and pierced for the braided

²⁷ Nicholas Thomas gives a detailed account of the origins of the whale tooth in Fijian mythology (Thomas 1991).

sinnet cord. They are not worn but used as presentation, the cord is held in one hand and the tooth in the other. They are considered to have talismanic qualities and are presented at important ceremonies, including weddings, births, and funerals.²⁸ Tabua used to be the most effective way to give weight to an apology or atonement. The occasion that tabua are presented at also determines their spiritual value. They are not prized for their monetary value but their spiritual and symbolic significance and the presentation of them at a ceremony indicates the importance of it. It is not known exactly when Fijians first used the teeth but it was before frequent contact in the West around 1800 and the exchange of tabua may even date back 3,000 years (Thomas 1991). They were associated with women and exchange and this myth surrounding the first social use of them has led to the use of tabua in marriage ceremonies, not in exchange for women, but as the first stage or ritual of a relationship when the family of the man approach the family of the bride-to-be as a prestigious gift:

Art and objects for Fijians have never been a ‘thing apart’. The whale’s tooth *tabua* which is the most powerful talisman in Fijian society is the embodiment of the female element – one might say a surrogate woman. Just as women were exchanged through groups, so were *tabu* (Ewins 1999: 2).

Constance Gordon Cumming wrote about an occasion when a chief ordered presents from villagers and records:

40,000 yams, 700 mats, and every man a whale’s tooth; each of which represents upwards of a shilling in value, but *means* far more. It symbolises goodwill; and the giving of a whale’s tooth accompanies every action of the smallest importance – from asking for forgiveness,

²⁸ Queen Elizabeth II visited Fiji in the 1953 and was presented with a tabua as an honorable guest. It is now in the National Museum, Scotland. Thanks to Chantal Knowles and Ross Irving for bringing this to my attention. (Visit to NMS 19/04/2012). A film of the Queen’s visit, *Royal Visit to Fiji and Tonga, 1953*, which includes the presentation of the tabua, can be viewed on www.YouTube.com.

or claiming the clubbing of a foe, or bringing in his body (Gordon Cumming 1885: 213).

The Reverend Thomas Baker was the last missionary to be killed and eaten in Fiji in 1867 and “his murder was secured by a tabua that had been sent ahead of him for that purpose” (Ewins 1982: 97).

Tabua are made from the teeth of the sperm whale which has approximately forty teeth in its lower jaw (there are smaller undeveloped teeth in the top jaw).²⁹ Fijians, or any Polynesians, did not hunt whales and the teeth were from stranded whales. This was a rare occasion in Fiji but happened more often in the nearby island of Tonga who traded teeth with the Fijians and this rarity added to their value. During the mid-nineteenth century European traders introduced western goods but they also made available new supplies of indigenous valuables and it was made known that Fijians valued whale teeth more than any other item and so they became more available due to the whaling industry in the Pacific. This increase and availability meant that they were no longer restricted to men of the highest rank although they were still held in very high esteem and remained valued as treasured heirlooms (Thomas 1995:18). Both von Hugel and Constance Gordon Cumming collected them. Gordon Cumming wrote about a missionary meeting that she attended and described all the presents presented to the mission and stated, “I, as a visitor, was presented with a live turtle, a whales tooth and four mats, also a basket and some fans from the chief’s wife” (Gordon Cumming 1885: 210). There were necklaces made with smaller teeth which retained an ornamental and prestigious value and were owned by high ranking officials, but they did not have the symbolic and spiritual *mana* associated with these large single teeth.

²⁹ The National Museum Scotland has on display a full size jaw of a sperm whale.

Benham did not record how she obtained her tabua or why. As previously discussed, Benham bartered her needlework in exchange for objects and money in which to make her collection and Fiji was a monetary economy by 1904. Her tabua is a large size and has a highly finished rich patina. Steven Hooper commented that it looks like a very nice example and the quality of the tabua is supported by Lucie Carreau who stated, “this is a very nice example of a smoked tabua (hence the dark sometimes even pinkish colour of the ivory).”³⁰ In addition, they both suggest that it must have been presented to Benham as an honoured guest on some occasion and probably given to her by someone of high status:

Tabua were never tourist objects, and still aren't. It is now possible to buy them at pawn shops but back in the early twentieth century they would not have been for sale to tourists passing by.³¹

How would Benham have obtained such a significant prestigious object? Benham's letters and articles reveal that she often mentioned people of high status in the colonies and she records in her *Catalogue of Museum* that on one occasion she was given a gift by an African chief.³² Benham obviously thought that this was important enough to her to record it when cataloguing the object. When she catalogued the whale tooth, as previously stated, she recorded the use of the object but not how it was obtained. It should be mentioned that Benham also collected another chief's ornament in Fiji³³ but this has not been located to date and is not on the current PCMAG database so there is

³⁰ Email from Steven Hooper, UEA, (20/07/2012), and Lucie Carreau, MAA, (20/09/2012).

³¹ Email from Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012.

³² This is recorded in her *Catalogue of Museum* as No 6 “carved black and white wooden box given me by a chief at Mbanana, Uganda” (PCMAG Benham Archives: *Catalogue of Museum*. The current PCMAG database for this is 1934.25.418).

³³ This is recorded in Benham's *Catalogue* as “285 ornament of shell & bone, worn by chief. Fiji”. (PCMAG: Benham Archives: *Catalogue of Museum*).

no record of what this actually was. However, what is significant is that it was another chiefly object and it can be assumed, like the *tabua*, that this was not a tourist object.

Benham recorded that throughout her travels she stayed at missionary stations. Many collectors relied on missionaries in a variety of ways from language translation, knowledge of local customs, and for places to stay (Byrne *et al* 2011).³⁴ *Tabua* were used as a presentation gift to esteemed guests and “they could also be used for the departure or return from a long journey” (Kaeppler 2008: 129) which would be very apposite in Benham’s case:

Notwithstanding the profound significance with which they *could* be imbued, the presentation of a *tabua* to an official or dignitary was, and is, a fairly standard courtesy, not only on their leaving a district but even on the occasion of an official visit. Many, if not most, Museum *tabua* would have been acquired this way (Ewins 1982: 97).

It is therefore not inconceivable that Benham was presented with the whale tooth by a European missionary on her arrival or departure from Fiji. Benham recorded the *tabua* in her *Catalogue* as “287 *tabua*, whale’s tooth, sent by one chief to another before visiting. If not received it signifies hostility. Fiji”³⁵ [see Appendix 4]. This statement implies that she had some insight into the function and significance of the *tabua* in Fijian culture. This knowledge of the object indicates a shift in her collecting and her identity as a collector from that of a tourist collecting tourist objects, to collecting with an intention or at least an expressed intention. The *tabua* is one of the most significant and prestigious objects in Fijian culture and her collecting of it involved a form of

³⁴ Sarah Byrne has described A.C. Haddon’s ambivalent relationship with missionaries: he was critical of their impact on the local cultures and at the same time depended on them for local knowledge (Byrne 2011).

³⁵ PCMAG Benham Archives: Benham’s *Catalogue of Museum*.

knowledge and Benham may have intended this for a particular audience or museum. The high level status of the object can also be said to reflect her status as a collector.

4.4 Headrests and Hair

Benham collected a wooden ‘pillow’ or headrest (*kali*)³⁶ and she recorded this in her *Catalogue* as “282 bamboo pillow. Fiji.”³⁷ [see Appendix 4] [Fig.18]. It consists of a plain piece of bamboo 39 cm long, 6cm in diameter on two wooden stands at each end. The height is 13 cm and two stands are attached and bound with plaited coir (coconut husk fibre). The first stand (on the left of the image) is a solid piece of wood, triangular in shape with a bottom width of 12cm. The other stand is in poor condition with a ‘step’ design and the wood is chipped and the binding is loose and dark in colour suggesting that this may be the original style of stand. The binding on the first stand is lighter in colour, suggesting that it is newer and probably a replacement. There are some very finely inscribed markings.³⁸ There is an original Benham label ‘282’ on one of the legs which corresponds with her *Catalogue of Museum*.

Several headrests were collected on Captain Cook’s voyages. Von Hugel collected a selection of these that were drawn by Constance Gordon Cumming who also collected them. She stated, “Most pillows are a stick about one inch in diameter, resting on two legs” (Gordon Cumming: 1885: 143) which is very similar to Benham’s *kali*. In describing the interior of a Fijian house, she states, “Mats are piled about a foot high for principal persons present. A few wooden pillows – merely a stick or bamboo on two short legs – complete the household inventory. There is no furniture of any sort”

³⁶ The Fijian name for this is Kali Bitu. Kali means headrest and bitu means bamboo.

³⁷ PCMAG 1934.25.514.

³⁸ These inscriptions read: ‘Isne’ at one end of the bamboo. At the other end there is ‘P’ and also an ‘A’. “Engraving of works or names only really occur on very few types of objects: headrests and tabua being the main ones, but there is no sense that the names are necessarily the names of the owner or maker of the object and there is no interpretation as to isolated letters” (email from Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012).

(Gordon Cumming 1885:83). On one occasion Gordon Cumming collected two neck-pillows and describes them:

A Fijian pillow, however, is merely a neck-rest; the head still supports itself as it was taught to do in those days of the elaborate hair-dressing, on which chiefs prided themselves so greatly that each considered it necessary to have his own especial barber, whose joy and delight it was to adorn the head of his master with curls and twists and plaits, more numerous and more wonderful than those of any other chief (Gordon Cumming 1885:120)

The pillow, however, was more symbolic than the physical function of supporting the head as the object was associated with the cultural practice of hairdressing in which the elaborate and ornate hairstyle of the chiefs symbolised status and significance in Fijian society. The head in Fijian symbolism is *tabua* or sacred and the pillow, which would be on the chief's bed, raised the head higher than the body, thus symbolising and protecting the head as the site of power or *mana* and this has been described as an 'aura' surrounding the head of the chief (Ewins 1982: 63). Constance Gordon Cumming describes the hairstyles as a spherical mass up to 3ft circumference and sometime as much as 5ft. It was stiffened with lime to maintain the shape and height. She laments the loss of this tradition which she refers to as 'forgotten art' and considers how future generations of visitors to Fiji will not see:

the wonderful hair-dressing which amazed travellers in the last generation, but which was so intimately associated with ideas of war and cannibalism, that the Christians as a matter of course desisted from it. Yet it was carried to such perfection as to rank as a high art. Each great chief had his own hair-dresser, who sometimes devoted several hours a day to his master's adornment, and displayed quite so much ingenuity in his designs as the potters or cloth painters do in their work (Gordon Cumming: 1885:249).

Hair was considered a very important aspect of Fijian men's identity and the only time it was cut was as a sacrifice to ward off evil spirits, or when in mourning, and even then the men wore wigs sometimes made of human or synthetic hair. Missionaries, in a misinterpretation of Fijian ontology, associated large hairstyles with warfare and banned the custom as they did not consider it as an appropriate appearance for conversion to Christianity.³⁹ This banning rendered the headrest obsolete and may be one reason that they became available for sale. The cutting of hair signified to the missionaries their success at converting Fijians to Christianity and justified their continuing mission. This conversion and adopting of western clothing was, however not straightforward.⁴⁰ There are many examples of kali in Fijian collections indicating that they were popular items to collect and readily available due to the fact that they had become (almost) obsolete in Fijian culture due to European missionary intervention, "virtually every early visitor who wrote of their experiences in Fiji mentions the curious headrests (kali) of wood and/or bamboo" (Ewins 1982: 63).⁴¹

The headrest Benham collected is in a poor condition and one of the legs is broken so it has obviously been used and repaired so it can be deduced that it was not made for the tourist market. There are many different varied types of kali and the ones made for tourists tend to be of the kind sculpted in one solid piece of wood rather than a bar with attached legs. The dark colour of the bamboo suggests that it was kept in a house and exposed to smoke.⁴² Benham may have obtained it from a European missionary or a market although it was not made for the tourist market due to its condition "I am quite

³⁹ "To shave his head was one of the profound sacrifices a man could make to his ancestral spirits, or in mourning, and superb human hair and, in the later 1800s, horse hair wigs were made for men recovering from this sacrifice and for those who were naturally bald" (Clunie 2003: 59).

⁴⁰ It is important to remember that there was resistance to colonial rule and that the practice continued in many villages, mainly in the hill villages in Fiji.

⁴¹ There are thirteen in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and an example similar to Benham's can be seen in Rod Ewins *Fijian Artefacts: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Collection* object no. 107, (Cat. No. M2187), p65.

⁴² Email Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012.

confident that this was not an object made specifically for tourists ... it was definitely an object that had a previous life with a Fijian household” (Email Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012).

Benham’s *Catalogue* records a model drum “284 model of lali or war drum. Fiji.”⁴³ [see [see Appendix 4] [Fig.19]. Drums were an important part of Fijian life and “varied in length from two to six feet according to the seniority of the chief living in the village where it is used and ... found in most villages. It is carved from the solid in a shape that resembles a very short canoe cut off abruptly at each end” (Ewins 1986: 33). The lali is indigenous to Fiji and was used to signal a variety of different social customs including the “bringing into the village of corpses intended for eating (bokolo)” (Ewins 1986: 20). The model lali that Benham collected is about 20cm long and can be confidently placed as an item made for tourists.⁴⁴ Lali were used in conjunction with heavy wooden beaters which eventually made marks around the top of the lali but the one Benham collected is undamaged and smooth indicating that it was not used.⁴⁵

Many large-scale objects were, however, commissioned as replicas and models by Westerners and sometimes this was due to the fact that missionary had banned certain objects and they were no longer made or available “Modelling and replication are two crucial features associated with the scientific method ... to make a model artefact is to produce a second-order version of a limited part of the cultural repertoire” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 20).

⁴³ Benham has crossed this out although it is in her collection. The PCMAG database record for this is 1934.25.590.

⁴⁴ Today most tourist hotels in Fiji have examples of lali in the foyer on display.

⁴⁵ Email from Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012.

Benham's model drum can be explained due to the large size of the original drum which would have been impossible for her to transport or to send back to England. The making of models and of enquiring of past practices can, however, lead to self-reflection and subsequently to the revival of them and in some cases objects that were specifically made for sale "had no indigenous precedent, but were called into existence purely by the conditions of the original encounter" (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 31).

The model lali can be interpreted as a materialisation of the effects of European contact and colonization on Fijian culture and the making of objects for tourists. The model retains the visual elements of a large lali although the materiality is diminished and the original function is not possible. This reduction of materiality does not, however, correspond with a reduction in significance, "a reduction in dimensions does not produce a corresponding reduction in significance ... and will have only a peripheral bearing upon the meaning" (Stewart 1993: 43). The model drum still signifies an historical aspect of Fijian life and culture, the beating of the drum to signify an important event, but it also represents the development of the tourist trade and the making of objects for sale at a particular time in Fiji.

Benham's *Catalogue of Museum* records that she collected two fans but the current PCMAG database records four.⁴⁶ Some objects that Benham collected and recorded in her *Catalogue* are unallocated and include a Fijian fork (*iculanibokola*). She records this as "291 fork used when eating human flesh, (for other food, fingers were used). Fiji." [see Appendix 4] Fiji was known as the 'cannibal isles' as they had a long history of cannibalism and many traders, explorers and traveller wrote about this aspect of

⁴⁶Benham records these in her *Catalogue of Museum* as 292 and 293 [see Appendix 4]. The PCMAG database numbers for the four Fijian fans are: 1934.25.569; 1934.25.570; 1934.25.581; 1934.25.724.



Figure18. Wooden Headrest, Fiji (1934.25.514)
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 19. Model of Drum (lali), Fiji (1934.25.590).
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

Fijian culture.⁴⁷ Constance Gordon Cumming recalled real cannibal feasts:

The Rev. Thomas Baker and seven Christian natives were treacherously murdered near Nirukuruku by a heathen tribe of Navosa in 1867 (only eight years ago). They were all eaten. Several villages pretended to be in possession of Mr Baker's head! (Gordon Cumming 1885: 102).

Von Hugel and Gordon Cumming collected these. She recalls one collecting event:

I bought from the villainous looking old priest a couple of large wooden spoons or scoops, made purposely for human broth: and we also got sundry cannibal forks of carved wood, with four long prongs, which were used exclusively for human flesh, this being the only meat which might not be touched with the fingers, because it was supposed to produce a skin disease (Gordon Cumming 1885: 102).⁴⁸

Von Hugel collected a variety of different types of these forks and recalled that he could not obtain information about them, "I procured one cannibal fork: people are reluctant to speak of these forks (isaga)" (Hooper and Roth 1990: 36).⁴⁹ Gordon Cumming recalls that the Baron gave her one of these, "He has collected some new curiosities and gave me a funny old cannibal fork" (Gordon Cumming 1885: 143). The high ranking chiefs and priests were held in such esteem that attendants served them with a fork, very carefully, so they did not have to touch human flesh, not even on their lips.⁵⁰ The fork

⁴⁷ The *Fiji Cannibal Exhibition*, 1873, toured cities on the American West Coast and included Fijian weapons, and cannibal forks as well as 'live' exhibits to perform national war dances (Thomas 1991: 165).

⁴⁸ This was a myth as it was rumoured that women did not take part in cannibal feasts but this was dispelled when Constance asked a chief who replied, "I'd like to see the woman who would not eat her fair share!" (Gordon Cumming 1885: 102).

⁴⁹ His collection is in MAA with illustrations by Constance Gordon Cumming.

⁵⁰ Fergus Clunie suggests that the term 'cannibal fork' is a misnomer. Their use was restricted to chiefs and priests who could not handle any food whatsoever (Clunie 2003). Human flesh is apparently highly indigestible and needed a vegetable served with it, *Solanum Anthropolophagorum*, essential as a herb to aid digestion. It was commonly grown for easy use (Gordon Cumming 1885: 251).

was a revered object in itself and hung in the interior of the *burekalou*⁵¹ or main spirit-house in the village.

Many of these forks were made for tourists and as Benham's has not been located it cannot be identified as to whether it was an original object or one made for sale. The demand for these objects was highlighted in 1880 by the collector James Edge-Partington who warned that they were made for tourists and stated, "when I was in Fiji they were being made by white men for sale to travellers" (Edge-Partington quoted in Thomas 1991: 167). Benham's collecting of it, however, can be seen as part of the nineteenth century Western fascination with the 'other' as flesh eating cannibals, the Fijians as savages, and the idea that the object "did not merely represent cannibalism but had actually been used to consume flesh" (Thomas 1991: 165).⁵² The fork exemplified the difference between the civilized and uncivilized cannibals and Fijian forks "attested materially to this emblem of barbarism" (Thomas 1991: 156).

Benham did not collect any spears, clubs or weapons. Many Fijian collections contain yaquona bowls, used for the making of kava, but these tended to be large so it is unsurprising that she did not collect one and Von Hugel had lamented the scarcity of these in coastal areas in the 1870s. The bowls for drinking kava were small and portable but Benham did not collect one of these either. She does, however, record in her *Catalogue* that she collected bark for making Kava but this was in Samoa rather than Fiji but it does indicate that she was aware of the practice.⁵³

⁵¹ This was a place for men only. Fijian society was hierarchical with strict gender roles and divisions

⁵² Thomas suggests that it was in the interests of newly arrived settlers to promote the 'primitive' practices of the Fijians and the cannibal fork was a materialisation of this. He further suggests that this preoccupation has endured and that travellers still write about them and that they are conspicuous in Fijian hand-craft stalls (Thomas 1991: 167).

⁵³ The drinking of kava was a widespread practice throughout Fiji. Benham's *Catalogue* record is "323 Bark used for making kava, the natives drink. It is chewed by women to make it soft, Samoa". The number has been crossed out [see Appendix 4].

Conclusion

Benham collected objects that were everyday quotidian items, those considered high status, as well as tourist objects and those made for use by Fijians. In contrast to the objects from North America, the objects are not decorative but are objects that had ‘agency’ in the social milieu in which they circulated. They were highly significant and codified objects, important as cultural markers in Fijian culture. It can be assumed that Benham did not collect them simply for aesthetic reasons, but that she collected them for cultural reasons and knowledge about Fijian culture and society.

From examining the cultural contexts in which Benham collected her tabua it can be concluded that the highest possibility was that she was presented with it by a missionary as a presentation on her arrival or departure. The tabua was an important object in Fijian culture and what knowledge Benham may have had of them before she visited Fiji is not known.

They are not things that are given away easily and when they are presented to someone, it follows quite a heavy protocol. I think that if Gertrude was not aware of the significance of tabua before she was given one, she would have realised very quickly how significant they were.⁵⁴

The whale tooth was an organic animal object but was highly valued by the Fijians and was “culturally marked as being a certain kind of thing” (Kopytoff 1986: 64). For Fijians, cultural objects were embedded into cultural relations, “their cosmology conceived of the temporal and spiritual worlds as coextensive realities. The hierarchy of gods and chiefs passed down through chiefs (gods on earth and gods in death) to the lowliest commoner” (Ewins 1999: 2). By collecting a valuable, important object,

⁵⁴ Email Lucie Carreau, MAA, 20/09/2012.

Benham transferred her system of value onto it and having such an object of significance, which was only held by persons of high esteem, would transfer to Benham as a person of significance, and therefore her status and identity as a collector:

Collections are gathered together for purposes which are seen by their possessors as lifting them away from the world of common commodities into one of special significance, one for which 'sacred' seems the right word (Pearce 1995: 27).

Benham collected objects that were sacred to Fijian society as well as more domestic and everyday objects. By collecting these objects Benham set them apart and in doing so the objects "passed from the profane – the secular world of mundane, ordinary commodity – to the sacred, taken to be extraordinary, special and capable of generating reverence" (Belk quoted in Pearce 1995: 24). The *tabua* is an example of an object which "originally stood for purely local relationships but which was later creatively extended to incorporate the intruding Whites" (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 23) and this is part of their cultural biography (Kopytoff 1986). Whether the objects Benham collected were 'sacred' to Fijian society or not:

They cease to be living goods working in the world and become reified thoughts and feelings, carefully kept by conscious preservation. They are made to withdraw from daily life in order to enable another order of life to come about (Pearce 1995: 25).

Whale teeth play a major role in Fiji today and continue to circulate as 'social actors' (Gell 1998) and still retain their spiritual value and talismanic qualities. Fijian systems of belief were, and still are, materialised through the use of *tabua*. Many traditional ceremonies and the worship of ancestral gods alongside Christianity continues in Fiji

today exemplifying that, “Contact is not an ‘all-or-nothing’, one shot event that transforms the world: it is a process, and some phases of that process have far more limited ramifications than others” (Thomas 1997: 11). The tabua and headrest were not made for tourists but were used by the Fijians to transmit sacredness and power in their society, and materialised their ontology and cosmology. By being collected by Benham and to become part of a western collection these objects underwent a ‘diversion’ from their intended path, “In these objects we see not only the equation of the authentic with the exotic everyday object, but also the aesthetics of diversion” (Appadurai 1986: 28). The objects have been diverted, they have taken a different route from their expected life and have become ‘culturally re-defined’ (Kopytoff 1986: 67) to become part of a Western collection, in this instance, a private collection. In being diverted they attract different values, in this instance, that of Benham who collected them.

Benham was a ‘mobile’ collector, one who collected en route, rather than a stationary collector who spent time in a place and this has important effects on the collection:

stationary collecting and ‘mobile’ collecting each has its own practical implications which potentially influence the kinds of artefacts that may be acquired, their level of documentation, the degree to which the collector relies on intermediaries, the kinds of anthropological understandings engendered and the nature of the relationships with local communities (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 15).⁵⁵

As a ‘mobile’ collector the chances are that objects would have “been ferried to her and this implies that the first selection was made by the natives themselves” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 18). If Benham was a stationery collector she would have had a better chance of collecting a full-range of material culture “but this also potentially increases

⁵⁵ O’Hanlon and Welsch assert that many collectors depended upon a miscellany of intermediaries, including indigenous people and white residents which both enabled and shaped collections.

the influence of the local community upon the collector, and the collection” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 16).

O’Hanlon and Welsch (2000) discuss collectors as ‘primary’ (a collection made by explicit intellectual design), ‘secondary’ (collecting was a goal, but “subordinate to some other, primary purpose) and concomitant (incidental collecting).⁵⁶ Concomitant collecting made as the by-product of other processes is likely to be the least ‘representative’ of a culture⁵⁷ and have less of an investment in authenticity:

Unshackled by a mandate to collect only the untainted, concomitant collections have the potential for comprising more authentic a record of the complexities of the moment at which they were made (O Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 23).

Even when the collection has a concomitant aspect to it, it “may be endowed with a kind of primacy by the collector” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 13).

According to Lucie Carreau, Benham’s collection is odd.⁵⁸ Benham, however was not an anthropologist or a systematic collector and collected more like the early explorers who “did not make systematic effort to acquire either representative samples of a totality or artefacts of particular kinds” (Thomas 1991: 138). It is not known if Benham knew the different systems of value regarding objects and museum’s preference for ‘pre-contact’ authentic objects but it does suggest that she had become more discriminating in her choice of objects.

⁵⁶ They acknowledge that these are ‘ideal’ types and may often overlap.

⁵⁷ Representative collecting was encouraged as early as 1885 – to represent the whole aspect of life, not just the dazzling and important objects but domestic and quotidian. The fourth edition of the publication *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* in 1912, published by the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) advised collecting the everyday and domestic. However, some collectors excluded any ‘tainted’ or corrupt objects that showed western influence (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000).

⁵⁸ Email from Lucie Carreau 20/09/2012.

Benham's collection, however, cannot be totally attributed to her own individual choice and taste but the control and agency of the Fijians has to be considered in discussing what she collected. They were geared up for trade with transient and mobile collectors, and had an awareness and knowledge of the type of objects preferred by Western museums.⁵⁹ The objects Benham collected are mostly made from organic material, such as the whale tooth ivory, the bamboo headrest and pandanus leaf fans and this materialises her interest in natural history. As highly significant cultural objects they also reveal Benham's interest in culture and other ways of living. Her collection may have been a trophy of her travels around the world and functioned in a similar vein to the early explorers, whereby "indigenous artefacts virtually became trophies which reflected the broader experience and mastery of a passage around the world on the part of the traveller" (Thomas 1991: 143). I suggest that the objects represented a certain prestige and status, and Benham, by owning them, was constructing her identity and status as a collector. This individual and private motivation for collecting was also collective in her intention to donate it to a museum "for the use of students" which implies a form of knowledge. Analysing the objects of a society can reveal many aspects of its culture: its history, heritage, religious systems of belief and myths. The objects she collected were not just about knowledge of other cultures but testified to the knowledge of the collector "Objects can have singular personal meanings at odds with their systematic significance" (Thomas 1991: 143). The objects that Benham collected were valued at different times by different people: for the Fijians, objects such as the tabua materialised their system of beliefs, their chief, priests, and gods. For the missionaries, the ownership of the tabua materialised the success of their mission and the acceptance of a new religion by the Fijians. The multi-layered interpretations of the objects reveal the history of collecting and colonialism in Fiji at a particular historical

⁵⁹ Nicholas Thomas suggests that in early voyagers, trade was determined in most cases by the islanders who "only brought certain kinds of good forward" (Thomas 1991: 138).

time and the West's entanglement with them. On a personal level, Benham, by collecting the objects, allowed herself to construct aspects of her identity and extend herself through them, and Benham was, and remains, entangled with them.

Chapter 5. Benham: A Collector in Africa

By 1908 the other scramblers – missionaries, traders, entrepreneurs, prospectors, sportsmen, bureaucrats, scientists, anthropologists, collectors, and the like – had already begun their harvests of everything from ivory to souls to art.⁶⁰

She was violently anti-suffrage ... This morning she trudged out of the station with one servant and seven carriers to go to Yorla – some 200 odd miles – from there she goes into German Territory, the Congo, then up into Nyasaland ... it sounds perfectly mad.⁶¹

Introduction

This chapter considers Benham as a traveller and collector in the contact zone of Africa.

Benham made four trips to Africa in 1909, 1913, 1923, and in 1937 on her eighth trip around the world. The collection is wide in its geographic scope and includes objects from East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and South Africa. She did not, however, discriminate where she collected from and her *Catalogue of Museum* records that she collected from British East Africa, German East Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Belgian Congo, and the French Congo [Appendix 4 and 7]. Travelling and collecting in Africa had been made easier for Europeans through the infrastructure of colonization and the establishment of trading centres. By the time Benham travelled to Africa most of these European colonies in Africa had, and were making, substantial museum collections of objects and Benham can be situated as part of this wider network.⁶²

The chapter initially addresses the contact zone of Africa giving a brief overview of African colonization and early collectors which resulted in the Berlin Conference of 1884 and the ensuing political scramble for Africa. This was also manifested in a

⁶⁰ Schildkroudt and Keim 1998: 19.

⁶¹ Letter from colonial officer Selwyn Grier written in Nigeria to his mother in 1916 (Birkett 2004: 12).

⁶² Institutions such as the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) and the RGS in London were meeting and discussion places for travellers who had just returned or who were just leaving, but Benham was not part of this network.

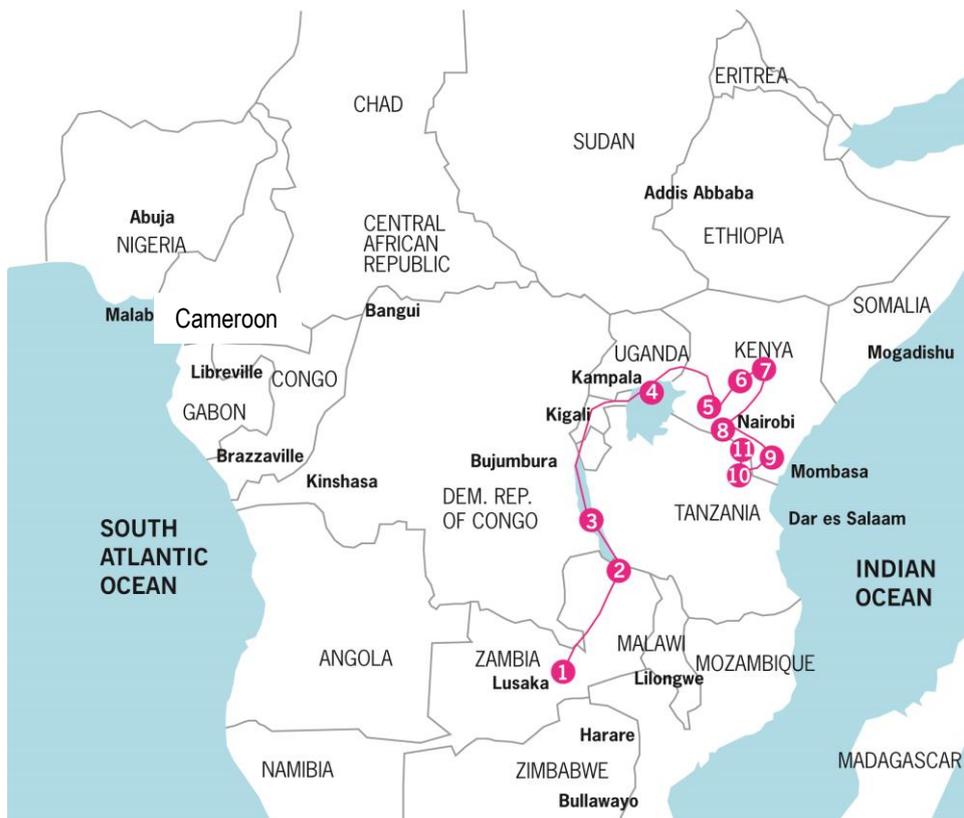


Figure.20. Map of Africa to show Benham's Journey 1909. The national boundaries are for the present not 1909. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

- 1 Broken Hill (Kabwe)
- 2 Abercorn (Mbala)
- 3 Lake Tanganyika
- 4 Lake Victoria
- 5 Naivasha
- 6 Nyeri
- 7 Mt. Kenya
- 8 Nairobi
- 9 Voi
- 10 Moshi
- 11 Mt. Kilimanjaro

scramble for objects in an onslaught of exploratory expeditions by a wide range of collectors and museums. It considers how Africa was constructed socially - geographically - culturally, and reinvented for the British public through a range of tropes such as exhibitions and the popular press which worked to render the stereotype of African people as static, uncivilized and in need of control.⁶³ Central to this were objects which were collected en masse by a vast range of collectors and collecting expeditions, 'taken out of Africa' and displayed in Western museums.

The chapter then goes on to address Benham's travels and collecting in Africa. This is based on her letters and interviews to gain an insight into her achievements, personality and attitude to the people she met during her travels in Africa. How did African people react to her? How, as an unarmed, white middle-class European woman, did she negotiate her way through difficult environments and terrains and encounters with African people?

Finally the chapter consider the types of objects Benham collected and questions why she collected certain objects and not others which are common in African collections. Benham collected a diverse range of objects but her collection is dominated by Akan goldweights, beaded necklaces, and domestic objects. The collection can be described as quotidian and domestic, and consisted of objects in everyday use by Africans, objects that had been rendered obsolete by colonization, and objects made for sale. Throughout the twentieth century, ethnographic objects, including African art, had undergone a re-evaluation in status, in a changing taxonomic system, as either "cultural witnesses or

⁶³ The generalized term 'African' is used here as a historical and geographical shorthand (as with other areas of the globe in this study) for the diverse peoples and cultures of the continent and acknowledges that it does not reflect the complexities of the different regions and cultures of Africa.

aesthetic masterpieces” (Clifford 1988: 228).⁶⁴ However, these shifts in an objects status were based on western categories of how close an object was to European forms of expression. The chapter considers the impact of this reassessment on the types of objects Benham collected.

5.1 The Contact Zone: Africa

Trade and colonization by Europeans in Africa has a long and complex history but beginning with the Portuguese in fifteenth century and with development of the Atlantic Slave Trade over the following two centuries this resulted in the forced migration of at least eleven million people which had devastating effects on their lives and on African society, economics, and culture (Pole 2007). This colonization was carried out mainly in the coastal areas and it was not until the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on exploration and international scientific expeditions that a new orientation towards the interior of lands as well as the maritime exploration began. This was part of what Pratt refers to as a new ‘planetary consciousness’⁶⁵, “by 1792 the French traveller Saugnier saw it as a matter of global fairness: the interiors of Africa “deserve the honour” of European visitation as much as the coasts” (Pratt 1992: 24). Africa was not ‘colonized’ until later than other continents and this, according to Frank Willett, was due to the terrain that external influences were limited to coastal areas, and “penetration of foreigners into the interior only came after the Industrial Revolution, when Europe was seeking sources of raw materials and markets for the finished goods” (Willett 1973: 10). These raw materials included palm oil, gold, as well as land and included human

⁶⁴ This resulted in boundaries between art and science and the aesthetic and the anthropological, which according to Clifford are not permanently fixed (Clifford 1988: 228). Schildkrout and Keim state that there has been a “century of debate about how African objects fit into western descriptive categories” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 2).

⁶⁵ Pratt’s term ‘planetary consciousness’, as discussed in Chapter 2, was a deliberate strategy towards interior exploration and was a basic element in constructing a hegemonic modern Eurocentrism (Pratt 1992).

slaves, and from the eighteenth century onwards European countries began to compete for them.

Between 1795-1797 Mungo Park (1771-1806), a Scottish explorer travelled to Africa to explore the Niger basin.⁶⁶ The missionary David Livingstone was awarded a prize from the RGS for his ‘discovery’ of Lake Ngami in 1849, and in 1857 he was awarded the RGS Gold medal for his journey across Southern Africa and was said to have unlocked the door of the African continent (Driver 2001).⁶⁷ In 1860 the explorer Richard Burton (1821-1890) explored the Lake Regions of Central Africa and is known for the ‘discovery’ of Lake Tanganyika. This was followed by another discovery by John Hanning Speke who undertook a journey to discover the source of the Nile in 1863. Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) travelled to Africa in 1871 in search of David Livingstone and in 1874 explored Central Africa and the Congo River.⁶⁸ When he returned to England Stanley was hired by King Leopold of Belgium to return to the Congo to organise trade in raw material to enrich Belgium and himself but this was done under the auspices of a philanthropic mission and resulted in one of the most horrific atrocities committed against a colonized country by Europeans. These atrocities were widely reported in the British and European press and caused considerable controversy. The competition between European countries, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, to claim land and raw materials led to the Berlin Conference in 1884 which

⁶⁶ This was funded by the African Association which was formed in 1788 under the leadership of Joseph Banks.

⁶⁷ ‘Discovery’ is a contested term and part of a Eurocentric discourse “as a rule the discovery of sites like Lake Tanganyika involved making one’s way to the region and asking local inhabitants if they knew of any big lakes, etc. in the area, then hiring them to take you there, whereupon with their guidance and support, you proceed to discover what they already knew” (Pratt 1992: 202).

⁶⁸ The Stanley and African Exhibition was held in 1890 when Benham was 23 years old and living in London. It was regularly reported in the national press and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that she visited it. It had displays of objects from Tanganyika, the Lower Niger Region, the Congo Basin, ‘Nyasaland’, Central South Africa and ‘Masailand, Kilimanjaro’ (Coombes 1994: 72-73), all the places that Benham collected from. Stanley published *How I found Livingstone* in 1872, *Through the Dark Continent* in 1878 and *In Darkest Africa* in 1890 which were widely read and extremely popular with the middle-classes.

essentially carved up the whole of Africa into different geographical and political areas, controlled by different European powers, in what became known as the ‘Scramble for Africa’, a period which witnessed the political dividing up of Africa between competing European countries in their desire for raw materials from Africa.

5.2 Taken Out of Africa

This political ‘Scramble for Africa’ was partly visually manifested in the search for curios, scientific specimens, and art, and demonstrates the centrality of objects and collectors in imperial expansionist policies and positions the collecting of objects, whether professional, systematic, or amateur, as a political act. European museums were included in the competitive ‘scramble’ to make ethnographic collections and Africa ‘was made available’ through its material culture to be studied and collected by Westerners, “after the Berlin conference, all of the colonial powers began sponsoring systematic collecting expeditions that brought back trophies and artefacts for display in expositions and museums” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 6).⁶⁹ Leopold, who made an enormous fortune from his exploitation of Africa had a museum built to house his extensive collection of objects and “the largest ethnographic collections today are in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium and are unequalled anywhere in the world” (Corbey 2000: 14).⁷⁰

In 1897 British museums were provided with a range of military looted African royal insignia from Benin. The punitive raid on Benin City in the Niger Coast Protectorate by British forces in 1897 was widely publicised in the media at the time to a range of the British public “at once scientific, popular, geographical administrative and cultural”

⁶⁹ Schildkrout and Keim (1998) estimate that the amount of objects removed from Africa before World War 1 were between 70,000 and 100,000 objects.

⁷⁰ Leopold never travelled to Africa but made his collection through other people. He gave a substantial collection of Congo objects to the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

(Coombes 1994: 7). The objects brought back to Britain were sixteenth century ivories and lost wax brass or alloy carvings and their notoriety and the subsequent debates regarding the bronzes reported in the press highlighted the issues around aesthetics. The highly detailed and intricately carved objects, demonstrated that African culture was highly sophisticated and equalled European 'art' and sculpture and "this should have fundamentally shaken the bedrock of the derogatory Victorian assumptions about Africa, and more specifically, the African's place in history" (Coombes 1994: 7) but this was not the case. However, even though the popular press continued to describe Africa in terms of racial degeneracy, Richard Quick, the curator of the Horniman Museum, which had received a donation of Benin material, was partly responsible "for the shift in terms used to describe and categorise Benin material, and, more specifically, its transformation from the status of 'relic' to 'work of art' in museum circles" (Coombes 1994: 27). It has, however, to be acknowledged that there was a diversity of interpretations of the representation of Africa and that it was not without its critics and challenges. As Coombes points out, these representations were not fixed and the heterogeneity of responses "tell us more about the nexus of European interests in African affairs and about the colonizer, than they do about Africa and the African over this period" (Coombes 1994: 2). Whether part of a scientific community, academic institution, museum or a member of the public, the reports on Benin pervaded all aspects of society in Britain and it can be assumed that Benham was aware of this.⁷¹ As the map of Africa was being redefined by European powers, the names of places were changed and populations of African people were shifted to accommodate new borders. The collecting of objects had a central role in this new mapping as "the

⁷¹ In September 1897 the British Museum exhibited over three hundred Benin Bronzes. (Bronze is a misnomer as they were not actually bronze but an alloy) (Coombes 1994). "The Benin collections acquired by Liverpool's Mayer Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, London's Horniman Free Museum and the British Museum, all featured prominently in the press over this period" (Coombes 1994: 23).

collecting and labeling of objects helped to bring about order from the chaos” (Fabian 1998: 85).⁷²

It was not just male explorers, missionaries, and collectors that travelled to Africa and the colonies but many women did as well. Mary Slessor (1848-1915) was a famous Scottish missionary who left for Nigeria in 1875. Alexandrine Tinne (1835-1869) came from a wealthy Dutch family and made several self-financed voyages of exploration in Africa, accompanied by members of her family.⁷³ Mary Hall (1857-1912) was the first woman to cross Africa, travelling from the south to the north in 1905 ('from the Cape to Cairo') and covered 7000 miles in three months.⁷⁴ Mary Kingsley (1862-1900) began travelling after death of parents (as Benham did). She travelled to West Africa in February 1893 until January 1894 and climbed Mount Cameroon (13,760ft). She made a second trip in 1894 and stayed for nearly a year during which time she made collections of natural history and ethnography.⁷⁵ In 1893 she met the trader and collector Richard Dennett (1857-1921) in Cabinda on the Congo coast.⁷⁶ She wrote two books, *Travels in West Africa* (1897) and *West African Studies* (1899) which were widely read and in which she voiced her concerns about the political situation in Africa. In the twentieth century the competition for land, raw materials, and the frantic competition for objects continued. Famous collectors include Emil Torday a Hungarian

⁷² The earliest donation of Asante objects in the British Museum was collected by Thomas Bowdich (1791-1824) and donated to the museum in 1818 (www.britishmuseum.org). The African collection of the World Museum Liverpool numbers over 10,000 objects and strongly reflects the development Liverpool's important maritime links with the western coast of Africa. Collections were donated by Joseph Mayer, in 1867 and between 1895 and 1916 Arnold Ridyard transported over 2000 artefacts from West and Central Africa to the museum ([www.liverpoolmuseum.org.uk>worldcultures](http://www.liverpoolmuseum.org.uk/worldcultures)). The Horniman Museum in London have an estimated 22,000 objects, from Africa (www.horniman.ac.uk).

⁷³ The Tinne ethnographic collection is in Liverpool Museum. Thanks to Zachary Kingdon for bringing this to my attention.

⁷⁴ Mary Hall published two books, *A Woman's Trek from the Cape to Cairo*, in 1907 and *A Woman in the Antipodes and the Far East* in 1914.

⁷⁵ She returned home with sixty-five species of fish and eighteen species of reptile, and three new species of fish were named after her (Blunt 1994: 53).

⁷⁶ The Kingsley ethnographic collection is in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford and the Dennett collection is in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

ethnographer who first went to Africa in 1905 and again between 1907-1909 on an expedition undertaken to the Belgium Congo where he made a substantial collection of Kuba objects on behalf of the British Museum. Olive Macleod (1866-1936) a Scottish aristocrat, travelled through West and Central Africa from 1910 to 1911. She accompanied a botanical, zoological and anthropological survey expedition led by Amaury Talbot and his wife Dorothy. She published a book on her travels *Chiefs and Cities of Central Africa* (1912). Financially independent, she made a substantial collection of objects throughout the expedition of which she donated 175 to the British Museum in 1911 and another 416 were donated to the Liverpool Museum in 1924.⁷⁷

5.3 Imagining Africa

The objects brought back to Britain were central in forming perceptions of Africa, and although collectors were minor players in the history of the colonization of Africa, “they brought back tangible objects that were used to construct the Africa of popular imagination” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 7). The display of the objects, informed by the then current theory of evolution, were manipulated to produce cultural difference and alterity in which “the Other is cited, quoted, framed, illuminated ... [but] loses its power to signify, to negate, to initiate its historic desire, to establish its own institutional and oppositional discourse” (Bhabha 1994: 31).

Annie Coombes has addressed the stereotypical construction of the African as ‘degenerate’ and how these racialised assumptions “underpinned the categories and descriptive processes for classifying ethnographic collections, and thus their consumption by the museum-going public” (Coombes 1994: 43). She suggests that the

⁷⁷ She also made donations to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. At the Maiduguri market alone, she claims to have bought more than 200 objects (Email from Zachary Kingdon, Liverpool Museum 02/09/2010).

curators of ethnographic collections promoted themselves as having benevolent and educational objectives through a particular form of rational and scientific knowledge about indigenous people in the colonies. Africa became a ‘spectacle’ and the material objects as ‘proof’ of racial inferiority which, in turn, justified the colonizing mission (Coombes 1994:44).⁷⁸ Through a range of different discourses and national and regional regional exhibitions, the British public developed a firm belief in their superiority. This knowledge of Africa and Africans in the public consciousness and imagination was supported by the emerging discipline of anthropology as ‘scientific truth’ on the one hand, and through popular ‘entertainment’ for the masses on the other. Institutions, societies, and museums were a part of this and the RGS was significant for its role in turning African exploration into a national obsession and was well known for its ‘African nights’ (Driver 2000: 78).

The role of objects, whether considered ‘ethnographic’ or ‘curios’ was central to the construction of knowledge about African and other colonized peoples and this locates the collecting of objects from colonized countries as a political act. Benham’s collecting was and is part of this history and trajectory, particularly in her statement in which she describes her intention for her collection “to be of use to students”. This implies an epistemological intentionality in constructing knowledge through her objects, and although this knowledge about Africa and the colonies was mainly derogatory it cannot be assumed that this was Benham’s intention. The colonization of Africa and the early explorers laid the foundation for further exploration, and a new infrastructure allowed travellers such as Benham access to the continent.

⁷⁸ This emphasis on ‘scientific’ knowledge, defined as anthropological or ethnographical, differentiated it from other forms of knowledge about the colonies. The conflation of race with science served to promote and validate a set of beliefs which maintained racial, stereotypical assumptions about colonized peoples (Coombes 1994).

5.4 Benham: Tramping, Camping, Collecting

Between 1907 and 1909 Benham circumnavigated the globe for the second time and visited South America and Africa. Howgego records that from:

Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia (now Kabwe in Zambia) she walked 900 kilometres to Abercorn (Mbala) near the southern tip of Lake Tanganyika, then crossed the lake into German East Africa (Tanzania) and continued to Lake Victoria and Uganda. From here she travelled into British East Africa (now Kenya) ... ascended the lower slopes of Mount Kenya and made her way to Nairobi then headed south to make a daring assault on the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro (Howgego 2009: 19) [Fig. 20].

In an interview in 1935 Benham recalled that when she was in Africa in 1909 she “visited and climbed Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa (19,700 feet) and that no woman had ever climbed it” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 84) [Fig 21]. In her quest for the mountain Benham walked across the Serengeti Desert in East Africa with her porters and records some of the event, her porters, the dust and intense heat:

The stupid porters insisted on drinking all their water, and by midday were so exhausted that I had to walk behind them to keep them going. They kept stopping, and when I ordered them on threatened to run away. I could not make out what the trouble was. The African native’s mind works in a mysterious way (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 84).

Benham recalled that the following day the porters were reluctant to start but she managed to get them going and as they were making their way to the mountain, they came across two human skeletons which unnerved the porters who refused to continue, “I argued and bribed and, at last they started again, but presently stopped a second time and flatly refused to go on ... I confess that I felt almost desperate, but I resolved that, rather than give up my mountain, I would go alone” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 85). As



Figure 21. Photograph of Gertrude Benham in Africa with porters (date unknown). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

Benham was packing to leave, four of her group agreed to accompany her. As they ascended higher up the mountain snow appeared and one of the porters, who had never seen snow picked some up in his hands and said he was going to take it back with him “I put some in my cup near the fire, and when it melted and only a little water remained the boy’s surprise was laughable ... he thought it bewitched” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 86). Benham continued on her own to climb Kilimanjaro and wrote an article about her trip ‘An Englishwoman in Central Africa’ and sent it to *The Times* newspaper who published it on 20 December 1909 (Howgego 2009). Years later in 1927, Benham records that when she was in the West Indies she read in *The Times* that a woman had climbed Kilimanjaro for the first time. She did not dispute this but an anonymous letter was sent to *The Times* pointing out that Benham had climbed it eighteen years earlier (Howgego 2009).⁷⁹ After climbing Kilimanjaro Benham spent four days alone in camp on a plateau sketching the mountain scenery. This may have been for purely artistic reasons, or evidence of her being there, or recording of the landscape which was seen as a “prerequisite to an array of colonial programs” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 21).⁸⁰ Benham’s attitude to her African porters demonstrates her superiority and authority yet she also wrote about the kindness shown to her throughout her travels in Africa. She was dominant towards the porters just as she might have domineered servants in England. When meeting African people, Benham’s race, her position as a European, along with her skin colour, signified colonialism in Africa, a signifier of racial and colonial otherness, but also as a colonizer by the visibility of her skin colour just as the Africans were visible to Benham, her skin acts as a signifier of difference and alterity and “provides ‘visibility’ to the exercise of power” (Bhabha 1994: 79). This would have

⁷⁹ This woman was Sheila Macdonald, a twenty-two year old Londoner who reached the summit of Kibo, Kibo, the highest peak on Kilimanjaro at 19,340 feet, and who is the first British woman generally recognised as reaching the summit. Benham had reached the second highest peak, Mawenzi at 16,890 feet (Howgego 2009).

⁸⁰The explorer and artist Georg Schweinfurth explored and sketched the African landscape, people and objects published in his book *The Heart of Africa* 1874.



- 1 Forcados
- 2 Baro
- 3 Kano
- 4 Bauchi
- 5 Yola
- 6 Ngauhere (Ngaouhere)
- 7 Babua (Baboua)
- 8 Carnot
- 9 Nola
- 10 Irebu
- 11 Lake Tumba
- 12 Stanleyville (Kisangani)
- 13 Bafwaboli
- 14 Avakubi
- 15 Irumu
- 16 Mbarara
- 17 Kigali
- 18 Ishangi
- 19 Usumbura (Bujumbura)
- 20 Abercorn (Mbala)
- 21 Kayambi
- 22 Old Fife
- 23 Karonga
- 24 Fort Johnston (Mangochi)
- 25 Zomba
- 26 Blantyre
- 27 Mulanje
- 28 Chinde
- 29 Dar es Salaam

Figure 22. Map of Africa to show Benham's Journey in 1913. The national boundaries are for the present not 1913. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 23. Gertrude Benham in Nyasaland, Africa, 1913. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

been compounded by the fact that Benham wore Khaki clothing and a pith helmet, external signifiers of colonial power. Benham's attitude was, however, contradictory. Although she was dominant towards some people, she was respectful toward chiefs, and this may have been motivated by the fact that she relied on them for food and sometimes lodgings, and may even have encouraged the buying of objects. Blunt (1994) suggests that British women experienced ambivalence in the colonies and that:

Once the women were beyond the confinement of European colonial society, imperial discourses of power and structural inequality arguably came to supersede those of patriarchal discourses, and women travellers became increasingly able to share in the authority of male colonizers (Blunt 1994: 36).

However, this subject position was ambivalent and Western women remained subordinate to Western men but became dominant in relation to indigenous men and women. Benham was expressing her "female imperial authority in the contact zone" (Pratt 1992: 170). Benham completed her first world trip and returned to England in 1912, albeit briefly. In October 1912 she sailed from England to West Africa where she landed at Forcados in the western part of the Niger delta and travelled to Kano in northern Nigeria. From Kano, in 1913, she walked across central Africa which she described in an interview,

I have walked across Africa from west to east ... I started through Northern Nigeria, and went through the Cameroons, French Congo, Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) and out through German East and British East. It took me eleven months (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 83) [Fig 22].

This description of the different political areas in Africa indicates an awareness of the political situation and the cutting up of Africa by European countries after the Berlin conference in 1884, but to what extent is debateable. When asked if she was alone Benham replied “Quite alone, except for my boys. I had, of course, to have carriers for my tent and food boxes. I had seven boys and a cook” (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 83) [Fig.23]. As discussed in chapter 2 Benham, travelled to different villages where she was met by the chief and was offered food and lodgings and commented on the kindness and hospitality she was shown throughout Africa. It is probably on this walk through the continent that she was given a gift which she recorded in her *Catalogue of Museum* “6. carved black & white wooden box given me by a chief at Mbanana, Uganda”⁸¹ [see Appendix 4]. It is not known if she reciprocated the gift.

Benham is known to have been in Africa in 1920 from a letter sent from Benham to Alfred Rendle at the BMNH which was posted from Durban 28 July 1920.⁸² Howgego recounts that in 1920 Benham travelled from the Seychelles to Mombasa on the east coast of Africa, visited Nairobi where she is reported to have climbed Mount Elgon, made her way back to Mombasa and sailed to Durban on the south east coast of Africa then she “tramped in the Drakensberg and Zululand” (Howgego 2009: 38). Another letter to Rendle, dated 4 August 1921, was posted from Durban and was part of a parcel of flowers that she sent back to BMNH.⁸³ All that is known of the remainder of the journey is that she intended to sail to Perth, Western Australia (Howgego 2009: 38).

⁸¹ PCMAG 1934.25.418 Benham Archives, PCMAG.

⁸² Letter from Benham to Alfred Rendle, BMNH, 28 July 1920:NHM Archives File CB8 DF 400/16/3

⁸³ Letter from Benham to Alfred Rendle, BMNH 4 August 1921: NHM Archives File CB8 DF400/17/2

5.5 Collecting Goldweights

By the time Benham first went to Africa in 1909, Africans were already very experienced at trading with British collectors and museums, they were very much aware of European taste for objects and the demands of museums and had responded by making objects specifically for this purpose. This agency of the African people may have had an impact on what Benham collected and may have even advised her on what to collect, “Africans made conscious choices about what to give, sell or make for the collectors, based on their perception of the outsiders’ interests and desires” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 6).

Benham collected objects from all parts of Africa and the Islands of Madagascar and St Helena which reflect her wide ranging travels throughout the continent [Appendix 7]. She collected a diverse range of objects but the largest types of objects collected are Akan goldweights (32) and necklaces (32), followed by domestic containers, including baskets, (25), bracelets (23) and personal items (23). In her collection as a whole, objects of personal adornment and domestic objects predominate [see Appendix 3].

Benham collected thirty two gold weights from Ghana, West Africa and these were probably collected on her second trip to Africa in 1912-13 when she arrived in West Africa, and walked across Central Africa towards East Africa as described earlier.⁸⁴ There is no record of her actually visiting Ghana, or what became known as the British Gold Coast colony in 1874, as this is further west to where she is known to have travelled. Ghana had natural resources of gold, ivory and salt and the Akan people of Ghana increased their wealth by establishing trade routes with North Africa in the fourteenth century, particularly in the trade of gold. It is most probable that her gold

⁸⁴ These are recorded on PCMAG database as 1934.25.602.1x to 1934.25.602.32x .

weights were collected on this journey as Nigeria had strong trade links with Ghana, specifically with gold.⁸⁵ The first forms of Asante (Ashanti)⁸⁶ currency included iron, brass and cowrie shells but “by the late seventeenth century most of the central and south Gold Coast was committed to a gold-dust currency which led to the development of the art of gold-weights as well as to other equipment such as a blow pan, boxes, scales and weights” (McLeod 1981: 74).⁸⁷ Every trader had a bag of weights and equipment for weighing gold and “in some cases nearly every male adult had a bag of weights” (Garrard 1980: 176). In the Akan parts of Ghana the practice and the objects of the gold-trade were, however, gendered as a specifically male trade. In general, a woman could never become a goldsmith, they were forbidden by law to even touch any of the equipment, could not inherit them on the death of a male, and when menstruating were banned from the vicinity of a goldmine (Garrard 1980).⁸⁸

Extensive colonization by the British of Africa began on 4 February 1874 when British forces invaded Kumasi, the state capital of Ghana. As the Asante fled they left behind hoards of gold objects and associated items which were put on display in the South Kensington Museum, London in the same year. The exhibition was hugely popular with the British public and widely reported in the British press.⁸⁹

The Asante use of gold far exceeded anything Europeans encountered elsewhere in West Africa, gold-casting was well established on the coast by the late fifteenth century with considerable technical skill ...

⁸⁵ The main mining areas include Bambuk (in western Mali and eastern Senegal), the Lobi region of Burkina Faso and in the Asante Confederacy area of Central Ghana where gold dust as a currency was established. (Pole 2007: unpublished report for PCMAG.)

⁸⁶ Both Asante and Ashanti are used. The Asante (Ashanti) are Akan people, from Kumasi, Ghana.

⁸⁷ Garrard dates the first use of them to 1400 although he suggests it is possible that it was earlier, but by 1471 the use of them for weighing gold was an established feature of life on the gold coast (Garrard 1980).

⁸⁸ In Southern Akan women sometimes inherited them and were known to have used them for weighing gold-dust in the market place (Garrard 1980: 177).

⁸⁹ V & A website: www.vam.ac.uk. The Victoria and Albert Museum have collected African objects since its inception. They have a collection of goldweights which dates back to 1874, purchased from a sergeant of the British army after the battle of the Asante capital Kumasi.

and the European greed for gold drew more traders and adventurers to the region (McLeod 1981:72).

Vast quantities of gold was mined and panned within the Asante Kingdom and huge amounts of gold weights had been made over a period of at least four hundred years. Although the Asante resisted invasion it became a British protectorate in 1902 and “it is unlikely that many goldweights were made after 1874” (Garrard 1980: 301). The Asante use of Akan weights had ceased by 1905, “by the 1920s goldsmith skills and brass casting had declined and were only made to sell as curios to the European collector” (Garrard 1980: 304). European colonization replaced gold dust as a currency with printed money.⁹⁰

When Benham collected her gold-weights around 1913 there must have been an enormous surplus for sale on the market before they were made as curios for tourists and therefore they were obviously in demand by collectors. Garrard states that in determining age, and due to a radical change in style, goldweights can be divided into two broad categories: Early and Late periods. The Early Period circa 1400- 1720 (geometric and figurative) and the Late Period from 1700-1900 (geometric and figurative). Twelve of Benham’s goldweights can be traced to the early period and the remaining twenty from the late period. The early period weights are geometric in various designs.⁹¹ Benham’s goldweight 1934.25.602.13 [Fig. 24] is similar to what Garrard (1980) has identified as a ‘cone form’, or a ‘simple engraved form’ and although they may appear simple they would have been skilfully made and are among

⁹⁰ Garrard suggests various reasons for the ending of the gold-dust trade –the northern towns and villages of Ghana did not survive attacks by colonial forces in the 1890s and this brought about economic decline. In other parts of the ivory coast the gold-dust currency ended around 1890-1910 due to the French invasions and destruction of remote villages (Garrard 1980: 301).

⁹¹ Len Pole carried out an independent assessment of Benham’s goldweights in 2007 (Pole (2007), Unpublished Report, PCMAG). The information on each of the images of goldweights are based on this report.



1cm

Figure 24. Akan Goldweight
Abstract, bi-conical shape,
Early Period (1934.25.602.13).
Courtesy and copyright,
PCMAG.



1cm

Figure 25. Akan Goldweight
Abstract, Swastika, Early
Period (1934.25.602.7).
Courtesy and copyright,
PCMAG.



1cm

Figure 26. Akan Goldweight ,
Abstract, swastika with lines,
Early Period (1934.25.602.26).
Courtesy and copyright,
PCMAG.



1cm

Figure 27. Akan Goldweight
Early Period Abstract
(1934.25.602.29).
Courtesy and copyright,
PCMAG.

the oldest of Akan weights, circa 1400-1700, “these are extremely difficult to obtain being among the rarest of Akan geometric forms” (Garrard 1980: 277).

Other early period designs identified by Garrard are carved rectangles with a common basic design of bars and swastikas (circa 1500-1720). Three of Benham’s gold weights have a ‘swastika’ design but according to Pole this is not to do with the similar Indian design but rather that it has a northern origin and possibly an Islamic connection (Pole 2007: 2) [Fig. 25, 26 and 27].⁹²

The majority of the figurative weights are from the Late Period, there is a proliferation of designs which show highly skilled complex casting techniques and are known as ‘proverb weights’ due to their symbolic function (Garrard 1980: 288). Designs include insects, fish, reptiles and animals. Benham’s collection contains five of these late period goldweights. [Figs.28, 29, 30, 31 and 32].⁹³

Weights would carry traditional proverbial lore or simply show people in everyday activity or comment upon social and political relationships, or to reflect upon religious acts and spiritual ideals. Humans, birds, wild animals, fish, amphibians as well as objects of everyday life were subjects for representation in weights. Representational imagery derived from contact with Europeans includes ships, rifles and cannon are also found in weights.⁹⁴

⁹² These are respectively: 1934.25.602.7; 1934.25.602.26 and 1934.25.602.29.

⁹³ These are respectively: 1934.25.602.1; 1934.25.602.2; 1934.25.602.3; 1934.25.602.4 and 1934.25.602.30. The information on each goldweight is from Pole (2007).

⁹⁴ www.vam.ac.uk/asante-gold.



Figure 28. Akan Goldweight Figure climbing tree to get palm fruits? Late Period (1934.25.602.1). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 29. Akan Goldweight Figure, Hunter caught in his own trap? Late Period (1934.25.602.2). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 30. Akan Goldweight shield, Late Period (1934.25.602.3). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 31. Akan Goldweight Figure, bird's feeding. Late Period (1934.25.602.4) Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 32. Akan Goldweight Figure, Mudfish? Late Period (1934.25.602.30). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.

There were extensive amounts of goldweights made and these were now available for collectors and as noted earlier, they were even made for sale to tourists. Benham may have collected them as they were easily available, relatively cheap to buy, and the small scale meant that they were extremely portable. Benham may have been attracted to them for their symbolic significance in African culture as the goldweights represented an important aspect of African life for over five hundred years, they were an intrinsic part of daily life for Akan people and as part of African currency they were objects intrinsic to exchange and trade. Each gold weight is individually made by the lost wax method and therefore each is singular and original. Due to the number Benham collected, she may have been attempting to collect a representative example of goldweights as “the goldweights in the Plymouth collection ... can be used to demonstrate the main features of the system” (Pole 2007: 1).

5.6 Collecting Necklaces

Benham collected thirty-two necklaces mostly made from a variety of beads, seeds and shells. From the first Early Modern European contact in the fifteenth century beads were an important trade item between Africa and Europeans. The beads were made from glass in European glass making centres such as Venice and were relatively cheap to produce.⁹⁵ Most explorers, travellers and missionaries carried beads with them to Africa Africa in order to trade as they were accessible and portable, “Beads were the most popular trading items worldwide due their size and uses in self-adornment – they could be made into complex structures or used a single items of trade” (Gosden and Larson 2007: 187). Beadwork was an important aspect in many areas of African life and was used as a vehicle to signify social status, gender, age, and relationships as well as political protest, and items made with beadwork were important objects in weddings,

⁹⁵ Margret Carey cites Venice, Italy and Jablonec (Gablonz), (Bohemia) Czechoslovakia (Carey 1986: 5).

pregnancy, and childbirth (Carey 1998).⁹⁶ The story of glass beads has “not been distinguishable from that of colonization and beads were exchanged for raw materials such as palm oil, gold and ivory as well as slaves” (Sciama and Eicher 1998).⁹⁷ For the Africans:

These exotic objects came to symbolize wealth status and prestige, and were valued for their spiritual and medicinal potency. Some of them found their way back to Europe via the twentieth century tribal art trade. – and then, some were used to trade again in Africa, these were then collected again by traders and brought back to the west for a second time. Some objects were made in Europe and used for trade in Africa (Corbey 2000: 8).

This demonstrates the different routes that objects may take to come into the hands of collectors and complicates any notion of authenticity and the origins of objects in any kind of essentialist or ‘pure’ form of culture out of which objects might have emerged.

Two of Benham’s necklaces from South Africa have been identified as being European in design.⁹⁸ The first necklace from Lesotho, South Africa [Fig. 33] was “probably inspired by mission work.⁹⁹ Missionaries influenced the production of beadwork which mimicked European decorative jewellery” (Carey 2007: unpagged). The second is from North West Rhodesia [Fig.34] and this was probably made for colonial wives as it mimics European style jewellery” (Carey 2007: unpagged).¹⁰⁰ These beaded necklaces were made with imported European beads, made by Africans in Africa based on

⁹⁶ According to Margret Carey there are no early photographs or records of bead making as this was not a subject that early travellers, missionaries or collectors were interested in. The exception is a lady Victorian traveller, Helen Caddick, who published an account of her travels in 1900: Caddick, H. (1900) *A White Woman in Central Africa*, London: Fisher Unwin.(Carey 1998).

⁹⁷ Sciama and Eicher’s statement is based on a sample card of beads in the British Museum even though it it postdates the abolition of slavery.

⁹⁸ An assessment of beadwork and basketry at PCMAG was carried out by Margret Carey (2007) (PCMAG Archives: unpublished report). The European influence was supported by Catherine Elliott, BM (Email 13/08/2012).

⁹⁹ PCMAG 1934.25.11.

¹⁰⁰ PCMAG 1934.25.497.

European design, and sold to European collectors for European museums. The necklaces may have been commissioned by European colonial administrator's wives or settlers, or they may have been made to appeal to European tourists¹⁰¹ and demonstrates that "from the earliest contacts Westerners deliberately or inadvertently influenced certain spheres of African craft and artefact production" (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 25). Mission stations had workshops "where Africans were taught 'useful' skills ... and mission schools supplied goods for fund-raising bazaars and some beadwork would have been included" (Carey 1986: 60). The commissioning of objects by Westerners in Africa had a long history which went back centuries to first contact with the Portuguese. Some objects, however, were made in England for export to Africa which disrupts notions of authenticity which was based on the idea that an object had to have been made for use by, and used by, Africans. These types of objects, however, had become scarce due to collecting and the result of this created a demand and "the demand was met by Africans who began forging authenticity and even by Europeans who made objects for sale to Africans, in African styles" (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 183).

Some of these European-made objects that were exported to Africa were then collected by European collectors as mentioned above who assumed them to be African, and therefore by doing so complicating the idea of the 'pure' authentic African object and demonstrating the changing dynamics between cultures. Benham may not have been able to tell the difference between old and newly made objects as forging was a sophisticated practice and even "colonial agents were usually unable to tell whether the items were specially made and modified for the souvenir market" (Graburn 1976: 2).¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Benham may have commissioned them herself, although if she had it seems likely that she would have recorded it as something extraordinary in her *Catalogue of Museum*.

¹⁰² For Graburn, the borrowing of new ideas, materials and techniques has led to new syntheses and new forms of art. He cites Navajo blankets as a case in point – weaving was learned from Spanish colonizers to become part of Navajo tradition and highly commercialized art (Graburn 1976: 7).

Another necklace that Benham collected is made from Bakelite ¹⁰³[Fig. 35] “the Bakelite may have come from items originally imported as machine parts” (Carey 2007: unpagged). The incorporation of a western material, used to make an ‘African object’ and then sold to westerners exemplifies the notion of “transculturation in the contact zone” (Pratt 1992: 7) and as a form of mimicry (Bhabha 1994) as discussed in chapter three. “African craftspeople shaped their production according to the demands of their patrons, whether African or European” (Poulter 2011: 267). However, African craftspeople continued to make objects for their own communities:

The demand for souvenir objects is likely to have been a significant factor in influencing production, allowing [carvers] to respond creatively to the requests and taste of their European patrons. As such demands on both sides of the exchange are likely to have shaped, and been shaped by, the production of souvenir objects (Poulter 2011: 272).

The necklaces that Benham collected can be said to be the outcome of a negotiated response (Poulter 2011) but demonstrates how:

The colonial presence in West Africa impacted on indigenous production, with craftspeople layering new meanings onto traditional practice (to meet colonial taste), often creating new art forms. In turn, colonial officials in West Africa appropriated these items, and so different worldviews were melded together in order to create a new sense of self in response to the changing environment. African craftspeople and colonial administrators were thus simultaneously reconfiguring their identities and sense of place through ‘things’. Within this sphere of colonial demand and indigenous production, the genres of taste, function and need, on the part of both the producer and consumer, overlap and intertwine (Poulter 2011 276).

¹⁰³ PCMAG 1934.25.415



Figure 33. Necklace, plaited organic fibre, cloth and beads, European influence, Lesotho, South Africa (1934.25.11). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 34. Necklace, beads, European influence, North West Rhodesia (1934.25.497). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Figure 35. Necklace, Bakelite and beads, Kano, West Africa (1934.25.415). Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.

These necklaces were probably not made for African people. Using Graburn's analysis of objects, he suggests that there are two types of objects, the inwardly directed arts - that are made for, appreciated by, and used by peoples within their own culture and have an important function in maintaining ethnic identity and social structure, and secondly arts made for the external, dominant world; "these arts have often been despised by connoisseurs as unimportant, and are sometimes called tourist arts" (Graburn 1976: 4-5). Some of the objects that Benham collected, however, may have been made for and used by Africans as well as being sold to Benham.

In addition to the beadwork discussed above, Benham's collection includes beaded necklaces: one that functioned as a message from a girl to a boy to indicate that she is interested in him romantically that were specifically worn by men, and were produced by unmarried women, and a necklace made and worn by high ranking Tutsi women in Rwanda. However, in discussing the beadwork she collected in general "they all lack the brass buttons synonymous with Zulu beadwork ... which would have made the pieces more expensive to produce."¹⁰⁴ When Benham was in South Africa, the Zulu doll, made from beads and cloth, was being made for tourists yet Benham did not collect any and this raises the question of whether she was avoiding more 'touristy' objects.¹⁰⁵

5.7 Art/Artefact

Benham's collection can be considered as being domestic, decorative, and craft based rather than art or sculpture. She did not collect any figurative sculpture, masks or any ancestral or fetish power carved figures even though in the period in which travelled (1909-1913) "there was a growing effort to collect figurative objects, those representing humans and animals" (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 24). It was also a period in which

¹⁰⁴ Email from Catherine Elliott, 13/08/2012.

¹⁰⁵ Email from Catherine Elliott, 13/08/2012.

some African objects underwent a taxonomic shift (Clifford 1988) and were the topic of ongoing debates in Britain about what constituted ‘art’. The quality and beauty of the Benin Bronzes in 1897 had sparked a debate about Africa, art and aesthetics. The debate over whether African objects could be categorised as ‘art’ or ‘craft’ was compounded at the beginning of the twentieth century with modern European artists and their ‘discovery’ of African art. These objects were highly selected based on their formal qualities in relation to Western art and were reassessed and judged by Western standards and categories of art “since 1900 non-Western objects have generally been classified as either primitive art or ethnographic specimens” (Clifford 1988: 198).¹⁰⁶ Graburn has referred to this as ‘art by metamorphoses’ when objects are deemed art after they are originally made and “when objects produced in one society are transported to another and labelled ‘art’ ” (Graburn 1976: 3). These re-evaluated objects tended to be sculptures, figures and masks – the type of objects that Benham did not collect.¹⁰⁷

This debate, however, was steeped in evolutionary theory which proposed a hierarchy of civilization. For some, the superiority of Europeans and their notion of art could not be compared to that of Africa which, under an evolutionary theory which was essentially racist, were considered a lesser civilization. Any realism in African art was attributed to the influence of Europeans. Even though questions had been raised about considering African figurative sculpture as art (e.g. Benin) stereotypical assumptions about African people and their material culture was pervasive well into the twentieth century as “most ethnographers, embedded in the popular discourse of the day, were immersed in the

¹⁰⁶ This was the basis of the anthropology/aesthetic distinction in exhibiting non-Western objects.

¹⁰⁷ In discussing African art Frank Willett cautions that we need to avoid “generalisations about Africa because it is such a vast and diverse continent – an area of twelve million square miles is more than three times that of the United States – it has more distinct peoples and cultures than any other continent” (Willett 1973: 10).

ideas of biologically determined racial hierarchy, progress, and the superiority and civilizing mission of the West” (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 169).¹⁰⁸

Within collecting there were two main reactions to this: in the first mode of collecting, collectors collected in order to prove this paradigm and the objects were interpreted as evidence of an essential primitiveness while a second mode of collecting rejected this in favour of a more democratic balanced view to a common humanity. These different attitudes and preconceptions affected how collections were made, the agendas, methods, and contents of collections. The first mode of collecting emphasized the ‘pure’ traditional African objects ‘uncontaminated’ by the West, while the second mode of collecting can be situated in the “contact zone of collecting ‘hybrid’ art and ‘tourist’ art ... however, both types of collections contain objects that are old, new, ‘real’ and ‘fake’, ‘authentic’ and ‘tourist’” (Schildkrout 1998: 171).¹⁰⁹ Benham’s collection consists of a range of different objects: tourist, hybrid, and authentic, and she can be positioned in the second mode of collecting although most collectors “were not immune to Social Darwinism that pervaded popular discourse” (Schildkrout 1998: 169).

Each collector had (or indeed has) their own different agenda and motivation for collecting and their individual biography has to be taken into account such as their education, access to the scientific community and theories, their financial position, class, race and gender and whether they are affiliated to a museum or institution.

Benham, as a woman, was excluded from intellectual and scientific communities. She used her own finances to collect her objects, sometimes this was money earned from the

¹⁰⁸ Although this was the prevailing image, Annie Coombes (1994: 2) highlights that there was a diverse range of responses to, and involvement in, Africa.

¹⁰⁹ Enid Schildkrout considers the collecting methods of Frederick Starr (1858-1933) and Herbert Lang (1879-1957), who were in the Congo between 1905-1915, and analyses their relationship to prevailing notions of science and evolutionary theory and how this affected their collections. She discusses Frederick Starr as an example of the first mode of collecting and Herbert Lang as an example of the second mode (Schildkrout 1998: 169).

sale of her embroidery and she did not collect to any institutional or museum agenda (but perhaps had in the back of her mind a more vague understanding that the 'collection' should be kept together and eventually donated to some institution or another). The objects that she did collect such as goldweights, necklaces and domestic containers were not considered as part of this artistic reassessment and remained in the "demeaning category of curiosity" (Coombes 1994: 2). This reassessment and re-evaluation of African objects, and by implication African people, can be considered as a political act based on western systems of value and categories of art, where "representations of the African were, and are, evidently not 'fixed' but eminently recuperable and variable, depending on the political exigencies of any specific historical conjuncture" (Coombes 1994: 3). There was, however, a heterogeneity of responses and some collectors had always questioned and challenged Western categories (Schildkrout and Keim 1998).

In a discussion on the art of Africa, Chris Steiner states that:

Many of the arts which traders handle are considered to be the property of men. In the village context, for instance, most masks and figural statues are carved by men, and in some cases are even forbidden to be seen by women and children (Steiner 1994: 40).

Gender therefore may be one reason that Benham's collection does not include these types of objects as she would probably have been looked after by women in the villages she visited and this may explain why her collection is mainly of domestic or quotidian items.

Figurative sculpture, in the Western sense of the word, was undertaken by academically trained artists and mainly consisted of classical representations of the human body. For Benham, a middle-class Edwardian woman, artistic pursuits included needlecraft and watercolour painting as being gender-appropriate, and African sculpture may simply not have appealed to her aesthetic sensibility, or she may not have even considered them as art. From a practical point of view, they may have been more expensive to buy and heavy to transport. The lack of figurative sculpture is surprising for collectors at the time:

I am a little surprised that there are no figurative objects or any sort in there as these would have been particularly prevalent at the time ... if she travelled on a small budget she may not have been able to afford figurative pieces which were expensive and hard to carry so she opted for cheaper, smaller and more transportable items.¹¹⁰

The reassessment of African objects as art was still on-going throughout the twentieth century and to a certain extent still is being undertaken. Benham's collection of Akan goldweights is a case in point. They were functional, everyday important objects which were intrinsic to the African currency system and therefore can be considered as cultural objects of knowledge of a particular time and place in African history. Frank Willett (1973) comments that Ashanti African goldweights were not considered important enough for serious study and were relegated as trifles and curiosities. He, on the other hand, found them exciting and included "the ingenious little goldweights" as part of African sculpture (Willett 1973: 139). This consideration of African Asante goldweights as art is supported by Malcolm McLeod who stated:

¹¹⁰ Email from Emma Poulter 04/07/2012.

Gold weights are in many ways the most fascinating of Asante arts. The large number made, probably over a period of at least 300-400 years, their different sizes, and the many subjects depicted produce an impression of almost infinite variety. Many weights show keen observation and are modeled with great sensitivity and understanding of sculptural form (McLeod 1981: 122)

From this perspective, Benham's collection of goldweights can be considered as art.¹¹¹

As such, these objects, that were once every-day functional pieces in Asante culture, have undergone a 'diversion' from their expected life history (Appadurai 1986).

Regardless of whether an object is categorised as art or artefact:

It is still part of the system of objects, for example, the antique or the exotic object has a very specific function within the system, in that it signifies time and answers other kinds of demands than the consumer commodity such as witness, memory, nostalgia, or escapism (Baudrillard 1968:77).

As Clifford states, "collectible artefacts have changed and will continue to do so"

(Clifford 1988: 226).¹¹²

Benham may have valued the goldweights for their singularity as due to the process of making no goldweight was the same.¹¹³ In a discussion on exchange, commoditization and value, Kopytoff discusses how certain objects are marked and made singular and that value is held by groups who wield cultural hegemony in society. According to him,

¹¹¹ Chris Steiner (1994) states that goldweights are now part of the African art market and are being sold in box frames as art. As such they have undergone a 'diversion' from being artefacts to being valued as 'art'.

¹¹² Clifford discusses how objects are assigned value and how they move through the 'modern art-culture system'

¹¹³ The Lost Wax Method is an exceptionally labour intensive process and no two weights are the same resulting in unique objects (www.vam.ac.uk).

objects collected during fieldwork in the past were placed within a closed sphere which he refers to as the ‘sacred’:

The objects collected were greatly singularized; they were held to have for their collector a personal sentimental value, or a purely aesthetic one or a scientific one, the last supported by the collector’s supposed knowledge of the object’s cultural context. It was not considered entirely proper to acquire an object from African market traders or, worse, from European traders in Africa, or worse still, from dealers in Europe or America. Such an object, acquired at second hand, had little scientific value, and it was vaguely contaminated by having circulated in a monetized commodity sphere – a contamination that was not entirely removed by keeping thereafter in the same category as the objects “legitimately” acquired in the field (Kopytoff 1986: 78).

Within a western system of value it was not just objects that were devalued but the way in which they were collected that was also devalued. Benham’s objects were obtained in a variety of ways as she walked and travelled through Africa. In remote African villages it is highly probably that objects would have been brought and offered to her and therefore Africans had more control over some of the collecting process. She was given some objects as gifts and this, according to Kopytoff’s theory, made them ‘legitimately’ acquired in the field. Benham, however, acquired her objects in other ways, from missionary and trading stations:

Villages along the major rivers – particularly those tributaries that supported steamers – became trading stations, and many collectors made short collecting sojourns as the river boats stopped for supplies of wood for fuel, food, and trade goods, especially ivory and rubber (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 7).

Benham collected in a variety of ways and it is not inconceivable that she bought from African market traders, which according to Kopytoff was not



Figure 36. Copper collar, anklet?
Belgian Congo, Central Africa
(1934.25.469).
Courtesy and copyright, PCMAG.



Reverse of Figure 36 with
Benham label.

entirely proper collecting as it was ‘contaminated’ (Kopytoff 1986). There were, however, many collectors who collected in this way which disrupts notions of ‘field’ collecting and ‘legitimate’ collections.¹¹⁴

Benham’s *Catalogue* does not document how she acquired her objects except in circumstances where she was given a gift or if she found something. Other than this it has to be assumed that she bought them, but this is not always clear. Benham collected an iron collar which she recorded in her *Catalogue* as “33 copper collar, worn by the Modjombo, Bondjes & Lubala tribes, Ubangi River, Belgian Congo” [see Appendix 4] [Fig. 36].¹¹⁵ The collar has a semi-circular label with 33 written on it which corresponds to the *Catalogue* number.¹¹⁶ What is interesting about this is that Benham has identified and recorded the actual tribal people who wore it as well as the place where she acquired it, but not how she acquired it. The location responds to Benham’s second visit and walk through Africa, in 1913 [Fig.22]. Howgego records that after leaving Carno she took a boat and arrived on the River Ubangi at Mongoumba and then took a steamer to Irebu, a village on the south bank of the Congo where it meets the Ubangi. Benham had to wait for the next steamer and in the meantime visited Lake Tumba,¹¹⁷ and eventually travelled on to Stanleyville (Kisangani) (Howgego 2009: 26). It is very likely that she obtained it on this part of her journey. Len Pole states:

The object is clearly made with considerable skill ... and is one of the better documented African iron objects from a period when local iron smelting was coming to an end in this part of Africa ... It is definitely

¹¹⁴ Henry Balfour (1863-1939), the first curator of the Pitt rivers Museum, Oxford, bought a lot of museum material in curio shops, through middlemen, traders, and in local markets as it was the most efficient way to acquire objects quickly on his travels and there was no time to establish relationships with the people who made the objects (Gosden and Larson 2007: 176).

¹¹⁵ Benham’s *Catalogue of Museum*, Benham Archives PCMAG. The current database record is PCMAG 1934.25.469. Benham labelled some of her objects to correspond with those listed in her *Catalogue*. The labels are small white paper semi-circular stickers on which she handwrote numbers and can be seen on this object. The Belgium Congo is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

¹¹⁶ Len Pole suggests that this was an anklet rather than a collar (Email 19/03/2012).

¹¹⁷ This had been explored by Stanley in 1883.

for local use, not an item made for sale to visitors; but perhaps if she was in touch with the people of the community in which it was made, she may have purchased it or been given it as an example of the quality of their work¹¹⁸

The naming of the tribes is a very rare occurrence in her *Catalogue* and implies that Benham must have been informed of the details regarding the people who wore them. The lack of documentation of some of the other objects she collected may have been due to the restrictions of her gender which may have prevented access to certain forms of cultural knowledge. Transient collectors such as Benham, may not have been very well informed of local culture and this would have been compounded by her lack of anthropological training and, or, institutional support. However, it also has to be taken into account that her gender may have restricted her access to cultural knowledge and this may be a factor in the lack of documentation of her collection.¹¹⁹

Conclusion

This chapter considered the social, political and cultural contexts in which Benham travelled and collected from in the contact zone of Africa. Benham, as with many travellers and collectors to Africa, arrived with preconceived ideas about Africa but these were modified during their stay. For example, as discussed above, Benham refers to her porters as stupid and mysterious and she maintains a superior attitude to them, yet she also wrote about the kindness shown to her throughout her travels in Africa.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Email from Len Pole 19/03/2012.

¹¹⁹ Conversely, male collectors were also restricted to certain forms of knowledge and women collectors had access to knowledge that male collectors did not.

¹²⁰ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, RGS, 09/01/1914: RGS Archives.

Collectors such as Emil Torday and Mary Kingsley actively challenged preconceived ideas and promoted African culture and people in a positive light.¹²¹

Benham transgressed and transcended notions of gender constructions and her achievements in Africa challenge the imperial wisdom that claimed “Africa is no place for a white woman” (Chaudhuri and Strobel 1992: 6). As with other women travellers and collectors such as Mary Kingsley, “clear tensions exist between wanting to be included in a masculine tradition of exploration and seeking some form of self-definition” (Blunt 1994: 73). Benham, like Kingsley, was “claiming a [spatial and behavioural] freedom from the gender restrictions of her own society, found in the white male status she could assume in Africa” (Birkett 1992: 121). This self-definition for Benham was walking across a continent, climbing mountains, and collecting objects, all of which were factors in defining and materialising her identity, and eventually, through her donation to PCMAG, an extension of herself and immortality.

Walking for thousands of miles and collecting en route can explain the variety of small and domestic objects she collected such as gold weights, necklaces, containers, and baskets, some of which according to Carey, are finely made (Carey 2007). Benham collected a range of objects: some made for local use; some made in the style of European design; and some made for tourists. It can be concluded that due the vast area she covered and the remoteness of some of the villages, some of Benham’s objects were not made for tourists while others certainly were.

¹²¹ Torday was compassionate and tactful in dealing with African people and stated that all colonization was an injustice (Fabian 1998:93). Pratt (1992) locates Kingsley within the project of empire although she acknowledges that Kingsley rejected the tropes of imperial domination (Pratt 1992: 215). Mary Kingsley openly criticised the negative effects of European colonization on African culture and the colonial government (Coombes 1994; Blunt 1994). Schildkrout and Keim (1998: 4) state that “William H. Sheppard, Emil Torday, and to a more limited extent even Herbert Lang, there was the expectation that the display of their collections might cast a more positive light on the peoples of Africa.”

As Benham walked through Africa and met with people she may have been an opportunistic collector and collected simply what was offered to her, and this may account for the large proportion of domestic containers and baskets which may have been in daily use. This conforms to O’Hanlon and Welsh’s notion that whether a collector was stationary or mobile affected what they collected, and that the input of both indigenous communities and colonial employees enabled and shaped collections “local people moulded collections in ways unrecognised by accounts which attribute exclusive agency to collectors” (O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000:18). In Africa Benham was mobile in a different way than she was in Fiji, as discussed in chapter 4. Rather than stopping off from a boat and spending a short amount of time in a country she spent many months in Africa: but, as can be seen from her travels, particularly her second trip to Africa in 1913, she spent eleven months walking through the continent from West to East. This involved going where ‘no white woman had been before’ and therefore it can be assumed that she walked through remote villages where she was the first white person that African people had seen and collected her objects en route.

Benham’s own personal interests were also a factor, in her collection. The baskets and the beaded necklaces which were made out of plant materials, shells and seeds reflect Benham’s interest in natural history and the novel use of organic materials and this is what may have motivated her to collect them. The domestic aspect of her collection adheres to the notion that women sought out embodied and sensory engagement with their collections and were drawn to objects that had to do with the everyday and domestic (Gordon 2006).

Benham’s status as a collector at the time would have been considered amateur due to her lack of scientific training. She travelled and collected in Africa at a similar time

period to Torday and Frobenius who were on museum-sponsored collecting expeditions which were considered professional and justified by their rational and scientific methods and interests. Fabian (1998), in a discussion on Torday and Frobenius, challenges this status and demonstrates that, “exploration and scientific travel had elements, aspects, and conditions that were anything but rational in the sense of being self-controlled, planned, disciplined, and strictly intellectual” (Fabian 1998: 80). He refers to this as the ‘ecstatic’ method, collecting everything the neutral, objective collector was not. His main point is that collections were made in many different ways and that many factors were involved, internal and external to the collector, and that objectivity was always imbued with subjectivity, the rational with the irrational, and this complicates scientific anthropological knowledge and the distinction between professional and amateur collectors.

The directive from anthropology to collect all aspects of cultural life would have applied to collectors whether they were considered professional or amateur, and Benham’s collection is indicative of a specific time and place in African and British history. The emergent discipline of anthropology was based on scientific and systematic collecting as part of a professional discipline, yet it is difficult to position collectors as being either professional or amateur. For example, Emil Torday did not have a scientific background although he was guided by the staff at the British Museum and the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI). This scientific, neutral objectivity was, however, far from dispassionate, “Torday’s view of the Kuba, however, was far from dispassionate, whatever the aims of neutral reporting he brought to the study of their society” (Mack 1998: 67).

Many so called authentic African objects had disappeared by the time Benham was in Africa and this was due to different factors including Christian and Islamic missionaries who banned the making of pagan idols and often burned what was left. These art objects were often seen as symbols of tribal resistance to colonial or central government authorities and “since 1907 the only genuine examples of African art could be found in the remote villages” (Bascom 1976: 305).¹²² The lack of figurative sculpture in her collection cannot be solely attributed to the demise of African culture and the impact of colonialism and missionaries. It has to be considered that Benham herself must have made the decision to collect her range of gold weights and beaded necklaces.

At the time Benham travelled to Africa, anthropology, as a developing science, had emphasised the collecting of objects from all aspects of cultural life rather than just the spectacular objects of a culture and Benham’s collection fits with this criteria:

Benham's collection has a very similar 'feel'/ 'character' to it to the so-called 'amateur' collectors (mainly people stationed in West Africa as administrators at around the same time) including women collectors. The combination of grass basket work objects – including hats and mats, poker work on gourd bowls, finger piano, ivory trade tokens, beads etc. seems quite typical of the time. The majority look to me like they have been made by local craftsmen for sale (either to the local population for their use or to travellers/tourists).¹²³

For Emma Poulter, made-for-sale objects are not ‘anomalies’ but “embodied representations demonstrative of changing dynamics in operation at the interface between cultures” (Poulter 2011: 266) and are “valuable indicators of the formation and

¹²² Bascom’s observation comes with the caveat that some art forms never died out and that new creative traditions developed. Not all the blame can be placed on outsiders as local factors within different African regions also had an impact (Bascom 1976).

¹²³ Email from Emma Poulter 04/07/2012.

transmission of meaning, identity and memory across cultural boundaries at particular times and places (Poulter 2011: 267).

The discourse of collecting in Africa is replete with accounts of plunder and looting with an emphasis on salvage and systematic collecting by white European males.

Schildkrout and Keim (1998: 21) suggest that African collecting falls into two phases – prior to the Berlin Conference of 1884 (haphazard collecting of souvenirs) and post Berlin conference (a period of intensive and often violent colonization by European powers in which ‘trophy’ of domination were collected). I suggest that this was not as clear cut as it may seem. Although it cannot be denied that the political situation in Africa became more aggressive after the post-Berlin conference, there was aggressive ‘trophy’ collecting prior to it and conversely, haphazard collecting of souvenirs continued after it. I suggest that Benham’s mode of collecting, however, was a more nuanced form of this and falls into neither of these categories but occupies an interstitial space, as a hybrid collector-type, just as some of the hybrid objects she collected.

As far as is currently known Benham did not record any knowledge of the people she collected from although she may have done so in her missing diaries. She was not an ethnographer and her collection is not ethnography in the sense of an attempt to create a “sustained narrative of a particular group” (Pearce 1995: 330), but it can be described as an ethnography of the collector, of Benham herself and of British attitudes towards arts in maintaining a superior position in relation to an uncivilized Africa and its cultural products (Clifford 1988).

Many collections of African objects are from a specific area and often associated with British colonial rule or missionaries. Benham’s collection was from many parts of

Africa and transcends the geographic dividing up of Africa by European colonial powers. It therefore does not just represent British interests in Africa but also the agency of the Africans, and her own personal interests in the material culture from a politically divided continent. "Collecting created and defined Africa" (Schildkrout and Keim 1998: 4) but I would suggest that in the process Africa was also defining Europe and Benham, as a collector, and was part of this whole process of creation and definition. But it was not just Africa that she was defining, but through collecting, Benham was also creating, defining and materialising her own identity.



Figure 37. Map of Himalayas to show Benham's journey from Simla to Srinagar 1914. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

Chapter 6. Benham: A Collector in Asia

What was the Orient for the individual traveller in the nineteenth century ... the orient was India of course, the actual British possession.¹²⁴

The people were nearly always kind and friendly. Some were surprised that a white woman could walk and climb as I did. One chief in a small hamlet exhibited me to his people with pride. "This," he said, "is a mem-sahib who walks like a goat".¹²⁵

Introduction

This chapter considers Benham's travels and collecting in Asia where she made collections from many areas: South Asia (Kashmir, the Himalayas, India), East Asia (Japan, China, Formosa (now Taiwan), Tibet)¹²⁶, South East Asia (Java, Malaya, Bangkok, Burma, Sulawesi), and West Asia (Kuwait, Syria, Iran) [see Appendix 8]. The chapter, however, focuses on Benham's collection from the Himalayas and Tibet. In addition there is only one photograph in Benham's collection and this was collected from Formosa (now Taiwan) and the chapter considers the significance of this to Benham, to the Formosans, and to the Japanese colonizers.

Initially the chapter addresses the contact zone of India as a British colony and how it was represented and made knowable to the British public through a range of discourses which can be described as Orientalist (Said 1978). Tibet, the highest place on earth lies north and east of the Himalayas, was closed to foreigners and remained unknowable to the West. This led many trespassers to penetrate their way into Tibet and Benham

¹²⁴ Said 1978: 169.

¹²⁵ Gertrude Benham in Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 92.

¹²⁶ Benham's spelling of Tibet as Thibet is consistent with the time.

applied many times to enter but was refused on several occasions but eventually gained permission to enter. The chapter outlines the political situation of Tibet and the British and Russian attempt to penetrate the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Benham made extensive walks through the Himalayas. She spent many months walking, painting, botanizing, and collecting in the Himalayas, particularly near the border with Tibet making a nuisance of herself, and wrote many letters to government officials for permission to enter, most of which were refused. The chapter considers the western fascination with Tibet in an attempt to understand why Benham was so determined to travel there. One of the ways in which knowledge of other cultures was constructed was through their material culture. Did Benham want to go in order to collect objects? To make sketches? Or was it simply because it was forbidden?

Benham made a collection of objects from India, Kashmir and Tibet [Appendix 8]. Many collections of Tibetan material were made by collectors who had never been to Tibet and the chapter considers how she might have acquired them.¹²⁷ Some of her objects are identified as Tibetan but were collected in Ladakh and the surrounding villages of the Himalayas close to the border of Tibet. It highlights the difficulty that sometimes occurs in making an exact provenance of an object.

While there are a range of different types of material objects in Benham's collection there is only one photograph. Benham travelled and collected from many parts of Asia and collected a photograph of a woman from Formosa (Taiwan) which according to

¹²⁷ The first 'professional' collector that was sent to Tibet was L. A. Wadell who was attached to the Younghusband expedition (1904) as a doctor and a collector for the British Museum (Livne 2010: 90).

Howgego (2009) she visited sometime between 1926 and 1928. The chapter considers why she collected only one photograph and how she acquired it. What might the image have meant to Benham? What did it mean to the Formosans? What did it mean to the woman who was the subject of the photograph? How did it function as a colonial photograph? The chapter finally considers Benham as an Oriental flâneuse and her collecting as part of an Orientalist discourse but it also demonstrates that Benham, although an amateur collector, had professional aspects to her collecting.

6.1 The Contact Zone: The Himalayas and Tibet

Benham visited India and Kashmir on her first world voyage sometime between 1904 and 1909 and “probably towards the end of 1906” (Howgego 2009: 17). On her second and third world voyage she again visited Asia between 1909 to 1911 where “she spent some time in India, and twice visited Kashmir” (Howgego 2009: 25). It is known that Benham was back in India in October 1913 on her fourth world voyage from a letter she wrote to John Scott Keltie at the RGS, written on board the S.S, Gaseon, Mozambique Channel, when she informed him that she was leaving Africa and her address for the next three or four months would be in Lucknow, India.¹²⁸ “From Mozambique, Benham proceeded to Zanzibar and the Seychelles ... then to India where she disembarked at Bombay early in 1914” (Howgego 2009: 31). In a letter written from Dasna, India in 1914 Benham stated, “I am hoping to go to the Himalayas again this next summer to do more tramping and sketching.”¹²⁹ She again visited India and the Himalayas on her fifth world voyage in 1919 to 1920, on her sixth trip in 1924 to 1925 when she also visited Tibet, during her seventh world voyage between 1929 to 1933 and on her eighth trip between 1936 to 1937. Many years later Benham recalled:

¹²⁸ Letter from Benham to John.Scott Keltie, RGS, 28 October 1913. PCMAG: Benham Archives. Lucknow is in Utter Pradesh, Northern India and Benham most probably made her collection of seven objects here.

¹²⁹ Letter from Benham to Keltie, RGS, 9 January 1914. PCMAG: Benham Archive.

Altogether on different journeys, I have spent ten years in India, and have made many long trips in the Himalayas, sometimes spending the whole summer at about 10,000 to 12,000 feet. That was in 1914. I had twice before visited Kashmir, and this time I started from Simla (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 89).

What was the fascination with India, the Himalayas and Tibet for Benham and why did she collect their material culture? The Great Exhibition of 1851, held at Crystal Palace, London was a ‘display of empire’ for Britain to exhibit the material culture of their colonies and served to reinforce “the certainty of European Imperial superiority” (Coombes 1994: 64). Central to this exhibition were objects collected by the East India Company which introduced the British public, en masse to Indian material culture.¹³⁰ The British were dazzled by the richness and intricacy of workmanship in Indian objects which reinforces the notion that colonialism was always associated with material wealth, gain and greed. India was the ‘jewel in the crown’, a country objectified in material terms.¹³¹ The admiration for Indian objects was counterbalanced by the British who maintained cultural and political supremacy and one of the ways in which this was achieved was through the exhibition of Indian objects, informed by evolutionary ideas of display. Exhibitions of Indian objects were part of an Orientalist discourse which promoted a European cultural hegemony and “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said 1978: 7) and provided a distinction between the east and west as a “starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, ‘mind,’ destiny, and so on” (Said 1978: 3). India was represented to the British public through their material culture, “collected objects from the Indian

¹³⁰ Although there was an Indian Museum in London which opened in 1801, the British public had not been systematically exposed to Indian products and manufactures until the Great Exhibition in 1851. The collections from the Indian Museum were the founding collections of the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum. (Levell 2000: 38).

¹³¹ The Koh-i-Noor diamond from India, which is now part of the British crown jewels, was part of the display at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

subcontinent were the medium through which notions about Indian culture were transmitted to Europe, particularly, but not only, to Britain whose empire India had become” (Pearce 1995: 331).

Although India was a British colony and under British rule since the eighteenth century, they had not invaded or penetrated its neighbour Tibet, which remained on the edge of empire, but not part of it.¹³² Collections from Tibet, however, were treated as part of the colonial paradigm as there were few alternative ways in which to understand this material (Livne 2010).¹³³ So, in other words, once the museum paradigm had been set up in which national and regional British collections could be housed, there existed a colonial and imperial framework in which to place them and thus objects not normally seen as ‘colonial’ could be subsumed within this new representational paradigm. Tibet, as a close neighbour of British India, with its long trading links and exchange of objects, would have been viewed as part of this colonial paradigm.

During the nineteenth century Britain had invaded and colonized Burma, Sikkim and Bhutan, areas that immediately surrounded Tibet. In 1899, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India was keen to develop trade relations with Tibet and pursued negotiations for trade and commerce. In 1903-4 he sent a mission to Gangtok on the Tibet-Sikkim border along with a military escort led by Colonel Francis Younghusband who fought his way into Gyantse and eventually Lhasa, the capital of Tibet which led to a new diplomatic relationship and established trade centres in Gyantse, Gartok as well as Yatung in Tibet.

¹³² India remained under British rule until 1947.

¹³³ Most Tibetan collections were made between 1890 and 1930 and are mainly from missionary, military personnel. 80% of the Tibetan collections at National Museum Scotland, which consists of 1,100 objects were made by amateur collectors. These include Annie Taylor, Harry French Ridley, J.W. Innes Wright, Colonel F. M. Bailey, Major William John Ottley, Lillian Le Mesurier, and Isabella Tyrie (Livne 2010). National Museums Liverpool also have important collections by: Sir Charles Bell, Colonel F. M. Bailey, his wife the Honourable Mrs Irma Bailey, Hugh Richardson and Sir Francis Younghusband (Martin 2010).

In 1906, the Anglo-Chinese Treaty confirmed political stability and trade between Tibet and the British, although the Tibetans continued to remain wary of British intentions.¹³⁴ Tibet's remoteness, mountainous environment and isolation from the rest of the world led it to become known as the 'Roof of the World' and its capital Lhasa, the 'Forbidden Land', became steeped in mystery and myth:

Like Shangri La, the 'lost' valley of James Hilton's *Lost Horizons*, Tibet was a land where time stood still and people had not yet lost their innocence. It was this, perhaps above all else, which made it so alluring to trespassers from the West. Here, surely, lived Rousseau's Noble Savage (Hopkirk 2006: 8).

Even though outsiders were unwelcome in Tibet, the lure and mystery of the place attracted many who managed to trespass beyond the borders. Many explorers became involved in what became known as the 'Great Game'¹³⁵ and worked for the British secret service as the vast mountainous area of Tibet needed to be mapped in the event of Russian invasion. The publication of Kipling's *Kim* in 1901, an adventure story of a young orphan recruited into the Indian secret service, immortalised the Great Game and as an Orientalist discourse, enforced the myth and mystery of India and Tibet in the British imagination. Benham carried this book with her on all her travels and stated, "Wherever I go I take a few books. Besides the Bible and a pocket Shakespeare, I have *Lorna Doone* and Kipling's *Kim*. In cloth covers made by myself, these books have been my companions in every continent" (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 90). Benham's interest in the novel *Kim* is in keeping with the British fascination with the myth of India and

¹³⁴ Tibet remained independent until the Chinese invasion in 1950 when it was incorporated into the People's Republic of China (PRC). For a full account of the Tibet/British relationship see Bell (1924).

¹³⁵ The 'Great Game' refers to the conflict between the British, who wanted to retain their political occupation of India, and the threat from Russia. It came to an end in 1907 with the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention. "Several women travellers were on the fringes of the intelligence 'game'. Women such as Freya Sark, Gertrude Bell and Violet Cressy-Marcks were known to be involved in espionage and intelligence gathering" (Maddrell 2009:114).

Tibet as exotic places, peoples and landscapes but also with the colonization of them such as the mapping of unknown territories. By visiting and travelling through these places, Benham could be described as living out the fictionalised adventure story with herself as heroine (instead of a boy), and as an explorer on the edge of empire.

Many different types of people, missionaries, adventurers, explorers attempted to enter Tibet. In 1892, the missionary and traveller Annie Taylor and her Tibetan companion Ponsu travelled to Tibet with aim of visiting Lhasa. Taylor learned to speak Tibetan, shaved her head, and dressed as a Tibetan in order to avoid being detected, but unfortunately was captured before she arrived and was forced to leave.¹³⁶ In 1924 Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969), a French explorer and writer who was just one year younger than Benham, famously entered Tibet dressed in disguise as a pilgrim, spoke fluent Tibetan, and carried a concealed gun. She had illegally crossed into Tibet in 1914, lived as a hermit in a cave in Sikkim, and is the first European woman to have visited the capital Lhasa (Hopkirk 2006).¹³⁷ Women travellers like these “were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences” (Clifford 1997: 32). This notion of ‘disguise’ and of ‘mimicking’ of indigenous people by Europeans conforms to the statement by Said in that “The Orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true” (Said 1978: 160) and exposes the power relationship of the European determination in penetrating and mapping places that were politically excluded to them and which were outside of the

¹³⁶ Taylor subsequently accompanied the Younghusband expedition in 1904 as a nurse.

¹³⁷ David Neel published *My Journey to Lhasa* in 1927 and *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* in 1929 which were widely read.



Figure 38. Map of Himalayas to show Benham's Journey from Naini Tal to Leh in 1919. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

realms of the British Empire.¹³⁸ Collections of objects were made from Tibet for the purpose of adding to the ‘imperial archive’ and Benham’s travels to Asia, her painting of landscapes and collecting of objects can be understood against this background of the British fascination with “penetrating Tibet, possessing knowledge about its topography, peoples and their material culture” (Levell 2000: 161). In her determination to visit Tibet, legally or illegally, Benham can be situated as part of this Occidental desire, and her collection of objects that she ‘hoped would be of use to students’ as an “Oriental masquerade and an Orientalist device for capturing and conveying valuable, otherwise inaccessible information” (Said 1978: 160).

In 1886, when Benham was nineteen and living in London, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was held at the South Kensington Museum and in 1895 the London Missionary Society held an exhibition at Crystal Palace, Sydenham (both exhibitions were popularised in the press.) In 1894-5 the collector Frederick John Horniman (1835-1906), founder of the Horniman Museum, London, made a collection of Tibetan objects of approximately ninety objects from the market in Darjeeling which he thought to be the “best in India” (Levell 2000: 159). The Horniman Free Museum opened with a room dedicated to India. Levell has described how there was much ‘native’ jewellery on display and that baskets and jewellery “were articulated as gendered objects; one that would appeal to the Victorian female’s desire for decorative, oriental wares” (Levell 2000: 260). This gendering however, served to reinforce the ideological view that “the East (India) was ‘effeminate’ in contrast to the rational, scientific, technically advanced masculine West (Britain)” (Levell 2000: 261). The British colonies were represented

¹³⁸ During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a fashion for dressing up as an ‘Oriental’. For example the eighteenth century portraits of Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1689-1762) in Turkish dress (Birkett 2004: 47) and Lady Isabel Burton (1831-1896) (wife of the explorer Sir Richard Burton) in Syrian costume, “both the Burtons were fond of dressing up” (Birkett 2004: 60). This masking of the self in the guise of the Other has parallels with travellers who adopted the guise of the peoples of the countries in which they visited.

and exhibited to the British public through the gendering of their material culture, underpinned by a racist and evolutionary ideology. Benham, particularly as she lived in London, was surrounded by collections of objects from the colonies and media reports of the British Empire which would have informed her preconceptions of Asia. It was against this cultural, political and economic background that Benham travelled and collected in India and the Himalayas and applied to the India Office for permission to enter Tibet in 1923.

6.2 A Mem-Sahib Who Walks Like a Goat

In 1914 Benham travelled across the Himalayas from Simla to Srinagar [Fig.37] which she described in a letter to John Scott Keltie at the RGS:

I thought you might be interested to know of my tramp from Simla to Srinagar this autumn. April 16 1914 Left Simla, travelled via Kulee, Lahoul, Paugi Pader, Frankar Susu to Kashmir, passing the Jolori, Rolang, Umasi, Peuse, Bhol Khol, Sona Sar, Har Nag and Yecu Sar passes.¹³⁹

Benham described how her photographs had not been successful and that she had made forty three sketches on her journey and hoped to exhibit them on her return to England. In an attempt to obtain funding from the RGS, Benham outlined the cost of her journey and wrote, “the £26 includes curios” which indicated that she had begun to form her ethnographic collection of this area. She arrived in Srinagar in August 1914 when she heard about the outbreak of the First World War and wrote:

I have heard nothing of the outer world since April and the first thing that greeted me on my arrival here on August 10 was the news of the war. I felt almost stunned. After the peace and joy of the mountains it

¹³⁹ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, RGS, 20 August 1914. RGS Archives.

echoed terrible and it affects all the world. In many respects it has been more uncivilized than in Africa as I did not see a white person for nearly two months after leaving Kyelang, where there are Monasteries.¹⁴⁰

Benham wrote about the trouble she had with servants, and how she became an object of curiosity herself when villagers came out to see her:

As I went farther and farther into the wilds I became an object of curiosity to the people in the hill villages. They would touch my umbrella, my watch, my ivory bracelet, and my dress. The people were nearly always kind and friendly. Some were surprised that a white woman could walk and climb as I did. One chief in a small hamlet exhibited me to his people with pride. "This", he said, "is a mem-sahib who walks like a goat" (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 92).

6.3 Botanizing in the Himalayas

After the First World War Benham returned to India in 1919 on her fifth world voyage and visited Naini Tal and Leh in Kashmir. Howgego records that she stayed at the YMCA in the hills at Naini Tal to the west of the Nepalese border. During the summer she undertook a walk from here to Leh, the capital city of Ladakh in Kashmir (Howgego 2009) [Fig. 38]. During this 'tramp' she 'botanized in the Himalayas' collecting flower specimens which she sent to Alfred Rendle at the BMNH.¹⁴¹ In this letter Benham described her journey from Naini Tal to Srinagar in Kashmir and stated that she walked for eight or nine hours a day and made sketches. The two servants she engaged in Naini Tal deserted her after five weeks and she had to be:

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Benham to John Scott Keltie, RGS, 20 August 1914. PCMAG Benham Archives.

¹⁴¹ Letter from Benham to Rendle, BMNH, 15 October, 1919. NHM Archive File CB8 -DF400/15/2

Jack of all trades, as well as sketching, botany and writing, I was quite away from all civilization most of the time and only saw about 6 white people from the beginning of May until October. I did the Hindu pilgrimage: Badrinath, Tangnath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Tehri Spiti, Rupshu, Ladakh and Leh.¹⁴²

From Leh she made her way to Srinagar where she posted her letter to Rendle. In this letter Benham requested rolls of film and subsequently in a postcard sent to him from Nairobi on 28 July 1920, Benham thanked him for sending three packets of film which was waiting for her on her arrival at Mombasa. She stated that she had spent two months in the islands of the Seychelles, complained about the expense of travelling and the unsociable English community.¹⁴³

Benham walked through the Himalayan mountains and made sketches, collected natural history, collected objects, visited monasteries and sites of pilgrimage, all of which were consumed by her western gaze and can be situated as part of “how European culture was able to manage and even produce – the orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the Post-Enlightenment period” (Said 1978: 3) and as such was entangled in a power relationship of domination and of varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said 1978: 5).

6.4 Benham in Tibet: An Oriental Flâneuse¹⁴⁴

In 1914 Rendle at the BMNH had suggested to Benham that Tibet would be an interesting place to visit and wrote:

¹⁴² Leh was a busy town on the silk route from China. Letter from Benham to Alfred Rendle at BMNH, 15 October 1919: DF400/15/2. Visit to NHM 19/08/2009.

¹⁴³ Letter from Benham to Alfred Rendle at BMNH, 28 July 1920: DF400/16/3. Visit to NHM 19/08/2009.

¹⁴⁴ Flâneuse is a feminine form of flâneur, the nineteenth century male character who strolled the streets of Paris gazing on the sights of modernity and depicted by writers such as Baudelaire. It is used here in relation to Gertrude Benham as a passionate spectator and collector of the world.

I do not suppose you thought of getting into Tibet. That would be rather difficult. Sikkim and Bhutan are very interesting countries, but also it is extremely difficult for anyone to get in: perhaps you as a woman would find it more easy than a man would do.¹⁴⁵

This demonstrates the desire of the English to penetrate Tibet, to gain knowledge of the terrain, the flora and fauna, the people and to add to geographical knowledge. Tibet was known as the 'Roof of the World' due to being 16,000 ft (4,900mtrs) above sea level and its inaccessibility and mountainous environment would have intrigued Benham who was determined to travel there. In October 1923, Benham, whilst in England, made a request to the India Office to visit Tibet which was refused. In 1924 she wrote another letter, this time from Delhi, to the Indian Government to visit Tibet in particular Gyantse (Gyangze), Yatung and the sacred Lakes Mansarowar (Mapam Yumco) and Kailas (La'nga Co) and requested permission to enter through a remote pass from Garhwal or Tehri in the west of Nepal rather than through the more accessible route through Sikkim (Howgego 2009:41).¹⁴⁶ Her request was passed to Frederick Marshman Bailey, the Political Officer in Sikkim who, on 5 April 1924, permitted her to enter Tibet, but "only by the route from Darjeeling and through Sikkim" (Howgego 2009: 41). Benham spent the summer months tramping in the Himalayas on the border of Tibet [Fig. 39] much to the annoyance of the authorities and in November 1924 wrote to Bailey to inform him that she would arrive in Darjeeling in March 1925 and that she would proceed to Gyantse, Tibet in April until May 1925.¹⁴⁷ Due to severe weather conditions at that time of year Bailey had to decline Benham's request. Gyantse

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Alfred Rendle, BMNH to Benham 24 September 1914. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

¹⁴⁶ It is interesting that she particularly requested Gyantse and Yatung as these were both established trading centres. Even though the Tibetans did not trust the British and there were severe restrictions on entering Tibet "the trade in Yatung continued to increase in spite of restrictions, for the Tibetans are keen traders" (Bell 1924: 62).

¹⁴⁷ Benham wrote an article on her travels in 1924, 'My Tramps in the Himalayas' which was published in the *Journal of Madras Geographical Association* Volume V111, 1933-34.



Figure 39. Map of Himalayas to show Benham's Journey from Mussoorie to Tapoban in 1924. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

was a trading post just inside the Tibetan border and foreigners could not proceed any further inland without permission of the Dalai Lama.

According to Howgego Benham arrived in Sikkim in March 1925 as she intended, she “waited patiently for two months, then in late May made her way across the Tibetan border to the trading city of Gyantse” (Howgego 2009: 43). She returned to Darjeeling in late June after she had “made a thorough nuisance of herself the whole time she has been in Tibet, complaining of the behaviour of the Tibetans and everyone else towards her and of conditions in Tibet generally” (Howgego 2009: 44). Benham made collections of flowers which did not survive the environmental conditions and it is probable that she must have made her collection of Tibetan objects during this month in Gyantse [see Appendix 8]. Hopkirk (2006) suggests that Benham had intended to visit the Forbidden City of Lhasa rather than Gyantse. David-Neel had returned from her journey to Lhasa in 1924-25 and attracted worldwide publicity. Hopkirk suggests that this led other women to emulate her and this included Gertrude Benham, “she made her first unauthorized attempt to reach Lhasa soon after Alexandra David-Neel’s triumphant return, apparently getting as far as Gyantse” (Hopkirk 2006: 230).¹⁴⁸

In 1928, after Benham had completed her sixth world voyage, she landed in Plymouth where she visited Plymouth Museum and offered to donate her collection to them. From London she again wrote to the India Office for permission to cross the Indian border into Nepal and Bhutan but this was refused and she set off on her seventh world trip. In 1929 she landed in Delhi and wrote to Indian government for permission to enter western Tibet from Simla but this was also refused. In 1929 she was still attempting to

¹⁴⁸ It cannot be verified if Benham intended to visit Gyantse or Lhasa. On 30 January 1928, *The Daily News* reported Benham’s visit to Plymouth. In the interview Benham stated that she had just returned from her sixth trip around the world and had visited Tibet.

enter Tibet. By now her confidential file bore the statement “she is a bad type of British traveller to be allowed to enter Tibet, but just why, we shall never know” (Hopkirk 2006: 230). Not easily deterred Benham, in May 1929, wrote to the Maharaja of Nepal for permission to visit Kathmandu (Nepal) but was refused. Two months later in July 1929 she wrote to the Government of India for permission to visit lakes Kailas and Mansarowar, stating that she was a harmless traveller and she wanted to sketch mountains but again was refused. In her last letter in January 1930, she requested permission to visit Kathmandu to collect flowers for the British Museum and make sketches for the RGS, even though she had not corresponded with them for many years. Her request was approved but Howgego suggests that it unlikely that she ever reached Kathmandu (Howgego 2009: 49).¹⁴⁹ In 1931 Benham spent many months in the Himalayas with the intention of sketching Mount Kamet on the border of Tibet and the second highest peak in the British Empire. Howgego suggests that this was an ulterior motive in order to enter Tibet without permission of the authorities (Howgego 2009). During this trip she met the official mountaineering expedition led by Francis Smythe on their way to make an assault on Mount Kamet:

When the Mount Kamet expedition had pushed its way up into the wilds of Tibet, had reached the very last native village, and was setting off into the realm of eternal snow its members had the shock of their lives to find a small tent in which a quiet Englishwoman sat peacefully knitting – her invariable habit in foreign lands (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 79).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ These letters are in the British Library: Oriental and India Office. Formerly classified and confidential British intelligence and policy files, Ref: L/P&S/10/1014-2 File P.3971/1921 Pt 8 53ff. the volume is labelled 1921: P3971: Parts 7,8, 9 & 10: Tibet: Travellers. Visit to British Library 19/08/2009. Also see (Howgego 2009: 60).

¹⁵⁰ “It was only after Charles Bell (Political Officer 1908-1918) gained approval from the Dalai Lama in 1921 in Lhasa that the British were allowed to send in mountaineering parties and I would think that they would want to keep out anyone who might ruin their chances of sending mountaineering parties for Everest” (Email from Emma Martin 11/06/2012).

Benham told Smythe that she hoped to go to Tibet but whether she did or not is not known.¹⁵¹ As a form of credential, and to strengthen her request and status as an explorer, Benham stressed her institutional relationship with the RGS and the BMNH. Howgego suggests that her relationship with these institutions was ‘tenuous’ and her desire to become an “official scientific explorer” had either clouded her reality or that she was just out to deceive the authorities in her determination to enter Tibet (Howgego 2009: 41).

6.5 Collecting Tibet

Benham collected a range of objects from all parts of Asia which represents 52% of her collection, and this is probably due to her extensive travels in the region [see Appendix 2]. The different regions that she collected from include: East Asia (Japan, Tibet, China, Taiwan (Formosa), South Asia (Kashmir, Srinagar, Himalayas, India, Hyderabad, Bhutan, Surat, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab), South East Asia (Java, Malaya, Bangkok, Burma, and Sulawesi) and West Asia (Kuwait, Syria, and Iran) [see Appendix 8]. Although every individual collection is singular, ethnographic collections include similar objects which reflect other collections:

From China come fabrics and embroideries, material said to be taken from the Forbidden City, or the Summer Palace ... sheaths for long fingernails of mandarins, and boxes of tiny shoes for bound female feet. From Japan come tea services and samurai equipment, and from India material relating to religious life (Pearce 1995: 329).¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Smythe recalled this in his book *Kamet Conquered* (1932: 6). (Howgego 2009: 51). Benham wrote an article ‘A Woman on Kamet: The Adventure of an Artist’ which was published by *The Times* 17 February 1932.

¹⁵² Benham collected a sheath for long fingernails and she records this in her *Catalogue* as “369 silver shield, worn to protect the nail of little fingers which is let grow long, China” but this is not on the current PCMAG database.



Figure 40. Religious Thangka Painting depicting the Wheel of Life, Tibet (1934.25.717). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 41. Benham's boots worn by her on her tramps to Leh, Baltistan (1934.25.217). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

Benham collected an embroidered ‘Mandarin’s Robe’ from China¹⁵³ and two pairs of embroidered satin shoes for bound feet¹⁵⁴. She collected a range of domestic and lacquered objects from Japan and a high percentage of religious objects from India including a religious thangka painting¹⁵⁵ [Fig. 40]. Her collection includes a pair of boots from Baltistan “worn by me on my tramps to Leh”¹⁵⁶ [Fig. 41].

Emma Martin assessed the Tibetan collection.¹⁵⁷ Some objects are common, such as the three cloisonné cups from China¹⁵⁸ [Fig.42] which could be “picked up ten a penny, they were often sent by Tibetan officials to accompany letters as small gifts, but it is likely that she picked it up from a trader.”¹⁵⁹ However, other objects are higher status objects such as a stand for a scholar’s screen¹⁶⁰ [Fig.43] commonly seen on Chinese and Tibetan aristocratic tables, and a silver cup that would be “tucked into a robe and used for tea and food, the silver holder is quite nice, suggesting a person from higher society”¹⁶¹ [Fig. 44]. Some objects were made for the tourist trade in Darjeeling such as a ceremonial dagger, or Phurba¹⁶² [Fig.45].

Benham collected many pieces of jewellery which is an important aspect of Himalayan life and “can reveal its wearer’s sex, their regional origins, position in society and way of life as well as allowing us glimpses of religious preoccupations and beliefs” (Clarke

¹⁵³ PCMAG 1934.25.261.

¹⁵⁴ PCMAG 1934.25.221 and 1934.25.226.

¹⁵⁵ PCMAG 1934.25.717. Benham records this in her *Catalogue of Museum* as “177 The Wheel of life, hand-painted by lamas, representing scenes in the lives of good & bad folks. Seen in all Tibetan monasteries.” [see Appendix 4].

¹⁵⁶ Benham recorded these as 460 in her *Catalogue of Museum*. PCMAG database is 1934.25.217. These boots were included as part of the BBC ‘Stories of the World’ project in collaboration with the British Museum: *Gertrude Emily Benham’s Tibetan Boots*. www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects. They are not strictly Tibetan as Baltistan is in North India.

¹⁵⁷ Emma Martin, Head of Ethnology and Curator of Asia Collections at National Museums, Liverpool, kindly assessed Benham’s Tibetan collection.

¹⁵⁸ PCMAG 1934.25.123; 1934.25.124; 1934.25.125.

¹⁵⁹ Email from Emma Martin 11/06/2012. Benham did not record these in her *Catalogue of Museum*.

¹⁶⁰ PCMAG 1934.25.429.

¹⁶¹ PCMAG 1934.25.471. Email from Emma Martin 11/06/2012.

¹⁶² PCMAG 1934.25.707. Email from Emma Martin 11/06/2012.



Figure 42. Cloisonné Cup, China (1934.25.123). Benham collected three of these. Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 43. Stand for a scholar's screen, Tibet (1934.25. 429). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 44. Silver cup, Tibet (1934.25. 471). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



10cm

Figure 45. Ceremonial dagger, or Phurba, Tibet (1934.25.707). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



5cm

Figure 46. Woman's ga'u or amulet box known as a (kerima) (mkhal ri ma), Tibet (1934.25.466). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



1cm

Figure 47. Woman's ga'u as a type worn in Lhasa, Tibet (1934.25.564). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



5cm

Figure 48. Man's loop earring, worn in the left ear, Tibet (1934.25.568). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

2004: 15).¹⁶³ Some of the jewellery Benham collected was worn specifically by men and others by women. [Fig. 46] is a simple woman's ga'u or amulet box which is worn at the neck and is known as a kerima (mkhal ri ma) due to its shape which is similar to a kidney.¹⁶⁴ A ga'u is a decorative charm box which holds relics worn by most men and women and would contain rolled up prayers or blessed objects. Ga'us can be highly decorative and embellished with turquoise and coral to signify the wealth of the wearer and Benham's is very plain and dented, as though it has been well used. Clarke (2004) states that plain ga'u in this shape were worn by nuns throughout Tibet and has provenanced this to South or Central Tibet along with another woman's ga'u as a type worn in Lhasa, Tibet¹⁶⁵ [Fig 47]. There are similar ga'u in collections in the V & A (Clarke 2004: 85). Some earrings were worn specifically by men such as a loop earring [Fig. 48] which would be worn in the left ear.¹⁶⁶ Tibetans believed that if men did not have their ears pierced they would be reborn as a donkey.

Benham collected several items of traditional women's Tibetan clothing, demonstrating her interest in women and personal adornment. The collection includes a dark green silk Tibetan robe (shuba) without sleeves, a yellow silk scarf (Khata), two blouses, one blue and one cream, and a multi-coloured apron.¹⁶⁷ These were exhibited together for the first time in PCMAG's centenary exhibition in 2010 [Fig 49]. In her own *Catalogue* Benham has numbered all of these as number 41. She described that the two blouses are worn over each other, the blue above the white and the apron "a most important feature as all Tibetan women of all classes wear one of the same colouring & design, but not all

¹⁶³ John Clarke (V & A) assessed Benham's Himalayan and Tibetan collection.

¹⁶⁴ PCMAG 1934.25.466.

¹⁶⁵ PCMAG 1934.25.564

¹⁶⁶ PCMAG 1934.25.568. There is a very similar earring in Clarke 2004: 83.

¹⁶⁷ These are PCMAG: Robe 1934.25. 261, Scarf 1934.25.264, Blue blouse 1934.25.265, Cream blouse 1934.25.266 and Apron 1934.25.268.

as finely woven as this” [see Appendix 4].¹⁶⁸ Although she identifies them as Tibetan, she does not record where or how she acquired them. The sleeveless silk robe has been identified as the summer outfit of an aristocratic woman.¹⁶⁹ The colourful striped apron is worn by women to indicate that they are married. Benham’s comment on the fineness of the weave implies that it was a more expensive and higher status item than usual and confirms the high status of the robe. Benham obviously valued the fact that the apron she collected was more finely woven than others and this reveals her system of value not only in relation to the apron, but also that her collection contains ‘fine’ objects. The fineness of the weave indicates a level of quality and craftsmanship which Benham obviously valued and appreciated perhaps in contrast to western mass-produced woven items. Benham as an embroiderer herself recognised the quality in the weave and felt that it was important enough for her to record it. The scarf (khata) is a traditional presentation object which is usually given as a gift to welcome someone on arrival or when they are leaving or at a festival or celebration such as a wedding or birthday and it was worn draped around the neck. Although Benham does not mention how she acquired this, clothing was sometimes given as a gift.¹⁷⁰

According to Emma Martin, Benham’s collection is “absolutely typical of opportunistic collectors in the Himalayan area at that time.”¹⁷¹ She further suggests that the main centre for Tibetan ‘curios’ and ‘fakes’ made by Kashmiris and Indians, was Darjeeling, and by 1925, there would have been no ‘original’ or authentic material left. Tibet had traded for centuries before the arrival of Europeans and it is difficult to determine the exact place of where an object was produced, traded and marketed.

¹⁶⁸ Benham *Catalogue of Museum* PCMAG: Benham Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Email from Emma Martin 18/05/2010.

¹⁷⁰ The Pitt Rivers Museum’s ‘Tibetan Album’ has many photographs of Tibetan women wearing similar outfits to the one Benham collected: <https://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo>.

¹⁷¹ Email from Emma Martin 11/06/12.



Figure 49. Woman's Tibetan outfit exhibited at PCMAG's centenary exhibition in 2010. Author's photograph, permission of PCMAG.



Figure 50. Bandolier belt, from which would hang tinder pouches, weapons, and bullet makers, Tibet (1934.25.520). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

There are, however, Tibetan collections by collectors who never went to Tibet (apart from armchair collectors) that are similar to Benham's collection. Emma Martin points to a collector, the missionary John W. Innes Wright who worked in Ghoom near Darjeeling, and who made a collection of good quality Tibetan objects even though he did not travel into Tibet but collected from Tibetan pilgrims who passed through Ghoom.¹⁷² The fact that Benham followed the 'Pilgrim Route' is interesting as there were many monasteries and temples in the area. Emma Martin suggests that Benham may have collected items from individuals who were on pilgrimage. Many of the objects Benham collected from this region are very similar, if not identical to other collections in Liverpool Museum and all are provenanced to Darjeeling. For example, a bandolier belt, from which would hang tinder pouches, weapons, and bullet makers¹⁷³ [Fig.50], a coral bead necklace¹⁷⁴ [Fig. 51], and a butter lamp, used by pilgrims or nomads¹⁷⁵ [Fig.52]. Benham records this lamp in her *Catalogue of Museum* as "178 Silver butter lamp. Butter is used for illumination in all Tibetan temples. The cup is filled with butter & a wick is stuck in. All villages have to supply butter to the temple in their district." [see Appendix 4].

Frederick Horniman's Indian and Tibetan collections were formed through a network of different people and he met with established dealers in Indian and Tibetan objects, notably Paul Mowis in Darjeeling and S. J. Tellery and Co. who had offices in Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Simla.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Email from Emma Martin 11/06/12.

¹⁷³ PCMAG 1934.25.520.

¹⁷⁴ PCMAG 1934.25.41.

¹⁷⁵ PCMAG 1934.25.150.

¹⁷⁶ Tellery catered for wealthy English tourists and residents and offices were located in fashionable tourist areas near to hotels and were recommended in popular tourist guides such as Murray's *Handbook for Travellers* published in 1836 and covered continental Europe. An edition on India was published in 1859 and revised in 1891 (Levell 2000). Its authors included members of the RGS and the British Alpine Club and it is very possible that Benham was aware of this.



Figure 51. Coral bead necklace, Tibet (1934.25.41).
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.



Figure 52. Butter lamp, used by pilgrims or
nomads, Tibet (1934.25.150).
Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

When Horniman visited India in 1894-5 fakes and copies were already on the market but his dealer Paul Mowis was able to “procure ‘genuine’ Tibetan articles by employing ‘native travellers’ to cross over the border to collect” (Levell 2000: 288). Horniman emphasized that the objects he collected had been used by indigenous people which shows that he was aware of the trade in ‘inauthentic’ goods (Levell 2000).¹⁷⁷ Collectors, such as Horniman, did not penetrate Tibet although they made Tibetan collections through well-known dealers in Tibetan objects and, as such, theirs was a ‘symbolic penetration’ of Tibet (Levell 2000: 161).

Some of Benham’s objects collected in Ladakh have been identified as ‘Tibetan’ and some objects, identified as Tibetan, may have been made over the border in India.

Benham wrote an article about her journey through the Himalayas which was published in *The Journal of The Madras Geographical Association* in 1933-34 and commented on the objects in use in villages in the Himalayas on the Tibetan border:

As it is so near to Tibet there are many Tibetan things in use. Cups, boots, hats, aprons etc. many of the people speak Tibetan as there is a constant intercourse with Taklakot which is a large trading centre a few miles over the border.¹⁷⁸

In this article she described the people, the food, the architecture, clothing, personal adornment and more significantly, what and where she collected. This is more of an ‘ethnographic’ account than anecdotal and along with her collection of objects can be described as a deliberate “attempt to portray a foreign culture” (Barnes 2007: 203).

¹⁷⁷ Some of Horniman’s most valuable objects in his collection were identified as fakes in the twentieth century (Levell 2000: 286). Levell describes an object which is a good specimen of Tibetan work and questions why such a large and valuable object would have been allowed to leave the country by a government who actively discouraged and prevented foreigners from entry into Tibet (Levell 2000: 288).

¹⁷⁸ Gertrude E. Benham ‘My Tramps in the Himalayas’ *Journal of Madras Geographical Association*, Volume V111, 1933 -34: 13.

Emma Martin could not detect any objects that may have come from Tibet and stated, “I can’t see anything in the group that jumps out as being acquired in Gyantse or Tibet itself.”¹⁷⁹ Many objects were made for the tourist trade by Kashmiris and Indians working in the Darjeeling area and Martin suggests that a ceremonial dagger or *phurba* that Benham collected is a prime example of this [Fig. 45].¹⁸⁰ Darjeeling, although developed as a British hill resort, was an important trading centre for indigenous traders and “thus an oriental spectacle for the western tourist” (Levell 2000: 159). However, it was established that Benham did spend a month in Tibet from late May until late June 1925 so the objects she identified as being acquired in Tibet may well have been collected at the Tibetan market in Gyantse.

6.6 A Colonial Photograph: ‘A Woman of Formosan Savage’?

When Benham travelled to Asia anthropology had a new emphasis on ‘field work’ methods and the recording of cultures and their social practices. However, physical anthropology was still practised and one of the main ways in which this was achieved was through the ethnographic photograph which was sometimes published as a postcard to represent the physical characteristics of a race. Photographs and ethnographic postcards were one of the dominant ways in which the British public could ‘see’ the colonies.

There is only one extant photograph in Benham’s collection which she acquired in Formosa (now Taiwan) on her visit there between 1926 and 1928 [Fig. 53]. It is in a wood frame which she recorded in her *Catalogue* as “436 carved sandalwood frame. Surat” as well as “124 Carved frame from Kashmir with photo of Formosan girl” [see

¹⁷⁹ Email from Emma Martin 11/06/12.

¹⁸⁰ PCMAG 1934.25.707. Email from Emma Martin 11/06/2012.

Appendix 4]. The photograph and the frame are recorded on the PCMAG database as 1934.25.468: Photograph.”¹⁸¹

The photograph is of the head and shoulders of a woman from the Atayal tribe in Formosa and is a profile portrait to show her right side. She is wearing a traditional striped woven garment tied at the right shoulder, a large tubular earring through her ear and she has a facial tattoo which stretches diagonally in a v-shape across her face from her right ear down to her chin and up to her left ear. Tattooing and weaving had great significance as cultural markers of identity, status and gender in Formosan society. For women, a facial tattoo was a codified index of her adulthood, her good character and her ability as a weaver and therefore, her eligibility as a wife who was capable of producing clothing for the family. In addition to this it also had a spiritual dimension for them to be accepted by ancestral spirits in the afterlife and weaving looms were often buried with them. Formosa was a ‘headhunting’ society and the practice was an essential and intrinsic part of their life and system of belief. Facial tattooing for men was an essential part of their identity as a headhunter and as recognition of belonging to a particular tribe. An essential part of their ‘headhunting’ equipment was a beheading knife. Benham collected one of these and recorded it in her *Catalogue* as “192 Headhunters knife.”¹⁸² [see Appendix 4]. This demonstrates that Benham was aware of this cultural practice and shows that she was interested in the practices of other cultures. This, however, has a macabre and exotic aspect to it and the knife, as object, embodies a ‘savage otherness’ to the ‘civilized’ European and exemplifies an alterity between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

¹⁸¹ Benham’s *Catalogue* records that she collected another photograph. This is recorded in the second section of her *Catalogue* as number 90 “mother of pearl & tortoiseshell frame, made by convicts on the Andaman Is. Photo Japanese child.” This is not on the current database and has not been located to date. (Benham’s *Catalogue of Museum*: PCMAG Benham Archive) [Appendix 4].

¹⁸² PCMAG 1934.25.686.



Figure 53. Carved frame (Surat) with a photograph of a Formosan woman. She has been identified as Pazzeh Naheh (1934.25.468). Courtesy and copyright PCMAG.

—10cm—



Figure 54. Post-card with caption *Woman of Savage*. Courtesy and copyright Taipics.com



Figure 55. Post-card with caption *The Barbaric Woman of Formosa*. Courtesy and copyright Taipics.com

The woman is shown wearing tubular bamboo earrings which were a feature of Atayal women and men's personal adornment. They not only signified beauty but were cultural and spiritual marker in the afterlife. They are made from a tube of bamboo and decorated with geometric patterns. Benham's own *Catalogue* lists "197 & 198 ear ornaments" and "202 earrings" but these are not on the current PCMAG database and have not been located but it has to be assumed, however, that Benham did in fact collect these earrings and had the photograph to show how they were worn.¹⁸³

Benham was known to have carried a camera and to have taken photographs so it was initially thought that this was one that she might have taken herself. Further research during this study revealed that the image was used for popular postcards for tourists. Figure 54 is one such postcard with the caption *Woman of Savage* and Figure 55 shows a postcard which is in reverse to show the woman's left profile and has the caption, *The Barbaric Woman of Formosa*. Another postcard revealed the same woman in a different pose, facing straight into the camera [Fig. 56]. The woman is not named and is anonymous and is represented as a 'savage'. She can be identified as a weaver due to her facial tattoo and may have supplemented her income by posing for these photographs. In the conservation department at PCMAG Benham's photograph and frame were taken apart which revealed that it was an actual photograph and not a postcard [Fig.57]. On the back of the photograph there is Japanese hand-writing and a translation "Urai-sha, Taihoku-cho" and underneath it reads "Woman of Formosan Savage" [Fig. 58]. It is not Benham's handwriting. According to Paul Barclay (2010)¹⁸⁴ "Urai-sha is 'Wulai', an indigenous outpost in Chinese territory that was the first

¹⁸³ There are three similar pairs in the British Museum registration numbers: AS1910.1207.1 a-b; AS1910.1207.2; AS1910.1207.13a-b.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Barclay (2010) has analysed the Warner collection of picture postcards from Taiwan in the 1930s. Gerald Warner was the US Consul to Taiwan from 1937-1940.



Figure 56. Formosan woman looking straight into the camera. Courtesy and copyright Taipics.com.



Figure 57. Benham's photograph without frame (1934.25.468). Author's photograph permission PCMAG.

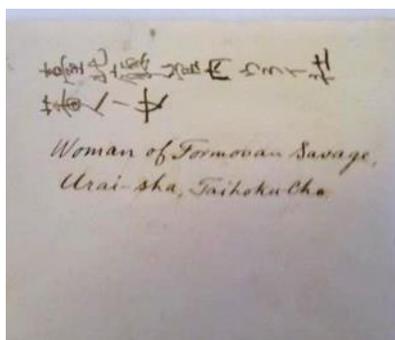


Figure 58. Reverse of Figure 57 with Japanese writing which reads "'Urai-sha, Taihoku-cho" a popular tourist destination and "Woman of Formosan Savage." Author's photograph permission PCMAG.

Japanese tourist stop for getting an "Indigenous Flavor" on a day trip from Taipei/Taihoku¹⁸⁵ which was a main port where Benham most probably embarked.

The Japanese severely confined and restricted the spatial domains of Taiwan in their propaganda to promote it as a place of peaceful tranquillity and tourists could only visit certain authorised places such as Wulai Falls, Mount Kappan, Taroko Gorge, Sun Moon Lake, and Orchid Island which were all within a specified distance from the port in Formosa (Taiwan). These places, along with tourist postcards of indigenous Taiwan people served as a tool of propaganda for the Japanese government which rendered the Taiwan people "picturesque, accessible, and politically cooperative" (Barclay 2010:85).

Barclay has researched the role of the postcard as a tool of Japanese propaganda throughout their colonial rule of Taiwan from 1895 to 1945 and states that the "Atayal people are the best represented of main-island Indigenous Peoples, appearing in 27% of the indigenous themed images" (Barclay 2010: 90). This prolific production and use of postcards is demonstrated in figures: 96 million postcards were mailed in Japan in 1890 and in 1913 1.5 billion postcards were sent (Barclay 2010: 82).

The exoticness of many of the photographs and the association with savagery functioned to legitimize the Japanese occupation of Taiwan and indigenous people in need of control and civilizing as well as supporting the newly developing tourist industry. Barclay's research includes the same image of the Formosan woman in Benham's photograph. He suggests that the photograph was part of a series of photographs of anonymous Taiwan women that depicted 'Taroko Beauties' or 'maidens' whose facial tattoos were accentuated and which exposes the Japanese

¹⁸⁵ Email from Paul Barclay 15/07/12.

fetishization of them. The paradox of this was that at the same the Japanese were promoting these images they had enforcedly banned the practice of facial tattoos in 1910 as part of their assimilation policies.

The anonymous, depersonalized woman depicted as a ‘Savage’ in Benham’s photograph has been identified by Barclay as Pazzeh Naheh, daughter of a prominent Atayal leader, Watan Yura and “wife to the Watan’s heir apparent” (Barclay 2010: 95). This description of her name and her status was the caption on an early photograph of her in 1903, acknowledging her identity and individuality but demonstrating the extent to which these photographs were subject to “stagecraft, captioning and mislabelling” (Barclay 2010: 93). She was first photographed in c.1900 as part of a family group, “wearing a Chinese style blouse and head-covering typical of Atayal women in border areas c.1900” (Barclay 2010: 95). The anthropometric portraits of her, full face and profile, (the profile is similar to the one Benham collected), with no background, and wearing woven garments, bamboo earrings and facial tattoo, anonymous with the caption representing her as ‘savage’:

appeared in the Japanese and English editions of Takekoshi Yosaburo’s pro-government *Japanese Rule in Formosa* (1905 and 1907), in a packet of photos given to American Consul Julian Arnold by Police Inspector Oshima Kumanjiro in 1907 ... and on several postcards ... her ethnic affiliation is either erased or misstated” (Barclay 20010: 96).

One of the reasons that may explain why there is only one photograph in Benham’s collection is the fact that visitors to Taiwan were forbidden to sketch, take notes, or use a camera. Some visitors were actually given postcards of ‘promotional imagery’ along with instructions on the restrictions of using their camera and restrictions of movement

of where they could, or could not, go. The Japanese, in their attempt to construct a controlled idealised image of Taiwan, severely restricted, and spatially controlled the areas where tourists could visit.

The style of the photograph with the woman in profile and looking straight out of the camera look staged and static and conforms to other anthropometric ‘colonial photographs’ at the time which were used to study racial attributes through physical appearance. The individuals are anonymous and their personal identity erased in order to objectify and analyse them. By the late nineteenth century there were several editions of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, which was published to assist the traveller, the physical body of colonized peoples were surveyed and examined through a series of scientific practices such as skull measurement, nose shape, and length of limbs, to document the physical data of races (Coombes 1994).¹⁸⁶ Photography played an essential role in recording ‘objective truth’ and was used as verifiable evidence of a hierarchy of race. Directions for taking photographs were based on physiognomy and emphasised a full face and profile,¹⁸⁷ to catalogue racial difference, exactly as in Benham’s photograph.

The Japanese colonial rule in Formosa lasted from 1895-1945, during which time they banned practices such as headhunting and facial tattooing. Benham’s collecting of the photograph, the earrings, and the headhunting knife may have been a form of ‘salvage collecting’ the idea that the practice, and objects associated with it, were rapidly

¹⁸⁶ *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* included advice on how to measure the head and face, illustrations of different nose types, varieties of eye and hair colour, and charts to show various skin colours (Coombes 1994).

¹⁸⁷ It was recommended that the subject of the photograph should be stark naked against a background of measurements. This scientific ‘objectivity’ also had an invidious, voyeuristic aspect to it, particularly in the representation of women by male photographers.

disappearing.¹⁸⁸ The reasons that photographs were purchased or collected in the first place, and one of their defining qualities, was for the “indexical appeal” (that brief moment of exposure of the real world in front of the camera)” (Edwards and Hart 2004:2). For Benham the punctum of the image “the inexplicable point of incisive clarity” (Edwards 2001:1)¹⁸⁹ may have been the association of the woman with a decorative tattoo, weaving, and personal adornment, all elements which would have materialised her own values, her gender, interest in textiles, self-adornment, in women’s lives, and their appearance, and their role in society. The photograph was small and portable for collecting but Benham thought enough of it to have it framed and possibly used it herself, and therefore it had a ‘performative’ role and exerted a ‘social action’ in the world (Gell 1998).

The fact that Benham had the photograph framed indicates that she may have used it herself implying an exotic voyeuristic gaze, “Photographs are entangled in many different scopic regimes, not just that of colonial surveillance” (Pinney and Peterson 2003: 10). This ‘performative’ role, however, was not just for Benham: it also functioned as ideological propaganda of the Japanese colonizers to render the indigenous people of Taiwan as ‘Primitive Other’ and in an ‘ethnographic present’ whose purpose was to justify their occupation and control of their country to produce a certain knowledge of those people.¹⁹⁰ This places Benham, as a collector and owner of the image, as entangled with the politics of Japan and Taiwan, historically and in the present (Thomas 1991). Analysing the photograph reveals a narrative in which it

¹⁸⁸ There are very few elderly women still living who have facial tattoos but the practice is being reintroduced albeit slowly, as well in a gentler way through the use of stick-on tattoos.

¹⁸⁹ The ‘punctum’ is a theoretical term first used by Roland Barthes in his book *Camera Lucida* (1980) and refers to the relationship between the viewer of a photograph and the subject or person within it.

¹⁹⁰ It has to be acknowledged that there was a certain amount of complicity of Formosan people in the production of the photograph, however unequal.

functioned and circulated just as the flora and fauna, and the material objects Benham collected:

The photograph as souvenir is a logical extension of the pressed flower, the preservation of an instant in time through reduction of physical dimensions and a corresponding increase in significance supplied by means of narrative. The silence of the photograph, its promise of visual intimacy at the expense of the other senses (its glossy surface reflecting us back and refusing penetration), makes the eruption of that narrative, the telling of its story, all the more poignant (Stewart 1993: 138).

The ‘story’ of Benham’s photograph reveals an entanglement with the political and cultural history of Japan and Taiwan and how this impacted on the everyday lives of Formosan people such as Pazzeh Naheh. It was part of the phenomena of the picture postcard era and exposes how photographs were part of a colonial discourse embedded in power relations, validated by science, and produced a racial taxonomy for display in the museum. Photographs also functioned as visual tool of colonial propaganda in the ideology of images from the colonies and as a form of “spectatorial lust” (Coombes 1994: 63).¹⁹¹

The photograph did not exist in isolation but was part of a larger series of colonial images of the people of Taiwan, produced on the initiative of the occupying Japanese government and were part of the desires involved in “looking, collecting, and classifying that were central to processes of colonial appropriation” (Wright 2003: 148). With the development of the tourist industry, this photograph was part of a larger set of:

¹⁹¹ Barclay (2010) has investigated how these images were produced by an ‘interpretive community’ of photographers, artists, and government officials and the mass circulation of such images.

related and contextualized photographs' participated in, and was representative of an official discourse that constructed a particular kind of Taiwan indigenous society, one characterised by historical continuity, subsistence economies, and de-individualized culture bearers (Barclay 2010: 104).

The colonial photograph produced an ideological form of knowledge which rendered Pazzeh Naheh as 'savage' and 'other' distanced in time "in an 'ethnographic present', and a 'denial of coevalness' ... There is no knowledge of the Other which is also not a temporal, historical, a political act" (Fabian 1983 :1).

Conclusion

Benham's travels to the Himalayas and her determination to enter Tibet was in keeping with the Victorian and Edwardian fascination with the Orient and the east as well as the imperialist objective of exploration, expansion; to possess and to conquer, whether literally or through sketching, painting and collecting. The collection of objects from India and Tibet is part of this narrative of possession through the collecting of their material culture which was part of the imperial project of collecting knowledge of other cultures through their material. Benham's 'surveying eye' was not content with British India but wanted to go where very few British people had been, and were, still excluded. Tibet was unknowable and the collecting of objects, of their material culture, was one way of gaining knowledge about them. The refusal of Benham's requests to enter Tibet can be read against a background of the British desire and determination to penetrate, map, and acquire knowledge about Tibet and Tibetan people which can be situated as part of an Orientalist discourse of conquest and possession.

Benham not only walked across the Himalayas but she drew many sketches, painted mountains, and collected flowers and objects. This was in keeping with the time in which knowledge about the British colonies was considered to be a travellers' imperial duty for the British Empire and the "preoccupation with 'penetrating Tibet, possessing knowledge about its topography, peoples and their material culture'" (Levell 2000: 161). It was not just material objects that formed knowledge about Tibet but included sketches and paintings as well as written descriptions of the people and collecting natural history:

By making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 1978: 3).

The types of objects Benham collected reflect other Tibetan collections, whether collected in Darjeeling, Ladakh or in Tibet itself. She collected a range of different types of objects from those of high status objects to more common everyday vernacular objects, as well as those made for the tourist trade. Benham, as a mobile, itinerant collector did not have the same relationship with local people as a stationary collector would have had although her collection is similar to the missionary Innes Wright who was a stationary collector, but as Emma Martin stated, he collected from pilgrims moving through the area:

this means the mutual trust and fairness essential to regular trading partners is absent from the relationship between collector and subject...the need to maintain high levels of honesty is not particularly important in cases where the collector and informer will never meet again. In consequence, it is hardly surprising that some information presented to collectors as truth was embellished in some way (Brown 1998: 36).

How and why Benham's collection includes only one photograph may be explained by the fact that photographs, at that time, were mainly considered as two dimensional images and not three dimensional objects (Barthes 1980) or "real visual objects engaged with in social space and real time" (Edwards 2001: 2) and this may be why Benham did not collect many of them: she may not have considered them as ethnographic objects to be collected. However, it may have been that Benham was more interested in the material objects than physical anthropology and the physical characteristics of people. Another reason which can be considered is that she painted and sketched her own landscapes and had a camera, so it can be assumed that she took her own photographs and made her own images of unexplored landscapes to 'capture' her own visions of countries but as discussed, photographs were not allowed in Taiwan (Formosa) and it is very possible that Benham, as with other tourists, was given the image. However Benham acquired it, the woman has been 'collected' and, like the objects, represents a snapshot in time. Benham was interested in textiles which connects her to the significance of weaving in Formosan society and the role of women. The fact that she collected earrings similar to the ones in the photograph can be interpreted that her collecting was not idiosyncratic but rather a considered form of collecting related to her own personal interests as well as her interest in cultural practices. Benham's collecting may have been idiosyncratic and opportunist at times as she took advantage of the opportunity to acquire objects from pilgrims. Other Tibetan collections, however, were made in a similar way. She was, however, discerning in her collecting of Tibetan clothing and the apron she collected, which was finely woven. This reveals her knowledge of weaving and materials and an ability to discriminate between the one she collected and other examples, and can be interpreted as a professional and considered approach to her collecting. Benham's collection is varied and is a record of an encounter between Britain and Tibet at a particular time and place in their history.

Benham's collecting can be considered as a form of Orientalism, "the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part" (Said 1978: 7). Said suggests that at the end of the eighteenth century there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office (Said 1978). India was considered in objective terms to be analysed, described, collected, and consumed whether through walking, mapping, sketching, painting, and collecting objects and their subsequent display in European museums, and Benham's collecting of objects and sketching can be situated as part of this, "the very acceptability of Oriental lands and peoples as subjects for amateur art attests to the hegemonic status of imperial and orientalist ideologies" (Lewis 1996: 116). However, Benham's Orientalist gaze was not that of the western, scientific, detached mastery of the male gaze, as "women Orientalists tended to be positioned as unmediated witnesses, *not* as scientifically neutral observers" (Lewis 1996: 178). The fact that Benham was fascinated by Kipling's *Kim*, an exciting adventure story of international espionage is indicative of her as a boy adventurer and as an Oriental flâneuse but the fact that she collected artefacts of colonized people is not a neutral act or practice and evidences the hegemonic status of imperialism and Orientalism. Benham may have been given the photograph as part of the Japanese propaganda which demonstrates that collectors, whether considered 'professional' or 'amateur' were not alone in acquiring their objects, and that it was not just their own personal 'selection' nor that of a 'museum agenda', but that other factors, such as the agency and power of indigenous people, along with the political, social and cultural contexts of production and consumption which has to be taken into account in any discussion of ethnographic collecting and collections.



Figure 59. Gertrude Benham in the *Daily News* in Plymouth, published on 30 January, 1928 which accompanied an article, “Woman Globe Trotter”, “Six Times Round at £250 a Year”, “Sunshade Her Only Weapon in Jungle.” Thanks to John Benham, Gertrude’s great great nephew for this image.

Chapter 7. A Collector and a Collection En Route

Some years ago I landed at Plymouth and visited the museum, which I thought beautifully arranged. So I asked the authorities if they would like my collection, and they said that they would be glad to have it. I was a little surprised that this collection was valued by their expert at a thousand pounds. I am hoping that it will be of use to students.¹⁹²

The initial exchanges through which museum pieces were acquired, whether by donation, bequest, barter or sale, thus continue to unfold as they attract people now and into the future ... rather than putting an end to the social lives of things, museums have become nexi for their on-going relations with people.¹⁹³

Introduction

In 1928 Benham arrived in Plymouth from Trinidad from her sixth world voyage. She visited PCMAG and, as described in the first quotation above, she offered to donate her collection of objects to the museum. This chapter addresses Benham's first visit to PCMAG to gain an understanding of why she donated her collection to the museum in 1928. She describes the museum as 'beautifully arranged' but what did this mean at the time? What was on display and what factors might have influenced her to donate her collection to PCMAG?

Firstly the chapter gives a brief history of the museum and its early collections to gain an insight into the type of collections acquired by the museum and the objects it may have had on display at the time of her first visit in 1928. Research into the type of objects on display can reveal the type of institution PCMAG was as well as its perceived aesthetic, historic and scientific value. The museum is discussed as a contact

¹⁹² Gertrude Benham in Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 94.

¹⁹³ Henare 2005:9.

zone situated between cultures (Clifford 1997) and PCMAG is contextualized within the development of municipal museums at the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. More specifically, it is concerned with Benham's relationship with the curator Alfred Caddie and the system of value of the museum in relation to ethnography.¹⁹⁴ It considers the reason why Benham donated her collection to PCMAG and the impact that the collection would have on PCMAG.

The chapter then goes on to consider the acquisition of the Benham collection in 1935 and this is discussed through a photograph of Benham supervising the loading and delivery of her collection to PCMAG. The photograph offers a particular visual insight into a moment of transformation, translocation, and translation for Benham as a collector, for the collection itself, and for PCMAG. It considers the impact of the acceptance of her donation by a museum on the status of Benham as a collector and suggests that this represents a shift in her identity as a collector. Her donation is also considered as a form of symbolic self-extension and immortality (Belk 1995, 2006). The contribution and role of so called amateur collectors to museums is discussed.

Benham died in 1938 off the east coast of Africa on her eighth voyage and never returned to help unpack her collection or see it displayed in PCMAG. After her death her donation was confirmed in her bequest, as outlined in the introduction to this study, but is their social life over once the items have reached their 'destination' in the museum? "Collections outlive their collectors" (Belk 2006: 537) and the chapter follows the trajectory and the institutional social life of the collection to the present. The museum has been variously described as a 'mausoleum' and 'entombment' (Elsner and

¹⁹⁴ There is no extant publication on the history of PCMAG and information has been collated from research in the West Devon Records Office, Plymouth Library, PCMAG archives and the V & A archives.

Cardinal 1994:155), a ‘living fossil’ (Vergo 1989:4) and as ‘terminus’ (O’Hanlon in Gosden and Larson 2007: xvii) which implies an ‘end’ of a journey, the fate of the objects halted, an atrophy, and the end of their circulation. Foucault positions them as ‘carceral’, confined in the museum (Foucault 1975).¹⁹⁵ They have been removed from their country of origin and ‘detached’ or ‘excised’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) from their country through being collected by Benham. The collection is now *beyond* Benham and articulates the concept of the museum as relational and emergent, “constantly brought into action through the actions of a wide variety of people” (Gosden and Larson 2007), I suggest that the collection is also beyond the limits of PCMAG, but Benham, the collection and PCMAG, were, and remain, entangled with the cultures from whom the objects were collected. This chapter argues that rather than being the end of the life of the collection, in the museum Benham’s collection begins its ‘second life’ (Pearce 1992:141).

7.1 The Contact Zone: PCMAG¹⁹⁶

Benham visited Plymouth in 1928 on her return from her sixth world voyage as mentioned above [Fig. 59]. This was considered important enough for her to be photographed and interviewed by the *Daily News* in Plymouth, published on 30 January, 1928 which read, “Woman Globe Trotter”, “Six Times Round at £250 a Year”, “Sunshade Her Only Weapon in Jungle”.¹⁹⁷ It was during this visit that she visited PCMAG and decided to donate her collection as she was impressed by the ‘beautiful arrangement’ of the museum. The curator at the time with whom she met was Alfred

¹⁹⁵ The guide to the Municipal Museum and Art Gallery in Plymouth, 1912, refers to the Natural History collections, which includes ethnography as being ‘confined’ to the ground floor (Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth, Guide 1912: unpaginated) PCMAG Archives.

¹⁹⁶ James Clifford applied Pratt’s (1992) notion of the contact zone to the museum (Clifford 1997). Trudy Nicks has discussed the museum as ‘contact work’ (Nicks 2003). I use the term initially in reference to ethnographic objects in contact with each other in the museum and later in the chapter to the postcolonial museum.

¹⁹⁷ Thanks to John Benham, great, great nephew of Gertrude Benham for sending me this photograph from the Benham family archives. Benham was also interviewed and published in *The Daily Mail*, Monday 13 February 1928.

Caddie and letters reveal the subsequent negotiations she had with him regarding her donation. How was the museum ‘beautifully arranged’ and what might Benham have seen on display which influenced her to donate to PCMAG? What was the status of ethnography at the museum?

A brief history of PCMAG can give an insight into their system of value and the status of ethnography. By the 1890s Plymouth was one of Britain’s largest urban centres in the UK. The Museum Act of 1845 enabled any town with 10,000 inhabitants or over to build a museum and these were understood as places of social reform and education. The Museum and Gymnasium Act of 1891, which inspired councils to create museums, contributed to the idea for a museum in Plymouth to coincide with Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and this was to be named ‘The Victoria Free Museum and Art Gallery’.¹⁹⁸ The *Beaumont Park Museum* was opened in 1898 as a temporary museum until the existing museum was opened in 1910 when the new building was completed¹⁹⁹ [Fig.60].

The first curator to be appointed in 1898 was Thomas Hodgson (1864-1926) who had interests in biology and Natural History.²⁰⁰ Hodgson developed a collecting policy but his main emphasis was on education and with students at the heart of the museum and he organised and delivered a lecture programme and visited schools. Hodgson is said to have visited over thirty museums around the UK for inspiration for the new museum and new displays. He was particularly impressed with the layout of the South

¹⁹⁸ Museum and Gymnasium Act 1891: The Act of 1891 empowered the Urban Sanitary Authorities of England and Ireland, with the exception of the Metropolis, to erect and maintain museums and gymnasias which were to be thrown open to the public during certain portions of the week. Minutes from the Victoria and Albert Museum in May 1911 confirm that Plymouth Museum was maintained by this Act and that it produced £1,130 a year funding.

¹⁹⁹ This was named *The Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth* and this subsequently became *Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery* (PCMAG) to reflect the city status that Plymouth received in 1928 when three towns amalgamated to form the new city: East Stonehouse, Devonport and Plymouth.

²⁰⁰ He left temporarily in 1901 to accompany the Scott Polar expedition to the Antarctic.



Figure 60. Opening Exhibition Programme, Borough of Plymouth Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, August and September 1898. Authors photograph with permission PCMAG.

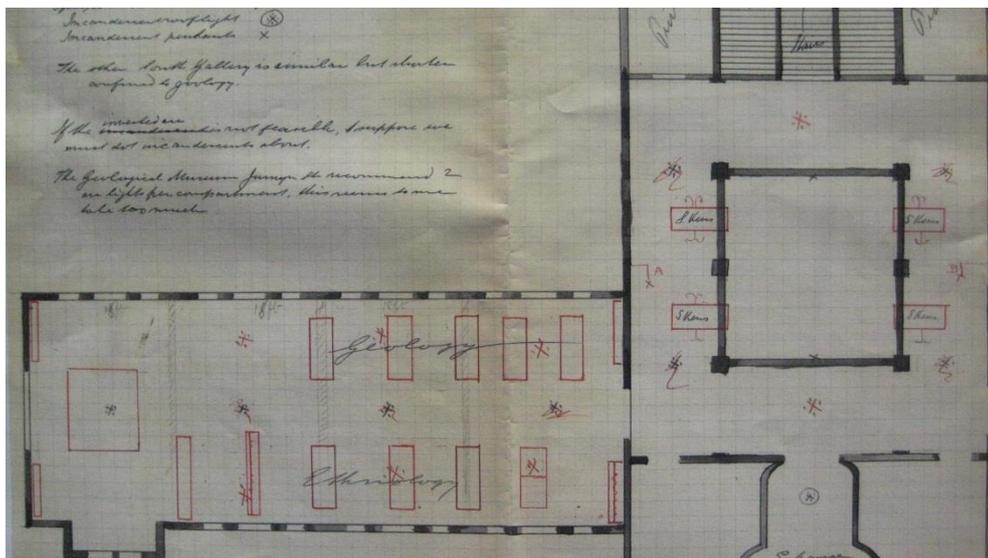


Figure 61. Schematic layout of Plymouth Museum 1909/1910. The left-hand cases have the word 'ethnology' pencilled over them and the right-hand cases have 'geology'. Author's photograph with permission PCMAG.

Kensington Museum in London (renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899). Hodgson applied to the Department of Science and Art at the V & A for a loan of objects for the museum in 1898. In his application the purpose of the museum in Plymouth is stated as being, “A public institution to retain in the district objects (both of art and Science) of interest and to further the educational resources of the Technical and Board Schools”.²⁰¹ It appears that education was to be an integral part of the new museum which was in keeping with museological practice at the time based on the Education Act of 1902 which was passed due to the “government’s recognition of the educational potential of such institutions” (Coombes 1994: 111). The V & A made annual inspection visits to the museum regarding security, layout and purpose, and a report from a visit in 1915 records that the museum was largely used by the School of Art and that Lectures were frequently given by the curator.²⁰²

The first collections were fine art, archaeology, and ethnography. A report in the archives at PCMAG reads “The earliest collections accessioned were from Carwithen (1899), Brent (1903) and Dauncey (1909-23), all of Pacific origin”.²⁰³ However the current database records there were other donations from S. J. Whiteford of Kensington who donated items from Japan in 1898 plus a collection of ceramics and fine art – the ceramics were classified as ‘art’, not ethnography.²⁰⁴ In addition to this Hodgson purchased two pieces of Chinese costume for the museum from Liberty of London in 1905.²⁰⁵ A report by the V & A on a visit to PCMAG on 12 October 1910 stated, “Science collections include natural history, ethnology and geology”.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Application form for loan by Beaumont House Museum, Plymouth from Department of Science and Art, V & A Archives MA/1/P1545 (Ref: 95376) 1898.

²⁰² Minute Paper, 5 February 1915, V & A Archives File MA/1/P1545.

²⁰³ PCMAG Archives: Dauncey File.

²⁰⁴ These include: tea caddy (Japan) 1898.6.701x; Indian box 1898.(7.704x) and four netsuke (Japan) 1898.(6.686x-689x).

²⁰⁵ These consisted of: Skirt (1905.10.3316x) and a woman’s blue silk gown (1905.9.3315x).

²⁰⁶ Minute Paper, V & A Archives File M/1/P1545 (1497).

The relationship with the V & A was not just about loans and advice on safety and display. In 1916 Hodgson was offered a portion of a roll of Tapa barkcloth, made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree and painted by hand with designs (including a Union Jack) which had been donated to the V & A by Lady Sargood. It had been given to the Governor of the Fiji Islands in 1902 by one of the native chiefs. On 1 June 1916 Hodgson wrote to accept the cloth and mentioned that they already had a fine piece about 10ft square which demonstrates an on-going interest in ethnographic objects.²⁰⁷

Why would the V & A offer this to PCMAG? I suggest that this was offered due to their existing ethnographic collections, particularly the Dauncey collection from New Guinea and so added to the strengths in this area, and it strengthened their ethnographic collections as a whole. The annual inspections by the V & A, although sometimes critical of the security and safety of the museum, reported in 1923 that it was well arranged and regarded it as one of the better local museums.²⁰⁸ This supports Benham's statement that the museum was 'beautifully arranged.'

Research into the history of PCMAG revealed that ethnography was part of the ethos of the museum from its inception. The Reverend Henry Moore Dauncey (1863-1932) collection, an important collection of approximately three hundred and fifty items from New Guinea had been on loan to the museum from 1899, a second donation was made in 1909, and final purchase and acquisition was made by the museum in 1923.²⁰⁹ The importance of this collection is demonstrated by the purchase of thirty six items by the

²⁰⁷ Letter from Hodgson to V & A, 1 June 1916, V & A Archives File: MA/1/P1545.

²⁰⁸ Minute Paper 2 June 1923 "Report on a visit to Plymouth Museum". V & A Archives File: MA/1/P1545.

²⁰⁹ Dauncey was employed by the London Missionary Society and collected mainly from the Delena district in Papua New Guinea from 1888 to 1928. He published *Papuan Pictures* in 1913.

Pitt Rivers Museum in 1910 for £10.00.²¹⁰ The purchase of a large ethnographic collection by PCMAG may be due to the fact that the Pitt Rivers Museum was interested in it and if the museum had not purchased it may have been sold and lost to the city even though it took until 1923 for the sale to be finalised.²¹¹

Hodgson had visited many museums in the development of PCMAG and it is known that through his negotiations with the Dauncey collection that he was in contact with Henry Balfour (1863-1939), the curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. This implies that he was aware of Balfour as an academic and museum curator as well as being aware of contemporary issues in the display of ethnographic material. Henry Balfour was President of the Museum Association, founded in 1888, and according to Bennett, he was active in urging museums to adopt evolutionary principles of display exemplified in the Pitt Rivers Museum (Bennett 1995: 252). This, however, was mainly for pedagogic reasons, “in his conception of ethnological exhibitions as devices for teaching the need for progress to advance slowly – step by step – in a manner that was intended to serve the purposes of an automated pedagogy” (Bennett 1995: 197). This typological method of display was intended to instruct and educate through exhibiting the objects in an irreversible and hierarchical ‘sequence’ to show their development, from crude simple forms through to more sophisticated ones. This, however, was informed by evolutionary theory which included not just objects but the people and cultures that made them. The West was placed at the top of this hierarchical ladder. In the PCMAG *Guide to the Winter Exhibition* of 1898-9, Room 2 is described as containing the “Weapons and Implements of Savage Nations”. This includes objects from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Easter Island, South Pacific, Nicobar Islands, Africa

²¹⁰ Receipt from the Pitt Rivers Museum for £10.00. PCMAG: Dauncey Archives. 114 mounted photographic prints by Dauncey are held in the archives for the Council for World Mission, SOAS.

²¹¹ Letter from Dauncey to PCMAG, 1923. PCMAG: Dauncey Archives.

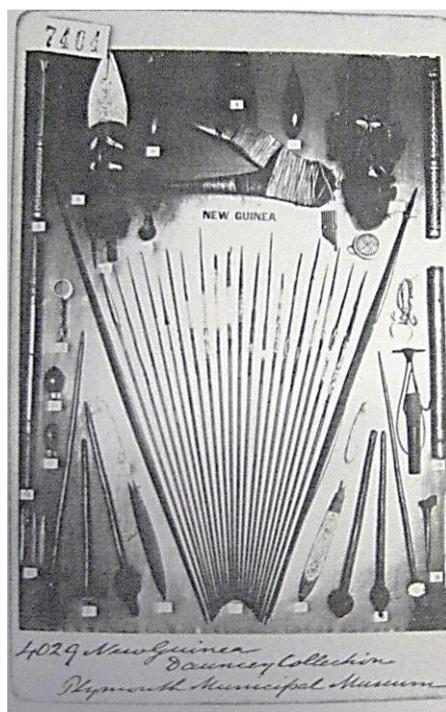


Figure 62. Dauncey Collection, Papua New Guinea, Plymouth Municipal Museum.c. 1920s. Author's photograph with permission PCMAG.

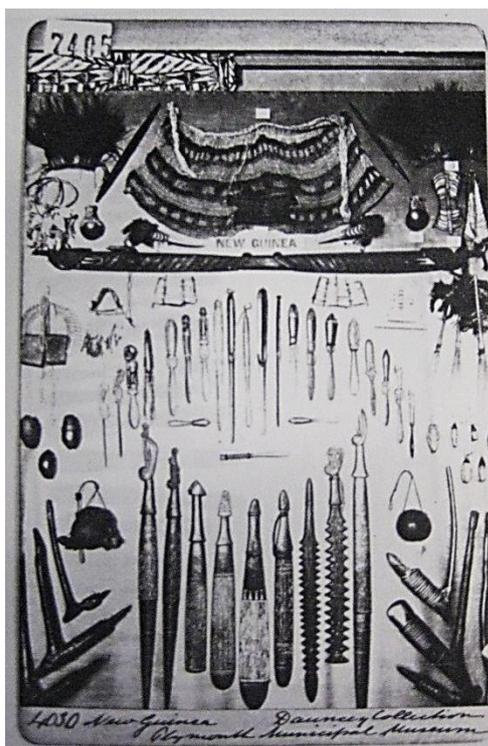


Figure 63. Dauncey Collection, Papua New Guinea, Plymouth Municipal Museum. c.1900-1920s. Author's photograph with permission PCMAG.

and ‘Eskimo’.²¹² In the *Guide to the Spring Exhibition Programme* of 1899, Room 6 is described as containing Ethnographical Photographs and again the “Weapons and Implements of Savage Nations” which includes the same places as in the winter exhibition guide.²¹³ In a *General Guide* to the museum Ethnography is in Room VI:

Weapons, instruments, manufactures, and ornaments of the various Races of Man. The term natural Races is now generally adopted to replace the older term “Savage,” which is far too much a term of reproach in ordinary language to be applied with justice to many of those races to whom European civilization is unknown.²¹⁴

This includes all the places in the previous exhibition guides but includes the Dauncey collection from New Guinea.

Figure 61 shows a schematic layout for the design of the new museum presumably by Hodgson. It shows the ground floor North Gallery with display cases marked along the left and right walls. On the left-hand cases is pencilled the word ‘ethnology’ and on the right-hand cases is ‘geology’. In addition to this Hodgson wrote, ‘This North Gallery will be devoted to Geology and Ethnology’ 1909/10.²¹⁵ So it appears that ethnology was to be included as part of the new museum from its inception.

The PCMAG Guide of 1920 (page 5) includes a section on ‘Ethnographic Collections’ and Prehistoric Man is compared with the Arts and Crafts of modern uncivilized man. Page six has a section on ‘New Guinea’ and describes the Dauncey collection as being

²¹² The word ‘Eskimo’ was used in the guide even though this is not a geographical entity. Borough of Plymouth, Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Winter Exhibition Programme 1898-9. PCMAG Archives..

²¹³ Borough of Plymouth, Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Spring Exhibition Programme 1899. PCMAG Archives.

²¹⁴ Plymouth Municipal Museum and Art Gallery Popular General Guide. There is no date on this but it can be dated to before 1910 as the museum was still located at Beaumont House. PCMAG Archives.

²¹⁵ PCMAG Archives. Thanks to Mark Tosdevin, Business Manager, PCMAG for access to this.

valuable, extensive and important. The objects are referred to as the work of ‘uncivilized Man’ and are compared to the objects of European Prehistoric man as the objects from both reveal religious emotions and traditions. Other ethnographic objects on display to show ‘native skills’ in cases and on the walls, include Maori and the ‘Indians of North West America.’²¹⁶

The Dauncey Archives in PCMAG contains images of his collection on display as well as records of them in storage. The captions on the display images reads “Dauncey Collection, New Guinea, Plymouth Municipal Museum,” so they can be identified as being part of the museum display [Figs.62 and 63]. They are displayed in an ‘artistic’ arrangement rather than ‘scientific’ and although they are not dated they give a good indication of how the Dauncey material was displayed. The museum guides from 1912 and 1920 refers to the Dauncey collection so it can be assumed that this important collection which was purchased by the museum was on continuous display and that Benham saw this on her visit in 1928.

Included in the PCMAG archives is a poster from 1916 advertising a series of lectures with lantern slides which includes a lecture on the ‘New Guinea’ collection on 22 November 1916. From this it can be assumed that ethnography was part of the grand scheme for the museum from its inception and that it was on display in the *Beaumont House Museum* from 1899 and continued to be prominent in the new museum and as part of the educational programme.

The decisions made by Hodgson of what to collect and exhibit in the museum were based on his own personal interests, internal institutional factors, as well as external

²¹⁶ Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery Guide, 1920, V & A Archives File: M/1/P1545.

wider contexts such as the role of the museum and collecting of objects from the British colonies. As such it involved issues of power, politics and authority, “The nature of exhibiting, then, makes it a ‘contested terrain’” (Karp and Levine 1991:1). Museums are therefore not neutral or innocent but highly constructed ideological public spaces and the development of PCMAG has to be understood in this context.

7.2 The Curator as Collector

Hodgson retired in 1926 and Alfred Caddie (1870-1953), the assistant curator, was appointed curator. Schools and students were encouraged to use the museum and Caddie gave lectures and talks on the ‘wireless’.²¹⁷ During his period as curator, Caddie was an active museum collector. From his appointment in 1926 he was responsible for acquiring important collections²¹⁸ but the largest collection he was responsible for was the Benham Collection of world objects in 1934-35,²¹⁹ which he had negotiated with Benham in 1928. Caddie was ambitious: in 1928 he was elected onto the council of the Museums Association and in 1931 he hosted their annual conference in Plymouth. It is against this background of art and design collections, ethnographic displays, and the layout and design of the museum, that Benham’s donation can be situated.

As discussed, the V & A had complimented the arrangement and layout of the museum and the museum had acquired several important collections since its opening in 1910. In addition to this the progressive and ambitious attitude of the curator Caddie must have had an impact on Benham. The ethnographic collections were on the ground floor in the North Gallery, and at the end of this gallery was a room dedicated solely to the Cottonian Collection. Benham’s bequest stated that her collection was to be displayed

²¹⁷ Mark Tosdevin, Business Manager, PCMAG, personal communication 07/09/2011.

²¹⁸ These include the Carpenter Bequest in 1926, a large collection of ceramics, the Harmsworth donations in 1929-46 a large collection of paintings and some works on paper (mainly maritime), and the Alfred de Pass Collection of important drawings and paintings donated in 1914 and 1926.

²¹⁹ [http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/acquisitions and disposal policy](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/acquisitions-and-disposal-policy) (accessed 13/02/12).

together and she may have been influenced by the fact that the Cottonian Collection was a permanent exhibition displayed in its own room. Caddie had plans for an extension to the museum and she may have been under the impression that a room would have been dedicated to her collection.²²⁰ The exhibitions on display in PCMAG would have reflected Benham's own interests: Art, Natural History and Ethnography. In addition to this the educational emphasis at the museum was also important to Benham and can be included in the factors that contributed to her donation as it suited her objectives for the collection "to be of use to students"²²¹

But why did Caddie accept the donation for PCMAG? Caddie was active as a collector for the museum and would have been enthusiastic to accept such a large ethnographic collection as much as Benham desired it, "the collector's desire for immortality is so strong, and the curator's desire to acquire interesting material so fierce, that a fairly satisfactory agreement is reached surprisingly frequently" (Pearce 1992:66). Selection, according to Pearce (1992) is at the heart of collections but she suggests that when a museum accepts a collection it is a second process of collecting:

Museum collections are created by the act of collecting usually twice over – firstly through the choices of the individual collector, and secondly, by the willingness of a museum to take the collected assemblage for reasons which have to do with its perceived aesthetic, historic or scientific value (Pearce 1992:7).

Belk distinguishes between the "actively acquisitive collector and the more passive curator of a collection" and suggests that someone who is given a collection and does not add to it is a "curator but not a collector" (Belk 2006: 535). By accepting Benham's

²²⁰ In the correspondence with Benham regarding the donation of her collection, Caddie refers to plans for a new extension to the museum and it appears that Benham was under the impression that she would have a gallery in the new extension devoted entirely to her collection.

²²¹ Gertrude Benham in Hessel-Tiltman 1935: 94.

collection, Caddie, as museum curator, made a value judgement about it and sanctioned her collection, “museum collections are also a repository for what society judges to be the best individual collections” (Belk 2006: 537). Ethnographic collections were an established category in the museum, so the offer of a very large donation of ethnographic material fitted into the existing collections already at the museum. The Dauncey collection had actually been purchased by the museum in 1923 which testified to its importance as a collection as well as being an important addition to the museum’s collections and reflects the museum’s system of value in relation to museum ethnography. Benham’s collection would have added to, and complemented this existing collection. In addition, museums were in competition with each other and in the South West the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter (RAMM), Torquay Museum, and Bristol Museum all had important ethnographic collections and Benham’s collection would contribute to the collections and reputation of PCMAG.

Other factors which may have influenced Benham to donate to Plymouth may be due to the maritime history of Plymouth and its historic links with exploration and travel.

Since the sixteenth century Plymouth has had an established history of exploration and discovery.²²² It has been the departure and arrival point and for many famous voyages and PCMAG collections reflect this history.²²³ However there may have been other more

²²² The marketing of Plymouth today refers to it as a ‘City of Discovery’.

²²³ This includes Sir Francis Drake, who in 1577 set off from Plymouth with his cousin Sir John Hawkins in the Golden Hind to circumnavigate the globe and the New World and in 1585, a venture sponsored by the Devon-born Sir Walter Raleigh established the first British Colony at Roanoke in Virginia which could be regarded as the origin of the British Empire. In 1616 the North American Indian daughter of the Chieftain, Powhatan, known as Pocahontas, arrived in Plymouth on her visit to England and in 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers set off from Plymouth (a stopover in their voyage from Kent) in the Mayflower to found the second major English colony in America in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Captain James Cook set off on his three voyages in 1768, 1772 and 1776, and in 1789 Admiral William Bligh set sail aboard HMS Bounty. Charles Darwin left Plymouth on his second voyage in HMS Beagle in 1831. PCMAG collections include volumes (II) and (III) of Captain Cook’s voyages, published in 1777.

pragmatic reasons for Benham's decision to donate to Plymouth. She had a house built in Lyme Regis for her retirement and the close proximity and transport links for her to visit her collection may have been a practical reason. She had had an antagonistic relationship with national institutions such as the RGS and may have felt that she would receive fairer and more prestigious treatment in a smaller provincial museum.²²⁴

Benham's collecting and her donation to PCMAG can be understood by interpreting her personal reasons as an 'extended self'. By donating her collection to PCMAG, the objects in the collection outlive the collector who achieves a 'symbolic immortality through the continued existence of the collection' (Belk 2006: 535).

7.3 A Collection En Route

In 1935, in collaboration with the curator Alfred Caddie, Benham organised the packaging and delivery of her collection to PCMAG. This was considered to be important enough to be reported in the *Western Morning News and Daily Gazette* on 18 February 1935 which headlined: 'Round the World on £5 a Week'; 'Lone Woman Wanderer'; 'Story Behind Gift to Plymouth'.²²⁵

This article was followed on Thursday, February 28 1935 by a photograph of Benham 'superintending' the loading of her collection of 'ethnographical specimens' into the van that had been sent by the museum [Fig.64]. It was taken in Lyme Regis where Benham lived.²²⁶ Benham is on the left looking out of the image holding some objects, while on the right, a man in a suit, who is very probably the curator Caddie, is dealing with a tea chest which has 'Liptons Tea' printed on the side. In the background a man in

²²⁴ When Benham was travelling abroad she had asked her Brother Percy to look for a museum to house her collection without success. (Letter from Maura Benham (Gertrude's great niece) to Mrs .C. Gaskell Brown, Keeper of Archaeology and Local History, PCMAG, 10 March 1984), PCMAG: Benham Archives. This current research has been unable to locate any museum with records relating to Percy or Gertrude Benham.

²²⁵ *Western Morning News and Daily Gazette*, Thursday 18 February 1935.

²²⁶ Letters record her address as 2 Malvern House, Lyme Regis. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

overalls is loading the 'museum van' which has its cover up, and is probably a museum technician. The caption to the photograph reads:

Woman Explorer's Gift to Plymouth - Miss Gertrude Benham superintending the loading at Lyme Regis yesterday of her collection of ethnological specimens, which she has presented to the City Museum. They were conveyed to Plymouth yesterday by special van. Miss Benham has explored all parts of the world, collecting curios of many nations.

Benham is described as an 'explorer' and her collection is a 'gift' to the city of Plymouth. Her collection of objects is described as 'ethnological specimens' indicating a scientific authority and their importance is evinced through being conveyed to Plymouth by a special van. In one sense they are 'ethnological specimens' indicating their importance as 'scientific' and associated with the science of ethnography and anthropology. On the other hand they are referred to as 'curios', a more demeaning category (Coombes 1994: 2). The image represents an important and poignant moment for Benham as a collector and her collection of objects. It is a site of transformation, a site of closure, and a site of opening in the social life of the Benham collection. It signifies Benham's recognition and acknowledgment as a collector of ethnographic objects and transformed her status into a museum collector and museum donor, along with the prestige of this which she yearned for since her desire to become a member of the RGS in 1914.

The photograph is also a site of intersecting histories and encounters. The acceptance of the donation by PCMAG and the treatment of it in the use of a 'special' van indicates their system of value, the personal predilection of the curator Caddie who authorised the acquisition, and the wider, national ideologies of museums and collections of

ethnographic objects. It is a defining moment in the life of the collection as it is transformed from private to public domain and the beginning of its institutional life, “if entry into a collection is an object’s first rite of passage, then entry into a museum is its second – a passage which marks its translation into the class of heritage material, of sacred durables” (Pearce 1992:66). For Benham, it represents her personal meaning and memories of the objects, where and how she acquired them, and personal relationships encountered, made all the more public by the photograph. Benham wrote in a letter to Caddie:

I had no idea, when I first offered you my collection that it was going to be such a public affair. My family were surprised at my thinking of doing such a thing. I wondered who would accept it, but as they did not care to look at it, they did not know anything about it. I find I am now well known here.²²⁷

The photograph itself has its own cultural biography: taken in Lyme Regis in 1935 by a press photographer who had direct contact with Benham, published in a newspaper for public consumption, it loses its ‘personal’ meaning and has been kept on microfiche in the archives of the *Western Morning News* since 1935. It has now been printed and added to the Benham Archives in PCMAG where it will be available for further use in the future. In being added to the Archive, it itself becomes a “cultural object, with its own social biography” (Edwards 2001: 12) with a life beyond the bounds of the photograph itself.

The photograph is also political in that it represents the collecting of objects from colonized countries for a western museum and the subsequent representation of those

²²⁷ Letter from Benham, Lyme Regis, to Caddie 27 February 1935. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

countries. It therefore represents an entangled history which goes beyond the immediate surface content to the ideology of collecting colonized peoples' material culture:

The interest is not only with the surface of the image but with its cultural depth as an inscription; that is, how photographic meaning is made in the precise intersections of ethnography, history, and the past, both as confrontation with the past and as an active and constituent part of the present (Edwards 2001: 7).²²⁸

The photograph of Benham in 1935 supervising the delivery of her ethnographic collection was newsworthy because the Empire was at its height and many British museums, both national and municipal, had ethnographic collections which reflected the extent of the colonies. It was also about local identity for Plymouth and competition between museums, particularly in Devon, where the RAMM in Exeter had ethnographic collections and PCMAG was building up their collections. Collections, once enshrined in the museum, "help define a sense of local, regional, or national identity" (Belk 2006: 537).

The photograph, however, is not simply an arrested moment rather it is part of a 'narrative', the social life of Benham and the social life of the objects: it is part of their cultural biography (Kopytoff 1986). This narrative includes what went on before the image was taken, (Benham's world trips and collecting), the significant moment of taking the photograph (Benham's donation to PCMAG and their acceptance of it), and the future (their new public institutional life in the museum). The objects are on another journey beyond Benham. From all parts of the globe packed into cases on a journey to PCMAG, to begin their new life, the objects are detemporalized and distance (the

²²⁸ This reading of the photograph is from a select and partial viewpoint and as Edward's states, "there is seldom a 'correct interpretation'" (Edwards 2001: 6).

regions of the world) is spatially condensed. This transformation from formally private to formally public, which can be quite an extended process, is an important aspect of collection-making (Pearce 1992: 37).

After Benham had overseen the delivery of her collection to PCMAG in 1935 she set off on another world voyage and wrote to Caddie, “I do not know if there is anything interesting in the way of curios there, but I will keep my eyes and ears open, I hope I may find something.”²²⁹ This statement implies a significant moment and a shift in understanding Benham as a collector. She was now collecting specifically for a museum. Prior to this she may have intended her collection for a museum, but now, having had her collection accepted by PCMAG, she was collecting for them.

In the same letter to Caddie, Benham told him of her intentions for another journey and that she planned to assist in the unpacking of her collection on her return:

I do not know how long I shall be away, but I do want to help unpack the things at Plymouth, as I know them so well. I will let you know the date of return, approximately, when I know it so you can let me know when the room is likely to be ready ... I feel very pleased that they are safely stored, and that they will have a home where they will be appreciated.²³⁰

Benham’s statement that she ‘knew her objects’ well suggests her emotional attachment to them and a satisfaction that they would be appreciated as much as she appreciated them. In this letter she mentions that her sketches had been packed into a trunk and sent to a warehouse in Bridport and that she has addressed it to PCMAG.²³¹ Benham’s

²²⁹ Letter from Benham to Alfred Caddie at PCMAG, 27 February 1935. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

²³⁰ Letter from Benham to Alfred Caddie at PCMAG, 27 February 1935. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

²³¹ Staff at PCMAG have no knowledge of the whereabouts of this trunk.

‘room’ never materialised.²³² Caddie retired in 1936 and Benham had set off on her eighth world trip but unfortunately died on 26 February 1938 aboard a ship off the coast of East Africa. With Benham unable to return to sort out the collection that she ‘knew so well’, and the retirement of Caddie, the future of the collection would depend on several factors including the institutional system of value and the personal interests of the curators.

The new curator from 1936-1938 was Charles Carter MSc, FMA, FSA, OBE. He was an academic who had previously been director of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. Benham’s letters reveal an antagonistic relationship with him and a misunderstanding about her collection being placed in the new extension which was completed in 1938. Whatever the situation, Carter, who was interested in fine art had his own objectives for the museum. During the 1930s museological interest in ethnographic collections waned. Stocking (1985) describes the decline in museum anthropology and the lack of interest in material culture and museum collections due to a shift in anthropology itself towards an interest in behavioural and social anthropology. Sturtevant describes the decline of museum anthropology from the 1930s continuing to decline until the 1960s. The phenomena of ethnographic collecting had come to an end and by the outbreak of the Second World War “museum anthropology was stranded in an institutional, methodological, and theoretical backwater” (Stocking 1985: 8). Anthropology, as a discipline, shifted its emphasis away from objects in an attempt to distance itself from its colonial associations, “ethnographic objects in museums are the misguided efforts to make culture into a science ... they can still be slightly embarrassing and politically challenging” (Gosden and Larson 2007: 90). This could be another reason for the lack

²³² The new room was given to the Hurdle collection for which money was donated to the museum. Benham left £13,472 in her will. According the National Archives this would be the equivalent of £480,740.00 in 2005. www.nationalarchives.gov.uk (accessed 31/01/2012)

of interest in Benham's ethnographic collection – it was simply out of (museum) fashion. Although the collection was acquired by the museum in 1935 it would remain in storage for more than fifty years until the 1980s.

External factors which affected the life of the Benham collection included the Second World War which broke out in 1939. Susan Pearce, in discussing the shift from private collection to public institution, states:

Once in a museum it will be subject to a series of vicissitudes, ranging from the rare catastrophe like the Second World War bombing of Dresden and Liverpool Museums, to the more familiar problems of inadequate storage and insufficient staff (Pearce 1992:120).

According to Win Scutt, the curator at PCMAG in the 1980s, Benham's collection was partly unpacked and accessioned between 1935 and 1936 when the curator Caddie left the museum and this was recorded on index cards. Between 1936 and 1984 the Benham collection, as far as can be ascertained, was left in the attic of the museum. In 1984 Scutt began to organize the ethnographic collections and completed the index card accession.²³³ He organized new storage for the collections such as roller racking, and Benham's objects, along with the other ethnographic objects, were unpacked from their boxes in the attic and placed in the new museum storage.²³⁴ From 20 November 1990 to 7 January 1991 a small exhibition of Benham's objects was held at PCMAG: *Around the World with Gertrude Benham: Adventures with a Sunshade.* The curator Robin Cheesman aimed this at a target audience of children and families, "School relevance/national curriculum – it is not intended as a schools exhibition, but the skills

²³³ The index card system has two records of Benham – incomplete from 1936 and completed in 1984.

²³⁴ Personal communication with Win Scutt 19/06/2012.

of observation and deduction required are part of the National Curriculum for History and Science”²³⁵

As discussed, when Benham donated her collection she planned to return to help to unpack the collection that she ‘knew so well’ and the curators at PCMAG would have relied on her expertise and knowledge of the objects and this would have greatly enhanced the documentation of her collection. In the event Benham did not return and this may be considered as another factor in her collection remaining unpacked in storage for over fifty years. Many donors were private collectors and were considered amateurs, yet their advice had a significant impact on professional museum practice and public collections, and some were considered to be the leading expert on a particular region (Wintle 2010).²³⁶ They contributed to the ‘museumification’ of objects such as documentation, accession registers, cataloguing, object labels, interpretation and display, some networked between museums and some acted as cultural brokers for other collectors, “professional networks between museums were also facilitated by outsiders – often donors – who acted as advisers to and negotiators for some of the country’s most important ethnographic museums” (Wintle 2010: 79). The practical knowledge and authority of these amateurs contributed to a blurring of the boundaries between the so called amateur and the professional collector.

Collectors, collections and objects cannot be understood at a single point in time but go through continual processual shifts in meaning over time and space, and whether a person or an object, they are “a culturally constructed entity endowed with culturally specific meanings and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories”

²³⁵ Robin Cheesman (1990) Unpublished pamphlet, PCMAG: Benham Archives.

²³⁶ Wintle’s case studies are Edward Horace Man (1846-1929) and Richard Carnac Temple (1850-1931) although she includes many more ‘amateurs’ who contributed to ‘professional’ museum practice.

(Kopytoff: 1986: 67). Ethnographic collectors and objects are part of a specific discourse “they become culturally marked as a certain kind of ‘thing’ (Edwards 2001: 15) and are assigned different values at different times, by different people. The way that Benham, as a collector, and her collection of objects were evaluated had to do with the discourse of anthropology as much as with the curators at PCMAG.

7.4 Bringing the World to Plymouth or Bringing Plymouth to the World?

Why did Benham’s collection remain unpacked for more than fifty years? PCMAG is a municipal, multi-disciplinary museum and the ethnographic collections are categorized under Human History and so did not have a specialist curator and had to compete with other collections in the museum including, “archaeology, social history and photographic collections” (Pitt 2007: 13). The ethnographic collections at PCMAG consist of circa 4,000 objects and Benham’s collection represents about 18%.²³⁷ Due to understaffing and the interests of different curators the ethnographic collections have been under-researched. In 2004 Fiona Pitt, the then curator of Human History, set out to raise the profile of the ethnographic collections in the project *Access Regeneration to World Cultures* and secured a £50,000 ‘Your Heritage’ grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In addition to this it benefitted from funding from the *Renaissance in the Regions* programme (Pitt 2007: 117). The aim of the project was to “safeguard the ethnographic collection at PCMAG, both physically and intellectually ... through upgrading the storage environment, and increasing awareness and use of the collection, both locally and further afield” (Pitt 2007: 113). Benham’s collection was an important part of this, “What is certainly the most extensive, and probably the most important, ethnographic collection at Plymouth, was donated by Gertrude Benham in 1935” (Pitt 2007: 113).

²³⁷ Rachel Smith, Curator of Social History and World Cultures, PCMAG.



Figure 64. Gertrude Benham 'Woman Explorer's Gift to Plymouth - Miss Gertrude Benham superintending the loading at Lyme Regis yesterday of her collection of ethnological specimens, which she has presented to the City Museum. They were conveyed to Plymouth yesterday by special van. Miss Benham has explored all parts of the world, collecting curios of many nations.' *The Western Morning News and Daily Gazette*, Thursday, February 28 1935. Copyright and courtesy Western Morning News.

The funding allowed for the construction of a website which includes fifty objects to highlight the ethnographic collections at PCMAG.²³⁸ The result of the project was that the ethnographic collections became part of the PCMAG's internal agenda. When the ground floor of the museum was redeveloped the ethnographic collections were an intrinsic part of this.²³⁹ Benham's collection had been dispersed into different departments when it was unpacked in the 1980s. For example, costume and textiles along with objects, such as ceramics and lacquer ware, mainly from China and Japan, were classified under 'Costume' and 'Decorative Art' which was part of the Fine Art Department. Planning for the new World Culture Gallery and a focus on ethnography, resulted in Benham's collection being retrieved from other departments and was recognized as a complete entity.

In 2009 the new World Cultures Gallery, *Bringing the World to Plymouth* opened and for the first time the Benham collection was put on display, albeit not in a room on its own, and not in its entirety with her sketches as stated in her bequest, as these have not been recovered to date. The *Benham Collection* is prominent in the World Cultures Gallery and visitors are introduced to her through her photographic portrait and her boots which are displayed beneath it in a glass case [Figs 65 and 66]. A selection of Benham's objects shares the gallery with other ethnographic collectors at the museum, including missionaries and military personnel.²⁴⁰ Benham is also represented in the main foyer of the museum in an automaton display, thus introducing her to PCMAG visitors.

²³⁸ 'World Cultures @ Plymouth' can be accessed through the main museum website:

<<http://www.plymouthmuseum.gov.uk>>.

²³⁹ Consultations with the public revealed an enthusiastic response for a world cultures gallery, "any contribution to the understanding of a multicultural society was to be encouraged" (Pitt 2007: 119).

²⁴⁰ These include: The Reverend Harry Moore Dauncey (1863-1932), (Papua New Guinea), Lieutenant Francis John Pye (1871-1916) (Nigeria), and The Reverend Sidney John Delight (1895-1939) (China).

These developments in ethnography at PCMAG in the late twentieth century have to be considered with the wider contexts of World Cultures, the post-colonial museum and postmodern theory. The conditions in which Benham collected her objects and donated to PCMAG no longer apply and the museum is no longer simply a repository of knowledge about other cultures. The single authoritative voice of the museum curator has been replaced with diversity and a plurality of voices including those of source communities from whom objects were collected. In the postcolonial contact zone of PCMAG “it is necessary to communicate to visitors that objects and collects are representations of complex and on-going human relationships rather than souvenirs of exotic others and exotic ways” (Nicks 2003: 27). The meaning of objects is no longer fixed but is open to multiple interpretations. Within the postcolonial museum the object has returned as a focus, “It was not until the late twentieth century that the object began to be of interest again” (Bell & Geismar 2009):

Changes in the discipline and within particular institutions did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, the story of collecting and displaying anthropology is highly contingent, dependent on local circumstances and on the careers and personalities of the curators and collectors involved ... Rather it demonstrates the extent to which institutional contingency and the training and interests of specific personnel shape the disciplinary territory occupied by museum ethnography (Alberti 2006: 7 and 16).

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the decolonization of Britain’s empire, the creation of modern nations and indigenous people demanding a voice in how they are represented in western museums. The emergence of postmodern and postcolonial thinking resulted in a critique of colonial history and a rejection of master

narratives and discourses.²⁴¹ This has resulted in “the emergence of a new national consciousness in the aftermath of the colonial era” (Stocking 1985: 11) and pluralist, inclusive museology. Since the late 1960s the authority of Western museums in representing other cultures has been challenged and questioned, “the non-European “others” ... have come forward as actors in the world of museum anthropology” (Stocking 1985: 11). This has resulted in the ‘new museology’ and a more inclusive and diverse approach:

From personal treasure houses to repositories of imperial booty, from storehouses of science to places of memory, museums have adapted their collecting and exhibiting practices in relation to changing historical milieu” (Henare 2005: 9).

Benham the collector is no longer alive but it is through her objects in the museum that she lives on through her collection. The objects materialise her life, travels and collection “Objects have lives which, though finite, can be very much longer than our own. They alone have the power in some sense to carry the past into the present by virtue of their ‘real’ relationship to past events” (Pearce 1992: 24).

7.5 Beyond Benham/Beyond PCMAG

Drawing on the notion of the relational museum, Gosden and Larson discuss our global connectedness through objects in the museum “each is proof of our global connectedness, of the relationship that traders, explorers, missionaries, scientists and travellers have forged with communities throughout the world” (Gosden and Larson

²⁴¹ For example, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall. The journal *Third Text* was founded by Rasheed Araeen in 1987.



Figure 65. The World Cultures Gallery, 'Bringing the World to Plymouth', PCMAG. Author's photograph with permission PCMAG.

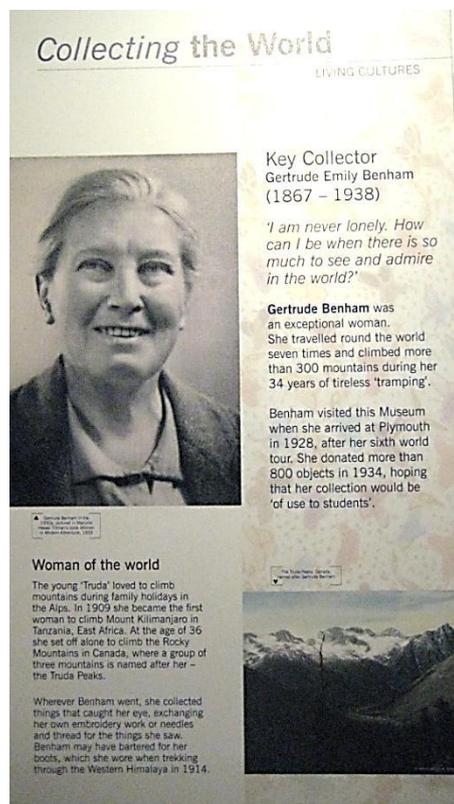


Figure 66.. Gertrude Benham in the World Cultures Gallery, 'Bringing the World to Plymouth', PCMAG. Author's photograph with permission PCMAG.

2007: 174).²⁴² They assert that objects in the museum have the potential to reach way beyond the boundary of the museum's wall and that objects are the medium through which we can engage with the world and history:

The museum is an aggregation of people and things that stretches beyond its immediate physical confines and involves a variety of events, negotiations, and technologies. Each object in the collection has a different story to tell gathering up the experiences of a range of people in different places along the way (Gosden and Larson 2007: 1).

Although Benham travelled and collected alone she can be considered as being entangled in an array of relationships which includes the makers of the objects, indigenous and western traders who exchanged objects with her and who operated through various systems of value. The acceptance of her donation to PCMAG entangled her with the institutional ideology of the British Empire in the representation of non-western objects by western museums.

In the contact zone of the museum Benham's objects from around the globe encounter each other as well as other ethnographic collections. However, the objects collected by Benham now displayed in the World Culture Gallery, "could never be entirely possessed by the museum as "they were sites of a historical negotiation, occasions for an on-going contact" (Clifford 1997: 194). This on-going contact is the premise of ethnographic collections today and how they are used. Since the development of the World Cultures Gallery and the exhibition of Benham's ethnographic collection it has had a higher profile and has begun to attract attention, and like other collections, it has begun to "attract scholars, descendants, artists, curators, and other people who come to study them, draw inspiration from their forms, conserve their substance and observe

²⁴² The Relational Museum Project at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford from 2002 until 2006 was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Information on the project can be accessed at www.history.prm.ac.uk. For published outcomes see Gosden and Larson (2007).

them on display” (Henare 2005: 9). In the postcolonial museum curators are now considered to be “facilitators and collaborators” (Nicks 2003: 24).

In 1985 a relative of Benham, Maura Benham, wrote to PCMAG as she was undertaking research on her family history and added to the Benham archives. In 2009 PCMAG published a biography of Benham in collaboration with Raymond John Howgego and this research brought another of Benham’s relatives, Anne Gretton, to the museum to see her ancestor’s collection. The centenary exhibition of PCMAG in 2010 exhibited several objects from Benham’s collection for the first time including a Tibetan woman’s costume and this entailed conservation being undertaken on it [Fig. 49].²⁴³ A pair of Benham’s boots that she wore on her ‘tramps’ across the Himalayas were included in the collaborative project between the BBC and the British Museum, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* in 2010 [Fig. 41].²⁴⁴ Since 2004 Benham’s collection is included as part of a module at the University of Plymouth, *Collecting and Exhibiting Cultures*, taught to second and third year undergraduates.²⁴⁵ In recent years, museums have commissioned contemporary artists to work with and to produce work in response to their ethnographic collections and PCMAG have been active in this. In 2011 Benham’s objects were used as influence for a contemporary exhibition *Connecting with Gertrude*, by the textile artist Amy Houghton and a review of this was published by the present author in the *Journal of Museum Ethnography* [see Appendix 9].²⁴⁶ Benham’s collection is just beginning to be recognised and as a global collection has the

²⁴³ Thanks to Emma Martin at Liverpool museum for assistance with research on this and thanks to curatorial staff at PCMAG for allowing me to choose this particular item for display.

²⁴⁴ This can be accessed at the website www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/. Benham’s boots (PCMAG 1934.25.217).

²⁴⁵ This module was designed and written by Stephanie Pratt, Associate Professor, University of Plymouth.

²⁴⁶ This was held at Plymouth College of Art from 3 March to 23 April 2011. For the published review: Cummings, Catherine, *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 25 (2012), pp. 183-188.

future potential for source communities to visit and undertake research into their own culture and history:

Artefacts in museums embody both the local knowledge and histories that produced them, and the global histories of Western expansion which have resulted in their collection, transfer to museums, and function as sources of new academic and popular knowledge (Peers and Brown 2003: 5).

When we visit a museum today, we do not only see representations of ‘how things used to be’ or ‘how things are’ in the form of exhibitions about history and ‘primitive’ cultures. We also see things themselves, artefacts through which past lives and social relations reach into the present (Henare 2005: 9). Thomas (1991: 4) asserts that, “objects are not what they were made to be but what they have become” thus acknowledging the mutability and dynamic of the re-contextualization of objects and denying the notion of the meaning of an object as fixed. In addition, many ethnographic objects were embedded in the ontology and epistemology of the culture they were collected from and were misunderstood by Western collectors from the very start of their being collected. For example, for Maori communities *taonga*, always retain their ancestral *mana*, they always remain powerful objects and are considered to “mediate cross cultural relationships and materialise complex subjectivities on the border zones of different political, institutional and social contexts” (Bell and Geismar 2009: 18). This perspective on museum objects places them as active and dynamic and argues against the museum as mausoleum:

Thus, the world extends from the museum in all directions: an object’s history can be traced back to its origins ... where a researcher could learn much more about its history and significance (Gosden and Larson 2007).

This includes virtual access to collections which has the potential for people around the world to engage with Benham's collection and this study has been researched following some of these historical paths.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed Benham's shift as a private collector to a public museum collector during which she gained authority and prestige in the acceptance of her donation. It has also addressed the social life of her collection and the different values and meanings attributed to her collection by different curators at different times during its institutional life.

The development of PCMAG can be situated as part of the wider context of the development of museums in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Their attitude to ethnography and the curator's acceptance of ethnographic collections, "not only provided a window onto the colonies ... [but] from a wider perspective, also confirmed the empire's mission and worth" (Levell 2001: 186). The collecting of material objects from the colonies was concomitant with the emergence of anthropology as a discipline, the development of museums, and the display of Empire and Benham's collecting and donation can be situated as part of this. Amateur and professional collectors contributed in many different ways to museums, positioning the terms as interrelated and permeable.

The chapter discussed the meaning of Benham's collection to her identity as a collector, and the meaning of it to PCMAG by accepting the donation. Pratt's notion of the contact zone – "the space where people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving

conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (Pratt 1992: 6-7) was applied to Benham’s collection in PCMAG where objects from all around the globe are in contact with each other through display and storage in the museum even though they are de-temporalized, translocated, and translated by different audiences and curators. Although Benham’s collection is being used in a variety of different ways it has the potential to be used by source communities and this will bring new meanings and status to her collection.²⁴⁷

The photograph of Benham supervising the delivery of her collection to PCMAG can be situated as part of an Orientalist discourse which conforms to ideological thinking of colonialism and the politics and expansion of the British Empire as well as “the forces of domination and repression, the operation of capillary power and asymmetries within colonial relationships” (Edwards 2001: 3). By collecting ethnographic objects and donating them to a Western museum, Benham did her imperial duty to inform the British public of the colonial other. It is a ‘political’ photograph but also cultural, and it brings all the themes of the study together – the collector, her objects, her donation and the museum.

By collecting the objects from colonized peoples and cultures Benham, whether considered as a professional or amateur collector, became entangled in their history, politically, socially and culturally and her donation and acceptance of her collection by PCMAG evinces that the “the ‘entangled’ nature of the objects goes far beyond the initial transactions that took place in the field” (Knowles 2000: 251):

²⁴⁷ In 2011 PCMAG underwent a staffing restructure with the appointment of two part-time curators of Social History and World Cultures to further develop the ethnographic collections.

Creative contextualization and indeed re-authorship may thus follow from taking, from purchase or theft; and since museums and exhibitions of history and culture are no less prominent now than in the epoch of world's fairs, that is a sort of entanglement that most of us cannot step outside (Thomas 1991: 5).

By donating her collection and having it accepted by a museum, Benham's practice as a collector was judged, sanctioned and approved. The meaning of this was a significant shift in her identity as a collector as well as a form of symbolic self-extension and immortality. The transformation, translocation, and translation of Benham and her collection are part of an on-going entanglement in multiple histories and thus multiple trajectories (Edwards 1994). In the museum the objects can be physically seen, they can be measured, their materials described, but their entanglement is intangible, invisible, but they are far from docile and they can be a catalyst for further enquiry to stimulate the imagination, "they attract scholars, descendants, artists, curators, and other people who come to study them, draw inspiration from their forms, conserve their substance and observe them on display" (Henare 2005:9). This evinces all the potential of the Benham collection and its social life of which this study is a part.

Benham may have collected the 'world' and brought it to Plymouth but now, the collection is beyond her and beyond the museum, "each object is a material fragment from its community of origin" (Gosden and Larson 2007: 3) thus the world extends from the museum in all directions. From the perspective of Benham's collection as being relational and emergent, her collection and the World Cultures Gallery at PCMAG *Bringing the World to Plymouth* can be reconsidered as *Bringing Plymouth to the World*. This exemplifies that the life of Benham's collection is far from over and that her collection in PCMAG continues on its social life. As with other ethnographic collections:

Although they are kept mainly in the stores of museums, these artefacts continue to participate in society through exhibition, loans to other institutions, and research, bringing people together and generating discussions about their origins and value. Their social lives are far from over (Henare 2005: 48).

Invoking the concept of the 'relational' and emergent museum has shown that objects in the museum are not static, passive objects incarcerated in a 'mausoleum' – they are alive and kicking and dynamic – and they can be a catalyst for further enquiry, stimulate the imagination, and have potential to engage with communities in which they originated and from where they were collected. Objects have a history and a present but they also have a future and they are far from docile. Benham's collection in the contact zone of PCMAG continues on its social life.

Chapter 8. Gertrude Benham: A Collector

Introduction

This chapter evaluates and summarizes Gertrude Benham as a collector. This thesis has followed the social life of Benham and her collection en route from her first trip in 1904 to her death in 1938 to ascertain why and how she formed her ethnographic collection and why she donated it to PCMAG. The conditions of imperialism allowed Benham to travel and her collection is contextualized between the intersecting histories of the professionalization of anthropology, geography and museums. The complexity of studying a woman ethnographic collector entailed a multi-disciplinary approach including collecting theory, postcolonial theory, anthropology, museology and feminist theory and demonstrates that an effective and inclusionary history has to combine different approaches (Maddrell 2009). This demonstrates the complex factors in studying a collector which cannot be detached from the objects she collected, the museum she donated to, the shifts in meaning of the collector, and the meaning and significance of the collection today, in other words, the social life of the collector and the collection.

In locating Benham as a collector the chapter considers inherited terms such as professional and amateur which emerged during the nineteenth century and questions their relevance today in discussing ethnographic collectors such as Benham. It then goes on to discuss the different types of objects that Benham collected which raises issues of authenticity and value and these categories are revealed as constructions. The objects Benham collected had different meanings for different people exposing the fact that meaning is indeterminate. The types of object reflect her shifting status as a collector, from that of a tourist to a more discriminating collector, and then to becoming a museum collector. The chapter then considers gender in collecting and the agency of

indigenous people and considers whether these had an impact on Benham's collecting. Finally the chapter considers the configuration of motives which led to Benham to form her collection.

8.1. Locating Benham as a Collector

In discussing professional and amateur collectors, one term provides the rhetoric for how the other is perceived. Professional may imply the systematic, scientific, rational, objective and political whereas amateur may imply the opposite, the irrational, chaotic, subjective, and domestic the very terms associated with the feminine. These two inherited terms are unhelpful and create an oppositional dichotomy which I suggest is limiting and problematic in discussing ethnographic collectors today. Collectors may have been both types of collector at different times and museum curators may have had different perceptions as to what constituted a professional or amateur collector which demonstrates the instability and permeability of the terms. Recent literature on colonialism and collecting such as ter Keurs (2007), argues that there never was 'systematic' collecting and that all collecting involved an element of subjectivity. In a paradigm shift, the idea of western rationality is questioned and in a reversal he positions some western collectors as 'irrational' and the indigenous cultures as 'rational' in their trade and transactions. Collectors were often dependent on what was available and "selecting objects in a rational, 'objective' manner was, in most cases, impossible" (ter Keurs 2007:1). Shelton suggests that there is no option between objective and subjective knowledge and challenges the idea of positioning collectors within these categories (Shelton 2001a). There were many diverse and complex ways in which collecting took place and scientific travel and museum collecting trips, "were anything but rational in the sense of being self-controlled, planned, disciplined and strictly intellectual" (Fabian 1998: 80). This complicates and disrupts the categories of professional and amateur.

As discussed in chapter 2, Benham collected at a time when scientific and scholarly knowledge was highly valued and this coincided with the emergence of the systematic professional collector. Objects were subjected to newly proposed scientific classifications based on natural history taxonomies and in a taxonomic shift curiosities became scientific specimens. Collectors who were not scientifically trained or did not have access to this knowledge were marginalised as amateurs, and this included women collectors who were not scientifically trained and whose gender, in many cases denied them access to education and training (Maddrell 2009). In terms of collecting, and invoking Foucault's effective history in relation to collecting, the emergence of science was not straightforward and there was not a clear cut between objective scientific knowledge and more emotional subjective collecting. Instead there were many instances of discontinuities and overlaps and professional collecting was usually always imbued with the subjective and the passionate (Thomas 1991, O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000, Shelton 2001a; 2001b, Gosden and Knowles 2001, O'Brien 2010, Livne 2010).

Benham was not trained in anthropology or science and could be said to have collected in a prescientific way which was not systematic. The word *amateur* means *to love*, and in this sense Benham loved the objects she collected and referred to them in human terms when she stated, "I know them so well."²⁴⁸ In this instance *amateur*, which infers that she collected with a passion, can be valued and celebrated for itself as it is not placed in a hierarchical binary relationship which places more value on professional collecting. Whether considered professional or amateur, the affinities and contrasts of both positions are blurred: all collectors contributed to certain forms of knowledge, the problem was that in a time of scientific rationalism, positivism, and objectivity, some forms of anthropological and geographical knowledge were privileged over others. The

²⁴⁸ Letter from Benham to Alfred Caddie at PCMAG, 27 February 1935. PCMAG: Benham Archives.

descriptive, the anecdotal, the feminine, and the indigenous were not acknowledged as being important to the scientific discourses of the time. The type of knowledge that Benham produced was considered too anecdotal and not scientific enough and therefore collectors such as Benham, who had no access to scientific training, were marginalised and considered amateur in relation to the professional. Her opportunities for professional training, particularly as a woman, were limited, and the entry into scientific societies heavily guarded and restricted by an ‘in-group’ of noted male scientists, ethnographers and geographers who made up the controlling boards of such scientific societies in London, as discussed in chapter 2.

Benham intended to document her collection for PCMAG on her return to England but died before she could do this and therefore had professional intentions in her collecting. Whether she wrote about her collecting activities in her diaries is unknown. Benham labelled her objects to correspond to the list she made in her *Catalogue of Museum* [see Appendix 4] which indicates an important aspect of Benham as a collector: that she was not totally devoid of cultural knowledge, and that it was intended for use by someone other than by herself. The organising, classifying, labelling, and documenting, usually associated with the systematic professional collector, indicates that it was for use for someone external to herself (just as she had done for the natural history specimens that she sent to the RGS) and evinces that she did have intentions to donate it to a museum.

Chapter 7 demonstrated that many amateur collectors made important contributions to museums, not only through donating a high percentage of ethnographic collections but also in their knowledge of the objects, and in their skills of networking and brokering and that museum professionals often relied on them, “museum collections compiled by dedicated amateurs are not only far more abundant than those put together by

professional anthropologists, but are also at least as significant” (Durrans 2001: 190). This highlights that amateur knowledge was intrinsic to professional knowledge and blurs the distinction between the two terms and further, that these terms are “increasingly ambiguous” (Shelton 2001a: 13).

The terms professional and amateur are part of a binary form of colonial thinking in the nineteenth century when a collector’s identity was fixed and worked to create a colonial ‘politics of polarity’ (Bhabha 1994). In studying ethnographic collectors today these terms are anachronistic and the dualistic categories are too limiting to address the diversity of collectors. These “simple and crude oppositions” are, however, better acknowledged today and recent exhibitions have shown that the public appreciate exhibitions that include the “subjective motivations underlying collecting” (Shelton 2001a: 17) and that:

Without the generous donation or sale of family collections, souvenirs of intrepid explorers, and the bounties of war, most museum collections would be much poorer, in both objects and the social histories that surround them (Livne 2010: 84).

I suggest that Benham falls outside these dualisms and was neither ‘amateur’ nor ‘professional’ but occupies an interstitial space, which reveals gaps and fissures in the dominant discourse of colonialism and collecting. In discussing the idea of the professional systematic collector who documented details and personal collections, Shelton states:

The system of objects and the system of narratives have no intrinsic or necessary link between them. Consequently, the supposedly objective basis of systematic collections, and the use of such criteria to distinguish between private and museum-based collections must be

seen as having been grounded on wholly fictitious assumptions (Shelton 2001: 19-20).

During the time that Benham made her collection she may have been considered an eccentric and may not have even been considered as an amateur collector or a collector at all.²⁴⁹ As a woman she may have been considered as a consumer of souvenirs but not a collector. These shifts and differences in whether and when a collector and an object are understood as being of a certain category reveals power relations and the instability of categorization and knowledge (Kopytoff 1986). These terms, although inherited in anthropological discourse and literature on colonial collecting are not fixed but “go through a ‘process’ of social transformation” (Kopytoff 1986: 65).

Benham’s collecting underwent shifts throughout it social life during the thirty four years of her travels. This study has shown that Benham was not just one type of collector but was different at different times and in different places demonstrating that collecting cannot be understood by one single factor but there was a configuration of motives for her collecting. As discussed in chapter 3 Benham began her collecting as a tourist in North America and collected tourist objects demonstrating that perhaps she was unaware that museums did not value this type of object but she simply appreciated them as aesthetics objects as well as the intricate handmade skills that went into the making of them. Her collecting in Fiji as described in chapter 4 included a whale tooth *tabua*, a highly significant object in Fijian society and the collecting of this reflected a shift in her status as a collector of museum quality objects with cultural significance. It is not known how she obtained it but it represents a shift in her collecting from that of a tourist to a more discriminate type of collector. In Africa Benham collected a variety of

²⁴⁹ James Gregory has addressed the relationship of eccentricity to imperialism. He notes that Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism* (1978) refers to the Orient as a “particular form of eccentricity” and in Said’s 1989 edition of Kipling’s *Kim* he refers to Kim as an eccentric orphan (Gregory 2012).

different objects, some of which can be classed as ‘contaminated’ tourist objects and others as more authentic. Walking through the continent she many have been an opportunistic collector, but so were many other collectors and all collecting, to some extent, can be described as opportunistic. Benham’s collection from Asia is similar to other collections made at the time and consists mainly of domestic and religious objects. As described in chapter 6 she collected a woman’s Tibetan outfit including a striped woven apron worn by most women in Tibet. Benham commented in her *Catalogue of Museum* that the apron was more finely woven than others indicating her discerning eye for quality and her interest in textiles as she was an embroiderer herself. Benham was in fact, more than opportunistic: she was subversive in her Asian collecting activities and even ‘colonialist’ in defying authorities by entering the closed country of Tibet [illegally]. In this sense, Benham was not eccentric or irrational but was in fact rational, independent and determined in her travelling and collecting. Chapter 7 discussed Benham’s donation to PCMAG and their acceptance of it, and this resulted in a significant shift or diversion in Benham’s status and identity as a collector from a private collector to public museum collector, “collecting is a matter of authenticity, of creating new identities, both of the object collected and, by extension, of the collector” (Van der Grip 2006: 12).

8.2. Collecting Objects and Empire

As outlined in the introduction to the thesis the same questions asked of people can be asked of objects (Appadurai 1986). Following the social life and invoking an ‘effective’ history highlighted that objects have no essential meaning but that they have different meanings for different people at different times and places when “their values and meanings are contingent on the spatio-temporal, discursive relationships in which they are embedded” (Levell 2001: 182). The study has discussed that the meaning of objects

when collected undergo a diversion (Appadurai 1986) from their expected social life: a diversion of their original meaning to the people that made it, to the meaning attributed to them by the collector to their institutional meaning. For example, the beaded objects in North America, as discussed in chapter 3, had different meanings for the colonial administration, for First Nations people, and for Benham as a collector.

As discussed, Benham collected a range of different objects. Some objects were made specifically for sale to tourists, some were high status objects, some were souvenirs, some hybrid, and some were the authentic 'real thing.' However, regardless of how these objects are categorized, "it may be marked as being different things at different times, may be more than one of these categories and the same thing may, at the same time, be seen as a commodity by one person and as something else by another"

(Kopytoff 1986: 64). This indeterminacy of meaning can also be applied to notions of the authenticity of objects and to Benham as a collector and whether she is considered amateur or professional.

Authenticity was discussed as a construct based on ideas about "temporality, wholeness and continuity" (Clifford 1988: 215). These categories were examined and critiqued in terms of the value placed upon them and it was argued that all objects, regardless of whether they are deemed authentic or inauthentic can be understood as "embodied representations demonstrative of changing dynamics in operation at the interface between cultures" (Poulter 2011:266). This highlights the unhelpful terms in describing such objects yet such definitions have an impact on how a collector or collection of objects is perceived and understood.

The objects in Benham's collection were intended as objects of knowledge. Pearce considers the "nature of collecting as part of our effort to construct an intelligible world view" (Pearce 1995: vii). Collecting is not just about material tangible objects but also about the intangible such as ideas, experiences and countries. From this perspective Benham, as a world traveller, as a painter of landscapes, walking through continents 'where no white woman' had been before, and 'conquering' mountains could be said to be a collector of countries and experiences as well as the physical material culture of those countries. This implies a form of possessiveness and ownership of the objects and places she visited which fits with the colonial ideology of the time of 'acquiring empire' and doing her imperial duty by collecting not just objects but knowledge of colonized people and places. Her wanderings around the world and her fascination with the adventures of Kipling's *Kim* invokes a romantic adventure and this can be applied to her collecting, "In the nineteenth century, collecting was also closely related to politics, to nation building and to the collectors personal, 'romantic' search for adventure and prestige" (ter Keurs 2011: 165).

8.3. Gender: A Complex Location

Benham's itinerant status, her limited financial means, and her gender had an impact on what she collected. In the colonies she would have been excluded from certain forms of indigenous knowledge, access to certain areas, and from some objects that were not meant to be seen by women. Benham collected very few weapons but a high percentage of domestic objects and items of personal adornment (see Appendix 3) and conforms to the idea that women collect self-referential and decorative items and men collect objects which reflect domination and control (Belk and Wallendorf 1994). However, in addressing gender in collecting, "a multi-factorial analysis should be applied that goes beyond the stereotypical dichotomies such as that of man-the-hunter and woman-the-

home-maker” (Van der Grip 2006: 284). Many ethnographic collections made by men contain high percentages of weapons, but this was due to the fact that sometimes these were the only objects that were offered to them. Some male collectors collected objects that belonged to women and this was due to the absence of men who had to leave villages to work for the colonizers, thus leaving women as the only contact the collector would have had.²⁵⁰ The agency of indigenous people also has to be taken into account as they decided what and what not to trade to collectors which evinces that Benham’s selection of objects was not the only factor in the formation of her collection. This demonstrates the complexity of gender in collecting.

The study identified that there were many women ethnographic collectors who made important contributions to ethnography and their stories are yet to be told. This is not to simply add them to the list of an extant, mainly male, discourse but to interrogate their specific experience of collecting and to acknowledge their complex location, marginalisation, and contribution, and to acknowledge that they do not conform to a particular stereotype and this is what makes them interesting (Birkett 1992, 2004).

Addressing a European woman collector raised questions about the role of colonized indigenous women many of whom made, produced and traded objects sometimes in resistance to European colonization. The result of this was the survival of some cultures, albeit in a different form, and these histories are yet to be written and should result in a more effective history which is inclusionary and nuanced.

²⁵⁰ For example, John Todd collected a high percentage of women’s skirts and ornaments and the anthropologist Beatrice Blackwood’s collection was dominated by stone tools (Gosden and Knowles 2001).

8.4 Motivations: 'I Collect Therefore I Am'

Benham travelled alone and did not record relationships with people and for her the act of collecting may have been a mode of communication with other cultures. Her collecting can be considered as part of her identity construction, her mode-of-being in the world and a materialisation of her values and desires (Bell and Geismar 2009), and was a form of self-fashioning (Thomas 1994a: 5). In the fin de siècle and the first decades of the twentieth century collecting was considered as a respectable hobby, particularly for women to define themselves and to forge an authentic identity. In discussing art collecting, Rovers (2009) suggests that:

the development of identity was probably the most important motivation for the bourgeoisie to collect art. .. this self-defining function is in fact probably the strongest driving force behind every collection ... collecting appeals to the need people feel to create a world of their own, which they can control, and it provides an opportunity for the construction and communication of an identity. A collection can in fact be regarded as an adaptable extension of the self and a confirmation of the collector's own existence (Rovers 2009: 160).

Benham's collecting can be situated as part of constructing and defining her identity and controlling the world. As such, the collector's motto, *accumulo ego sum* (I collect therefore I am) (Rovers 2009: 160), can be applied to her. By collecting, Benham was consolidating her identity and constructing a personal narrative, "the collector is not merely an attribute of the self, but also, in a real sense, the model through which the unity of the self is, progressively and retrospectively achieved" (Bann 1994: 78). Benham's individual motivations as a collector can be considered as an symbolic extended-self and immortality (Belk 1988, 2006) and "by willing his treasures the collector leaves behind a part of himself and perpetuates his name for all time ... a kind of self-portrait its owner wants kept intact after he dies" (Baekeland 1994: 217).

Benham did not just collect for personal reasons but had an educational social intention for her collection “to be of use to students” and this places her between “philanthropy and self-glorification” (Rovers 2009: 160).

Collecting for individual as well as social reasons indicates that she did not just collect for personal memory and nostalgia as in a souvenir collection, “the souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia” (Stewart 1993: 135)²⁵¹ and souvenirs are about the memory of a place (Csikszentmihaly and Rochberg Halton 1981). The souvenir is about personal history, whereas the collection, in contrast to the souvenir, is “ahistorical” ... “The collection does not displace attention to the past; rather, the past is at the service of the collection” (Stewart 1993: 151). When Benham selected her objects, she severed them from their context of origin and they entered a new context – that of the collection – in which new meanings are generated, by being selected by Benham and as being reframed as part of the context of her collection (Stewart 1993). Benham’s collection therefore cannot be considered as a ‘souvenir’ collection and Benham not as collector of souvenirs. Neither can Benham be described as a mere accumulator as her collection had an ‘internal classification’ (Baudrillard 1968; Stewart 1993) and an intentionality.

Benham’s love of travel and appreciation of the natural beauty of the world was not a scientific gaze but an aesthetic one and it can be interpreted that her collection was based on aesthetic criteria rather than scientific data about the objects. This lack of science does not mean that Benham should be less valued as a collector. Benham,

²⁵¹ “The origin of the term souvenir derives from the eighteenth century French word *souvenir*, ‘remember’, and from Latin *subvenire*, ‘to occur to mind.’” OED (ed. Pearsall 1999) quoted in Poulter 2011: 281.

however, does not fall within the same category as many other collectors – she did not collect for financial gain (as did many missionaries), she was not part of the military narrative of plunder and looting, she did not approach her collecting activities with an intention to prove a pre-existing ‘theory’ of culture, nor was she part of a government or museum collecting expedition. She was an independent woman who made an individual collection without any obvious external agenda. Benham was not a systematic collector and to some her collection could be interpreted as being modest and easily dismissed as being domestic and quotidian (Potvin and Myzelev 2009). However, collectors like Benham, who did not conform to a museum or institutional collecting agenda, merit attention because their collecting was influenced by their own preferences and tastes and “their own personalities could shine more brightly through their collections” (Durrans 2001: 190). This is in contrast to organised collecting expeditions that usually had an objective scientific approach to collecting specific types of objects and adds to the diversity of ethnographic collections. The collecting of everyday items may reflect a truer sense of the culture she collected from including so called ‘inauthentic’ objects which were made for trade. By collecting an object Benham elevated it out of the ordinary by a “reappraisal, repositioning, and recontextualizing” of it based on her system of value and including it as part of a collection. This can alter the meaning of the object and the collector “assumes the role of creator and initiator of both meaning and pleasure” (Potvin and Myzelev 2009: 2):

Collections are the artistic creation of self out of self, part of the connection of past and present and the hope of the future. Collectors who seek out what they love are involved in an effort of self-discovery and self-affirmation which is characteristically human and so, no matter how trivial others may perceive the material to be, it itself is never trivial (Pearce 1992:66).

Benham had an intention for her collection “to be of use to students’ and this gives it a use value and an intention. However, collecting it is not just about intention, rather it is about ideas “to create a group of material perceived by its possessor to be lifted out of the common purposes of daily life and to be appropriate to carry significant investment of thought and feeling” (Pearce 1995: 23).

Most of Benham’s collection was made from money she earned by the sale of her embroidery and she was a maker herself. Clive Edwards (2009) has discussed collecting as a ‘bricolage’, “a collection of objects whose common features are made or defined by the collector rather than the nature of the objects themselves” (Edwards 2009:39). In this sense Benham can be positioned within the notion of ‘collector as maker’ (Gordon 2006) which implies collecting as an aesthetic and creative act, and “as an expression of a creative impulse and an outlet for skills and interests” (Baekeland 1994: 215). The imaginative effort in assembling a collecting demonstrates the “sense of individual creative power which can show how an individual experiences the world both as actor and acted upon” (Pearce 1995: 31). As an artist and embroiderer I suggest that Benham’s collection was a form of knowledge about hand crafts from around the world. Many ethnographic collections were made and justified due to the salvage paradigm of collecting the objects from cultures before they disappeared. I suggest that Benham was collecting hand-made craft objects from around the world and that she appreciated the skills, processes, innovative use of materials and the handmade, which was rapidly disappearing in the industrial, mass produced West. Her collection could be situated as containing knowledge of the arts of different nations (Thyacott 2001) and as an ‘ethnographic collage’ rather than “an ordered collection based on taxonomic logic” (Noble 2004: 234). Her interest in natural history was reflected in the range of objects

she collected using organic natural materials. Benham did not have one motivation to collect but different ones and these served different purposes at different times.

Conclusion

This thesis has positioned the collecting of material from colonized countries as a political act, a form of symbolic violence and cultural hegemony in which Benham could be said to be a part. From a postcolonial perspective it has highlighted that European collecting and the demand for objects produced a form of resistance in which the agency of indigenous people was intrinsic: Benham's collection was not just due to her own personal selection but the agency of indigenous people in forming her collection has to be taken into account. The changing styles of some objects and the influence of western design was discussed through the notion of transculturation (Pratt 1992), the idea that indigenous people chose what and what not to use from the materials made available to them by the colonizers. This positioned indigenous cultures as creative and dynamic, constantly changing to meet demands and needs, and not frozen in an 'ethnographic present'. They also controlled what and what not to trade. Benham was discussed as a mobile collector and the impact of this status differed to that of a stationary collector and how European collectors relied on indigenous people to trade objects.

Situating Benham in the discourse of ethnographic collecting implies a form of 'hesitation' as there is no one exact location in which to insert her, but rather demonstrates "the multi-positionality and the multi-spatiality of cultural location":

Which overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it

must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics (Bhabha 1994: 25).

Benham can be situated in 'an in-between space' which is 'interruptive' and 'interrogative' and allows for new possibilities and subject positions, both of collectors and the objects they collected (Bhabha 1994). This is not to say that Benham is a hybrid of professional and amateur but rather she can be located in a new space which avoids a dichotomy of one or the other. It offers the potential for a more nuanced and inclusive discourse, one that takes into account issues of gender, the so called amateur collector, indigenous agency and the value of all ethnographic objects.

Conclusion

This conclusion synthesises the main themes addressed in this thesis. Firstly it considers what has been learned from studying Benham as a collector. It then goes on to consider what insights have been gained from exploring her collection of objects and finally it considers the impact of collecting on indigenous people and the future possibilities for the collection.

Benham as a Collector

In addressing the questions set out in the introduction to this thesis, namely why and how Gertrude Benham made her collection and what motivated her to collect, the thesis followed the social life of Benham and her global collection, en route in four continents. The personal, individual cultural encounter of a woman collector revealed the larger political colonial encounter and the involvement of national institutions and disciplines in the production of particular forms of knowledge.

Exploring Benham and her collection en route, both literally and metaphorically, and following their social life, allowed the thesis to explore the spatial and temporal mapping of a global collection in different places and times during her thirty-four years of collecting. This also allowed for a consideration of the different levels of colonialisms, the shifting contexts and the different spaces of knowledge production in the British Empire and “exposed the nuanced understanding of the plurality of colonizing endeavours and their continuing effects” (Thomas 1994: 20). This revealed that knowledge, whether scientific, anthropological or geographical, and the institutional validation of it, was a social construction contingent on very divergent circumstances. This was particularly relevant in studying a woman collector whose gender positioned her on the margins of this knowledge and at the same time revealed

that knowledge as a fiction. The efforts of institutions such as the RGS and the RAI in their pursuit to produce particular forms of knowledge was more intellectual than practical and it was not as authoritative as it attempted to be. The emergence of the professional systematic collector was a construct to validate a particular form of collecting and knowledge but this thesis has shown that collecting and knowledge remained diverse and heterogeneous, and in most cases an element of subjectivity and the personal was retained.

Employing a postcolonial perspective allowed an “intervention into hegemonic ‘normality’ to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged histories of nations, races, communities, peoples” (Bhabha 1994: 171). This can also be applied to Benham and her status as a woman and as an ethnographic collector, ‘doubly marginalised’. A postcolonial perspective, together with an effective history is not concerned with whether the precise terminology for collectors (such as professional or amateur), or for objects (authentic or inauthentic) is employed, but rather with the processes that produced such forms of knowledge. This exposes the boundaries of a discourse, to enable a transgression of those limits, to subvert dualistic categories, and to enable a ‘third space’. This third space blurs the limitations of existing boundaries to allow for new spaces and new meanings to emerge (Bhabha 1994). Whether Benham as a collector is categorised as professional or amateur, and objects categorised as authentic or inauthentic, these were revealed as western categories constructed from a political and ideological perspective as unstable, permeable and contingent terms. Ethnographic collections were made in many diverse ways and ended up in Western museums and this thesis has highlighted that to produce a nuanced account of ethnographic collecting each collector, regardless of gender needs to be considered in their own right.

This study set out to discover where Benham, as a collector, fitted into the scheme of things but instead it has discovered “how things fit into the schemes of people” (Henare 2005: 266). Benham does not ‘fit’ into the terms professional or amateur but the very terms themselves were constructed around collectors like her. She does not ‘fit’ into the discourse on colonial collecting but rather helps to construct the very foundations of that discourse. As Henare (2005) has stated, the collecting of objects and trade in the colonies was not a secondary practice that innocently developed but rather collecting actually instantiated those very conditions and helped to bring about colonization and settlement of countries thus the objects were a central tool in the project of empire. Benham’s global travels and collecting is an apt example of the “conditions under which these two cultural practices – travelling and collecting – were inextricable interfused” (Bann 1992: viii) and highlights the importance of imperial power and the development of disciplines such as geography to the study of ethnographic collections and museums.

The Benham Collection

The social life of the objects in the collection was also considered as being en route, diverted from their originating cultures, to entering a private western collection, to becoming a museum collection, to the beginning of their institutional life in PCMAG and beyond. Studying Benham’s global collection gave insights into interactions and transactions that have shaped history and defined relationships between Britain and its colonies. Each object in Benham’s collection had a different value and meaning for the colonizer, the colonized and for Benham as a collector. Analysing her objects’ ‘hidden histories’ revealed whole structures of a society’s system of belief and values, and in doing so revealed those of Britain and its fascination with the Other. By exploring the social life of her collection en route exposed the mutability of objects and that the

meanings attributed to them at various times, whether from a western or indigenous viewpoint is indeterminate and always open to further multiple interpretations. The production and consumption of the objects Benham collected was interpreted in this thesis as a manifestation of indigenous agency and resistance whether explicit or implicit, and exposed the attempt to promote British superiority as limited and truncated.

Although this study addressed different histories and colonialisms in different contexts in four continents which are diverse in geographic range and scope, culture, and politics, similarities can be identified through the collecting of their material culture. In many cases the meaning and cultural significance of the objects collected were misunderstood by Europeans due to the West's dualistic relationship between the object and subject. In some indigenous cultures, such as North America, objects are an intrinsic part of their cosmology and ontology and even by being collected, translocated, and transformed in a western museum the object will always retain its spiritual and ancestral power.

Similarly, New Zealand Maori *taonga* permanently retain their mana and ancestral power (Henare 2005) and "the Australian aboriginal attachment to *tjurunga* was necessarily so strong that any European acquisition of these objects can only have been a form of theft" (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 3). This reveals that there exists many different types of knowledges and ways of being-in-the-world, different ontologies and epistemologies, and not just Western positivism and empiricism. In this sense Benham and European collectors did not just collect the *material* culture of colonized people they also collected their *emotional* and *spiritual* culture. This misunderstanding of the importance of objects and the material world can be considered as "the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*" (Foucault 1970: xvi).

The impact of European colonization had different outcomes and upheavals on cultures around the world and the salvage paradigm in collecting may have been successful in some circumstances but in some there has been more cultural continuity. Some cultures disappeared, some survived, albeit in different ways and on various levels and some managed a form of cultural continuity or what the Ojibwe scholar Gerald Vizenor has termed ‘survivance’ (Vizenor 2000).²⁵² Colonialism affected both parties, the colonizers and the colonized and both had to negotiate new relationships and new sources and levels of power and both gained knowledge of each other. The impact of collecting on colonized cultures, which is beyond the scope of this study, is just beginning to be addressed.²⁵³

In analysing the types of objects Benham collected aspects of indigenous agency can be recovered, albeit in different ways and on different levels. Indigenous agency is “registered in a range of indirect ways and can be explored indirectly” (Thomas in O’Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 274). Indigenous agency can be recuperated through Benham’s *Catalogue* when she described that she was given a gift which raises questions about the conditions in which she was given it, by whom and why. What decisions, personal and collective, were the deciding factors? What power relations were in force in the decision? Indigenous agency is embodied in all the objects she collected, whether these were quotidian, everyday objects such as domestic containers or whether they were prestigious objects such as Fijian tabua. The physical objects contain indigenous materials, technologies, processes, skills and creativity and

²⁵² Gosden and Knowles cites the Arawe region in New Guinea who drew on their local cultural resources to fashion a new way of life, consonant with their histories and in tune with new circumstances (Gosden and Knowles 2001: 210).

²⁵³ For example, new projects include ‘The Sea of Islands: The Pacific in the Nineteenth Century’, Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006-2009, directed by Professor Nicholas Thomas and funded by the Leverhulme Trust; The Melanesian Project, ‘Melanesian Art: Objects, Narratives and Indigenous Owners’, a collaboration between Goldsmiths College, University of London, the British Museum and Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2005-2010, funded by the AHRC.

adaptation in what were mostly adverse circumstances. Benham's collection contains cross-cultural agency, which reveals a historical paradox in "that the narratives of the colonizers and the colonized are linked but not shared, and connected but not incommensurable" (Thomas in O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000: 277). Also, through the entanglements of colonialism, unequal and imbalanced relations of power pertained that made the collecting of objects far from apolitically and passively enacted. The indigenous people were put at a disadvantage by not having the power of such discourses that underpinned the collecting and classifying activities themselves and although collecting linked Europeans and indigenous communities it was "not always in the manner each party desired" (Gosden and Knowles 2001: 153). Researching some of Benham's objects revealed that the invasive and sometimes aggressive approach of colonizers to obliterate some cultural practices and traditions was not as successful as it aimed to be. For example production of the maireener shell necklaces from Tasmania which was in decline is today revitalised, and traditional skills are being passed to new generations. The whale tooth necklace (*tabua*) from Fiji continues to be a significant cultural object in presentation ceremonies.

Future Possibilities

In discussing Benham's donation and her collection as a complex cross-cultural encounter, PCMAG was discussed as a postcolonial contact zone, a place where all cultures and all objects come into contact with each other. Invoking the notion of the relational and emergent museum this thesis argued that objects in a museum are not inert and static but have much potential for future research and that "the museum is not an enclosed container for inert objects – it is a launching place for anthropological adventures into the past and indeed, the future" (Gosden and Larson 2007: 6). As discussed in chapter 7, Benham's collection is beginning to be researched and employed

in different ways by a variety of different people and PCMAG staff are open to the potential of working with source communities. Knowledge of Benham as an individual collector enriches knowledge about her collection as a whole and reveals the multiple layers of meaning of objects to different people at different points in time, and the intangible aspects of colonialism through the tangible objects. Benham's collection has global and multicultural importance in learning about the world through her collection of objects and can educate future generations about the creativity of cultures and in turn can help to break down any barriers of prejudice about non-western cultures. Museums are now agents of social change and contact work in the museum refers to the relationship between indigenous people and the museum where they have to translate their collections:

Into effective means of replacing colonial representations of passive indigenous peoples with representations that make explicit the agency with which these peoples have always engaged their own and other worlds (Nicks 2003: 27).²⁵⁴

Benham's objects today are not *about* knowledge about other cultures but knowledge *for* other cultures from their own or the originating communities' perspectives. Her collection has the potential to engage with source communities, however, it has to be acknowledged that PCMAG is not an ethnographic museum and their collections have to compete with many other collections and departments in the museum which imposes constraints upon it.

²⁵⁴ There are many ways in which European museums are addressing issues such as repatriation of indigenous objects. For example, the Tasmanian maireener shell necklace at RAMM, Exeter, mentioned earlier in the thesis. Museums are also working closely with source communities repatriating knowledge rather than the objects. For example, the Blackfoot Shirt project at Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, initiated by Laura Peers and Alison Brown who collaborated with Blackfoot elders in Southern Alberta and northern Montana to revive, share and transmit cultural knowledge.

This study and research can be included as part of the social life of Benham's collection. In the course of this research many museum specialists have been made aware of Gertrude Benham and her collection, and many have assessed and commented on her objects nationally and internationally.²⁵⁵ Conversely, this has also added to their knowledge and expertise in their particular area of ethnography which adds to the potential of the collections' use in future. In this sense Benham's objects which are her material legacy, are continuing on their social life, engaging and communicating within an entangled network of diverse people around the world. Source communities who engage with Benham's collection in the future can only add to and enrich an understanding of her collection from their own perspectives. New scholarship and new histories, "will come from individuals who are naturally positioned in-between and who work to develop their narratives with a full awareness of difference and ambiguity and change and timelessness" (Deloria and Salisbury 2004: 21).

Benham's name and life history has literally been extended through her collection and the objects materialise her life. Collecting ethnographic objects was an intrinsic part of her life and travels. By addressing different aspects of her life in addition to her practice of collecting this study has attempted to add to the knowledge we have on the collection and by doing so we have a richer understanding of how the collection was formed and her motivations for collecting. This study is a 'little narrative' that has attempted to encompass the wider 'bigger narratives' in the contexts of colonial collecting beyond that of an individual woman collector. Benham's collection can be described as 'raw' (Edwards 2001), with many possibilities that lie beyond the scope of this study. Her collection lives on in PCMAG with potential and possibilities to travel the world again, to return to their countries of origin, to be visited by many different

²⁵⁵ These were mentioned in the introduction and throughout the thesis.

people. “Artefacts in collections still generate and perpetuate social ties – at the very least they are visited and studied, conserved and periodically taken out for exhibition. Preservation keeps them alive, and in time they may continue travelling the world” (Henare 2005: 8). As such Benham and her collection continue en route.

Appendix 1. Gertrude Benham's Eight World Trips²⁵⁶

First Journey 1904-1906

Canada

New Zealand *via* Fiji

Australia *via* Tasmania

Japan

India

Kashmir

Egypt

Corsica

Second Journey 1907-9

Japan

South America (Valparaiso in Chile, Argentina, Buenos Aires)

1909 South Africa (first trip to Africa: walked from South Africa (Broken Hill (Kabwe), climbed Kilimanjaro then continued on to East Africa, Mombasa)

Madagascar

Mauritius

Third Journey 1909-12

India

Indian islands

Kashmir (1910 and 11)

South Pacific – Tahiti 1911

America (west coast) San Francisco

1912 England

Fourth Journey 1912- 1914

October 1912 - Africa (North West Africa (Nigeria), walked across Central Africa to Chinde, South East Africa)

(West Africa: Northern Nigeria, the Cameroons, French Congo, Belgian Congo, German East, and British East. (Hessell-Tiltman 1935: 83).

Zanzibar

²⁵⁶ This is based on Howgego (2009).

Seychelles

India 1914

Himalayas – walked from Simla to Srinagar (August 1914)

1916-1919 – England – First World War

Fifth Journey 1919 – 1923

1919 –1920 India (walked from Naini Tal (May 1919) to Leh in Kashmir (October 1919): Hindu Pilgrimage route)

1920 – Seychelles

Africa (Mombasa)

Durban

Perth, Western Australia

Islands of South Pacific?

October 1923 –England (“I have just completed my fifth journey around the world” (Benham in Howgego 2009: 39).

1923 Applied to the India office for permission to enter Tibet (refused).

Sixth Journey 1923-1925

1924 Mussoorie (Hill station), Cawnpore (now Kanpur), India

March 1925 Gangtok in Sikkim (eastern Himalayas), Darjeeling

May 1925 Tibet (Gyantse)

June 1925 returned to Sikkim (spent May until June in Tibet)

July 1925 Darjeeling

Africa (Madagascar, Zanzibar)

Sudan

Egypt

Palestine

Syria

India

Malaysia

Hong Kong

California

Guatemala

British Honduras (Belize)

Trinidad
South America (unspecified)
Nicobar Islands
Java
Siam (Thailand)
Celebes (Sulawesi)
Formosa (Taiwan)
China
Burma (Myanmar)
1928 Plymouth, England (visited PCMAG)

Seventh Journey 1928-1934

1928 London (applied to India Office, London for permission to enter Tibet - refused)
1929 Delhi, India (wrote to Indian government for permission to enter western Tibet from Simla - refused)
Sept 1929 (Naini Tal)
Sikkim
1931 – Northern India
Himalayas
Mount Kamet (Benham was 64).
Tibet?
Pithoragarh
Naini Tal
1933 – Singapore
Hong Kong
California
South America (Mollendo in Peru and Valparaiso in Chile)
1934 - England (transferred collection to PCMAG).

Eighth Journey

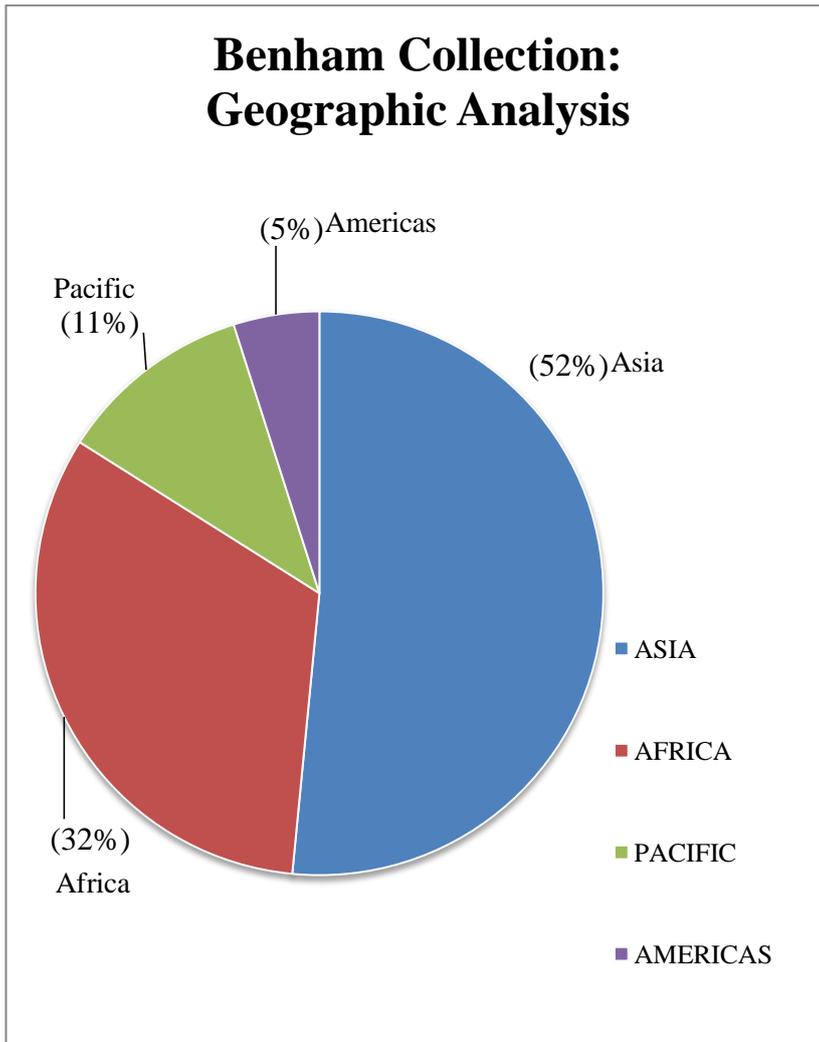
1935 New Hebrides (now Vanuatu)
New Zealand
Hong Kong
India (Himalayas)
1937 Colombo

Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

South Africa (Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

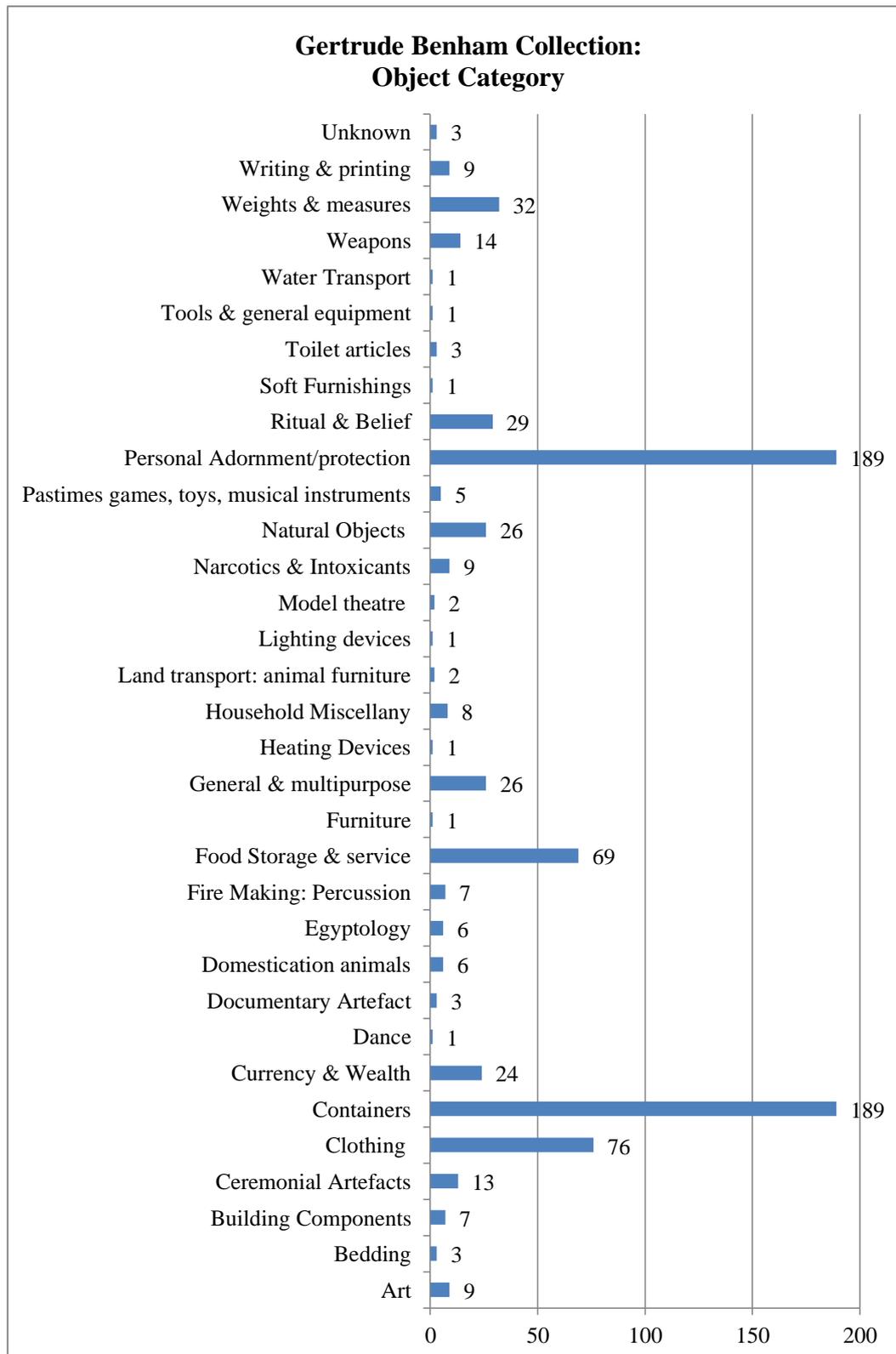
East Africa (died aboard ship and buried at sea).

Appendix 2



Appendix 3. Benham Collection: Object Type Chart

While arguably featuring too many categories, this appendix is intended to conform to the categories adopted by PCMAG and reflects the diversity of the Benham collection. Source PCMAG.



Appendix 4. Transcription of Gertrude Benham's *Catalogue of Museum*

Note: There are discrepancies between Benham's *Catalogue of Museum* and the current PCMAG database. Some objects have been crossed out by Benham but are located and on the PCMAG database. Some objects which have not been crossed out are not on the current database. Why Benham crossed out some objects is not known. It has been transcribed verbatim. The end references in square brackets are the current PCMAG database number where they have been identified.

- 1 three legged wooden milk pail. N. W. Rhodesia
- 2 wooden milk bottle & cover. GE Africa
- 3 bamboo milk bottle, Nyasaland [1934.25.504]
- 4 milkstrainer, Nyasaland [1934.25.511]
- 5 stand for holding milk bottle, GE Africa [1934.25.634]
- 6 carved black & white wooden box given me by a chief at Mbarara, Uganda [1934.25.418]
- 7 carved wooden pillow, Portuguese E Africa [1934.25.410]
- 8 carved wooden stands for carrying loads on the head. Portuguese E. Africa [1934.25.614] [1934.25.77]
- ~~9~~
- 10 wooden bell generally worn by dogs. Belgian Congo
- 11 ivory pestle, used for pounding palm nuts to make oil, Lake Tumba, Belgian Congo [1934.25.626]
- 12 Ivory horn Belgian Congo [1934.25.574]
- 13 necklace with ivory ornament , Eljei? GE Africa
- 14 knife used for cutting banana, Kivu, GE Africa [1934.25.711 or 83]
- ~~15,16,17,18,~~
- 19 shield, Ruanda, GE Africa
- 20 girdle with iron beads worn by women, Kissenji, Kivu [1934.25.667]
- ~~21~~ bar of iron used as currency
- 22, 23, 24– wooden bracelets worn by men, Rwanda, GE Africa [1934.25.490]
- [1934.25.488], [1934.25.489]
- 25, 26, 27,28 necklaces made of plaited grass, Loko, Lobay River, French Congo, [1934.25.606], [1934.25.407], [1934.25.618], [1934.25.687]
- ~~29~~ wooden plate, Nyasaland
- 30 women's dress, Belgian Congo
- 31necklace of cowrie shells, Loko, French Congo. [1934.25.414]
- 32 comb, Belgian Congo
- 33 copper collar, worn by the Modjombo, Bondjes & Lubala tribes, Ubangi River, Belgian Congo [1934.25.469]
- 34 musical instrument, also used as currency. Loko. French Congo
- 35 women's dress front, Loko [1934.25.432]
- 36 womens dress back. Loko, [1934.25.432]
- 37 ivory armband, Cameroon [1934.25.400]
- 38 ivory bracelet, Lake Kivu
- 39 ornament worn on upper arm, British E. Africa [1934.25.503]
- ~~40,41,42~~ calabashes used for food, N Nigeria
- 43,44, 44a bead and leather bracelets Kano, N Nigeria [1934.25.496], [1934.25.415], [1934.25.495]
- 45,45a, 46, 47, 48 necklaces and beads, Kano, N Nigeria [1934.25.493], [1934.25.502], [1934.25.433], [1934.25.501], [1934.25.494]

- 49 grass circlets, worn as anklets or bracelets, & and also used as small currency. Lake Kivu, GE Africa
- 50 wooden comb. Lake Kivu [1934.25.665]
- 51 wire bracelets. British E Africa
- 52, 53 bead necklaces, Nyasaland [1934.25.491] [1934.25.492]
- 54 bead head ornament, N W Rhodesia [1934.25.499]
- 55 Banjo, N Nigeria
- 56 music flute N Nigeria [1934.25.709]
- 57, 58 native "pianos" French Congo & Kamerun [1934.25.515], [1934.25.605]
- 59 harp, Uganda [1934.25.741]
- 60 guitar, Kissenji GE Africa [1934.25.763]
- 61 bamboo guitars, NW Rhodesia [1934.25.701]
- ~~62~~
- 63 Banjo, Nyasaland (broken) [1934.25.710]
- 64 Miveso board, Uganda a game much played all over Africa, with beans or small pebbles [1934.25.748]
- ~~65~~ iron cow-bell & hide collar, Karonga, Lake, Nyasa [1934.25.128?]
- 66 knife & carved wooden sheath, Kissenji, Lake Kivu [1934.25.666]
- 67 knife in sheath bound with copper wire, Kissenji [1934.25.671]
- 68 5 arrows. French Congo
- 69 bows and arrows. Uganda [1934.25.682] & [1934.25.702]
- 70 Fancy stick Uganda [1934.25.669]
- ~~71~~ stick covered with beads, Portuguese, E. Africa
- 72 ebony stick, Nyasaland
- 73 chief's stick, iron & copper wire & brass nails, Ubaugi? Belgian Congo
- 74 carved wooden stick, NW Rhodesia
- 75 sjambok, rhinoceros hide, Nyasaland
- 76 basket & lid, covered with cowries, N Nigeria
- ~~77~~ basket with leather & cowries, N Nigeria
- 78 ~~crossed-out~~ basket & lid, N Nigeria
- 79 basketwork food dish, Kano, N Nigeria [1934.25.476]
- ~~80~~ small basketwork food dish & cover, N Nigeria
- ~~81~~ large basketwork food dish & cover. Soudau? Or Souvau? [part 1934.25.653]
- ~~82~~ basket & lid, for holding flour, N W Rhodesia
- ~~83~~ and ~~84~~ baskets for flour, GE Africa
- 85 flat basket for food, N W Rhodesia [1934.25.632]
- ~~86~~ small basket & cover, Bukoba, Victoria Nyanza
- 87 basket with pointed cover, G. E. Africa
- 88 small flat basket & cover, G.E.Africa
- 89, 90, woven bags for carrying food, Bukish > E. Africa [1934.25.477]
- 91 shield of rhinoceros hide, Somaliland [1934.255.649]
- 92 comb ornamented with beads, Mpika, N. W Rhodesia
- 93 comb, E. Africa [1934.25.696]
- 94 piano and gourd for playing it on, Serluji, N W Rhodesia
- 95 wooden cup, G.E. Africa
- 96, 97, 98 Bead necklaces, N. W. Rhodesia & British E. Africa [1934.25.500], [1934.25.498], [1934.25.499]
- 99 wooden spoon, G. E. Africa [1934.25.729]
- ~~100~~ wooden spoon G. E. Africa
- 101 and 102 small baskets, decorated in colours, G E Africa
- ~~103~~ necklace of beads & wood, British E. Africa
- ~~104~~ necklace of plaited grass & beads [1934.25.11]

- ~~105~~ & ~~106~~ necklace of beads & pink seeds, Basutoland [1934.25.10]
~~107~~ blanket pin, (for fastening blanket on shoulder), Basutoland
~~108~~ wire bracelet, Basutoland
109 ivory bracelet (mended), N. W. Rhodesia
110 copper & brass bracelets, N. W. Rhodesia & G.E. Africa
~~111~~ 2 wire anklets. B.E.Africa
~~112~~ finger ring, N Nigeria
113 2 iron bracelets, Congo
~~114~~ wire bracelets, B. E. Africa
~~115~~ 2 ornaments worn one in each nostril, French Congo
~~116~~ 2 hair ornaments of brass, N Nigeria
117 bone hair ornament, F Congo
118 iron hair ornament, F Congo
119 2 wooden ear ornaments, decorated with beads. N. W. Rhodesia
120 wooden ring worn in the ear (the flesh going round outside of the ring, B. E. Africa
121 3 wooden discs worn in the ear, N W. Rhodesia
~~122~~ ivory disc worn by women in the upper lip, Belgian Congo
123 ear ornament of dogs' teeth, French Congo
~~124~~ ear ornament of folded paper, G. E. Africa
125 steel & brass ear ornament, B.E. Africa
126 ornament of hippo ivory, decorated with red sealing wax, worn round the neck, Nyasaland
~~127~~ ring of hippo ivory, Nyasaland
~~128~~ ear ornament, hippo ivory, Nyasaland
~~129~~ ear ornament white metal, Nysaland
130 ornament of white shell, worn on necklace, Lake Tanganyika, G. E. Africa
131 (2) triangular ornaments of white shell worn on necklace, Abercorn, N. W. Rhodesia
~~132~~ ornament of glass, N Nigeria
133 small snuff box, made of gourd, Abercorn, N. W Rhodesia
~~134~~ fine basket work cover for milk bottle, Ankole, Uganda
135 leather purse, N Nigeria
136 Shoes, N Nigeria
137 woman's dress, bark cloth, N. W. Rhodesia [1934.25.764]
~~138~~ miniature knife & sheath, Lake Kevu, G. E Africa
139 bamboo ear ornament, B.E. Africa
~~140~~ tail of baby elephant, N Nigeria
141 hairs of elephant's tail, (often used for bracelets). French Congo (my note: Benham wore one of these)
141 bracelets of hairs of elephant tail, Uganda
143 bracelet of wire & elephant hair, Belgian Congo
144 bag trimmed with long string of fur, worn round the neck for holding tobacco [1934.25.734]
145 bag with long strings, Ankhole, Uganda, Pabtechal???
146 miniature pestle & mortar of hippo, Nyasaland
146a cotton seed
147 fur bag for carrying tobacco in, Nyasaland [1934.25.730]
148 mat, Lake Tumba, B Congo
149 hair of giraffe used for necklace, Belgian Congo
150 skin of small crocodile, Belgian Congo
151, 152, & 153 – 3 knives, 2 with wooden sheath bound with wire, N. W Rhodesia
154 ring of hippo ivory, B.E. Africa

- 155 wire bracelet, B.E. Africa
 156 necklace, beads & hair, Belgian Congo
 157 knife of ivory, Belgian Congo
 158 razor, Belgian Congo
 159 depilatory, Belgian Congo
 160 small knife, Belgian Congo
 161 bird's nest built on reeds at edge of Lake Kivu
 162 2 pieces of lava from the eruption at Kaderusi, Lake Kivu
~~163~~ & 164 leather bags, Kano, N Nigeria
 165 specimen of Nigerian embroidery such as is worn on the man's robes
 166 (2) cotton cloth, woven in small hand loom, used for making garments, N Nigeria
 (Note by C.C. this sounds like Hausa cloth lengths - not located on database)
 167 cap, made and worn by men (the edges made by biting the material with their
 teeth), N Nigeria (Note by C.C. probably Hausa – not located on database)
 168 cap, made and worn by Sriuahilis???, Zanzibar
 169 Afredi cap. N. W. frontier, India
~~170~~ sarong of batik work, Java
 171 turban of batik work, Java
 172 sarong of ????? cotton, Siam
~~173~~ embroidery for woman's dress, Baluchistan: drawing of this (a)fronts), (b) pocket,
 (c) cuffs) [1934.25.243]
~~174~~ Lady's dress embroidered (a) trousers, (b) bodice, (c) chuddach??? or shawl. India
~~175~~ skirt of Chinese lady's dress- no place stated [1934.25.273]
~~176~~ part of Mandarin's dress (no place stated)
 177 specimen of very fine old Chinese embroidery
 178 cushion cover, Nigerian embroidery & material
 179 small cloth, Nigerian embroidery & material
 180 zarape, (boys), overmantel worn by men & boys, Mexico
 181 Madagascar material
~~182~~ small cloth woven from aloe fibre & embroidered. Madagascar [1934.25.237]
~~183~~ 2 drawn thread doyleys, Acapulco, Mexico
~~184~~ 2 lace doyleys, Uruguay
~~185~~ 2 embroidered doyleys, made of pine-apple fibre, pina. Manilla
 186 specimen of Baluchistan embroidery on leather, (2 pieces for a purse)
~~187~~ specimen of Manilla embroidery on pina.
 188 embroidered Kashmiri purse
~~189~~ embroidered belt & pocket, Formosa [1934.25.259]
 190 embroidered belt, Formosa
~~191~~ hat worn by Taijal native, Formosa (CC note: this may be Atayal)
 192 head-hunters knife, Formosa
 193 flute, Formosa
 194 and 195 Bag for carrying on the back, Formosa
 196 model of native canoe, Formosa [1934.25.757]
 197 & 198 ear ornaments made of bamboo & decorated with orchid stem, Formosa
~~199~~ bead bracelets, Formosa
~~200~~ brass triangular bracelet, Formosa
~~201~~ native shell money, Formosa
 202 earrings, Formosa
 203 specimen of camphor wood, Formosa
 203a small camphor wood stand, Formosa
 204 basket, Formosa
 205 medicine box, made of ?? Formosa

- 206 hair ornament, Luchu Is
~~207~~ hair ornament, Siam [1934.25.54]
208 (2) money boxes, made of seeds, Java.
209, 210, 211 small jointed lizards made of wood, Bangkok, Siam
212 inlaid mother of pearl bowl, used for giving offerings of food to the priests in the temple, Bangkok, Siam [1934.25.448]
~~213, 214, 215, 216~~ 4 small vases of old Siamese pottery. Bangkok [1934.25.447]
217 set of lacquer betal nut vases & bowl & plate Bangkok. [1934.25.639]
[1934.25.640], [1934.25.641]
218 small drum of earthenware & snake skin. Bangkok
~~219~~ basket. Bangkok
220 tile and pieces of gilt decoration from the pagoda, Bangkok [1934.25.750] &
[1934.25.411]
221 small model of cooking stove & pots. Bangkok
222 child's ball made of bamboo. Bangkok [1934.25.403]
~~223~~ wooden goat's bell. Java [1934.25.79]
224 needle for holding the wax for making batik work. Java
225 basket. Java [1934.25.196]
~~226~~ section of bamboo, used for holding & carrying flowers. Java
227 small brass model of rice-house, Padang, Sumatra [1934.25.439]
228 brass vase, Sumatra
229 small brass box, Sumatra
230 basket, Sumatra
230a basket, Sumatra
231 basket, N Borneo [1934.25.739]
~~232~~ basket, Sarawak, Borneo
~~233~~ basket, Malacca
234 basket, Jamaica
~~235~~ carved bamboo vase for holding lime, used with betal nut, N. Borneo
236 oil paper hat, worn over other hat, in rain, Korea
237 walking stick. Giran, Formosa
238 Malacca cane
239 stick. Toro, Uganda (used by me on my tramps)
240 Burmese umbrella [1934.25.676]
241 hat. Shan States [1934.25.655]
~~242~~ and ~~243~~ tiger puppets, Mandalay, Burma [1934.25.86], [1934.25.87]
244 basket made of an armadillo, Buenos Aires [1934.25.455]
245 models of wooden stirrups, Chile
~~246~~ gourd and spoon used for drinking tea, Chile
~~247~~ small basket, model of shape used for marketing, Chile
248 (3) miniature vases, Mexico
249 woven bag, Mexico [1934.25.571]
250 old sampler needlework, Mexico
~~251~~ old Mexican beads
252 (4) old Mexican casts of figurines in pottery. Mexico
~~253~~ & ~~254~~ basket work plaques. Arizona
255 valiha, bamboo musical instrument, Madagascar [1934.25.661]
256 small basket, Madagascar [1934.25.441]
257 bird made of horn, Madagascar
258 snuff-box, made of a gourd & moulded with silver, Madagascar
259 small bag made of seeds, St Helena
~~260~~ necklaces of seeds. St Helena [1934.25.53], [1934.25.32], [1934.25.17]

- 262 shell necklace. Zanzibar
- 263 necklace, cowries and seeds. Honolulu, H.I.
- 264 necklace, sharks teeth & seeds. Honolulu
- 265 necklace, yellow & white shells. Honolulu [1934.25.3]
- 266 seeds (Job's tears) & beads. Honolulu
- 267 seeds & shells. Honolulu
- 268 and 269 necklace of seeds. Rarotonga, Cook Is [1934.25.39] and [1934.25.40]
- 270, 271, 272, 273, 274 shell necklaces. Tasmania [1934.25.33/34/35/36/37]
- 275 carved box inlaid with mother-of-pearl, for holding the huia feathers worn by Maori chiefs. New Zealand [1934.25.692]
- 276 small bag made of NZ flax [1934.25.276]
- 277 balls made from flax, used in the (jsoi ?) dancing. New Zealand
- 278 and 278 form of lava. Kiliuea. Hawaiian Is.
- 280 piece of tapa or bark cloth. Hawaiian Is.
- 281 small wooden calabash. Hawaiian Is.
- 282 bamboo pillow Fiji [1934.25.514]
- 283 comb. Fiji
- 284 model of lali or war drum. Fiji [1934.25.590]
- 285 ornament of shell & bone, worn by chief. Fiji
- 286 tapa or bark cloth. Fiji
- 287 tabur, whales' tooth, sent by one chief to another, before visiting. If not received it signifies hostility. Fiji [1934.25.479x]
- 288 dress worn for dancing. Fiji
- 289 stick inlaid with mother of pearl, used for taking the lime out of bamboo box, for using with betal nut. Fiji
- 290 fish hook. Fiji
- 291 fork used when eating human flesh, (for other food, fingers were used). Fiji
- 292 fan. Fiji [1934.25.569]
- 293 fan. Fiji [1934.25.570]
- 294, 295, 296, shell bracelets. Fiji
- 297 tail feather of bosun bird. S Pacific given by Captain of SS. "Aurangi"
- 298 bracelet of small pieces of cut shell used as currency. S. Pacific Is
- 299 oyster shell from which mother of pearl is obtained. Mozambique
- 300 and 301 oyster shells from which mother of pearl is obtained. Tahiti
- 302 oyster shell with small pearl blisters. Thursday Is.
- 303 & 304 shells from which the New Guinea money is made
- 305 carved wooden pillow. New Guinea
- 306 nose ornament, made of shell. New Guinea. [1934.25.601]
- 307 necklace, made of money. New Guinea
- 308 necklace of mother of pearl. New Guinea
- 309 comb. New Guinea
- 310 snuff-bottle of decorated gourd. New Guinea
- 311 dagger, made from bone from cassowary leg. New Guinea
- 312 fork used for spearing fish (...onto a bamboo stick). New Guinea
- 313 waist ornament, made of seeds. New Guinea
- 314 armband or anklet made of seeds. New Guinea
- 314a bamboo pipe for smoking. New Guinea [1934.25.725 or 925]
- 315 bracelet & earrings. New Guinea
- 316 crossed out netted bag. New Guinea
- 317 crossed out plaited waistband. New Guinea
- 318 arm or waistband. New Guinea
- 319 shell used as knife for peeling potatoes. New Guinea

- 320 piece of tortoiseshell. New Guinea
- 321 woman's dress, grass. New Guinea
- 322 woman's dress. Barkcloth. New Guinea
- 323 man's dress, barkcloth. New Guinea
- 324 club with 7 pointed star made of stone. New Guinea [1934.25.765]
- 325 piece of tapa with coloured decoration. Fiji
- 325a stone implement for hollowing out canoes, from tree trunks. Fiji
- 326 Woman's costume: (a) waistband and skirt, (b) neck collar, (c) armlets, (d) ornaments for legs. Andaman Islands.
- 327 basket decorated with cockle?? shells. Andaman Islands
- ~~328~~ jawbone, smeared with red earth & fastened to a netted band, worn by widows in the Andamans. (the first year the widow wears her husband's skull hanging around her neck, & the second year, his jawbone, after which she can marry again. Smearing with earth is also a sign of mourning in the Andamans.
- 329 netted waistband with shell fringe. Andaman Is.
- 330 netted waistband with shell fringe. The yellow decoration in this & the other articles is the stem of an orchid. Andaman Is.
- 331 piece of orchid, dried like that used for decorations. Andaman Is.
- 332 armlet of brown shells. Andaman Is
- 333 stone knife in bark sheath, bound with human hair. Australian Aboriginies
- 334 crossed out scare devil. Nicobar Is, [1934.25.92]
- 335 crossed out New Guinea money made of shell
- 336 edible bird's nest eaten by the Chinese & found in the Andaman Is.
- 337 (4) tigers' claws. Siam
- 338 (2) crocodiles teeth. Columbia
- 339 (3) leopard's teeth (the leopard was killed at Bugarama, G. E. Africa the day after he had killed and partly eaten a native woman.
- 340 Mohamedan prayer mat. Zanzibar [1934.25.658]
- 341 fan Fanning Island [1934.25.579]
- 342 fan of cuscus grass. Jamaica [1934.25.724]
- 343 piece of lace bark tree, with the bark twisted to make a whip. Jamaica [1934.25.673]
- 345 walking stick with snake carved on it. Trinidad
- ~~346~~ necklace, small green shells. Barbados [1934.25.4]
- 347 hair ornament made of fish scale. Las Palmas
- ~~348 and 349~~ baskets made by N American Indians. North Bend, Canada
- 350 leather bag decorated with bead work, Banff, Alberta, Canada [1934.25.578]
- 351 small leather bag, with bead work. Banff, Alberta, Canada [1934.25.576]
- 352 necklace of rushes & bead work. Banff (sweetgrass) [1934.25.670]
- 353 small model of moccasins. Banff
- ~~354~~ box of bark, decorated with porcupine quills. Canada [1934.25.180]
- 355 small basket & lid. Indian work. Vancouver.
- ~~356~~ small lacquer bowl. Burma
- 357 copper bowl silvered used for food tc. Persiau ??& N Indian, Srinagar
- ~~358~~ copper bowl. Persia? & N Indian, Srinagar [1934.25.118]
- ~~359~~ copper bowl. Persia? & N Indian, Srinagar [1934.25.460]
- 360 copper vase. Persia & N Indian, Srinagar [1934.25.120]
- 361 copper plate. Persia & N Indian, Srinagar
- 362 copper jug. Persia & N Indian, Srinagar
- 363 copper jug. Persia & N Indian, Srinagar [1934.25.647]
- 364 umbrella. Burma
- 365 small Chinese brazier, Tilutsin

- 366 small brass vase, Zanzibar
~~367 & 368~~ Chinese Buddhist rosary [AR 1984.1336]
369 silver shield, worn to protect the nail of little fingers which is let grow long, China
370 silver whistle, China
371 woman's shoes, worn with bound feet. China
372 boy's shoes. Shanghai [AR. 1984.1566]
373 old Chinese vase, China
374 small soapstone vase, China
375 and 376 old Chinese tea cup, China
377 Chinese spoon
378 soapstone monkey. China [1934.25.745]
379 Old Tibetan book, - a history of the kings of Ladakh, dating from 700 A.D.. the illumination represents the 1st king, with his 2 wives, one from India & one from china. Kyelang, Ladakh
380 prayer wheel. Ladakh. [part 1934.25.715]
381 prayer wheel. Ladakh [1934.25.508]
~~382~~ devil dagger, to avert evil spirits. Ladakh
383 devil dagger, made of human bone, used specially in severe snowstorms. Thibet [1934.25.707]
384 Book of Thibetan prayers, used to bless the fields when sowing Lahoul??. Thibet [1934.25.769]
385 CO flint & steel used in the Himalayas [1934.25.166]
386 CO flint & steel. Ladakh
387 stone from a mani? Wall engraved with Thibetan prayers. Ladakh
388 cup, saucer & cover. Ladakh [part of 1934.25.138]
389 cup, saucer & cover. Ladakh
390 iron pencase & pen. Rungdum Monastery
391 wooden cup for mixing food in & eating from. Rungdum
392 brass spoon for woman. Fanskar [1934.25.553]
393 ornament worn by men for carrying a charm in. Ladakh
394 shell ornament worn by women to tie the plaits of their hair together at the end. Lahoul
395 woman's spoon. Ladakh [1934.25.550]
396 man's spoon. Ladakh
397 man's spoon. Ladakh
398 turquoise earring (man's). Ladakh [1934.25.562]
399 pair of earrings (men's). Ladakh [1934.25.560]
~~400~~ silver & coral necklace. Ladakh [1934.25.25]
401 silver & turquoise earring. Ladakh [1934.25.568]
~~402~~ silver chatelaine. Ladakh [1934.25. 22]
~~403~~ silver & turquoise ornament, worn round the neck for holding a charm. Ladakh
(134)
~~404~~ silver & turquoise ornament. Ladakh
405 silver bracelet. Ladakh
406 silver filigree ornament for carrying a charm. Ladakh
407 chatelaine of cowries & bells with brass charm box & brass ornament. Ladakh
~~408~~ cup of wood & silver. Ladakh [1934.25.164]
409 seal. Ladakh [1934.25.566]
409a papier mache portfolio. Kashmir
~~410~~ small brass bell, used in temple. Ladakh [1934.25.152]
~~411~~ small brass bell, used in temple. Ladakh [1934.25.167]
412 brass spoon. Rungdum

- 413 chatelaine of brass beads & bells. Lahaul [1934.25.483]
414 brass ornament. Lahaul
415 Thibetan tea-cup. Lahaul
416 Fire devil. Darjeeling
417 silver necklace. Kashmir [1934.25.68]
418 enamel & silver ornament with bells. Simla [1934.25.526]
419 jade ornament. Kashmir [1934.25.530]
420 jade ornament decorated with gilt & stones. N. India [1934.25.531]
421 child's silver necklet. Delhi
422 old eye-powder bottle, inlaid silver in shape of mango stone.
Lucknow [1934.25.525]
423 silk necklace. India. [1934.25.528]
424 finger & toe rings. Surat, India [1934.25.522]
425 finger & toe rings. Surat, India [1934.25.519]
426 finger & toe rings. Surat, India [1934.25.521]
427 finger & toe rings. Surat, India [1934.25.523]
428 finger & toe rings. Surat, India [1934.25.527]
429 ornament. India [1934.25.524]
430 rattle used by beggars to attract attention. If not heeded they threaten to put out their
eyes with the spike & have some sleight of hand trick by which they apparently do so
but in reality without injury. Muttra, India [1934.25.612]
431 specimens of the pietra dura
432 or inlaid work, used in the decoration of the Taj Mahal. Agra
433 piece of marble from the marble Rocks. Jubbulpore??
434 carved sandalwood box. Surat [1934.25.412]
435 carved sandalwood knife. Surat
436 carved sandalwood frame. Surat [Note by C.C.Refer to Photograph: 1934.25.468]
437 ebony elephant. Colombo
438 ebony elephant. Colombo
439 ivory elephant. Amritsar, (Punjab) [1934.25.451]
440 wooden elephant. Burma
441 leogryph, small model. The animal that keeps guard at the entrance to pagodas.
Burma
442 small brass vase, used by pilgrims for carrying holy water from the Ganges.
Hardwar??
443 brass vessel for holding holy water, used in Hindu temples. Agra
444 ladle for taking out the holy water. Agra
445 wooden bowl for food, used by the Afides. Peshawar
446 traingular brass gong, used in pagodas. Burma [1934.25.474]
447 round gong. Bhamo??, Burma
448 brass vase. India
449 cigarette case of basketwork, Colombo, Ceylon
450 old brass vase. India
451 old brass vase. India
452 bowl made from the fruit of the coco-de-mer palm. Seychelle Islands. Largely
exported to India & used for beggar's bowls.
453 seeds of sandal wood tree [1934.25.532]
454 prayers written on a palm leaf. Kaudy, Ceylon
455 Afghan knife [1934.25.705]
456 Afghan knife
457 ornament made of cloves, worn by Afridis on their hair. Peshawar [1934.25.529]
458 carved ivory paper knife, India? [1934.25.706]

- 459 Indian shoes (man's). Ulevar
- 460 boots. Baltistan (worn by me on my tramps to Leh) [1934.25.217]
- 461 child's grass shoes, Korea.
- 462 child's grass shoes. Formosa
- 463 child's grass sandals. Kashmir
- 464 Mexican sandals, Mazatlan, Mexico City
- 465 Mexican sandals, Mazatlan, Mexico City
- 466 shoes. Kulu
- 467 Japaese tabi (footwear) [1934.25.223]
- 468 piece of old linen from off a mummy. Cairo
- 469 model of old Egyptian necklace
- 470, 471, 472, & 473 Ansiverers. Small blue figures of pottery, found in old Egypt tomb, often many at a time & planted there to perform menial duties in the spirit world, instead of the spirit of the person buried there having to do them. QUERY: on database 470 is oceanic food bowl, 471 is Tibetan tea bowl, 472 is incense burner & 473 is a box. [probably 1934.25.470-3]
- 474 & 475 pods of bean growing on a large tree in Africa
- 476 basket for hanging up & holding flowers. Japan [1934.25.212]
- 477 tobacco pipe. Japan
- 478 embossed silver pillow end used by wealthy people. Others used embroidered or plain ends. Malay States
- 479 metal mirror used in Shinto temples. Japan
- 480 sake cup, Satsuma ware, Kagoshima, Japan
- 481 & 482 Satsuma plates, Kagoshima
- 483 & 484 Vases of cloisonné on wooden stands. Nagoya, Japan [AR. 1984.1384 & 5]
- 485 matchbox cover of fine cloisonné . Peking
- 486 tiger made of red stone from Enoshima, Japan.
- 487 small brass pot for making the stain in, with which the Japanese women blacken their teeth after they are married. This custom is now becoming obsolete
- 488 bronze figurine of Buddha. Japan [probably 1934.25.459]
- 489 Japanese scissors
- 490 fire sticks, for arranging the charcoal in a hibachi, or brazier, Japan
- 491 ivory hair ornament (feather, egg & chicken). Japan [1934.25.445]
- 492 wooden comb with mother of pearl. Japan [1934.25.408]
- 493 sorabau (abacus). Japan
- 494 lacquer box with two sets of chopsticks [1934.25.277 & 278]
- 495 wooden box with 2 sets of chopsticks
- 496 red lacquer writing box with raised design. Luchu Island (contents of this is listed under 1934.25.556)
- 497 lacquer box. Nakasa, Japan (content listed after 1934.25.575)
- 498 gold lacquer box with raised design & mother of pearl inlay. (in wooden box & furoshiki). Kyoto
- 499 little silk purse. Japan [1934.25.61]
- 500 small soapstone shrine & image. China
- 501 lacquer inro or medicine box inlaid with mother of pearl [1934.25.627?]
- 502 lacquer inro with gold & shells. Japan
- 503 lacquer inro with fish. Japan
- 504 small lacquer inro. Japan
- 505 lacquer comb with mother of pearl. Japan
- 505a mother of pearl comb. Japan
- 506 carved ivory netsuke, or pouch toggle. Japan
- 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512 carved ivory netsuke, or pouch toggle. Japa

513 group of wooden monkeys on stand. Japan	[AR. 1984. 1386]
514 wooden netsuke. Japan	
515 bronze tortoise. Japan	[1934.25.435]
516 ivory box with seal & wax. Japan	
517 3 carved ivory monkeys on wooden stand. Japan	
518 & 519 miniature geta (clogs) for wet weather. Japan	[1934.25.402]
520 small charm containing an image of Buddha. Japan	
521 Japanese toothbrushes	
522 bamboo knife & fork. Japan	
523 model of torii?? A gateway or arch found in shinto temple. Japan	
524 & 525 Japanese puzzles . Japan	[1934.25.102]
526 small sake bottle. Japan	
527 Japanese game. Japan	
528 wooden bowl & lid. Japan	[1934.25.720]
529 book of pictures by celebrated old Japanese artists. Japan	
530 book of pictures by famous old Japanese artists. Japan	
531 painting of Fujiyama, on silk, in lacquer frame. Japan	
532 & 533 lacquer frames. Japan	
534 frame of inlaid mother of pearl in black stuff made of mud. China	
535 Koran stand, carved in walnut wood. Kashmir	
536 bag of small coins of various countries.	
537 bone hair ornament Place?	
538 piece of stone containing garnets. Padar, Himalayas	
539 small stone with garnets. Himalayas	[1934.25.420a]
540 piece of stone containing copper. Chaudra Valley, Himalayas	[1934.25.420a.2]
541 & 542 pieces of pink stone from the Bhol Khol pass. Sura. Himalayas	[1934.25.420a & 420a]
543 & 544 pieces of sulphur from Japanese volcano	
545 & 546 pieces of stone containing copper, Grand Canyon, Arizona	
547 piece of lava, from the small island, which appeared off the coast of Trinidad, 1911.	[1934.25.420a and 420b]
548 shells from Tanganyika & crystals from Mt Mlanji, Nyasaland	
549 & 550 stones from Har Nag pass, Kashmir	
551 box containing shells, stones & pieces of sponge from Tasmania, Fiji, Andaman Islands	[1934.25.420]
552 seahorse	
553 srigonia??? Shells, Tasmania	
554 pieces of red coral. Andaman Islands	[part of 1934.25.420]
555 lava. Japan	
 CONTENTS OF RED LACQUER BOX	 [1934.25.496]
556 piece of New Zealand greenstone	
557 tiki (Maori god & charm carved in greenstone)	
558 Mexican onyx, in the rough	
559 Mexican onyx polished	
560 crocodolite. South Africa	
561 Kauri gum. New Zealand	
562, 563 & 564 opal in the matrix. Queensland, Australia	
565 opal in the rough. New South Wales, Australia	
566 & 567 onyx ornaments. N Nigeria	
568 & 569 pieces of turquoise, Thibet	
570, 571, 572 pieces of turquoise. Darjeeling	

573 jade bead. Agra, India
574 beads made from shell & called crabeyes. Amoy, China
Topazes – Jeypore
Garnets – California
Garnets – Kimberley

CONTENTS OF WAKASA LACQUER BOX [1934.25.497]

Pair of Chinese earrings made with kingfisher feathers
I large silver ring set with turquoises. Kyelang, Lahoul
I smaller silver ring with turquoise in shape of lotus flower.
I ring made of a quarter rupee piece with turquoise in centre.
Small model in silver of Kangri or small brazier, used by Kashmiris to carry about to warm themselves.
Small silver model of Kashmiri grass shoes, or rasi
Silver charm worn round the neck. India
Silver charm with enamel. India
Carved image in ivory of Krishna as a baby on a lotus leaf. India
Carved peach stone. Amoy, China
Copies of old Egyptian jewellery found in the tombs of the queen.
(diagrams of symbols: sign of life, the Ankh; the Teb, symbol of stability, goddess Nechebl ??? (in form of vulture)
Old roman coin found by me near the Pyramids
Small piece of old Egyptian pottery
Small bead, ancient Egyptian
Scarab, ancient Egyptian
576, 577, 578 & 579 Fragments of old roman glass, found during excavation
580 & 581 part of a tear??? Bottle
In sandal-wood box:
6 small Egyptian amulets in blue pottery.
Piece of Kingfisher's feathers. Cauldon, China

PART 11

“Things to be included in the museum, but which are in use and not labelled.”
The following is written in red ink: “Those marked (with a red tick) are labelled and catalogued”. (I have replaced Benham's tick with /).

/Japanese tea set, 5 cups, teapot, jug, 5 bronze saucers and round wooden tray
/Lacquer soup bowl, with peacock (black)
Lacquer soup bowl, black with iris
Set of 5 red lacquered soup bowls
Red lacquer soup bowl with stork
Red lacquer soup bowl with small storks
Red lacquer soup bowl with leaves
Pewter tea pot Sivekora?? China
Pewter tea caddy ditto
/ enamel tin tea caddy Japan
Enamel brass finger bowl Jeypore
Small brass finger bowls
Green lacquer finger bowls
/Black lacquer finger bowls fish and gold lacquer inside
/Set of 4 satsuma ware coffee cups and saucers
/brass hot water jug with red enamel .Jeypore, India

/bronze kettle small. Japan
 Brown lacquer tray. Japan
 Carved wooden tray japan
 /mats of aloe fibre. Madagascar
 Small Japanese mats
 Silver coffee pot. Zanzibar
 Silver bowl & lid Burma
 Silver cream jug Delhi
 Silver fruit knives & forks
 Silver fish knives and forks with jade handles.
 /wooden bowls with inlaid work
 Silver spoon with elephant. India
 Silver spoon with snakes. India
 Silver spoon with filigree handle. Peru
 Silver spoon with round bowl & long handle. Arizona (made by Indians out of dollars)
 Silver spoon with flowers handle
 Silver spoon with coin handle
 Silver spoon with Japanese figure
 Filigree tea strainer Peking
 2 silver salt cellars in shape of Kashmiri Raugris, & spoons like ones used at Srinigar
 2 silver pepper pots in shape of Kashmiri riltas?? Or baskets for carrying on the back
 3 small silver spoons for salt or mustard
 Embroidered tablecloth on dark red cotton. India
 Printed Indian curtains
 Printed Indian bedcovers
 Kashmir embroidery

The *Catalogue of Museum* has a red line across the page – the next section is in blue ink with numbers in red.

~~1 & 2~~ Decorated gourds, Indian work. Peru
 3 – embroidered sleeves worn by Indian women with a string fastened on their shoulder. Peru
 4– four mats made from llama fur. Peru
 5 mantle worn round the shoulders by Indian women, fastened with a pin. Peru
 6 girdle worn by Indian women. Peru
 7– Inca necklace (notice resemblance to Solomon Islands money. Both are made from the same kind of shell.
 8 & 9 – Inca idols made of alloy of gold, brass & copper. The kneeling one represents a man kneeling before the Inca, as all were obliged to carry a bundle on their back in his presence.
 10 Inca spoon & pin?? Combined
 11 Inca pin
~~12~~ pieces of Inca pottery
 13 crossed out Inca knife metal
 14 crossed out 2 pieces of Inca carving??
 15 Inca knife, stone
 16 stone head of weapon shaped like star (notice resemblance to that from New Guinea)
~~17~~knitted cap worn by Indian men. Peru
~~18~~ bead ornament for the head worn by Indian women, Peru
~~19~~feather headdress worn by Indian men for dance. Bartica, British Guinea
~~20~~ bead apron worn by women, Bartica, British Guinea

- 21-old stone implements, pottery re. from St Vincent, BWL
sulphur from Sonfriere, volcano.
- ~~22~~ Chinese mandarin coat [1934.25.261]
- 23 Child's bonnet, China, Hong Kong
- 24 Maitao sling for carrying child. China
- 25 guipil ?? blouse worn by women in Guatemala. Neck opening is made after it is sold.
- 26 guipil. Guatemala [1934.25.257]
- 27 & 28 -serviettes. Guatemala [1934.25.643.1 & 643.2]
- ~~29~~-sash Guatemala [1934.25.246]
- 30 & 31 – children's dresses Guatemala, neck openings not yet made
- 32 Cap. Guatemala
- ~~33~~ scarf. Guatemala
- 34 cloth. Guatemala
- 35, 36, 37 & 37a – Old Damascus embroidery
- 38 – Kerchief worn on head. Cyprus
- 39 crossed out – handkerchief. Cyprus
- 40 crossed out – embroidery. Cyprus
- 41 Tibetan woman's dress consisting of A-long silk robe, folded in pleats towards the back under the arms [1934.25.261] & tied with B- sash.[1934.25.264] C.C two blouses worn over each other, the blue [1934.25.265] above the white [1934.25.266]. The white sleeves coming over the head & the blue turned back at the wrist. D-the frontal to keep the blouses in place, fastened round the neck, & tied round the waist [1934.25.267]. E – the apron, a most important feature as all Tibetan women of all classes wear one, of the same colouring & design, but not all as finely woven as this [1934.25.268]
- ~~42~~- Chinese child's shoes [1934.25.227]
- ~~43~~ Chinese medicine box. It is made to be threaded on a cord & hung from the girdle.
- 44 Tibetan girdle
- ~~45~~-carved bamboo boxes. Toradja country Celebes. D.E.Indies (Sulewesi, SE Asia)
- 46 Brown cotton which I think is only grown in Guatemala
- ~~47~~-Food cover. Minnehasa, Celebes
- ~~48~~- Bracelet made of some plant, & supposed to be lucky. Minnihasa, Celebes. Dutch E. Indies.
- ~~49~~ Toradja carving. Celebes
- 50 Balinese weaving. Scarf worn by women, above their waist.
- 51 Ear-ornaments worn by Balinese women
- ~~52~~ Musical instrument. Toradja [1934.25.708]
- ~~53~~ Basket, Bali, Dutch East Indies
- ~~54~~-silver filigree & enamel reliquary & 1 chain. Cyprus
- ~~55~~ silver reliquary in shape of cross & chain. Cyprus
- ~~56~~ silver & enamel reliquary in shape of cross. Cyprus
- 57 fragments of old glass – 15th cent Arabic art. Cyprus
- ~~58~~ silver reliquary. Cyprus
- 59 carved crucifix in filigree setting. In three parts to be screwed together
- 60 & 61 old Egyptian (crossed out) seals
- 62, 62 old Egyptian amulets
- 63 old Guatemala coins. They would be cut in half, for small sums
- 64 Chinese comb
- 65 Chinese pen
- 66 Chinese snuff bottle
- 67 Chinese medicine box, inlaid with mother of pearl
- 68 Chinese pen stand, inlaid with mother of pearl (2 pieces)
- 69 Chinese small vase, with carving done on the pottery

- 70 Chinese ink box
- 71 Chinese shoes
- 72 Silver brooch & chain, worn by women in Bashaha, Himalaya
- 73 Silver nose ring. Bashaka? Or Baskahr
- 74 crossed out Vase made of camel's skin, made in gaol at Bikanir, Rajputana? Called Koopas
(172 marked on cat. But not found on database)
- 75 old little basket, Toradja work. Rantepas, Celebes. Dutch E. Indies
- 76-pan & betal set. Malacca [1934.25.146, 147 & 148]
- 77-guipil. Guatemala
- 78 girdle, Guatemala
- 79 counters & dice for playing Indian game pachesi, or chappa, counters called gote, dice rummil???
- 80 - Mat on which the game is played
- 81 & 82-a common mat & wooden counters of the same game, for ordinary use
- 83 lacquer box. Mysore, India [1934.25.507]
- 84 & 85 two lacquer boxes. Jodhpur, India
- 86 box inlaid ivory, tigers, Mysore
- 87 carved sandalwood small tray, Mysore
- 88-sandalwood beads from Pushkar, the sacred lake in India.
- 89 small vase from Prompenh,?? French Indo China
- 90 mother of pearl & tortoiseshell frame, made by convicts on the Andaman Is. Photo Japanese child.
- 91 Vase, Bidri ware, Hyderabad
- 92 Bowl. Bidri ware, Hyderabad [1934.25.716]
- 93-Persian cup. Ispahan
- 94 Persian cup. Ispahan
- 95 Persian match box [1934.25.616]
- 96 Persian lock
- 97 Persian Pony bell, opens? Offers? Much larger & 3 or 4 bells inside.
- 98 Persian charm box
- 99 wooden cow bell Bali. D.E.I
- 100 brass box old. Hyderabad
- 101 old temple spoon, for taking up holy water. Hyderabad [1934.25.116]
- 102 old carved elephant. Hyderabad
- 103 Argentine small vase
- 104 old Chinese cloisonné cups & stand
- 105 Chinese snuff bottle
- 106 sling for carrying on the back with band to go round the forehead [1934.25.440]
- 107 small model of hat worn on head to cover back from sun or rain. Khasi Hills, Assam
- 108 Tibetan table
- 109 small writing table about 2000 B.C. Mesopotania.
- 110 Arab ornament worn by men. Kuwait
- 111 Mat, Arabian embroidery [1934.25.426]
- 112 Asbesks from Amiands, Cyprus
- 113 Fragments old glass, Salamis, Cyprus
- 114 Fragment marble, Salamis, Cyprus
- 115 Inlaid box, Damascus
- 116 Stone seal with lion
- 117 Brass brooch & chain Bashar, Himalayas
- 118 Four little brass enamel bowls, Moradabad, India [1934.25.623, 622,624]

- 119 Bowl of bell metal? Moradabad
- 120 Old brass bowl, Kashmir
- 121 Tinsel cap, Kashmir
- ~~122~~ Old papier mache box, Kashmir [1934.25.106]
- ~~123~~ pair child's Tibetan boots [1934.25.224]
- 124 Carved frame from Kashmir with photo of Formosan girl [1934.25.468]
- 125 Chinese box, porcelain
- 126 Chinese enamel small dish
- 127 Chinese snuff bottle
- 128 Two blue Chinese lions on carved wooden stands
- 129 Pair Chinese ladies shoes for bound feet [1934.25.221]
- 130 small stone tray, pink stone, found locally, Hire, French Indo China
- 131 Carved frog in pink stone, Hue?
- 132 Pen case, Leh, Ladakh
- 133 Brass coffee pot, Damascus
- 134 Old necklace, Jerusalem
- 135 Fragments old pottery, Jerusalem
- 136 Incense burner, Damascus [1934.25.619]
- 137 Sandals, Damascus [1934.25.409]
- 138 Scent sprinkler, Jeypore [1934.25.660]
- 139 enamel vase, Jeypore
- 140 Vase for pouring water over the hands after meals, Jeypore [1934.25.699]
- 141 Open work enamel vase, Jeypore [1934.25.405]
- 142 Eye shade, Leh, Ladakh
- 143 Fragment of mosaic paving, Paphos, Greece
- 144 Engraved bowl, Kashmir
- ~~145~~ Copper cup case, Leh, Ladakh [1934.25.122]
- ~~146~~ Jade cup, Leh, Ladakh
- ~~147~~ Carved ivory Buddhist rosary, Chinese
- ~~148~~ Inlaid wooden box, Touking [1934.25.108]
- 149 Tibetan letter from Lhasa refusing me permission to go to Mt Kailes with Hindustani translation, also another small Tibetan letter.
- 150 2 flint arrowheads, Aboriginies, W. Australia
- 151 boomerang, W. Australia
- 152 Pearl shell carved by Chinese Saudakan, Brit, N. Borneo
- 153 Stand for shell. Made in Japan
- 154 Dalaifu, marble picture, wooden stand
- 155 Dalaifu marble, wooden stand with open ivorywork, Yunnan Fu, China
- 156 White marble dragon, wooden stand, China [AR 1984.1388]
- 157 Stone figure of Buddah, Gaya,(Japan) India
- 158 Small model of footstep of Vishnu at temple of Bisna Pal, Gaya
- 159 Plan of temple, Bishna Pal
- 160 Leaf from sacred BO tree at the temple at Buddah Gaya, India
- 161 Girdle, woven worked and worn by women in Bhutan, Himalayas
- ~~162~~ Phulkari, worked and worn by ladies in Punjab, India [1934.25.240]
- ~~163~~ Woman's chaddan "Tie & dye" work, Jeypore. The Indian women iron it flat before wearing (Note C.C.this should read Khaddar)
- ~~164~~ Chaddar, Jeypore (Khaddar)
- 165 Specimens old Indian embroidery, Punjab (1934.25.428)
- ~~166~~ Indian chaddar curtain, Punjab
- ~~167~~ Two embroidered doyleys
- ~~168~~ Embroidered cloth, Chamba, Himalayas [1934.25.642 see 256]

169 Woman's dress and sash, Bethlehem	[1934.25.271]
170 Buffalo horn spoon & fork, Java	[1934.25.727 & 728]
171 Enamel brass jug with lid, Jeypore	
172 Old brass vase, inlaid copper, Hyderabad	[1934.25.153]
173 Silver Arabic coffee pot, Zanzibar	[1934.25.689]
174 Silver enamel vase with lid, old and rare, Cawnpore	
175 Copper & silver bowl, Gyantse, Tibet	
176 Carved jade ornament in wooden stand, Tibet	[1934.25.429]
177 The Wheel of life, hand-painted by lamas, representing scenes in the lives of good & bad folks. Seen in all Tibetan monasteries	[1934.25.717]
178 Silver butter lamp. Butter is used for illumination in all Tibetan temples. The cup is filled with butter & a wick is stuck in. All villages have to supply butter to the temple in their district	[1934.25.150]
179 Brass butter lamp, Tibet	
180 Gong used in Tibetan worship	
181 Carved openwork jade pendant, Chinese	
182 Tibetan coins & 1 Yarkand coin square	
183 Tibetan lamps	
184 Spectacle case, Tibet	
185 Thumb rings, Tibet	
186 Betel box, Bhutan	
187 Brass charm, Bhutan	
188 Figure of Buddah, carved wood, tibet	
189 String bag, Khasi Hills, Assam	
190 Copper goat bell, Bhot, Himalayas	[1934.25.151]
191 Bell used in temple, Tibet	
192 Knife in sheath, Tibet	
193 Brass cup & cover, Tibet	[1934.25.467]
194 Straw ornament, Bashahr	
195 Ear ornaments, Kashmir	
196 2 brass thunderbolts (dorje) used in Tibetan temple	
197 3 tiger claws	
198 2 old seals, Kashmir	
199 hair ornament, Tibet	
200 Old Tibetan charm box	
201 Blanket pins & chain, Garhwal, Himalayas	[1934.25.57]
202 small brass seal, Bhot, Himalayas	
203 small brass seal, Tibet	
204 2 horsehair bracelets & rings	
205 wooden cups lined with silver, Tibet	[1934.25.129]
206 wooden cup, silver lining and silver ornamentation outside, Tibet special	[1934.25.471]
207 2 silver & turquoise charm boxes, Tibet	
208 2 wooden bottles for carrying ghi (butter), Garhwal & other Himalayan districts	[1934.25.85]
209 Basket, Bhot	
210 Silver cup, stand & cover, Tibet	[1934.25.142]
211 Jade cup with brass stand & cover, Tibet	
212 Green stone cups, Nepal	
213 Music instrument, Tibet	[1934.25.683]
214 Copper ladle, Bhutan	[1934.25.694]
215 2 necklaces, amber & coral, Tibet	

- 216 Girdle, leather & brass with ornament of old coins, Tibet
- 217 Knife in sheath & flint & steel case (Chakmak), Tibet [1934.25.611]
- 218 Brass brooch, Tibet
- ~~219~~ Purse, Tibet [1934.25.230]
- 220 Wooden comb, Tibet [1934.25.663]
- 221 Copper & brass snuff bottle, Tibet
- 222 Ivory handled knife & chop-stick in case, Tibet
- 223 Turquoise & silver brooch, Tibet [1934.25.464]
- 224 Wooden cup case, ornamented with brass, Tibet [1934.25.467b]
- 225 Pipe, Tibet [1934.25.505]
- 226 Buddhist rosary, made of seeds with silver beads & 2 small turquoise & silver
dirgis or thunderbolts, Tibet [1934.25.461]
- 227 Brass charm, Tibet [1934.25.462]
- 228 turquoise and brass charm box & lid [1934.25.466]
- 229 Steel & leather girdle, Tibet [1934.25.520]
- 230 Brass ornament, Tibet
- 231 prayer wheel, Tibet
- 232 Brooch, Tibet
- 233 Tibetan key
- 234 Tibetan inkpot
- 235 Small ladle, Tibet
- 236 Silver necklace, Nepal
- ~~237~~ Wooden food bowl lined with silver & ornamented with silver outside,
Bhot [1934.25.144]
- 238 Lotah or drinking vessel, bell mold, Moradabad, India
- 239 Small enamel brass tray, Moradabad, India
- 240 curved knife in sheath, Udaipur, India
- 241 Carved gourd cup, Nicaragua
- ~~242~~ piece of wood for making fire
- ~~243~~ Bronze incense burner & stand, Japan [1934.25.472 & 136]
- ~~244~~ lacquer box in 3 tiers with lid, Japan [1934.25.154]
- ~~245~~ Small vase, inlaid silver, Lucknow
- 246 Carved ivory ornament, China
- 247 snuff bottle, jade stopper, China
- 248 2 hair ornaments, women, China
- ~~249~~ Small bronze box, China
- ~~250~~ dish carved in carnelian, Japan
- ~~251~~ Small match box inlaid silver, Yunnan, China
- ~~252~~ Old wooden cup, lined silver, Tibet [1934.25.145]
- ~~253~~ Horn snuff bottle, Tibet [1934.25.157]
- 254 Old charm box, silver & turquoise with small image inside, Tibet
- ~~255~~ 2 old blue cloisonné cups, Tibet [1934.25.123 and 124]
- 255a Old amber necklace, Himalayas [AR 1984 1337?]
- 256 Stone seal, Tibet
- 257 Silver & turquoise brooch, Tibet
- 258 Silver & turquoise hair ornament, Tibet
- ~~259~~ Pieces of green stone, found on the Chang La, Ladakh, one piece polished
- ~~260~~ Small piece aquamarine, Kashmir
- ~~261~~ Stones with copper, Himalaya
- ~~262~~ sulphur from volcanoes
- 263 Brass coffee pot, Kuwait, Arabia

- 264 Silver ear ornaments worn by women in the Darma valley, Bhot. The only place where I saw them.
- 265 4 chakmaks (flint & steel) Tibet [1934.25.654; 131;534;166]
- 266 Brass brooch, Sikkim
- 267 Purse ornamented coral & turquoise, Tibet [1934.25.620]
- ~~268~~ Copper cup case, Rupshu, Himalayas
- ~~269~~ China cup inside (broken), Leh, Ladakh
- 270 large brass spoons from various parts of the Himalayas
- ~~271~~ 2 large wooden spoons
- ~~272~~ 3 small brass spoons (1 lined silver) use smaller bowl for the baby [1934.25.169;170;171]
- 273 small cross made of reed stuck in the ground as a charm against some evil, Chini, Bashahr
- 274 Tibetan beads, the long stones with curious markings are much prized and are costly [1934.25.7]
- 275 The tusks of the musk deer which are worn as ornaments in a bunch on shoulder, Darma valley & district
- 276 Large amber ring worn by women in Darma valley Bhot [1934.25.547]
- 277 Small bronze incense burner & wooden stand, Japan [AR 1984 1387]
- 278 small bronze kettle, Japan
- 279 Black lacquer bowl lined gold with gold fish painted inside, Japan
- 280 2 carved wooden stands Japan
- 281 Cherry wood box to hang on girdle, Japan
- 282 2 small pieces of wood from the temple at Yanada Ise, Japan. The temple, and all buildings connected with it, is pulled down every 20 years & a new one built on an alternative adjacent site, & pieces of the old one are sold as charms.
- 283 Tortoiseshell ring, inlaid silver, Samoa [1934.25.546]
- 284 Miniature ivory elephant, Ceylon [1934.25.541]
- 285 Finger ring
- 286 Small tray, Japan
- ~~287~~ shark's jaw, Barbados
- 288 2 silver filigree & turquoise brooches, Sikkim, Himalayas
- 289 4 silver & turquoise spoons & 1 plain silver, Bhot & other Himalayan districts (1934.25.565a;b;c;d & e)
- 290 Silver, turquoise & coral brooch, Nepal
- 291 17 rings from Tibet, Spiti, Ladakh, Bhot, Bhutan, Nepal & other states in the Himalayas [1934.25.533; 535; 536; 537; 539; 540; 542; 545; 549; 551; 552; 554; 556; 557; 559]
- 291a Earring, Bhot [1934.25.538]
- 292 Bead made of a pebble, Tibet [1934.25.561]
- 293 Bracelet, Hungary [1934.25.762?]
- 294 Large copper bowl, Persia
- 295 Small copper bowl, tinned over, Persia
- 296 Shallow brass bowl. I used these three things as a washing basin on my journey (mostly on foot), from Shiraz to Ispahan & back to Bushiri
- 297 Carved ivory fan, China
- 298 Wooden stand, Japan
- ~~299~~ dish, raised lacquer red, Japan
- 300 2 fans, Samoa [1934.25.427 one piece]
- 301 Candlestick, Kashmir
- 302 Ancient lamp, Palestine
- 303 Ancient jug, Palestine or Syria

- 304 Basket, Cuttack, India
- 305 2 pieces old Indian pottery, San Jose, Costa Rica
- 306 Small box of buffalo horn, Cuttack
- 307 Dried flower from Kilimanjaro
- 308 crossed out
- 309 woman's dress. Inisime Is. Pafua [1934.25.513]
- 310 Beetle given me by chief of a village near Rhiwenzou, Belgian Congo. He put a piece of grass with slip knot around one of its legs & I carried it on my wrist for a week or two and gave it sugar and banana to eat. As I was afraid of losing it (a chicken nearly got it one day when I had put in a bush near my tent) I asked a Belgian official to put it in spirits)
- 311 2 combs, 1 with mother of pearl & 1 with yellow stem of orchid, Soloman Islands
- 312 needle made of bone, Soloman Islands
- 313 2 tongs made of bamboo, Soloman Islands
- 314 Mat, Soloman Islands [1934.25.516?]
- 315 Stone knife, for hollowing out canoes
- 316 Children's food bowls, Soloman Islands
- 317 Cup made from gourd Soloman Islands
- 318 Stone knife
- 319 small mat, presented when child is born, Samoa
- 320 2 woman's grass dresses (one missing) [1934.25.685]
- 321 Money made from shell, only used for large sums, not singly, Soloman Islands
- 322 Shell money, W. Australia
- 322a Shell used as spoon, Solomon Islands
- 323 Bark used for making kava, the natives drink. It is chewed by women to make it soft, Samoa
- 324 Blue & red coral, Solomon Islands
- 325 2 cowrie shells, Solomon Islands
- 326 Shell bracelet and 3 shell rings, ornaments, Solomon Islands
- 327 Dried seed ornament, Solomon Islands
- 328 Wooden food vessel, Solomon Islands [1934.25.114]
- 329 Carved coconut bottle, Solomon Islands [1934.25.80]
- 329a Carved coconut spoon, Solomon Islands
- 330 Mat, trimmed red feathers, formerly worn by chiefs in Samoa
- 331 Dress worn by dancing girl, Samoa
- 332 Mat in process of making. The grass is soaked for some days in the sea, then it is smoothed out with the shell & cut into narrow lengths with the sharp small piece of shell, & then woven by women, Samoa.
- 333 2 rain or sun hats, one a child's worn on head to cover back. Papua
- 334 Large basket, Solomon Islands
- 335 Ornaments, Papua
- 336 Musical instrument, Papua
- 337 2 women's grass dresses
- 338 3 baskets, Samoa
- 339 2 cups made from gourds, Costa Rica
- 340 1 bamboo carved comb, Fiji
- 341 Shell bracelet
- 342 Shell ornament
- 343 3 necklaces, seeds and shells
- 344 Shells (or teeth) threaded on a piece of stick used for currency
- 345 Grass necklace with two bead ornaments
- 346 fine work round basket with cover

- 347 small round basket with handle
- 348 Small woven bag
- 349 small fancy basket made of straw [1934.25.419]
- 350 Basket for carrying food
- 351 Basket & cover for food
- 353 Basket for food Bashahri
- 354 Basket, Costa Rica?
- 355 Ivory bracelet, Africa
- 356 milk bottle, made of wood, Africa [1934.25.572]
- 357 3 legged milk pail, cut out of a piece of wood. Kenya colony
- 358 Wooden milk pail, Africa [1934.25.659]
- 359 Wooden snuff bottle, Africa [1934.25.506]
- 360 Wooden food dish cut from one piece of wood. Zululand
- 361 Wooden food dish, Zululand [1934.25.76]
- 362 Wooden pillow, Zululand [1934.25.104]
- 363 wooden milk bottle, Kenya Colony [1934.25.107]
- 364 Sling for carrying bottle [1934.25.713]
- 365 Horn for playing, Africa
- 366 Python skin, Kenya colony
- 367 Basket with cover, Africa
- 368 Small dish, very fine basket work [1934.25.421]
- 369 Square wooden food dish, Africa
- 370 Basket for holding food, Kenya colony
- 371 7 covers in basket work, for milk bottles and other things, Africa
- 372 Small basket & lid in very fine basket work, generally done by the chief's wives, Kenya Colony [1934.25.481]
- 373 2 small baskets, fine work, Kenya [1934.25.417]
- 374 Cover for milk bottle, Kenya [1934.25.754]
- 375 ornaments for necklace, originally threaded on a piece of hair from giraffe's tail, Africa
- 376 Bead collar, Kenya colony
- 377 2 Wooden ear ornaments, Africa
- 378 Bead girdle, Zululand
- 379 Bead necklace, Zululand
- 380 2 ear ornaments, Zululand
- 381 Bead necklace, Zululand
- 382 Waist ornament, Zululand
- 383 Bead ornaments, Zululand
- 384 Bead bracelet, Zululand [1934.25.60]
- 385 Bead dress, Zululand
- 386 Bead dress, Zululand
- 387 Wooden food dish, Africa
- 388 Wooden food dish Africa
- 389 wooden food dish, oblong on Stand, Africa [1934.25.487]
- 390 String sling for carrying bottles
- 391 Bell anklet or armllet, Africa
- 392 copper bracelet
- 393 Steel shield for finger
- 394 Leather girdle with steel beads, Africa [1934.25.458]
- 395 wooden ladle [1934.25.738]
- 396 Small bag of basket work
- 397 3 pieces of rock containing gold, Chari, Belgian Congo

- 398 small basket for food, Africa
- 399 Broom, made of weeds
- 400 Small hollow fancy stick Tibet [1934.25.723]
- 401 Small basket with netting at top [1934.25.664]
- 402 Long knife in red leather sheath
- ~~403~~ Pony collar & bell, Tibet
- 404 Black lacquer soup bowl with peacock on lid, Japan
- 405 dark red lacquer box for cakes, Japan
- ~~406~~ snuff bottle made from gourd
- ~~407~~ Finely plaited grass bracelets (broken)
- ~~408~~ Bracelets made of wire twisted round hair of elephant's tail (broken)
- ~~409~~ Bracelet of brass and steel beads
- ~~410~~ Bracelet of copper wire, Africa
- ~~411~~ 1 brass, 1 copper bracelet
- ~~412~~ Sennet plaited coconut fibre used in Samoa for binding the posts & rafters together in building a house. No nails are used anywhere. Made by women, & hundreds of yards are used in a house
- 413 Small drum on a stick [1934.25.512]
- 414 Plaited grass girdle [1934.25.580]
- 415 Small brass cup, Bhot, Himalayas
- 416 Brass cup, Himalayas
- 417 Brass dish, small, Himalayan district
- 418 Brooch, silver, ornamented with coral & enamel [1934.25.558]
- ~~419~~ 4 pipe bowls [1934.25.158]
- ~~420~~ a little Chinese shoe I picked up on a path near Yunnan Fu [1934.25.225]
- 421 A small carved wooden ornament, China or Japan
- ~~422~~ A piece of birch bark from Kashmir, used for writing & also extensively for the roofing of homes
- ~~423~~ 18 furoshiki or wrappers used for carrying parcels, Japan
- 424 1 Japanese towel
- ~~425~~ Japanese washing basin [1934.25.168]
- 426 Small basin for soap, toothbrush, Japan
- 427 Brass drinking cup, India
- 428 Saddle bags made of fibre [1934.25.674]
- 429 Shell, New Guinea & others, Pacific Islands. The small round part commonly known as "cats eyes" is really the door of the shell like the horny plate of the common winkle. When the fish is living inside the door is fastened to the shell by a hinge & can be opened or shut by the inmate.
- ~~430~~ Tibetan saddle rug, modern colours
- ~~431~~ small carpet, Bagdad
- ~~432~~ Pillow cover, Hellah, (Nr Babylon)
- ~~433~~ Small old saddle, Bhot, used by me on my chair when camping
- ~~434~~ Bedouin bag, Kuwait, Arabia
- ~~435~~ Old Tibetan saddle rug made with vegetable dyes. These old rugs are now rare & difficult to procure
- ~~436~~ Old Tibetan saddle rug, much used, made with vegetable dyes
- ~~437~~ Embroidered bag, Bhutan, Himalayas
- ~~438~~ Donkey saddle bag, Jerusalem
- ~~439~~ Walking stick, Bartica, British Guinea. Kuching, Saravak (cut in half because of difficulty of length in transport)
- ~~440~~ Carved bamboo chief's stick formerly decorated with feathers
- ~~441~~ Walking stick, East Africa [1934.25.425]

- 442 Stick made from rose tree, Srinagar, Kashmir
443 Carved bamboo stick, Kumaon?, India (has been with me all camping tours since 1912)
444 Iron cooking stand, Gola, W. Africa
445 4 coffee cups & saucers, Satsuma ware [1934.25.518]
446 Japanese tea set, 5 cups and bronze saucers, tea pot and 1 jug, tray of wood, lacquer tea caddy, 1 wooden spoon [1934.25.744]
447 Mat made of aloe fibre, Madagascar [1934.25.272]

Appendix 5. Gertrude Benham Collection: Database: The Americas

NORTH AMERICA		
1934.25.180	box	Canada & North America & America
1934.25.576	bag	Banff & Alberta & Canada & N. America
1934.25.578	bag	Banff & Alberta & Canada & N. America
1934.25.670	necklace	Banff & Alberta & Canada & N. America
1934.25.420a.1	natural object	Grand Canyon & Arizona & U.S.A & NA
SOUTH AMERICA		
1934.25.12	necklace	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.58	apron	Guyana & South America & America
1934.25.65	headband	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.82	spoon	Chile & South America & America
1934.25.178	ceremonial headdress	Guyana & South America & America
1934.25.245.1.1	sleeve	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.245.1.2	sleeve	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.245.2.1	sleeve	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.245.2.2	sleeve	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.245	sleeve	Peru & South America & America
1934.25.413	head	South America
1934.25.455	container	Buenos Aires & Argentina & S. America
1934.25.604	seal	South America
1934.25.675	head	South America
CENTRAL	AMERICA	
1934.25.4	necklace	Barbados I & Central America & America
1934.25.38	necklace	Mexico & Central America & America
1934.25.78	cup	Costa Rica & Central America & America
1934.25.115	cup	Costa Rica & Central America & America
1934.25.218	sandal	Mexico & Central America & America
1934.25.235	dress	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.236	scarf	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.238	girdle	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.246	waistband	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.257	cloak (?)	Guatemala > Central America > Americas
1934.25.475	natural object	Jamaica & Central America & America
1934.25.571	bag	Mexico & Central America & America
1934.25.643.1	napkin	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.643.2	napkin	Guatemala & Central America & America
1934.25.673	whip	Jamaica & Central America & America
1934.25.677	adzehead	West Indies (?) & Central America (?)
1934.25.678	axehead	West Indies (?) & Central America (?)
1934.25.679	axehead	West Indies (?) & Central America (?)
1934.25.680	axehead	West Indies (?) & Central America (?)
1934.25.684	natural object	West Indies (?) & Central America (?)
1934.25.420a.2	natural object	Trinidad & Central America & America

Appendix 6. Gertrude Benham Collection: Database: Pacific/Oceania

MELANESIA

FIJI		
1934.25.14	necklace	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.18	necklace	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.19	necklace	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.59	currency bar	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.90	drum model	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.419	container	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.479x.1	Tabua	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.514	pillow	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.569	fan	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.570	fan	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.581	fan	Fiji & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.724	fan	Fiji (?) & Melanesia (?) & Oceania (?)
NEW GUINEA		
1934.25.27	bracelet	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.28	earring	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.478	hat	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.513	skirt	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.615	bracelet	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.725	pipe	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.765	club	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.601x	nose stick	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.67x	necklace	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.95x	snuff bottle	New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.112	headrest	Collingwood Bay & New Guinea & Melanesia & Oceania
SOLOMON ISLANDS		
1934.25.6	bracelet	Solomon Is (?) & Melanesia (?) & Oceania
1934.25.44	currency cord	Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.80	bottle (?)	Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.470	food bowl (?)	Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.516	mat	Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
1934.25.617	spoon (?)	Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
AR.1984.1452	comb	Malaita & Unk & Solomon Is & Melanesia & Oceania
		TOTAL Melanesia 30

POLYNESIA

1934.25.3	necklace	Honolulu & Hawaiian Is & Polynesia & Oceania
1934.25.56	bag	Honolulu & Hawaiian Is & Polynesia & Oceania
1934.25.808x	natural object	Kilauea (?) & Kauai (?) & Hawaiian Is & Polynesia»
1934.25.39	necklace	Rarotonga & Cook Is & Polynesia, Oceania
1934.25.40	necklace	Rarotonga & Cook Is & Polynesia Oceania
1934.25.427	fan (?)	Samoa Is & Polynesia & Oceania
1934.25.546	ring	Samoa Is & Polynesia & Oceania
1934.25.685	skirt	Samoa Is & Polynesia & Oceania
1934.25.579	fan	Tabuaeran & Polynesia & Oceania
		TOTAL Polynesia 11

AUSTRALASIA

TASMANIA		
1934.25.33	necklace	Tasmania & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.34	necklace	Tasmania & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.35	necklace	Tasmania & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.36	necklace	Tasmania > Australasia > Oceania
1934.25.37	necklace	Tasmania & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.43	necklace	Tasmania & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.420.1	box	Tasmania (?) & Australasia (?) & Oceania (?)
		TOTAL 7
NEW ZEALAND		
1934.25.276	bag	New Zealand & Australasia & Oceania
1934.25.692	box	Rotorua (?) & New Zealand & Australasia & Oceania
		TOTAL 2
AUSTRALIA		
1934.25.690	boomerang	Australia & Australasia & Oceania
		TOTAL 1

UNLOCATED			
1934.25.726x	necklace	Oceania	Pacific
1934.25.755x	natural object	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.1	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific

AR.1983.1173.2	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.3	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.4	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.5	currency cord	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.6	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.7	adornment	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.8	earring	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.9	bracelet	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.10.1	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.10.2	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.11	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.12	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.13	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.14	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.15	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.16	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.17	bead	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.18	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.1	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.2	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.3	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.4	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.5	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.6	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.7	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.8	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.9	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.10	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.11	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.12	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.13	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.14	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.15	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.16	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.17	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.18	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.19	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.19.20	currency unit (?)	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1173.20	adornment	Oceania (?)	Pacific
AR.1983.1200	necklace	Oceania (?)	Pacific
	TOTAL 43		

Appendix 7. Gertrude Benham Collection: Database: Africa

SOUTH AFRICA		
LESOTHO		
1934.25.2	necklace	Lesotho & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.10	necklace	Lesotho & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.11	necklace	Lesotho & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.47	blanket pin	Lesotho & Southern Africa & Africa
		4
NATAL		
1934.25.13	necklace	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.15	girdle (?)	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.21	girdle (?)	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.23	bracelet	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.48	girdle	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.49	chest ornament	Natal > South Africa > Africa
1934.25.60	bracelet	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.76	dish	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.104	headrest	Natal & Southern Africa & Africa
		9
MOZAMBIQUE		
1934.25.46	dancing stick	Mozambique & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.77	stand	Mozambique & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.410	headrest	Mozambique > South Africa > Africa
1934.25.614	stand	Mozambique & Southern Africa & Africa
		4
ZIMBABWE		
1934.25.83	bottle	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.500	necklace	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.632	container	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.701	guitar	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.764	dress	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.70	bucket	Zimbabwe & Southern Africa & Africa
		6
MALAWI		
1934.25.110	plate	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.491	necklace	Malawi > South Africa > Africa
1934.25.492	necklace	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.504	stand	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.511	strainer	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.710	zither (?)	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.730	bag	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.420b.2	natural object	Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
AR.1984.1564	tool (?)	Malawi (?) & Southern Africa (?) & Africa

1934.25.128	bell	Karonga & Unk & Malawi & Southern Africa & Africa
1934.25.605	piano	Zambia (?) & Southern Africa & Africa
		11
RHODESIA		
1934.25.497	necklace	North West Rhodesia (South Africa)
1934.25.498	necklace	North West Rhodesia (South Africa)
		2
		TOTAL 36

EAST AFRICA

KENYA		
1934.25.5	necklace	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.64	collar	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.71	bucket	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.107	bottle	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.191	container	Kenya (?) & East Africa (?) & Africa
1934.25.192	container	Kenya (?) & East Africa (?) & Africa
1934.25.417.1	container	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.417.2	container	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.481	container	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.477.1	bag	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.477.2	bag	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.503	armlet	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.754	lid	Kenya & East Africa & Africa
		13
ZANZIBAR		
1934.25.16	necklace	Zanzibar & Unk & Tanzania & East Africa
1934.25.42	necklace	Zanzibar & Unk & Tanzania & East Africa
1934.25.45	necklace	Zanzibar & Unk & Tanzania & East Africa
1934.25.658	prayer mat	Zanzibar & Unk & Tanzania & East Africa
1934.25.689	coffee pot	Zanzibar > Tanzania > East Africa > Africa
		5
UGANDA		
1934.25.158	pipe	Mbarara & Uganda (?) & East Africa (?) & Africa
1934.25.418	container	Mbarara > Uganda > East Africa > Africa
1934.25.480	bag (?)	Ankole & Unk & Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.669	strainer (?)	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.682	bow	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.702.1	arrow	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.702.2	arrow	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.702.3	arrow	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.702.4	arrow	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.713	sling (?)	Ruanda or Uganda & East Africa & Afri»
1934.25.734	bag	Ankole (?) & Unk & Uganda & East Africa

1934.25.741	harp (?)	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.748	mweso board	Uganda & East Africa & Africa
		13
TANZANIA		
1934.25.484	necklace	Ujiji & Unk & Tanzania & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.664	sword (?)	Tanzania (?) & East Africa (?) & Africa (?)
1934.25.420b. 3	natural object	Tanzania & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.420b. 4	natural object	Tanzania & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.420b. 5	natural object	Tanzania & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.420b. 6	natural object	Tanzania & East Africa & Africa
		6
RUANDA		
1934.25.488	bracelet	Ruanda > East Africa > Africa
1934.25.489	bracelet	Ruanda & East Africa & Africa
1934.25.490	bracelet	Ruanda & East Africa & Africa
		3
OTHER		
1934.25.425	ceremonial stick (?)	East Africa (?) & Africa (?)
1934.25.649	shield	Somalia & North East Africa & Africa
1934.25.653	plate	Sudan > North East Africa > Africa
1934.25.696	comb	East Africa (?) & Africa (?)
1934.25.729	spoon	East Africa (?) & Africa (?)
		5
		TOTAL 45

WEST AFRICA

NIGERIA		
1934.25.72	bowl	Nigeria & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.73	bowl	Nigeria & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.188	dish (?)	Africa - Nigeria - Hausa (M. Carey)
1934.25.189	dish (?)	Africa - Nigeria - Hausa (M. Carey)
1934.25.231	bag	Kaus (?) & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
1934.25.232	bag	Nigeria > West Africa > Africa
1934.25.241	cushion cover (?)	Nigeria & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.496	bracelet	Nigeria
1934.25.501	necklace	Nigeria
1934.25.693	basket & lid	Africa (?) Nigeria, Hausa (M. Carey)
1934.25.709	flute	Nigeria & West Africa & Africa
		11

LOKO		
1934.25.407	necklace	Loko & Unk & Nigeria (?) & West Africa
1934.25.414	necklace	Loko & Unk & Nigeria (?) & West Africa
1934.25.606	necklace	Loko & Unk & Nigeria (?) & West Africa
1934.25.616	necklace	Loko & Unk & Nigeria (?) & West Africa
1934.25.687	necklace	Loko & Unk & Nigeria (?) & West Africa
1934.25.804x	dress	Loko & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
1934.25.805x	dress	Loko & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
		7
KANO		
1934.25.415	bracelet	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa &
1934.25.433	necklace	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa &
1934.25.476	dish	Kano & Unk & Northern Nigeria & West Africa & Afr»
1934.25.493	necklace	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
1934.25.494	bracelet	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
1934.25.495	bracelet	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
1934.25.502	necklace	Kano & Unk & Nigeria & West Africa
		7
CAMEROON		
1934.25.432	armlet	Cameroun & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.515	piano	Cameroon (?) & West Africa (?) & Africa
		2
GHANA		
1934.25.602.10x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.11x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.12x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.13x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.14x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.15x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.16x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.17x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.18x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.19x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.1x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.20x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.21x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.22x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.23x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.24x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.25x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.26x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.27x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.28x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.29x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.2x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa

1934.25.602.30x	weight	Ghana > West Africa > Africa
1934.25.602.31x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.32x	weight	Ghana (?) & West Africa (?) & Africa (?)
1934.25.602.33x	seal (?)	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.34x	seal (?)	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.35x	seal (?)	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.36x	seal (?)	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.37x	seal (?)	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.3x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.4x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.5x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.6x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.7x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.8x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
1934.25.602.9x	weight	Ghana & West Africa & Africa
		32 weights and 5 seals = 37
OTHER		
1934.25.651	helmet	West Africa & Africa
		1
		TOTAL 65

CENTRAL AFRICA

NUMBER	SIMPLE NAME	PRODUCTION PLACE
ZAIRE		
1934.25.84	bell	Zaire (?) & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.634	stand	Zaire & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.666	knife & sheath	Kisenji & Unk & Zaire & Central Africa
1934.25.667	girdle	Kissenji & Kivu & Zaire (?) & Central Africa
1934.25.711	knife	Kivu & Unk & Zaire & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.763	guitar (?)	Kisenge (?) & Zaire & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.806x	natural object	Kaderusi (?) & Zaire & Central Africa & Africa
AR.1984.1556	shield	Ruanda (?) & Zaire (?) & Central or South Africa
		8
LAKE KIVU		
1934.25.400	bracelet	Lake Kivu & Unk & Congo & Central Africa
1934.25.665	comb (wooden) (?)	Lake Kivu & Unk & Zaire & Central Africa
		2
BELGIAN CONGO		
1934.25.469	collar	Belgian Congo & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.609.1	natural object	Chari & Belgian Congo & Central Africa
1934.25.609.2	natural object	Chari & Belgian Congo & Central Africa

1934.25.609.3	natural object	Chari & Belgian Congo & Central Africa
1934.25.626	pestle	Belgian Congo & Central Africa & Africa
		5
1934.25.719.1	arrow	Gabon (?) & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.719.2	arrow	Gabon (?) & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.719.3	arrow	Gabon (?) & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.719.4	arrow	Gabon (?) & Central Africa & Africa
1934.25.719.5	arrow	Gabon (?) & Central Africa & Africa
		5
		TOTAL 20

AFRICA – NOT SPECIFIC

1934.25.26.1	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.26.2	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.26.3	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.26.4	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.26.5	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.26.6	anklet (?)	Africa
1934.25.75	dish	Africa
1934.25.89	dish	Africa
1934.25.93	spoon	Africa
1934.25.99	cup (?)	Africa
1934.25.105	food cover	Africa
1934.25.111	dish	Africa
1934.25.179	basket & cover	Africa
1934.25.181	cover	Africa
1934.25.182	cover	Africa
1934.25.183	cover	Africa
1934.25.184	cover	Africa
1934.25.185	cover	Africa
1934.25.186	cover	Africa
1934.25.187	basket & cover	Africa
1934.25.190	container	Africa
1934.25.193	container (?)	Africa
1934.25.195	container	Africa
1934.25.197	container (?)	Africa
1934.25.198	container (?)	Africa
1934.25.199	cover	Africa
1934.25.200	plate (?)	Africa
1934.25.201	plate (?)	Africa
1934.25.202	bag (?)	Africa
1934.25.203	container	Africa
1934.25.204	container	Africa

1934.25.205	container	Africa
1934.25.206	container	Africa
1934.25.207	container	Africa
1934.25.208	container	Africa
1934.25.209	container	Africa
1934.25.210	container	Africa
1934.25.211	container	Africa
1934.25.421	dish	Africa
1934.25.422	container	Africa (?)
1934.25.431	armlet	Africa (?)
1934.25.450	bag	Africa (?)
1934.25.456	cover	Africa
1934.25.458	girdle	Africa
1934.25.463	necklace	Africa (?)
1934.25.487	bowl	Africa
1934.25.506	snuff bottle	Africa
1934.25.510	container	Africa (?)
1934.25.572	bottle	Africa
1934.25.573	macehead (?)	Africa (?)
1934.25.577	flute (?)	Africa (?)
1934.25.583	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.584	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.585	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.586	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.587	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.588	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.589	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.590	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.591	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.592	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.593	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.594	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.596	necklace	Africa (?)
1934.25.597	necklace	Africa (?)
1934.25.598	dagger & sheath	Africa (?)
1934.25.599	dagger & sheath	Africa (?)
1934.25.600	necklace	Africa (?)
1934.25.603	bottle	Africa (?)
1934.25.607	container	Africa
1934.25.645	slipper (?)	Africa
1934.25.650	fan	Africa (?)
1934.25.656	bell	Africa (?)
1934.25.657	mat	Africa (?)
1934.25.659	bucket	Africa (?)

1934.25.681	brush	Africa (?)
1934.25.693	basket & lid	Africa (?)
1934.25.738	ladle (?)	Africa
1934.25.740	bracelet	Africa (?)
1934.25.747	bowl (?)	Africa (?)
1934.25.752	bell	Africa (?)
1934.25.760	bottle (?)	Africa (?)
1934.25.761	container	Africa (?)
1934.25.94x	spoon	Africa (?)

ISLANDS

1934.25.32	necklace	St Helena & the Islands & Africa
1934.25.53.1	necklace	St Helena & the Islands & Africa
AR.1983.1201	necklace	St Helena (?) & the Islands (?) & Africa (?)
		3
1934.25.237	cloth	Madagascar & Malagasy Republic & the Islands
1934.25.272	mat	Madagascar & Malagasy Republic & the Islands
1934.25.441	container	Madagascar & Malagasy Republic & the Islands
1934.25.661	valiha	Madagascar & Malagasy Republic & the Islands
		4
1934.25.401	drum	Egypt & North Africa & Africa
		1
		TOTAL 8

Appendix 8. Gertrude Benham Collection: Database: Asia

EAST ASIA

TIBET		
1934.25.7	necklace	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.41	necklace	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.123	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.124	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.125	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.127	collar	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.129	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.139	saucer & cover	Tibet (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.140.1	saucer (?) & lid	Tibet (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.140.2	lid (?)	Tibet (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.142	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.143	saucer	Tibet (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.145	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.149	thunderbolt symbol	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.150	lamp	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.157	snuff bottle	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.224	boot	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.230	purse	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.261	robe	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.264	waistband	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.265	blouse	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.266	blouse	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.267	bib	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.268	apron	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.429	stand	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.461	rosary	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.462	charm	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.464	brooch	Tibet (?) or India (?) & East Asia or India
1934.25.466	charm box	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.467a	cup & cover	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.467b	cup container	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.471	cup	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.505	pipe	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.520	girdle	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.549	ring	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.561	bead	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.611.1	knife, sheath & strike-a-light	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.611.2	knife sheath	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.611.3	strike-a-light	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.620.1	purse	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.620.2	natural object	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.663	comb	Tibet & East Asia & Asia

1934.25.672	thunderbolt symbol	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.683	guitar (?)	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.707	ceremonial dagger	Tibet > East Asia > Asia
1934.25.717	thanka	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.723	stick	Tibet & East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 47
JAPAN		
1934.25.61	purse	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.1	box	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.2	lid	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.3	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.4	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.5	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.6	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.7	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.8	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.9	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.10	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.11	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.12	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.13	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.14	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.15	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.16	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.17	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.18	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.19	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.102.20	puzzle piece	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.136	incense burner stand	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.168	bowl	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.175	box	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.177	dish	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.212	container	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.223.1	tabi X2	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.277	box	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.402.1	clog model x2	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.406	netsuke	Japan (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.408	comb	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.435	figure	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.445	hair ornament	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.459	figure	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.472	incense burner	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.518.1-4	saucer x 4	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.518	box & lid	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.720	bowl & lid	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.744	tray	Japan & East Asia & Asia

1934.25.277a & b	chopstick	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.278a & b	chopstick	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.420a.3	natural object	Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.807x	natural object	Japan & East Asia & Asia
AR.1984.1384	stand	Nagoya & Unk & Japan & East Asia
AR.1984.1385	stand	Nagoya & Unk & Japan & East Asia
AR.1984.1386	stand	Nagoya & Unk & Japan & East Asia
AR.1984.1387	stand	Nagoya & Unk & Japan & East Asia
1934.25.279.1	chopstick box	Luchu Is & Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.279.2.1	chopstick	Luchu Is & Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.279.2.2	chopstick	Luchu Is & Japan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.280.1 & 2	chopstick	Luchu Is & Japan & East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 51
CHINA		
1934.25.29	rosary	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.50	rosary (?)	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.51	rosary	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.117	box	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.135	box & lid	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.137	hand warmer	China (?) & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.165	box	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.221	shoe	China > East Asia > Asia
1934.25.225	shoe	Yunnan Fu (?) & Unk & China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.226	shoe TBC	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.227	shoe TBC	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.233	bonnet	Hong Kong (?) & China & East Asia
1934.25.258	waistband	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.261	coat	China > East Asia > Asia
1934.25.273	skirt	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.281.1	knife	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.281.2.1	chopstick x 2	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.281.3	chopstick container	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.447.1	container	China (?) & East Asia (?) & Asia
1934.25.453	plaque	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.745	figure	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.800x	rosary	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.801x	stand	China & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.802.1x& 2x	shoe	Shanghai & Unk & China & East Asia
		TOTAL 24
TAIWAN		
1934.25.62	bracelet	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.63	bracelet	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.194	hat	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia

1934.25.215.1	shoe x 2	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.259	bag	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.468	photograph	Taiwan > East Asia > Asia
1934.25.686.1	knife	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.686.2	sheath	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
1934.25.757	boat model	Taiwan & East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 9
OTHER		
1934.25.721	bowl & lid	Asia
1934.25.722	bowl & lid	Asia
		TOTAL 2

SOUTH ASIA

KASHMIR		
1934.25.505.1	prayer wheel	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.22	chatelaine	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.25	necklace	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.133	lid	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.134	box (?)	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.138	saucer & cover	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.156	ceremonial dagger	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.164	cup	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.152	ceremonial bell	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.166	strike-a-light	Ladakh (?) & Kashmir (?) & Indian
1934.25.167	ceremonial bell	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.508.1	prayer wheel	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.508.2	prayer	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.508.3	prayer	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.508.4	prayer	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.508.5	prayer	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.550	spoon	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.560.2	earring	Ladakh & Kashmir & India Subcontinent
1934.25.562	earring	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.564	box (?)	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.566	seal	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.568	earring	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.560.1	earring	Ladakh & Kashmir & India Subcontinent
1934.25.715	prayer wheel	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.468.1	frame	Kashmir > India > South Asia > Asia
1934.25.68	necklace	Kashmir & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.530	protective charm (?)	Kashmir & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.106	box & lid	Kashmir & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.217.1	boot	Kashmir > India > South Asia > Asia
1934.25.756	tablet	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.121.1	cup	Rushu (Kashmir) (?) Himalayas (?) & India

1934.25.121.2	lid	Rushu (Kashmir) (?) Himalayas (?) & India
1934.25.122	container	Leh (?) & Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian
1934.25.697x	box & lid	Ladakh & Kashmir & Indian Subcontinent
1934.25.420a.6	natural object	Kashmir & India Subcontinent & Asia
AR.1984.1294	prayer wheel	Ladakh (?) & Kashmir (?) & Indian
1934.25.217.2	boot	Baltistan & Kashmir & India Subcontinent
		TOTAL 37
SRINAGAR		
1934.25.118	bowl	Srinagar & Iran (?) or India & India
1934.25.120	vase	Srinagar & Iran (?) or India & India
1934.25.451	figure	Srinagar & Amritsar (Punjab) & India & India
1934.25.460	bowl	Srinagar & Iran (?) or India & India
1934.25.531	pendant ?	Srinagar & Unk & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.647	ewer	Srinagar & Iran (?) or India & India
		TOTAL 6
HIMALAYAS		
1934.25.131	strike-a-light	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.169	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.170	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.171	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.420a.4	natural object	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.420a.5.1	natural object x2	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.465	buckle	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.534.1	strike-a-light, tinder & flint	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.536	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.537	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.538	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.539	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.540	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.542	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.544	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.545	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.552	ring	Bhot & Himalayas & Nepal (?) & India
1934.25.554	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.555	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.556	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.557	ring	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.558	brooch	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.559	ring	Darma & Himalayas & Nepal & India
1934.25.565a	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.565b	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.565c	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.565d	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.565e	spoon	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent

1934.25.630	spoon	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.654	strike-a-light	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.732	spoon	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.735	spoon	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.736	spoon	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.737	spoon	Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.512	drum	Bhot (?) & Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.144	bowl	Bhot & Himalayas & India & India
1934.25.151	bell	Bhot & Himalayas & India & India
1934.25.446	brooch	Sikkim, Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.580	girdle	Bhot (?) & Himalayas (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.621	cup	Bhot & Himalayas & India & India
1934.25.533	earring	Bhot (?) & Unk & India & India Subcontinent
AR.1984.1337	bead	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
AR.1984.1337.1	bead	Himalayas & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.9x	brooch	Bashari (?) & Himalayas (?) & India (?)
1934.25.553	spoon	Zanskar (?) & Himalayas & India & India
		TOTAL 45
INDIA		
1934.25.31	necklace	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.126	container	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.130	pot & lid	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.141	cow bell	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.219.1x	shoe x2	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.228.1	shoe x2	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.229.1	sandal x2	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.449	pendant (?)	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.416	fire devil	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.509.1.1	die	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.509.1.2	die	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.509.1.3	die	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.509.2.1	counter x16	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.528	necklace	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.532	necklace	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.543	ring (?)	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.751	bell	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.706	paper knife	India (?) & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.438x	cup (?)	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.444x	necklace	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.482x	beaker	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.485x	vase	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.486x	bowl	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.524x	ornament	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.548x	spoon	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia

1934.25.567x	spoon	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.613x	flask	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.625x	bowl	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.629x	bottle (?)	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.695x	container	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.698x	belt	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.700x	belt	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.703x	shot container	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.712x	ornament	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.714x	bell	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.718x	bowl	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.743x	bowl	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.758x	vase	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.803x	curtain (?)	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.644x	bowl	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
1934.25.646x	lamp model	India (?) & India Subcontinent (?) & Asia
AR.1984.1568	pen & ink container	India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.440	sling	Assam & India & India Subcontinent & Asia
		TOTAL 43
HYDERABAD		
1934.25.116	spoon	Hyderabad & Andhra Prad & India & India
1934.25.153	vase	Hyderabad & Andhra Prad & India & India
1934.25.716	bowl	Hyderabad & Andhra Prad & India & India
1934.25.692x	vase	Hyderabad (?) & India (?) & India
1934.25.642	cloth	Himachal Pradesh > India > South Asia >
		TOTAL 5
BHUTAN		
1934.25.132	charm	Bhutan & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.434	box	Bhutan & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.535	ring	Bhutan & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.694	ladle	Bhutan & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.551	ring	Bhutan & India Subcontinent & Asia
		TOTAL 5
SURAT		
1934.25.519	ring	Surat & Gujarat & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.521	ring	Surat & Gujarat & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.522	ring	Surat & Gujarat & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.523	ring	Surat & Gujarat & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.527	ring	Surat & Gujarat & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.412x	box	Surat (?) & India (?) & India Subcontinent (?)
AR.1985.546	paper knife	Surat (?) & India (?) & India Subcontinent (?)
		TOTAL 7
UTTAR PRADESH		
1934.25.57	blanket pin	Garhwa (?) & Uttar Prad (?) & India & India
1934.25.85	container	Garhwa (?) & Uttar Prad (?) & India & India

1934.25.154	container	Lucknow & Uttar Prad & India & India
1934.25.525	cosmetic bottle	Lucknow & Uttar Prad & India & India
1934.25.622	bowl	Moradabad & Uttar Prad & India & India
1934.25.623	bowl	Moradabad & Uttar Prad & India & India
1934.25.624	bowl	Moradabad & Uttar Prad & India & India
		TOTAL 7
PUNJAB		
1934.25.69	brooch (?)	Bashahar (Punjab) (?) & India & India
1934.25.240	dress	Punjab & India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.428	cloth	Punjab & India & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.526	brooch (?)	Simla & Punjab (?) & India & India
		TOTAL 4
ASIA UNLOCATED		
1934.25.582	container	Asia
1934.25.628	pattern	Asia (?)
1934.25.668	ceremonial stick	Asia (?)
1934.25.674	saddle bag	Asia (?)
1934.25.749	ceremonial stick	Asia (?)
1934.25.437x	bowl	Asia
1934.25.638x	bowl	Asia
1934.25.457	scoop	Asia (?)
		TOTAL 8
OTHER		
1934.25.20	necklace	Pushkar & Rajasthan & India & India
1934.25.172x	vase	Bikanir (?) & Rajasthan (?) & India & India
1934.25.176	box & lid	Jodhpur & Rajasthan & India & India
1934.25.243	cuff	Baluchistan & Pakistan & India Subcontinent
1934.25.405	incense burner	Orissa > India > South Asia > Asia
1934.25.424	box	Mysore & Karnataka & India & India
1934.25.507	box & lid	Mysore & Karnataka & India & India
1934.25.529	hair ornament	Peshawar & Pakistan (?) & India
1934.25.541	figure	Sri Lanka & India Subcontinent & Asia
1934.25.612	ceremonial rattle	Mathura & Unk & India & India Subcontinent
1934.25.660	perfume sprinkler	Jaypur & Orissa & India & India
1934.25.699	ewer (?)	Jaypur & Orissa & India & India
1934.25.731	tray	Mysore & Karnataka & India & India
1934.25.753	manuscript	Kyelang & Lahul & Himachal Prad & India
1934.25.769	manuscript	Lahul & Himachal Prad & India & India
		TOTAL 23

SOUTH EAST ASIA

JAVA		
1934.25.74	plate	Minahassa (?) & Sulawesi & South East Asia
1934.25.79	bell	Java & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.100	vase	Java & South East Asia & Asia

1934.25.196	container	Java & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.260	sarong	Java > South East Asia > Asia
1934.25.727	spoon	Java & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.728	fork	Java & South East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 7
MALAYA		
1934.25.213.1	shoe x2	Malaya (?) & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.214	shoe	Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.216.1	shoe x2	Malaya (?) & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.222.1	shoe x2	Malaya (?) & South East Asia (?) & Asia (?)
1934.25.608	knife sheath	Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.662	kris sheath	Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.146	bowl	Melaka (?) & Unk & Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.147	cup & cover	Melaka (?) & Unk & Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.148	container	Melaka (?) & Unk & Malaya & South East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 9
BANGKOK		
1934.25.403	ball	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.411	tessera (?)	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.448	ceremonial bowl	Bangkok >Thailand > South East Asia > Asia
1934.25.639.1	bowl	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.639.2	container (?)	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.640	container	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.641	areca nut bowl	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.750.1	tessera x5	Bangkok & Unk & Thailand & South East Asia
1934.25.746x	plate	Bangkok (?) & Thailand (?) & South East Asia
		TOTAL 9
BURMA		
1934.25.86	puppet	Mandalay > Burma > South East Asia > Asia
1934.25.87	puppet	Mandalay & Unk & Burma & South East Asia
1934.25.173	bowl	Burma & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.474	ceremonial gong (?)	Burma & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.655	hat	Burma & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.676	umbrella	Burma & South East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 6
SULAWESI		
1934.25.88	box	Sulawesi > South East Asia > Asia
1934.25.91	snuff box (?)	Sulawesi & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.96	sound box (?)	Sulawesi & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.473	box	Sulawesi & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.652	snuff box	Sulawesi & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.708.1	cello (?) & bow	Sulawesi & South East Asia & Asia

		TOTAL 6
OTHER		
1934.25.92	figure	Nicobar Is > South East Asia > Asia
1934.25.98	lime box	Borneo & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.108	box	Tongking & Vietnam & South East Asia
1934.25.109	cow bell	Bali & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.420.2	function unknown	Andaman Is & South East Asia & Asia
1934.25.439	rice house model	Padang & Unk & Sumatra & South East Asia
1934.25.610	tray	Hue & Unk & Vietnam & South East Asia
1934.25.739	bag	Borneo & South East Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 8

WEST ASIA

KUWAIT		
1934.25.1	chain (?)	Kuwait & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.426	mat	Kuwait & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.633	coffee pot	Kuwait (?) & West Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 3
SYRIA		
1934.25.269	scarf	Dimashq (?) & Unk & Syria (?) & West Asia
1934.25.409.1	sandal	Syria > West Asia > Asia
1934.25.409.2	sandal	Dimashq (?) & Unk & Syria (?) & West Asia
1934.25.436	coffee pot	Dimashq (?) & Unk & Syria (?) & West Asia
1934.25.619	incense burner	Dimashq & Unk & Syria & West Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 5
IRAN		
1934.25.119	bowl	Iran & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.616	box & lid	Iran & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.648x	vase & lid & finial	Iran (?) & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.688x	vase & lid	Iran (?) & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.762x	bowl	Iran (?) & West Asia & Asia
		TOTAL 5
OTHER		
1934.25.271	dress	Bethlehem > Palestine > West Asia > Asia
1934.25.563	bracelet	Turkey (?) & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.705	knife & sheath	Afghanistan & West Asia & Asia
1934.25.631x	lid	West Asia (?) & Asia
1934.25.704x	pipe (?)	Arab culture area (?) & West Asia (?) & Asia
1934.25.742x	plate	West Asia (?) & Asia
		TOTAL 6

Appendix 9: Publication

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***Connecting with Gertrude*, at Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth, from 3 March to 23 April 2011.**

Commissioning contemporary artists to ‘intervene’ in ethnographic collections has become a familiar part of museological practice in recent years and has led to innovative collaborations and outcomes that position ethnographic objects in new perspectives and that address new audiences. Since the redisplay of the World Cultures Gallery in 2009, the staff at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery — keeper of human history Fiona Pitt, and assistant keepers Rachel Smith and Tabitha Cadbury—have welcomed a range of innovations and collaborations to make their ethnographic objects more accessible to a range of audiences. They have initiated community projects, organized lectures on aspects of the collections, collaborated with the University of Plymouth in developing undergraduate modules such as ‘Collecting Cultures’, and have supported scholarly research—including my own doctoral work on the traveller and collector Gertrude E. Benham (1867–1938). *Connecting with Gertrude* was an artist’s intervention based on archival and collections research about Benham. It formed part of a larger exhibition, *Hacking Antiques*, by textile artist and animator Amy Houghton, and was held at Plymouth College of Art, where Houghton was undertaking an artist’s residency. The exhibition highlighted the interaction between art and anthropology and the potential contribution of collaborative research into ethnographic collections and archives by a contemporary textile and animation artist.

Gertrude Benham circumnavigated the globe on her own eight times between 1904 and her death in 1938. She amassed a collection of more than 700 objects from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas, which she donated to Plymouth Museum in 1934.

Although, apart from one small notebook, there is a paucity of documentary information about the collection, Benham records that she embroidered and knitted throughout her life and that she sold or bartered things she had made to make her collection of ‘curios’. Benham was therefore a ‘maker’ herself, just as the objects she collected had been ‘made’ by indigenous people. As a textile artist, Houghton was interested in the qualities of and experience of makers, Benham’s relationship to the objects she collected, and why she collected. Houghton stated that she was attracted to the objects’ sensibility and their potential to evoke ideas. After viewing some of the objects in Benham’s collection, Houghton commented in interview that:

many of the objects are older than the museum itself. The objects in Benham’s collection led me on the path I have taken. The objects in the museum are interesting because of their cultural origins and history, but also because of the stories surrounding acquisition and the reasons why they reside in the museum.

Houghton had previously worked with archival material and was interested in exploring and revealing hidden histories in objects, the role of memory, nostalgia, and longing for both origins and a sense of authenticity. In addition to working with textiles she has also worked in photography, film, and animation. The exhibition included the handmade, the digital, the mechanized, texts, and objects, and explored the relationships between them, as well as the making and unmaking of objects, which could be understood metaphorically as the ravelling and unravelling of Benham’s life narrative and the connections and networks she encountered. In excavating the Benham archive and objects, as well as their connections to the maritime history of Plymouth, Houghton

became particularly interested in objects made out of string and rope, and this influenced her selection of objects for the exhibition.

The exhibition space was a small contemporary art gallery situated in an art college in Plymouth city centre, very close to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery. This is a temporary exhibition gallery with an open-plan, white-wall space with lots of natural light. Installations of Houghton's work *Hacking Antiques* were positioned on the walls of the gallery and inside these four white screens were positioned so as to make an intimate square, with openings at each corner for the visitor to enter or leave. The installations comprising *Connecting to Gertrude* were positioned on the inside of these internal screens.

Connecting with Gertrude consisted of five small installations, four of which were based directly on objects in Benham's collection. Houghton replicated Benham's collected objects in order to experience her understanding of materials and the making process. More importantly, she wanted to 'unmake' them, thus revealing their construction through their deconstruction. The replicated objects were photographed at each stage of unmaking to make a stop-frame video animation, thus reanimating the objects. This animated examination of the objects revealed the excavation of the archives as well as the excavation of Benham's objects and the knowledge contained within them.

As it happens, the first installation, 'Made in Portsmouth', did not relate to material collected by Benham, but featured a technical drawing of how to rig HMS *Victory*. This included a wooden deadeye, an item used in the rigging of a traditional sailing ship. The machine invented to standardize these led subsequently to another machine that was

used to make wooden cotton-reels. This led on to the second installation ‘Made in Tibet’, which consisted of an industrial treadle sewing-machine and stop-frame animation of Benham’s Tibetan boots. Benham recorded in her *Catalogue* that she wore these boots on her ‘tramps’ in Tibet. Houghton made a replica of Benham’s boots and then dismantled them. This process of deconstruction was photographed at each stage to make an animation of the ‘unmaking’ and ‘unravelling’ of the boots. The animation was set into the table of an old Singer sewing-machine, which the viewer had to sit behind and operate in order to activate the animation. The boots slowly dematerialized, revealing the processes, materials, and technologies used in their construction.

The third installation, ‘Made in More than One Country’, consisted of an old printing press and stop-frame animation including pages from Benham’s catalogue of her collection, illustrating how she recorded her objects. It was interesting to see the catalogue of a collector, her handwriting, the words she used, and how she arranged her notes. It was animated to show that some of the words and letters had ‘escaped’ from the page, suggesting—analogously to what Bruno Latour has referred to as disobedient or recalcitrant objects—that Benham’s objects may not have wanted to be collected, transported to another country, and stored or displayed in a Western museum. Such words are unstable and make us question what we read, our forms of knowledge production, and the discourse of history as ‘truth’. One word disappears, another appears, upside down, sideways, making us aware of the polysemic nature of language, different knowledges from around the world at different times and places, and different cultural interpretations. Within different languages some words may be indecipherable, exposing the possibility that some words can never be translated or understood—just like some of the cultures from whom Benham collected. This uncertainty demonstrates

the complexities involved in interpreting other cultures, let alone representing them through their objects in a Western museum.

The 'fabric-feed' mechanism used in sewing-machines was developed into the 'film feed' mechanism used in film and cameras. The fourth installation, 'Made in Taiwan' comprised a photograph, a film-viewing machine, and stop-frame animation. The photograph, the only one in the Benham collection, is a profile portrait of a young Atayal woman in Taiwan. Her face has been tattooed to indicate that she has reached a certain level of attainment in weaving and is therefore a woman who can marry, and she wears a woven textile over her shoulder. A film reel situated below the photograph had to be turned by hand to activate the animation during which the tattoo, the woven fabric, and the photographic emulsion were all seen in a process of unmaking until the image disappeared completely. This made me look more closely at the image to scrutinize the design of the tattoo and to ponder its meaning and significance to the individual, her gendered identity, the culture in which she lived, and the role of weaving textiles in her society.

The fifth and final installation, 'Made in Madagascar', comprised a wooden hand-loom, a woven and embroidered mat, yarn and spools of threads connected to a table loom, and a stop-frame animation. Set into the table to the right of the loom was an animation of a Madagascan embroidered mat collected by Benham, which slowly unravelled thread by thread. To the left of the loom, a circular magnifying glass was set into the table under which could be seen the thread passing as it undid itself and returned to the spool. It was fascinating watching the textile 'unmake' itself and the magnifying glass made me examine the process more intensely, thus affecting the way I looked at the textile as an object. Watching the textile unmaking itself and the threads passing by,

reminded me of the journey that it had gone through as well as its social life: made in Madagascar; used, sold, exchanged, or bartered, and collected by a white European woman; and donated to a Western museum. It may have been admired and cherished, or simply discarded and thrown away, but it highlighted how we continue to be entangled with other people's narratives through objects. The unravelling gave a sense of the textile returning to its origins, back to the spool, but destabilized, never being what it once was.

The technology of the jacquard loom was used in the development of the punch-card accounting system, which in turn was drawn on in the development of digital computer language, which in turn was the basis of the whole exhibition— stop-frame digital animation—thus making the connections complete. In each installation a mirror was placed on the wall, visually connecting all the exhibits. The exhibition was interactive, very hands on, and so was the antithesis of the 'do not touch' method of display, as the viewer had to engage with the exhibits in order to animate them. It was particularly interesting to see people 'playing' with the exhibits, cautiously at first, and then becoming more confident.

The labels on the exhibits followed art-historical conventions and were kept to a minimum. There were also two free leaflets. The first explained Houghton's practice as a textile artist and animator and, on the reverse, contained a 'map' laying out some of the connections of technological history and their links with Benham. The second, by Harriet Hawkins, contextualized the exhibition and Houghton's approach and connections to Benham in terms of gender, the act of 'making', and broader critical narratives about the processes of craft and its materialities, which question the status of knowledge and our modes of knowledge production. This was a more academic text,

which considering the audience (staff and students of art and design, museum staff, as well as the public) and the location of the exhibition, was appropriate and addressed different audience needs.

The spatial and temporal aspects of film and animation were conveyed through the historical objects in different ways: through the collection of the objects from different times and places, the making and unmaking of the objects in the animation, and the present experience of the time and space of the exhibition. The exhibition did not address the social or political conditions in which the objects were collected, and visitors were not encouraged to think about colonialism and the effects of this on the colonized cultures. However, this is understandable given the emphasis of the exhibition on aesthetics, materials, and the technologies and processes of making in every sense—the making of objects and the making of connections, historically and in the present. The exhibition avoided the dichotomy of ‘us and them’ to reveal that making is intrinsic to the human condition regardless of geographic location and/or the political ideology of colonialism. It highlighted the relational aspects of Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, connecting Plymouth—through Benham’s global collection—to a network of relationships emanating from the museum to the rest of the world and vice versa.

The processes of ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ reflect how we construct our ‘knowledge’ and understanding of the world and render it partial and unstable, always emergent and dynamic, just like the cultures from whom the objects were collected. In interview Houghton referred to the exhibition as ‘a conversation’ between Benham and the objects, but I suggest that it was more than this. The objects Benham collected embody the skills of the makers, which connects Benham as a maker with them, and in turn connects Houghton’s practice of making to them, all these connections being woven

together in a complex history—an entangled web of skills, materials, technologies, and knowledges—a conversation of encounters through time and space, always ongoing and emergent. The exhibition was a tribute to the original makers of the objects, whose intangible presence was embodied in the objects themselves through their creativity and skills as ‘makers’ alongside Houghton and Benham. Houghton may have unravelled the objects, but these connections can never be disentangled.

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