HELINÄ
RAUTAVAARAN
MUSEO

Objects Collecting People

EDITED BY
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WARNING
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
readers are advised that this book may
contain images of deceased persons.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The authors and patrons of this project wish to express their deep regard for Aboriginal cultural protocols and philosophical values and to acknowledge the Arrernte and Luritja peoples, Traditional Custodians of the land, of Australia. Aboriginal land, culture and knowledge were appropriated and transformed into the wealth of the Australian nation, which in turn has built all the institutions of government and society of Australia today. It is to the Elders and custodians of all these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations past, present and future that way acknowledge and pay respect to their profound custodianship of country.

Lofty Katakarinja in
Haukilahti beach, Espoo
3rd June 2018.
PHOTOGRAPH Matt Poll.

This book is dedicated to the Western Arrernte community of central Australia. Especially we dedicate it to Arrernte Elder Cleophas Lofty Katakarinja, who travelled the long journey to share his exceptional cultural knowledge about the Arrernte collection in Finland.

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Foreword

Objects Collecting People documents a rare encounter between cultural objects, the heirs of their original owners and creators, and two museums. The *Uterne* project took an important step to connect the Arrernte collection of the National Museum of Finland with the living traditions of the Western Arrernte people of central Australia.

Museums are not only preservers of heritage. They also help to build a sustainable future by nourishing the development of cultures, offering platforms for reconciliation, and by fostering diversity and cultural rights. This is only possible when they can work together with the peoples and societies concerned. I therefore want to express my deep gratitude towards our Australian guests for sharing their knowledge of, and relationship with, the Arrernte collection.

I address my warmest thanks to the Helinä Rautavaara Museum for bringing the parties together and coordinating the project. I am grateful to everyone who has collaborated on this project, and to the Kone Foundation for making the encounter possible.

When the project started, the ethnographic collections of the National Museum were arranged as a separate museum, the Museum of Cultures. Dealing with the heritage of cultures from all over the world, the Museum emphasized an open and living connection with the cultures represented in it. Now that, after twenty years, it is reintegrated into the National Museum of Finland, these practices and skills have become our core strategies.

Elina Anttila
DIRECTOR GENERAL
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINLAND

THE ARRERNTE ARE ONE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF AUSTRALIA.

It has been estimated that before the arrival of British colonizers, there were over 250 language groups and 800 dialects spoken on the Australian continent. Today, Indigenous people make up 2.4 per cent of the total Australian population: about 460,000 out of 22 million people. The Arrernte lands are located in the Northern Territory of Australia, northwest of Alice Springs (*Mparntwe*), and cover 120,000 square kilometres. According to statistics for 2016, the total number of speakers of Arrernte dialects was 4,537. The Arrernte are also often referred to as Aranda, Arunta or Arrarnta. However, the Central Land Council recommends the spelling *Arrernte*, pronounced Ah-runda ['arəɳ͡ɖa].

"Have you ever wondered why Arrernte is spelt the way it is?",
Central Land Council, accessed 8 November 2019.
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Introduction

Kristina Tohmo & Johanna Perheentupa

These Arrernte objects that have lain dormant for more than a century, shifted the narrative from a historical representation of collectors acquiring objects to that of objects collecting people.

Matt Poll, 2018

The Helinä Rautavaara Museum project *Uterne – 100 Arrernte Objects* was set up to reconnect the Western Arrernte community from central Australia with their cultural artefacts that for more than 100 years have been held at the National Museum of Finland. The aim of the project was to raise awareness among the Arrernte peoples about the existence of these objects, to facilitate a visiting Arrernte delegation to study the collections and, as Matt Poll suggests in his essay, to perform *collection reassurance*. It was also hoped that the delegation would share their knowledge with the Finnish ethnographic collection institutions involved in the project and thereby increase their understanding of the Arrernte material culture, which had travelled to the other side of the world, and about which little information was available in Finland. The project team and Finnish collection institutions were not only interested in learning more about the purpose of and materials used for the different objects. It was also important for them to understand the specific needs for maintaining and conserving the collection, and to identify any secret/sacred material that should not be displayed publicly nor accessed by anyone but initiated male Arrernte.

The objects in the collection represent a snapshot of the material culture of the Arrernte at the time of their collection between 1910 and 1913. It was a time of many radical and rapid changes in their lives, as following the invasion of their country by the colonial cattle farmers from the 1860s and 1870s onwards. As Johanna Perheentupa demonstrates in her essay, the collection is evidence of the vast imperial networks of exchange of what Europeans considered to be exotic objects. The Arrernte objects were bought from the Ethnographic Museum in Leipzig by the National Museum of Finland in 1913. They had been collected by Pastor Oskar Liebler, who worked between 1910 and 1913 as a missionary at the Hermannsburg Mission. The mission was established in 1877 by the Hermannsburg Missionary Society and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia at a site called *Ntaria*. Vast amounts of Arrernte and other First Nations material culture ended up in museums around the world as a result of Western collection practices facilitated by collectors such as Liebler.

The Hermannsburg Mission became the economic base of the Arrernte after the colonization and dispossession of their country. The Mission provided some relief from frontier violence, as well as access to food and Western education. In exchange, the missionaries expected the Arrernte to convert to Christianity and to abandon their traditional cultural practices. The missionaries also encouraged Arrernte people to practise art and crafts. Indeed, the mission became the centre of the Hermannsburg watercolour movement and was the home of its most well-known artist, Albert Namatjira, whose landscape paintings captured the attention of art critics in the mid twentieth century. Today, Hermannsburg is a historical precinct and a cultural centre, which among other things hosts the Hermannsburg Potters, the Western Arrernte women and their unique pottery. Following the Land Rights movement and the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* of 1976, the country where the Mission resided was returned to the Western Arrernte.

Since the 1970s, Aboriginal peoples have also made a concerted effort to claim back the material culture that collectors had taken, stolen and bought, sometimes by dubious means, from their country. This process has been increasingly supported by collecting institutions that reach out to those Indigenous communities whose collections they are in possession of, as illustrated by Eija-Maija Kotilainen, Heli Lahdentausta and Kristina

Delegation visiting the Finnish Heritage Collection and Conservation Centre in Vantaa 4th June 2018. Arrernte Elder Lofty Katakarinja (centre) with (left to right) keepers Heli Lahdentausta and Eero Ehanti from The National Museum of Finland, assistant curator Matt Poll and researcher Shaun Angeles.
PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo.

Tohmo in their respective essays. The *Uterne* project is part of this wider process of reconnecting Indigenous peoples with their objects, and the on-going process of the Arrernte peoples to locate, connect with, learn about and reclaim the Arrernte material culture held by museums in different parts of the world.

The visit of the Arrernte delegation organized as part of the *Uterne* (the Eastern Arrernte dialect word for 'summer') project was realized in June 2018, when Arrernte Elder, Cleophas Lofty Katakarinja from Hermannsburg; researcher Shaun Angeles Penangke, a Kungarakan and Arrernte man from Alice Springs; and assistant curator Matt Poll, of South Sea and Torres Strait Islander heritage, from Sydney, arrived in Helsinki. The consultation visit by the Arrernte delegation was coordinated by the Helinä Rautavaara Museum and funded by the Kone Foundation. Other collaborators were the Museum of Cultures | National Museum of Finland, the Macleay Museum in Sydney, the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs, and the Nura Gili Centre for Indigenous Programs at UNSW Sydney. This book tells the story of that visit. Importantly, it also provides a visual record of those Arrernte objects that can be publicly displayed.

As curator Matt Poll draws out in his essay "Objects Collecting People", these Arrernte objects, like other collections of material culture, have brought together people from different parts of the world. He suggests

that shifting scholarly focus on to the way that objects can collect people, rather than the histories of people collecting objects, allows perceptions of the past, present and future to become entwined in the very fabric of the twenty-first century cultural reorientation. It recognizes the agency and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, building connections and new networks between cultures, peoples and places that are empowering rather than oppressive. Consultation visits such as that of the Arrernte delegation to Helsinki in the context of the *Uterne* project, animate a renewed sense of understanding of what these objects can mean for future generations, rather than only interpreting their role in the past.

As part of the *Uterne* project it was also important to understand the context in which these objects were collected and map their journey to the Northern Hemisphere. Cultural historian Johanna Perheentupa's essay "From Hermannsburg to Helsinki" situates this journey at a time when modern museums, still a relatively new enterprise, relied on collectors working in the field to provide material for their studies and displays. In the German context, these collectors were often missionaries such as Oskar Liebler, who was unusual among contemporary collectors as he was interested in portraying the diverse aspects of everyday Arrernte culture rather than focusing wholly on men's tools and weapons in his collection. This is also apparent in the diversity of the Arrernte objects in the National Museum of Finland.

The essay "Collections of the National Museum of Finland and Cultural Heritage of Indigenous Peoples" brings out the perspective of the Finnish custodians of this Arrernte collection. Director Eija-Maija Kotilainen and Keeper Heli Lahdentausta share their experiences of the collaborations that the Museum has been involved with in recent years. This has been in response to the active effort of Indigenous peoples in searching out information about their cultural heritage. Indigenous artists and artisans have studied objects kept in museums, taking inspiration and gathering knowledge for their own creative work and as part of revitalizing traditional skills in arts and crafts to pass on to future generations. In this context, the National Museum of Finland has hosted visitors from Alaska and Namibia in 2015, and the Arrernte delegation in 2018.

Producer Kristina Tohmo offers an insight into the community collaboration that has taken place in the Helinä Rautavaara Museum in her essay "Museums as places of remembrance – linking the past, present and future". She explores the role that museums and their collections have in supporting the health, education and economic development of creator communities and migrants. This more collaborative approach in museology allows creator communities to renegotiate their own identity, history, and culture. As the *Uterne* project has shown, working with collection objects (or archive photographs) can support members of the communities involved in improving their cultural and physical health through gaining and sharing knowledge about their identity and history. Furthermore, repatriating secret/sacred materials, which museums cannot exhibit publicly anyway, has an empowering effect on Indigenous peoples.

Thank you all

The Helinä Rautavaara Museum would like to thank our Australian project team members Lofty Katakarinja, Shaun Angeles, Matt Poll and Johanna Perheentupa, as well as Eija-Maija Kotilainen and Heli Lahdentausta from the Museum of Cultures / the National Museum of Finland. Special thanks for their support also goes to Elina Anttila, Eero Ehanti and Anna Lantee from the National Museum of Finland, Felicity Green and Adam Macfie from the Strehlow Research Centre, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Dr Birgit Scheps-Bretschneider from the GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, and documentarist Antti T. Seppänen. And last but not least we thank the Kone Foundation for funding this project.

Matt Poll in The Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, 4th June 2018. PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo.

Objects Collecting People

Matt Poll

Our spirit, of our culture … I'll be going back home where I come from, where you come from, home, back to Hermannsburg, we know each other, that we are Arrernte tribe, see you … goodbye.[1]

As Cleophas (Lofty) Katakarinja left the storerooms of the National Museum in Vantaa, Finland, he casually said a moving goodbye to the objects he had visited over the previous days as if they were people standing alongside us all. It was a beautiful and special moment that I think all the non-Arrernte people in the room shared as a deep learning experience of the ways of the Arrernte, and especially the importance of respect and cultural safety, even in the most casual of situations. In this moment, these Arrernte objects that have lain dormant for more than a century, shifted the narrative from a historical representation of collectors acquiring objects to that of objects collecting people.

Consultations such as the *Uterne* project animate a renewed sense of understanding of what objects can mean for future generations, rather than what the beliefs about them were in the past. The new interpretative layer that is created by a consultation process guides with the authorized voice of a community spokesperson, which creates a new value for these

1 Cleophas (Lofty) Katakarinja, June 2018.

items that exists outside their monetary value. The *Uterne* project granted Arrernte and non-Arrernte alike the opportunity to see firsthand how, for the Arrernte, objects are ancestors and therefore no different to the way their land is an ancestor for the Arrernte.

When First Nations peoples of Australia such as the Arrernte speak of the land as an ancestor, they are often quite literally speaking of specific places where perhaps tens, if not hundreds, of generations of their ancestors were once born, lived and returned. Land of which they themselves are custodians and for which they have the responsibility for passing it on to future generations of their families. This relationship with land was disrupted by the colonization of Australia from 1788 onwards, as it transformed the established social, cultural and linguistic frameworks that Aboriginal peoples had developed over some 65,000 years. Yet, in recognition of the continuing significance of the connection that Indigenous peoples have to their land and culture, Article 11.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

> *'Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.*[2]

The Arrernte delegation's visit to Helsinki to assess and share their understanding of the Arrernte artefacts held at the National Museum of Finland demonstrates the way in which Arrernte peoples use historical collections as a platform for the 'future manifestations of their cultures'. These consultations underline how hyperconnected the networks between museums have become, and how the tyranny of distance seems to no longer apply in the case of communities, whose objects were collected by museums many decades, if not centuries, ago.

2 61/295. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, accessed 10 November 2019, https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Networks between museums and First Nations peoples from around the world have become exponentially globalized. Items, having lain dormant for years in far corners of the world, and once thought lost forever from the cultures they represent, have reconnected with the people they belong to. Access to new communication and information technologies make it possible for museums to connect with audiences unthought of until just a few decades ago. Many First Nations people are also increasingly curious about the purpose of the collections of their objects held in museums in distant parts of the world, similar to how the Western collectors were curious about the cultures that these objects represented. What have they been used for and what is their meaning today?

In several ways, the Arrernte consultation with the National Museum of Finland in June 2018 foreshadowed the broader developments in museums across Northern Europe and North America, where decolonization and repatriation have become a topical issue in recent years. Collecting institutions investigate their own understanding of why they are in possession of collections from the various colonial annexations of First Nations lands and how these collections can be used as consultation tools to negotiate more practical and ethical ways of exploring the past and displaying cultures. In early 2019, the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen articulated the position for museums in the northern hemisphere that are facing these issues for the first time:

> *Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen recognizes that claims can only be successful when made in a context which allows for consultation and open dialogue and clear communication by all parties.*[3]

3 'Return of Cultural Objects: Principles and Process', Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, accessed 7 March 2019, https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/en/return-cultural-objects-principles-and-process.

As many more museum collections are being made digitally accessible via databases, it is becoming entirely possible to virtually reconstruct entire assemblages of objects acquired at specific times and places throughout history. This access presents new opportunities for the Arrernte as there are tens of thousands of objects, clothing, stone tools, ceremonial artefacts, images and sound recordings of performances by the Arrernte people, in circulation around world while being wholly disconnected from the people they are purported to represent.

For more than a century, a version of the Arrernte past has been written and performed by non-Arrernte people. The histories written by these anthropologists and historians still bear a legacy today, as their representation of the Arrernte past is intertwined with the colonial forces that not only disposed of them but also, until the 1970s, had forcibly attempted to assimilate the Arrernte peoples into the broader Australian Nation. Decolonizing, and even *de-anthropologizing*, the Arrernte past is an important part of the process of collections assessment, as the reassurance that naming these objects in the language of their makers brings to modern communities is immeasurable. This is no easy task, as Maori theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith articulates:

> *The archive not only contains artefacts of culture but is itself an artefact and a construction of culture. For the Indigenous world, Western conceptions of space, of arrangements and display, of the relationship between people and the landscape, of culture as an object of study, have meant that not only has the Indigenous world been represented in particular ways back to the West, but the Indigenous worldview, the land and the people, have been radically transformed in the spatial image of the West. In other words, Indigenous space has been colonized ... More significantly however, space was appropriated from Indigenous cultures and then "gifted back" as reservations, reserved pockets of land for Indigenous people who once possessed all of it.*[4]

4 Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edn., London: Zed Books, 2012, 54.

When Lofty Katakarinja on the final day of the visit said goodbye to the objects, he was genuinely speaking to them as one would speak to any ancestor. He was showing respect to the living agency of an object as an ancestor, in much the same way that Indigenous philosophy speaks of the land as ancestor. So it would be better to use the term *collections reassurance* rather than *collections assessment*, as the cultural value of a collection is far more integral to the meaning of the object than its legal status, as is the importance of reassuring other community members in Hermannsburg that these objects are cared for.[5]

This assemblage of shields, boomerangs, ceremonial accoutrements and materials of everyday life is a snapshot, frozen in time, of the material world of the Arrernte people in 1911. It could not be easily recreated today. The actions of their ancestors who traded and sold such objects to museums need to be cautiously unpacked and respectfully engaged with as part of the objects' biography. The agency of the makers of these objects and the authority of those in the Arrernte community at the time, who wanted to trade and engage with the outside world, needs to be preserved. Museum exhibitions which in the past have perpetuated racist caricatures of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal culture as "primitive" have done irreparable harm, but connecting Aboriginal communities to museum collections, embedding Aboriginal philosophies into the way objects are named, conserved and where possible exhibited, can alleviate this harm in a living declaration of the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

This can be witnessed in Lofty Katakarinja and Shaun Angeles closely observing the making techniques of their grandfathers' knowledge that is embedded in these artefacts. For the most part Lofty Katakarinja would sing place names and their associated stories to jog his memory about where this object might sit in relation to ceremonial or just everyday use. On the second day of our collection assessment, Lofty Katakarinja's inspiration from witnessing these objects sparked an hour-long song discussion, back in our accommodation, of who needed to be notified about the condition of the objects.

5 Hermannsburg was established on 4 June 1877 at a sacred site known as Ntaria which was associated with the Arrernte ratapa dreaming.

Many Aboriginal people themselves have played an active role in using museums and museum collections as consultation tools to create new dialogues and conversations, rather than as representational tools. For communities to retrieve knowledge carefully conserved by museum curators and to re-apply the existence of this knowledge to nurture younger generations is an act of restorative justice. The Australian experience has been contemporaneous with the European museums in post-colonial contexts grappling with questions of *who owns the past*. In recent years, repatriation, restitution and the ethics of ownership have been at the forefront of museum practice around the world. As museum collections move into the digital realm, increased awareness of the existence of significant assemblages of objects held by museums has sparked fascinating new conversations and dialogue among disparate communities of global citizens.

When Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen popularized the lives of the Aranda and Luritja people in his 1892 photographic series and publication *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*,[6] he sparked a storm of attention focused on the lives of the Arrernte and their neighbouring tribes in central Australia. These photographs of the Arrernte offered a tantalising glimpse of a pre-enlightenment, pre-Christian even, world. Their photographs of a people living completely untouched by the spotlight of the great global migrations that have shaped the modern world that we know today, sparked a mania for understanding more of these peoples on the margins of European worlds. It was descriptions and images, such as the photographs by Baldwin and Spencer, that brought missionaries, such as Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler from across the world to bring Christianity to what was naively thought to be an 'uncivilized' people.

Photographic images of Arrernte and Luritja peoples circulated widely in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In 1917, Romanian expatriate artist Tristian Tzara performed songs of the Arrernte peoples of central Australia in Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire. Tzara had drawn inspiration from the gospel songs brought by Lutheran missionaries to central Australia and subsequently recorded and distributed around the world. It was only a few years before this performance that a collection of around 103 artefacts

6 Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, New York: Dover Publications, 1968.

acquired at the Hermannsburg Mission (1911–1913) found themselves on the other side of the world.

The photographs and anthropological descriptions of the Arrernte and their neighbouring tribes of central Australia became footnotes in some of the most influential European texts of the early twentieth century. Émile Durkheim referred to examples of totemic religion among Arrernte peoples to develop his theory of religion in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). The entire first chapter of Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913) is devoted to the totemic kinship systems and Freud's proposition that all modern forms of socialization are shaped by "the primitive culture of origin". Australian Aboriginal culture was a baseline against which it was thought all other cultures could be measured.

In some ways the cultural safety and security of the objects in Finland has been protected by their distance from the global centres. Through hearing the Arrernte and Finnish languages intersect, listening to Lofty Katakarinja and Shaun Angeles contextualise the objects within a continuum spanning centuries, and the genuine two-way learning between the Finnish curators and the central Australian custodians, a world of exciting possibilities and the truly global nature of these inventive traditions of craftsmanship, the Lutheran missionary history and the iconic art of the Namatjira school from Hermannsburg, emerges.

Like an Indiana Jones movie in reverse, it is the collections of Aboriginal artefacts hidden in obscure corners of the world that are collecting new generations of people. Their global networks bring the Arrernte objects to life through community engagement and the authorized community members speaking to these objects, reassuring them they have not been forgotten. This is the job of many Indigenous museum workers in the twenty-first century: to reconstruct vast historical assemblages of the past, animating and activating them by the way that descendants and kinspeople of the makers interpret these objects for contemporary people.

In focusing today on the ways that objects can collect people, rather than the histories of how the people who collected objects, perceptions of the past, present and future become entwined in the very fabric of twenty-first century cultural reorientation. It acknowledges that Aboriginal lands are places where hundreds of generations of ancestors are born and ultimately

return to in some form. The consultations and connections made between members of the Arrernte, First Nations people of Australia, and the National Museum of Finland, offer a glimpse of the ways that museums are transforming the world in the twenty-first century, building connections and new networks between cultures, peoples and places that are empowering rather than oppressive.

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Missionary Oskar Liebler and Mrs Liebler standing in front of pack camels at Hermannsburg, NT. Finke River Mission 1910–1913, Lutheran Archives, South Australia. P06432 12687

From Hermannsburg to Helsinki: The Journey of 103 Arrernte Objects

Johanna Perheentupa

Pastor Oskar Liebler with his wife Luise beside him was photographed holding the reins of a camel loaded with large packing cases. Another camel with an equally heavy looking load stands behind them. The photograph was taken at the Hermannsburg Mission in the Western Arrernte country of central Australia on 24 November 1913 when Oskar and Luise were returning to Germany. It is not possible to know for certain what the cases contain, but it was in just such a case that the 103 Arrernte objects held at the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki would have started their journey from Hermannsburg to Helsinki. It is likely that the cases did hold some of the many Arrernte objects that Liebler collected during his stay at the Mission from 1910–1913.[1]

The Hermannsburg Mission was established in 1877 by German Lutheran missionaries, A.H. Kempe and L.G. Schulze, on a site known by the Arrernte people as *Ntaria*, by the Finke River.[2] The Alice Springs Telegraph Station, 100 kilometres east of Hermannsburg, had started

1 The Lieblers in Hermannsburg, P06432 12687, Lutheran Archives, Adelaide. Jones identifies the date of the photograph in Philip Jones and Peter Sutton, *Art and Land. Aboriginal Sculptures of the Lake Eyre Region*, Adelaide: South Australian Museums, Wakefield Press, 1986, 55.

2 Anna Kenny, "Early ethnographic work at the Hermannsburg Mission in central Australia, 1877–1910" in Nicholas Peterson and Anna Kenny (eds), *German Ethnography in Australia*, Canberra: ANU Press, 2017, 169.

to operate five years earlier. Australia's north had only recently become colonized and the settlers were in violent conflict with the local Indigenous peoples who defended their country from invasion. The last publicly known of massacre was in Coniston on Warlpiri country, not far from Hermannsburg, in 1928. There were also reports of Aboriginal workers used as slave labour in the pastoral industry.[3] The missionaries hoped by their presence to curb the settler violence, but also to convert and "civilize" the local Indigenous peoples.

Liebler was sent to Hermannsburg by the Lutheran Immanuel Synod based in Adelaide to replace Pastor Carl Strehlow during his leave. Strehlow had been running the mission since 1894. He was also becoming widely known for his ethnographic work among the Arrernte, including linguistic studies and his extensive collecting of material culture under the guidance of Moritz von Leonhardi, a German intellectual and armchair anthropologist. Strehlow's ethnographic work, *Die Aranda und Loritja–Stamme in Zentral Australien*, edited by Leonhardi, was published in Europe between 1907–1920. Once Liebler had arrived in Hermannsburg, Strehlow and his family were ready to travel back to Europe so that his wife could receive medical attention, and their children further their education.[4]

It was common for German missionaries, such as Strehlow and Liebler, to collect information and Indigenous material culture, which they then sent to Europe. German missionaries had collected material culture since the late eighteenth century, enabling mission societies to display the culture of the countries in which the missionaries worked, and highlight the value of their work.[5] In the Australian context, the collection of ethnographic material from colonization in 1788 onwards reflected the widespread European curiosity about Indigenous cultures.

3 Arthur Vogan, *The Black Police. A Story of Modern Australia*, London: Hutchinson, 1890.

4 John Strehlow, *The Tale of Frieda Keysser. Frieda Keysser and Carl Strehlow: an historical biography*, Vol. 1, London: Wild Cat Press, 2010, 1068–1072.

5 Walter F. Viet, "Missionaries and their ethnographic instructions", *The Royal Society of Victoria*, 127, 2015, 75.

Examples of Indigenous material culture were increasingly sought after by museums and private collectors, especially after their display in International Exhibitions that were designed to demonstrate the achievements of Empire to the European metropoles. This interest resulted in a worldwide trade of Australian Indigenous material culture, and other ethnographic material, in a race to rescue examples of what Europeans thought to be soon disappearing cultures that would give way to modernity. In the Australian context, the study of material culture with its focus on weapons, tools and technology also provided the Europeans with evidence that justified colonization and the racial discrimination of Indigenous people as "primitive".

Links between missionary work and ethnography was further strengthened in the nineteenth century. Not yet embracing the idea of fieldwork, anthropologists relied on missionaries and other people working on the ground to provide them with observations and material to study. For example, Émile Durkheim's work on the elementary forms of religious life and Edvard Westermarck's research on the history of marriage were based in part on records and observations by amateur ethnographers in Australia.

The German ethnographic tradition differed from the practices of British anthropologists of the time, such as Baldwin Spencer, who followed evolutionary thinking and were influenced by ideas of Social Darwinism. Their interest in Indigenous cultures was driven by a desire to understand the history of humankind. Anthropologists from a German language background, however, were part of a humanist tradition and were critical of evolutionary ideas. They were interested in the study of languages, as well as learning about cultural traditions and material culture in specific communities and comparing regional differences between cultures.[6] They subscribed to the idea of a shared humanity, even as they classified Australian Indigenous peoples as *Naturvolk* or "uncivilized" and thus different to the "civilized" European *Kulturvolk*.

6 André Gingrich, "German-language anthropology traditions around 1900: Their methodological relevance for ethnographers in Australia and beyond" in Nicholas Peterson and Anna Kenny (eds), *German Ethnography in Australia*, Canberra: ANU press, 2017, 28, 33–34.

German-speaking anthropologists and missionaries shared the aim to better understand specific cultures and languages, as in Lutheran missionary practice it was important to be able to speak the language of the people to whom the missionaries preached. Liebler came to Hermannsburg as a 26–year–old, fresh from Germany, where he had studied at the Neuendettelsau seminary in Bavaria. His training emphasized linguistic as well as theological studies.[7] Liebler began to learn Arrernte with Strehlow before his departure to Europe.[8] A copy of Liebler's exercise book recording and classifying Arrernte words, previously credited to missionary Otto Siebert, is available in the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide.[9]

Liebler gained a notorious reputation as a collector of Indigenous material culture. Jones sees in Liebler's keen interest towards collecting Arrernte objects, his desire to make a mark as a missionary-ethnographer. According to Barry Hill, he collected 2,000 items during the less than four years he spent in Hermannsburg.[10] A large part of Liebler's collection is held in the Hamburg Ethnographic Museum, where it forms one of the largest collections of Australian Indigenous material culture in Germany.[11] However, the 103 Arrernte objects that found their way to Finland were first purchased by the Ethnographic Museum in Leipzig. The very large numbe r of Indigenous objects, around 3,000 in total, that Strehlow and Liebler between them sold to European museums, prompted Edward Stirling, the director of the South Australian Museum, to request an embargo that would prevent the export of any more Indigenous objects from South Australia. The embargo was put in place in November 1913 and as a result Liebler had to sell the remainder of his collection to the South Australian Museum in early 1914.[12]

7 Viet, 'Missionaries and their ethnographic instructions', 75.
8 Strehlow, *The Tale of Frieda Keysser*, 1072.
9 FRM Box N15, Immanuel Synod, Lutheran Archives, Adelaide.
10 Barry Hill, Broken Song. *T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession*, Sydney: Random House, 2002, 164.
11 Gingrich, "German–language anthropology", 39.
12 Jones, Philip, "A Box of Native Things": Ethnographic Collectors and the South Australian Museum, 1830s–1930s, PhD thesis: History, University of Adelaide, December 1996, 250.

The great demand for Indigenous material culture by European collectors and museums encouraged a manufacturing industry of objects in Indigenous communities.[13] Liebler was known to encourage such practices on the Hermannsburg Mission. Pastor L. Kaibel, the president of the Immanuel Synod and Liebler's superior, objected to Liebler's keenness for collecting artefacts, and noted the great lengths to which he would go to source material:

> *It is a morally questionable trade, for these things are manufactured by the aborigines [sic] in order to be sold. Liebler himself bought up hair from the hairdressers in Adelaide and before setting off, sent it to the Station for the aborigines to process and send back to him as ethnological artefacts.*[14]

Kaibel disapproved of the way Liebler took advantage of his role as a missionary to commission artefacts from the Aboriginal people in Hermannsburg for the purpose of selling the objects.

Not only the quantity, but also the diversity of objects that Liebler collected was remarkable even in the German ethnographic context of the time. Liebler was interested in representing the everyday life of the Arrernte peoples by collecting items as diverse as kangaroo tendons used as string, food such as roots and insects, as well as tools and weapons. He also collected toys and examples of women's material culture, such as jewellery, that were otherwise less commonly collected by ethnographers, who were commonly men and focused on Aboriginal men's tools and technology in Australia.[15] Liebler's selection of objects gave an idea not only of the everyday life and ritual of the Arrernte peoples, but also the environment in which they lived. His focus on diversity can also be seen in the range of the 103 Arrernte objects, from women's jewellery to tools to different coloured pigments, that were later sent to Helsinki.

13 Philip Jones, 'A Box of Native Things', 168.

14 Kaibel to Deinzer, 24 July 1914. Translation from copy of original by John Strehlow, 14 August 1995, C. Strehlow Papers, AA315, AASAM, quoted in Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 252.

15 Birgit Scheps, "Tradition und Wandel in der materiellen Kultur der Arrernte und Luritja in Zentralaustralien. Ein Vergleichmitmusealen Quellen", *ZeitschriftfürAustralienstudien/Australian Studies Journal*, 17, 2003, 25–26.

Liebler's collecting practices were guided by Georg Thilenius, the director of the Ethnographic Museum in Hamburg, for whom he mainly collected. Thilenius subscribed to the diffusionist German ethnographic tradition, which resisted unilinear evolutionism and saw in cultures their ability to develop independently from another and yet also participate in cultural exchanges. The diversity of objects that Liebler collected reflected Thilenius's interest in studying the way in which cultures exchanged ideas and influences as well as examples of material culture, and the origin and chronology of specific cultural practices.[16]

However, rather than to Thilenius, Liebler sold the Arrernte objects now held in Helsinki to Walter Schmidt who purchased the material as part of a larger collection for the ethnographic museum in his hometown Leipzig. Schmidt, a metal engineer, had arrived in Melbourne in 1896. There he set up a branch of his family toy factory.[17] Schmidt collected material from different parts of Australia, including Tiwi, West Australia and Tasmania. He was among the business people and educated elites of Leipzig, who were keen to support the museum in their home city, which they regarded as a major university city and a centre of international trade. The Ethnographic Museum in Leipzig was privately funded and part of the larger complex of the Grassi Museum in Leipzig. It opened in 1896 in a grand new building with large glass windows and a central glass ceiling to allow maximum natural light, demonstrating the scale of investment in museums and their collections as symbols both of the achievements of the nations and the significance of the cities, where they resided. [18] The Ethnographic Museum in Leipzig remains one of the leading ethnographic museums in Germany.

Prompted by the Director of the Museum, Professor Karl Weule, Schmidt was eager to make contacts in central Australia and approached the Hermannsburg Mission. Liebler responded quickly, sending his first shipment of over two hundred objects.[19] Interestingly, Liebler did not want his name to be mentioned in the context of the collection he sent to Schmidt.

16 Gingrich, "German-language anthropology", 39–40.

17 Walter H. Hugo Schmidt, Naturalisation, 1622/6656, A1, NAA; Birgit Scheps personal communication with the author, 11 January 2017.

18 H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture, Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 4–5, 48, 156.

19 Schmidt to Weule, 14 December 1911, *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

Whether it was to avoid offending Thilenius in Hamburg, or Strehlow who collected for the Ethnographic Museum in Frankfurt, or out of an awareness of the problematic nature of practising the large-scale trade of Indigenous objects for his own interest despite his missionary responsibilities, is not clear.[20]

The sale of Indigenous objects was a profitable business and Schmidt was competing with museums, private collectors, and also metropolitan dealers in collecting Indigenous artefacts for the Leipzig ethnographic museum. Together with material culture from Africa, Asia and the Americas, Australian Indigenous objects were sold through dealers such as W.D. Webster, based in England and Germany.[21] Liebler was clearly aware of the value of the trade he was involved in. Although Schmidt appreciated the range and quality of objects that he received from Liebler, he thought that Liebler drove a hard bargain and made sure not to send a shipment until first receiving payment.[22]

Although Liebler may have set high prices, he provided Schmidt with value for money. He provided detailed descriptions and notes together with the items he collected, as was common practice with many of the other German-speaking missionary collectors. He also wrote down the name of each item in Arrernte or Loritja, depending on the language preferred by the person from whom he received information. This kind of detailed record keeping was unusual outside German–speaking practice, as many other collectors in Australia had little interest in recording the specific origin of an object, let alone its Indigenous name or purpose.[23]

Unfortunately, information sometimes disappeared and collections were ruined in transit. The objects were first packed and loaded on to camels in Hermannsburg from where the cameleers took them to Oodnadatta. From there, the cases were taken by train to Adelaide, then they travelled by boat

20 Schmidt to Weule, 1 March 1912, Aktenstück 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.
21 Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 260.
22 Schmidt to Weule, 14 December 1911, *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.
23 Philip Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 236.

to Schmidt in Melbourne.[24] On camel packs the objects were vulnerable to weather. When sending his second shipment to Leipzig in May 1912, Schmidt reported that a large part of the collections had been ruined after they were caught in tropical rain and mud and then dried in the sun on their way from Hermannsburg. Schmidt tried to rescue what he could, but once the labels had come loose he could not identify which of the objects they related to.[25]

Liebler, together with other missionaries, was particularly interested in acquiring secret/sacred items such as *tjurungas*, or *churingas*, from central Australia, wood or stone slabs or tablets with encoded markings on them. On the one hand, *tjurungas* represented the continuation of Arrernte ceremonial practice that the missionaries wanted to end, and the removal of *tjurungas* would have been symbolic of Indigenous conversion to Christianity. On the other hand, Europeans saw *tjurungas* as a key to understanding Arrernte culture. By 1925, Jones notes, 1,000 Arrernte *tjurungas* were held in the South Australian Museum and 500 in the Museum of Victoria alone. To see these numbers in perspective, the Arrernte population was estimated to be approximately 2,600 people in 1870 but 55 years later it had decreased to 500.[26]

Weule was also eager to acquire *tjurungas* for the collection at the Leipzig Ethnographic Museum. Schmidt expressed doubt about being able to purchase any as at that stage *tjurungas* were hard to come by, but then he received a collection of stone and wood *tjurungas* from Liebler. Weule was delighted and encouraged Schmidt to continue pursuing *tjurungas* in particular, even though Liebler doubted he would be able to continue collecting once Strehlow, with whom Liebler was competing over Arrernte objects, had returned to Hermannsburg in April 1912.[27]

24 Schmidt to Weule, 14 December 1911, Aktenstück 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

25 Schmidt to Weule, 14 May 1912, Aktenstück 1912/56, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

26 Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 293–294.

27 Schmidt to Weule, 22 January 1911 [1912], *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig; Schmidt to Weule, 1 March 1912, *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig; To Schmidt, n.a., *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig; Schmidt to Weule, 10 July, 1912, *Aktenstück* 1912/87, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

Arrernte people gifted European collectors with *tjurungas*, or exchanged them in return for money, flour, tea, sugar or tobacco. Despite being voluntarily exchanged, Arrernte did not trade *tjurungas* lightly. Liebler described these surreptitious exchanges in his letter written in English to Stirling: "As never the blacks show ceremonial *tjurunga* marks to white strangers nor their wives, they only in dark nights secretly bring those seldom specimen articles to us to sell it for money or large amounts of rations."[28] Jones suggests that the Arrernte possibly traded *tjurungas* that belonged to people who had passed away. It is also possible that *tjurungas* were commissioned and made in central Australia to respond to high European demand. One third of the 200 *tjurungas* from Arrernte that are held in the Leipzig Ethnographic Museum were possibly produced specifically to supply to European collectors.[29] Such was the demand that *tjurungas* were also stolen by European explorers and collectors from where the Indigenous people kept them hidden.

Jones points out that Liebler was among the first Europeans to recognize the way *tjurungas* connected to Arrernte country, or the links between *tjurungas* and particular sites in the Arrernte landscape and knowledge system. More importantly, unlike earlier collectors, Liebler recognized that an Arrernte person belonged to their tjurunga rather than a tjurunga belonging to them.[30] Liebler kept a careful record of the *tjurungas* he collected, as he did of the other items of Arrernte material culture. These records accompanied the objects he sent to Schmidt. However, when the labels identifying each tjurunga became detached during the second shipment, Schmidt copied the drawings on the secret/sacred objects on to tracing paper and sent them to Liebler in Hermannsburg to help with identification. Liebler reported back that the Arrernte had personally identified the tjurunga, calling them their old acquaintances.[31] Fifteen of the Arrernte *tjurungas* that Liebler collected – including one identified as women's tjurunga, despite *tjurungas* being objects more commonly associated with males – ended up in Helsinki.[32] Thus, they also form a significant part of the Central Australian collection there.

28 Liebler to Stirling, 19 September 1914, AA298 Acc, 184, no. 84, AASAM, quoted in Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 310.

29 Birgit Scheps, personal communication with the author, Leipzig, 11 January 2017.

30 Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 310.

31 Schmidt to Weule, 10 July 1912, *Aktenstück* 1912/87, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig;

32 Verzeihnis der Australier–Sammlungen für Helsingfors, no 5, 1913, Kansallismuseo.

Altogether, Schmidt sent to Leipzig three shipments of the items that Liebler had collected. They travelled by sea, via the port in Bremen. The three cases containing 211 objects from Hermannsburg formed part of a larger shipment of eight cases of Indigenous material culture that Schmidt had purchased from other parts of Australia. They were loaded on to the ship *Frederick the Great* in April 1912. The contents of the eight boxes were insured to the value of £300, worth over €37,000 in 2018 terms.[33] Another two boxes from Liebler, insured for £250, arrived in Bremen in July 1912.[34] The last four boxes, insured for £200, were loaded on to the steamship *Scharnhorst* in Melbourne in May 1912.[35]

In Leipzig the objects were recorded in catalogues, treated with pesticides such as DDT, and stored in the collection room. Doubles or examples of artefacts that were already part of the museum collection were soon sold to other museums. Thus, the 103 Arrernte objects were sold to Helsinki in 1913. The State Historic Museum – since 1917, the National Museum of Finland – purchased the objects from Leipzig as part of a collection of 227 objects from different parts of Australia and New Zealand, paying for them 3,717 Finnish Marks, worth €14,599 in 2017 terms.[36] With limited missionary networks or other connections to European colonies, Finland relied on international museum networks to supplement its collection of non–European material culture.

The exchange was part of a larger attempt to increase the ethnographic collections from Africa and Oceania held in Helsinki.[37] U.T. Sirelius, a curator at the Museum between 1910 and 1918 and a specialist in Finno–Ugric studies, initiated and negotiated the exchange with Weule, as he was interested in having more representative collections of non–European cultures on display in the "Exotic" section on the top floor of the new Museum building.

33 Schmidt to Weule, 1 March 1912, *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig; Customs papers, *Aktenstück* 1912/35, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

34 Freight documents, 11 July 1912, *Aktenstück* 1912/87, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

35 Insurance certificate, *Aktenstück* 1912/56, transcribed, Museum für Volkerkunde Leipzig.

36 Antellin valtuuskunnan ostoluettelo, 29.4.1913, 4. 1905–1913, No. 687, Kansallismuseo, Museovirasto.

37 Pirjo Varjola, "Suomen Kansallismuseon yleisetnografinen kokoelma", *Suomen Museo*, 1981/1982, 83.

Sirelius, influenced by the approach taken in German ethnographic museums, was interested in displaying both the shared histories of humankind and the diversity of ways that different cultures had developed. The selection reflected the focus of German museums, in displaying an entire region via its objects, rather than in a typological arrangement in which similar types of object from multiple cultures were displayed together, as was more common in contemporary British and American museums.[38]

Accordingly, the exhibition of non–European cultures in Helsinki was geographically organised, similar to such displays in Leipzig, and divided by partition walls.[39] Based on a contemporary newspaper review the Australian display was close to sections representing Asia and New Guinea. It contained objects acquired from the Berlin and Leipzig ethnographic museums and most likely included some of the recently purchased Arrernte objects. The Australian display followed the stereotypic European representation of Indigenous peoples current at the time. It contained shields, spears and boomerangs that according to the reviewer Anne–Maria Tallgren, brought to mind "bloody wars between different tribes and their wild hunting parties".[40] Either the display did not utilise the diverse range of central Australian material culture collected by Liebler to represent the everyday life of the men and women of central Australia, or that was not what impressed Tallgren about the exhibition. The "Exotic" section was never open to the wider public, but only to specialist viewers, and that for a short period only due to the outbreak of the First World War.

Interest in Australian Indigenous material culture, and non–European cultures in general was a short-lived and temporary phase in Finland. The Museum staff together with its associated researchers were more invested in studying other Finno–Ugric cultures in different parts of the Russian Empire. They were motivated by rapidly increasing Finnish nationalism and a desire to situate the burgeoning Finnish nation as part of and leading the wider set of Finno–Ugric cultures. Importantly, Finns wanted to construct their nation as separate and different from Russia, particularly once

38 Penny, *Objects of Culture*, 6–7.

39 Leila Koivunen, *Eksotisoidut esineet ja avartuva maailma: Euroopan Ulkopuoliset kulttuurit näytteillä Suomessa 1870–1910-luvuilla*, Helsinki: SKS, 2015, 222, 233–234.

40 Anne–Maria Tallgren, 'Ulkomainen etnografia Kansallismuseossamme edustettuna', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18 January 1914.

Finland became independent in 1917. Therefore, minimal resources were allocated for the collection and display of non–European material culture.[41] Since the initial limited exhibition, only a few of the objects have been publicly displayed as part of larger exhibitions, such as the *Oceania* exhibition in 1943 that included 15 Arrernte objects.[42]

In 1913, the same year the Arrernte objects were sold from Leipzig to Finland, Liebler was recalled to Germany by missionary authorities.[43] He was known to have an abrasive personality and his collection practice had also caught the attention of the authorities following an inspection of the mission.[44] Pastor Kaibel, upset to learn of this trade in ethnographic material for personal ambition and financial benefit, which he considered distracted Liebler from his role as a missionary, wrote:

> *The Board is very put out that he used a great part of his time in Hermannsburg carrying on a large–scale trade in aboriginal weapons, ceremonial, decorations etc. with German museums, about which we knew nothing.*[45]

Liebler's wife Luise was also unwell and needed medical attention in Germany. When the First World War broke out, they could no longer return to Australia.[46]

Liebler's granddaughter Karin Klier describes her grandfather as outspoken in manner and not always diplomatic, characteristics that had also led him into conflict with his seniors at the seminary. She recounts that Liebler openly criticized Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist Party when they came to power. As a consequence, he lost his German citizenship. Even

41 Koivunen, *Eksotisoidut esineet ja avartuva maailma*, 228–233.

42 See Eija–Maija Kotilainen and Heli Lahdentausta in this collection.

43 Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 252.

44 Everard Leske (ed.), *Hermannsburg: a vision and a mission*, Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977, 30.

45 Kaibel to Deinzer, 24 July 1914. Translation from copy of original by John Strehlow, 14 August 1995, C. Strehlow Papers, AA315, AASAM, quoted in Jones, "A Box of Native Things", 252.

46 P.A. Scherer (trans. and ed.), Hermannsburg Chronicle 1877–1933, Tanunda, South Australia, 1995, 31; Korber, "GeharnischteBriefe and Herrn Hitler", n.p.

so, during the Second World War he was interned as a member of an enemy state in British controlled Palestine, where he had been a missionary, and died in 1943.[47] Today, the Arrernte people are left to deal with the loss of large quantities of their material culture and related knowledge due to the actions of collectors such as Liebler as part of the worldwide trade in Arrernte and other Indigenous objects. Their process of tracing the journeys of Arrernte objects across the globe is made easier by the efforts of contemporary institutions such as the Helinä Rautavaara Museum, the National Museum with its Museum of Cultures in Finland, the Macleay Museum in Australia, and the Leipzig Ethnographic Museum, to help the Arrernte and other Indigenous peoples reconnect with their material culture.

47 Tessa Korber, "GeharnischteBriefe and Herrn Hitler", *in'Franken.de*, 9 June 2017, accessed 22 June 2018, https://www.infranken.de/regional/kitzingen/Geharnischte-Briefe-an-Herrn-Hitler;art113220,2710987

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Collections assessment and consultation summary

PRESENTING 63 OF THE 103 ARRERNTE CULTURAL OBJECTS IN FINLAND, COLLECTED BY OSKAR LIEBLER

"We are using the collections: songs, films, and artefacts to connect our essence back to the traditional lands. We are working with the Elders to teach the younger generation [their] cultural heritage.

We are working very closely with the National Museums to identify artefacts that are from Arrernte Country. It is a long process. Artefacts taken away from us really disempowered us. — This thing we do with the people there [in the Strehlow Research Centre, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory] is really powerful, and brings a lot of happiness to us. These Elders visit the museum and teach people.

Shaun Angeles
3rd June 2018, Helinä Rautavaara Museum

INDEX VOCABULARY: ARRERNTE – ENGLISH

ARRERNTE	ENGLISH
akarnte	head pad
alepe	firestick
alkwerte	shield
alye	boomerang
alyekwe	stone knife
amirre	spear thrower, woomera
ankere	spinifex resin
aparre	butt of spear
atneme	digging stick
atyelpe	quoll
awerrtyepwere	bush bean
ilbataga / irlpakerte	beaked boomerang
inernte	ininti "bean tree" (grey corkwood, *Erythrina vespertilio*)
irrtyarte	hunting spear
irtetye	mulga
kanta	hairband
ketyeye	child
kokura	toy, playing stick
kukara	game, throwing a playing stick
kwetere	nulla-nulla/hitting stick
merne	food
ngkwerne	leg, stem, bone
ntanga	seed
tyemurrelye	mourning headdress
ulpa	ochre
urtne	coolamon (a trough for carrying things)
yalke	bush onion

For more Arrernte words:
https://www.memrise.com/course/173460/arrernte-vocab/
https://www.aboriginalart.com.au/culture/arrernte4.html
www.indigemoji.com.au

ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Shields, *alkwerte*, were used for a range of purposes: as a shield for protection against spears, boomerangs or nulla-nulla in conflict situations, to help create fire, and in ceremonial performances. The shields are often made of the *inernte* tree – *Erythrina vespertilio*. Also called grey corkwood or bat's wing coral tree.

VK4918:52 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Shield of catalpa wood. This shield shows evidence of its use as a fire-making implement. The boomerang and the shield are rubbed on each other until fire is sparked. It takes approximately ten minutes, depending on how fast the movement is done. Length 65.5 cm, widest width, 24.5 cm, height 8 cm.

VK4918:52 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Lofty Katakarinja and Shaun Angeles demonstrating to Keeper Heli Lahdentausta how the marks on the shield have been created during the process of making fire. Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, 4th June 2018. PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo.

VK4918:53 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Length 65.5 cm, widest width, 24.5 cm, height 8 cm.

VK4918:53 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

VK4918:55 ALKWERTE, TOY SHIELD

Wooden toy shield for Arrernte boys to play with.
Made of *Erythrina vespertilio* tree, *inernte* [ininti].
Length 42 cm, width 14 cm.

VK 4918:56 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Wooden shield, narrow and painted brown. Made of *Erythrina vespertilio* tree, *inernte* [ininti]. Shields are decorated for ceremonies, painted with the ancestor totems and decorated with eagle or cockatoo feathers. Length 59.5 cm, width 15.5 cm, height 7.2 cm.

VK4918:197 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

Small wooden toy shield. Likely to be a model shield, used to instruct children in its correct use. Children learned everyday skills using similar tools and weapons made to fit their size. Length 42 cm, width 14 cm.

VK4918:197 ALKWERTE, SHIELD

VK4918:131 KOKURA, TOY, PLAYING STICK

Boy's toy, a long thick-headed stick of eucalyptus wood that wriggles like a snake in the sand when thrown from the narrow end. The form allows the playing stick to travel great distances along the ground in a hopping or snaking motion following a calculated impact with a low bush or a grassy mound. Used for playing the far-far game called *kukara*, where the toy is thrown as far as possible. Typically made of a single piece of wood (Haagen, 1994.)

Length 70cm, largest diameter 3.5 cm.

VK4918:131 KOKURA, TOY, PLAYING STICK

ATYELPE, QUOLL

Atyelpe is an important Dreaming to the Arrernte people. It is now extinct from the region. Spotted-tailed Quoll, *Dasyurus maculatus*. Moonlit Sanctuary, Victoria.

PHOTOGRAPH David Paul.
(https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/species/8451)

VK4918: 211 TYEMURRELYE, HEAD ORNAMENT

ngkwerne (leg, stem, bone) *ankere* (spinifex resin)

Tyemurrelye, mourning headdress, is composed of small animal bones of a spotted-tailed quoll, attached to a head-ring typically using hair (*alte*) and spinifex resin. Mourning headdresses were worn by Arrernte women at the death of their husband. By wearing the headdress, it was believed that the spirit of the deceased husband could see that his wife had mourned him respectfully and expressed her deep sorrow at his passing. During the final part of the mourning ritual, the widow removed the headdress, broke it up and threw it into the grave of the husband. It is meant to symbolise an end to the burial ritual, but also to remind the spirit of the husband not to return.

(https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au)
Length 30 cm, width 25 cm.

ALYE, BOOMERANG

Different kinds of throwsticks have been found at archeological sites on five continents. In the Central Desert of Australia, the Arrernte, among other nearby tribes, developed their own style of throwstick, which they called *alye*, due to the height of its aerodynamic efficiency and long-range performance. The desert hunter would carry his *alye* in pairs and use them for numerous tasks other than hunting, although hunting was its major role. *Alye*, commonly known as a boomerang, have great social and religious significance. They feature in stories from the Dreaming and are used as a percussion instrument to accompany dancing and songs. Boomerangs are also used as tool for cutting, digging, and fire-making, as well as a toy and in sporting competitions and fighting. Most types of boomerang do not return. The Central Desert *alye* was of surpassing quality as a survival tool and it became a commodity to the surrounding tribes. It was traded far off across great distances.

(Kleinert&Neale 2000, Jones 1955, www.throwsticks.com)

VK4918:64 ALYE, BOOMERANG

Boomerang of curved form. The upper surface is slightly convex and fluted. This particular asymmetric form is generally used for hunting and is not a returning boomerang.
Span 73 cm, widest width 6.5 cm.

VK4918:66 ALYE, HUNTING BOOMERANG

Boomerang of curved form. The upper surface is slightly convex and fluted. This particular asymmetric form is generally used for hunting. Span 72.3 cm, widest width 6.5 cm.

VK4918:65 ALYE, HUNTING BOOMERANG
Boomerang of curved form. The upper surface is slightly convex and fluted. This particular asymmetric form is generally used for hunting and is not a returning boomerang.
Span 50 cm, widest width 5.6 cm.

VK4918:71 ALYE, FIGHTING BOOMERANG
Incised with designs.
Span 68 cm, widest width 5.5 cm.

VK4918:72 ALYE, LARGE FIGHTING BOOMERANG
Incised with designs.
Span 93.4 cm, widest width 6.6 cm

VK4918:70 ALYE, FIGHTING BOOMERANG
Span 99 cm, widest width 7 cm.

VK4918:67 ALYE, HUNTING BOOMERANG
Straight-flying hunting boomerang. Made from the wood of the Erythrina vespertilio tree, *inernte* [ininti].
Span 57.5 cm, widest width 5.4 cm.

VK4918:69 ALYE, HUNTING BOOMERANG

Straight-flying hunting boomerang.
For hunting kangaroos and emus.
Span 60.5 cm, widest width 5.2 cm.

VK4918:68 ALYE, FIGHTING BOOMERANG

Tribal warriors use this boomerang for fighting. One warrior could have four of these, because they sometimes get lost when thrown. Span 74 cm, widest width 5.6 cm.

VK4918:73 ALYE, BEAKED BOOMERANG

This boomerang is very important to Arrernte. It is called alye ilbagata or irlpakerte (irlpe 'ear' –akerte 'having'). Due to it's shape, it is known in English as a swan-neck, beak, or number 7 boomerang. It is used for fighting, hunting and ceremonies. It was used as a striking weapon in close combat, for which it was held like a pickaxe, with the hook serving as the blade. In combat, the enemy would use their own boomerang, battle club or shield to stop any boomerang thrown at them. When they did that, the hook of the boomerang would catch on the shaft of the club or the edge of the shield or boomerang, causing the boomerang's handle to spin and hit the enemy on the head.
(https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/20105)
Obtained from MacDonnell Ranges.
Span 64.5 cm, length 67.5 cm, widest width 17.5 cm.

URTNE, COOLAMON

Urtne is a wooden trough, a vessel for carrying things, also known as coolamon. It is used for carrying water, seeds etc. These troughs are hollowed out using a long wooden shaft with a sharp stone head. VK4918:100 might be a cradle for an infant. Children up to two years old are carried in them. A band crossing the shoulder is used to tie the trough to the mother's armpit. Similar vessels were also used for handling collected seeds for making flour.

VK4918:100 URTNE, COOLAMON

Length 59.5 cm, widest width 23.5 cm, height 15.7 cm.

VK4918:101 URTNE, COOLAMON

Length 45 cm, width 20 cm.

Lofty Katakarinja researching the catalogue information of a wooden trough with Keeper Heli Lahdentausta, Director Eija-Maija Kotilainen and Shaun Angeles. Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, 4th June 2018. PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo.

VK4918:102 URTNE, COOLAMON

Length 59 cm, width 21 cm.

VK4918:59 IRRTYARTE, HUNTING SPEAR

VK4918:59 IRRTYARTE, HUNTING SPEAR

Wooden spear with long shaft, its barb secured in place with string. Made from kangaroo sinew, the string was still tight after 100 years in storage. Length 277.8 cm.

VK4918:198 AMIRRE, WOOMERA, SPEAR THROWER

ANKERE, SPINIFEX RESIN

Wooden spear thrower with a knob of resin at the end. The resin is obtained by burning spinifex, a species of grass. Length 60 cm, widest width 9 cm.

Shaun Angeles demonstrating the use of a spear thrower. Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, 4th June 2018. PHOTOGRAPH Matt Poll.

VK4918:60 IRRTYARTE, HUNTING SPEAR

Spear with a long shaft, but no barb. Down wrapping at the base of the shaft is missing. Length 287.3 cm.

VK4918:60 IRRTYARTE, HUNTING SPEAR

VK4918:206 ALYEKWE, STONE KNIFE, WITH ANKERE, SPINIFEX RESIN, HANDLE

Stone knife with a thick layer of spinifex resin at the handle end. Spinifex is a grass that grows on very poor and sandy soils. Indigenous people also use its resin to bond things together. Length 20 cm, width of the blade 6 cm.

VK4918:85 ALYEKWE, STONE CHISEL

Stone chisel or knife. Obtained from the north via Alice Springs.
Length 17 cm, widest width 4.5 cm.

VK4918:61 KWETERE, HUNTING STICK, NULLA-NULLA

Club for throwing and hitting. *Kwetere* are used by men to hunt small game. They can also be employed as projectiles, used to make fire or to grind ochre for use as a pigment. *Kwetere* were made by both men and women and could be painted or left unadorned. *Kwetere* are generally about one metre in length and sometimes had a stone head attached with beeswax and string. They were made from the wood of a branch where it joins the tree, or from a young tree pulled from the ground with its roots intact. Length 70 cm, widest diameter 4 cm.

VK4918:62 KWETERE, HUNTING STICK, NULLA-NULLA

Length 49.6 cm, widest diameter 3.5 cm.

VK4918:74 DANCE STICK
Dancing staff of *ilitja* wood used by Arrernte women.
Length 83.5 cm, widest diameter 3 cm.

VK4918:75 DANCE STICK
Dancing staff of *ilitja* wood used by Arrernte women.
Length 87.3 cm, widest diameter 3.2 cm.

VK4918:77 DANCE STICK
Length 83.5 cm, widest diameter 3 cm.

VK4918:18 ININTI SEED NECKLACE
Necklace made of *inernte* (grey corkwood) tree seeds. Worn by Arrernte women around their breasts and shoulders. *Ɪnernte* (red bean).

NECKLACES

Necklaces made from natural resources such as seeds, shells and feathers are significant cultural items that link women to their land. The practice of necklace-making often occurs in a social context, as the women collect the seeds together and sit with one another and their children as they make their individually styled necklaces. That necklace making most often occurs on their Country is also of great importance in terms of cultural maintenance. Pre-contact, necklaces were strung on handspun string made from tree bark, human hair or animal fur, whereas today, many necklaces are strung on introduced material, including synthetic thread and fishing line. (https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au)

VK4918:19
ININTI SEED NECKLACE
Long chains of threaded brown and yellow *inernte* (grey corkwood) seeds.

VK4918:13 NECKLACE

Necklace made of eucalyptus flower capsules. Used by women and children. Length 27.5 cm.

VK 4918:15 ARMLET

Armlet made of eucalyptus flower capsules. Used by women and children.

VK4918:14 NECKLACE
Necklace made of eucalyptus flower capsules. Length 27.5 cm.

VK4918:17 NECKLACE
Necklace made of eucalyptus flower capsules with seeds of *inernte* (grey corkwood) tree threaded in between.

VK4918:16 NECKLACE

Necklace made of eucalyptus flower capsules with seeds of *inernte* (grey corkwood) tree threaded in between.

VK 4918: 39–43
KANTA, HAIRBAND
OF TWISTED WALLABY HAIR
COATED WITH REDDISH PAINT.

VK4918:39. Length 51 cm.

VK4918:40. Length 22 cm.
VK4918:41. Length 24.5 cm.

VK4918:42 KANTA, WOMEN'S HAIRBAND

Length 23.3 cm.

VK4918:43 KANTA, WOMEN'S HAIRBAND
Length 23.4 cm.

VK 4918:38 KANTA, HAIRBAND
Kanta of twisted wallaby hair, used by central Australian women. Length 23 cm.

VK 4918:38 KANTA, HAIRBAND

NECKLACES NUMBERED VK4918:35–37 ARE WORN BY YOUNG BOYS IN CEREMONIES.

Mothers make these to keep the boys strong. After the ceremony, necklaces are handed back to the tribal women who made them.

VK4918:35 NECKLACE

Necklace twined to combine several yarns. Length 38 cm, widest width 6 cm.

VK4918:36 ARMLET
Necklace of twisted kangaroo or wallaby hair covered with thick brownish paint. Length 23 cm.

VK4918:37 NECKLACE
Necklace made of hair or perhaps brown opossum hair. Length 32.5 cm, widest width 1.8 cm.

HEADBAND

Forehead bands of yarn made of wallaby hair. Also similar types of belt or strap were made of wallaby or human hair string. The hair was spun and strong, and used for joining things together.

VK4918:33
Diameter 20 cm.

Lofty Katakarinja and Shaun Angeles wearing red wool headbands in Finland. Headbands like these are worn by initiated men. PHOTOGRAPH Matt Poll

VK4918:34
Diameter 20 cm.

AKARNTE, HEAD PAD

Eucalyptus fibre.

A ring-shaped pad placed on the head to carry a coolamon on. Traditionally made out of twisted grass and/or hairstring made of eucalypt fibres. Used by women when carrying firewood and troughs. Similar pads are made of grass and hair, depending on the season.

VK4918:103

Widest diameter 17.5 cm, width 4.5 cm.

VK4918:104

Widest diameter 17 cm, width 2.2 cm.

VK4918:105

Widest diameter 23 cm, width 6.5 cm.

Detail of VK4918:105. PHOTOGRAPH Matt Poll.

ATNEME, DIGGING STICK

A solid piece of wood made out of mulga (bush) sharpened at the end, and used by women for digging roots, small animals and as a walking stick.

VK4918:80 ATNEME, DIGGING STICK

Wooden digging stick, used by women.
Length 70.3 cm, widest diameter 3.8 cm.

VK4918:81 ATNEME, DIGGING STICK

Length 113 cm, widest width 3.8 cm.

VK4918:82 ATNEME, DIGGING STICK

Digging stick used by women, especially when digging insect tunnels in eucalypt or roots. Found insect larvae are roasted and eaten.
Length 93 cm, widest diameter 3.3 cm.

VK4918: 86-88 ULPA, OCHRES, EARTH PIGMENT

Colours come from a range of earth-based pigments. Natural clay earth pigment is a mixture of ferric oxide and varying amounts of clay and sand. These colours called ochres range from white, through beige and brown to yellow, rust red and black. Ochres are used for painting, traditionally on bark, the self, on cultural objects, or on the ground.

VK4918:87 ULPA

Yellow ochre.

VK4918:86 ULPA

Red ochre, colouring substance for shields, spears and clothing.

VK4918:88 ULPA

White ochre lime, gathered in the Creeks area.

MERNE, FOOD

VK4918:92 NTANGA, NATIVE MILLETT (*PANICUM DECOMPOSITUM*)

The seed produced by this plant is an important food source. It is winnowed, ground, mixed with water and cooked to make an unleavened bread. Native millett is found in the Desert Rivers, Sand Country and Woodland habitats. Indigenous Australian people were among the first bakers on the earth. Length 33 cm, widest width 8 cm. (https://alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/connect-with-nature/plants/plants/native-millet)

VK4918:94 EDIBLE LEGUMINOUS PLANT
The wrapper says *naraka*. Length 10 cm, width 1.5 cm

VK4918:95 EDIBLE ROOTS
Possibly bulrush roots (*Typha*), also called cumbungi. The wrapper says *manna atnitja*. Length 7.5 cm, widest width 3.5 cm.

VK4918:91 YALKE, BUSH ONION

These plant tubers, (*cyperus bulbosus*), which grow abundantly in the Creeks area, are one of the main food supplies of central Australia. Dimensions of one onion: length 1.5 cm, width 0.9 cm.

VK4918:90 AWERRTYEPWERE, BUSH BEAN

Black bush beans are roasted in hot ashes, ground with stones and mixed with water to make a gruel called *kumia*, which means sugary. Dimensions of one bean: length 6 mm, width 4 mm.

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Researcher Shaun Angeles, Strehlow Research Centre and Keeper Eero Ehanti, the National Museum of Finland, exploring a shield that has been used for making fire, on the basis of the marks. Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre, 4th June 2018.
PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo.

Collections of the National Museum of Finland and Cultural Heritage of Indigenous Peoples

Eija-Maija Kotilainen & Heli Lahdentausta

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of ethnographic museums – museums presenting the world's cultures – is to preserve and present the cultural heritage of others, often also minorities and Indigenous peoples. This inevitably results in ethical and moral reflection. Ethnographic museums are a product of Western culture. Museums must be sensitive to the values of the cultures and minorities they are presenting. They are responsible for what they present and how.

What all ethnographic museums have in common is the fact that the origins and accumulation of their collections are more or less tied to colonialism. The majority of the collections of European museums were acquired by members of the colonial administration as well as merchants, researchers and missionary workers who followed them into the field. When Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia in 1809–1917, a large number of Finns worked for Russia in its colony Alaska, Siberia and various parts of the vast empire. Many officials and soldiers serving Russia collected artefacts for museums. During this period, the National Museum of Finland acquired several valuable collections, the best-known of which is the Alaska collection.

Finns carried out missionary work in various corners of the world and, at the same time, helped in the accumulation of collections. This is how artefacts ended up in Finland from places like Ovamboland, today the northernmost region of Namibia, which was the first mission field of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. The tentacles of German colonial activities extend to Finland also in the form of a collection originating from Australia.

It can be said that we have moved from the era of colonialism to an era of cooperation and sharing and, in some cases, repatriation of cultural heritage. In recent years, the Museum of Cultures, as a specific unit of the National Museum of Finland, has also aimed to share and return information about the cultural heritage in its possession to the original owners.1

In recent years, the National Museum of Finland has been visited by representatives of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska to learn about their handicraft traditions. They have been interested in the Alaska collection, collected by Etholén and his contemporaries during the 1830s–1850s. In 2015, Namibian museum professionals studied the Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe collections in Finland. The National Museum also has a collection of more than a hundred Arrernte artefacts, which were studied by a group of representatives of the Arrernte people from Australia in June 2018.

When collecting ethnographic objects, what is decisive is the collector's idea of which creations of the foreign culture are representative and worth incorporating into the collections. The selection is made by an external collector on the basis of personal criteria. Sometimes the person is an expert, researcher or museum professional. But often what is selected for the collections is quite random. Even though the collector does not consciously select objects to represent a certain culture or group, once these end up in the museum, they serve as samples of the culture of the group or area of origin. When an artefact on display comes from an environment with which the viewer is unfamiliar, stereotypes are easily formed and individual objects start to represent a larger entity than in real life. Objects trivial for a

1 The Museum of Cultures operated in separate premises in the centre of Helsinki from 1998 to 2013. Before and since then, national collections of world cultures are managed, exhibited and made accessible as an integral part of the core functions of the National Museum of Finland.

community may be presented as being important for the group's identity. It is quite impossible to find a museum collection that would comprehensively represent the material culture of a certain area. A large part of material culture is of the type that has not been considered worth inclusion in museum collections or simply has not been possible to collect. For rituals, for example, people may have created large, diverse structures including non-preservable natural elements: plants, fruit, animals or blood.

ALASKA COLLECTIONS

The oldest and most famous part of the National Museum of Finland's ethnographic collections comes from Alaska. The objects ended up here during a period when Finland was part of Russia and Finnish officials held high positions in places like the former Russian America.

The best-known collectors included **Arvid Adolf Etholén** (1799–1876), who was employed by the Russian-American Company and acted as Governor of Russian America in the 1840s, and Uno Cygnaeus (1810–1888), who worked in Alaska as pastor.

Even before his five-year term as Governor General (1840–1845), Etholén surveyed and explored areas such as the coasts of Bristol and Norton Bays, the Kuril Islands, Aleutian Islands and the Alexander Archipelago, also collecting objects from the original inhabitants. Etholén delivered his first collections to the Academy of Turku, but they were destroyed by the fire of Turku in 1827. He donated the objects he collected in 1826–1845 to the Coin, Medals and Art Cabinet of the Imperial Alexander University. His extensive collection of more than 500 artefacts includes clothing, hats and bags made of the intestines of walruses and other sea mammals and skins of birds and fur animals, wooden hunting hats, over 50 small walrus tusk sculptures, slate pipes, woven spruce root and other baskets as well as seal harpoons and other hunting weapons. A vast majority of the objects are from Inuit, Yupik and Aleut peoples, less than a hundred from the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast and California.

Uno Cygnaeus (1810–1888) was a clergyman better known as the father of the Finnish public school system. As a young man, he served as a pastor in Sitka, Alaska, where he established a Lutheran parish and had a Lutheran church built in 1843, during Arvid Adolf Etholén's governorship. Cygnaeus

collected both ethnographic objects and natural history samples in Alaska. In 1913, Cygnaeus's son Johan Cygnaeus donated his father's Alaska collection of 83 objects to the Finnish Antiquarian Society, which donated it further to the National Museum. The collection includes intestine clothing, hats and kayak models, but most of the objects are hunting weapons, such as harpoons, spears, etc.

Enoch Hjalmar Furuhjelm (1823–1886) worked for the Russian-American Company as a mining engineer in the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska (English Bay, now known as Nanwalek), where he established a coal mine, and in Sitka in 1854–1862. He also supervised fur trading and acted as the Russian-American Company's administrator for the Indigenous peoples. When Furuhjelm was returning to Finland in 1862 on the passenger ship *Golden Gate*, a fire destroyed his scientific and ethnographic collections. However, he had sent some of his belongings to Finland beforehand, so part of the collection was preserved. Nevertheless, Furuhjelm's objects did not end up at the National Museum until 1940, when his son Hjalmar Johan Leopold Furuhjelm sold them to the museum.

Another extensive old collection is one that was accumulated by the museum of Svenska klassiska lyceum i Åbo, a Swedish-speaking classical school in Turku. This collection was later moved to the Historical Museum of the City of Turku (now the Museum Centre of Turku) and on to the National Museum. It includes artefacts from Northwest America as well as East and Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Africa and South America. The collection began when Turku-based apothecary **Erik Julin** (1796–1874) founded a whaling company in Turku and equipped three barques to sail in the Bering Strait. Julin intended to establish a museum, so he ordered his captains to bring back objects that would provide information about faraway lands.

Fröja returned to Turku in June 1852 from its journey to the Aleutians, Sitka, China, Japan and East India and, in the same year, Julin donated 160 ethnological objects to Åbo gymnasium (predecessor of Svenska klassiska lyceum i Åbo). The collection later grew to comprise over 250 artefacts. The Russian-Finnish Whaling Company operated from 1851–1862, so the Alaskan artefacts in the collection are likely to date from that period.

Some of the Alaskan artefacts were donated by **Adolf Lindman** (1821–1874), who did not travel himself but probably received them in Turku from captains of the Russian-American Company's ships or from the Russian-Finnish Whaling Company's ships. Lindman started collecting antiquities in the 1850s, when he served as pastor in his home region of Tarvasjoki. In the 1860s, he moved to Turku Castle to work as the castle preacher and set up a small museum in his dwelling for the objects he had collected. He later donated 2,700 artefacts to the collections of the University of Helsinki. The National Museum of Finland's ethnographic collections include 54 of Lindman's artefacts, less than 10 of them from Alaska. These include one piece of intestine clothing, *kamleika*, a scale model of a kayak from the Alutiiq as well as an Aleutian storage bag made of intestines.

When the Alaska collections were brought to Finland, museums were still in their infancy. While the exotic artefacts never seen before were certainly of interest to the public, the majority of these collections were intended for education and research purposes at the university and other educational institutes. They were equated with natural scientific samples. This served well the evolutionism typical of the era. To us, these artefacts kept in Finland for 200 years shed light not only on Alaskan hunting cultures, handicrafts and use of various materials in the nineteenth century but also on Finnish history and contacts with the rest of the world.

OVAMBOLAND COLLECTION

The ethnographic collections of the National Museum also include items gathered by missionary workers in various countries. The earliest of these is from Ovamboland (now part of Namibia), where **Martti Rautanen** (1845–1926) accumulated his collection during 46 years of missionary work.

Born in Western Ingria, Martti Rautanen was accepted for the first class of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission's missionary school at the age of 17. He and four other students were ordained as missionaries in 1868 and were all sent to Ovamboland, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission's first foreign mission field. The German Rhine Missionary Society was already operating in the area, and the Finns studied the local Herero and Nama languages at their station.

Showing exceptional proficiency in languages, Rautanen created a standardized form of the Ndonga language and, among other things, translated the New Testament (1903) and the entire Bible (1924) into Ndonga. He also collected extensive linguistic and natural history materials as well as an ethnographic collection of 130 objects from the Ondonga, a Bantu people.

Collected in the 1880s, almost a quarter of the collection consists of arrows. Other weapons include spears, knives with sheaths and a few clubs. In addition, there are some pieces of leather clothing and plenty of jewellery: beads made of metal, glass and shells as well as thick copper anklets and bracelets. The rest consists of various dishes and containers – baskets, goblets, ladles, buckets and pots – a few tools, horn snuff boxes and wooden amulets.

Leila Koivunen (2011, 25) writes about missionary workers' collection activities:

> *The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission was founded during a period when missionary activities were becoming established in Western countries. In the first few years, the focus was on securing and strengthening the position of the society and establishing a foreign mission area. Ideas about exhibition work organized by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission were expressed for the first time when the missionary work had started in Southwest Africa and the first workers had returned to Finland in the early 1870s. However, the society had not provided its missionary workers with any instructions for collecting, so objects were accumulated at random. While interest in local objects was individual, it seems that most workers had acquired or received at least a few African objects as gifts.*

Leila Koivunen continues (2011, 29): *Martti Rautanen represented a new phase in the collection of objects and exhibition activities in the history of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. His activities as a versatile observer of the Ovambo way of life were strongly connected to the world of science at the time.*

When Martti Rautanen visited Finland in summer 1891, he brought along the collection he had gathered and set up an exhibition at his home, displaying it to researchers in various fields and other interested people. The collection was purchased by the Historical-Ethnographical Museum of

the Imperial Alexander University, now the National Museum of Finland. Rautanen's collection also includes some religious objects that missionary workers had collected or destroyed to weed out the worship of heathen gods. Rautanen was interested in the natural sciences, languages and peoples of Ovamboland, so his motivation for acquiring collections was probably primarily research-oriented. Indeed, the collection ended up in the university museum to facilitate teaching and research. At the time, these "primitive" objects were used to illustrate the development phases and evolution of humans. After Rautanen's death in western Ondonga in 1926, also his office and some ethnographic objects ended up in the Finnish Mission Museum.

ARRERNTE COLLECTION

The National Museum of Finland (then the State Historical Museum) purchased a large collection of objects used by Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples) from the Leipzig Museum für Völkerkunde in Germany in 1913. As Germany had many colonies, German museums had large amounts of ethnographic objects and were able to sell the excess. Around the same time, another large collection from Leipzig and one from the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde were purchased for Finland with funds provided by the Antell delegation. All these collections mainly include objects from the Pacific and Africa.

Collection VK4918:1–232 was collected by a Lutheran missionary, **Oskar Liebler**, while carrying out missionary work in Australia from 1910–1913. It features over 100 artefacts from the Aboriginal Arrernte people, also known as the Aranda or Arunta. They are an Aboriginal people from central Australia whose land extended from the southern parts of the Northern Territory to Queensland. They were originally hunter-gatherers who lived in a restricted area, moving between semi-permanent camps. The Arrernte have been divided into Eastern, Western and Southern Arrernte, for example based on their languages/dialects, and Liebler's collection is mainly from the Western Arrernte.

The collection includes various pieces of jewellery (eucalyptus necklaces and bracelets, kangaroo bone nose pins, kangaroo hair necklaces and belts, etc.); wooden shields, spears and striking weapons for hunting; dancing and digging sticks, boomerangs of various shapes, hollowed-out wooden dishes, plant samples, ritual and totem objects, churingas, and other secret/

sacred objects that only men were allowed to see.

The German colonial administration in various parts of the world enabled the country's ethnographic museums to carry out extensive collection activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ethnographic museums in Hamburg, Leipzig, Berlin and Munich competed with each other and other actors, each wanting to have the most extensive and rarest collections. Driven by a strong liberal-humanist tradition, they wanted to connect Germans to the world outside Europe. The underlying idea was not nationalism or colonialism; the German cities just wanted to strengthen their position as important international centres, and establishing and developing ethnographic museums was considered one means of building a metropolitan image. The collection activities were repeatedly justified by studying the history of mankind. Materials had to be collected and saved before the cultures of "primitive peoples" disappeared as a result of external contact.[2]

There was heavy international competition for hard-to-obtain objects between not only German museums but also other museums, private collectors, curiosity seekers, missionary workers and, later on, local administration representatives. To get funds for new expeditions and purchases, museums actively sold duplicate copies and extra objects to other museums. During 1912–1913, the National Museum of Finland purchased three extensive ethnographic collections from Germany: one (VK4888:1–235) from the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde and two from the Leipzig Museum für Völkerkunde (VK4894:1–307 and VK4918:1–232).

When the German collections were acquired for Finland, most of the National Museum building had just been completed in 1910. The State Archaeological Commission had established a delegation to design the interior decoration and plan exhibitions for the new museum. The Ethnological Department was represented in the delegation by Uuno Taavi Sirelius, a central figure in the Finnish museum world in the early twentieth century. He worked for the State Archaeological Commission and the Ethnological Department of the National Museum until his appointment as the first Professor of Finno-Ugrian Ethnology at the University of Helsinki in

2 Penny, 2002.

1922. Sirelius planned the National Museum's ethnological exhibitions, purchased collections and acted as a member of the Antell delegation in 1908–1929.3 He had contacts with international colleagues in Germany in particular. He started a correspondence with Georg Thilenius in 1903 and acted as an intermediary when Thilenius wanted to purchase Finnish objects for German collections. Thilenius acted as Director of the Hamburg Museum of Ethnography from 1904–1935. Sirelius had visited Berlin several times, starting in 1902. In 1908, he visited museums in Hamburg, Berlin, Darmstadt and Munich, and again in Berlin in 1911.[4]

The funds for the collections purchased from German museums as well as several other of the National Museum's collections came from the Antell delegation. Born in Vaasa in 1847, Herman Frithiof Antell died in 1893, leaving the Finnish people his collections and one million Finnish marks, the interest from which was to be used for purchasing valuable objects for the museum's collections. Since 1894, all the major collections were purchased with Antell's funds.[5] An illegitimate son of Herman Rosenberg, Antell studied to become a doctor, inherited his father's large estate and dedicated his life to travelling and collecting.[6]

Sirelius writes about the opening of the National Museum in 1916:

> *The Ethnological Department of the National Museum has collections of objects from peoples of foreign tribes, some of them highly valuable. […] By U. T. Sirelius, in 1911, a valuable collection was acquired from the Berlin and Leipzig Museums of Ethnology, consisting of Australian, Melanesian, Polynesian, Malay and African objects; the best of the latter originate from the German East Africa and Cameroon, part of the latter representing the arts and crafts of this Negro area with dignity. In addition, we acquired central Australian objects from the museum of Leipzig in 1913, some of them items of worship.*[7]

3 Lehtonen, 1972, 106, 114.
4 Lehtonen, 1972, 66.
5 Sirelius, 1916, 9–10.
6 Talvio, 1993, 30.
7 Sirelius, 1916, 16–17.

U. T. Sirelius clearly thought that these collections from "foreign tribes" also belonged to the National Museum. Sirelius considered the foreign collections important for evolutionary research. He had personally made several expeditions to Siberia, accumulating extensive collections of Khanty, Mansi and Nenets objects. In January 1916, the National Museum's domestic ethnological collections and historical collections were opened to the public. A permanent exhibition was also made of the Finno-Ugrian collections. By contrast, there was no room in the National Museum's exhibition halls for the collections from foreign tribes. Instead, they were placed in the attic as a storage exhibition. Small numbers of these foreign objects were occasionally displayed in temporary exhibitions: for example, 15 Arrernte objects in the National Museum's Oceania exhibition from 13 December 1942 to 31 May 1943.

VISITORS FROM ALASKA

The artefacts in the ethnographic collections of the National Museum are part of the cultural heritage of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, Namibia and Australia, and the museum is obliged to provide information about them. The museum has striven to improve the accessibility of the collections, particularly after being contacted by descendants of the original owners. Opening the collections in the Finna database has also made it possible to view the artefacts digitally.

The interest of Indigenous peoples of Alaska in collections in Finland has increased in recent years. In 2007, Suzie Jones, Deputy Director of the Anchorage Museum, and Aaron Legget, a representative of the **Dena'ina** people, visited the museum to view its Dena'ina collection. The Anchorage Museum in Alaska opened the first exhibition presenting the Dena'ina culture in September 2013, borrowing 11 artefacts from the collections of the National Museum of Finland.

In January 2010, two **Koniag** men of the Alutiiq peoples, Perry Eaton and Will Anderson, visited the museum to document the artefacts of their people. They work for Koniag Inc., a corporation that manages the possessions of the Indigenous peoples of the Kodiak Island area and has helped set up a museum in Kodiak, Alaska. The Alutiiq Museum works as a "national museum" for the Alutiiq people. The main goal of the documentation work was to use the materials as a source of inspiration for Alutiiq artists. In

addition, providing information about the cultural heritage, particularly to the younger generation, is a key means of cultural revival. Many inhabitants of Kodiak have lost the cultural ties to their past, and especially young people do not know or respect the culture of their forebears.

The aforementioned visit led to another one: in February 2013, when the Museum of Cultures was still located in the "Tennispalatsi" building in Helsinki, a group of six Koniag people from Kodiak Island led by Sven Haakanson, Executive Director of the Alutiiq Museum, visited the museum to learn about the handicraft traditions of their people. Having received a grant, they intended to study traditional leather sewing and, based on what they would learn, start teaching it at five village schools on Kodiak Island. They were allowed to study 63 artefacts: fur hats and fur parkas; intestine clothing such as *kamleikas* – intestine robes and anoraks – intestine hats and bags, bird-skin clothing and decorative ritual hats made of sealskin. After this, they carried out a two-year project together with 40 schoolchildren, sewing a new piece of clothing modelled after a women's caribou-skin dress (VK136) from the collections of the National Museum of Finland.

A couple of years later, in November 2015, the museum was visited by representatives of the **Chugach** people. They are also an Alutiiq people, but their traditional lands are in the Kenai Peninsula and the area around Prince William Sound, east of the peninsula. The group included three Chugach Elders – literally, since the eldest of them was 92 years old. Their visit to Finland was funded by a project entitled *Llangaklluku Llucilerpet*, which means becoming aware of one's origins. The project intends to gather together the Chugach artefacts in different museums around the world in the form of a virtual exhibition and perhaps also organize a physical exhibition of them later.

With the assistance of a conservator, the visitors were presented with 36 artefacts attributed to the Chugach: woven baskets, brimmed hats, horn spoons, wooden dishes, scale models of kayaks as well as *kamleikas* made of the intestines of large sea mammals. The museum wanted to use this rare opportunity to check some of its Chugach artefacts equipped with a question mark, and so the visitors were shown about a dozen other objects, too. The origin of only a few of these could be confirmed; if an artefact had been attributed to the Koniag, the visitors could not confirm it for sure,

since the two cultures are so close, even their languages basically dialects of each other. After all, the objects were collected as long as 180 years ago, and similar ones were no longer used even in the childhood of sprightly 92-year-old Virginia Lacy.

These visits are also important to the museum. We have learned to tell if the material in a piece of intestine clothing came from a walrus or some other sea mammal, and how the dark colour of intestine material may be the result of smoke treatment and not just the patina of time. We also got to know that grass was sewn into the seams of all intestine clothing, since it would swell when the clothing got wet, thereby improving the waterproofness of kayak clothing, for instance. Another thing we found out was that the spruce root hats that had been attributed to the nearby Tlingit, Indigenous peoples from the Pacific Northwest Coast were in fact Chugach objects, since the patterns had been painted and not woven.

After the visit, the Picture Collections of the National Board of Antiquities (now Finnish Heritage Agency) delivered photographs of the artefacts to the Chugach, and the cooperation may continue.

Another artefact loan must be mentioned. The first artefact in the ethnographic collections, a Salish Indian ceremonial robe was lent to the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in Vancouver during 2017–2018. The exhibition was entitled *The Fabric of Our Land – Salish Weaving*, and it coincided with a seminar and workshops where Indigenous Americans themselves had the chance to learn this rare textile weaving technique. Dating from 1778–1827, the woven robe was donated to the Coin, Medals and Art Cabinet of the Imperial Alexander University on 1 November 1828. The donor Anders Gustaf Grenqvist (1789–1834), who worked as a translator for the commander's staff at the Viapori naval port, is not known to have ever visited America, and so it has been assumed that he received the robe from naval officer A. A. Etholén or somebody else working for the Russian-American Company.

The robe was woven by Musqueam, who lived in the Fraser River estuary and belonged to the Coast Salish tribes, mainly using mountain goat (*Oreamnos americanus*) wool and another animal fibre, possibly dog hair. The fibres were dyed using plant dyes typical of the area. The weaving, and the use of mountain goat wool in particular, involved rituals and

taboos that were followed in the work. Robes were worn in ceremonies, used for trading and given as gifts. This woven robe is probably from the early decades of contact between the Indigenous peoples and settlers and is a very rare 'nobility blanket', one of only approximately 40 of its kind remaining in museums around the world. This secret/sacred Musqueam object was lent to the exhibition so that its original owners could learn from and admire it.

In March 2018, our museum was visited by Charles Lawrence, who personally wanted to thank the staff of the museum for lending the robe to the *The Fabric of Our Land – Salish Weaving* exhibition in Vancouver. A man in his eighties, Charles Lawrence is an active and visible teacher of Indigenous cultures in the United States, a *Metis* Blackfoot descendant adopted by Elders of the Hopi, Lakota, Seneca and Coast Salish tribes. The MOA exhibition was particularly touching for Lawrence because he had personally been involved in reviving this weaving tradition on the West Coast of Canada in the 70s, when it was in danger of disappearing from the collective memory.

NAMIBIA COOPERATION

The international *Africa Accessioned* project started in 2014 under the name Museum Collections Make Connections.[8] The project involved four European countries, Finland, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany, as well as four southern African countries, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It surveyed the collections in the museums of the four European countries from the four African countries with the purpose of developing and possibly implementing cooperation projects between the countries.

The Finnish party found out which collections from Southern Africa are managed by Finnish museums and other public institutions, after which the Namibian contact persons – project development manager Jeremy Silvester and exhibition manager Charmaine Tjizezenga from the Museums Association of Namibia as well as curator Magdalena Kaanante from Nakambale Museum – visited Finland in June 2015 to view collections at four different locations.

8 Partners in the *Africa Accessioned* project were ICME (International Committee for Museums of Ethnography) and SADCHA (Southern African Development Community Heritage Association).

The visit started at the National Museum of Finland, which has, in addition to missionary Martti Rautanen's Ovamboland collection, over 2,000 artefacts from Ovamboland and the rest of Namibia, transferred to the museum from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission when it ceased its museum activities in 2015. The National Museum of Finland's collections also include some artefacts from Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The visitors viewed Rautanen's collection and the artefacts transferred from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Museum as well as the extensive amount of photographic materials received from there and now included in the Picture Collections of the National Heritage Agency.

The Namibians also visited the University of Oulu, which keeps an Ovamboland collection collected by Oulu-based missionary Karl Emil Liljeblad in 1900–1931.[9] In addition, they visited Lammi, where the local parish has a collection of 42 artefacts and 16 natural history samples permanently exhibited in the parish hall. The fourth location they visited in Finland was the Provincial Museum of Western Uusimaa in Ekenäs (Tammisaari), which holds a collection of around 20 artefacts collected by nurse Karin Hirn, who worked in Ovamboland in the 1930s.

After the visit to Finland, the Museums Association of Namibia published a report of the visit, also outlining further cooperation with a wide variety of options (Jeremy Silvester, Charmaine Tjizezenga and Magdalena Kaanante, 2015). Some of the intended cooperation with the National Heritage Agency has already been carried out, including photographing the Rautanen collection and opening the artefact information in Finna. A further project to be carried out this year is the translation of the booklet *Ambomaan kokoelma* (Ovamboland Collection) published by the National Board of Antiquities in 1983, which includes a brief description of Martti Rautanen and his collection, and publish it with new photographs and additional information. The new publication also includes photographs taken on-site at the old mission stations. A photography exhibition that will tour different parts of Namibia is also being planned with the Picture Collections of the Finnish Heritage Agency.

9 The collection in Oulu includes 407 artefacts and 219 natural history samples.

VISITORS FROM AUSTRALIA

The Helinä Rautavaara Museum is coordinating the *Uterne/Summer – 100 Arrernte* objects project, within which a group of Australians visited the National Museum of Finland in June 2018 to view the collection of Arrernte artefacts. The programme also included making a documentary film of the visit and presenting the Arrernte culture to the public in the Helinä Rautavaara Museum and the National Museum of Finland. The visitors were Shaun Angeles, a researcher from the Strehlow Research Centre (SRC), Alice Springs; Matt Poll, Assistant Curator of the Macleay Museum, Sydney University; and Cleophas Katakarinja, an Arrernte Elder from Hermannsburg.

The museum received additional information about the artefacts – for example, many artefacts previously regarded as regular pieces of jewellery turned out to be secret/sacred or ritual objects. The visit was a touching occasion, particularly for Cleophas Katakarinja, who was visibly moved when he said goodbye to the artefacts: "Goodbye, goodbye, we won't be seeing each other again." The collection was photographed, and it was opened in Finna, the joint search portal for the collections of Finnish archives, libraries and museums, with English captions to prepare for the visit.

As the examples show, Indigenous peoples have actively sought and collected information about their cultural heritage in recent years in order to revive it. They have visited museums in various corners of the world. Artists and artisans who belong to Indigenous peoples have used the museum artefacts as sources of inspiration and information. People want to revive traditional handicraft skills and transfer them to new generations. Museums are obliged to support the representatives of Indigenous peoples in this work and enable the presentation of their cultures in exhibitions. The interest aroused in recent years proves that museum collections can also provide Indigenous peoples and minorities with important tools for building and strengthening their identity.

All of us have several identities as individuals and members of groups. No person or group has a static identity. In shaping and preserving collective cultural identity, common shared symbols, myths, values and memories play a key role. These manifest themselves in various forms: oral traditions, rituals and ceremonies, everyday behaviour as well as material forms of

culture. Identifying the significance and meanings of objects from foreign cultures in terms of cultural identity is a difficult task for museum professionals and anthropologists. For this reason, it is important to let representatives of Indigenous peoples themselves identify, and if desired, utilize and interpret the artefacts in our collections. This also realizes the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their languages and cultures and decide on their own cultural development.

ABOUT RETURNING COLLECTIONS

At its most extreme, the transfer of cultural heritage involves repatriating collections. Requests for the return of collections have increased recently in many countries. The Indigenous peoples of North America, Australia and New Zealand have been the most active, but discussion on returning African art and cultural artefacts has also increased. The majority of the requests for return have concerned human remains and secret/sacred objects. Presently, the National Museum of Finland is preparing the repatriation of the human remains and burial items from Mesa Verde, Colorado. An inventory of the entire Mesa Verde collection was therefore carried out. This archaeological collection, excavated by Gustaf Nordenskiöld in Colorado in 1891, was made available also in the Finna database, with the exception of human remains.

Only a few objects have been returned from Finland so far. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Museum returned a ritual stone to the Kwanyama Traditional Authority in 1995, and the same museum, under the name Kumbukumbu, returned an Ombalantu ritual stone to Namibia in 2013. The handover ceremony, in which the stone was given to Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of Namibia, took place in Finland in November 2013. The stone had been donated to the museum in 1932 by missionary Heikki Saari, who had obtained it while working in Northern Namibia in 1903–1947. The President of Namibia handed the ritual stone on to Chief Oswin Mukulu of the Ombalantu Traditional Authority, saying, "This stone is part of our cultural heritage and has historical significance not only for the Ombalantu Traditional Authority but for our entire country." President Pohamba went on: "Undoubtedly, this ritual stone will serve as a symbol for the unity of the Ombalantu community –. Let us continue the preservation

of our culture for the benefit of the current and future generations."[10]

This wish for the strengthening of unity proved premature. By contrast, it resulted in an argument about where and to whom the ritual stone belongs. Abisai Shilomhoka Heita, the claimant of the Ombalantu kingdom, accused the government and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia of destroying the culture and heritage of the Aambalantu community by handing over the stone. According to him, the stone had been taken from the royal family and must be returned to it, as similar objects had been returned to other royal families before.[11]

Next, a group calling themselves the "Ovambalantu elders" demanded to have the stone. They claimed that the stone should be donated to the Outapi Cultural Centre and kept at the famous Baobab Tree Museum in Outapi so that everyone interested would have the chance to see it. Why keep something that belongs to the entire nation in a private home?[12] This example shows that repatriations are not easy. Nevertheless, the National Museum is also aiming to return a piece of the stone of the Ondonga Kingdom next summer when Finland and Namibia celebrate their 150-year relations. It has been a special wish of the present vice-president Nangolo Mbumba.

Repatriations are always long, complex processes on which decisions can only be made case-by-case, after careful consideration. What is important is to know the history of the collection well and ensure that the claimants are entitled to request the return and the object(s) will continue to be stored or exhibited in appropriate conditions, or, when human remains are in question, reburied. Sometimes, alternative solutions should be considered: permanent loan, joint ownership, exchange or digital repatriation.

10 Namba, Namibian, 17 February 2014.
11 Ashipala, 27 May 2014.
12 Haufike, Informante, 12 June 2014.

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Lofty Katakarinja (second from the left) with Shaun Angeles, (first from the left,) explaining the use use of the head pads to Keeper Heli Lahdentausta and Director Eija-Maija Kotilainen from the Museum of Cultures. Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre, Vantaa 4th June 2018.
PHOTOGRAPH Kristina Tohmo

Museums as places of remembrance – linking the past, present and future

Kristina Tohmo

A LIVING MUSEUM WITH ITS COMMUNITIES

The Helinä Rautavaara Museum is home to a collection established by a world traveller and journalist, Ms Helinä Rautavaara, in various countries of the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Africa, during the years from 1957–1997. It contains approximately 3,000 objects and a large number of photographs, sound recordings and film. After Ms Rautavaara passed away in 1998, the Museum was founded jointly by the University of Helsinki, Finnish Museum Association, Finnish Anthropological Association, and the City of Espoo. Since its inception, the Museum has received further donations, and has documented present-day living cultural traditions of Finland by working with different local communities.

The mission of the Museum is to maintain a collection representative of world cultures and to convey information about cultural diversity. Through inclusive and participatory exhibition projects, audience work and documentation, the Museum participates in building a culturally

diverse Finland and a more socially just world. The essential values of the Museum are inclusion, reciprocity, giving space to a multiplicity of voices, and topicality. Accordingly, the Museum has often collaborated with the source or creator communities from which museum collections originate, or with their present-day descendants.[1]

During these collaborative projects the Museum staff has learned that the collector, Helinä Rautavaara, is still very much remembered by the people she had met in different countries of the world. Whenever possible, the Museum aims to work with people who knew her personally, or with their descendants, and with new collaborators found in Finland and internationally, in order to share and gain more knowledge about the collection.

In this article I draw on my experience of such collaborations over the past 20 years. It explores how a museum, especially an ethnographic museum in a remote country, can become a place where the past, present and future meet in ways that best serve local and international communities and audiences. It sees its work at the Helinä Rautavaara Museum in a context of "decolonization" – a topical issue in museums internationally. My understanding of what it means for a museum to decolonize follows Ben Garcia's definition of it as a "process that institutions undergo to expand the perspectives they portray beyond those of the dominant cultural group, particularly white colonizers". Which means "including perspectives at the Museum that should have always been included, but historically were not".[2] Or as defined in the Abbe Museum Strategic Plan, "at a minimum, sharing authority for the documentation and interpretation of Native Culture".[3]

Involving creator communities in the everyday practices of museums is essential for the "post-ethnological" museums that are searching for new forms and public roles, driven by new pressures and opportunities.[4]

1 "The term 'source communities', sometimes referred to as 'originating communities', refers both to these groups in the past when artefacts were collected, as well as to their descendants today." (Peers and Brown, 2003: 2). I, however, follow Laura Katharina Preissler, who prefers "creator community", referring to Byrne et al. who suggest that the term "creator community" expresses more clearly the "active" and "participatory" role of the makers of the objects (Byrne et al., 2011: 8).

2 Rachel Hatzipanagos citing Ben Garcia, The Washington Post, Oct. 12, 2018.

3 Abbe Museum Strategic Plan, https://abbemuseum.wordpress.com/the-plan/

4 James Clifford, Un musée à imaginer, Colloque international, Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, conference in Paris, 2016.

Importantly, it pushes for change in the museum institution and practices. Trudy Nicks lists three themes that emerge from Indigenous people entering and using museums, in addition to new directions and legislation in museum policies: changes in the status of Indigenous objects; changes in museum practices; and implications of contact work for the curatorial role within museums.[5] One of the most significant changes has resulted from the different understanding of material culture between Western museums and the creator communities, among whom objects are often considered to be part of a living entity, to be ancestors and/or spirits. These different ways of seeing objects then affect their conservation, storage, curating and exhibition practices. Furthermore, some objects cannot be exhibited to everyone, or at all.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES, 1998–2019

The Helinä Rautavaara Museum aims to have equal partners rather than pseudo–participants. Which means, ideally, that the collaborators would be able to participate fully, rather than have to enter into a given structure, format, or hierarchy, typical of museums.[6] Many of the Museum's projects have been initiated following a request from a community, and different projects have involved trainees, volunteers and paid staff from the participating communities. Experience has come both through mistakes and successes. Certainly, learning and peer support have been gained and given within training workshops both in Finland and around the world.

BEAT THE DRUM – MUSIC WORKSHOPS (1999)

The year after our first opening we hosted five music workshops with migrant musicians from Senegal, Jamaica, Bolivia and Tanzania in Finland. The Senegalese musician was an old friend of Helinä Rautavaara and had previously performed at the museum's first opening party. In each

5 Nicks, 2003: 20.

6 "For many source communities, collaboration means full and equal partnership in all stages of a project; it is a recognition of their expertise and their attachment to objects that are central to their culture, and their participation will often be based upon expectations of community benefit." (Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown, 2003: 9)

workshop the audience learned about the musical tradition of one of these cultures and had an opportunity to try the instruments themselves. At the end of each workshop the musicians and audience members played together in a jam session.

THE BAYE FALL AND MOURIDE COMMUNITIES (1998–ONGOING)

Helinä Rautavaara was a member of the Senegalese Baye Fall brotherhood and travelled between Finland and Senegal several times during the 1980s. Members of the community have visited the Museum, mostly during 2018–2019, for archival research, and to curate the Senegalese collection for the Museum's new collection exhibition, which opened in August 2019. As a result of this collaboration the Museum has given copies of the archival photographs to the community in Senegal. The Museum staff visited the community gatherings and together they produced a short film for the collection exhibition.

INTERNATIONAL CAPOEIRA COMMUNITY (2005–ONGOING)

Helinä Rautavaara researched the martial art of capoeira while travelling in Brazil, 1963–4 and 1971. During her travels she met the most famous capoeira teachers, Mestres, of the time. She interviewed them, took photographs and recorded their capoeira events. In the 1980s, the Brazilian Mestre Samara (Claudio Lemos) based in the Netherlands, met Helinä Rautavaara in Finland, researched her collections and informed the other Mestres around the world about them. Since then our museum has hosted several visitors from Brazil and the international capoeira community. As part of these exchanges we have facilitated archival research and organised capoeira workshops in our museum space. In addition, we produced a video film together with Mestre Cobra Mansa (Cinézio Feliciano Peçanha) for the collection exhibition.

AROOSKA – SOMALI WEDDING (2009–2014)

Between 2009 and 2014, the Museum also carried out many diverse projects together with members of the local Somali community. Rather than display Somalian material culture, which the Museum did not have in its

collections at the time, the projects included video-making workshops for youth, poetry clubs for teenage boys, and training for cultural mediators. They worked towards improving the mother tongue of Somali children in Finnish day-care centres as well as providing workshops in the Somali and Finnish languages for schoolchildren. These projects were funded by the Kone Foundation, by other smaller foundations, the Ministry for Culture and Education, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

As part of the collaboration with the Somali community the Museum also collected objects and recorded accounts telling of the lives of the first generation of Somali immigrants in Finland. This collaboration developed into the co-curated exhibition Arooska Somali Wedding, which was presented at the Museum in 2013. In 2014, it was also displayed in cooperation with the City Museum of Helsinki, a local cultural centre in Helsinki. The exhibition brought together many of the projects from past years. The aim of the exhibition was to tell the story of change in cultural heritage and way of life as seen by the Somali diaspora living in Finland.[7]

The most valuable outcome of the process was the exchange of knowledge on all levels of the project. Everyone learned from one another: the Somali community, the Museum staff and the audience. Importantly, the elderly Somali people taught the younger generation, and the younger generation taught their parents and grandparents.

The curator of education, Ilona Niinikangas, described her experience of the project:

> *The process gave us new insights into how cultural institutions are viewed from the outside and from the inside. The scent of Somalian anjeera pancakes and spicy coffee lingered through the white gallery walls of the exhibition centre located in an upper-middle-class area of Espoo. The sound of drumming, singing and laughter, the colourfully dressed women waiting in the lounge*

7 People from Somalia began arriving in Finland in the early 1990s, escaping civil war, drought and famine in Somalia. They comprised the so-called third refugee wave after the people from Chile and Vietnam. There was a lot of open racism towards Somali people when they arrived. (Tiilikainen, 2003). In 2019 there are some 20,000 people from a Somali background living in Finland.

area made the diversity very visible. The process blurred the usual boundaries of museum work: on the one hand there was the pride and joy of elderly Somalian women, the amazement and delight of the experienced cultural journalists and museum visitors for the truly innovative approach and maximum community involvement. And on the other hand there were odd comments about the work conducted not being suitable for the exhibition centre premises because the community involvement was too visible.[8]

The Arooska Somali Wedding project showed the way for institutional change. By blurring the institutional boundaries inside the Museum, it revealed frustration and even anger as the Museum staff were nudged beyond their customary comfort zone on a journey for which representatives of the Somali community held the compass, and ownership and power were shared. The collaboration between the Finnish–Somalian community members and our Museum continues to this day. The women participating in the Arooska project found and established a supportive network with one another and have continued to meet regularly, along with new members who join them.

THE FINNISH ROMA COMMUNITY (2015–2016)

When members of the Finnish Roma Association learned about the Arooska Somali Wedding exhibition, they contacted the Museum to enquire if a respectful exhibition about their own culture could also be produced.[9] For more than 500 years there have been Roma people, originally from India, living in Finland, where they continue to maintain their cultural traditions. Today, a population of approximately 10,000 Roma people live in Finland.

Roma people experience much everyday racism in Finland. When the Roma Association approached the Museum, their main wish was for their people to be represented "inside respectable walls at least once in their lives".[10] The subsequent exhibition Phuranengo Drom – The Road of the Elders was

8 Personal email correspondence with Ilona Niinikangas, 3rd January 2019.

9 The Finnish Roma Association (Finitiko Romanengo Sankiba), established in 1967, is one of the oldest Roma associations in Finland.

10 Tiina Isberg, Finnish Roma Association, 2015.

based on a project developed jointly by the Finnish Roma Association, journalist Aija Kuparinen and photographer Olga Poppius, whose photographs and interviews of 12 Roma Elders were collected in a book.

The exhibition, organised in 2016, and its accompanying book told the story of the last generation of Finnish Roma, who until the 1960s had lived a roving life, a life in which a horse and caravan were one's most valued possessions. It not only introduced Roma history, but also helped to generate a better understanding of the living traditions of present-day Roma living in Finland.

UTERNE – 100 ARRERNTE OBJECTS (2017–2019)

For our 2018 community project Uterne / Summer – 100 Arrernte Objects, as recorded in this book, the Museum arranged for an Arrernte delegation from Central Australia to visit Finland to research their collection in the National Museum of Finland. The Uterne project was a collaboration between the Macleay Museum at Sydney University and the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs. The project was in many ways very special. It was the first time we had helped the community to connect with the collections held in another museum. It was also an example of how, instead of anthropologists travelling to distant lands to "study the resident natives", Indigenous Elders now increasingly travel to the world's museums to do their own field work, and to evaluate ethnographic collections for themselves.[11]

The Uterne – 100 Arrernte Objects project was begun in the year 2014. It developed after a Sydney based colleague, assistant curator of the Macleay Museum in Sydney, Matt Poll, visited Finland in 2014. Matt was keen to learn about the Australian collections at the National Museum. Although the collections were not accessible, photographs of the objects and some Arrernte jewellery could be seen at the Museum of Cultures | National Museum of Finland in central Helsinki. Following this visit Matt Poll envisioned a visit of an Arrernte delegation to Finland to research their collections. Over the years, we developed a project to connect the Arrernte

11 Fienup–Riordan, 2003: 39.

people with their cultural objects, but also for the National Museum to find out more about the collection that had been in storage at the Museum for 100 years.

Finally, in 2018, it was possible to realise the project with funding from the Kone Foundation. However, there was much organising to be done between the funding decision and the delegation landing at Helsinki–Vantaa airport. First, the objects were all photographed.

Meanwhile in Australia, Matt Poll contacted Shaun Angeles Penangke, a Kungarakan and Arrernte man, the Artwe–kenhe (Men's) Collection Researcher at the Strehlow Research Centre, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. After photographs of the objects were sent to Shaun Angeles, the nature of the collection began to fully unfold as he learned of its contents. Shaun Angeles then began interviewing Western Arrernte Elders to find out who among them would be suitable to make the visit, that is which of the Elders had the closest connection or a personal relationship to the items in this particular collection. The chapter by Matt Poll in this book helps us to better understand the need for establishing connections and relationships between the objects and the community Elders in order to achieve a successful collaboration.

Through the interviews and by showing the photographs of the artefacts, Shaun Angeles found two Elders who were related to the items in this collection. He also learned that there was a relationship between the collector Oskar Liebler, a German missionary who worked in Arrernte Country, and one of the current Elder's great-grandfather, who had worked with Liebler.

Community projects usually take more time than is scheduled and this one was no exception. The Elders had never travelled overseas and therefore had to apply for passports, while based in a remote community. The Men's ceremonial season also slowed down communication as the Elders were unreachable. Eventually, a delegation of three – Western Arrernte Elder Cleophas Lofty Katakarinja, Shaun Angeles, and Matt Poll – was ready to travel, after one of the Elders had to cancel for family reasons. They landed in Finland on June 2, to start a nine-day visit that made a lasting impact on all the project participants.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

In all of our community projects it has become very clear to us that artefacts and photographs have the capacity to evoke knowledge, and to spark lively debates about the identity and stories of the people or makers involved. They have encoded within them the ability to reveal cultural knowledge and intention. Thus, these objects can function as links between the past and present. For many Indigenous communities working with archival photographs and artefacts can also become part of a strategy to preserve the cultural and physical wellbeing of their members through gaining and sharing knowledge about their identity and history.[12] [13]

The Arrernte collection in Finland includes 107 objects, of which 103 were collected by Oskar Liebler. Most are everyday objects, such as boomerangs made for different purposes, shields, spears, vessels, jewellery and other decorative items, belts, ochres, stone and plant samples. The visit included two days at the Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, where the delegation studied the objects and their materials together with the staff of the National Museum. They demonstrated how these objects were used and taught them their West Arrernte names which they recited together. Relevant materials and animals were researched on mobile-phone web browsers.

The collection also includes the culturally important Men's collection, the sight of which is restricted from outside viewers and women. The National Museum respected this Arrernte practice and, prior to the visit, approximately one third of the collection was moved to another room with restricted access. Only a male conserver was allowed inside the room with the guests, along with the cameraman who filmed the collection for use by the Arrernte community. We learned that some objects in this restricted collection were very significant for the Elders, who thought they had mostly disappeared from central Australia. To see them was very moving for our

12 Peers and Brown, 2003; Edwards, 2003: 83; Bell, 2003.

13 "Cultural memory is formed by symbolic heritage embodied in texts, rites, monuments, celebrations, objects, sacred scriptures and other media that serve as mnemonic triggers to initiate meanings associated with what has happened. Also, it brings back the time of the mythical origins, crystallizes collective experiences of the past and can last for millennia." (Meckien 2013: 2).

guests, as they evoked memories, deep cultural meanings and stories.

After seeing artefacts related to his Dreaming stories, Lofty Katakarinja remembered and "sang the country", the places and stories that related to particular items. I was told this had happened later in the evening, back in the hotel suite, and lasted several hours until the whole area of a country and the related stories had been sung through.

Seeing the objects was emotionally strong, not just for the Arrernte guests but also for us Finnish museum workers. Even only witnessing the everyday objects being re-connected to their countrymen and hearing the Arrernte language spoken to them for the first time in 100 years was an unforgettable experience for all of us.

Eero Ehanti, Keeper, Head of Conservation Department of the National Museum, described his experience:

> *The objects that have been hidden in storage here for a hundred years, woke up in front of our eyes. It is, I think, the most remarkable thing that has happened here. On a personal level, I understood what a very long period of time, continuum, there can be in a human culture." – "Another great insight was to see how the traditions were moved on. When there was an older person from the community and a younger one. And we could clearly see that there was a continuous communication, they were in interaction as the older person transferred information to the younger person. I was also told that this is very strongly present in their community and is how their tradition is moved on to the younger people.*[14]

The wider public was also given the opportunity to learn about the Western Arrernte culture and philosophy. Lofty Katakarinja, Shaun Angeles and Matt Poll gave two lectures during their visit, one in the National Museum of Finland and one in the Helinä Rautavaara Museum. The presentations were special because they gave us an Arrernte perspective on the world. We also learned that having the opportunity to connect with this kind of remote

14 Eero Ehanti's interview by Antti T. Seppänen at the Finnish Heritage Agency Collection and Conservation Centre in Vantaa, 5th June 2018.

museum collection, and to be able to participate in taking care of their cultural artefacts, is very important to Australian Aboriginal communities.

HOW COLLECTION ASSESSMENT VISITS AFFECT MUSEUM PRACTICES

Collaborations such as the Uterne project reveal the diverse nature of the collection and Indigenous knowledge. Artefacts can be seen as family property, kin, extensions or manifestations of people or spirits.[15] Some objects are considered to be alive and must therefore be handled with great respect. Also, Indigenous communities around the world have different attitudes towards the value of objects held in museum collections. For example, when everyday items are still made and used within a community they are not perceived to be of as much interest as archived photographs and films, which can fill gaps in the memory of a community and help in renegotiating its history.

However, very different rules apply to secret and secret/sacred cultural objects that require museums to alter their usual practices and restrict access to objects that must not be viewed by outsiders. Secret/sacred material culture also needs to be conserved in culturally appropriate ways. For example, freezing and the use of plastic bags may suffocate the living entity of an object. Some objects may require feeding by their community members.[16]

A museum should never display openly and publicly objects of a restricted nature. The only ethical solution is the repatriation of the collection to the creator community.[17] However, the situation can be complicated and ambiguous. It is not always obvious where the objects belong, or even if the museum knows where the objects come from, the community also needs

15 Edwards, 2003: 96.

16 According to Nancy B. Rosoff's examples from the Native American communities: the fact that the objects are [believed to be] alive, taboos must be respected or objects have to be located on the top floor, so that there is no one walking on top of them, bring an evolution of new traditions to the museums instead of traditional care in the true sense, mainly because of the limitations of the museum environment. (Rosoff, 2003: 72–78).

17 As an option for repatriation, it has also been suggested that when lending sacred materials to communities, where it is physically possible, like NMAI (National Museum of the American Indian), collection policy contains on case–by–case basis. Tribes request sacred objects to manifest their spiritual beliefs and to perform ceremonies that benefit their communities. (Rosoff, 2003: 76)

to be ready to receive the objects.[18] As Matt Poll describes, human remains, photographs, secret/sacred objects and intellectual properties all have their own unique circumstances in relation to how, and even when or if they should be returned. He reminds us that behind the scenes of the good news stories of the return of numerous ancestral remains from Australian museums to communities around Australia there is a large network of community Elders and project workers who facilitate the logistics of returning cultural property on a case-by-case basis.[19] However, the connection between the objects in the collection of the National Museum in Finland and the members of the Western Arrernte community was easily affirmed during the visit.

DECOLONIZING MUSEUMS OR JUST COLONIZATION IN A NEW FORM?

Each of our museum projects has taught us different things. The future of museum work relies on the ability to successfully collaborate with the various communities and audiences. Internationally, museums are acquiring different models of Indigenous curatorship, and also becoming "performance spaces", using the museum as a venue for a wider cultural programme. Small regional projects set up with local communities and free admission can attract from communities a greater sense of ownership over museological processes and diminish the feeling of museums as "alien spaces".[20]

As we have learned, decolonization of a museum starts with the training of museum staff, including those who greet and educate visitors. It even determines what is sold in the gallery stores.[21] Indigenous research ethics are vital when working with Indigenous groups. This requires the methods used to be respectful and approved of by the relevant Indigenous community. Every project should incorporate the collaborating community's social and cultural practices. It requires an equal research partnership, fair opportunity of involvement, beneficence: outcomes and outputs to be distributed in a way that is agreed to and considered fair by the participants.[22]

18 Clifford, 1997: 211–212.

19 Personal email correspondence with Matt Poll, 20th June 2018.

20 Bolton, 2003: 50–53, Mew, 2008: 98–108.

21 Abbe Museum Strategic Plan, https://abbemuseum.wordpress.com/the–plan/

22 Margaret Raven, Helsinki, 2019. National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research in Human Research 2007.

The positive outcomes for the collaborating partner in a museum project can include raising awareness of their cultural heritage among Finnish and sometimes global audiences. It can allow teaching the younger generation about the cultural heritage of their parents and ancestors, or discussion on the issues that can arise when living under the pressure of different cultures or cultural traditions. The collaborative projects can also train new cultural interpreters among the community. The aim is to strengthen internal cohesion of the community and to fight the prejudices faced by people with different cultural backgrounds. One of the goals is to support the integration of young people with different cultural backgrounds into the Finnish society.

Working with creator communities also has a big impact on an institution. They bring new relationships and learning and often involve documenting living cultural practices. They also educate the mainstream population about cultural diversity and minority groups.

However, Cajsa Lagerkvist reminds us that creating an inclusive institution is not about finding one model that can be applied to all museums and communities. Rather, the task is to maintain dialogue, to negotiate and renegotiate with each separate community involvement. In other words, there is no shortcut to inclusion.[23]

The collaboration, or especially the ongoing collaborative cooperation, requires institutional resources and/or expertise. Lack of time and/or funding to organize meetings, projects or events with the community members, may cause a well-begun collaboration to dry up. Changes of museum staff also impact on the cooperation. Coordinators often work on a project under grant funding, even for a period of several years, then move on to other positions taking knowledge and networks with them. Building long-term relationships and continuous collaboration requires dedicated museum staff, time and resources.[24]

Decolonization efforts may also fail and sometimes even help to replicate colonial behaviours and attitudes. Artist and curator Shaheen Kashmani

23 Lagerkvist, 2006.

24 Clifford, 1997: 213, Nicks, 2003: 20.

notes that decolonization is not the same as diversity. She instead posits that decolonization is "the upfront challenge of white supremacy". Decolonization de-centres the Eurocentric view, and values the narrative of those who have been "othered". It dismantles systems of thought, epistemologies, methodologies and philosophies that place the white man as standard. It is not just about inviting Indigenous and other marginalized people into the museum to help the institution improve its exhibitions, it is about overhauling the entire system. Otherwise, according to Kashmani, "museums are merely replicating systems of colonialism, exploiting people of colour for their emotional and intellectual labour within their institutions without a corollary of respect and power."[25]

A fruitful relationship between the Arrernte people, their collection and the staff taking care of the collection in Finland, was established during the visit. The Arrernte guests said they were happy to see that the objects seemed to be safe in Finland, and that they were conserved in culturally respectful ways.[26] Visual repatriation of the objects has been done,[27] that is, high-resolution images and filmed documentation of the collection items were sent to Shaun Angeles, who will use them in consulting processes with the Arrernte Elders of central Australia.

It is hoped that this visit will have led to the repatriation of the important restricted Men's collection back to central Australia, where it is invaluable for the local Elders in their work of transferring cultural knowledge to their younger generations and to continuing a living tradition of thousands of generations over 60,000 years.

25 Shaheen Kashmani, 2017. https://www.museumnext.com/article/decolonising–museums/

26 Lofty Katakarinja's and Shaun Angeles's interview by Antti T. Seppänen at the Finnish Heritage Agency Collection and Conservation Centre in Vantaa. 5th June 2018.

27 Visual repatriation is the use of photography to return images of ancestors, historical moments and material heritage to source communities. (Peers and Brown, 2003.)

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INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Lofty Katakarinja's and Shaun Angeles's interview by Antti T. Seppänen at the Finnish Heritage Agency Collections and Conservation Centre in Vantaa. 5th June 2018
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