Alison Petch

A Typology of Benefactors: the Relationships of Pitt Rivers and Tylor to the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford[1]

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There are many important people connected to the early development of the Pitt Rivers Museum; this paper concentrates on two — Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900) and Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917). These men had different contributions to bring to these years and the Museum would not have developed as it did without them.

The Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in 1884 when a large collection of ethnographic and archaeological objects, amassed by Lieutenant-General Pitt Rivers, was donated to the University of Oxford. Since that date the University has continued to acquire many thousands

[1] I would like to acknowledge the help I have received from Chris Gosden, Catriona Kelly, and Jeremy Coote in preparing this paper. I would also like to thank Frances Larson, my fellow researcher on the Economic Science Research Council funded 'Relational Museum' during which the research for this paper was carried out. It should be noted that although this paper talks about the Pitt Rivers Museum, which is now a separate institution from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History (which is next door), during the period in question the Pitt Rivers Museum was, in fact, essentially part of the University Museum. At this time the Museum was often known as the Pitt Rivers Collection, making it even more clearly a department of a larger Museum, rather than the separate Museum it would eventually become.

Edward Burnett Tylor, studio portrait. [Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, Photographic collections, 1998.267.88.].

of ethnographic objects from other donors. Today there are well over half a million objects (including photographic and manuscript collections) in the Museum's collections, and the Museum continues to add to its collections. It is considered to be one of the top ethnographic museums in the world, with objects from all over the world and from many periods of history.

For a British museum in the early twenty-first century, the Museum's displays are unusual, in that they are arranged 'typologically' not geographically. This form of display is based upon Pitt Rivers's views on the evolution of ideas, which he tried to demonstrate using typological displays [Pitt Rivers 1891: 117]. Today Pitt Rivers's ideas are no longer supported by the University or the Museum's staff but this method of display is still found useful and is much liked by visitors. It is no longer seen as demonstrating evolutionary ideas, but as showing the diversity of solutions to common human problems. One of the reasons for the public's affection for the museum may be that many more objects are displayed in its cases than is currently fashionable in Western Europe. All of these things are considered essential parts of the Pitt Rivers Museum, what makes it 'unique'. However, none of these things would have existed without our protagonists.

Without Pitt Rivers's contribution there could have been no Pitt Rivers Museum, or indeed separate ethnographic collection at Oxford. The University had owned some ethnographic objects since 1683 when the Ashmolean Museum opened in Broad Street, Oxford and displayed the ethnographic collections of the two John Tradescants, but such artefacts had always been formed part of displays or cabinets of general curiosities rather than ones specifically for ethnography. After the University Museum (of Natural History) opened in 1860, it also contained a small number of ethnographic artefacts, including the 'Cook' voyage material, collected by the Forsters, which was the property of Christ Church[1] [Coote 2004:

[1] i.e. Christ Church, Oxford, one of the colleges of the University of Oxford, though it is traditionally not given the title 'college', because it is also an ecclesiastical institution, home to the Dean and Chapter of Oxford Cathedral (it is colloquially known as 'The House', from Aedes Christi) [Editor].

7]. The donation of the founding collection was an opportunity for the University to consolidate its ethnographic collections in one place.

Pitt Rivers was an honorary Lieutenant-General of the British Army, a noted archaeologist (who concentrated on excavating his private estate on the Wiltshire/ Dorset border), and an eminent public figure. He had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in June 1876 and awarded an honorary D.C.L. by the University of Oxford in June 1886. For many years he served on a succession of clubs and societies' councils as secretary and chairman including Fellow (from 1864) and Vice-President of the Society of Antiquaries (1871), member and Secretary of the Ethnological Society (1868), vice-President of the archaeological section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1872, 1874, 1875), and President of the Anthropological Institute (1876, 1881–2) to name but a few. In other words he was a senior member of the British Establishment, someone treated with respect and deference. However, he was an autodidact in the field of ethnography, and had, indeed, had little formal education apart from home tutors, spending only six months at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst [Bowden 1991: 14].

From the early 1850s he had collected a wide range of artefacts. By 1884 he had acquired at least 20,000 artefacts and must have been one of the most prolific collectors in England. In other papers ([Petch 1998]; [Petch 2006]), I have described Pitt Rivers's life, collection and his intellectual interests (providing information about the museum displays with which he was associated at Bethnal Green and South Kensington Museums in London and Farnham Museum in Dorset, but concentrating particularly on the founding collection that came to Oxford), and discussed the methods by which Pitt Rivers acquired objects. Broadly speaking, Pitt Rivers's collection covered both archaeological and ethnographic collections from all over the world; it was particularly strong on weaponry and stone tools, but it covered almost all types of artefacts made and used by mankind.

Pitt Rivers's main intellectual interest, derived from his collection, was to show the evolution of design from the simple to the complex:

The collection does not contain any considerable number of unique specimens, and has been collected during upwards of twenty years, not for the purpose of surprising any one, either by the beauty or value of the objects exhibited, but solely with a view to instruction. For this purpose ordinary and typical specimens, rather than rare objects, have been selected and arranged in sequence, so as to trace, as far as practicable, the succession of ideas by which the minds of men in a primitive condition of culture have progressed from the simple to the com-

plex, and from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous' [Pitt Rivers 1906, Principles of Classification, 2].

However, Pitt Rivers did not so much collect the ethnographic artefacts for their own sake as in order to cast light upon prehistory; he believed that by using the ethnographic as the 'known' it was possible to submit to reason the unknown — the total material culture of ancient man — when all that remained in the contemporary world were stone artefacts [Pitt Rivers 1906, Principles of Classification, 4]. In other words, he assumed that he could extrapolate from the ethnographic artefacts back to prehistory and gain insight into long-lost social organisations and cultures:

These, and many other notices of a similar character that are to be found in the pages of travel, establish it as a maxim, that the existing races, in their respective stages of progression, may be taken as the bona fide representatives of the races of antiquity; and marvellous as it may appear to us in these days of rapid progress, their habits and arts, even to the form of their rudest weapons, have continued in many cases, with but slight modifications, unchanged through countless ages, and from periods long prior to the commencement of history. They thus afford us living illustrations of the social customs, the forms of government, laws, and warlike practices, which belonged to the ancient races from which they remotely sprung, whose implements, resembling, with but little difference, their own, are now found low down in the soil, in situations, and under circumstances in which, alone, they would convey but little evidence to the antiquary, but which, when the investigations of the antiquary are interpreted by those of the ethnologist, are teeming with interesting revelations respecting the past history of our race, and which, in the hands of the anthropologist, in whose science that of antiquity and ethnology are combined with physiology and geology, is no doubt destined to throw a flood of light, if not eventually, in a great measure, to clear up the mystery which now hangs over everything connected with the origin of mankind [Pitt Rivers, 1906, Primitive Warfare I: 53–54].

Pitt Rivers's one big idea was to display his artefacts in typological series, in order to show his intellectual ideas of the evolution of form in physical reality. The reasoning behind this display method was that each type of artefacts, for example, spears, bows or clubs, would be placed together. Within each of these there would be sub-divisions indicating specific geographical provenances and wherever Pitt Rivers felt that *'... a connection of ideas can be traced...'*, the specimens would be arranged *'the simpler to the left and the successive improvements in line to the right of them'*. Pitt Rivers was prepared to accommodate the practical limitations presented by cases and screens, but hoped that the displays would despite these show the *'succession of ideas'* [Pitt Rivers 1906, Principles of Clas-

Alison Petch. A Typology of Benefactors: the Relationships of Pitt Rivers and Tylor to the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford

sification: 3]. He believed that his 'systematically acquired' collection could be arranged typologically so as to demonstrate that *'there is not a single work of man's hand which has not its history of slow and continuous development, capable of being traced back, like branches of a tree, to its junction with others, and so on until the roots of all are found to lie in the simplest contrivances of primeval man'* [Pitt Rivers 1906, Primitive Warfare II: 98].

The outcome of this physical arrangement was supposed to have social, political and indeed psychological effects. The typological series aimed at educating visitors in the benefits of slow evolution rather than rapid revolution:

For good or for evil [...] we have thought proper to place power in the hands of the masses. The masses are ignorant, and knowledge is swamped by ignorance. The knowledge they lack is the knowledge of history. This lays them open to the designs of demagogues and agitators, who strive to make them break with the past, and seek the remedies for existing evils, or the means of future progress, in drastic changes that have not the sanction of experience [...] The law that Nature makes no jumps, can be taught by the history of mechanical contrivances, in such a way as at least to make men cautious how they listen to scatter-brained revolutionary suggestions [Pitt Rivers 1891: 115–6].

This was, of course, a time of rapid social change and industrialization in Western Europe and Pitt Rivers (and other members of the British Establishment) were eager to avoid the social anarchy and national disgrace that they believed had overcome France, culminating in the loss of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 (hence the reference to *'scatter-brained revolutionary suggestions'*).

Pitt Rivers's first attempt at displaying his series of objects took place in Bethnal Green Museum from 1874. Later these displays were transferred to the mother organization, the South Kensington Museum (now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum, London). It is clear that all the hallmarks of the Pitt Rivers Museum as it would later become were therefore present, at least in embryo form, before the artefacts left London in June 1885. When Pitt Rivers signed the deed of gift and donated his collection to Oxford, he probably intended to continue to play as large a role in its displays and arrangements as he had at South Kensington Museum. Pitt Rivers's Deed of Gift of 20 May 1884 specified that the University should *'build a separate Annexe to the present University Museum for the purpose of receiving maintaining and keeping in Oxford the said Collection and such Annexe shall be used solely for the said Collection and the additions to be made thereto from time to time ... and a lecturer shall be appointed by the University who shall years give Lectures at Oxford upon Anthropology'* [PRM manuscript collections foundation volume, University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/2]. Both of

these provisos were met. Edward Burnett Tylor (who had been appointed Keeper of the University Museum in 1883) was appointed Reader in November 1883 with tenure to begin in January 1884 [University Gazette, vol. XIV November 6, 1883: 89]. A new building was erected on the east side of the University Museum, completed around June or July 1886.

Tylor was another self-taught anthropologist. Until he was appointed Keeper he had been a gentleman-scholar, most famous for the 1871 publication, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom.* He was very well regarded by the anthropologist community, perhaps the most famous anthropologist living in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century, recognised as one of the founding fathers of British social anthropology and an important figure in the global early history of the discipline. All his life Tylor was effectively a synthesiser of other people's observations; however, he did travel a good deal for the purposes of leisure and convalescence, particularly in Europe. Tylor's publications highlight his basic humanitarianism, interest in world cultures and global viewpoint:

Surveying in a broad view, the character and habit of mankind at once display that similarity and consistency of phenomena which led the Italian proverb-maker to declare that 'all the world is one country' [...] Little respect need be had in such comparisons for date in history or for place on the map ... As Dr Johnson contemptuously said when he read about Patagonians and South Sea Islanders [...] 'one set of savages is like another.' How true a generalization this really is, any Ethnological Museum may show. Examine for instance the edged and pointed instruments in such a collection [...] of these most or all belong with only differences of detail to races the most various [...] Even when it comes to comparing barbarous hordes with civilized nations, the consideration thrusts itself upon our minds, how far item after item of the life of the lower races passes into analogous proceedings of the higher, in forms not too far changed to be recognized, and sometimes hardly changed at all [Tylor 1891: I, 6–7].

Tylor's first formal contact with Oxford University had been when he was awarded the degree of D.C.L in 1875. *The Times* of June 10 1875 described his commemoration at Oxford:

In solemn silence the Regius Professor of Law presented each of the candidates for an honorary degree: [...including] Mr Tylor, famous for his researches into the science of the origin of man. Each of these, as he was presented, was received with a flutter of feminine interest and passed to his seat.

As a result of a formal petition on his behalf by twenty Oxford professors, Tylor gave two public lectures on anthropology at the Univer-

sity in February 1882 that attracted large audiences. When the then Keeper of the University Museum, Henry Smith, died early that very month, Tylor was chosen to replace him. He moved to Oxford on 19 September 1883. On 11 December 1883 the announcement of his appointment to the Readership in Anthropology was made. This post was part of the arrangement that had been forged with General Pitt Rivers before he donated his collection to the University. It was the first anthropological academic post in the UK to be established, a situation which brought its own peculiarities. According to Stocking, '*Tylor's position was structurally anomalous, and his lectures usually drew rather small and heterogeneous audiences, many of them non-academics*' [Stocking 1987: 265]. Later, in June 1895, a statute was approved to establish a Professorship of Anthropology, tenable by Tylor for his time as Reader.

Apart from the stipulation about a lecturer, Pitt Rivers also had another demand in the Deed:

The general mode of arrangement at present adopted in the said Collection shall be maintained and no change shall be made in details during the life time of the said Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers without his consent and any changes in details which may be made after [Pitt Rivers'] death ... shall be such only as shall be necessitated by the advance of knowledge and as shall not affect the general principle originated by the said [...] Pitt Rivers. The said Chancellor [of the University] Masters and Scholars shall from time to time as occasion shall arise and as they may deem desirable spend and complete by the addition of further specimens such of the series of objects in the said Collection as are at present more or less imperfect or incomplete such specimens shall bear on their labels the names of their respective Donors or of the Collections from which they may have been derived [PRM manuscript collections, foundation volume].

This proviso was carried out to a limited extent, the museum has always been, and is still, largely displayed typologically. However, changes to the displays took place almost immediately after the Collection was transferred as new artefacts were acquired, fitted into and the existing series were expanded. Museum staff, through Tylor mostly, did liaise with Pitt Rivers in the early years after the transfer but not, so far as is known, about the particularities of each display. For example, Henry Acland, Regius Professor of Medicine, wrote to him in 1887 to ask his advice on Balfour's future following Moseley's illness. Since Acland did not want to disturb Moseley with the issue, he asked directly whether Pitt Rivers would have any objection to the University guaranteeing to keep Balfour on for a further 3 years [OUMNH manuscript collections, 1885/1, box 2]. But even this contact diminished over time for a number of reasons that will become clear.

Henry Nottidge Moseley (1844–1891), the Linacre Professor of Human and Comparative Anatomy, had worked at the University Museum from 1881 and been part of the negotiation process to bring the Pitt Rivers Collection to Oxford. He was appointed 'Curator of the Ethnological collections in the University Museum' by statute in May 1882 [Letter from Hatchett Jackson to Price, 3 May 1890, PRM manuscript collection, Foundation Volume]. Later, this role naturally expanded to include the newly acquired Pitt Rivers Collection. Moseley and Tylor can therefore be seen as component parts of the University's response to Pitt Rivers's deed of gift. The Pitt Rivers Collection was administered by the Anatomy Department until the early 1890s, when Henry Balfour (1863–1939) became Curator and new offices were added to the original extension. The first job that Tylor and Moseley undertook in 1884 was to arrange for the transfer of the Collection from South Kensington Museum to Oxford.

Given that Oxford University was the first British institution to begin the formal teaching of anthropology, which was initiated at the same time that the collection was transferred, it was at first not possible to find anthropologically trained staff for the Museum. Instead of turning to archaeologists (perhaps the more obvious choice in other circumstances), Moseley, as befitted the employee of a natural sciences museum, looked to natural sciences graduates to work on the new anthropological collection. This choice was to profoundly affect the development of anthropology at Oxford.

There were in fact some benefits in using natural scientists to work on ethnographic collections, chiefly derived from the training they got in observing, recording and ordering data. The recognition of the absolute importance of physical evidence, which could be tested, was also a key benefit. Henry Balfour treated his ethnographic artefacts almost like animal specimens, even *'giving an account of the comparative anatomy of the composite bow*' [Balfour 1889: 244]. Different families and species of animals and birds could be identified by careful attention to their structural characteristics, similarities and differences; Balfour believed that the same process could be employed in scientifically investigating material culture. In other words, natural science training might make the typological process identified by Pitt Rivers even more rigorous and scientific. Pitt Rivers himself had grasped the closeness of his typological arrangements to natural sciences taxonomies:

The classification of natural history specimens has long been a recognized necessity in the arrangement of every museum which professes to impart useful information, but ethnological specimens have not generally been thought capable of anything more than a geographical arrangement. ... the specimens in our museums, not having been systematically collected, cannot be scientifically arranged [Pitt Rivers 1874/9: xii].

Alison Petch. A Typology of Benefactors: the Relationships of Pitt Rivers and Tylor to the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford

The first trained natural scientist to work on the Collection was Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929) who would shortly after be appointed as the first Professor of Biology at Melbourne University, Australia. From Easter 1885 Spencer worked as Moseley's Demonstrator in the Comparative Anatomy Department. His main duties included the supervision of laboratory classes and a course of lectures but he was also asked at some point during 1885 to carry out the packing and transporting the Pitt Rivers Collection to Oxford. He was supervised in this task by both Moseley and Tylor. The actual transfer began in June 1885 when Moseley wrote to William Gamlen, Secretary to the University Chest, that '*I am off to town with Tylor to superintend*' [University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/2]. A further letter from Moseley to his colleague Edward Bagnall Poulton confirms that the majority of the work relating to the transfer took place in June 1885 [OUMNH manuscript collections, E.B. Poulton mss.]. Tylor also travelled up to London, staying at the Athenaeum Club [University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/2]. Spencer remarked:

The Government people are removing it [...] but we can't trust them to do the labelling [...] We three begin in the mornings and go on till 5.30 with only a short break for lunch. However, it is rather interesting, if tiring work: Tylor himself is of course the best anthropologist in England and a very nice man indeed [quoted in Mulvaney 1985: 60].

Spencer worked with W.J. Hill who had looked after the Collection at South Kensington Museum.

Spencer later wrote to Balfour that:

it was the old Pitt Rivers collection that first gave me my real interest in Anthropology. It was, I think, in 1884 or 5 that Moseley asked me if I would spend the vacation in helping to pack up the collection which was then housed at South Kensington. I did a great deal of the packing up and it was intensely interesting to have Moseley and Tylor coming in and hear them talking about things. I remember well that Moseley seemed to know a great deal more than Tylor in regard to detail and, of course, after his experience on the 'Challenger' he could speak of many things with first hand knowledge but Tylor with his curious way which you may remember of every now and then as it were 'drawing in his breath' — I don't know how otherwise to express it — simply fascinated me. It was intensely interesting to a young man like myself and also a great privilege to come into such personal contact with two such workers. Of the two it struck me at that time that Moseley had the greater technical knowledge but Tylor the wider outlook [PRM manuscript collections, Spencer papers, Box IV: letter 21, 24 September 1920].

Spencer was repaid for his hard work when Tylor gave a reference for him:

When [I was] *an applicant for the Chair of Biology in the Melbourne University, Dr. Tylor, with whom I had been working in connection with the removal of the Pitt Rivers Collection to Oxford, in a letter that he gave me, expressed the belief that he thought I might be able to do some work of value if ever I chanced to come into contact with savage peoples* [Spencer 1928: 185 footnote 5].

Spencer of course, lived to fulfil this wish, becoming an eminent anthropologist, working with his colleague, Francis James Gillen, among the Arrernte people of central Australia.

Both Tylor and Moseley were not only involved in the day-to-day arrangements over packing but also in the detailed planning of the new Museum (see, for example, University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/2 where Moseley objects to the narrowing of a staircase). On 12 October 1885 Moseley asked Gamlen to fund a skilled assistant for a year to aid him arranging and labelling the Pitt Rivers Collection. Moseley asked Henry Balfour, another of his natural science graduates, to undertake the work, for a stipend of £100 a year:

It would be pretty hard work of all sorts making little drawings, writing and typing out very neat labels, writing catalogue descriptions, arranging things in cases, mending and batching and cleaning, helping a carpenter fix things on screens, looking up objects of all kinds in illustrated books, Cooks travels etc. [Letter from Moseley to Balfour, 11 October 1885: PRM manuscript collection, foundation volume].

Balfour began work on 28 October 1885.

Henry Balfour was thus the second natural sciences graduate to be employed by the Pitt Rivers Collection, bringing his scientific training and skills of observation to the service of anthropology. Given the length of time that must have elapsed between the Collection being transferred to Oxford and the new building being completed (at least a year) it is likely that Balfour worked on the artefacts stored at the University Museum and elsewhere (the Clarendon Building, rooms at the University's Divinity School, in the Bodleian quadrangle and in the Examination Schools building on the High Street). Spencer and Balfour both seem to have worked on the early stages of installing the Collection at Oxford, Tylor wrote that Spencer and Balfour were given the Keeper's room in the University Museum while they handled the Collection — and they *'used the room for a long time*' [Mulvaney 1985: 60]. Most unpacking, arranging and labelling in the early years before the new Annexe was completed was carried out in the area of the University Museum court set aside for Anatomy and parts of those collections had to be stored temporarily to give sufficient space.

As the deed of gift had specified, the majority of the Pitt Rivers Collection was supposed to have been installed more or less iden-

Henry Balfour in the Upper Gallery of the Pitt Rivers Museum [Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, Photographic collections, 1998.267.94.5].

tically to its display at South Kensington Museum. This was made easier by the fact that that Museum agreed to transfer the screens upon which the displays had been fixed to Oxford, in some cases still with the objects in place [University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/2]. However, because the packing had been done so rapidly it soon became clear that some of the displays were more tricky to reconstruct, particularly as some documentation had gone astray [Letter from Hill to Moseley, 8 May 1886, University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/3]. In June 1886 Moseley arranged for Hill to travel from the South Kensington Museum with the original catalogues for the Collection, to try and help with the process [Letter from Moseley to Gamlen, 11 June 1886 and 23 June 1886, University Archives, UC/FF/60/2/3].

It rapidly became apparent, as the Pitt Rivers Collection was augmented with new artefacts, that the existing typological displays would need to be extended. Not only were new objects accessioned from other donors but also the University arranged to transfer all ethnographic and some archaeological collections from other museums in the University to the Pitt Rivers. The influx of new artefacts was large enough to be noted in the Annual Report of the Delegates of the University Museum in 1888:

'*To the Pitt-Rivers Museum contributions have come in somewhat too quickly for convenience of arrangement, but in all parts of the world old stages of civilization are now disappearing so rapidly, that it becomes*

desirable to find place for specimens of this class, the opportunity of securing which may never recur' [First Annual Report 1889: 401]. In addition, donors from outside the University began to send objects to the Museum as soon it was established in Oxford. Approximately 2,901 objects were received from new donors and 4,948 objects transferred from other parts of the University Museum and the Ashmolean Museum from 1884 to the end of 1889. Only a few of these new donors had previously given objects to the Pitt Rivers founding collection. Most of them fell into three groups — they lived in Oxford, had connections with Oxford University, or were acquaintances of Tylor himself.

If Pitt Rivers's main contributions to the development of the Museum had been the all-important Collection, and the method of displaying it, Tylor's contribution would be to lay the foundation for the network of people who would become its donors and take the Collection forward into the twentieth century. Over his years as a gentleman-scholar Tylor had acquired a mass of connections that could now be activated to contribute new artefacts to the Museum. Later Balfour would establish his own network, building on the foundation laid by Tylor, and would eventually be able to call on colleagues and allies across the world to contribute artefacts or information to the Museum and provide a source of new students to enrol on the Museum's courses.

The role of facilitator or procurer of new artefacts was the most important contribution Tylor made to the Pitt Rivers Museum. A significant number of the people who donated artefacts during the period up to 1891 were his connections. These included family members such as his sister-in-law; J.J. Tylor (probably a nephew); and Francis Fox Tuckett, his brother-in-law. Other donors were professional colleagues such as Basil Hall Chamberlain, James Stevenson, Lorimer Fison, Everard Im Thurn, and Joseph Paxton Moir, all of whom had corresponded at length with Tylor about anthropological matters. Tylor's success as an anthropologist rested on the multitude of collectors, missionaries, colonial civil servants, travellers and ethnologists he wrote to and collaborated with around the world. The exchange of objects was an important part of this process, binding the network closer.

Tylor himself probably started collecting himself whilst in Mexico in 1855. The Museum has stone tools, for example a Mexican obsidian scraper [1917.53.101], and figures [1917.53.299–406] from there, and also a costume worn by him whilst collecting (given by a descendant, F. Millicent Tylor [1978.14.1–4]). He continued to collect objects during his many trips abroad in Europe and North Africa. A few items are specifically recorded as being field-collected by him, for example, a Norwegian sword obtained by Tylor

Alison Petch. A Typology of Benefactors: the Relationships of Pitt Rivers and Tylor to the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford

in Molde [1888.42.4]. In many instances, however, it is not known for sure whether Tylor collected the objects himself, but it is possible that he could have done so because the objects were provenanced to countries he is known to have visited or lived in.[1]

We have reviewed Tylor's collection statistically as part of the current research project based in the Museum, the Economic Science Research Council-funded 'Relational Museum' project.[2] The maximum number of artefacts once in Tylor's ownership and later given to the Museum is 4,285. Many of these were not donated directly by him but by Anna Tylor after his death in 1917, or by her executors after her death in 1921. A total of 70 countries are represented or possibly represented in the Tylor collection, indicating a very wide coverage indeed.

Upon occasion, Tylor actively solicited specific new artefacts for the Pitt Rivers Museum (as he certainly did with his most famous donation, the totem pole [1901.39.1], given in 1901). Another instance of him soliciting particular artefacts from colleagues was in 1889, when he asked Franz Boas for a specific plaited basket, *'This is the missing stage in the Museum, and much wanted*' [Brown et al 2000: 269]. The phrase *'missing stage'* confirms that Tylor had a direct interest in the typological displays, and that he used his professional contacts to make good deficiencies or fill perceived gaps in these. He also used his position at the University to actively beg for items, as the following letter from an Oxford contact indicates:

In the course of a conversation in your Drawing Room a few months ago you mentioned the superstitious habit of some people in carrying the chopped off tip of a tongue as a charm. At the same time you asked me if I ever could obtain one that had actually been carried to let you have it. Quite unexpectedly a few days ago I managed to obtain one that had been carried for some length of time and I now enclose it in this envelope in the hope that you may find it useful in adding to your collection of such things. It is a genuine specimen. I have not carried it about myself in order to qualify it [Albert William Brown,[3] Tunbridge Wells, to Tylor 13 October 1897. Original emphasis. Tylor Papers, PRM Manuscript Collections].

Sometimes Tylor's role was more passive in that he was given unsolicited donations. But whatever the exact circumstances of the

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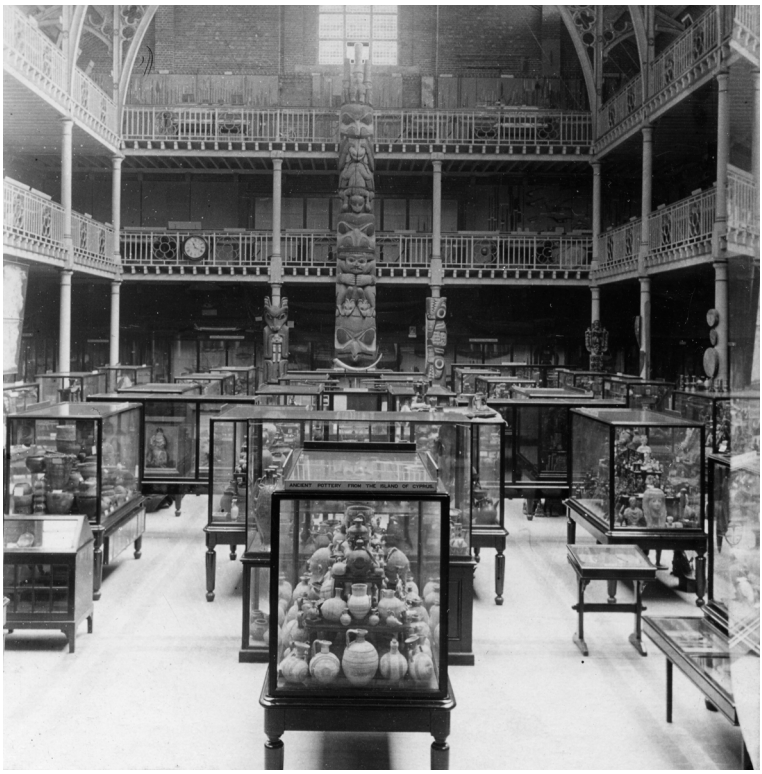
1 For further information about the Tylor collection see <http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/collector_tylor.html>. and <http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/page_54.html>. In addition all accession numbers can be used to find the relevant collections management information on the Museum's artefact database, see <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/databases/>.

2 For further information about this project and its findings go to <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/RelationalMuseum.html>.

3 Albert William Brown was a Student (i.e. Fellow) of Christ Church, Oxford.



The Pitt Rivers Museum as Tylor would have known it, showing the totem pole he gave in 1901 [Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, Photographic collections, 1998.267.262.6.].

gifts, it can be agreed that his very presence in Oxford and connection with the Museum meant a significant increase in the level of donations. He cemented these exchange relationships by sending items by return, for example sending some coins and other items to an Australian stone tool donor [Westlake papers, f.11–13, PRM manuscript collections].

Tylor and Balfour continued to work together during the early years of the Museum, after Moseley's retirement. Although there is evidence (see below) that there was some competitiveness or ill-feeling between the two, it is also clear that they put aside any personal differences to discuss particular aspects of material culture:

The different modes of fashioning wampum, serving as they do to determine its date and origin, require further consideration here. After going somewhat carefully into the matter with Mr H. Balfour, I have drawn up the following particulars in which we agree. As to the outside shaping of the beads there are two kinds. The more ancient beads were made by rubbing down a fragment of shell on a stone [...] the modern beads received their cylindrical shape by turning in a lathe [...] Applying this

criterion to the wampum belts which form the subject of Mr Hale's paper. Mr Balfour and I fail to find in them any stone-bored beads, which is equivalent to saying that they belong to the European period and cannot be earlier than 1600 [Tylor 1897: 249–250].

The arrival of all these newly accessioned items slowed down the work of getting the reconstructed displays installed, which was indeed a formidable task. In the first published Annual Report for the Pitt Rivers Collection in 1888, Balfour (standing in for Moseley who was ill) reported that about 1,500 specimens on the screens had been fully catalogued, *'that is, a label upon each specimen refers by a number to a separate card, upon which is written an exact description of the specimen, with measurements, where necessary, locality, and all data, as well as references to literature. The cards are numbered and arranged in series in boxes.*' By this time, Balfour was working on the displays in the Upper Gallery of the Museum, the displays in the Court below having been opened to the public in January 1887.

Tylor's influence on the Pitt Rivers Collection seems to have waned from about 1890 when Balfour was finally appointed Curator of the Collection. By that time, a marked degree of hostility had developed between Tylor and Balfour. Even some 30 years later, Balfour was still incensed about what he saw as Tylor's excessive meddlesomeness and self-promotion:

Tylor <u>never</u> played any part in the internal administration of the Pitt Rivers Museum + was not responsible in <u>any</u> way for its classification, organization or administration. ... it was placed under the care of Prof. Moseley ... until Prof. Moseley retired + I succeeded <u>him</u> as Curator, when he died. ... Tylor played no part in the organization + was never asked to do so. It is true that in 1890 an attempt was made by Council to place Tylor over my head, but this fell through, as I very naturally refused to have anything to do with so unfair a scheme, which would have meant <u>his</u> getting the credit for the work <u>I</u> had done + was doing ... Tylor's appointment was Reader in (+ later Professor of) Anthropology + this did not involve his having supervision of or responsibility in regard to the Pitt Rivers Museum [letter dated 1 October 1919 PRM manuscript collections Tylor papers. Emphasis original].

The conflict was, however, mitigated by external circumstances. Tylor, who had became unwell in 1896 or so, resigned in March 1902 as Keeper of the University Museum, though still keeping his role as Professor of Anthropology. At this point his formal involvement in the Pitt Rivers Museum is likely to have ceased completely. However, his contribution to the social life of the University continued to be recognised. When Tylor finally left Oxford in 1910 the following account was published in *The Oxford Magazine* of December 8 1910:

All Oxford was present in spirit at the railway station on Thursday last to take leave of Dr and Mrs Tylor [...] For them it must be something of a wrench, after twenty-six years of academic life, to part from friends and familiar scenes [...] In Somerset, where all his famous books were written, the veteran scholar will enjoy that absolute immunity from petty interruptions which is every day becoming more impossible of attainment within this University, despite its classic reputation for cloistered quiet. For us, on the other hand, the departure of Dr and Mrs Tylor is sheer loss. Tea and talk at Museum House with a peep at some of its weird treasures—Tasmanian eoliths, Mexican pots, bull-roarers, ghost-ladders, et hoc genus omne—were precious privileges for which the coming generation will have to sigh in vain. Besides, to harbour an Olympian is almost to be Olympus. The presence of Dr Tylor in our midst, whether he took part in the teaching work of the place or not, endowed Oxford Anthropology with a sort of primacy in the eyes of the whole world. At any rate [...] let Dr and Mrs Tylor bear in mind that it is a straight run [...] between Wellington and Oxford, so that surprise visits at frequent intervals will be expected of them by their many Oxford friends, and not least of all by those who strive as best they may to maintain that Tylor Tradition which is no small part of our academic glory.

It is hardly surprising that the installation of some 28,000 objects took Balfour, his assistant J.T. Long and later another helper called Beale, around seven years to complete. It was not until the end of April 1891 that Pitt Rivers, the donor of the founding collection gave an introductory public lecture, 'The Original Collection of the Pitt-Rivers Museum: the Principles of Arrangement and History' and not until late 1892 before the all of the Museum displays were open to the public. It is not clear exactly when the Pitt Rivers Museum and the University Museum became completely separate institutions, there has never been a formal statute to that effect, but the Museum was increasingly building up a clear identity of its own.

This lecture in April 1891 was probably one of the few occasions when most of our named protagonists (except for Spencer and Moseley) were in the same place at the same time. It was also the end of the early part of the Pitt Rivers Museum's history, the part connected with Pitt Rivers the man. From this time, Balfour's influence increased and he was the dominant force in the Museum until his death in 1939, shaping and developing the collections as he saw best and also training the anthropologists, field collectors and museum professionals who would carry the collection and Museum forward into the second half of the twentieth century.

These developments were not much to the taste of the original donor. Pitt Rivers was disappointed by the way that the Museum developed after it came into the hands of Tylor, Moseley and Bal-

four. He seems to have had little regard for the contributions of Tylor, though the latter had devoted himself both to anthropology and the long term future of the Collection at Oxford, or for Balfour's hard work. Pitt Rivers later concluded that:

I hardly think that the system [his own system of typological arrangement] has been favourably tried at Oxford. Mr Tylor and Mr Balfour have done their best no doubt, but they do not have the means, the materials, or the funds to work the system thoroughly, and as I soon found out that it was quite impossible that a method communicated by one person should be worked out effectively by others. Some of the series have not been developed at all, and others very imperfectly. The whole collection was out of sight for a long time, five years, I think, whilst the building was being erected, and my health has not allowed me to go there much since. It is not the kind of a building for a developmental collection, which would be better in low long galleries well lighted from above and without pretention; the large and lofty space was not wanted. Rolleston and Moseley were the heads when I gave the collection to Oxford, and Tylor though the best man possible for Sociology, had at that time but little knowledge of the material arts. Balfour, though hard-working, does not, I believe know fully to this day what the original design of the collection was in some cases. I do not however complain of the men. They have done their best to carry out an idea which was an original one at the time, and circumstances have been against it. Oxford was not the place for it, and I should never have sent it there if I had not been ill at the time and anxious to find a resting place for it of some kind in the future. I have always regretted it, and my new museum at Farnham, Dorset, represents my views on the subject much better. I shall write a paper about it before long if I live ... [Letter to F. W. Rudler 23 May 1898, Salisbury Museum, quoted in Chapman 1981: 535].

However, Pitt Rivers's disappointment at the museum at Oxford was not matched by either members of the public or scholars — both groups flocked to the Museum as visitors, and also donated artefacts in increasing numbers. By the end of the Second World War in 1945, a total of nearly 180,000 objects had been accessioned by the Museum. Balfour, whom Pitt Rivers dismissed as lacking in knowledge, worked his whole life in the Museum until his death in 1939 and became a renowned expert on the ethnographical museum.

Abbreviations

PRM Pitt Rivers Museum

OUMNH Oxford University Museum of Natural History

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