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# Aboriginal Material Culture in Australian Museums

*The origin of Aboriginal collections in Australia and overseas has recently become the subject of numerous studies. Colonial museums have become intricately linked to the colonial practices of dispossession and appropriation, and museum interpretations of indigenous peoples' history have been brought under scrutiny. This paper explores the tradition of collecting, classifying, documenting, storing, displaying and protecting Aboriginal material culture in Australian museums and other institutions. This tradition, developed from the nineteenth century colonial discourse, represents ongoing challenges for curators and Aboriginal communities alike. As meeting places of European and indigenous cultures, museums remain important landmarks in the history of indigenous peoples and cultural institutionalism.*

Key words: museum collections, Aboriginals (Australia), colonial museums, museum ethics, museum praxis, acquisition of museum materials, documenting of collections, classifying of collections,

## Introduction

In the survey and subsequent analysis of Aboriginal artefacts deposited in Australian museums, one comes to the inevitable conclusion that what today exists in their repositories and on occasional displays, is a mere (and meagre) reflection of very few aspects of Aboriginal everyday life and spirituality. The reasons for this are numerous, and in this paper I shall examine some of the more obvious.

The process of uncovering Aboriginal material culture in Australian institutions is a tedious task. Concentrating on the material culture of one Aboriginal group makes it even more challenging, as Aboriginal cultural remains are often scattered throughout the continent and require extensive periods of travel to collect and analyze the data. Museum research was only one component of my project which focused on the traditions of a single Aboriginal group (the Gamaroi) from northern New South Wales.<sup>1</sup> While this fact limited the extent and scope of my research, its results are applicable to Aboriginal Australia in general. There is no Aboriginal community which, at some point in time, did not experience some form of cultural genocide. The practice of collecting played a crucial role in the process. In this paper, I explore the methods of acquisition, classification, documentation, storage and display of Aboriginal material that contributed to the cultural dispossession of Aboriginal people.

## Unveiling the dust

Prior to the twentieth century the general practice of Australian museums was to send some of the obtained Aboriginal artefacts to British and other European museums, either as a matter of courtesy or a token of good will towards the British Crown or in exchange for other items as indicated in Carol Cooper's report *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections in Overseas Museums*.<sup>2</sup> My research, however, concentrated on the contents of Australian state museums, university museums, and some of the local Aboriginal museums, galleries and keeping places in south-east Australia.

The information on the number, type, condition and public/research accessibility of Aboriginal artefacts in Australian museums was gathered in Melbourne (July 1997), during the research trips to Sydney (May-June 1997, September 1998, December 1999), Canberra (August 1997), Adelaide (April-May 1998) and Brisbane (October 1998), during the field trip to northern New South Wales (July-September 1999) and, to a lesser extent, through correspondence and from the media, including the Internet. The situation described may change in the years to come, due to, among other factors, the fact that some of these institutions were (and still are) in a delicate process of ongoing negotiation with Aboriginal communities, in particular regarding the repatriation of culturally sensitive material. Often it was written material that directed my search, especially that published from the 1850s to the 1920s, that is, during the period of double significance for the preservation of culture of most

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<sup>1</sup> The project was undertaken as the major requirement of my doctoral degree at the University of Melbourne, from February 1997 to October 2001. The other two areas of my investigation were historical records and Gamaroi oral histories.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, C. (1989) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections in Overseas Museums*, The Institute Report Series, Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press for Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Aboriginal groups of inland New South Wales and Queensland. Firstly, the beginning of this period was the time immediately after the invasion, during which the local Aboriginal groups still (and I would say considerably) maintained their traditional identity, which ensured that the main body of their knowledge was still greatly intact. Secondly, this situation enabled, and indeed inspired, a number of amateur and later professional anthropologists (or, more suitably for that time, ethnologists), to broaden and modify the existing speculations and beliefs of their contemporaries, including the public at large, about the Australian "noble savages". As an increasing number of individuals roamed the extensive plains of inland Australia in search of the knowledge and material objects of, what was a general belief at the time, the "fast dying-out Aborigines", Australian museums' directors and curators delighted at the prospects of enriching their collections with the presumably last remnants of a culture "on the verge of extinction".<sup>3</sup> This situation was actually very likely to contribute to the further, this time also culturally legitimized, eradication of the sacred Aboriginal lore. On the one hand, it encouraged Europeans to go to the area and obtain, we may surmise often under questionable circumstances, Aboriginal groups' objects used in everyday life and on particular ceremonial occasions, while, on the other hand, it gradually discouraged Aboriginal people from manufacturing objects such as shields and boomerangs only for their own uses, and instead encouraged them to produce objects with the characteristics appealing to the European "audiences". This is why on some objects from that period one can discover a whole range of patterns, e.g. incised hearts, flowers and other non-Aboriginal motifs, obviously incorporated within an Aboriginal functional object, and thus made into an Aboriginal work of art with the intention of exchange or sale.

While Australian cultural policies and institutions of the time that either openly or implicitly acquiesced in the cultural rape and plunder of Aboriginal people were in no way legitimate although legitimized and legally sanctioned, one cannot, however, ignore the fact that Aboriginal people, either by lack of awareness or silence, contributed to the ultimate tragic consequences. There is no doubt that, in some, although probably rather rare cases, Aboriginal people did profit (at least economically) from European interest in their culture. As numerous post-contact experiences suggest, barter or trade normally come into being when two different cultures meet.<sup>4</sup> Whether it is an exchange of native weapons for tobacco or glass beads or for money is irrelevant as long as both parties are satisfied (although the extent of such contracts was often not clarified).

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, Aboriginal people have been "on the verge of extinction" for such a long time that it should surprise us that there are any around at present, some still maintaining traditional practices. For a more detailed discussion of the historical discourse that created and propagated this view, see Chapter V in Kovačić, L. (2001) *Cataloguing culture: In search of the origins of written records, material culture and oral histories of the Gamaroi, northern New South Wales*, unpublished PhD thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

<sup>4</sup> The significance of barter between indigenous people and their colonizers has been discussed at length by Humphrey, C. & Hugh-Jones, S. (1992) Introduction, in: Humphrey, C.

The reason why this has been overlooked by most researchers even today is the fact that the atrocities and massacres committed by European arrivals (both individuals and institutions) towards Aboriginal people greatly superseded such, not so significant (though by no means insignificant) details. In Europe and its colonial territories, the nineteenth century saw a rise of physical anthropology which required "fresh" research material in the form of human skulls, bones, and other osteological items. "Body-snatching" soon became the most brutal (and most lucrative) form of museum "trade". It was a common nineteenth century method of supplying overseas and colonial museums with Aboriginal osteological material, the evidence of which is still palpable in most such institutions.<sup>5</sup>

## New owners, new positions

The Aboriginal collections in Australian federal and state museums can be roughly subdivided into two areas: the so-called traditional objects acquired in the early colonial period, and the objects acquired in the postcolonial era. The former were manufactured before or immediately after colonization, and include boomerangs, clubs, hatchets, shields, spears, children's toys, dilly bags, carved and scarred trees, mourning caps, canoes, etc., as well as the various archaeological material and items given to Aboriginal people by colonial authorities, such as breastplates or gorgets.<sup>6</sup> The lat-

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& Hugh-Jones, S. (eds) *Barter, Exchange and Value: An Anthropological Approach*, pp. 1-20, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. The two-way nature of barter is explained as follows: "Essentially the exchange in barter is determined by the interest which each side has in the object of the other, an interest which is satisfied by the transaction."; *ibid.*, p. 7. In *Politicised values: The cultural dynamics of peripheral exchange*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 21-41, Nicholas Thomas relates the numerous accounts of exchange between the Polynesians, the Inuit and the Pacific Islanders, and the Western new-comers. The transactions were essentially based on inequality: "Here, the indigenous people almost immediately recognise their technological inferiority and form great and insatiable desires for European goods."; *ibid.*, p. 22. In *Yesterday's luxuries, tomorrow's necessities: Business and barter in Northwest Amazonia*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 42-74, Stephen Hugh-Jones shows the impact of European goods on the peoples of Amazonia, and similarly points to the appeal of those goods and their role in the indigenous people's lives: "Western goods provided new and increased opportunities for both technological and symbolic innovation."; *ibid.*, p. 59. In his book *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope* (1994), Melbourne, Oxford University Press, p. 240, John Harris briefly mentions "gross exploitation by settlers" spurred by "the temporary delusion held by Aboriginal people that European items were extremely desirable wealth. ...Confronted with what must have seemed unbelievable wealth, there were Aboriginal men who were willing to barter the use of women for European goods."

<sup>5</sup> As discussed by Monaghan, D. (1991) *The body snatchers*, in: *Bulletin*, pp. 30-8, and Turnbull, P. (1991) *Science, National Identity and Aboriginal Body-Snatching in Nineteenth Century Australia*, London, Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London.

<sup>6</sup> Brass breastplates were often given to the Aboriginal people who acted as mediators between colonial authorities and local Aboriginal populations. A typical breastplate contains

ter were obtained from Aboriginal communities in the past fifty-odd years, and usually represent weapons, (children's) drawings and art inspired by traditional designs and methods of manufacture. My research interest lay primarily in identifying the origins and the current status of the first group of objects.

All Aboriginal material also falls into one of the four categories: ethnographic, archaeological, "secret/sacred" and osteological collections. While the first two groups are open to the public, access to the "secret/sacred" and osteological collections is restricted to varying degrees. This division of Aboriginal material into so-called secular (that is, non-restricted) and so-called secret/sacred (and therefore restricted) material has gained prominence in the last decade. The former includes the majority of items used in everyday life, while the latter comprises private and ceremonial objects such as churingas, bullroarers and carved trees.<sup>7</sup>

There are three categories of restricted (including "secret/sacred") objects with regard to who and under what conditions can view them. The first category of objects (e.g. carved trees) can be viewed by Aboriginal people in general as well as by non-Aboriginal people who obtained special permission from the relevant Aboriginal community (including museum staff). The objects falling into the second category (e.g. human skeletal remains) cannot be viewed by anyone except Aboriginal people directly related to them and the relevant museum staff. Finally, the third group of objects consists of items such as churingas which were traditionally accessible only to the selected few (e.g. fully initiated men/women, or "clever men/women"), and there are either no living members of the community to look after such material, or the community has given the right of permanent custody over such material to the museum in question; these objects have been permanently sealed and cannot be viewed by anyone at all, not even by the museum director.

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an inscription "King (or Queen) of [such and such a place]" and the stereotypical images of kangaroo and emu, today official emblems of Australia. Breastplates are discussed as shameful colonial representations of Aboriginality by both scholars and Aboriginal intelligentsia. See, for instance, Cleary, T. (c.1993) *Poignant Regalia: 19th Century Aboriginal Breastplates and Images: A catalogue of Aboriginal breastplates held in public, regional and private collections in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian National Territory*, Glebe, NSW, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, and Healy, C. (2001) *Chained to their signs: Remembering breastplates*, in: Creed, B. & Hoorn, J. (eds) *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, pp. 24-35, Routledge in association with Pluto Press & University of Otago Press.

<sup>7</sup> Carved trees or dendroglyphs are objects unique to the Aboriginal nations of Wiradjuri and Gamaroi, central and northern New South Wales, and their immediate neighbours. Two types of dendroglyphs are distinguished: teleteglyphs (initiation trees) and taphoglyphs (burial trees). They were used for ceremonial purposes, and constitute a major group of culturally sensitive material in the state museums of south-east Australia. In the case of teleteglyphs, this is owing to the fact that their viewing was originally restricted to fully initiated men, and the breaking of this taboo resulted in a death sentence. Taphoglyphs are considered private items. Dendroglyphs can be viewed only by members of the respective Aboriginal communities or with written permission of their local Aboriginal Land Councils.

State and university museums (Fig. 1) have the largest collections of Aboriginal material, while local Aboriginal galleries and keeping places (Fig. 2) store a limited number of items, either of local origin or manufacture, or (rarely) returned to the local community by one of the state museums. At a local level, an institution such as an astronomical observatory may sometimes unexpectedly house some locally found items (Fig. 3).

The cultural institutions that hold Aboriginal artefacts also include libraries, archives, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (with its separate branches in each state) and various governmental departments. These institutions house newspapers, manuscripts and rare books, photographs, films, audio and video tapes,<sup>8</sup> and archaeological material. The branches of the National Parks and Wildlife Service are also responsible for maintaining and supervising Aboriginal sites and objects in situ. Besides these institutional sources, a significant amount of information can be obtained from (amateur) local historians, anthropologists and linguists as well as from Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and Aboriginal individuals. The latter may supply stories and oral histories, and give one permission to access significant sites and restricted material in state and local museums, and to obtain family genealogies.<sup>9</sup>

The Sound and Pictorial Collections at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra store audio-tapes and photographs, the latter of which were taken in the second half of the nineteenth century, but without sufficient (if any) details about the people they document and the exact date when they were taken. I have encountered the same situation at the New South Wales State Archives in Sydney. It is a distressing experience to flip over one microform photograph after another showing rows of Aboriginal people without personal names and cultural association as well as a number of governmental missions and reserves that contributed to this cultural dispossession. The obvious lack of attribution of photographs is also present in the Pictorial Collection at the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

State museums store skeletal remains of different Aboriginal groups, primarily with the aim of determining their background, that is, the geographical area and language association, age and conditions of the deceased reflecting the climatic, economic and other conditions of life in the area, and so on. The South Australian Museum Human Biology Division stores a considerable amount of this material.

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<sup>8</sup> The video production, although of a recent date, is nevertheless an invaluable source of information, as old Aboriginal people die and there is often no one to preserve and pass on their cultural heritage. In 1999, for instance, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service produced a documentary *Inard Oongali: Women's Journey*, the first comprehensive video on Gamaroi "women's business", featuring seven senior Gamaroi women. One of the women died several months after its release.

<sup>9</sup> The copies of the genealogies thus obtained were then sent to the people who gave me permission to view them in the first place. Other material found its way into my PhD thesis, to be used as source of reference for the communities.

The Australian Museum in Sydney stores some osteological items. The Queensland Museum has de-accessioned most of its skeletal material and repatriated it back to the communities for reburial. I did not have the opportunity to view any of this material, nor was I enthusiastic to do so. Like so called secret/sacred material, osteological material is regularly restricted in access and can be viewed only by blood-relations and the representatives of the Aboriginal community in question.

The majority of these collections, however, suffer from the same disadvantage: even where the artefacts are coming from a certain region, they are of uncertain language affiliation. This reflects the random processes of selection behind the creation of early collections responsible for the classification labels which often indicate only a wider geographical location as the provenance of the objects.

Let us now deal in a more systematic way with the basic issues which confront anyone interested in Aboriginal material in Australian cultural institutions: the acquisition of artefacts; the classification and documentation of artefacts; the storage of artefacts; and the museum policies on Aboriginal material in their collections.

## Acquisition of Artefacts

The primary objective of Australian museums, as that of any other, was to preserve Australian Aboriginal and other material objects from destruction by time, weather and "unprofessional" handling. Besides this, Australian museums also had another aim: to gather as much cultural material and as representative as possible of different origin, manufacture and, to a lesser extent, significance for the original owners, in order to create a coherent museum collection. It seems, however, that, evaluating what has been left of the original collections, Australian museums have failed in both objectives.

Firstly, the issue of preservation is today (especially in case of indigenous knowledges and cultures) a contested ground on which indigenous claims play a significant role and point to important questions, such as these: Can we call "preservation" what from today's perspective seems to have been ruthless plunder and dispossession by individuals and institutions? For instance, can (and do) the carved trees removed from the sacred Gamaroi and Wiradjuri initiation grounds in any way represent the culture that is non-existent today? Devoid of their cultural context and geographical location, can they ever be seen by either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal audiences as monuments surviving time and destruction by weather? What about the destruction inherent in the very act of their removal? This is not to mention the shameful flipping of a coin which determined the fate of some of these trees regarding their future storage under the auspices of two state museums (the then National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne and the South Australian Museum in Adelaide).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For more detail, see below.

The acquisition of Aboriginal artefacts in the early days of museums depended largely on curators' knowledge and skills, not only about the material but also about the ways in which to acquire it. As the first curators of Australian museums regularly lacked both (some of them being completely untrained in anthropology or related disciplines, a trend which continued well into the twentieth century), it would have seemed quite a miracle that Australian museums are still reputed for their Aboriginal collections had it not been for the three directors in the last decade of the nineteenth and the first three decades of the twentieth century: Sir Edward Stirling (South Australian Museum, Adelaide; 1889-1913, an honorary ethnologist 1914-1919), Robert Etheridge, Jr. (Australian Museum, Sydney; 1895-1920, pioneering work 1889-1918) and Sir W. Baldwin Spencer (Museum of Victoria, Melbourne; 1899-1928, a trustee 1895-1899).

These directors introduced far-reaching changes in museums' policies and during their era the museums under their supervision reached an amazing increase in the acquisition of Aboriginal artefacts. They also worked diligently, not only on supplying their collections with items acquired in Australia, but exchanged them with overseas museums and purchased items at international exhibitions. Many irreplaceable Aboriginal artefacts were thus shipped overseas and lost to Australia.<sup>11</sup>

Prior to this period, Australian museums suffered a low rate of acquisitions, especially so before 1853 through to 1860 and from 1860 to 1874, which reflected an overall lack of awareness and non-recognition of Aboriginal culture in Australia's newly established colonies. Museums faced an important political issue in their search for Aboriginal objects and were seriously disadvantaged by the fact that early settlers' practices more often than not conflicted with those directed towards the preservation of Aboriginal heritage: authentic Aboriginal objects were increasingly more difficult to find under the surveillance of Aborigines-hostile settlers and pastoralists.

The 342 Aboriginal specimens acquired by the Australian Museum and stored in the Garden Palace in Sydney after the 1879 International Exhibition caught fire in 1882, thus forever erasing a valuable source of knowledge for the generations to come. Within the next five years, the Museum's curator Dr E.P. Ramsey would more than triple the number of ethnological artefacts (including non-Australian) that originally existed in the collection. No attempts had been made, however, to create a museum catalogue which would list the inventory of state museums, except for Sir Baldwin Spencer's catalogue of the National Museum of Victoria (1901-1922), of which I have been able to consult only the 1918 and 1922 editions.

To sum up, the earlier acquisitions had been affected by the following issues: 1 an overall unawareness and non-recognition of Aboriginal culture(s); 2 conflicting

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<sup>11</sup> cf. McCarthy, F.D. (1982) *Anthropology in the museums of Australia*, in: McCall, G. (ed.) *Anthropology in Australia: Essays to Honour 50 Years of "Mankind"*, Sydney, Anthropological Society of NSW, pp. 24-5.



interests: curators vs settlers and pastoralists; 3 untrained curators and museum staff; and 4 non-existence of (appropriate) museum catalogues and inventory lists.

A noticeable exception to the collecting passion of museum curators were objects made and used by Aboriginal women and children who are clearly underrepresented in the collections. The main reason is the fact that the museum staff were male, Anglo-Saxon "experts" who saw nothing special or valuable in "women's business", even when they were allowed by Aboriginal people to observe the more everyday aspects of it. As Anderson and Reeves observed: "The absence of women from departments of ethnography has had long-term implications for the gender balance of Aboriginal collections. A recent survey of the Aboriginal collections of the major state and federal museums revealed that between 75% and 80% of all objects relate to the material culture of men rather than of women."<sup>12</sup>

The artefacts in today's museums' possession have been acquired in several different ways: a) on so-called "museum expeditions", gathered by the museum staff; b) by purchase, mainly from individual collectors and, to a lesser extent, from auctions; c) by exchange; d) by donation; e) unknown.

a) The term "museum expedition"<sup>13</sup>, refers to the museum staff visit to an area of, in this case, anthropological interest, and acquiring specimens from either an individual or a group of people or simply taking (sometimes literally uprooting) items considered to be valuable to science, some of which would otherwise soon perish due to age, atmospheric conditions and, only recently recognized, vandalism. In the past, this decision often rested with only an "anthropologist" or two. With the exception of most recent acquisitions, I have not encountered a single documented example of the museum staff consulting and obtaining consent of the concerned local groups or individuals prior to (or even after) the removal of either "profane" or "sacred" objects from the locality of their manufacture/existence.

In the case of Gamaroi material, the "museum expeditions" refer to the early 20th century expeditions undertaken by Robert Etheridge, Jr. and Edmund O. Milne, both curators of the Australian Museum, who supplied the Museum with some eighty carved trees by visiting old initiation and burial grounds in north central New South Wales.

The 1938-39 Harvard-Adelaide Expedition, conducted by Norman B. Tindale and Joseph B. Birdsell and documented by Tindale in his *Journal*,<sup>14</sup> cut across south, southeast and northeast Australia. During the expedition, valuable

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<sup>12</sup> Anderson, M. & Reeves, A. (1994) *Contested identities: Museums and the nation in Australia*, in: Kaplan, F. (ed.) *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': The Role of Objects in National Identity*, London & New York, Leicester University Press, p. 108.

<sup>13</sup> As employed in the computer listing of Gamaroi artefacts at the Museum of Victoria, July 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Tindale, N. B. [1938-39] *The Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, Australia, 1938-39: Journal and Notes*, MS 1, pp. 1-758, Adelaide, Division of Ethnography, South Australian Museum.

archaeological material was collected, including millstones, choppers, hammerstones, hatchet heads, adze flakes, scrapers, cylcons, shells used as food and other stone implements from north central New South Wales. Among the wealth of non-archaeological material, a water-craft (canoe) from the Macintyre River and seven canoe-wedges from Boggabilla, also on the Macintyre River, were obtained. A large number of genealogies were also collected.

In 1949 a joint "museum expedition" visited the Collymongle Bora (Gamaroi male initiation) grounds near Collarenebri, led by Norman B. Tindale of the South Australian Museum (Adelaide) and Donald Tugby of the National Museum (Melbourne) and "inspired" by Lindsay Black of the town of Leeton, NSW. These men cut down fifty-two carved trees and, after dividing them into two lots by flicking a coin, transported them to the state museums in Adelaide and Melbourne.<sup>15</sup> The Museum of Victoria Ethnographic Catalogue<sup>16</sup> lists twenty-three of these trees as having been collected by Lindsay Black, the collection date unknown. The accession date of 31 January 1950, however, points to the 1949 "museum expedition". Freda Young's article<sup>17</sup> on the removal of carved trees from the Collymongle Bora grounds states that there were fifty-two trees removed, of which twenty-five were sent to each of the two state museums and the remaining two to the Queensland Museum in Brisbane. It appears, however, that the Queensland Museum does not hold any carved trees from that location. What has happened to them and the other two from the Museum of Victoria? Have they been classified incorrectly, sent unregistered to (an)other museum/s which still keep them, destroyed in the process of adjustment to a new environment or due to handling, or did the author of this article present to the public an inconsistent or even wrong piece of information? I have not been able to find answers to any of these questions.

- b) Some museum items have been purchased from individual, independent dealers, including travellers. Again, there is no evidence to support what today can be only conjectures: Were these items exchanged for material goods, bought for money, stolen, or simply given by people who maybe recognized in pale-skinned people the spirits of their ancestors or simply well-intentioned passers-by (sometimes in quest of knowledge and/or a material proof of its existence), willing or even alert to hear Aboriginal stories? It is highly probable that they were obtained in all of these ways, depending on people and circumstances. The naturalist Charles Daley appears to be one of the few independent "professional" collectors of New South Wales items, in the sense that he probably made his living out of supplying museums with Aboriginal artefacts. The Australian Museum is the only institution which has a written record of purchase at auctions, all of a recent date.

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<sup>15</sup> A part of the proceedings was documented visually by H.R. Balfour (National Museum, Melbourne). A copy of the film existing at the South Australian Museum has, according to an officer at that museum, been sent to a local Aboriginal organisation in New South Wales.

<sup>16</sup> Computer print-out, July 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Young, F. (1949) Scientists save sacred trees..., *Australian Women's Weekly*, [pp. 20-1].

- c) There is no special record of Australian museums exchanging particular items with other Australian or overseas museums, except for the Australian Museum, Sydney. A glimpse at overseas museums' lists of artefacts from Australia reveals, however, that a huge number of Aboriginal objects must have been either exchanged for other items from overseas museums' collections, or sold to the latter.<sup>18</sup>

In a few instances, it is clear that there has been some form of exchange or transaction between some Australian museums, since items that were at some point in time listed as part of the inventory of one museum or institution suddenly appear not to be there any more, but at a different location. Such is the case with the two carved trees which were first deposited at the Australian Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, from which they were later transferred to one of the museums. Sometimes it is difficult to trace the inter-museum movements of some items.

- d) Donated items came from the private collections of individual people, who later decided to give them to museums without any costs or prices involved. Often these were members of the museum staff, usually curators or researchers. Sometimes donations were made by missionaries or travellers as well as by station owners and local people.

Sir William Macleay's collections (which included natural history specimens as well as Australian anthropological and archaeological material) were formed in the 1860s and the 1870s, and were subsequently bequeathed by Macleay to what is now known as the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney.

- e) For a number of artefacts the current curators are unable to determine acquisition details, that is, the name of the person/institution from whom or which they had been originally acquired or the date of the transaction. These bear the label "unknown" for these designations.

There are several reasons for this: the lack of adequate training, knowledge and skills of previous curators; insufficient information on and documentation of objects at the time of their acquisition; and finally, one should search for reasons outside museum institutions, related to who and how originally obtained these objects. As I already pointed out, today it is next to impossible to track down all the factors and links in the chain of the shaping of today's museums' collections.

The South Australian Museum Archaeological Collection Database neatly lists how and from whom the artefacts were acquired, although in some cases without the year of the transactions. The three volumes of the guide to the main Aboriginal collection, however, regularly lack significant acquisition details, except for the artefacts obtained during Tindale and Birdsell's 1938-39 Harvard-Adelaide Expedition.

The National Museum of Australia (Canberra) has a well-documented database of Aboriginal objects coming from New South Wales. The only drawback of this Museum's computer catalogue system, in my opinion, is the absence of an acquisition date for all but the few artefacts.

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<sup>18</sup> cf. Cooper, op.cit.

## Classification and documentation of artefacts

The main problem regarding the classification of Aboriginal artefacts is their multi-functional nature. One and the same object can have, or contextually obtain, a few if not many "different" meanings and functions. The use and significance it has (had) for an Aboriginal person of yesterday and today vary as much as the use and significance it has for the twenty-first century non-Aboriginal person. It is therefore extremely difficult to classify Aboriginal objects according to any of the factors involved.

For instance, a carved tree in its original geographical and cultural location, for a Gamaroi of the pre-invasion period, probably (for we can only speculate and conjecture about what was) had a whole range of meanings and significant practical as well as spiritual functions (Fig. 4).

Of course, all of these meanings and functions would together be incorporated into a singular holistic body of culturally important knowledge, although they might have had only a limited significance for individual members of Gamaroi society.

In the museum context, Aboriginal, and, we may well argue, any other objects, have been decontextualized (through the very act of their removal from their place of origin) and recontextualized (in the sense that, by being in a museum, they have acquired a facet of new meanings).<sup>19</sup> One should bear in mind that museums are presenting to the public a material culture in a reconstructed "traditional" context, that is, the museums' version (or rather versions as museum policies and consequently displays change) of the past and present. In addition, each and every one of the objects on a public display undergoes a process of further recontextualization by the viewer, through the viewer's perception and the pre-existing knowledge (which may or may not exist) of the "authentic" socio-historical context.

The classification of objects has a double significance for museums: it is important for the organization of both storage and documentation systems which are closely linked anyway. A "classification" implies arranging or ordering material in a certain way, according to certain parameters. It enables the museum staff to allocate to certain objects certain places in a store-room and place their descriptions under a certain file name on a computer system. There is hardly a need to mention that it is a Western concept and as such does not relate well, if it relates at all, to Aboriginal concepts of time and space.

Aboriginal artefacts have been classified by the museum staff according to basically only two parameters: first, geographical location, and second, use. In order to classify them in this way, the staff relied on additional sub-classifications according to

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Lumley, R. (1988) *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, London & New York, Routledge, and Russell, L. (1995) *(Re)presented pasts: Historical and contemporary constructions of Australian Aborigines*, unpublished PhD thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

form, style, and (sometimes) material. The more knowledge and recognition of a particular form, style and material a curator has, the more he/she is likely to classify an object correctly, especially as the geographical location parameter proves to be as unreliable as others, even though it has been selected by the museum staff as the most reliable (or at least most recognizable) one.

- 1 The classification of Aboriginal artefacts according to the geographical location where they were found is an old and well-established practice of Australian museums. There are three reasons for this:
  - a) The material obtained during the early stages of museums' development lacked sufficient documentation, especially as independent dealers were reluctant to disclose from whom they had obtained it.
  - b) As Bolton has suggested, "[d]istinctions between groups are often much harder to establish than distinctions between places: languages slide from dialect area to dialect area, groups classify themselves in different terms than do their neighbours and administrators, and change as the ordinary course of human life - marriage, death, enmity and reconciliation - modify their composition and alliances."<sup>20</sup>  
This is particularly the case with the large confederations such as Gamaroi, which consisted of a number of smaller groups, as reflected in the languages and dialects of their territory.
  - c) The person or the group that manufactured a certain object may or may not be the same person or group that uses, exchanges, sells or gives the object to the collector either at that same place or somewhere else. Frequent trading between neighbouring Aboriginal groups described by McCarthy<sup>21</sup> suggests that by no means can we today be certain that an object had been manufactured by members of a certain group rather than by those of the neighbouring one. That is why museum objects have been classified according to the place where they had been found, and not according to their place of origin.
- 2 When referring to different uses for which objects had been made, again we are dealing with Western concepts and perceptions. Aboriginal objects are regularly ascribed one of the following labels:<sup>22</sup> **weapon:** club, shield, boomerang, spear, spear-thrower... **stone implement:** axe, hatchet, cylcon...**clothing:** possum rug... **food gathering and cooking utensil:** dilly-bag, digging stick, millstone, container... **hunting/fishing implement:** canoe, fishing-net... **toy:** weet weet... **decorative item:** head ornament, necklace, breastplate... **ritual object:** carved tree, mourning cap...

<sup>20</sup> Bolton, L. (1997) A place containing many places: Museums and the use of objects to represent place in Melanesia, in: *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> McCarthy, F.D. (1939) 'Trade' in Aboriginal Australia and 'trade' relationships with Torres Strait, New Guinea and Malaya, in: *Oceania*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 405-38. Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 80-104. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 171-95.

<sup>22</sup> cf. Meehan, B. & Bona, J. (1986) *National Inventory of Aboriginal Artefacts*, Australian Museum, Sydney, Aboriginal Arts Board & Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

This division is unsatisfactory as it does not take into account a possible multi-functionality of Aboriginal objects. Some of these objects had more than one use: a spear, for example, was used as both a hunting implement and a fighting weapon.<sup>23</sup>

Bolton states that objects in museums' collections are "selected on the basis of their materiality and their portability".<sup>24</sup> This poses additional problems when it comes to storing and presenting Aboriginal objects in museums. "Materiality" implies that only objects that are tangible and can be physically handled find their way into collections; what about other forms of Aboriginal knowledge such as story-telling and spirit-dwelling? Only very recently have Australian museums become aware of these issues. Bolton mentions a meeting of Pacific museum curators in Vanuatu in July 1995, during which the participants addressed the issue of spirits inhabiting indigenous objects in museum collections and their concern about the possible repercussions regarding the curators' safety as well as their responsibility for the places thus represented.<sup>25</sup> This was clearly an attempt to deal with indigenous rather than exclusively Western concepts in the museum practice.

In recent years Australian museums have seen a number of attempts to present Aboriginal knowledges in more "Aboriginal" contexts. Tape recordings, video and interactive computer presentation are becoming increasingly popular. Yet, this creation of "Aboriginal" contexts is achieved largely by Western means: a tape-recorder, video or touch-screen rather than a real person or a group.<sup>26</sup>

"Portability" implies that only those objects that can be physically transferred from their place of origin to a museum become museum artefacts. In the case of Gamaroi material, the museum staff often downplayed this principle, notably by literally cutting down carved trees off the Bora grounds and transporting them by trucks to two state capitals.

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<sup>23</sup> In *The Traditional Mode of Production of the Australian Aborigines* (1987), North Ryde, NSW, Australia & London, UK, Angus & Robertson, p. 67, F.G.G. Rose acknowledges that "[t]he boundary between whether an instrument was used as a fighting weapon or as a hunting or collecting instrument was frequently not clearly defined."

<sup>24</sup> Bolton, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> I can recall an Aboriginal exhibition at the Australian Museum in Sydney in May-June 1997 where two tape-recorded stories told by Aboriginal people of northern New South Wales were presented to the Australian public. The recording would set off every time a visitor stepped into a designated place (the reconstruction of a cave with stencilled hand-prints). An exception to this practice is the inclusion of Aboriginal guides by the new Melbourne Museum to address visitors' questions.

## Storage of artefacts

Aboriginal artefacts in museum collections are regularly stored in four different ways:

- 1 **In the open, on long metal shelves:** medium-sized objects made of harder material and therefore not liable to easy damage, e.g. weapons and hunting implements, toys; occasionally, carved and scarred trees are also stored in this way;
- 2 **In long, flat drawers, laid upon or wrapped into large, thin sheets of paper:** small and medium-sized objects in need of more careful handling and sensitive to dust, e.g. clothing, wooden weapons;
- 3 **In smaller cardboard boxes, wrapped into several layers of thin paper:** small objects sensitive both physically and culturally, e.g. mourning caps made of gypsum, cylcons made of softer stone; sets of small objects of the same type found on the same location, e.g. archaeological material;
- 4 **In the open, in a special niche or cabin:** individual or groups of large objects of the same type, e.g. canoes; sometimes objects culturally sensitive and restricted in access, e.g. carved trees. Sometimes, these objects are bound together in a vertical position with a metal chain or placed on an individual basis within a more protective cabin in the store-room. Occasionally, they are stored horizontally on open shelves, or installed on separate stands and covered with light fabric. Only in one instance were carved trees stored in individually sized boxes, thus fully protected from both dust and repeated handling. As carved trees are considered culturally sensitive material, they are normally stored separately, in a restricted access area.

In a store-room, the shelves normally occupy a central place, with drawers and cabins occupying lateral positions. The shelves and drawers are classified and labelled according to the general provenance of the objects they store. Thus, all objects coming from north-central New South Wales and southern Queensland will be stored in one place, depending yet again on the type.

The method of storage of particular items depends largely on curators' skills, knowledge and inclinations. One and the same type of object can be stored in two (rarely more) different ways. For instance, some curators may perceive wooden weapons as environmentally-sensitive and place them into a drawer lined with paper, while others may simply store them on an open shelf.

Trying to find an Aboriginal object described in a collection catalogue on a shelf or in a drawer is often a tedious process, even for the curators themselves. The difficulty lies in the fact that all Aboriginal objects from throughout Australia are deposited in the same storage area (usually only one room for the main, publicly accessible Aboriginal collection), which is subdivided according to the type and territory, hardly ever according to a particular language group. In addition, the old-type card catalogues, such as the one that still exists at the Australian Museum in Sydney, again classify Aboriginal material according to its type, and not according to its provenance. The researcher inevitably finds him/herself spending a good few

days making notes about the objects he/she wishes to see (if possible), an additional few days (if not weeks) negotiating the time of visit to the repository with the curator responsible for that section and/or public relations and, once in the repository, spending at least another day locating the objects on the premises. Finally, the objects viewed/ photographed have to be matched with their descriptions in the catalogue, which can easily be a nerve-racking experience if researchers do not have at their disposal the actual image of the object (either a museum photograph or visual documentation from published material).

Today most museums use computer cataloguing and transfer old, typed card catalogues to the computer database. This enables the staff and researchers to access the existing (often scraps of) information faster and more efficiently, as well as to carry out a particular search according to a certain principle, such as geographical location or the collector. The Australian Museum is the only exception to the rule as it still largely operates on the old card catalogue system.

The catalogue of Aboriginal objects normally contains information on a series of details, not all of which are usually known. This information has often been extracted and compiled from a number of older records (registers and catalogues), and is (for all the aforementioned reasons) more often than not incomplete. Figure 5 shows catalogue details of Aboriginal artefacts in museum collections.<sup>27</sup>

## Museum Policies on Aboriginal Material

Following an intense debate on Aboriginal cultural heritage in Australian institutions in the 1980s and the 1990s,<sup>28</sup> museums, libraries and other repositories of Aboriginal material were compelled to take a different stand and draft new policies in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material. As museum "ownership" of indigenous objects (and knowledges) was contested by numerous scholarly studies, the new concept of *custodianship* emerged.<sup>29</sup> In the span of over twenty years, museums and other cultural institutions have produced a number of legislative documents which (re)define their position in relation to this material. Today, Australian state museums do not act as owners, but as custodians of Aboriginal objects in their

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<sup>27</sup> The list includes all categories I have encountered in museum catalogues, whereas, of course, most museums will not have all of them, or some categories may be interchangeable.

<sup>28</sup> See Attwood, B. & Arnold, J. (eds) (1992) *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, Bundoora, Vic, La Trobe University Press; Healy, C. (1994) *Histories and collecting: Museums, objects and memories*, in: Darian-Smith, K. & Hamilton, P. (eds) *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, pp. 33-54, Melbourne, Oxford University Press; McBryde, I. (ed.) (1985) *Who Owns the Past?*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press; and Rigg, V. (1994) *Curators of the colonial idea: The museum and the exhibition as agents of bourgeois ideology in 19th century NSW*, in: *Public History Review*, Vol. 3, pp. 188-203.

<sup>29</sup> See, for instance, Mulvaney, D.J. (1989) *Aboriginal Australia: Custodianship or ownership? A reflection on the National Estate*, in: *Heritage News*, Vol. 11, No. 4.



collections on behalf of Aboriginal communities. On the national level, this role of museums and other federal institutions has been regulated and sanctioned by a series of Commonwealth acts, including the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1975), the Museum of Australia Act (1980), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (1984), and the *Previous Possessions, New Obligations*<sup>30</sup> document of the Council of Australian Museums Association. Each state also has its own legislation regarding indigenous material. In addition, individual state museums have developed their own policies, consistent with the above.<sup>31</sup>

These policies have resulted in concrete changes in the museum practice. The "secret/sacred" and osteological collections are generally closed to new acquisitions, except where this is requested by Aboriginal communities. Some material has been de-accessioned and returned to communities according to approved repatriation claims. The latter involve mainly human remains.

A general dissatisfaction with the narrow, one-discipline approach to indigenous material has resulted in its giving ground to the pressures for a variety of interdisciplinary and indigenous-friendly perspectives. In the presentation of Aboriginal material, museums have recently endeavoured to promote indigenous perspectives by providing more environmentally-friendly exhibition space, employing Aboriginal staff as guides and interpreters of exhibitions, and increasingly engaging in consultation with Aboriginal communities. Independent or affiliated professionals have played an important role in advocating and furthering indigenous rights, and the guidelines of social research ethics have been extended to collection, display, management and promotion of indigenous material.<sup>32</sup> Old-fashioned museum sections such as the Pacific Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide have earned the ambiguously honorific title *museum within a museum*,<sup>33</sup> as new, postcolonial readings of multicultural spaces create new social and museum landscapes.

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<sup>30</sup> *Previous Possessions, New Obligations: A Plain English Summary of Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, [1993], North Fitzroy, Vic, Museums Australia Inc.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, the Australian Museum has developed Policies and procedures for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections and related issues, [n.d.], Sydney, Australian Museum.

<sup>32</sup> See Parrott (1990) *Legislating to protect Australia's material cultural heritage - guidelines for cultural resources professionals*, in: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 31, pp. 75-82; Stanton, J., et al. (1990) *Positions and policies of museums in Australia on human skeletal remains*, in: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 31, pp. 52-60; and Davidson, I. (1991) *Notes for a code of ethics for Australian archaeologists working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage*, in: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 32, pp. 61-63. Further information on Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property rights can be found on: <http://icip.lawnet.com.au>.

<sup>33</sup> cf. Fergie, D. (1998) *Unsettled history: Common sense, cannibalism and cultural displays*, paper presented at the Cultural Studies Association of Australia conference "Postcoloniality/Cultural Studies: Representing difference", Adelaide, University of South Australia.

Despite such far-reaching changes and negotiation with indigenous communities, museums are still (and perhaps increasingly) seen as *gatekeepers*<sup>34</sup> exercising control over indigenous material on their own terms: by restricting access to it by the self-imposed mechanisms of control, by disseminating selected information on their collections, and by reaping profits in the form of research fees and publication. Although it is state museum policy to inform Aboriginal communities about the material coming from a particular area, it appears that Aboriginal people, apart from the LALCs, are not fully aware of the existence of their material culture in museums. For most Aboriginal people the poor living conditions in rural areas and unfamiliarity with legal procedures are often enough to preclude their travelling in order to track down their family histories and other sources locked up in "big" institutions.<sup>35</sup> The local Aboriginal keeping places (Fig. 6), established and run by Aboriginal staff, sometimes as private collections with some items returned by state museums,<sup>36</sup> provide an acceptable (and often desired) alternative.

While federal and state museums and archives normally require that legal procedures be observed for accessing material or obtaining copies of photographs (sometimes at unreasonable prices), local keeping places often generously supply all the information needed, relying on moral rather than legal parameters. The investigation of the extent to which Aboriginal people are familiar with the plight of their own culture remains to be carried out in further research. Only a few have thus far lifted the veil of dust and neglect fallen over the Aboriginal material in almost two hundred years of hidden and silenced history.

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<sup>34</sup> cf. Gostin, O. (1995) *Accessing the Dreaming: Heritage, Conservation and Tourism at Mungo National Park*, Adelaide, University of South Australia, p. 107.

<sup>35</sup> See, for instance, Fourmile, H. (1989) *Who owns the past? Aborigines as captives of the archives*, in: *Aboriginal History*, Vol. 13, Pt 1, pp. 1-8, Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. the Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum, and the "Goondee" Aboriginal Keeping Place in Lightning Ridge, run by Roy and June Barker. The latter has a collection of archaeological objects repatriated by the Australian Museum.

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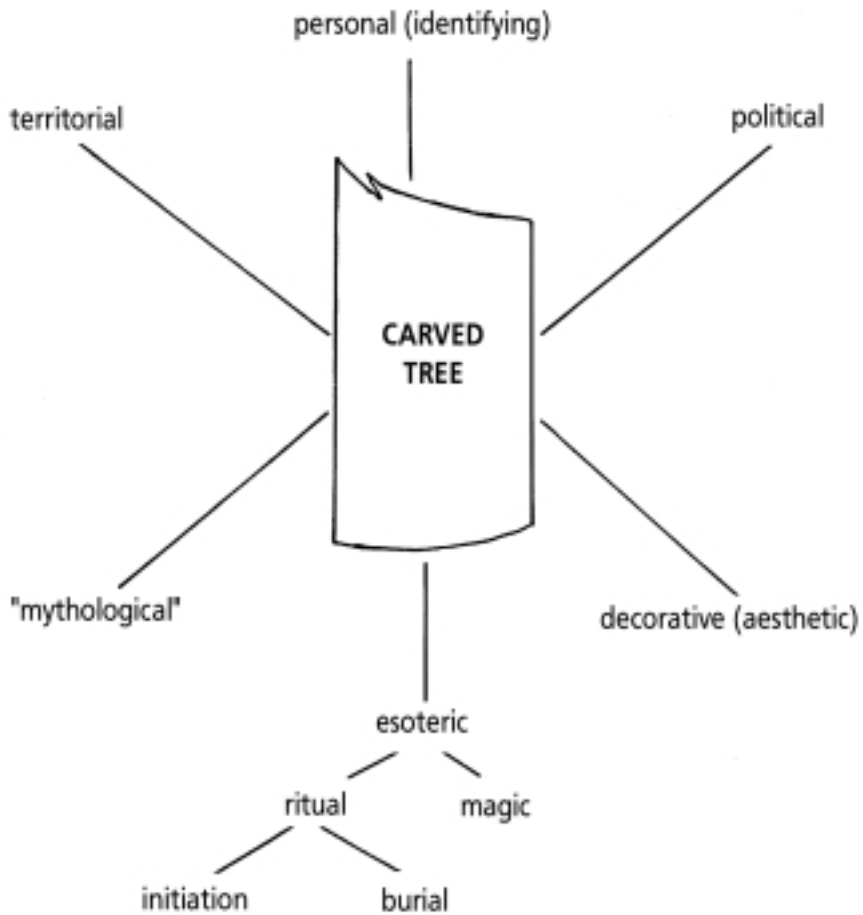
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Fig. 6.05 List of museum catalogue details

ID:  
Registration number:  
Accession number:  
Name: / Object (Type):  
Subject:  
Restricted:  
Status:  
Hazard:  
Country:  
State/Province: / Area: / District: / Region:  
(Specific) Locality:  
History: / How Acquired:  
Date Acquired:  
Acquired From:  
Collector:  
Collection Date:  
Collection No:  
Date Registered: / Accession Date:  
Cultural/Language Group:  
Department:  
(Permanent) Location: / Unit: + Shelf: + Lot:  
Temporary Location:

Collection (Name):  
Admin File No:  
Previous Control No: / Old Reg No:  
Dimensions: / Measurements: / Size:  
Usual Store: Object Part:  
    Usual Store:  
Current Location: Object Part:  
    Status:  
    Location:  
(Brief) description:  
Interpretation:  
Production Details: Method:  
    Person: / Maker: + Gender:  
    Role:  
    Place:  
    Date:  
Association Details: Person:  
    Date:  
    Place:  
    Notes:  
Subject Details: Type:  
Documentation (Details):  
    Sources: / Primary:  
        Secondary:  
        Documentation Files:  
        Reference to Other Objects:  
        Copyright Status:  
        Owner:  
        Exhibition:  
Conservation: Object Barcode:  
    Store Barcode:  
    Images:  
Entered By: Date:  
Edited By: Date:  
Remarks:  
References: / Reference to Papers:  
Photograph(s):

Fig. 6.04 Carved tree: Possible meanings and functions





6.01 A



6.01 B



6.02 A



6.02 B



6.02 C



6.03



6.06 A



6.06 B



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# Aboridžinska materijalna kultura u australskim muzejima

*Porijeklo aboridžinskih zbirki u Australiji i izvan nje nedavno je postalo predmetom brojnih studija. Kolonijalni muzeji su se počeli usko povezivati s kolonijalnim praksama otuđivanja i prisvajanja, a muzejske interpretacije povijesti autohtonih naroda pomno se preispituju. U ovom članku istražuje se tradicija sakupljanja, klasificiranja, dokumentiranja, pohranjivanja, izlaganja i zaštite aboridžinske materijalne kulture u australskim muzejima i drugim ustanovama. Ta tradicija, koja se razvila iz kolonijalnog diskursa devetnaestog stoljeća, predstavlja kontinuiran izazov i za kustose i za aboridžinske zajednice. Kao mjesta susreta europskih i autohtonih kultura, muzeji ostaju važna uporišta u povijesti autohtonih naroda i kulturnog institucionalizma.*

Ključne riječi: muzejske zbirke, Aboridžini (Australija), kolonijalni muzeji, muzejska etika, muzejska praksa, nabava muzejskih predmeta, dokumentacija zbirki, klasifikacija zbirki

## Uvod

U istraživanju i naknadnoj analizi aboridžinskih predmeta u australskim muzejima, dolazi se do neminovnog zaključka da je ono što danas postoji u njihovim depoima i na povremenim izložbama tek bijedan odraz samo nekoliko aspekata aboridžinskoga svakodnevnog života i duhovnosti. Iako su brojni razlozi tomu, u ovom ću članku razmotriti samo najočitije.

Proces otkrivanja aboridžinske materijalne kulture u australskim ustanovama mukotrpan je zadatak. Usredotočenost na materijalnu kulturu jedne aboridžinske skupine čini ga još izazovnijim, budući da su njihovi kulturni ostaci često rasijani po cijelom kontinentu pa su potrebna duga razdoblja putovanja da bi se prikupili i analizirali podaci. Muzejsko istraživanje bilo je tek jedna komponenta mog projekta koji je bio usredotočen na tradicijske prakse samo jedne aboridžinske skupine (Gamaroi) iz sjevernog New South Walesa.<sup>1</sup> Iako je ova činjenica ograničila opseg i domet mog istraživanja, njegovi su rezultati primjenjivi na aboridžinsku Australiju općenito. Ne postoji aboridžinska zajednica koja, u određenom trenutku, nije iskusila neki oblik kulturnoga genocida. Praksa sakupljanja odigrala je ključnu ulogu u tom procesu. U ovom članku istražujem metode nabave, klasifikacije, dokumentacije, pohrane i izlaganja aboridžinske građe, koje su pridonijele otuđivanju kulture aboridžinskih naroda.

## Podizanje vela prašine

Kao što je pokazala Carol Cooper u izvještaju *Aboridžinske i otočke zbirke u prekomorskim muzejima*, uobičajena praksa australskih muzeja prije dvadesetog stoljeća bila je slanje nekih od nabavljenih aboridžinskih predmeta u britanske i druge europske muzeje, bilo kao izraz pažnje ili u znak dobre volje prema britanskoj kruni ili pak u razmjenu za druge predmete.<sup>2</sup> Moje istraživanje bilo je, međutim, usredotočeno na sadržaj australskih saveznih, sveučilišnih i nekih lokalnih aboridžinskih muzeja, galerija i pričuvnih centara u jugoistočnoj Australiji.

Podaci o broju, vrsti, stanju i javnoj/istraživačkoj dostupnosti aboridžinskih predmeta u australskim muzejima prikupljeni su u Melbourneu (srpanj 1997.), na stručnim putovanjima u Sydneyu (svibanj-lipanj 1997., rujan 1998., prosinac 1999.), Canberri (kolovoz 1997.), Adelaidei (travanj-svibanj 1998.) i Brisbaneu (listopad 1998.), za vrijeme terenskog istraživanja u sjevernom New South Walesu (srpanj-rujan 1999.) i, u manjoj mjeri, dopisivanjem i preko javnih medija, uključujući internet. Opisana situacija možda će se u narednim godinama promijeniti s obzirom i na činjenicu da su neke od ovih ustanova bile (i još uvijek su) u delikatnom procesu kontinuiranog pregovaranja s aboridžinskim zajednicama, naročito u vezi s repatriacijom kulturno osjetljivog materijala.

Često je pisani materijal usmjeravao moju potragu, osobito onaj objavljen između 1850-ih i 1920-ih godina, to jest, u razdoblju od dvostrukog značaja za očuvanje kul-

<sup>1</sup> Projekt je ostvaren kao glavna komponenta mog doktorata na Sveučilištu u Melbourneu, od veljače 1997. do listopada 2001. Druga dva područja mog istraživanja bili su povijesni zapisi i usmena tradicija Gamaroi naroda.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, C. (1989) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections in Overseas Museums*, The Institute Report Series, Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press for Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. "Otočki" se odnosi na narode Torresovog tjesnaca, sjeveroistočno od australskog kontinenta (nap. prev.).

ture većine aboridžinskih skupina unutrašnjeg New South Walesa i Queenslanda. U prvom redu, ovo razdoblje počinje neposredno nakon početka kolonizacije, kada su lokalne aboridžinske skupine još uvijek (i, rekla bih, u znatnoj mjeri) održavale svoj tradicionalni identitet, koji je osiguravao da glavina njihovog znanja ostane uglavnom netaknuta. Kao drugo, ta je situacija omogućila, te uistinu i nadahnula, određeni broj amaterskih, a kasnije i profesionalnih antropologa (ili, primjerenije onom vremenu, etnologa) da prošire i modificiraju postojeća nagađanja i vjerovanja svojih suvremenika, uključujući i javnost općenito, o australskim "plemenitim divljacima". Dok je sve veći broj pojedinaca lutao prostranim ravninama unutrašnje Australije u potrazi za znanjem i materijalnim predmetima, kako se tada općenito vjerovalo, "brzo izumirućih Aboridžina", direktori i kustosi australskih muzeja oduševljavali su se izgledima za obogaćenjem svojih zbirki, po svojoj prilici, zadnjim ostacima kulture "na rubu izumiranja".<sup>3</sup> Ta je situacija vrlo vjerojatno doprinijela daljnjem, toga puta i kulturno ozakonjenom, iskorjenjivanju svetih aboridžinskih običaja. S jedne strane, poticala je Europljane da odlaze na teren i nabavljaju, često pod sumnjivim okolnostima, predmete aboridžinskih skupina koji su se koristili u svakodnevnom životu i u određenim ceremonijalnim prigodama. S druge pak strane, postupno je odvrćala Aboridžine od proizvodnje predmeta poput štitova i bumeranga isključivo za svoje vlastite potrebe i, umjesto toga, poticala ih da proizvode predmete s karakteristikama koje su se sviđale europskoj "publici". To je razlog zašto na nekim predmetima iz tog razdoblja otkrivamo cijeli niz uzoraka, npr., izrezbarena srca, cvijeće i druge neaboridžinske motive, koji su očigledno ukorporirani u aboridžinski funkcionalni predmet i tako pretvoreni u aboridžinsko umjetničko djelo namijenjeno razmjeni ili prodaji.

Međutim, ne možemo ignorirati niti činjenicu da su i Aboridžini, kroz nedostatak svijesti ili šutnju, pridonijeli konačnim tragičnim posljedicama. Nema sumnje da su u nekim, iako vjerojatno dosta rijetkim slučajevima, Aboridžini imali koristi (barem ekonomske) od europskog zanimanja za njihovu kulturu. Kao što daju naslutiti brojna kolonijalna iskustva, kada se sretnu dvije različite kulture, obično dolazi do razmjene dobara ili trgovine.<sup>4</sup> Radi li se o razmjeni starosjedilačkog oružja za duhan, staklene perle ili novac nebitno je tako dugo dok su obje strane zadovoljne (iako opseg takvih ugovora često nije bio jasno definiran).

<sup>3</sup> Zanimljivo je da su Aboridžini na "rubu izumiranja" već tako dugo da bismo trebali biti iznenađeni da ih još uopće ima, te da neki još održavaju tradicionalne običaje. Za detaljniju raspravu povijesnog diskursa koji je stvorio i podupirao ovakav stav, vidjeti Peto poglavlje u: Kovačić, L. (2001) *Cataloguing culture: In search of the origins of written records, material culture and oral histories of the Gamaroi, northern New South Wales*, unpublished PhD thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

<sup>4</sup> Značaj robne razmjene između autohtonih naroda i kolonizatora opširno su razmatrali Humphrey, C. & Hugh-Jones, S. (1992) Introduction, u: Humphrey, C. & Hugh-Jones, S. (eds) *Barter, Exchange and Value: An Anthropological Approach*, str. 1-20, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Dvosmjerna priroda robne razmjene objašnjena je ovako: "U osnovi, robnu razmjenu određuje interes koji svaka strana ima za predmet one druge, interes koji se zadovoljava transakcijom."; *ibid.*, str. 7. U: *Politicised values: The cultural*

Razlog zbog kojeg ovo i dan-danas previđa većina istraživača jest činjenica da su nedjela i masakri koje su počinili europski došljaci (pojedinci i ustanove) nad Aboridžinima učinili bespredmetnima takve, ne tako značajne (mada nipošto beznačajne), pojedinosti. Europa i njezini kolonijalni teritoriji doživjeli su u devetnaestom stoljeću uspon fizičke antropologije kojoj je bila potrebna "svježja" istraživačka građa u obliku ljudskih lubanja, kostiju i drugog osteološkog materijala. "Otimanje tijela" ubrzo je postalo najbrutalnijim (i najunosnijim) oblikom muzejske "trgovine". Bila je to, u devetnaestom stoljeću, uobičajena metoda za snabdijevanje prekomorskih i kolonijalnih muzeja aboridžinskim osteološkim materijalom, dokazi čega su još opipljivi u većini takvih ustanova.<sup>5</sup>

## Novi vlasnici, nove pozicije

Aboridžinske zbirke u australskim federalnim i saveznom muzejima mogu se grubo podijeliti u dvije skupine: prvu čine takozvani tradicionalni predmeti nabavljeni u ranom kolonijalnom razdoblju, a drugu predmeti nabavljeni u postkolonijalnoj eri. Prvi su proizvedeni prije ili neposredno nakon početka kolonizacije, a obuhvaćaju bumerange, toljage, sjekire, štitove, koplja, dječje igračke, torbe, izrezbarena i izbrazdana stabla, pogrebna pokrivala za glavu, kanue itd., kao i raznu arheološku građu i predmete koje su Aboridžinima dale kolonijalne vlasti, poput ploča za prsa.<sup>6</sup> Potonji su nabavljeni od aboridžinskih zajednica u prošlih pedesetak godina, i obično predstavljaju oružje, (dječje) crteže i umjetnost inspiriranu tradicionalnim stilovima i metodama proizvodnje. Mene je kao istraživača ponajprije zanimalo da identificiram porijeklo i sadašnji status prve skupine predmeta.

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dynamics of peripheral exchange, u: *ibid.*, str. 21-41, Nicholas Thomas navodi brojne opise razmjene između Polinežana, Inuita i pacifičkih Otočana, te zapadnih došljaka. Transakcije su se u osnovi zasnivale na nejednakosti: "Ovdje, autohtoni stanovnici gotovo smjesta prepoznaju svoju tehnološku inferiornost i u njima se javlja velika i neutaživa želja za europskom robom."; *ibid.*, str. 22. U: *Yesterday's luxuries, tomorrow's necessities: Business and barter in Northwest Amazonia*, u: *ibid.*, str. 42-74, Stephen Hugh-Jones pokazuje kakav je učinak europska roba imala na narode Amazonije, i slično ukazuje na privlačnost te robe i njezinu ulogu u životima autohtonih stanovnika: "Zapadna roba pružala je nove i povećane mogućnosti i za tehnološku i za simboličku inovaciju."; *ibid.*, str. 59. U svojoj knjizi *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope* (1994), Melbourne, Oxford University Press, str. 240, John Harris nakratko spominje "krajnju eksploataciju od strane doseljenika" potaknutu "privremenom iluzijom Aboridžina o tome da su europski predmeti izuzetno poželjno bogatstvo. ... Suočeni s nečim što im se moralo činiti kao nevjerovatno bogatstvo, neki muškarci bili su voljni podvoditi svoje žena za europske artikle."

<sup>5</sup> Kao što razmatraju Monaghan, D. (1991) *The body snatchers*, u: *Bulletin*, str. 30-8, i Turnbull, P. (1991) *Science, National Identity and Aboriginal Body-Snatching in Nineteenth Century Australia*, London, Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London.

<sup>6</sup> Mjedene ploče za prsa često su davane Aboridžinima koji su posredovali između kolonijalnih vlasti i lokalnog aboridžinskog stanovništva. Tipična ploča sadrži natpis "Kralj (ili Kraljica) [tog i tog mjesta]" i stereotipne prikaze klokana i emua, danas službenih amblema

Sva aboridžinska građa također spada u jednu od četiri kategorije: u etnografske, arheološke, "svete/tajne" ili osteološke zbirke. Dok su prve dvije otvorene javnosti, pristup "svetim/tajnim" i osteološkim zbirkama ograničen je u različitoj mjeri. Ova podjela aboridžinske građe na takozvani svjetovni (to jest, u pristupu neograničen) i "sveti/tajni" materijal kojemu je pristup bio ograničen, došla je do izražaja u posljednjem desetljeću. Prvi obuhvaća većinu predmeta korištenih u svakodnevnom životu, dok se drugi sastoji od privatnih i ceremonijalnih predmeta kao što su churinge (zujače daščice) i dendroglifi.<sup>7</sup>

Postoje tri kategorije predmeta s ograničenim pristupom (uključujući i "svete/tajne") s obzirom na to tko ih i pod kakvim uvjetima može vidjeti. Prvu kategoriju predmeta (npr., dendroglife) mogu vidjeti Aboridžini općenito kao i ne-Aboridžini (uključujući i muzejsko osoblje) koji dobiju posebno dopuštenje od relevantne aboridžinske zajednice. Predmete koji spadaju u drugu kategoriju (npr., ljudski posmrtni ostaci) ne može vidjeti nitko osim Aboridžina u izravnom krvnom srodstvu i relevantnog muzejskog osoblja. Napokon, treća skupina sastoji se od predmeta poput churingi koji su tradicionalno bili dostupni samo odabranoj nekolicini (npr., potpuno iniciranim muškarcima/ženama, ili ljudima od znanja). Budući da danas više nema živih članova zajednice koji bi mogli nadzirati takav materijal, zajednica može dati pravo trajnog nadzora nad njime određene muzeju u kojem se pohranjuju trajno zapečaćeni predmeti koje ne može vidjeti apsolutno nitko, čak niti direktor muzeja.

Savezni i sveučilišni muzeji imaju najveće zbirke aboridžinske građe, dok lokalne aboridžinske galerije i pričuveni centri pohranjuju ograničen broj predmeta lokalnog porijekla ili proizvodnje te one rijetke koje su savezni muzeji vratili lokalnoj zajednici. Na lokalnoj razini, ustanova poput astronomskog opservatorija može ponekad neočekivano pohranjivati neke lokalno nađene predmete.

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Australije. O pločama za prsa raspravljaju i stručnjaci i aboridžinska inteligencija kao o sramotnim kolonijalnim reprezentacijama "aboridžinskosti". Vidi, na primjer, Cleary, T. (c.1993) *Poignant Regalia: 19th Century Aboriginal Breastplates and Images: A catalogue of Aboriginal breastplates held in public, regional and private collections in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian National Territory*, Glebe, NSW, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, i Healy, C. (2001) Chained to their signs: Remembering breastplates, u: Creed, B. & Hoorn, J. (eds) *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, str. 24-35, Routledge in association with Pluto Press & University of Otago Press.

<sup>7</sup> Izrezbarena stabla ili dendroglifi jedinstveni su predmeti za aboridžinske narode Wiradjuri i Gamaroi, iz centralnog i sjevernog New South Walesa, i za njihove neposredne susjede. Razlikuju se dvije vrste dendroglifa: teleteglifi (inicijacijska stabla) i tafoglifi (pogrebna stabla). Korišteni su u ceremonijalne svrhe i predstavljaju glavnu skupinu kulturno osjetljive građe u saveznim muzejima jugoistočne Australije. Teleteglifima je pristup prvotno bio ograničen na potpuno inicirane muškarce, a prekršaj ovog tabua povlačio je smrtnu kaznu. Tafoglifi se smatraju privatnim predmetima. Dendroglife mogu vidjeti samo članovi dotičnih aboridžinskih zajednica ili su dostupni uz pismeno dopuštenje lokalnih aboridžinskih zemaljskih vijeća.

Kulturne ustanove koje pohranjuju aboridžinske predmete uključuju također knjižnice, arhive, Upravu za nacionalne parkove i zaštitu prirode (s ograncima u svakoj saveznoj državi) i razne vladine urede. Ove ustanove pohranjuju novine, rukopise i rijetke knjige, fotografije, filmove, audio- i video-vrpce<sup>8</sup> te arheološku građu. Ogranci Uprave za nacionalne parkove i zaštitu prirode također su odgovorni za održavanje i nadzor aboridžinskih mjesta i objekata in situ. Pored ovih institucijskih izvora, značajna količina podataka može se dobiti od lokalnih povjesničara, antropologa i lingvista (amatera), kao i od lokalnih aboridžinskih zemaljskih vijeća i pojedinaca. Potonji vas mogu obdariti pričama i usmenom predajom, dopustiti da posjetite značajna mjesta, pomoći da dođete do građe s ograničenim pristupom u saveznom i lokalnim muzejima, te nabavite obiteljska rodoslovlja.<sup>9</sup>

Zvučne i slikovne zbirke pri Australskom institutu aboridžinskih i otočkih studija u Canberri pohranjuju audio-vrpce i fotografije, od kojih su potonje snimljene u drugoj polovici devetnaestog stoljeća, no bez dostatnih (ako ikakvih) pojedinosti o osobama koje prikazuju i bez točnog datuma kada su snimljene. Na istu sam situaciju naišla i u Arhivu New South Walesa u Sydneyu. Potresno je iskustvo pregledavanje fotografija koje prikazuju niz Aboridžina bez osobnih imena i kulturne pripadnosti, kao i vladine misije i rezervate koji su pridonijeli tom kulturnom otuđivanju. Nedostatak atribucije na fotografijama prisutan je i u Slikovnoj zbirci Nacionalne knjižnice Australije u Canberri.

Savezni muzeji pohranjuju posmrtno ostatke različitih aboridžinskih skupina, ponajprije s ciljem određivanja njihovog porijekla, to jest, geografskog područja i jezične pripadnosti, starosti i stanja pokojnika koji odražavaju klimatske, ekonomske i druge uvjete života na tom području itd. Odsjek za ljudsku biologiju Muzeja Južne Australije pohranjuje znatnu količinu ove građe. Australski muzej u Sydneyu pohranjuje nešto osteološkog materijala. Muzej Queenslanda otpisao je većinu osteološke građe i repatrirao je zajednicama za ponovnu sahranu. Nisam imala prilike vidjeti ovaj materijal, niti bi me to veselilo. Poput "svetog/tajnog" materijala, pristup osteološkoj građi redovno je ograničen i mogu je vidjeti samo krvni srodnici i predstavnici dotične aboridžinske zajednice.

Većina ovih zbirki, međutim, trpi od istog nedostatka: čak i gdje predmeti dolaze iz određene regije, njihova je jezična pripadnost neizvjesna. To odražava proizvoljne procese odabira pri stvaranju ranih zbirki, koji su odgovorni za klasifikacijske etikete koje često indiciraju tek širu geografsku lokaciju kao mjesto porijekla predmeta.

<sup>8</sup> Video-produkcija je, iako nedavnog datuma, svejedno neprocjenjiv izvor informacija budući da stari Aboridžini umiru i često ne postoji nitko tko bi očuvao i prosljedio njihovu kulturnu baštinu. Godine 1999., na primjer, Uprava za nacionalne parkove i zaštitu prirode New South Walesa snimila je dokumentarni film *Inard Oongali: Women's Journey*, prvi opsežniji video o "ženskim stvarima" Gamaroi žena, sa sedam glavnih starijih Gamaroi žena. Jedna od žena umrla je nekoliko mjeseci nakon njegovog objavljivanja.

<sup>9</sup> Kopije genealogija do kojih sam tako došla poslane su zatim ljudima koji su mi dopustili da ih vidim. Ostatak materijala našao je put do moje disertacije, kako bi ga zajednice mogle koristiti kao izvor priručnih informacija.

Sada ćemo se sustavnije pozabaviti osnovnim problemima s kojima se susreće svatko koga zanima aboridžinska građa u australskim kulturnim ustanovama. To su: nabava predmeta; klasifikacija i dokumentacija predmeta; pohrana predmeta; i politika muzeja prema aboridžinskoj građi u njihovim zbirkama.

## Nabava predmeta

Primarni cilj australskih muzeja, kao i svih drugih, bilo je očuvanje australskih aboridžinskih i drugih materijalnih predmeta od propasti uslijed zuba vremena, vremenskih nepogoda i "nestručnog" rukovanja. Pored ovoga, australski muzeji imali su i drugi cilj: da sakupe što je moguće više kulturne građe što reprezentativnijeg porijekla, proizvodnje i, u manjoj mjeri, značaja za izvorne vlasnike, kako bi stvorili cjelovitu muzejsku zbirku. Međutim, sudeći po onome što je preostalo od izvornih zbirki, čini se da su australski muzeji podbacili u oba slučaja.

Kao prvo, pitanje očuvanja danas je (osobito u slučaju autohtonih znanja i kultura) sporno područje u kojem autohtona prava igraju značajnu ulogu i ukazuju na važna pitanja poput sljedećih: Možemo li nazivati "očuvanjem" ono što iz današnje perspektive izgleda kao nemilosrdno pljačkanje i krađa od strane pojedinaca i institucija? Na primjer, mogu li dendroglifi preseljeni sa svetih Gamaroi i Wiradjuri inicijacijskih mjesta na bilo koji način predstavljati kulturu koja više ne postoji? Lišeni svoga kulturnog konteksta i geografske lokacije, može li ih ikada aboridžinska ili neaboridžinska publika vidjeti kao spomenike koji su preživjeli zub vremena i propast uslijed vremenskih nepogoda? A što je s propašću koja je inherentna u samom činu njihovog preseljenja? A da ne spominjem sramotno bacanje novčića koje je odredilo sudbinu nekih od ovih stabala u odnosu na njihovu buduću pohranu u okrilju dvaju saveznih muzeja (tada Nacionalnog muzeja Victorije u Melbourneu i Muzeja Južne Australije u Adelaidei).<sup>10</sup>

Nabava aboridžinskih predmeta u ranim danima muzeja ovisila je uvelike o znanju i vještini kustosa, ne samo o građi, nego i o načinima njene nabave. Budući da je prvim kustosima australskih muzeja redovno nedostajalo oboje (neki od njih nisu imali nikakvu obuku u antropologiji ili srodnim disciplinama, i taj se trend dobro nastavio u dvadesetom stoljeću), činilo bi se pravim čudom da su australski muzeji i dalje na glasu zbog svojih aboridžinskih zbirki da nije bilo tri direktora u posljednjem desetljeću devetnaestog i u prva tri desetljeća dvadesetog stoljeća: Sira Edwarda Stirlinga (Muzej Južne Australije, Adelaide; 1889.-1913., počasní etnolog 1914.-1919.), Roberta Etheridgea, mlađeg (Australski muzej, Sydney; 1895.-1920., pionirski rad 1889.-1918.), i Sira W. Baldwina Spencera (Muzej Victorije, Melbourne; 1899.-1928., član upravnog odbora 1895.-1899.).

Ovi su direktori uveli dalekosežne promjene u politici svojih muzeja. Za njihova upravljanja, nabava aboridžinskih predmeta dosegla je nevjerojatan porast.

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<sup>10</sup> Za dodatne pojedinosti, vidjeti dalje u tekstu.

Marljivo su radili, ne samo na snabdijevanju vlastitih zbirki predmetima nabavljenim u Australiji, već su ih i razmjenjivali s prekomorskim muzejima te kupovali na međunarodnim izložbama. Tako su mnogi nezamjenjivi aboridžinski predmeti transportirani preko mora i Australija je ostala bez njih.<sup>11</sup>

Prije toga, australski su muzeji nabavljali malo, osobito u razdobljima od 1853. do 1860. te od 1860. do 1874., što je bio odraz općeg nedostatka svijesti i nepriznavanja aboridžinske kulture u australskim novoosnovanim kolonijama. Muzeji su se suočavali s važnim političkim pitanjem u svojoj potrazi za aboridžinskim predmetima i bili su u vrlo nepovoljnom položaju zbog postupaka ranih doseljenika koji su se vrlo često kosili s onima usmjerenim ka očuvanju aboridžinskog nasljeđa: autentične aboridžinske predmete bilo je sve teže naći pod prismotrom doseljenika i farmera neprijateljski raspoloženih prema Aboridžinima.

Godine 1882. zauvijek je izbrisan dragocjen izvor znanja za buduće naraštaje kada su se zapalila 342 aboridžinska primjerka koje je Australski muzej nabavio i pohranio u Vrtnoj palači u Sydneyu nakon Međunarodne izložbe 1879. U sljedećih pet godina, kustos Muzeja dr. E. P. Ramsey više je nego utrostručio broj etnoloških predmeta (uključujući i neaustralske) u zbirci. Nije, međutim, bilo pokušaja da se stvori muzejski katalog koji bi sadržavao popis inventara saveznih muzeja, izuzev kataloga Sira Baldwina Spencera za Nacionalni muzej Victorije (1901-1922), od kojih sam uspjela konzultirati samo izdanja iz 1918. i 1922. godine.

Da rezimiramo, na ranije nabavke utjecali su sljedeći problemi:

1. opći nedostatak svijesti i nepriznavanje aboridžinskih kultura;
2. sukobljavajući interesi: kustosi naspram doseljenika i farmera;
3. neosposobljeni kustosi i muzejsko osoblje; i
4. nepostojanje (primjerenih) muzejskih kataloga i popisa inventara.

Zamjetljiv izuzetak u sabiračkoj strasti muzejskih kustosa bili su predmeti koje su izradile i koristile aboridžinske žene i djeca. Glavni razlog njihovoj vidljivo slaboj zastupljenosti u zbirka jest činjenica što su muzejsko osoblje sačinjavali muškarci, anglosaski "stručnjaci" koji u "ženskim stvarima" nisu vidjeli ništa posebno ili vrijedno, čak kada im je i bilo dopušteno da promatraju njihovu svakodnevnu stranu. O tome govore i Anderson i Reeves: "Odsutnost žena u odsjecima za etnografiju ostavila je dugoročne posljedice na rodnu ravnotežu aboridžinskih zbirki. Nedavno istraživanje aboridžinskih zbirki glavnih saveznih i federalnih muzeja pokazalo je da se između 75% i 80% svih predmeta odnosi na materijalnu kulturu muškaraca prije nego žena."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Usp. McCarthy, F.D. (1982) *Anthropology in the museums of Australia*, u: McCall, G. (ed.) *Anthropology in Australia: Essays to Honour 50 Years of "Mankind"*, Sydney, Anthropological Society of NSW, str. 24 - 25.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, M. & Reeves, A. (1994) *Contested identities: Museums and the nation in Australia*, u: Kaplan, F. (ed.) *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': The Role of Objects in National Identity*, London & New York, Leicester University Press, str. 108.



Predmeti u vlasništvu današnjih muzeja nabavljeni su na nekoliko različitih načina: a) sakupljanjem u takozvanim "muzejskim ekspedicijama" koje je poduzimalo muzejsko osoblje; b) otkupom, uglavnom od pojedinih sabirača i, u manjoj mjeri, na dražbama; c) razmjenom; d) donacijom; e) na nepoznat način.

a) Termin "muzejska ekspedicija"<sup>13</sup> odnosi se na odlazak muzejskog osoblja na teren od, u ovom slučaju, antropološkog interesa, i nabavljanje primjeraka od pojedinaca ili skupine ljudi, ili naprosto uzimanje (ponekad doslovno otimanje) predmeta koji su se smatrali znanstveno dragocjenima, od kojih bi inače neki ubrzo nestali uslijed starosti, atmosferskih uvjeta i, tek nedavno priznatog, vandalizma. U prošlosti, ova je odluka često ovisila o jednom ili dva "antropologa". S izuzetkom najrecentnijih nabavki, nisam naišla ni na jedan dokumentirani primjer u kojem bi se muzejsko osoblje posavjetovalo i dobilo odobrenje od dotičnih lokalnih skupina ili pojedinaca prije (ili barem nakon) preseljenja bilo "profanih" bilo "svetih" predmeta s mjesta njihove proizvodnje ili nalazišta.

Kada se radi o Gamaroi građi, "muzejske ekspedicije" poduzimali su početkom 20. stoljeća Robert Etheridge, mlađi i Edmund O. Milne, obojica kustosi Australskog muzeja, koji su za Muzej nabavili osamdesetak dendroglifa sa starih inicijacijskih i pogrebnih mjesta u sjeverno-centralnom New South Walesu.

Harvardsko-adelaidska ekspedicija iz 1938.-1939., koju su predvodili Norman B. Tindale i Joseph B. Birdsell i koju je Tindale dokumentirao u svom Dnevniku,<sup>14</sup> sjekla je preko južne, jugoistočne i sjeveroistočne Australije. Za vrijeme ekspedicije, sakupljena je dragocjena arheološka građa, koja je uključivala žrvnjeve, sjećiva, nakovnje, vrhove sjekira, krhotine sjekirica, strugala, cilkone<sup>15</sup>, školjke za ishranu i druga kamena oruđa iz sjeverno-centralnog New South Walesa. Unutar bogate nearheološke građe, nabavljena je i splav (kanu) s rijeke Macintyre te sedam dijelova kanua iz Boggabille, također na rijeci Macintyre. Sakupljen je i velik broj genealogija.

Godine 1949. združena "muzejska ekspedicija", predvođena Normanom B. Tindaleom iz Muzeja Južne Australije (Adelaide) i Donaldom Tugbyjem iz Nacionalnog muzeja (Melbourne), a "nadahnutu" Lindsayom Blackom iz gradića Leetona, NSW, posjetila je Boru Collymongle (muško inicijacijsko mjesto Gamaroi naroda) blizu Collarenebrija. Oni su posjekli pedeset dva dendroglifa i, podijelivši ih u dvije hrpe bacanjem novčića, transportirali do saveznih muzeja u Adelaidei i Melbourneu.<sup>16</sup> Etnografski katalog Muzeja Victorije<sup>17</sup> navodi da je

<sup>13</sup> Primijenjen u računalnom ispisu Gamaroi predmeta u Muzeju Victorije, od srpnja 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Tindale, N. B. [1938-39] The Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, Australia, 1938-39: Journal and Notes, MS 1, str. 1-758, Adelaide, Division of Ethnography, South Australian Museum.

<sup>15</sup> Orig. *cylcons*: cilindrično-konični kamenovi koji su se koristili u ceremonijalne svrhe (op.prev.).

<sup>16</sup> Dio događaja vizualno je dokumentirao H. R. Balfour (Nacionalni Muzej, Melbourne). Kopija filma koji se nalazi u Muzeju Južne Australije, prema službenici Muzeja, poslan je lokalnoj aboridžinskoj organizaciji u New South Walesu.

<sup>17</sup> Računalni ispis od srpnja 1997.

dvadeset tri od ovih stabala sakupio Lindsay Black, a datum je sabiranja nepoznat. Datum dostupnosti od 31. siječnja 1950., međutim, ukazuje na "muzejsku ekspediciju" iz 1949. Članak Frede Young<sup>18</sup> o uklanjanju dendroglifa s Bore Collymongle navodi da su uklonjena pedeset dva stabla, od čega je po dvadeset pet poslano u dva savezna muzeja, a preostala dva u Muzej Queenslanda u Brisbaneu. Pokazalo se, međutim, da Muzej Queenslanda ne posjeduje nijedan dendroglif s te lokacije. [to se dogodilo s njima, a što s druga dva iz Muzeja Victorije? Jesu li nepravilno klasificirani, poslani neregistrirani u neki drugi muzej koji ih još uvijek pohranjuje, uništeni u procesu prilagodbe na novu sredinu ili načinom rukovanja, ili je autorica ovog članka javnosti dala nedosljednu ili čak pogrešnu informaciju? Ja nisam uspjela pronaći odgovore na ova pitanja.

- b) Neki muzejski predmeti otkupljeni su od pojedinih nezavisnih trgovaca/preprodavača, uključujući putnike. Ni tu ne postoje dokazi koji bi podržali ono što danas mogu biti tek nagađanja: Jesu li ovi predmeti razmjenjivani za materijalna dobra, otkupljeni novcem, ukradeni, ili jednostavno darovani ljudima koji su zbog svijetle puti možda prepoznati kao duhovi predaka ili naprosto kao dobrotorni putnici-namjernici (ponekad u potrazi za znanjem i/ili fizičkim dokazom njegova postojanja), voljni ili čak željni slušati aboridžinske priče? Vrlo je vjerojatno da su nabavljeni na sve ove načine, ovisno o ljudima i okolnostima.

Prirodoslovac Charles Daley pojavljuje se kao jedan od nekoliko nezavisnih "profesionalnih" sabirača iz New South Walesa, koji je vjerojatno živio od prihoda dobivenih snabdijevanjem muzeja aboridžinskim predmetima.

Australski muzej jedina je ustanova koja ima podatke o kupovinama na dražbama, sve novijega datuma.

- c) Ne postoji posebna dokumentacija o razmjeni pojedinih predmeta iz australskih muzeja s drugim australskim ili prekomorskim muzejima, osim u slučaju Australskog muzeja u Sydneyu. Letimičan pregled popisa predmeta iz Australije u prekomorskim muzejima otkriva, međutim, da ogroman broj aboridžinskih predmeta mora da je ili razmijenjen za druge predmete iz njihovih zbirki, ili kupljen.<sup>19</sup>

U nekoliko slučajeva jasno je da je postojao neki oblik razmjene ili transakcije između nekih australskih muzeja, jer predmeti koji su svojedobno bili navedeni kao dio inventara jednog muzeja ili neke druge ustanove odjednom više nisu tamo nego na nekoj drugoj lokaciji. To je slučaj s dva dendroglifa koji su prvo bili pohranjeni u Australskom institutu za anatomiju u Canberri, odakle su kasnije prebačeni u jedan od muzeja. Ponekad je teško pratiti kretanje nekih predmeta od jednog muzeja do drugog.

- d) Donirani predmeti dolaze iz privatnih zbirki pojedinaca. To su često članovi muzejskog osoblja, obično kustosi ili istraživači. Ponekad su donacije davali misionari ili putnici, kao i vlasnici farmi i lokalni stanovnici.

Zbirke Sira Williama Macleaya, koje su sadržavale prirodoslovne primjerke, kao i australsku antropološku i arheološku građu, sabirane su u 1860-ima i 1870-ima,

<sup>18</sup> Young, F. (1949) Scientists save sacred trees..., *Australian Women's Weekly*, [str. 20-21].

<sup>19</sup> Usp. Cooper, op.cit.

a potom darovane današnjem Muzeju Macleay pri Sveučilištu u Sydneyu.

- e) Za određeni broj predmeta današnji kustosi ne mogu ustanoviti pojedinosti njihove nabave, to jest, ime osobe ili naziv ustanove od koje su prvotno nabavljeni ili datum transakcije. Umjesto tih podataka, oni nose oznaku "nepoznato".

Za to postoji nekoliko razloga: nedostatak primjerene obuke, znanja i vještina prethodnih kustosa; nedovoljni podaci i dokumentacija predmeta u vrijeme njihove nabave; i konačno, odgovore treba potražiti izvan muzejskih ustanova, s obzirom na to tko je i kako prvotno nabavio ove predmete. Kao što sam već istaknula, gotovo je nemoguće otkriti sve činitelje i karike u lancu oblikovanja današnjih muzejskih zbirki.

Baza podataka Arheološke zbirke Muzeja Južne Australije uredno predočava kako i od koga su predmeti nabavljeni, iako u nekim slučajevima bez godine transakcije. Tri sveska vodiča kroz glavnu aboridžinsku zbirku, međutim, redovno trpe od nedostatka značajnih pojedinosti o nabavi, s izuzetkom predmeta nabavljenih za vrijeme Harvardsko-adelaidske ekspedicije Tindalea i Birdsella 1938.-1939. godine.

Nacionalni muzej Australije (Canberra) ima dobro dokumentiranu bazu podataka o aboridžinskim predmetima iz New South Walesa. Po mojemu mišljenju, jedini je nedostatak računalnog kataložnog sustava ovog Muzeja što postoje datumi zaprimanja samo za nekolicinu, a ne za sve predmete.

## Klasifikacija i dokumentacija predmeta

Glavni je problem klasifikacije aboridžinskih predmeta njihova multifunkcionalna priroda. Jedan te isti predmet ima, ili kontekstualno dobiva, nekoliko, ako ne mnogo, "različitih" značenja i funkcija. Upotreba i značaj koji je neki predmet imao ili ima za osobu aboridžinskog porijekla jučer odnosno danas variraju jednako kao i upotreba i značaj koji on ima za neaboridžinsku osobu dvadeset prvog stoljeća. Stoga je izuzetno teško klasificirati aboridžinske predmete prema bilo kakvim kriterijima.

Na primjer, izrezbareno drvo u svom autentičnom i kulturnom ambijentu, za pripadnika Gamaroi iz pretkolonizacijskog razdoblja vjerojatno je (jer možemo samo nagađati o onome što je bilo) imalo cijeli niz značenja i važnih praktičnih, kao i duhovnih funkcija. Naravno, sva ova značenja i funkcije zajedno su tvorile jedinstveno holističko tijelo kulturalno važnog znanja, iako su možda bili od ograničenog značaja za pojedine članove Gamaroi društva.

U muzejskom su kontekstu aboridžinski, a možemo zaključiti, i svi drugi predmeti, dekontekstualizirani (kroz sam čin preseljenja s mjesta njihova porijekla) i rekontekstualizirani (zadobivši svojim bivanjem u muzeju lepezu novih značenja).<sup>20</sup> Valja

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<sup>20</sup> Vidjeti, na primjer, Lumley, R. (1988) *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, London & New York, Routledge, i Russell, L. (1995) (Re)presented pasts: Historical and contemporary constructions of Australian Aborigines, unpublished PhD thesis, Melbourne, University of Melbourne.

imati na umu da muzeji javnosti prezentiraju materijalnu kulturu u *rekonstruiranom* "tradicionalnom" kontekstu, to jest, muzejsku verziju ili, prije, verzije prošlosti i sadašnjosti budući da se politike muzeja, a time i postavi mijenjaju. K tome, svaki pojedini predmet na javnoj izložbi prolazi kroz proces daljnje rekontekstualizacije kroz gledateljevu percepciju i prethodno znanje (koje može ili ne mora postojati) o "autentičnom" društveno-povijesnom kontekstu.

Klasifikacija predmeta od dvostrukog je značaja za muzeje: važna je za organizaciju sustava pohrane i dokumentacije koji su i inače usko povezani. "Klasifikacija" podrazumijeva svrstavanje ili organizaciju građe na određen način, prema određenim kriterijima. Ona omogućava muzejskom osoblju da dodijeli određenim predmetima određeno mjesto u depou i evidentira njihove opise u računalnom sustavu. Gotovo je i nepotrebno spominjati da je to zapadni koncept koji se ne uklapa dobro, ako ikako, u aboridžinske predodžbe o vremenu i prostoru.

Osoblje muzeja klasificiralo je aboridžinske predmete prema, u osnovi, samo dva kriterija: prvo, prema geografskoj lokaciji, i drugo, prema upotrebi. Da bi ih ovako klasificiralo, osoblje se oslanjalo na dodatne potklasifikacije prema obliku, stilu, i (ponekad) materijalu. [to kustos ima više znanja i sposobnosti da prepozna određen oblik, stil i materijal, to je vjerojatnije da će predmet ispravno klasificirati, ponajprije zato što se pokazuje da je kriterij geografske lokacije jednako nepouzdan kao i ostali, iako ga je muzejsko osoblje odabralo kao najpouzdaniji (ili barem najprepoznatljiviji)].

1. Klasifikacija aboridžinskih predmeta prema geografskoj lokaciji/nalazištu stara je i dobro utvrđena praksa australskih muzeja. Za to postoje tri razloga:
  - a) Građa nabavljena u ranim fazama razvoja muzeja nije bila dovoljno dokumentirana, zato što su nezavisni preprodavači nerado otkrivali od koga su je nabavili.
  - b) Kao što Bolton upozorava, "[r]azlike između skupina često je mnogo teže ustanoviti nego razlike između mjesta: jezici klize s jednoga dijalektalnog područja na drugo, skupine se same klasificiraju na drugoj osnovi nego što to čine njihovi susjedi i administratori, i mijenjaju se prema tome kako običan tok ljudskog života - brak, smrt, neprijateljstvo i pomirba - modificiraju njihove strukture i saveze."<sup>21</sup>  
Ovo je osobito točno u slučaju velikih konfederacija poput Gamaroi naroda, koji se sastojao od više manjih skupina, što se odrazilo na jezike i dijalekte njihovog teritorija.
  - c) Osoba ili skupina koja je neki predmet izradila može, ali i ne mora biti ista osoba ili skupina koja taj predmet koristi, razmjenjuje, prodaje ili daje sakupljaču bilo na tom istome mjestu ili negdje drugdje. Često trgovanje susjednih

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<sup>21</sup> Bolton, L. (1997) A place containing many places: Museums and the use of objects to represent place in Melanesia, u: *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 1, str. 21.

aboridžinskih skupina koje opisuje McCarthy<sup>22</sup> navodi na zaključak da danas nipošto ne možemo biti sigurni da su predmet izradili članovi određene skupine, a ne njihovi susjedi. Zbog toga su muzejski predmeti klasificirani prema mjestu na kojem su nađeni, a ne prema mjestu njihovog porijekla.

2. Kada govorimo o različitim upotrebama za koje su predmeti bili izrađeni, opet se bavimo zapadnim pojmovima i percepcijama. Aboridžinskim predmetima redovno se pripisuje jedna od sljedećih etiketa:<sup>23</sup> **oružje**: toljaga, štit, bumerang, koplje, bacač koplja ... **kameno oruđe**: sjekira, sjekirica, cilkon ... **odjeća**: pokrivač od oposumove kože ... **pribor za skupljanje i pripremu hrane**: torba, štap za kopanje, žrvanj, posuda ... **pribor za lov i ribolov**: kanu, ribarska mreža ... **igračka**: weet weet ... **dekorativni predmet**: ukras za glavu, ogrlica, ploča za prsa ... ritualni predmet: dendroglif, pogrebno pokrivalo za glavu ...

Ova je podjela nezadovoljavajuća jer ne uzima u obzir moguću multifunkcionalnost aboridžinskih predmeta. Neki od ovih predmeta imali su više od jedne upotrebe: koplje se, na primjer, koristilo i kao pribor za lov i kao oružje za borbu.<sup>24</sup>

Bolton navodi da se predmeti u muzejskim zbirkama "odabiru na temelju njihove materijalnosti i njihove prenosivosti".<sup>25</sup> To nameće dodatne probleme kada se radi o pohranjivanju i prezentaciji aboridžinskih predmeta u muzejima. "Materijalnost" podrazumijeva da samo predmeti koji su opipljivi i kojima se može fizički rukovati nalaze put do zbirke. A što je s drugim oblicima aboridžinskog znanja kao što su pripovijedanje i nastanjenost predmeta duhovima? Tek nedavno su australski muzeji postali svjesni ovih pitanja. Bolton spominje sastanak pacifičkih muzejskih kustosa u Vanuatu u srpnju 1995., na kojem su sudionici razmatrali pitanje duhova koji nastavaju predmete autohtonih naroda u muzejskim zbirkama i njihovu zabrinutost za moguće posljedice po sigurnost kustosa, kao i njihovu odgovornost za tako reprezentirana mjesta.<sup>26</sup> To je očigledno bio pokušaj bavljenja autohtonim, a ne isključivo zapadnim pristupima u muzejskoj praksi.

Posljednjih godina australski su muzeji bili svjedocima pokušaja da se aboridžinska znanja prezentiraju u više "aboridžinskim" kontekstima. Audio-zapisi, video- i interaktivna računalna prezentacija postaju sve popularniji. Pa ipak, ovo stvaranje

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<sup>22</sup> McCarthy, F.D. (1939) 'Trade' in Aboriginal Australia and 'trade' relationships with Torres Strait, New Guinea and Malaya, u: *Oceania*, Vol. 9, No. 4, str. 405-38. Vol. 10, No. 1, str. 80-104. Vol. 10, No. 2, str. 171-95.

<sup>23</sup> Usporedi. Meehan, B. & Bona, J. (1986) *National Inventory of Aboriginal Artefacts*, Australian Museum, Sydney, Aboriginal Arts Board & Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

<sup>24</sup> U *The Traditional Mode of Production of the Australian Aborigines* (1987), North Ryde, NSW, Australia & London, UK, Angus & Robertson, str. 67, F.G.G. Rose potvrđuje da "[g]ranica između toga je li se predmet koristio kao oružje za borbu ili kao pribor za lov ili sakupljanje hrane često nije bila jasno definirana."

<sup>25</sup> Bolton, op.cit., str. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., str. 31.

"aboridžinskih" konteksta postiže se uglavnom zapadnim sredstvima: magnetofonom, videom ili touch-screenom umjesto stvarnom osobom ili skupinom ljudi.<sup>27</sup>

"Prenosivost" podrazumijeva da samo oni predmeti koji se mogu fizički prenijeti od mjesta svog porijekla do muzeja postaju muzejskim predmetima. U slučaju Gamaroi građe, muzejsko je osoblje često zanemarivalo ovo načelo, osobito doslovnom sječom izrezbarenih stabala s muških inicijacijskih mjesta i njihovim kamionskim transportom do glavnih gradova dviju saveznih država.

## Pohranjivanje predmeta

Aboridžinski predmeti u muzejskim zbirkama redovno su pohranjeni na četiri različita načina:

1. **Na otvorenom, na dugim metalnim policama:** predmeti srednje veličine od tvrdog materijala koji nisu lako podložni oštećivanju, npr., oružje i pribor za lov, igračke; povremeno se ovako pohranjuju i izrezbarena i izbrazdana debila;
2. **U dugim, ravnim ladicama, položeni na ili umotani u velike, tanke komade papira:** mali i predmeti srednje veličine koji zahtijevaju pažljivo rukovanje i osjetljivi su na prašinu, npr., odjeća, drveno oružje;
3. **U manjim kartonskim kutijama, umotani u nekoliko slojeva tankog papira:** mali predmeti osjetljivi i fizički i kulturno, npr., pogrebna pokrivala za glavu napravljena od gipsa, cilkoni od mekšeg kamena; skupine malih predmeta iste vrste nađeni na istoj lokaciji, npr., arheološka građa;
4. **Na otvorenom, u posebnoj niši ili odjeljku:** pojedini predmeti ili skupine velikih predmeta iste vrste, npr., kanui; ponekad kulturno osjetljivi predmeti kojima je pristup ograničen, npr., dendroglifi. Ponekad su ovi predmeti zajedno vezani u okomitom položaju pomoću metalnog lanca ili stavljani pojedinačno u zaštićeniji odjeljak u depou. Povremeno su pohranjeni vodoravno na otvorenim policama, ili pričvršćeni na posebne stalke i prekriveni lakom tkaninom. Samo su u jednom slučaju dendroglifi bili pohranjeni u kutijama pojedinačno prilagođene veličine, čime se u potpunosti štite od prašine i opetovana rukovanja. Kako se dendroglifi smatraju kulturno osjetljivom građom, obično se pohranjuju odvojeno, u području kojem je pristup ograničen.

U depou, police obično zauzimaju središnje mjesto, s ladicama i odjeljcima položenim bočno. Police i ladice klasificirane su i etiketirane prema općem porijeklu predmeta u njima. Tako su svi predmeti iz sjeverno-centralnog New South

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<sup>27</sup> Sjećam se aboridžinske izložbe u Australskom muzeju u Sydneyu u svibnju-lipnju 1997. godine, na kojoj su australskoj publici prezentirane dvije priče u kazivanju aboridžinskih osoba iz sjevernog New South Walesa, zabilježene na magnetofonsku vrpcu. Snimka bi se aktivirala svaki put kad bi posjetitelj stao na određeno mjesto (rekonstrukciju spilje s otiscima ruku). Izuzetak u ovoj praksi uvođenje je aboridžinskih vodiča koji odgovaraju na pitanja posjetitelja u novome melburnškom muzeju.

Walesa i južnog Queenslanda pohranjeni na jednom mjestu, što i opet ovisi o njihovoj vrsti.

Metoda pohrane pojedinih predmeta ovisi uvelike o kustosovoj vještini, znanju i sklonostima. Jedna te ista vrsta predmeta može biti pohranjena na dva (rjeđe više) različitih načina. Na primjer, neki kustosi doživljavaju drveno oružje kao osjetljivo na vanjske utjecaje i stavljaju ga u ladicu obloženu papirom, dok ga drugi naprosto pohranjuju na otvorenoj polici.

Pokušaj da se aboridžinski predmet opisan u katalogu zbirke pronađe na polici ili u ladici često je mukotrpan proces, čak i za same kustose. Teškoća leži u činjenici da su svi aboridžinski predmeti iz cijele Australije pohranjeni u istom prostoru (obično u samo jednoj prostoriji za glavnu, javnosti dostupnu, aboridžinsku zbirku), koji je dalje podijeljen prema vrsti predmeta i teritoriju, gotovo nikad prema pojedinim jezičnim skupinama. K tome, katalogi na karticama, poput onoga koji još postoji u Australskom muzeju u Sydneyu, i opet klasificiraju aboridžinsku građu prema njenoj vrsti, a ne prema njenom porijeklu. Istraživač neminovno provodi nekoliko dana radeći bilješke o predmetima koje želi vidjeti (ako je to moguće), dodatnih nekoliko dana (ako ne tjedana) ugovarajući vrijeme posjete depou s kustosom odgovornim za taj odsjek i/ili odnose s javnošću i, kad se konačno nađe u depou, potreban mu je još barem jedan dan da pronađe predmete na licu mjesta. Konačno, viđene/fotografirane predmete treba usporediti s njihovim opisima u katalogu, što lako može biti pogubno za živce ako istraživači nemaju na raspolaganju sliku dotičnog predmeta (bilo muzejsku fotografiju bilo slikovnu dokumentaciju iz objavljenog materijala).

Danas većina muzeja koristi računalno katalogiziranje i prenosi podatke sa starih, tipkanih kataložnih kartica u računalne baze podataka. To omogućava osoblju i istraživačima da dođu do postojećih (često mizernih) podataka brže i učinkovitije, kao i da ih sami pretražuju prema određenom kriteriju, kao što su geografska lokacija ili sakupljač. Australski muzej jedini je izuzetak od tog pravila, jer se još uvijek uvelike oslanja na stari sustav kataloga na karticama.

Katalog aboridžinskih predmeta obično sadrži podatke o nizu pojedinosti, od kojih obično nisu sve poznate. Ti su podaci često izvađeni i kompilirani sa starijih dokumenata (registara i kataloga) i, zbog svih prethodno navedenih razloga, najčešće nepotpuni. prikazuje kataloške podatke o aboridžinskim predmetima u muzejskim zbirkama.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Popis uključuje sve kategorije koje sam susrela u muzejskim katalozima, dok, naravno, u većini muzeja neće sve postojati, ili će neke biti međusobno zamjenjive.

## Politika muzeja prema aboridžinskoj građi

Nakon vatrenih rasprava o aboridžinskoj kulturnoj baštini u australskim ustanovama 1980-ih i 1990-ih,<sup>29</sup> muzeji, knjižnice i druge riznice aboridžinske građe bili su prisiljeni zauzeti drukčije stajalište i donijeti smjernice za novu politiku u odnosu na aboridžinsku i otočku građu. Kako su brojne stručne studije osporavale "vlasništvo" muzeja nad autohtonim predmetima (i znanjima), pojavio se novi pojam *skrbljenja*.<sup>30</sup> Kroz više od dvadeset godina, muzeji i druge kulturne ustanove proizvele su povećani broj zakonskih dokumenata koji (re)definiraju njihovu poziciju u odnosu na ovu građu. Danas australski savezni muzeji ne djeluju kao vlasnici, već kao skrbnici nad aboridžinskim predmetima u svojim zbirkama u ime aboridžinskih zajednica. Na federalnoj razini, ovu ulogu muzeja i ostalih federalnih ustanova regulira i sankcionira niz zakona Commonwealtha, uključujući *Zakon o zaštiti nacionalnih parkova i prirode* (1975.), *Zakon o australskim muzejima* (1980.), *Zakon o zaštiti aboridžinske i otočke baštine* (1984.) i dokument *Previous Possessions, New Obligations*<sup>31</sup> Udruženja odbora australskih muzeja. Svaka savezna država također ima vlastite zakone o autohtonoj građi. Povrh toga, pojedini savezni muzeji razvili su svoje vlastite protokole, u skladu s navedenim.<sup>32</sup>

Ovakva politika rezultirala je konkretnim promjenama u muzejskoj praksi. Zbirke "svete/tajne" i osteološke građe općenito su zatvorene za nove nabavke, osim gdje to ne zahtijevaju aboridžinske zajednice. Nešto je građe otpisano i vraćeno zajednicama u skladu s odobrenim zahtjevima za repatrijaciju. To se odnosi uglavnom na ljudske posmrtno ostatke.

Opće nezadovoljstvo uskim, jednostranim pristupom autohtonoj građi rezultiralo je njegovim povlačenjem pred pritiscima za raznolikošću interdisciplinarnih stajališta bliskih autohtonim narodima. U prezentaciji aboridžinske građe, muzeji odnedavno čine napore za promicanje autohtona stanovišta osiguravajući izložbeni prostor u skladu sa zahtjevima okoliša, zapošljavajući aboridžinsko osoblje kao vodiče i tumače izložbi, i upuštajući se češće u konzultaciju s aboridžinskim zajednicama. Samostalni

<sup>29</sup> Vidi Attwood, B. & Arnold, J. (eds) (1992) *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, Bundoora, Vic, La Trobe University Press; Healy, C. (1994) *Histories and collecting: Museums, objects and memories*, u: Darian-Smith, K. & Hamilton, P. (eds) *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, str. 33-54, Melbourne, Oxford University Press; McBryde, I. (ed.) (1985) *Who Owns the Past?*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press; i Rigg, V. (1994) *Curators of the colonial idea: The museum and the exhibition as agents of bourgeois ideology in 19th century NSW*, u: *Public History Review*, Vol. 3, str. 188-203.

<sup>30</sup> Vidjeti, na primjer, Mulvaney, D.J. (1989) *Aboriginal Australia: Custodianship or ownership? A reflection on the National Estate*, u: *Heritage News*, Vol. 11, No. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Previous Possessions, New Obligations: A Plain English Summary of Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, [1993], North Fitzroy, Vic, Museums Australia Inc.

<sup>32</sup> Australski je muzej, na primjer, razradio Politiku i procedure za aboridžinske i otočke zbirke i srodna pitanja, [n.d.], Sydney, Australian Museum.



i nesamostalni stručnjaci odigrali su važnu ulogu u zagovaranju i promicanju prava autohtonih naroda, a etičke smjernice društvenih istraživanja proširene su i na sakupljanje, izlaganje, upravljanje i promicanje autohtone građe.<sup>33</sup> Staromodni dijelovi muzeja, poput Galerije pacifičkih kultura pri Muzeju Južne Australije u Adelaidei, stekli su dvosmislen počasni naslov *muzej unutar muzeja*,<sup>34</sup> dok nova, postkolonijalna iščitavanja multikulturalnih prostora stvaraju nove društvene i muzejske krajobrazne.

Unatoč takvim dalekosežnim promjenama i suradnji s autohtonim zajednicama, muzeji se i dalje (i možda sve više) doživljavaju kao *gatekeepers*<sup>35</sup> koji provode kontrolu nad autohtonom građom prema vlastitim kriterijima: ograničavajući pristup samonametnutim mehanizmima kontrole, distribucijom selekcioniranih podataka o svojim zbirkama, i ubirući profite u obliku naplate za istraživanje i publiciranje. Iako je politika saveznih muzeja da aboridžinske zajednice obavještavaju o građi koja dolazi iz određenog područja, ispada da Aboridžini, izuzev lokalnih aboridžinskih zemaljskih vijeća, nisu u potpunosti svjesni postojanja svoje materijalne kulture u muzejima. Za većinu Aboridžina, siromašni uvjeti života u ruralnim krajevima i nepoznavanje zakonskih procedura često su dovoljni da ih spriječe u putovanju kako bi istraživali povijest svojih obitelji i druge izvore zaključane u "velikim" ustanovama.<sup>36</sup> Lokalni aboridžinski pričuvni centri koje je pokrenulo i koje vodi aboridžinsko osoblje, ponekad kao privatne zbirke s nekolicinom predmeta koje su vratili savezni muzeji,<sup>37</sup> predstavljaju prihvatljivu (i često priželjkivanu) opciju.

Dok federalni i savezni muzeji i arhivi obično zahtijevaju da se poštuju zakonske procedure za pristup građi ili za nabavu kopija fotografija (ponekad po nerazumnim cijenama), lokalni pričuvni centri često velikodušno pružaju sve potrebne podatke, oslanjajući se na moralne prije nego na zakonske kriterije. Ispitivanje o

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<sup>33</sup> Vidjeti Parrott (1990) Legislating to protect Australia's material cultural heritage - guidelines for cultural resources professionals, u: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 31, str. 75-82; Stanton, J., et al. (1990) Positions and policies of museums in Australia on human skeletal remains, u: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 31, str. 52-60; i Davidson, I. (1991) Notes for a code of ethics for Australian archaeologists working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, u: *Australian Archaeology*, Vol. 32, str. 61-63. Dodatne informacije o pravima na aboridžinsko kulturno i intelektualno vlasništvo dostupne su na: <http://ictp.lawnet.com.au>.

<sup>34</sup> Usp. Fergie, D. (1998) Unsettled history: Common sense, cannibalism and cultural displays, paper presented at the Cultural Studies Association of Australia conference "Postcoloniality/Cultural Studies: Representing difference", Adelaide, University of South Australia.

<sup>35</sup> Usp. Gostin, O. (1995) Accessing the Dreaming: Heritage, Conservation and Tourism at Mungo National Park, Adelaide, University of South Australia, str. 107.

<sup>36</sup> Vidjeti, na primjer, Fourmile, H. (1989) Who owns the past? Aborigines as captives of the archives, u: *Aboriginal History*, Vol. 13, Pt 1, str. 1-8, Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

<sup>37</sup> Npr., Muzej aboridžinske kulture u Brewarrini i "Goondee", Aboridžinski pričuvni centar, u Lightning Ridgeu, koji vode Roy i June Barker. Potonji ima zbirku arheoloških predmeta koje je vratio Australski muzej.

mjeri u kojoj su Aboridžini upoznati sa sudbinom vlastite kulture, preostaje da se izvede u daljnjem istraživanju. Samo je nekolicina dosad podigla veo prašine i zane-marenosti kojim je aboridžinska građa bila prekrivena u gotovo dvije stotine godi-na skrivene i ušutkane povijesti.

**Prilog 6.05** Popis muzejskih kataložnih podataka

Identifikacijski broj:

Registracijski broj:

Naziv / predmet (vrsta):

Predmet:

Ograničen:

Status:

Oštećenje:

Zemlja:

Savezna država / pokrajina / područje / okrug / regija:

(Specifično) područje:

Povijest / način nabave:

Datum nabave:

Nabavljen od:

Sakupljač:

Datum sakupljanja:

Br. zbirke sakupljača:

Datum registracije / datum ulaska u inventar:

Kulturna / jezična skupina:

Odsjek:

(Trajna) lokacija

/ jedinica + polica + dio:

Privremena lokacija:

Zbirka (naziv):

Evidencijski br.:

Prethodni kontrolni br.: / stari reg. br.:

Dimenzije / mjere / veličina:

Uobičajena pohrana: dio predmeta:

Uobičajena pohrana:

Trenutna lokacija: dio predmeta:

Status:

Lokacija:

(Kratki) opis:

Interpretacija:

Pojedinosti proizvodnje: metoda:

Osoba / izrađivač + spol:

Uloga:

Mjesto:

Datum:

Popratne pojedinosti: osoba:

Datum:

Mjesto:

Bilješke:

Pojedinosti o predmetu: vrsta:

Dokumentacija (pojedinosti):

izvori / primarni:

sekundarni:

Dokumentacijska evidencija:

Veza s drugim predmetima:

Status copyrighta:

Vlasnik:

Izložba:

Restauriranje: znak predmeta:

Znak spremišta:

Slike:

Unio: datum:

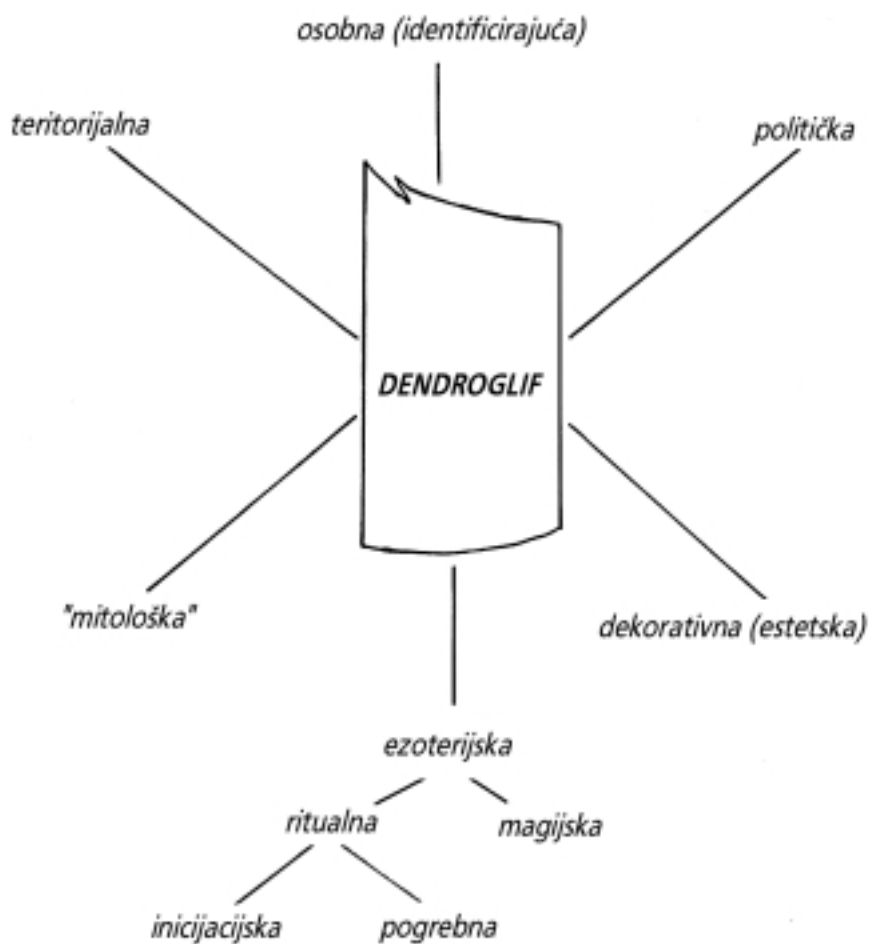
Uredio: datum:

Napomene:

Reference / Reference u literaturi:

Fotografije:

Prilog 6.04 Dendroglif: moguća značenja i funkcije



Prevela: Leonarda Kovačić