Chapter 14
Trials and Traces: A. C. Haddon's Agency as Museum Curator

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Abstract Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940) is most well known for organising The Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait and New Guinea (1898–1899). What is less commonly known is that Haddon also spent 13 years acting as an advisory curator at the Horniman Museum in London (1902–1915). There, he exerted considerable influence on the running of the Museum, from its day-to-day management to its acquisition policies. This chapter explores Haddon's personality as museum curator, paying particular attention to the way in which his relationship with source communities, professional colleagues, auction houses, dealers and missionaries influenced which artefacts he acquired for the Museum and which he rejected. The study provides fresh insights into the professional life of a man who played a central role in the establishment of institutional anthropology in Britain.

Introduction

Ethnographic collections manifest a complex array of social relationships, negotiations and processes. While much attention has been paid to the motivation of field collectors, the role of museum curators in the formation of the collections has largely been overlooked. Since museum curators are the pivotal agents around which museum collections are built, the factors motivating their intentions, desires and opinions warrant further academic attention. This chapter explores Alfred Cort Haddon's role as advisory curator with the Horniman Museum, London, between 1902 and 1915 by examining the British New Guinea and Torres Strait objects he acquired. Drawing on some aspects of Bruno Latour's (1997, 2005) actor-network theory, I will explore the various relationships or *trials* Haddon had with source communities, professional colleagues, auction houses, dealers and missionaries, unpacking what evidence or *traces* these left behind in the collections he amassed. Haddon's prominent role within a newly emergent anthropological discourse and his extensive field experience meant that he was one of the earliest expert curators collecting within a museum setting.

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S. Byrne et al. (eds.), *Unpacking the Collection*, One World Archaeology,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4419-8222-3_14,

Collections and Agency

The position of ethnographic objects has largely waxed and waned throughout the history of anthropology. During the heyday of evolutionary anthropology in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Britain, field, theoretical and museum anthropologists were largely operating under an unifying doctrine whereby 'facts and artefacts were thus considered to share a similar status' (Shelton 2000: 180). The move towards functionalism in the first decade of the twentieth century undermined the role of ethnographic collections. Indeed, Bronislaw Malinowski's disregard for ethnographic collections is well known. One of his contemporaries at the British Museum once remarked how 'the intractability of hard dead things, divorced from their true setting seemed at times to daunt and even repel him' (Braunholtz 1943: 15). Ethnographic collections largely remained unfashionable until a renewed interest in the 1980s when academics called for a 'process of *recontextualization* or redefinition,' which 'should be of interest to anthropology, for it not only informs us about ourselves but also recurring features of culture contact, culture domination and culture change' (Ames 1986: 34, Italics original). It has really only been with increasing involvement of source communities in the last decade or so that a more intimate understanding of the historical and contemporary meaning of ethnographic collections has begun to be achieved. This process is challenging museums to devise new ways that shared histories and agency can be researched and presented. Of particular importance is the 'recognition of the very personal connections that can be made between families, communities, images and artefacts' (Peers and Brown 2003: 7). Focusing on these more personal elements is important, not only because it forefronts local agency but also because it encourages a deeper consideration of the face-to-face interactions between different people and between people and things. By following the experiences of the different actors involved, this essentially 'bottom-up' approach is helping unpack the different relationships inherent within collections.

Approaching agency in this way allies itself with Latour's actor-network theory and particularly his suggestion that you need 'to follow the actors themselves' (Latour 2005: 12) so as to understand the *social*. His suggestion that 'if you mention an agency, you have to provide an account of its action, and to do so you need to make more or less explicit which trials have produced which observable traces (Latour 2005: 53)' is directly relevant for collections research. Conceptualising ethnographic objects as 'traces' through which agency can be revealed is useful and identifies them as conduits for revealing social interaction. A 'trace', in this context is best conceived as any evidence found within the collection that reflects human agency. These 'traces' are naturally present at different levels; they are evident within the object itself, reflecting the decisions involved in its making and any subsequent modifications thereafter. Equally the 'trace' can be the actual object, its very presence at a specific place and time reflects the agency of those involved in moving the collections from source to museum

Fig. 14.1 Alfred Cort Haddon, resident curator at the Horniman Museum from 1902 to 1915 (Courtesy of The Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust)

site. Latour's actor-network theory sees all actors as a 'full blown mediators' (Latour 2005: 128), facilitating a view that all 'trials' or relationships and experiences involved in creating and assembling museum collections are worthy of investigation.

This chapter examines one type of actor in the formation of museum collections: the curator. Alfred Cort Haddon was advisory curator with the Horniman Museum, London, between 1902 and 1915 (Figs. 14.1 and 14.2a, b), during which he accumulated artefacts from all over the world from auction houses and dealers. There is a clear bias in his acquisition policy in favour of objects from British New Guinea and Torres Strait, undoubtedly linked to his specialised knowledge of these regions' material culture. Haddon's many professional contacts within Pacific anthropology and the networks in which he circulated also influenced the type and quality of objects purchased by him and presented to the Museum. The importance of museum curators in assembling collections is often downplayed in favour of field collectors. Yet it is museum curators who are pivotal agents, arguably because they are involved in interacting with the largest number of external agents in shaping a group of objects into a coherent collection (see also Philp Chapter 12 and Wingfield Chapter 5).

By focusing on the agency of a museum curator, I am also deliberately drawing attention to the fact that the more personal and idiosyncratic aspects of agency are not just relevant when considering the relationship source communities have with collections but are also pertinent in relation to collectors. The agency of collectors and curators has too often been eclipsed by a focus on the governing ideologies or system in which they operated. This ultimately creates a forced

Fig. 14.2 (*left*) The Horniman Museum in 1901, the year it was donated to the London County Council (Courtesy of The Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust) and (*right*) the Museum today (Courtesy of Sarah Carpenter)

tension between the individual and their relationships with external agencies. I argue that Haddon's agency as curator was as much influenced by his personal relationships as by the evolutionary theory he embraced. In the same way Latour (2005: 22) points out how 'in each course of action a great variety of agents seem to barge in and displace the original goals' and that action by its very nature is 'borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated' (Latour 2005: 46). The various decisions Haddon made whilst collecting objects for the Museum were not as systematic as they might first appear. It would be misleading here to think of Latour's 'network' as any kind of concept replacement for 'system'. Indeed, Latour has tried endlessly to detach the two, 'a network is a concept. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described' (Latour 2005: 131). It is this more methodological idea of a network that is applied here. It is a conceptual entry point into the idiosyncrasies of Haddon's acquisition policy, revealing what 'trials' produced the specific 'traces' still evident in the Horniman collection today. By situating Haddon's agency as museum curator in relation to his encounters with source communities, professional colleagues, auction houses, dealers and missionaries, I aim to provide a more intimate understanding of the collections he amassed and, in doing so, reassemble Haddon's agency as curator.

Encountering Communities

When Haddon assumed his role as Advisory Curator in 1902, following his 1888 and 1898 expeditions, his knowledge of British New Guinea and Torres Strait material culture was well established. To fully understand Haddon's agency as museum curator, it is essential to consider his fieldwork experiences and interactions with source communities. The maiden voyage of 1888 was the turning point of Haddon's career. Four months into the expedition, he sums up activities.

> I fancy a fair verdict would be (1) coral reef investigator – much less done than I should of liked, but I am making a start – (2) General marine zoology about as much as I could reasonably expect to do. (3) Anthropology much more than I anticipated (Haddon 1888–1889: 52).

Haddon's historic metamorphosis from marine biologist to anthropologist was not overnight. Quiggin (1942: 82) points out that 'he had always intended to make the most of his opportunities of seeing and learning what he could of his first "savages"' and 'he also had a secondary motive for getting in touch with them as he hoped to recoup himself for some of the expenses of the journey by collecting "curios" for museums'. After he made his first acquisitions of a drum and a mask on Murray Island 'belonging to one of the old boy's son who was away working in the mainland but whose father took it on himself to trade for his absent son' (Haddon 1888–1889: 6), artefact collecting became daily practice. Within a few weeks, it became 'usual to make enquiries for ethnological specimens' (Haddon 1888–1889: 8). Collecting was no passing fancy. His diary entries became dominated by detailed accounts and sketches of the function, technology and design of the various artefacts he encountered and collected. During this 1888 expedition he collected around 250 artefacts, including tobacco pipes, masks, personal ornaments, clubs, bows and arrows, masks, dance paraphernalia and clothing (see Moore 1982: 38). The majority of these objects were offered to the British Museum with a few duplicates being sold or donated to some smaller institutions, including the Horniman Museum. These objects became central to Haddon's anthropological writings (e.g., Haddon 1894, 1946; Haddon and Hornell 1936–1938) and were used to expound his theories on art, anthropology and the role of museums. Haddon's field experiences and interactions with source communities not only instilled in him an understanding of the use and meaning of various objects within their local context but helped form his ideas on museums and material culture. 'It is the non-understanding of objects that makes visits to museums frequently dull or uninteresting. As a matter of fact, objects are really interesting in themselves' (Haddon 1904: 4).

The 1888 expedition ignited in Haddon a passion for preserving knowledge of traditional culture that became the driving force behind his career as an anthropologist and influenced his choice of objects for the Horniman Museum. He once remarked how 'posterity will have plenty time in which to generalise and theorize but it will have scarcely any opportunity for recording new facts. The apathy of our predecessors has lost to us an immense amount of information' (Haddon 1894: 270). In protest to such apathy, Haddon's career was characterised by an overwhelming

and voracious energy and urgency. His fears that the knowledge of customs would be lost convinced him that urgent fieldwork and collecting was the only way to save such vanishing data. He invested a huge amount of energy into collecting and documenting artefacts through writing and photography. He attempted to reawaken traditional customs, for instance, by commissioning specific items (Herle 1998: 96–96). He was especially preoccupied with traditional costume, once declaring how 'our first business was to get the women to appear in their native dress – after much time they did so and retired to their houses with much laughing and giggling' (Haddon 1888–1889: 15). On another occasion, however, when he 'could not get the women to wear grass petticoats,' he was not dissuaded once he 'proved that they were used' (Haddon 1888–1889: 20). This highlights an important point: Haddon's priority rested with preserving knowledge rather than the culture practice itself. Once the knowledge was not lost, then there was less pressing need to preserve the practice.

Haddon's (1897: 305–306) urgency for more fieldwork to save the 'vanishing knowledge' of the region resulted in the organisation of the 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Strait (see Herle and Rouse 1998). Haddon organised and planned the expedition in line with his concept of anthropology as an all-encompassing discipline by incorporating expertise from a wide range of scientific pursuits such as zoology, psychology, physiology and biology. He therefore sought 'the co-operation of a staff of colleagues, each of whom have some special qualification' (Haddon 1901: viii). As Herle and Rouse (1998: 1) acknowledge, this approach was not without its problems: 'on the eve of the 1898 Expedition to the Torres Strait, British anthropology was in search of self-definition. Situated precariously between the arts and the natural sciences, it was struggling for legitimacy in the academy while lacking both recognisable boundaries and unifying paradigm'. One area that benefited from this decisively broad stance was Haddon's collecting strategies. As Strathern (1999: 7) points out, 'one of the rubrics which Haddon and his colleagues worked in the Torres Strait was to gather as much material as possible', resulting in the diverse and well-documented ethnographic collections we have today.

During the 1898 expedition, Haddon amassed a broader range of material than on his previous expedition. This included both everyday items such as grass skirts, food bowls, shell hoes and fire sticks as well as ritualistic objects such as masks, ancestor posts and bullroarers. Unlike the previous expedition, Haddon was now collecting artefacts with established anthropological agendas. The amateur's passion so vivid in his 1888 journals was overtaken by a more academically informed method of collecting. The 10 years since the first expedition had seen Haddon's full conversion to anthropology. A simple child's toy was now interpreted as a possible 'link in a chain of evidence of race migration' (Haddon 1898: 92). Objects were also collected with his professional reputation in mind. For instance, he delighted in the acquisition of a musical instrument at Kerepenu (10th June 1898) because 'H. Balfour of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford has written a paper recently on precisely the same "horn"' (Haddon 1898: 118). He also became more wary of taking objects at face value and not 'to assume an object is native to the district because it is found there but always

make enquiries' (Haddon 1898: 118). The 1,300 objects (some 40 boxes) collected during the 1898 expedition were very well documented and the majority even had their local names attached. All artefacts (bar a few duplicates) were presented to the Cambridge University Museum in recognition of their financial support of the expedition (see Herle 1998: 79). Today the Museum boasts 3,670 objects in the Haddon Collection, including some 1245 artefacts from the Torres Strait, and 1227 from New Guinea.

The relationship between Haddon's field experiences and his identity as museum curator is important to unpack because it is these field experiences that ultimately underpinned his ideas about the function and nature of anthropology. As museum curator, he was not acquiring objects directly from community members, but rather through the filter of auction houses and dealers. Yet his field experiences and cross-cultural relationships were to prove central to his decision making. In this way, his decisions 'overflow' with elements that are already in the situation coming from some other time and some other 'place' and generated by some other 'agency' (Latour 2005: 166). His memories of field collecting and encounters and exchanges in British New Guinea and the Torres Strait impacted on his decisions and desires as museum curator. As Benjamin (1969 [1931]: 60) aptly points out, 'every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories' The specific 'traces' or impact these 'trials' had on formation of collections at the Museum will be more fully expounded below.

From the Field to the Museum: Interacting with Colleagues

On the 19th January, 1901 Frederick John Horniman donated his museum to the London County Council. The majority of objects had been accumulated during Horniman's travels as a tea merchant to Egypt, India, Ceylon, Japan, Canada and the USA. Others had been 'acquired in England' through auction houses because they 'either appealed to his fancy or which seemed likely to interest and inform those whom circumstances prevented from visiting distant lands' (Gomme 1902: 6). Collecting objects with such haphazard fancy was something Haddon vehemently disagreed with. Indeed, following his very first visit to the Horniman Museum in July 1901, he remarked how 'the day has passed when we can consider a collection of "curios" as a museum. If properly arranged, a museum is an educational institution of the greatest value, as information is conveyed visually with accuracy and great rapidity' (Gomme 1901: 1–2).

On December 7, 1901, G. L. Gomme, the clerk of the London City Council, recommended to the Museum's subcommittee that 'the best course to adopt with regard to the staff and the rearrangement and relabelling of the exhibits, would be to endeavour to obtain the services of a consulting curator, of some eminent authority upon museum work, such as Dr. Haddon at a nominal salary of say 50 guineas a year, to retain the present curator, Mr. R. Quick as resident curator and also to pertain the services of Mr. R. Slade, the naturalist' (Gomme 1901: 134). Haddon

was the perfect choice not only because he was a renowned anthropologist, but given his zoological background, he could also advise on the natural history collections. When 'Dr. Haddon expressed his willingness to accept the post of advisory curator of the Museum', he put forward a proposal to rearrange the whole museum under the three chief categories of anthropology, art and history 'with the object of supplying the only place in London where education from the objective be obtained' (Gomme 1902: 151–152). The long-lasting impact of the 'Haddon Years' had begun.

Haddon took the lead in the 'scientific' rearrangement of the Museum with great fervour. Each year a different section of the ethnological collections was organised in line with an evolutionary schema. For instance, the 1904 Annual Report acknowledges how 'progress has been made in the arrangement of certain parts of the collection, chiefly in connection with art of existing primitive races' (Gomme 1905: 6) with a special case being erected on the 'Evolution of Art'. The meaning of these rearrangements in the context of the evolutionary and educational ideas of the day has already been subject to attention (see Levell 2001). Although ideas of social evolution undoubtedly governed many of Haddon's decisions as curator, overemphasis on these results in the neglect of the more intimate aspects of Haddon's influence. Shelton (2001: 12) recognises this preoccupation with systems of collecting as 'the museum's attempt to banish the personality of the passionate collector'. Haddon was not a slave to the evolutionary system and was aware of the multiple ways in which artefacts could be successfully displayed, as is clear from the following statement:

> The main object of collections of this nature is to illustrate the past and present culture of man, in other words to show that the things he makes or has made for utilitarian and non-utilitarian purposes. The objects themselves may be regarded from points of view of space and time. Specimens may be collected from all parts of the world and these may be arranged according to countries and peoples, as is the case with the collections in the Ethnographic Department of the British Museum, or they may be classified according to subject in order to illustrate the geographical distribution and local varieties of that class of object; or they may be arranged to demonstrate their evolution, as is well done in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford (Haddon 1904: 10).

Haddon also assumed control over the acquisition budgets. At each subcommittee meeting objects were 'offered for presentation' and 'for sale' and the 'specimens purchased at auctions' were reported to the council. An analysis of hundreds of these meetings shows that without exception the council agreed with Haddon's recommendations. Being in financial control of acquisitions did not come easy to Haddon; he was well known for his philosophical attitude towards money (see Quiggin 1942: 113). When first appointed, he was given 'an expenditure of a sum of money not exceeding £10, between any two ordinary meetings of the committee, on the purchase of any articles which he may consider necessary for adding to the collection at the Museum, or if any illustrations and maps etc. which may be needed' (Gomme 1902 (14th Feb): 2). By the end of 1902, it was already obvious that Haddon was overenthusiastic with the committee's finances. By December of that same year the council called for the 'attention of Dr. Haddon. . .to the fact that he has again exceeded the amount of £10 which he was to spend on emergency' (Gomme 1902 (5th Dec): 128). This overspending did not cease, and eventually

a motion was passed in the council on 22 January 1904 stating that 'the advisory curator be asked to indicate briefly in all further cases his reasons for suggesting the purchase of objects', a task he had to follow throughout his tenure at the Museum.

Haddon's influence and control over museum policies also extended into issues of staffing. A strained relationship developed between Haddon and resident curator Richard Quick, whom Haddon viewed as an 'old school' curator because he was primarily interested in the aesthetics of art and artefacts, whereas Haddon was 'scientifically' informed. On 18 December 1903, Gomme reported to the subcommittee that Haddon 'has been continually hampered by the incapability of Mr Quick to grasp the underlying plan of such arrangement' (Gomme 1903: 1). It was decided 'that the only possible course for the Committee to take is to make a change in the post of resident curator' (Gomme 1903: 1). In September 1904, Haddon recommended Herbert Spenser Harrison as the new resident curator, a post he was to occupy for no less than 37 years. Haddon and Harrison were associates, having first met at the University College of Cardiff where Harrison lectured in biology. Harrison had also converted from zoology to anthropology, shared an evolutionary outlook, and therefore ascribed to Haddon's vision and transformation of the Museum. Whilst Haddon's passion for acquiring artefacts may have burned holes in the council's pockets, the same passion dramatically transformed the Museum and improved the quality of collections housed there forever.

Equally important was Haddon's relationships with colleagues outside of the Museum. Between 1906 and 1915, there was a significant increase in donations of British New Guinea and Torres Strait material to the Museum. Haddon's reputation was so well established that he was frequently offered objects as loans/donations. For example, Ethel Simmons wrote to him on February 19, 1906, stating how 'having heard of your interest in ethnography, particularly in connection with the Pacific, I am writing to know if you would care to have the loan of some curios I have. These are 2 Dancing masks, fish rods, war drum, spears and bows all from the Elema Country in the Gulf of Papua'. Indeed, 30% of all acquisitions from British New Guinea and the Torres Strait during Haddon's tenure were presented to him, largely from his professional colleagues. James Edge-Partington gave a number of items from New Ireland and the Trobriand Islands to the Museum. Dr. Gunnar Landtman donated a group of material that included a panpipe, flute, stringed instrument and two wooden initiation figures from Kiwai in Papua New Guinea. In 1906, following the Cooke-Daniels expedition, C.G. Seligman presented a lot of 54 objects from different areas throughout the Papuan Gulf to Haddon for inclusion in the Horniman displays.

Focusing on the nature of Haddon's relationships and interactions with his colleagues provides an appreciation of the parameters in which he was working and the relationships that enabled or restricted acquisitions. Whilst slightly restricted by finances, Haddon had significant authority over what objects were acquired and what objects were rejected by the Museum. Haddon's relationships with professional colleagues left as many 'traces' in the shaping of the collections at the Horniman as any other interactions during the process of objects moving from the field to the Museum.

Acquiring at the Auction Houses

Frederick Horniman's original collection of 217 New Guinean objects that Haddon inherited were *all* purchased from auction houses, the majority originating from Stevens Auction Rooms (Covent Garden, London). Between 1902 and 1915, Haddon acquired 504 objects from British New Guinea and the Torres Strait. My analysis found that only 116 objects were acquired from auction houses, representing a 75% drop in reliance on these sources since Horniman's time. This can be explained by the lack of detailed information normally associated with objects from auction houses and dealers.

Haddon was very ethical and precise about the provenance of the artefacts he collected during fieldwork. His concept of local 'intensive study' and analysis of local styles and art forms convinced him that accurate provenances were essential (Haddon 1894, 1895). He once remarked how 'I value the information I have gathered concerning the things as being of more value. There is no merit in mere collecting' (Haddon 1888–1889: 24). The three lots of his own material that he sold and donated to the Horniman Museum in 1906, 1912 and 1915 were extremely well documented. The first lot that he donated in 1906 (6.300–6.317) were mostly duplicates from the 1898 expedition. Given the fact that he had to hand over the majority of this collection to the Cambridge museum where he had no control over its fate at this time, these duplicate items must have been precious to him. In 1912, when he sold 50 artefacts to the Museum, the majority of which were from Murray Island, he made a comprehensive list of each artefact and handwrote labels detailing object function and local names. The final lot of artefacts that Haddon donated to the Museum in 1915 (15.129–130, 15.174–15.182) derived from the Percy Sladen Expedition of 1914, his final expedition to New Guinea and the Torres Strait.

Whilst it was easier to control documentation of his own collections, maintaining such high standards in his role as museum curator must have come as a challenge. Museums depended so much on secondary (other collectors) and tertiary sources (auction houses/dealers) for their acquisitions that accurate provenances were not always easily deduced. Out of the total 116 objects purchased by Haddon at auction houses, 97 of these were purchased between 1904 and 1905. This period of bulk buying was very deliberate since it was the period when the Museum was undergoing 'very considerable re-arrangements' (Gomme 1905: 6), being transformed from a cabinet of curiosities to a museum that would 'illustrate the evolution of culture' and 'help to supply one of the educational needs of London' (Gomme 1904: 10). In 1904, Haddon purchased 64 objects from the W. D. Webster collection at Stevens' Auction Rooms. In 1905, he also acquired lots from William Oldman, (5.2–5.11) 'whose collection of Oceanic and especially Polynesian art was rivalled only by size and quality by the British Museum' (Anon 1949: 1) and from F. Smith, a dealer in ethnographic objects in London.

An analysis of artefacts purchased by Haddon in 1904 and 1905 reveals some interesting patterns (see Fig. 14.3). The significant amount of weaponry purchased was evidently acquired for the new 'Stone Implements' section and the section on 'War and Chase' set up in 1905, where weapons were displayed 'as far as possible,

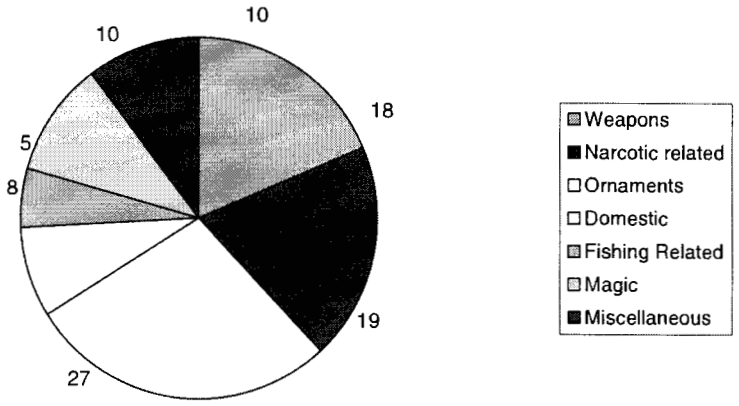

Fig. 14.3 Number of British New Guinea and Torres Strait objects acquired by Haddon from auction houses and dealers, 1904–1905 (data obtained with kind permission of The Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust)

in the order in which it is probable that they were first invented or employed' (Gomme 1906: 7). The narcotic items were purchased to be displayed in the 'Evolution of Art' case set up by Haddon in 1904, which included a large number of bamboo smoking pipes from British New Guinea. There were 20 bamboo smoking pipes from 'New Guinea' in Horniman's original collection, and Haddon continued to add to this. It is interesting to note that 4 out of the 5 Kiwai pipes he purchased in 1904 from the Webster collection (4.169–4.173; Fig. 14.4) were described as being 'unused, with no bowl' but as having 'burnt decoration'. Although Haddon usually preferred used items, these particular artefacts were purchased specifically to illustrate their geometric design rather than their function. Haddon, like Henry Balfour (Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; see Wingfield Chapter 5), rejected aesthetics as a

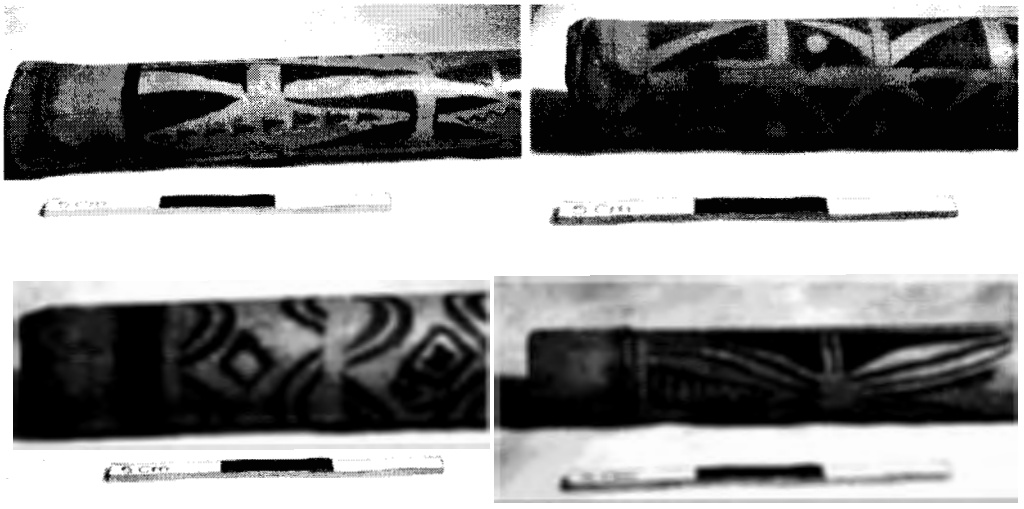

Fig. 14.4 Selection of Kiwai tobacco pipes purchased by Haddon in 1904 from the Webster collection at Steven's Auction Rooms, showing a variety of geometric designs (Courtesy of The Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust)

reason for acquiring objects. Instead his 'purpose' was to study art from a biological point of view, by comparing the 'lifelines' of different designs and 'the linear development of ornament from naturalistic to geometric and abstract' (Coombes 1994: 49; see Levell 2001). Another lot of artefacts bought for their design qualities were bark belts from British New Guinea (4.148–4.152), about which Haddon (1895: 32) notes that 'there is a wonderful diversity of pattern in these belts, yet, at the same time, there is a fundamental similarity in the style of the designs which clearly indicates a community of origin.' The pipes and bark belts served to highlight geometric patterns or what Haddon interpreted as the 'middle phase' in the evolution of design.

While 'discriminate acquisition by purchase or gift' (Gomme 1914: 6) continued throughout Haddon's time at the Museum, it is the early period of 1904–1905 that such discriminative acquisition is most obvious. Haddon usurped the auction house as an easy way to acquire objects to 'fill the gaps' in his transformation of the Museum (see Fig. 14.5). It is important to stress that Haddon was visiting the auction house as an expert; he had held, bought, analysed and wrote about the vast majority of British New Guinea and Torres Strait material under the hammer. Just as Stocking (1983: 75) pointed out how Haddon, 'as an academic man with field experience in ethnography was a rarity in British anthropology', it can be equally acknowledged that a man of Haddon's standing was even more of rarity in the London auction houses of the day. Although his acquisition policies were largely being governed by the system he was enforcing, his personal idiosyncrasies and ideas about material culture and memories of time spent in the Torres Strait and British New Guinea

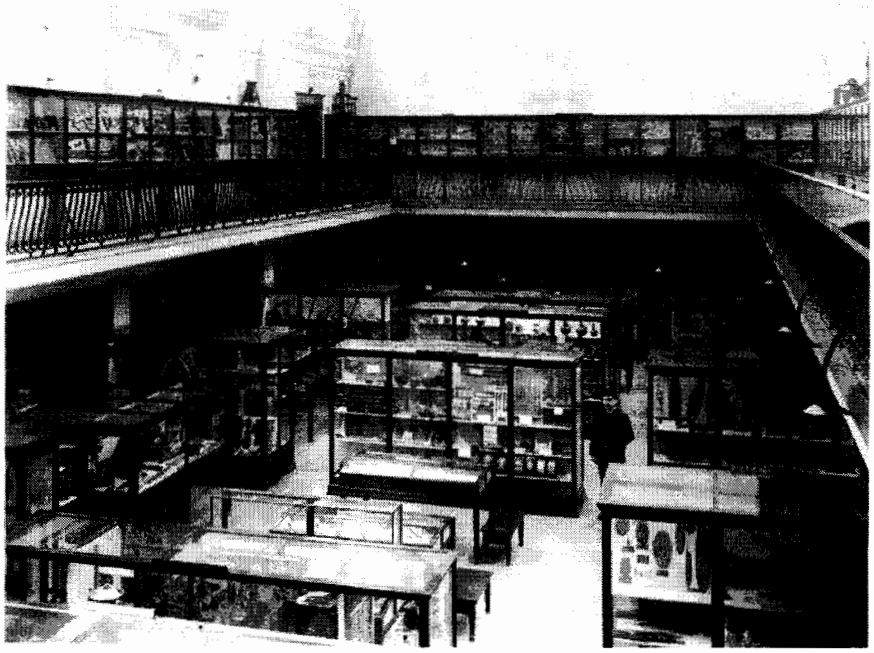

Fig. 14.5 View of the Horniman Galleries during Haddon's tenure (Courtesy of The Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust)

influenced his choice of objects. Buying from auction houses is likely to have compromised many of Haddon's collecting ideals and concerns over the authenticity of objects. But as his 'leading motive [was] to convert a somewhat heterogeneous collection into one which will be of service to students of all ages' (Haddon, Harrison and Gomme 1912: 11), it meant that he had to acquire artefacts quickly from these less 'reputable' sources. Juxtaposing Haddon's ideals as collector and his practical duties as museum curator allows us to uncover some of the inherent tensions he may have experienced in these different roles. It also reveals that Haddon's relationships with the objects themselves were flexible and depended on the social circumstances in which he found himself. Latour's actor-network theory also recognises this inherent fluidity in the relationship between people and things. He writes that 'continuity of any course of action will rarely consist of human-human connections' or of 'object-object connections, but will probably zigzag form one to the other' (Latour 2005: 75). This is particularly true in relation to a curator, who needs to strike a delicate balance between his/her various curatorial needs whilst all the time making sure to uphold the relationships that facilitated them.

Relationship with Missionaries

Haddon displayed a mixed attitude towards missionaries. On the one hand, he was critical of their impact on local custom and culture. For example, in 1888 on a visit to Saibai island, Haddon (1888–1889: 84) lamented how 'civilisation has taken away their manly enterprises- *viz.* fighting- the missionaries have abolished their dances and their feasts.' Yet, during both expeditions Haddon relied heavily on missionaries as 'provisioners, brokers, translators and important sources of local knowledge' (Herle and Rouse 1998: 13). In particular he formed close relationships with Rev. James Chalmers (*Tamate*) in New Guinea and Rev. S. McFarlane in the Torres Strait. It is alleged that he was even converted to anthropology by a missionary, one Rev. W. W. Gill. The *General Ethnography* section of his expedition reports demonstrates his dependency on missionaries. It is largely a compendium of local knowledge, folklore and information derived from his contact with missionaries, who like him conversed with the locals in broken pidgin.

Haddon's twofold attitude to missionaries influenced his acquisition policy at the Horniman Museum. In June 1902, Rev. Wilfred H. Abbott wrote to Haddon introducing himself as 'the first white settler in the Collingwood Bay District, North East Coast,' where 'my people are still cannibals and are still in the Stone Age using flint and bone implements' (Abbott 1902a: 1). Abbott sent some specimens for Haddon's review, which he then recommended the council to purchase. Analysis of this group of material and its associated documentation reveals some important insights into Haddon's personality as museum curator and relationship with missionaries. The group of objects included a collection of 'primitive' tools in the form of four greenstone adzes (3.63–3.66), three kangaroo jaws used as chisels (3.58), a wooden gardening hoe (3.59), a wooden rasp wrapped in fish skin (3.57), a stone axe

What's of interest is that Abbott had collected such a wide range of stuff without advice

(3.51), a piece of worked obsidian that was used for shaving and cutting hair and two obsidian flakes (3.69 & 3.55). There was a small collection of fishing equipment, which included two netting needles (3.68 & 3.61) and a few pieces of turtle shell also used in netting (3.67), as well as a number of domestic items such as a sago spoon and pounder (3.52 & 3.53). Other items included shell money (3.54), a women's mourning necklace (3.56), two boar's tusks (3.60) and four shells (3.62).

The acquisition of the Abbott collection took over six months to finalise because of Haddon's suspicions of certain artefacts.

(a) Is this really shell money? I meant cowries worn on the forearm, this specimen has been newly mounted, have you got an original mounting?
(b) The handle, at all events, if it is a sago beater looks quite new, has it ever been used?
(c) Have any of the white cowries ever been used? Or are they merely examples?

> The large axe-blade which is separate looks as if it had been recently rubbed at its edge – the string looks very suspicious. The shell necklaces being un-mounted are useless museum specimens (Haddon 1902:1).

Throughout Haddon's expeditions he became very familiar with local materials and frequently lamented the introduction of European ones. Once during a visit to Warrior Island in 1888, he wrote how he regarded the '"decently clothed" – the women with long calico gowns' as 'a most disappointing sight' (Haddon 1888–1889: 13). During dugong fishing on Thursday Island local fishermen informed him that 'homemade rope is preferred to commercial rope as it is light and floats on the surface of the water whereas hempen or manila rope sinks' (Haddon 1888–1889: 53). Therefore, it is not surprising that Haddon is suspicious of the newly mounted shell money. Despite Abbott's repeated assurance that 'the shells, the necklace I sent you was not remade up for me. I don't know the string used, further it has undoubtedly been worn' (Abbott 1902b: 1), and his observation that the locals 'are continually making and remaking their ornament' and that 'they like the new fibre as much as I do' (1902b: 1), Haddon remained unconvinced and requested specimens be 'made up with old string.'

It is not clear when the distaste for collecting hybrid objects was first articulated in anthropology, but Haddon may well be one of the earliest collectors to be so vocal about it. Other collectors such as Rev. George Brown, a Methodist minister based in New Britain from 1860 to 1917, were also conscious of attaining 'untainted' specimens (see Gardner 2001: 48). Rejection of hybrid artefacts became an important collecting criterion in the Pacific for many decades to come. Some thirty years later Beatrice Blackwood (1935: 1) was to reject a model boat offered to her on Buka Island because 'it had European paint on it.'

Haddon was also suspicious that certain objects from the Abbott collection had been specifically manufactured for sale, but he was duly rebuked by him.

> The large axe blade has not been recently rubbed at the edges as far as I know. I am rather amused at this. My natives only saw a white man for about three months in a year. I have never known them to sell a stone axe to anyone except me. I don't think it would be worth their while to fake up a stone axe, they get the stone from the Hill Tribes, they don't make

> them themselves. However I will send another axe blade instead, that I see has been broken with use. I mean the edge (Abbot 1902b: 2).

Given that Haddon prided himself in his reputation as a scientific collector, it is not surprising that the possibility of acquiring forgeries worried him; indeed, he was not alone. Between 1880 and 1900 the Australian Museum specifically set aside a special category for 'fakes' from Oceania (Philp 2003). An equally concerned colleague, James Edge-Partington (1901: 69) noted that 'at a recent sale the most obvious forgeries from New Guinea were offered and eagerly bought'.

> I use the term 'forgery' for want of a better; the specimens are of genuine native manufacture, and display in details of art and manufacture, the characteristics of the locality whence they come. At the same time they are of no practical use in themselves; their existence, which they owe ultimately to the development of civilised trades, is in fact illogical, except as a means to obtain for their makers certain coveted articles of European manufacture. In a word they are not what they pretend to be' (Edge-Partington 1905: 72).

That Haddon's concept of 'forgeries' was very much in line with Edge-Partington probably relates directly to his own prior experiences of locals trying to sell him 'fake' artefacts. One such incident happened on Kiwai Island on the 4 June, 1898.

> The Motu people especially the women are such keen traders that they condescend to forge 'curios'. Some of the coral they brought had never been used – as there were no signs of friction on the surface – this I pointed out to them, later and then the next morning the same pieces of coral were again to appear for sale but in the meantime they had rubbed on something or other, but it was easy to detect this and they only smiled when I told them what they had done. They will often pick up casual stones and try and pass them off as objects in use and as something 'very good' (Haddon 1898: 156).

What is important here is that Haddon's concept of 'authentic' objects, his rejection of hybrid artefacts and his awareness of the deliberate manufacture of objects for sale, all influenced not only his field collecting but also the type and 'quality' of artefact he acquired for the Horniman Museum. It was in Haddon's relationship with missionaries, in particular, that such concerns were played out. The agency of the missionaries, mediated by Haddon, also left specific traces behind that impacted on the formation of the collections.

Another characteristic of Haddon's collecting policies, which is linked both to his relationship with missionaries and source communities, was his desire to obtain what he deemed as the most 'primitive' artefacts. Haddon's definition of a 'primitive' object centred either on the technology involved in producing the artefact or the material used in its manufacture. These objects were useful to him, given that they could be slotted into the earlier phases of the Museum's evolutionary displays. Haddon was also committed to collecting these kinds of objects before they fell out of use. The correlation of 'primitive' material with 'primitive' artefact also influenced how the displays were arranged. For example, in describing 'spoons from all countries,' Haddon (1904: 21) insinuates that the most primitive ones were from Oceania because they were made from coconut and scallop shells. He accumulated a large number of these 'primitive' vessels: some 30 odd spoons; gourds; vessels and food bowls made from coconut and a number made from shell. He also acquired

a large number of stone artefacts such as stone clubs, daggers, boring drills, axes, adzes, etc., as well as some wooden implements including bark beaters, arrows, flat clubs, pounders, etc. Objects made from even less 'civilised' materials were also accumulated: for example, kangaroo jaw chisels (3.58); bat bone needles (3.61); rasps with shark skin (5.10, 8.307, 8.308, 9.173); shell and coral-bladed hoes; axes; adzes; clubs; knives and spoons (6.138, 6.405, 6.417, 12.130–12.133, 12.172). The commitment Haddon had towards retrieving and salvaging such artefacts is nicely demonstrated by an incident that occurred on Kiwai Island (September 15, 1898).

> Then by dumb show and broken English I asked for a shell-hoe. I feared these were out of use but was overjoyed when one was brought to me for which I gave a fish hook. In a very short time I had half a dozen on the same terms. Hardly anything else during the whole trip pleased me more than to secure some specimens of this very rare and primitive agricultural implement especially as I had give up hope of obtaining it (Haddon 1898: 225).

The fact that such an incident pleased him more than 'hardly anything else during the whole trip' indicates how his passion for collecting endangered artefacts took precedence over everything else. This urgent 'salvage' paradigm was a central concern within nineteenth century anthropology more broadly. As Gruber (1970: 1294) points out, 'the vanishing savage was a constant theme. And out of an amalgam of moral and scientific concerns, an emergent anthropology- whether its focus was on the group or on the species – found a method and a role.'

Conclusion

By considering a number of *trials* that influenced Alfred Cort Haddon's tenure as museum curator with the Horniman Museum and the *traces* these experiences and relationships left behind, I have traced his agency from the field to the museum. Haddon's experiences in the field were particularly formative and greatly influenced his views on material culture and authenticity, which subsequently propelled his desire to collect objects of high quality for the displays at the Horniman Museum. His field experiences also instilled in him certain ferocity of commitment towards the preservation of traditional culture, which meant his relationships with colleagues who did not share his vision were oftentimes strained. Yet Haddon was highly respected, and many colleagues regularly donated objects to him for exhibits at the Museum. His relationship with auction houses was essentially uneasy, but he seemed to take a pragmatic stance, recognising the importance of these places as important sources of objects needed for the creation of his vision. Haddon largely lamented the impact of missionaries, building close relationships with some whilst being distrustful of others. The many influences that impacted on Haddon's day-to-day decision making whilst at the Museum epitomises Latour's (2005: 46) notion of agent as not necessarily the source of action 'but the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming toward it'. Yet it is these subtle and somewhat fleeting interactions that have lasted, permanently materialised in the collections we see today.

Susan Pearce's (1995: 1) point that 'objects embody human purposes and experiences, and they invite us to act towards them' invites us to find methodologies in which such purpose can be unpacked. Following Haddon's agency in relation to the Torres Strait and British New Guinea collections at the Horniman Museum is but one actor-network; an understanding of this collection can be built upon further by following other trajectories and other actors to see where they might lead us.

Acknowledgements I thank the Horniman Museum and in particular Dr. Fiona Kerlouge for providing me with access to the collections and giving me permission me to use both historic and object photographs in this chapter. I would also like to thank Dr. Bill Sillar and Dr. Nick Merriman who read an earlier version of this chapter and provided useful comments and feedback. I would also like to thank Annie Clarke, Robin Torrence and Rodney Harrison and other WAC participants for their helpful comments on this draft.

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