ANTHROPOS

114.2019: 495–513

Tracing the Biographies of Objects and Lives

Inbal Livne

Abstract. – This article focuses on the Tibetan collections of the National Museum of Scotland, which were formed by colonial agents from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century. The meanings and values given to Tibetan material culture in the British colonial context was often predicated on modes of categorisation, whereby objects could be denoted as "artistic," "ethnographic," "religious" or as symbols authenticating personal experience and family ties. This article examines how these categories, and the values given to them by collectors, can be used to unpack a complex series of relationships between objects and people in the context of British-Indian colonial society. *[Tibet, India, empire, colonialism, object biography, ethnography]*

Inbal Livne, received her PhD from the University of Stirling in 2013, as part of an AHRC funded award in collaboration with the National Museum of Scotland on Tibetan collections in Scottish museums. – Currently she is head of collections at the Powell-Cotton Museum, Birchington (Kent, England) having previously worked at the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland. – Her publications include: "'Museum' Sites in Early Twentieth-Century Edinburgh" (*Museums History Journal* 2013.6.1: 39–55) and "The Many Purposes of Missionary Work. Annie Royle Taylor as Missionary, Travel Writer, Collector, and Empire Builder" (in: H. Nielssen, I. M. Okkenhaug, and K. Hestad-Skeie [eds.], Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Unto the Ends of the World. Leiden 2011: 43–70). – See also References Cited. Email: Inbal.livne@quexmuseum.org

1 Introduction

The history of British colonial agents and their interest in collecting material culture is both long and rich. For most British subjects working in the Empire, the nature of their work, or their relationship to imperial strategies, impacted significantly on the collecting choices they made. In regards to colonial agents working for national or international agencies – such as the military or missionary organisations – clear, shared ideological concerns provided a structured way of "seeing" the non-European world, allowing for collective participation in imperialist discourse and colonial practice. However, this article will focus on a group of men and women who are less easily connected by shared ideologies and working practices. These "colonial collectors," as I suggest we term them, form a mosaic of political agents, tourists, and women thrust into life in the Empire by their relationship to men, who held roles of power and governance in British India.

These collectors will be examined through a series of linked case studies, based on the Tibetan objects now held at the National Museum of Scotland (NMS). The Tibetan collections at NMS provide an excellent resource for a study of this nature, as over eighty percent of Tibetan objects can be clearly provenanced to specific individuals. Despite this, most of the collectors examined in this article only have an archival presence in the museum itself, and generally such traces can only be unpacked through the collections themselves. These reveal biographical details of both objects and people, and the complex mosaic of relations that existed between the two within the paradigm of colonial collecting. What stands out particularly within these collections is the way that terms used to categorise objects – "art," "ethnographic," "religious," "authentic" – allowed these relationships to be malleable and even to change. As objects passed from one person to another, on their way from Tibet to the Museum their values became

tied to different categories, bringing different aspects of these relationships to the fore.

1.1 Colonial Collectors

A distinctive trait of both missionary and military collections of Tibetan material culture, collected from India's Himalayan borders of Tibet itself, was that such collectors were quick to define "Tibetan" material culture and its aesthetic sensibilities. For military collectors, this occurred largely as a result of the 1904 Expedition,[1] which saw a huge influx of Tibetan material culture into British homes and museums, and was a turning point for the definition of Tibetan "art," particularly Buddhist art (Harris 2012: 49–78). Missionaries, mostly collecting a decade or two before the 1904 Expedition, were quick to focus on objects they considered specifically "Tibetan," despite often working with or being resident near other cultural groups, such as Bhutias, Lepchas, or Bengalis (Livne 2013: 114–116). Such a focus was often linked to missionary ideologies and a desire to focus the hearts and minds of supporters in Britain on those cultures most distant, exotic, and in need of missionary intervention.

By contrast, the colonial collectors examined in this article often gathered a broader range of "Himalayan" material culture, including objects from Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, and West Bengal. In this context, what made an object authentically "Tibetan" included a broader range of understandings of the term "authenticity" itself and was predicated by the desire to categorise objects in ways that gave them quite personal sets of "values."

Colonial collectors did share some of the characteristics visible within more locatable collecting groups. Like military officers, many other British agents came from a long line of imperial workers, their families moving back and forth between Britain and India across the generations. Most of them also lived in areas bordering Tibet and were in close proximity to these other British agents, who had differing strategies, emphases, and opinions about Tibetan material culture. As collectors, these individuals all remained framed by the wider imperial discourse that became embodied in their actions, including the process of collecting. For example, racial prejudice and a belief in Christian superiority were not confined to missionary discourse nor was a concern for hierarchy and status the sole purview of the military.

Yet, as I have already stated, these individuals, who formed part of a loosely knit group we might identify as "colonial collectors," were far less identifiable as a community (of collectors) than other groups, such as military personnel or missionaries. How, then, do we analyse the way in which their Tibetan collections were constructed and categorised? Furthermore, how can we make visible the ways in which material things were attributed specific roles by these collectors, thereby integrating them into the British-Indian society and reflecting wider concerns about imperial ideologies and colonial practices?

Robert Young (2001: 16) examines imperialism and colonialism as constituent parts of empire: imperialism as a structure of empire, bureaucratically controlled by government from a centre, developed for ideological and financial reasons; and colonialism as a structure of empire developed specifically for settlement by individual communities or for commercial purposes by trading companies. Young argues that imperialism was a centralised project of power, somewhat abstract, whereas colonialism functioned as a physical activity, often economically driven and peripheral to central government. Therefore, whilst we can analyse imperialism as a concept, colonialism must be analysed as a practice (Young 2001: 17).

For the purposes of this article, this differentiation assists an understanding of how a varied group of British agents, each with a slightly different relationship to empire, visualised their encounters with Tibetan culture. The collectors examined here lived "colonially" in terms of their relationship to empire, to one another, and to Indian culture. However, their relationship with Tibetans, and more specifically Tibetan material culture, operated over a physical and cultural distance, with encounters taking place in the "contact zone" of the Indian territory where the British community was politically and socially dominant.[2] For colonial collectors, living within the stable British-Indian community, often for generations, their interaction with Tibetan material culture brought Tibet

1 The 1904 Expedition, also known as the "Tibet Mission" or, more commonly, the Younghusband Expedition, was an ostensibly diplomatic mission aimed at opening up trading routes between British India and Tibet, in order to mitigate Russian interests in Tibet. However, this quickly escalated into a military incursion, under the direction of Captain Francis Younghusband, who hoped to bring Tibetan territory under British control.

2 A contact zone can be defined as a "social space … where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt 1992: 4).

into their daily enactment of colonial practices within the Indian territory. The ways this was manifested are the traces now visible through the collections themselves, and the information stored in museums and archives about the collecting process. Richard H. Davis, in his biographical analysis of Tipu's Tiger, notes that in its present location within the Victoria and Albert Museum, the viewer can no longer turn the crank and hear it roar, reminding them that "they can no longer vicariously participate in the colonial enterprise" (1997: 184). Yet, what this article aims to demonstrate is the variety of ways in which objects *were* able to be of service to collectors and sometimes to the people they were collected from, and how their movement through time and place recorded this ever-changing process.

1.2 Trials and Traces: Tracing Biographies of Objects and People

The idea of unpacking the biographical detail inherent in objects as a way of exploring their social value is not a new one (see Kopytoff 1986). Equally, that objects are socially meaningful on many levels, and both individuals and societies attach different moral and economic values as a result of historical experience (both personal and communal) is a well documented notion (Pearce 1995: 16). Christopher B. Steiner (2011: 210) is particularly keen to highlight this malleability of object meanings and to show how their biographical presence can be woven into both personal biographies and historical moments in different ways. This way of seeing – the biographical model – is, therefore, well served to the project at hand.

Steiner's reading of Igor Kopytoff highlights the dangers in assuming objects have agency without people (Steiner 2011: 209f.). This article aims to use the biographies of objects to uncover the biographies of people – to unpack the values, ideas, and experiences tied up in the process of collecting. This is an approach whereby objects' voices can be heard without reliance on archival material (which – as noted – is missing for most of the subjects of this present study). This framework also recognises the importance of personal connections between people and objects, which can, as Sarah Byrne notes (2011: 308), forefront local agency, but also encourage a deeper consideration of the face-to-face interactions between different people and between people and things.

This approach, looking for agency in objects and collectors, partially allies itself with Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory, particularly his suggestion that one needs to "follow the actors themselves" (cited in Byrne 2011: 308). By understanding the movement of objects and the way in which they form new articulations in changing contexts, we can explore their roles as mediators in encounters between collectors and Tibetan material culture. The enactment of colonial practices by collectors led to the continuous remaking of "colonialism" as a concept and continually changed relationships between different forms of agency. Therefore, the only way to clearly distinguish particular collecting processes is to follow individual collectors and their objects as they move through these changing frames of reference.

For this article I will therefore make particular reference to Sarah Byrne's interpretation (2011) of Latour's model, using her concept of "trials and traces." Byrne maps these biographical relations between objects and people by following the experiences of different individuals (the trials of the collectors) to unpack the relationships and agencies inherent in collections (the traces). In conceptualising objects as traces, through which agency can be revealed (2011: 308), Byrne offers a model for making salient those details Kopytoff (1986: 67) suggests are masked by more traditional or formal ways of viewing material culture. These "traces" can be found on objects themselves; through physical marking, labelling, and modifications, reflecting decisions made about and around objects. But the trace can also be the actual object, its very presence at a specific place and time reflective of the agency of those involved in its movement (Byrne 2011: 308).

Through the "trials," we can track associations between motivations, access, relations (including agency), intent, and place. In objects, we can trace authenticities, as objects mediated different responses to themselves and the situations within which they were given public and private roles. The specific examples within this article explore how the construction of something "authentic" – its categorisation as "art" or "ethnography," or as the less tangible "experience" – was made real through objects, and how those objects helped to define the biographies of their collectors, revealing their agency in the process. I will use the examples in this article to trace these associations through objects across time and place, through a series of different collectors, each of whom brings to the fore a varied set of associations, tying them to other collectors, imperial concerns, colonial practices, and personal experiences; all of which were authenticated in specific ways. I will follow these biographical traces not chronologically, but

through the markers left by particular experiences and ways of viewing Tibetan culture that thread together these disparate collections, thereby revealing which "trials" produced the specific "traces" still evident in the collections today (Byrne 2011: 310).

2 Colonial Collectors: Biographical Case Studies

In the following, I will work through a series of short case studies, linking these varied trials and traces inherent in the objects examined. Through these case studies, I will examine how objects became part of the performance of colonial life, and were implicated as "objects of art" versus "objects of religion" and the effect this had on the collector's attitude towards the authenticity and value of their collection.

2.1 Isabelle Tyrie: Familial Ties and Object Legacies

In 1989, the estate of Isabelle Tyrie bequeathed a large portion her father's Tibetan collection to the Royal Scottish Museum (RSM).[3] These Tibetan items had formed part of a larger collection, gathered by Colonel David Alexander Tyrie from his first appointment in India in 1888 until his death in 1946.[4] Colonel Tyrie had a dual role, as an agent of empire and an agent of commerce, being both an associate of the Port Gloucester Jute Manufacturing Co. Ltd., and Assistant Deputy Commissioner to the Governor of Bengal. Whilst stationed in India, the family lived in a large house near Calcutta, said to have been built by Clive of India, and spent their summer months in the hill station of Darjeeling.[5]

Hill stations, and Darjeeling in particular, were important places that manifested ideas about British "traditional" life. Thanks to the temperate climate, Darjeeling offered an environment where life could revolve around the family unit, meaning that children did not need to be sent away and husbands and wives could remain together throughout the year. Whereas the British population in India as a whole was overwhelmingly male, in the hill stations women and children equalled, or exceeded, men (Kennedy 1996: 7). Therefore, the social dynamic within the hill stations was markedly different to that of the plains, allowing residents to live a more traditional, "British" way of life, or at least what they imagined a more traditional "British" life to be.

Isabelle Tyrie never left the family home. When Colonel Tyrie retired, the family returned to their native Dundee. Following the death of her mother, she remained with her father in their house in Dundee, which they had purchased in 1920, and lived there until a decade before her death in 1989 (Tyrie n. d: 3). Not only did she stay in her family home, but following the death of her father very little was changed within the house itself, leaving the collections he had built up in his life time *in situ* (Tyrie n. d.: 1–27). Isabelle Tyrie, therefore, became curator to the legacy of her father. As sole custodian of the collection for over forty years, she was vital to both the construction of Tibet for British audiences through the collection, and the construction of her father's legacy in relation to the objects he had collected.

Isabelle Tyrie's custodianship sought to create a static, unchanging vision of Tibetan material culture as displayed in the family home, built around a framework of reverence to her father. In this context, objects became a series of heirlooms that had little to do with the representation of Tibet at all. An heirloom, by its very nature weaves, through a narrative, a significance of blood relation at the expense of a larger view of history and causality (Stewart 1993: 137). Heirlooms, then, define who one is in the historical sense, allowing objects to act as vehicles for bringing the past into the present (cf. Weiner 1985: 210). By living in an

3 Now known as the National Museum of Scotland, its previous moniker had been the Royal Scottish Museum (1904–1995). Other items from the Tyrie family were bequeathed to Dundee's McManus Museum and Art Gallery, the Tyrie family's "local" museum, which was also bequeathed a selection of Japanese and Chinese items from the collection.

4 The Tyries left India in 1920 and Mrs Tyrie died in 1928, after which Colonel Tyrie and his daughter Isabelle continued to travel, – and to collect extensively – including trips to South Africa, New Zealand, Japan, the West Indies, and South America (see Anonymous 1946 – copy of obituary notice courtesy of Christina Donald, McManus Museum and Art Gallery).

5 Clive of India was a founding father of Company rule and, therefore, an almost mythical character in the history of the Empire to those who came after him. The importance of this association is clear through the fact that Isabelle Tyrie remembered this information about her childhood home, when so many of her memories appear partial (Tyrie n. d.: 4–6). There is no date on the document, but it appears to have taken place not long before she died (in 1989), when she was resident in a care home. The document seems to have been given to NMS along with the bequest of objects in 1989. The interview documents her early life in India and her time in Dundee, including the roles her father undertook in both places and the family's social circumstances.

unchanging setting as arranged by her deceased parents, Isabelle Tyrie's home placed the collection in something of an entropic state, as associations and agencies hidden in the collection were lost through the death of her father and the passing of time.

Yet those associations remain inherent in the collection itself and can be retrieved from within it. The Tyrie Tibetan collection at NMS comprises of sixty objects, the most prominent pieces forming part of an altar service, consisting of a portable altar table made of gilded and silvered hammered copper, two gilded ritual daggers, and a gilded *dorje* (see the figure below).

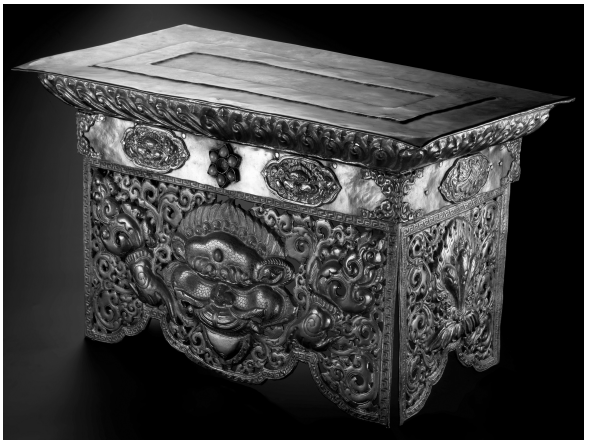

Fig. 1: Portable altar, ceremonial dagger (purba) and dorje, Tyrie collection. © National Museums (With kind permission from National Museums Scotland)

Colonel Tyrie began collecting in around 1905, a year after the 1904 Expedition had flooded the Western market with Tibetan Buddhist material culture, most of which had been acquired directly from sites such as monasteries. Tyrie, however, probably acquired his altar service via a (wealthy) Tibetan individual, for use within the home. He may even have commissioned the items especially. Other objects within the collection are decorated in a similar style, such as a large copper ewer with silver and gilt panels, raised decoration, and turquoise and carnelian (accession number A.1990.85). These objects are in many ways the antithesis of the "Tibetan style" outlined by Lilian Le Mesurier (1904) in her scholarly work on Tibetan design, discussed later in this article,which focused on the simplicity of Tibetan design, with a particular emphasis on the fact that "authentic" Tibetan artefacts did not show the influence of neighbouring cultures.

However, Tyrie's items spoke to the aesthetics of late Victorian and Edwardian tastes for the exotic and spectacular.[6] The type of authenticity they render visible is therefore quite different to that defined by the more academically minded Le Mesurier, who considered the inclusion of such items spurious, as they did not reflect a Tibetan style unadulterated by outside influences. In scholarly circles, most of Tyrie's collection could have been considered slightly erroneous. For example, the "silver" cup stands and cup covers are in fact made of a cheaper white metal compound, and many of the semi-precious stones set into jewellery pieces are in fact either glass or small chips of turquoise and carnelian.[7]

The decorative styles and the processes used in the objects' manufacture are also not typical of Tibetan craftsmanship, but are Newari.[8] Newari metalworkers had long been resident within Tibetan territory and were an important part of Tibet's trading network. Many of the traders the Tyries would have encountered in Darjeeling would have either been Newari or selling Newari goods. Such items were traded and used across the Himalayas, including by Tibetans, but are absent from the earlier collections of Tibetan material in Scottish museums, made by collectors who perhaps also saw Newari crafts as very much distinct from the Tibetan artefacts they were focused on collecting (Livne 2013). Many of the objects in the Tyrie collection, including both utilitarian and decorative items, are Newari made, showing the abundance of accessible Newari material in the Darjeeling area and painting a richer, and more accurate, portrait of the diverse Darjeeling communities in the early twentieth century.[9]

6 By the late 19th century, as Deborah Cohen (2006: 56–65) notes, "art" had entered the homes of the middle classes through the convergence of "art" and "commerce" and the proliferation of "artistic" and "exotic" possessions. Commercial establishments, such as Liberty's of London, played on this emerging taste for exotic possessions, which were becoming readily available within Britain. For the Tyries, such objects were available to purchase first hand, furnishing their very British home in India, much as their home in Britain would have been furnished.

7 NMS conservator Jim Tate (n. d.) discovered that the "silver" within the collection had extremely low silver content.

8 With thanks to John Clarke (curator of the Asia Department, Victoria and Albert Museum) for his help in the analysis of these objects. Newari craftspeople, originally from Nepal, travelled to and settled in Tibetan communities and were famed for their metalworking style, which was popular in Tibet. For a brief summary of Newari metalworking see Pal (1985: 81f.).

9 The rise of the tea industry caused a huge population influx into the Darjeeling area, many of whom were not representative of the "hill people" indigenous to the area, but who were Bengalis from further south and Nepalese Ghurkhas

Other objects also show the mixing of styles, such as a small box with a hinged lid, documented as a "dice holder," which appears to reuse bone plaques similar to those found on monastic bone aprons.[10] Such aprons were items of ceremonial apparel, worn by monks during certain Buddhist practices, and were known to have been taken by military collectors during the 1904 Expedition. With the inclusion of turquoise and bone on an engraved brass box – all materials and techniques established by the collections made during the 1904 Expedition as being used in authentically Tibetan artefacts – this item pulls together different elements of Tibetan design to create a pastiche of a Tibetan object. Though taking its cues from post-1904 concepts of what formed Tibetan art, this "dice box" is precisely the sort of item that scholars of the time considered to be spurious and inauthentic.

One scholar in particular, L. A. Waddell, was highly vocal on this issue. A major turning point in the Western understanding of Tibetan material culture, and the culture of Tibetan Buddhism in particular, had been the publication of Waddell's research within a Tibetan Buddhist temple, when he was stationed in Darjeeling as sanitation officer in the 1880s (Harris 2012: 44–47). His book "The Buddhism of Tibet" (1894) was based on the artefacts found within a monastic setting – not in the market places and bazaars that dominated the town centre – and brought together a variety of items, varying in styles, provenance, and "authenticity." Though objects bought from market stalls were not always tourist pieces, by the late nineteenth century the items available had been implicated as "spurious antiques" by scholars like Waddell and those who followed his methodologies of collecting and analysis (Le Mesurier 1903: 261). If, as Susan Pearce notes, the "essence of a spurious artefact … is the once-decent artefact perverted into something it is not as a result of collecting activity" (1995: 294), then the meaning of Waddell's words were clear. A *gau* (amulet box), for example, purchased from a market stall, without going through the process of consecration – and, therefore, authentication – and placed into a "collection," was inauthentic.

This opinion was decisively influential to collectors with scholarly interests, but for every Waddell who shunned the curio markets and was willing to go to great lengths for "authentic" Tibetan objects that were used by Tibetans, ideally from within authentic Tibetan settings such as the monastery, there were ten colonial agents like Tyrie. These were collectors who had an idea of what "authentic" Tibetan material should look like, thanks to its new visibility post-1904, but were less concerned with provenance, manufacture, age, or use than their scholarly counterparts. Rather than serving a scholarly purpose, these items would become embedded in the domestic space of colonial collectors. This type of object, often classed as souvenirs, probably made up the bulk of Tibetan objects sold to the British in Darjeeling in the early twentieth century.[11] These items were made as a result of Tibetan acknowledgement of Western collecting desires. Through their subsequent development of these styles and object types, Tibetan craftspeople injected themselves into that market, making Tibetan agency visible in the formation of Western ideas about Tibetan material culture.

Therefore, within the material form of these objects, we see Tibetan and Newari agency come to the fore. The Tyrie collection as a whole, including those items now in Dundee's McManus Art Gallery and Museum, are all made of lesser-quality materials made to look like silver, turquoise, and coral. At first glance, many of the objects appear to be made using recognisably Tibetan decorative styles, but on closer inspection, in fact, they are a mixture of styles and materials in forms that were not necessarily Tibetan at all, but paid homage to a variety of Himalayan influences.

The Newari-made altar set conforms to many of the stylistic notions within early-twentieth-century Britain as to what a Tibetan altar should look like, based on knowledge acquired in 1904, including its motifs, materials (which in this case are genuine silver and gold), and form. By the time Colonel Tyrie was collecting these pieces, probably post-1905, the influx of Tibetan material from the 1904 Expedition into the area had both height-

from across the border. Labour also came in from Bhutan and Tibet, so that the community in the hills, the haven of Britishness, was in fact built on otherness.

10 This object probably acquired the name "dice holder" when it came into the RSM with dice inside. It is best understood as a decorative box with a hinged lid. The bone plaques on the lid have a series of small holes drilled into them, similar to those found on bone apron (accession number A.1905.352), also held at the NMS and collected during the 1904 Expedition. The holes were most likely for the purposes of stringing the plaques in their original form, suggesting the plaques had been repurposed. The "turquoise" surrounding the plaques is of poor quality and may in fact be paste or dust particles glued together.

11 Clare Harris has noted the voracity with which such items were manufactured and sold to Western audiences' intent on owning "Tibetan" objects (1999: 11).

ened its appeal to Western collectors and, judging by the prices such items were reaching in London auction houses,[12] probably pushed many "authentic" pieces out of the reach of colonial collectors living in the Himalayan foothills. Tibetan and Newari craftspeople appear to have been quick to fill this void, which coincided with an increased use of Darjeeling as a holiday destination for British-Indian residents, and produced items, such as the "dice box," which were outwardly Tibetan without any of the markers of authenticity that had been expounded by experts (such as Waddell). This careful mixture of "authentic" and "inauthentic," and the innate understanding of the balance between the two, suggests craftspeople were creating new kinds of Tibetan objects, purely for a Western market, subverting the Western notion of Tibetan material culture without detection.

This collection, then, performed different roles for different individuals and shows the multiple meanings of "authenticity" that were evident in relation to Tibetan material culture. For Isabelle Tyrie, the objects were a legacy, illustrative of family ties and her childhood in India. As heirlooms, their position as "authentic" Tibetan material culture was muted, in favour of their links to personal experiences. For her father, the original collector, these items were souvenirs of summers spent in the Darjeeling hills with his family, just as later pieces from China and Japan would be reminders of his extensive travels after his retirement. As representations of place, these objects were evidence of the authenticity of those personal experiences. Whilst they may have lacked many of the characteristics European scholars of Tibetan material culture expressed as essential for objects to be authentically "Tibetan," they were completely indicative of Darjeeling in the early twentieth century and the relationships between the sellers in the markets and their British audiences, making visible this diverse and dynamic community, which was often muted in imperial discourse.

2.2 Lord and Lady Carmichael

Lord Carmichael of Skirling was appointed Governor of Bengal, in 1912, a role he held until 1917. The position entailed spending the summer months in Darjeeling, away from the Presidency capital in Calcutta, and his appointment coincided with Colonel Tyrie's posting as Assistant Deputy Commissioner. This meant that both men were collecting in the same place, at the same time, whilst moving in the same social circles within the British-Indian society. These threads of social contact, time, and place offer a very different sort of "trace" to that discussed above, which is found directly within the object. By contrast, the position of the Carmichael objects at certain times and places were themselves manifestations of agency and intent.

Carmichael was known as a connoisseur of the arts long before his first overseas appointment as Governor of Victoria, Australia. He had been an avid collector of Italian art and in retirement became a patron and trustee of several national collections (Weaver 1937: 158). He was, therefore, not just a collector of material culture but also a collector of "art," who separated out "ethnographic" objects and set up particular boundaries for the meaning of "authenticity" within his Tibetan collection. This was a divergence from the Tibetan material collected by his colleague Colonel Tyrie, discussed above.

Once in India, Lord Carmichael's attentions shifted to the collection of Indian art. His relationship with the art world was both private and public, extending to an interest in museums, as seen in his opening address at a Museums Conference in Madras in January 1912.[13] This address shows that he remained strongly tied to British museum practices, a British understanding of a museum's purpose, and the place of material culture within it. He noted how the majority of exhibits in Indian museums related to the flora, fauna, and "cultural" material of India, and that the bulk of visitors were keenly interested in depictions of their own culture, suggesting that:

> [Indian] visitors do not for the most part belong to the more wealthy classes to whose interest in other countries museums owe so much. If museums here are at all like those in Europe it will be to your interest to gain the sympathy of wealthy gentlemen who may perhaps make you presents which will add to the lustre of the museum (Carmichael 1912).

Distinctions between art and ethnography were, at a certain level, tied to distinctions regarding class and race. "Art" was of interest to, and in the inter-

12 See, for example, Stevens' Auction House and publication (1905).

13 This conference was held in Madras, January 15–17, 1912, at the behest of the Government of India's Department of Education. Lord Carmichael gave the opening address and appears to have attended several of the sessions (Carmichael 1912). With thanks to Mark Elliot, Senior Curator, Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, for drawing my attention to this document and providing me with a transcript.

ests of, a certain class of person: a group to whom the Carmichaels belonged. Ethnographic collections, though educationally useful, did not highlight the illustrious potential of museum exhibits and their associations with patrons, who were often private collectors themselves. In 1915, the Indian Museum in Calcutta hosted an exhibition of Carmichael's personal collection of Indian and Tibetan objects, which included such "treasure [as] a fourteenth century gilt Buddha, a rare image of Avalokitesvara and an ancient Tibetan image of the Dalai Lama" (Darwent 1987). Although the exact content of this exhibition is unknown,[14] a list of "important objects lent in 1915" appeared in Lady Carmichael's memoirs of her husband (1929: 271), and was made up entirely of sculptural pieces representing figures from the Tibetan Buddhist canon and paintings of well-known Tibetan motifs, such as the Wheel of Life. All these items, listed within a chapter titled "Art in India," were, in fact, Tibetan and came from within a very narrow field of object types that could be categorised as Buddhist art. The classification of Tibetan material culture in this way, and the range of values given to different types of material, was reflective of the impact the 1904 Expedition had on the construction of Tibetan art and the way in which interested parties had adapted and refined the framework set out by the 1904 Expedition's collectors (see Harris 2012: 71–78).

Although Lord Carmichael collected the objects, the subsequent reinterpretation of his collection by his wife had particular consequences for the way in which these objects were categorised, valued, and authenticated. His memoirs, written by Lady Carmichael, suggest that his (Western) understanding of "art" substantially narrowed his collecting field.[15] However, the objects associated with Carmichael now in held by the NMS, hint at a broader field of interests. Lady Carmichael makes no mention of the ethnographic collections he made when Governor of Victoria, which were presented to the RSM in 1911.[16] A collection of Tibetan weaponry and an extensive collection of Tibetan *cham* costumes, worn in the production of plays within the Tibetan monastic setting, are also absent from her record of his collecting activity, appearing only in a footnote regarding the "other" objects Carmichael collected, which includes a mention of "Tibetan Devil Dance Costumes" (Carmichael 1929: 275).[17]

The objects show a much wider variety of collecting interests and offer a counterbalance to the visualisation of Carmichael's collection as "art" only, a view promoted by his wife. Some of the objects from the 1915 exhibition were donated to the Indian Museum before the Carmichaels' return to Britain in 1917 (Carmichael 1929: 269), but most of the remaining "art" pieces were lost at sea, when a German torpedo sank the ship transporting them back to Britain (Darwent 1987: 36). If, in this instance, we envisage "trace" as an object in a time and a place, the physical movement of the Carmichael collection and the separation of its parts had a major impact on forms of agency and authenticity. As the "ethnographic" Tibetan material had not formed part of the 1915 exhibit, it appears to have travelled separately from the rest of the collection, and subsequently survived to be integrated into the RSM's holdings in 1919. If the remainder of the "art" collection had not been lost, it may also have made its way into a museum setting, but in its absence, the weapons and *cham* costumes took on the role of constructing "Tibet" and representing the non-European elements of Carmichael's collecting legacy.

Lady Carmichael's relationship to her husband's collection was similar to Isabelle Tyrie's relationship to her father's – one of legacy. Lord Carmichael's memoirs offered an opportunity to recapture what had been physically lost and present some resistance to the tangible remains of her husband's collection, which constructed Tibetan culture quite distinctly from the principles he appears to have followed in his lifetime.

The traces of time and place mean that it is the less valued, less "authentic" portion of Carmichael's collection existing today, which allows us to analyse Carmichael's moment of encounter with Tibetan culture. By the time Lord

14 A catalogue was produced, but I have been unable to locate a copy within the United Kingdom. The copy ostensibly held by the British Library is currently recorded as "missing."

15 There is in fact an entire chapter in Lady Carmichael's book dedicated to his art collecting, of which the section "Art in India" is only a small part. For the most part, the chapter focuses on his European art collections.

16 This collection mainly consisted of weaponry from various parts of Australia. Originally, Carmichael gifted over 250 pieces, although many have now been deaccessioned (Carmichael Australian collection, accession number A.1911.397).

17 The term "devil dance" was the common name for the *cham* dance in this period, reflecting attitudes to Tibetan Buddhist practice as already described in the previous chapters. This footnote lists these costumes along with "ancient and European pieces," which seems to reflect objects she was unable to position within the headings of her book, but also scholarly trends for positioning non-European cultures against "primitive" moments in European history.

Carmichael arrived in Darjeeling, going to see a performance of a *cham* dance was part of the common tourist trail for well-to-do Europeans taking in an Asian "Grand Tour."[18] The performances told stories from the time of Buddhism's introduction into Tibet, with the characters in the plays coming from a mixture of Bön and old Tibetan mythological traditions, hence the common name "devil dance."[19]

It is unsurprising that Carmichael visited a monastery to watch a dance, but what is interesting is that he collected what appears to be a monastery's entire set of *cham* costumes, related accessories, and props.[20] These costumes, and especially the masks, were well looked after by the monasteries, with older masks being particularly revered. Masks and costumes were valuable to the monasteries, both in cultural and economic terms, being an important part of Tibetan Buddhist tradition and expensive and time consuming to make and maintain. It is therefore likely that Carmichael paid a substantial sum of money to procure them. However, the masks show almost no signs of wear and were either a set only recently made for a monastery, or may even have been especially commissioned. By contrast, although the costumes are in good condition, they had obviously been repaired just prior to Carmichael acquiring them, or may have been repaired on acquisition.[21] It seems possible then, that Carmichael was able to acquire the monastery's original set of costumes but not necessarily the masks. He also had the collection photographed, not in a studio but in front of a monastery, where they were worn by Tibetans. The notes that remain regarding his lost collection of Indian and Tibetan objects indicate the importance of "sets" of objects,[22] explaining his interest in adhering to a full taxonomic recording of Tibetan art, mainly through the field of sculpture. His collection of "sets" of Tibetan and Australian weapons and the full range of *cham* costumes are further evidence of this practice. But the mixing of old costumes and new masks could be said to make this collection no more "authentic" than Tyrie's dice box. Not only then did Carmichael make distinctions between art and ethnography, but those two classes of objects merited differing understandings of "authenticity" and value.

The objects were given an identity through the process of exchange, as different elements came together to create each *cham* costume. Carmichael believed that by completing a set, fixing broken items, and capturing an image of the collection *in situ*, he had purchased something "authentic." Such authenticity had in fact not been made by Carmichael but by the monks who sold him the objects. In choosing what to give (the costumes) and what to keep back (the masks) they had controlled the making of the set, and remade the idea of the *cham* costume to fit both Carmichael's notion of "completeness" and their own desire to retain the most valuable part of the collection. These were power relations that were apparently invisible to Carmichael himself, who was caught up in his own remaking of colonial practices and domination through the wholesale purchasing of Tibetan material culture.

The two seemingly contrasting collections that Carmichael acquired – one "art" and the other "ethnography" – were given very different identities, both through their material form and their movement, allowing them to perform very different roles as both mediators and intermediaries (Latour 2005: 79). For Lord Carmichael, the collection of Tibetan and Indian art objects was tied to his longstanding artistic connoisseurship, their identities fixed into a Western framework of art history. For these objects, age, materials, form, and the authenticity that was established through these values, were public markers of Lord

18 In 1906, the traveller Jane E. Duncan noted the steady stream of Europeans she came across in Ladakh on their way to Hemis Monastery to see the *cham* dance, suggesting that by the early twentieth century, Europeans were regularly part of the lay audience watching the performances (1906: 54).

19 Bön, an animistic belief system, was common in Tibet before Buddhism was introduced. Tibetan Buddhism's degenerate nature, as understood by European observers, came about through the mixing of elements of the Bön tradition with Indian Buddhism. This is particularly evident in *cham* dance, which includes many of the wrathful deities found in Bön practices. Their seemingly grotesque dancing would easily have fitted into a European understanding of how a devil might be imagined.

20 *Cham* costumes (accession numbers A.1919.622.1-23). The collection numbers 21 complete costumes plus accessories and, as far as I can determine, is the largest single collection in a museum in the United Kingdom.

21 During the conservation process, the head of textile conservation for NMS, Lynn Mclean, noted that several repairs had been made to the costume for the "black hat dancer", including the replacement of silk on the sleeves with new pieces of material, which showed no signs of wear personal communication.

22 In fact, this appears important across his collecting concerns. Groups of metalwork, groups of paintings and sculptures were all bought and sold as "sets" throughout his collecting career, some of which are now in the Art and Design Department of NMS.

Carmichael as a colonial tastemaker.[23] These were the attributes of the collection's identity that his wife wished to consolidate through the publication of his memoirs, as she remade his collecting practices as part of his, and her, personal legacy. Carmichael's relationship with his ethnographic collections is less clearly defined. On the one hand, he completed sets of items, suggesting that he had an understanding of the subject matter, and the collection of both costumes and masks implies that "completeness" was important. These were not, then, a random assortment of souvenirs but were part of deliberate collecting practices. On the other hand, the ethnographic material was purposefully separated from the rest of the collection physically, but also in terms of its value and "authenticity." It was only through the movement of objects and the accidental loss of items, that the ethnographic material would later take on a new level of importance within the museum setting. Finally, the Tibetan monks who sold and made the *cham* costumes, like the sellers in Darjeeling from whom Colonel Tyrie purchased many items, were remaking typically "Tibetan" material culture and in doing so mediating the Western response to its form, value, and authenticity.

2.3 Robert Brown

Robert Brown was a surgeon in the Bengal Army, working in India around the time of the 1857 Rebellion and its aftermath. Brown was probably based in Calcutta, but would have had the opportunity to travel all over the Presidency of Bengal, thanks to his position as a surgeon. It was during this time that he was able to collect Tibetan and Nepalese objects.[24] Brown is an interesting person because he was active much earlier than the other collectors examined in this article, namely at a time, when Britain's relationship with its empire was changing significantly, thanks to the events of 1857.

In contrast to the Tyrie and Carmichael collections, there is no archival information connected to Robert Brown or his collection, and so the traces in the objects themselves need to be unpacked in order to bring to light the collector and his response to Tibetan material culture. Brown collected thirteen items; three Nepalese silver and gold boxes, with intricate openwork frames and central panels of Hindu and Buddhist motifs; seven Tibetan *gau* of varying styles; two bangles; the lid of a silver vessel, and a pair of Tibetan earrings in the Lhasa style. Whilst the boxes are very consistent in their manufacture and aesthetics (shape, size, and pattern), the *gau* form a discrete "type" collection, representing the different styles of this one particular object found across Tibet and Sikkim). This narrow field of object collection suggests Brown specifically chose these items, indicating his interest in them as markers of Tibetan material culture. This also suggests that even if these were gifts from clients rather than purposeful purchases on his own part, people around him were aware of his interest in them. The collection, therefore, was made on remarkably similar principles to the Indian and Tibetan art collection of Carmichael formed fifty years later, and like both collectors previously examined in this article, Brown focused on metalwork items.

When comparing Brown's *gau* to others held in the collection of NMS, it becomes apparent that *gau*, though an object recognised by Western collectors as symbolic of Tibetan Buddhism, had additional values and differing agencies for this colonial collector. There are nearly fifty *gau* in the collections of NMS, and those collected by Brown are some of the finest in terms of materials used, quality of manufacture, and quality of decorative work. This highlights the importance of aesthetics to Brown, and marks these qualities out within his notion of authenticity of metalwork design and manufacture. Brown's collection showcases the workmanship of Himalayan material culture, highlighting the ancestry of characteristics later defined within the category Tibetan "art."

An interesting comparison can be made between these *gau* and those collected by missionaries in the 1890s, also held in the NMS collections. For missionaries, *gau* became symbolic of the superstitious nature of Tibetan Buddhism and so the material qualities of the object were of less importance than this symbolism. The missionary J. W. Innes-Wright, for example, collected several *gau* and amulets, which included packets of prayers. These provided the "evidence" that his work was necessary, by showing British audiences that Tibetans were still relying on such devices for protection and healing. But the quality of manufacture of missionary examples was poor, implying

23 Lady Carmichael, in her husband's memoirs, had noted that Australia had lacked 'art' and that one of their pastoral roles, as Governor and his wife, was the cultivation of 'taste' amongst white settlers. This role clearly moved with them to India, seen in Carmichael's interest in museums and the public showing of his private collection (Carmichael, 1929:267).

24 Despite a thorough search of the India Office Private Papers, I have been unable to find specific details of Brown's posting, largely due to the ubiquity of his name.

that their aesthetic detail was less relevant (see Livne 2013: 145). Another contrasting feature is that whilst missionary collected *gau*, which were often well worn and retained the consecrated paper prayers, *tsa-tsa*[25], or cloth bundles that were the source of their protective abilities, Brown's *gau* have had much of this evidence of use removed. They are perfectly clean on the inside, with the exception of some inscriptions printed directly onto the metal casing.[26] This shows, that as with the Carmichael and Tyrie collections, Brown's *gau* were interpreted through a Western frame of reference to material culture and aesthetics, and their place as objects of use within a Tibetan context (as part of the practice of Tibetan Buddhism) did not form part of their authenticity in the collector's mind. In other words, the context given to these items by their collector placed them as objects of "art" rather than objects of "religion."

In 1872, on his return to Scotland, Brown loaned his objects to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art. On his death in 1877, his daughter Amelia Brown wrote to the Museum and determined that the loan should continue in her name. When she got married, a few years later, she again wrote to record her name change to Amelia Thexton. But in 1901, Thexton asked for the objects to be returned, before finally donating them to the Museum in her own name in 1928.[27] Thexton's relationship to these objects was very different to that of her father. As with Isabelle Tyrie and Lady Carmichael, for Thexton these objects signified legacy. There is no evidence that Amelia Thexton herself was born in India, although she was probably born whilst her father was in the service of the East India Company.[28] Therefore, these objects pertaining to his time in India, when the family was split, offered her a tangible link to an unknown familial past. In this sense, these items follow even more closely the path of the Tyrie collection, as the objects passed from father to daughter, entered an entropic-like state (whilst returned to Amelia Thexton) before re-entering the Museum with a rearticulated series of connections to people and place, associating them with their keepers rather than their collectors.

Robert Brown had formed his collection at a crucial moment in British-Indian relations. Although this "moment" of the 1857 Rebellion had brought a shift in British attitudes towards India's culture and people – from relatively positive attitudes to generally more negative ones – the high quality of the collection suggests, that Brown himself was not fully immersed in the move towards more negative assessments of Indian people that were formed in the wake of the Rebellion (Livne 2013: 301–308). Brown's view of Tibetan and Nepalese material culture was as inherently artistic, in line with developing attitudes towards Indian material culture, which was positioned within the category of "art" long before its Tibetan neighbours.[29] Therefore, though the 1904 Expedition was undeniably important in the formalisation of the category of "Tibetan art," there were colonial collectors already developing ideas about artistic integrity and authenticity in relation to Tibetan material culture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

This important facet of the collection's biography was hidden from view when the collection passed to Brown's daughter, who understood the authenticity of the collection to lie in its position as a marker of personal experience. The process of re-giving the collection to the Museum in her own

25 *Tsa-tsa* is a form of Buddhist art that has flourished for centuries in the Himalayas, most notably Tibet. Like many Tibetan sacred objects, they are iconographic forms of various buddhas. In Tibet, *tsa-tsas* are made with clay from the earth. These days, more modern and durable materials are used such as plaster or hydrostone.

26 Many consecrated statues and *gau*, now in museums, have had their interior contents removed by scholars and collectors, interested to see what was inside. As Harris has noted (2012: 59f.), this was to become a common phenomenon in 1904 when Expedition officers realised the high values of what was stored inside sculptures, which may themselves have had a more conservative economic value. These objects could be filled, as Chandra Reedy has noted (1991: 14), with a variety of holy articles, depending on what was most appropriate to the situation. Reedy's interviews with Tibetan Buddhist practitioners in the 1980s shows, that for Tibetan Buddhists the opening of sculptures and removal of contents is not only desecration but rendered them inert (30). Thus, Brown clearly had little interest in retaining the ability of these *gau* to perform a function in a Tibetan context and was happy to remove that functionality for his own purposes.

27 *Royal Scottish Museum* 1872: 121). An unknown museum employee added the notes in 1901.

28 There is no record of an Amelia Brown in the birth records for the British in India. She may have been Jane Amelia Brown, born in Dumfries in 1858 (as an adult she lived in Dumfries). This ties in with the timing of her father's posting and suggests she saw little of her father in her childhood. This information was accessed via the India Office Family History Search website (<http://indiafamily.bl.uk/UI/> [27.05.2013]). Scottish births, marriages, and deaths were accessed via Scotland's People website (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> [27.05.2013]).

29 For the importance of Indian art as an influence on the creation of Tibetan art as a category, see Livne (2013: 204).

name, literally pasted over the traces of the object's previous identities, as labels bearing her own details were stuck to the surface of each object in 1928.

2.4 Ernest Stephen Lumsden

Since the mid-seventeenth century, the European Grand Tour had operated as a means for wealthy individuals to educate themselves about the world and, by the mid-nineteenth century, the grand tour began to include Asia as well (Jayawardena 1995: 112). The travelogue of Jane E. Duncan (1906), who journeyed through Ladakh, shows that by the early twentieth century a greater proportion of ordinary, albeit well-off, European and American men and women were able to experience Tibetan culture first hand. Many objects without doubt were acquired as souvenirs during these visits or purchased through encounters, such as those experienced by Colonel Tyrie in Darjeeling.

Ernest Lumsden should be understood as someone who engaged in the performance of colonialism, in his role as traveller, tourist, and artist. However, Lumsden's experiences as a tourist in India were captured in a very particular set of objects and suggest he had a specific sort of relationship with both the cultures he encountered and their material manifestations. Lumsden and his wife Mabel Royds travelled through India and Ladakh several times between 1912 and 1927, although he most likely made this collection in 1913 during their most extensive trip. Lumsden, an etcher, and Royds, also an artist, documented their travels through their artworks, which included etchings of Hindu monuments, rituals (such as bathing in the Ganges), and scenes of markets, villages, and landscapes.

Lumsden's travels represented a grand tour in the most traditional sense, where his experiences influenced and improved his art. That Asia should become part of such a grand tour and that Tibetan (largely Buddhist) material culture should be an integral part of the experience for a Western artist, highlights the shift in the perceptions of Tibetan culture that took place after the 1904 Expedition. However, Lumsden's collection is also reflective of another framework of understanding, one that was quite different to the methodology for "knowing" a culture that had been developed and practiced in the nineteenth century. Lumsden, I would argue, went to Ladakh to be inspired, to connect with something intangible, and to have the sort of epiphany that might change the course of his life.[30] James Hilton's literary work "Lost Horizon" (1933) would most clearly outline this new understanding of Tibet as "Shangri-La," an "other worldly" place, just as Kipling's novel "Kim" (1901) had encapsulated British relations between Tibet, India, and the Empire thirty years earlier. In other words, Lumsden was looking for something inherently personal and intangible that used the experience of encountering Tibetan Buddhism to reaffirm his own principles for living. This, of course, gave the construction of Tibet in the Western imagination an entirely new perspective, highlighting the possibility that the West could learn something from Tibet, as much as Tibet could learn from the West.

Lumsden's etchings attempt to capture fleeting moments. For example, the 1922 etching "The Shrine," shows a woman sitting at the base of a Buddhist altar, probably in Ladakh, lost in contemplative thought. The objects Lumsden collected reflect the fleeting nature of the traveller's experience, similarly difficult to capture as the woman's momentary gaze. He collected fifty objects from Ladakh, two thirds of which were *tsa-tsa*, the small clay votive offerings moulded and placed along roadsides, in temples, or in *gau*. The other items include a set of eight brass and silver spoons, small personal items such as tweezers, and a few objects relating to Tibetan Buddhist rites, such as vessels and bells (Lumsden collection: accession numbers A.1924.56-111). Here I wish to focus on the *tsa-tsa*, which form a discreet group within the wider collection. *Tsa-tsa* are ephemeral, not made to last, but made to decay, to be replaced by new ones in time. The *tsa-tsa* as a votive object is only made holy after empowerment through consecration and, unlike Robert Brown's collection of empty *gau*, Lumsden's *tsa-tsa* show signs of decay, suggesting that they had a life as active, empowered items before collection. Though no written evidence exists to explicitly state Lumsden's reason for focusing on the collection of *tsa-tsa*, the importance of fleeting moments of encounter within "religious" or "spiritual" settings, as visualised in his etchings, may be the reason for his interest in visiting many of the monasteries of Ladakh. Although this can also be understood as a "type" collection, the nature of its content suggests that the collector understood its "authenticity" in a very different way than, for example,

30 Laurie H. McMillin (2001: 3) has suggested that for the last hundred years the myth of epiphany has been so common in Anglophone travel texts about Tibet, that they would seem incomplete without one.

Robert Brown. Lumsden would have easily had access to new *tsa-tsa* that had not been "used" and, therefore, were in pristine condition, but he chose to collect those already exercising a function in Tibetan Buddhist practice. In opposition to Brown, it was their role as "active" Tibetan Buddhist objects that created their authenticity as markers of Tibetan material culture.

Lumsden numbered his *tsa-tsa* to identify the locations in which they were collected, and also wrote a shorthand version of the place-name on the reverse of each one. By means of these numbers we can retrace the route he followed through the region and see how the collection was built up. The shorthand names in pencil were likely written onto the objects in the field and the ink numbering done at a later date. In contrast, the other objects in the collection – spoons, a teapot, other metal vessels – remain unmarked and seemingly unrecorded. The RSM's accession registers note that the spoons were collected in Leh, but the only other object from Lumsden that has been marked in some way is a piece of a faded prayer flag, which has three illegible numbers scrawled on in pencil.

This appears, then, to be a collection of contradictions. On the one hand, the collection of ephemeral objects suggests an interest in non-tangible experiences that cannot be fully recorded. On the other hand, it was a "type" collection like that of Robert Brown, which spoke to the notion of a scientific way of collecting something very much "real" and tangible. Furthermore, the collection employed modern techniques of record keeping of the sort used by professional anthropologists. The numbering of objects in the field, followed by a more detailed marking of the object later in ink, were techniques suggested in the handbook for ethnographic collecting "Notes and Queries on Anthropology" (Garson and Read 1892: 232). The system Lumsden developed strongly suggests he had a working knowledge of this publication and it is this paradox between scientific knowledge and non-recordable experiences that makes Lumsden's collection so interesting within an analysis of colonial collectors' intent. Colonial collectors, far more so than missionary or military collectors who were overtly tied to institutional practices and ideologies, were in a position to draw from different influences, understandings, and methodologies. Lumsden's collection of *tsa-tsa* highlights the variety of experiences created from the bringing together of two seemingly opposing ways of understanding Tibetan material culture: here it becomes apparent that a variety of meanings exists for the terms "science," "religion," and "anthropology" from within a single, discrete group of objects.

Whilst there is no written evidence as to Lumsden's personal response to the intangibility he was attempting to capture in a collection of physical things, he clearly formed a deep connection to the area and was open to the various practices he encountered. Making five journeys to India, Burma, and Tibet over the course of the early decades of the twentieth century, Lumsden's "mind and sympathies could extend to the most 'modern' adventure" (Anonymous 1948). When viewed together, Lumsden's etchings, collected objects, and the memory of his disposition, as recounted in his obituary, all suggest that his travels in India and Tibet were more than just an exercise in ticking off the itinerary of an Asian grand tour, and the collection of *tsa-tsa* was an integral part of marking this "modern adventure" in a very particular way.

The value of Lumsden's collection lay in the way it critiqued the long established views of scholarly orientalists who had dominated the study of Tibet at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and yet followed the same methodology – collecting objects that were in use and collecting in a scientific manner – to construct Tibetan culture as both a "thing" that could be touched and something that could not be touched.

2.5 Lilian Le Mesurier

The final collector I would like to examine in this article highlights a thread that has run through all these case studies – what it means for something (an experience or an object) to be authentic. Perceptions of the "authentic" and the ways in which collectors responded to, and manipulated, the concept varied widely. For Isabelle Tyrie and Amelia Thexton authenticity was about personal experience and the legacy of family memory; for Lord Carmichael and Robert Brown authentic collecting was located in the realm of "type" collections that explored the relationship between Tibetan material culture and Western understandings of authenticity in art; and for Ernest Lumsden authenticity was more loosely located in a visualisation of Tibet, and particularly Tibetan Buddhism, as something that, by its very nature, could not be made "knowable" at all. Lilian Le Mesurier provides an excellent study to end on, because she is the only colonial collector found within the NMS collections who left a paper trail relating directly to her collecting activities, in which she explicitly outlined

her position as a collector and the role she envisaged for her objects. Of all the colonial collectors, Le Mesurier followed the most "scientific" methods of collecting, developed by the discipline of anthropology from the late nineteenth century.

Le Mesurier not only collected but also wrote about her collection at the moment the 1904 Expedition was taking place on another point of the Indian-Tibetan border. Although Waddell had written the influential "Buddhism of Tibet" (1894), it was during the 1904 Expedition, that the ideas on Tibetan material culture expounded in that book were taken up by a broader British public.[31] In 1903 and 1904, Le Mesurier wrote two articles on the Tibetan material she had collected in Ladakh during her husband Eugene's posting with the Indian Political Service as political assistant to the Resident in Kashmir. The first was a chapter for a book on mountain travel by the mountaineer and future Royal Geographical Society President, Douglas Freshfield, titled "Tibetan Curios" (1903). The second was an article for the art magazine *The Studio*, titled 'Tibetan Art' (1904). In "Tibetan Curios" Le Mesurier lists her collection in its entirety, separating objects "used in religious rites and services" from other items, which "though in many cases used by the Lamas, were not themselves of a sacred character" (1903: 263). In "Tibetan Art" she examines the history and aesthetics of Tibetan metalwork design, using three teapots from her collection as examples; items which in the first article were categorised as "non Buddhist" objects. The titles of these articles alone show a shift in Le Mesurier's relationship to her collection, as it moved from "curiosity" to "art" within one year, and from publication in a travel book to a critical art magazine. But they also represent two different notions of authenticity: the first, authenticity of the collecting experience, and the second, the collection of "authentic" Tibetan objects.

Her collection of over 109 Tibetan objects, mostly collected in Ladakh's Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, provides the data on which these articles were based. "Tibetan Curios" makes it clear, that from the moment she started collecting, Le Mesurier had a specific idea of what it was she was trying to construct, and the correct manner in which to achieve it. She notes that her "chief interest was the endeavour to make a really representative collection of Tibetan curios" and that, with the assistance of certain Tibetan Buddhist dignitaries she was able to make it "as perfect as possible" (1903: 262). By the following year, she began to determine far more specific definitions of "authenticity" in Tibetan objects. For example, "[i]n determining the age and authenticity of any Tibetan vessel … two matters may be born to mind, viz., weight and join … the matter of the join is more important, as it is a valuable proof of the genuine Tibetan character of any article" (Le Mesurier 1904: 298). Le Mesurier believed that the exact position of the join on Tibetan vessels (between the two metal sheets used to form the body) signalled a "real" Tibetan piece, a trait absent from newer "copies." She also believed that older vessels were lighter. In addition, she had confined herself to talk about metalwork as Tibetan art, because she believed it to be "unique and characteristically Tibetan," whereas painting and cloth articles were considered heavily influenced by India and China or "degenerated by contact with modern utilitarianism" (1904: 295).

The ideas laid out in her articles, along with the objects themselves, reveal both the methodological approach Le Mesurier followed as she strove for authenticity within the collection, and the influences that informed her choices. Within the collection, ten objects have pencilled numbers written prominently onto their surface. These include seven stone implements and domestic utensils, a wooden table, and two gilt bronze figures, one of the goddess Green Tara and one of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. The numbering is not consecutive, and ranges from 34 to 174, suggesting that other objects were likely to have been numbered and that, at one time, the collection was larger than the 109 objects sold to the RSM in 1907. The numbering system, in conjunction with her habit of collecting from within Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, suggests that Le Mesurier's collecting methodology had two major influences: the knowledge of Tibetan material culture emerging out of the 1904 Expedition, which helped publicly formulate the category of "Tibetan art," and the professionalisation of anthropological practice, which was expressed through publications such as "Notes and Queries on Anthropology" (Garson and Read 1892).

Garson and Read (1892) offered collectors in the field a succinct "how-to"-manual for collecting both physical objects and intangible cultural heritage, such as oral histories, folklore, and kinship genealogies. Each section, usually only a few pages, covered a different aspect of anthropological research and was authored by an expert in that particular field. First published in 1874, this edi-

31 For further analysis of Waddell's influence on the 1904 Expedition see Harris (2012: 63–68).

tion did not include a section on the collection of material culture. However, by the time the second edition was published in 1892, its publishers assumed that a large part of the publication's target audience would be travellers and amateur scholars, who took an increased interest in anthropology and wished to follow more professionalised modes of practice. The influence of this working method underpinned Le Mesurier's ideas about the function and nature of Tibetan material culture that were later expressed in her written work.

We can see from the traces on the objects themselves that Le Mesurier adhered to the processes suggested in "Notes and Queries …," such as the correct way to number objects, but in doing so she was also aligning herself with Waddell's earlier methods of analysing the "fixtures and fittings" of Tibetan Buddhist material culture (see Harris 1999: 12 and 2012: 44–47). "Notes and Queries …" was categorically a scholarly publication, although at this time the line between the amateur and the professional was still decidedly blurred. By following its principles, Le Mesurier was marking herself out from the other women examined in this article, shining a light on the authenticity within the object itself and the process of collecting rather than the experience of owning the collection. She was also tackling collecting from the position of a "professional" collector,[32] the majority of whom were male and so, in her own way, was subverting British perceptions of the "scholar." The traces left on and around the collection, therefore, reveal the tensions of amateur versus professional knowledge production, and the way in which it was expected that gender roles would be performed.

L. A. Waddell was part of a long history of Orientalist scholarship, which formed Buddhism as an object, the creation of which allowed the systematic definition, description, and classification of cultural "facts" about Tibet. The collection of objects and the methodology used within his work would allow any other scholar the opportunity to categorise and contextualise their own Tibetan collections within the framework of "Tibetan Buddhism," which he, along with other Orientalists, had assumed to be a term interchangeable with "Tibetan culture." One of Waddell's key assertions was for the collection of "authentic" Tibetan articles, rather than those he considered the "spurious antiques" of the markets and bazaars frequented by tourists and travellers. His notion of "authentic" was tied to that of "Notes and Queries …," which stated that an ethnographic specimen was an article made for use.

Le Mesurier's collection was made largely within the monastic setting, so that even "utilitarian" objects had a clear association with Tibetan Buddhism through their provenance. Her collection, especially as examined in her 1903 article, therefore presents authentic Tibetan culture as Tibetan Buddhist culture. In keeping with anthropological practice, items made for use were particularly sought out, and she was willing to offer the monasteries new items in exchange for older ones (Le Mesurier 1903: 263). These influences may explain the apparent weeding of the collection as seen through the discrepancies in the numbering system. Within the political service, gift giving and exchange was a standard part of the practices employed by those working in the military and political sector, but these were not necessarily the sorts of objects Le Mesurier was happy to have present in the collection, marring its integrity. If these items originally had been part of the collection, this might explain why they were removed before the objects were sold to the RSM. Also absent are contemporary objects and with them the signs of life from within the monastery itself, which had a population of several thousand. The absence of items representing the very men making use of the objects she collected, and practicing Tibetan Buddhism, linked the collection very clearly to discourses about Western dominance within the definition and construction of Tibetan culture. Le Mesurier, through her Western authority, could represent Tibetan monastic life without including traces of the men who inhabited that space.

The tensions of this very issue can be unpacked in another part of Le Mesurier's collection, which reveals the traces of local agency and mediation in the collecting process. Nearly all the objects sold to the RSM came from seven monasteries, which skirt the edge of the Indus River as it runs through Ladakh, to the east of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.[33] Her article "Tibetan Curios" tells us that all the objects were acquired with the assistance of men she understood to be the highest-ranking figures within these organisations, most significantly the "head lama" of Hemis monastery

32 By this, I refer to museum curators and dealers and scholars such as Waddell, who were establishing the definitions of Tibetan material culture through their work.

33 Lilian Le Mesurier collected from the following Ladakhi monasteries: Hemis, Leh, Maulbeck, Rizong, Saspol, Spituk, and Tikse.

and the Kushok of Spituk monastery.[34] Whilst Le Mesurier believed him to be of service, assisting in *her* construction of Tibet, the Kushok was *himself* a gatekeeper, allowing and denying access to objects and information as he saw fit.[35] This relationship can be traced through the exchange of one particular object, a travelling shrine case containing an image of the first Bakula Rinpoche.

The Kushok was prepared to part with the case itself but not with the original *thangka* painting, and so had a copy made for Le Mesurier. From her notes on the item in "Tibetan Curios" there is no suggestion that she felt she had missed an opportunity to collect an "authentic" article.[36] She had a complete object, painted by the monks and, therefore, fulfilling the requirements of her own notion of authenticity. But to the monastery, the case, though perhaps historically interesting and of some age, was less relevant than the practice of venerating the image within it, which was sacred, having been blessed for use in the monastery and imbued with generations of prayer. So, in this object, partly old and partly new, a series of agencies were at work. On the one hand, Le Mesurier, the scholarly collector, following anthropological practices and Orientalist modes of thinking to collect a complete and, therefore, authentic object, felt that her position in the British-Indian society and the relationship that it allowed her to form with the Kushok, gave her the authority to represent Tibetan culture as she understood it. The Kushok, for his part, was able to form a relationship with an important Western ally, her husband Eugene Le Mesurier, through the support of his wife's activities, which he could assist with whilst never actually parting with the objects that he and the monastery considered of value and importance.[37]

This collection, as formed by a British woman with the assistance of Tibetan monks, mediated multiple dialogues between peoples and cultures. It allowed both parties to engage in subversions of imperial ideologies through their roles as cultural commentators and gatekeepers. For Le Mesurier, the collection reflected her notion of "authenticity" through the field of professional collecting and a scholarly output, which simultaneously pushed against the recognised role of female colonial collectors as keepers of personal experience rather than connoisseurs of objects and art. Through the actions of the Kushok of Spituk, the role of Tibetans in the process of Western collecting can be revealed, showing how a Tibetan sense of "Tibetan culture" could be embedded within Western collections through the visible and invisible ways in which roles were ascribed. Whilst Le Mesurier understood the Kushok's role as helper, like the monks who assisted Lord Carmichael in Darjeeling, he was able to exert far more control over the process of collecting than the collector herself necessarily realised.

3 Conclusion

The above case studies are linked by experience, expectation, and ways of seeing, which carved out specific notions of ideas such as "art," "religion," "ethnography," and "authenticity," and explored the many ways in which colonial collectors defined themselves in both their roles as collectors and colonial agents and in their relationship to Tibetan material culture. Le Mesurier's collecting methodology, though similar in some ways to Lumsden's, was articulated in a fundamentally different manner. Le Mesurier, Tyrie, and Thexton were all women married or born into the Empire, partaking in colonial practices, but who related those experiences to material culture through contrasting means. Equally, Lord Carmichael and Robert Brown shared an interest in the aesthetics of Tibetan material culture and the scholarship surrounding it, but through the roles played by the women in their lives, the collections' biographies followed divergent paths. So, whilst these were a disparate assortment of collectors, their experiences, linked through collecting practice and important junctures in Western understandings of Tibetan culture, provide us with valuable evidence

34 The Kushok, referred to as the "Abbot" of Spituk monastery by Le Mesurier, was both the head of the monastery and the reincarnation of Bakula Rinpoche, a disciple of Buddha. His full religious title was "Blo bzang bstan pa'I rygal mtshan." The Kushok Le Mesurier met was the eighteenth incarnation (1860–1917). With thanks to John Bray for information on the role of the Kushok (email to the author 19.07.2011).

35 She notes, "[t]his valuable assistance had the most fortunate results for me, and I acknowledge it very gratefully" (Le Mesurier 1903: 262).

36 "The shrine-box … is one of great age, made of wood, painted dark red and gilded. The likeness of the saint within is, however, only a copy of the original picture, this being one of the cases where the Lamas would certainly have scrupled to part with the originals" (Le Mesurier 1903: 268).

37 The Kushok was also a politically active figure, and at the time Le Mesurier was collecting from his monastery, he was attempting to mediate relations between British India, of whom Captain Le Mesurier was a representative, and the Maharaja of Kashmir (information from John Bray, email to the author 06.10.2011).

regarding the roles material culture played in the lives of many different types of colonial agents.

In fact, I would argue, this is what makes this loosely knit group of individuals worth studying in the context of colonial collecting. They are representative of a large portion of "colonial collectors" whose collections are located in museums today: not just those who collected Tibetan material culture but those who gathered objects from all over the world. Within the NMS Tibetan collections, such collectors represent approximately a third of all identifiable collectors. Assuming such diversity can be extrapolated across the Museum's known collectors as a whole, this highlights the importance of understanding the knowledge, experiences, and values invested and imbued in material things by those individuals and their families who are not always so easily defined by the specific roles they undertook as agents of empire.

It is the approach used within this article – the biographical model – that makes it possible to transform a seemingly unrelated set of narratives into a contextualised mosaic of colonial life and its relationship to material things. This methodology not only highlights agencies that were known (collectors) but the potential agencies of other previously unseen actors (specifically female and indigenous agents). Such collectors have left little textual evidence in their wake (Le Mesurier being an exception in this instance), but this approach has made visible their motivations to collect, often through objects alone, offering new insights into how to locate such intentions in collections that usually have little or no accompanying textual evidence.

Finally, I would like to return to the role of categories; specifically the importance of categorisation in the process of providing objects with roles and meanings. What the case studies in this article have shown is that much of the more particular categorisation of objects – as "art," "ethnography," or something "religious" – was borne out of a desire for authenticity. It has therefore been in the ability to locate a collector's sense of the "authentic" that such categories could be understood.

Within this article, two types of authenticity have come to light, one pertaining to the object and the other to the collector. The notion of an "authentic" object is an ideological construct, part of a social and political invention, yet also in part relational as a local tactic imposed by the collector at a certain moment (Clifford 1988: 12). Despite the difficulty in defining an object's authenticity, nearly all the collectors implicitly or explicitly sought to create a sense of the "authentic" within their collections. Such authenticity, I would argue, was linked to notions of authority – who had the authority to speak about Tibetan culture and who had the authority to say which objects were and were not authentic. Therefore, collector authenticity was located in the unique personal experience of the collecting process and the very fact that the collector had been the person "on the spot" at that moment of encounter. In this sense, objects were the evidence that authenticated personal experience (Stewart 1993: 135), ascribing the collector with the authority to make pronouncements about Tibet, because *they were actually there,* when others were not.

It has been the trials and traces linking objects to people to context that have allowed the categorisation of objects to be positioned within this complex set of ideas that developed regarding authenticity, authority, and, ultimately, the values that were ascribed to objects based on their categorisation as something "artistic" or not. The biographies of objects, as they intersect with the biographies of people, provide a space in which many individuals, silent in written sources, can re-emerge in history, but also in the very current world of the Museum and its collection.

This article is based on research undertaken as part of the author's PhD thesis, completed in 2013. I would like to thank Dr Michael Marten, Dr Timothy Fitzgerald, and Dr Henrietta Lidchi, who supervised the thesis. As part of my AHRC funded research, the University of Stirling hosted a one day workshop, titled "(Mis)Representing Cultures and Objects. Critical Approaches to Museological Collections." I would like to thank the University of Stirling, Dr Marten, and Dr Rajalakshmi Nadadur Kannan for organising the workshop, from which this article has come.

References Cited

Anonymous
1946 Dundee Loses Noted Citizen. *The Dundee Courier* (February 23, 1946).

Anonymous
1948 Obituary: Mr. E. S. Lumsden, Etcher and Painter. *The Times* (October 2, 1948): 6.

Byrne, Sarah
2011 Trials and Traces. A. C. Haddon's Agency as Museum Curator. In: S. Byrne, A. Clark, R. Harrison, and R. Torrence (eds.), Unpacking the Collection. Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum; pp. 307–325. New York: Springer.

Carmichael, Mary Helen Elizabeth (Nugent) (ed.)
1929 Lord Carmichael of Skirling. A Memoir Prepared by His Wife. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Carmichael, Thomas David Gibson
1912 Address of Lord Carmichael, Madras, January 15, 1912. [The British Library, Pamphlet Collection, P/W 461]

Clifford, James
1988 The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cohen, Deborah R.
2006 Household Gods. The British and Their Possessions. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Darwent, Charles
1987 Mystery of the Medina. *Observer Colour Supplement* (July 22, 1987): 36.

Davis, Richard H.
1997 Lives of Indian Images. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Duncan, Jane E.
1906 A Summer Ride through Western Tibet. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

Garson, John George, and **Charles Hercules Read** (eds.)
1892 Notes and Queries on Anthropology. (Ed. for the British Association for the Advancement of Science by J. G. Garson and C. H. Read.) London: The Anthropological Institute. [2nd Ed.]

Harris, Clare
1999 In the Image of Tibet. Tibetan Painting after 1959. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.
2012 The Museum on the Roof of the World. Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hilton, James
1933 Lost Horizon. London: Macmillan.

Jayawardena, Kumari
1995 The White Woman's Other Burden. Western Women and South Asia during British Colonial Rule. New York: Routledge.

Kennedy, Dane
1996 The Magic Mountains. Hill Stations and the British Raj. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kipling, Rudyard
1901 Kim. London: MacMillan.

Kopytoff, Igor
1986 The Cultural Biography of Things. Commoditization as Process. In: A. Appadurai (ed.), The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective; pp. 64–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, Bruno
2005 Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Le Mesurier, Lilian
1903 Tibetan Curios. In: D. W. Freshfield (ed.), Round Kangchenjunga. A Narrative of Mountain Travel and Exploration by … with Illustrations and Maps; pp. 261–273. London: Edward Arnold.
1904 Tibetan Art. *The Studio* 31/134: 294–301.

Livne, Inbal
2013 Tibetan Collections in Scottish Museums 1890–1930. A Critical Historiography of Missionary and Military Intent. Stirling. [PhD Thesis, University of Stirling]

McLean, Lynn
n. d. Conservation Report for A.1919.622.9A. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland Conservation Department. [Unpubl.]

McMillin, Laurie Hovell
2001 English in Tibet, Tibet in English. Self-Presentation in Tibet and the Diaspora. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Pal, Pratapaditya
1985 Art of Nepal. A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Assoc. with University of California Press.

Pearce, Susan M
1995 On Collecting. An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition. London: Routledge.

Pratt, Mary Louise
1992 Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation. London: Routledge.

Reedy, Chandra L.
1991 The Opening of Consecrated Tibetan Bronzes with Interior Contents. Scholarly, Conservation, and Ethical Considerations. *Journal of the American Institute of Conservation* 30/1: 13–34.

Royal Scottish Museum
1872 Loan Register. Vol. I. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland Loans Department.

Steiner, Christopher B.
2011 Rights of Passage. On the Liminal Identity of Art in the Boarder Zone. In: F. R. Myers (ed.), The Empire of Things. Regimes of Value and Material Culture; pp. 207–232. Santa Fé: School of American Research Press.

Stevens, J. C.
1905 A Most Important and Valuable Collections of Tibetan Curios. London: J. C. Stevens.

Stewart, Susan
1993 On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. Durham: Duke University Press.

Tate, Jim
n. d. Metallurgy Conservation Report for Collection A.1990.59-97. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland Conservation Department. [Unpubl.]

Tyrie, Isabelle
n. d. Interview with Isabelle Tyrie. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland Archive, Dept. of World Cultures: Isabelle Tyrie Accession File. [Typed Transcript, Original Source Unknown]

Waddell, L. Austine
1894 The Buddhism of Tibet. Or Lamaism with Its Mystic Cults, Symbolism, and Mythology, and Its Relation to Indian Buddhism. London: W. H. Allen.

Weaver, John R. H. (ed.)
1937 The Dictionary of National Biography 1922–1930. London: Oxford University Press.

Weiner, Bernard
1985 Human Motivation. New York: Springer.

Young, Robert J. C.
2001 Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.