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Alison L. Kahn

Imperial Museum Dynasties in Europe

Papal Ethnographic Collections and Material Culture

ANTHROPOS INDIA FOUNDATION

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In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations' (1915)

I
Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II
Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III
Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

Thomas Hardy

For my mother and father, Sylvia Alice and Leslie Arthur Wates

Preface

Many ethnographic collections housed in national institutions around the world were collected, or at least influenced, by missionaries. Ethnographic collections of Catholic missionaries remain a largely untapped and unchallenged area of material cultural and museum studies. These collections inhabit seminaries, churches, mission houses, schools and other institutions owned and run by the Catholic Church throughout the world. One of the most significant collections, as one might imagine, resides within the walls of the Vatican itself.

Most of my early research on this topic took place in the Vatican during a six-year period from 1998 to 2004, with frequent visits from 2000 to 2012. My last visit to the museum was in January 2019. I first entered what was then called the Missionary and Ethnological Museum in the Vatican (MEMV) to conduct an interview with the Head of Collections, Ester Console, a non-clerical ethnologist; I also met and discussed the museum with its director, Monsignor Zagnoli. At the time, they were the only permanent staff of the museum, and both had been arranging the transfer of the museum's library to a fire-proof facility in the heart of the administrative area of the Vatican. I was informed of Console's plans for a conservation programme for some of the most fragile objects in collections and repairs to the museum that were being undertaken. At the time of my visit in 1998, the museum had been closed for five years and was one of many institutions in Rome that was being refurbished, repaired and cleaned in time for the celebrations of the 2000th anniversary of Christianity.

I was fascinated by the existence of the diverse collections of ethnographic materials in this little-known museum and set out to better understand its nature, origin and structure. It took a good part of an MA in Visual Anthropology at Goldsmith's College at the University of London, an M.Phil. in Material Culture and Museum Ethnology and a D.Phil. at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Oxford, to get to grips with its history, notwithstanding an intense learning curve in language acquisition to communicate in Italian and French, and to read basic German and Latin. Although my fieldwork was based in archives, the non-verbal language, codes and customs of the Vatican officials (from the papacy down to the security guards) had to be understood and strategies negotiated to access, and sustain access to archives, which are rarely opened to non-clerical persons. When

putting together the history of the 'tribe' of Vatican Museum functionaries in Rome and the Catholic missionary 'tribe' in the field, a certain unpacking of events needed to be undertaken to reveal their mutual influences.

Building on the anthropological and historical origins of the Pontifical Missionary Exhibition in 1925, I explored the wider picture of Italian politics under fascism and papal manoeuvres to restore the Catholic Church's place on the European stage. The exhibition is seen as central to the papal agenda which included demonstrating to the world the role Catholics had taken in the progress of science, redefining its place as a missionary empire alongside Mussolini's expansionist foreign policy, and readdressing the issues of centralisation within the Church itself.

These collections are private, and I am very much indebted to the curators and directors of the Vatican's ethnological museums for allowing me continued access to the museum and its archives. I am extremely grateful to the former directors; Fr. Josef Penkowski SVD who showed me the collections when I first arrived, and to Msgr. Roberto Zagnoli, who gave me permission to research in the museum's archives for many years. Also, my immense thanks to Ester Console, Head of Collections, whose guidance and kindness proved invaluable. I am also thankful for the kind permission of Fr. Nicola Mapelli, the present director of the Ethnological-Missionary museum, now renamed, *Anima Mundi*, for allowing the publication of images from the archives. I am most indebted to the Divine Word Society (SVD), who were welcoming and kind to me during my visits to the Generalate in Rome: especially to Fr. Franz Bosold, the archivist in their library, for his help in my quest to find context to the Vatican's ethnographic collections, and whose generous hospitality left me with happy memories of pleasant discussions with other members of the SVD, around the dining room table. I am also very grateful to Carlos, Ilaria and Federica, for their kindness and helpfulness while exploring the missionary archives at SEDOS in Rome.

I would like to acknowledge my Ph.D. supervisor, Robert Barnes, for his wisdom and understanding that helped develop these ideas as a student at the University of Oxford, and to others who have guided me in my research and taken the time to read through drafts and listen to my thoughts: Ruggero Taradel, Wendy James, Tony Dunn, Sunita Reddy, Lola Martínez, Christoph Rippe and Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez. Before going to press I had the wonderful experience of presenting a couple of chapters from this book to researchers in the *Religious Matters* group at the University of Utrecht. My thanks to the project leader, Birgit Meyer, who led the discussions, Ana Rita Amaral who facilitated the event, and the whole team, who gave much appreciated feedback. I take full responsibility for the shortcomings in this book.

Finally, thanks to my husband Aaron Kahn, and our three patient children, Helena, Seth and Lukas, and my even more patient mother, Sylvia. I regret that my father, Leslie, did not live to see the publication of this book.

Oxford, UK   Alison L. Kahn

Introduction

Housed in palatial buildings and establishment institutions, with the ambitious endeavour to collect, curate and catalogue objects from faraway places, often with a focus on lesser-known, small-scale societies for scientific and cultural heritage purposes, the Western European ethnographic museum now is under attack. Although one cannot help thinking that the attacks are well deserved, a new generation of directors and curators has attempted to address some of the issues that affect the image of this type of national institution, whose roots lie deep in the murky waters of Western colonial expansion. Enormous efforts have been put forth to re-establish the reputation and changing role of the European ethnographic museum, that has now become a contemporary safe space for twenty-first century critical thinking about its collections.

At its best the ethnographic museum now provides a place to teach, communicate, to facilitate cultural exchange and to contemplate, apologise, forgive and redefine collective histories, and hopefully to restore faith in humanity. Recent public demonstrations in the UK, including by Black Lives Matter, Rhodes Must Fall and in Bristol after the murder of George Floyd, remind us of the importance of framing collections in ways that are relatable and sensitive to the historical context of their existence. There are still many outsiders in the ethnographic museum experience, and for most of the population in the UK, this type of institution remains a place for intellectuals, school visits and the middle classes. Museum anthropological approaches need to become more inclusive to a wider demographic, and the exploration of the history of the ethnographic museum in Europe becomes more accessible to the everyday visitor. This book goes some way to provide an historical overview of the history of this elusive institution that is now just beginning to provide the public with opportunities to explore the nature of social relations within European society and Europeans' relationship with the wider world.

Here we trace the roots of the national European ethnographic museum beyond the UK to offer a fuller understanding of the political, religious and emerging scientific climate in which they were founded. Central to this study is a dialectic approach to concepts and identities of 'otherness' in museum anthropological readings. The categories of otherness have been packaged thus far as having cultural difference

due to language, tradition, class, religion and economics. However, there is also an endeavour to introduce other contributors to a discussion about ethnographic museums. Why do we deem some cultures more important to collect and exhibit? What types of 'otherness' are we happy to display within our own societies, and why is there still mistrust between the museum builders, the gatekeepers of European cultural heritage, scholars, activists and the source communities whose collections we store?

Ethnographic museums, their colonial histories and legacies are not just topics of academic discourse: in the last few years, calls for repatriation have risen in the public consciousness and the museum is now a focus of critique in popular culture and political importance at the level of national governance. In this study, I propose an overarching concept of *museum dynasty* as a framework of interpretation for this type of national institution; the term, *dynasty* here, refers to groups of Europeans who make up a kinship system based on power (and access to it), and economic autonomy. In many cases, these elite dynastic families have the social connections to stand in authority regarding matters of cultural perception due to distinction of birth, wealth, class, ethnicity, race, education or gender, and operate alongside a Western-style democracy, and sometimes within it. Among these autonomous bodies of power and influence have been philanthropists and benefactors who have helped to preserve cultural heritage; others are commissions and trustees without whom we would not have a museum heritage to critique. However, it is important to highlight that decisions about cultural heritage in European nations lie in the hands of the few, and politics within these institutions are as raw and questionable as the government officials we see operating in our parliaments. Here, I build on the work of historians of anthropology such as Stocking Jr. (1968, 1987, 1992, 1995) and Penny (2002, 2003, 2021), both of whom remind us of non-Anglo-Saxon narratives that have largely been ignored in anthropological degree courses in Britain and the USA since World War II. It is important to untangle some roots of the historical and semantic notions that have combined to create, in our imagination, as much as in its material form, that resilient manifestation we continue to engage with: the ethnographic (ethnological) museum.

Classical Roots of Ethnographic Museums

Cross-cultural art and artefactual collections are not new by any means, nor are the politics that accompany the representation of others.[1] Classical European collections were also evident at the apex of classical Europe, and there are many examples of the appropriation of Egyptian cultural symbols and artefacts into Roman life well after the conquering of Egypt by Rome in 30 BC. At the National Roman Museum in Rome, there is a Roman floor mosaic with a Nile scene depicting a man and a hippopotamus. In the New York MET, an artefact exists of an Egyptian scene

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[1] See Barrett (2017).

in a Roman mosaic floor from the Mid Imperial period (Late Hadriadic or Early Antonine. Date: ca. AD 130–150). This reveals how dominant Roman cultural forms combined with Egyptian motifs and were used in the decoration of floors, Roman wall paintings, and images of sphinxes appeared on Eastern Roman coinage as a symbol of hope. Roman emperors and citizens were also influenced by Egyptian religious ideologies. There are no fewer than 37 Egyptian obelisks in Rome today:

> Roman visual and material culture generated numerous representations of landscapes, people, deities, and consumer goods that either evoke Egyptian origins or allude to Roman constructions of "Egypt." However, the relationship among images, objects, values, and meanings is far from straightforward. Much debate still surrounds modern scholarly interpretations of Roman "Aegyptiaca," and even in antiquity, similar images might mean quite different things in different contexts or to different viewers. The "meaning" of many Roman images of Egypt thus resists reduction to any single fixed interpretation, remaining open to contestation, renegotiation, and reinterpretation according to changing circumstances. (Barrett, 2017: 1)

On the one hand, Egypt was conquered and annexed as a province of the Roman Empire, and was embedded within the imperial economic political framework, but at the same time Romans opted for a cultural appropriation of certain things. For example, the cult of Isis and Osiris became extremely popular throughout Rome and the Empire, just in the same way Eastern thought was incorporated within Western value systems, and many Westerners convert to Buddhism, or Shivaism, or go to India to follow their Guru. The Romans were no different: they were fascinated by the Egyptian mysteries and in many cases, mutual influence generated a syncretic material culture despite the imperial dominance of the Romans.

Late twentieth and turn-of-the-twenty-first century studies illuminate the path of discovery of the history of Western Museum anthropology, be it as a lesson in renegotiation of authority in the museum. Stocking's edited publication in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (1985) gathered a range of authors who surveyed the collecting and curating practices of ethnographic material of the twentieth century from British and North American perspectives. They highlighted the rising contentions between museum practice and anthropology as an academic discipline:

> But despite the embeddedness of the present essays in documentary historical material, they do in fact raise important broader issues: the problematic interaction of museum arrangement and anthropological theory; the tension between anthropological research and popular education; the contribution of museum ethnography to aesthetic practice; the relationship of humanist culture and anthropological culture; and of ethnic artifact and fine art, and most generally, the representation of culture in material objects—to mention only some of the more obvious focusing themes. (Stocking, 1985: 3)

Van Keuren's article on cabinets of culture in the context of Victorian anthropology (1989) informed on nineteenth-century British attitudes to collecting and curating ethnographic objects. The object as a form of agency and its meaning within a cultural context was brought to the fore and questions regarding the changing significance of the museum collection hailed in a new political emphasis on the role of museum, and the role of its curators as potential arbiters of representation for the voiceless

collections they housed. Further studies wrenched the methodological practice and publication of anthropological discourse from the written archive to other ontologies that promised a refreshed perspective in three-dimensional analyses. In the edited volume, *Writing Culture: the poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986), Clifford and Marcus plunged academic anthropology into what is now referred to as a 'crisis of representation'. This view was born out of the political realities that were brought to bear in the intellectual forums of the 1980s and in part, in reaction to Edward Saïd's seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978). In short, all notions revealed that Western writers could no longer portray non-Western peoples with unchallenged authority, and the process of cultural representation was inescapably contingent, historical and contestable.[2]

Museum and material cultural studies scholars have long been preoccupied with political landscapes of European collecting and colonialism, and the nature of relationships between diverse sets of peoples. Some have seen colonial encounters as an opportunity to dissect collecting practices (Gosden & Knowles, 2000); others have attempted to disentangle objects from their colonial past (Thomas, 1991; Clifford, 1986, 1997). Museum artefacts have been described as metonymic and used as metaphors to represent associated ideologies attached to different kinds of museum spaces (Price, 1989). We learned that we might consider objects as having lives of their own and are in fact biographical entities (Hoskins, 1998), or as part and parcel of the culture that wraps them in their own specific cultural norms (Hendry, 1995).

Further work focusing on the nature of authenticity and paradigms about primitivism was high on the agenda as exhibitions of art and aesthetics demanded a rethink through a clearer post-colonial lens. Although politics in Europe had shifted to new models of education, this was yet to be seen in the national museums that held so much non-Western cultural heritage. There was a sociological conflict between certain art forms; television, popular music and film (UK and USA in particular) seemed to have captured the zeitgeist of a multicultural society, but national museums lagged behind. Progressive anthropologists spoke of art as 'agency' (Gell, 1998), and others explored the symbolic beyond aesthetics (Pinney & Thomas, 2001). Aesthetics and art became fluid terms reassessing appreciation and value in cross-cultural contexts, and new categories branched out of singular terms such as 'art' and 'aesthetics'. The object became imbued with agencies beyond its familiar place, on the edge of anthropological theory, but instead at the centre if it, creating an exciting new role for it as an active social agent that had capacities to bind people together and capable of a social relationship (Appadurai, 1986).

Tim Barringer's edited volume, *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (1997), demonstrated the impact of colonial contact with other cultures on the material culture of both the colonised and the imperial nation. An exhibition entitled *Paradise,* with objects from New Guinea, was held at the Museum of Mankind in London in 2000 by Michael O'Hanlon, who attempted to tackle the problem of the display case and its potential to represent other cultures in a way that provoked thoughts on the unequal bias of Western exchange. These have

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[2] Further studies include: Jones (1993) and Butler (2000).

all engaged with lenses of critical theory on histories of ethnographic museums and colonial collections, and they recognise that museums are historical entities subject to cultural and ideological transformation.

There has been a significant move towards collaboration, negotiation and active creation of space within the physical and ideological space of Western European ethnographic museums in response to demand for change and a call for more voices to be included within the museums space. Repatriation is a word that has caused no end of debate and strikingly contrasting views from communities and curators alike. Thomas recognises the importance of publications such as *Exhibiting Cultures* (1991) and *Museums and Communities* (1992) but called for more unpacking of terms such as 'community':

> Given that commentators and students were preoccupied with questions of 'representation' and the politics of identity that underpinned the rhetoric of the period, the response- almost necessarily, but in any case constructively- took the form of dialogue and collaboration between museums and communities: people would have a say in how they and their cultures and traditions were represented.... Less adequately examined has been the more general question of who or what constituted "community". If this notion was too anodyne or no longer fit for purpose in disciplines such as sociology, it was powerfully reinvigorated in the museum context […] (and) became increasingly central to curatorial practice, especially but not exclusively among those charged with the care of ethnographic collections. (Thomas, 2016: 31)[3]

Acknowledging late twentieth and early twenty-first century debates about imperial legacies and curatorial challenges of representation has produced renewed forms of negotiation and collaboration with cultural envoys to assist in the coproduction of exhibitions and archives. While many UK and continental ethnographic museums are explicitly confronting the problematic origins of their collections, this study asks the reader to consider the variables involved in some of the larger swathes of understood history. Elizabeth Edwards reminds us that:

> The challenge for museums is to represent this history without lapsing into apologism on the one hand or a sanitized celebration of multiculturalism on the other. Museums must find a way of articulating this difficult history in a way that can account for complexity while remaining relevant. (Edwards, 2013: 20)

Europe is not a homogeneous society, and concepts of the cultural other cannot be confined to attitudes of power solely concerned with imperial discourses that regard colonial powers as simply the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, or as an issue or racial relations alone. Although these factors are of great significance, it is important to incorporate into any historical debate other elements of historical oppression and inequality that have significance, such as class, religion and gender, which are all subdivisions of these overarching political positions. Museums can also store elitist discourses along with the collections they hold, a residue of the powerful voice that Trouillot calls intellectual colonialism (1995). Said warned us to be aware of the 'fantasy of other' when shaping our narratives from colonial histories. If we are to attribute a fair share of voices to collections and diverse registers of those

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[3] See also Lavine and Karp (1991), Peers and Brown (2003), and Clifford (1997).

voices to the intellectual space of the museum, we must accommodate the cultural imaginations that are stakeholders in our society, one that is mutually influenced by a range of participants.

We should also remind ourselves of the undying attitudes behind belief systems that underpin political agendas: despite the secular positions of most European governments today, religion still plays an important role in the descriptions and representation of culture. Contemporary developments in certain institutions need further commentary on the role of religion in the history of collecting practices, and how agendas of the past need to be preserved and accounted for to address the role of such museums today. With this aim in mind this book seeks primarily to unravel a lesser-known history of the creators of European museums, largely unmentioned in current material cultural studies cases, and urges the reader to step outside the binary focus of current dialectics that oversimplify complex relationships between societies and within societies. The 'us' and 'them'; the 'Western' and the 'Non-Western', and 'pre' and 'post-colonial' often create obstacles for the scholar who needs to uncover the longer spanning influence of ideologies and societal practices that affect the way we see cultural heritage. We share in mutual histories of global contact at every level of existence, and if we are to give credence to past collections, we must continue to unravel our own transforming cultural self. We must be aware of the ebb and flow of diverse cultural imaginations as being just as important as the political spheres that we inhabit. Christopher Pinney points out that, 'colonialism refuses historiographical compartmentalisation: it rapidly unfolds into the history of the modern world: modernity and globalisation are intimately entangled with colonialism' (Pinney, 2006: 382). Our decision-making process in assessing collections and their heritage depends on our imagined selves in a fragmented culture, and a leap of the imagination is necessary to understand ethnographic collections from another time and place.

In Britain, our perception of the concept of a dynasty often consists of a grand hereditary family or empire with influence far beyond their palace walls. However, there are other types of dynasties of generational power that are connected to knowledge and authority. The class struggle in Western European societies has always been about access to power through wealth and knowledge. The lack of access to certain types of knowledge has excluded lower classes from entering professions and societies because of a lack of education, family connections, or social and behavioural similarities to the heritage gatekeepers. Powerful groups of people usually determine the dominant discourse in historical knowledge and, as such, influence how the rest of the people see themselves in relation to society. These power groups of people shape the agendas of leading institutions, such as governments, universities, churches, libraries, galleries, archives, schools and museums. The control of these places is of great importance as they hold the material wealth of our lived and shared pasts, and they influence the present and the future. The empowered few dominate the mainstream narrative in their respective societies through the decisions they make for the rest to follow.

Ideas, protocols, customs and laws are integrated into our material cultural knowledge and passed down through the ages much like monarchical lineage, all of which

withstand challenges to their existence in terms of power, influence, wealth, belief and ideology. We are familiar with historical dynasties such as the Tudors and the Stuarts, who embodied the wealth-power dynamic of fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth-century Britain by preserving vestiges of eras gone-by, and they can be safely visited annually by children studying history from the national curriculum or adults watching television dramas. However, in this book the idea of dynasties of knowledge-power is proposed as a separate but connected conceit to the ancient regimes of dynastic power. They are of course not mutually exclusive, but mutually influential; it is useful to separate the converging power dynamics since these two sets of power relations play out to great effect in the ethnographic museum. The processes through which the territorial and political reshaping and the dissolution of Europe's empires led to a religious, economic and political shift of paradigm. The result was the birth of the idea and ideology of the nation state and the development of specific national cultures and political systems. The material legacy of the ideas attached to the regimes of power resides in the national archives of Europe's nation states.

Attempting to piece together fragments of the story of the ethnographic museum in Europe is far from a straight-forward task as it is an enigmatic space that projects varied emotional and intellectual responses. University courses on ethnographic museums in English-speaking countries focus on American, Canadian and British authors and museum practices. This is an enigma as the American and Canadian story is rather different from the European one and can never be extrapolated from the story of the foundation of the USA and its relations with the indigenous American, African American and other ethnic minority communities. When the USA became an independent country in the late eighteenth century, it was just a slither of the North American continent (Georgia to present-day Maine), but it saw the vast lands to the West towards the Pacific Ocean as an opportunity for expansion, which the founding settlers justified by creating the myth of 'manifest destiny'. In the same way the European monarchs had believed in the 'divine right of kings' as the natural order of things, the first US settlers in the West interpreted their right to dominate and annex territories for their own gain as God's plan. The relationship of the USA with the ethnic and cultural 'other' is a different set of histories that lies outside the sphere of this study.

European ethnographic museums have their roots in national exhibitions, and subsequently, World Fairs. Tracing early examples of ethnographic exhibitions in Europe, we find some of the first organised displays of regional curiosities and crafts in the eighteenth-century market displays of France. These grew exponentially throughout Europe to become regional and national shows and *expositions*, culminating in Britain's Great Exhibition of 1851. This event heralded the start of a new museum age in Europe and began a new set of dynastic knowledge-power relations played out in significant metropolises of knowledge and culture of the late nineteenth century: London, Vienna, Paris and Berlin. The natural history and ethnographic museums built during the second half of the nineteenth century created new forums of dialogue based on Liberal Humanist ideologies and positivist approaches to the material world. These storehouses of thought were built by kings and queens and were immediately recognised as institutions of authority. Ironically, despite their

auspicious beginnings as princely archives, they were set to challenge the status quo in terms of belief and endeavour. Darwin's evolutionary theories and Europe's material turn in terms of science and economic independence would ultimately undermine the political power of the Catholic Church in Europe and outlive all but one imperial dynasty by the end of 1918: the British Royal Family. These two dynasties mark the beginning and end of this inquiry in terms of chronology of ethnographic museum building,

Here we concern ourselves with the rise and fall of the influence of the ethnographic museum between 1851 and 1929. Although there existed many exhibitions and institutions preceding the modern ethnographic museum, this time is inextricably linked with European imperial agendas that entangled colonialism with the Christian missionary enterprise. This included the rise of nationalism as a political force in Europe. This book provides a narrative to discuss how ethnographic museums in Europe were constructed as pillars of understanding through their definitions of cultures, classification systems of objects and progressive Liberal Humanist agendas. Endeavouring to piece together important museums within their political, social and physical institutional structures is like looking through a dusty bell jar where one has to rub vigorously through the glass in order to see inside. However, this attempt to link up some of the legacies of empire, national agendas and evangelical aspirations ultimately unravels a set of networks that help us understand the trajectory of ideas behind a selection of Europe's most important national ethnographic museums. This study situates London's Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace as the first such international forum, marking the beginning of the museum age open to the wider public. A brief overview of some important world fairs of the nineteenth century provides a broader understanding of European cultural climate in which the Vatican's Pontifical Missionary Exhibition (PME) of 1925 was first imagined. The PME was the brainchild of Pope Pius XI (1922–1939)[4] and engineered by Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt SVD (1868–1954).

The National and University Ethnographic Museum as a Reflection of European Dynasties

The rule over Europe's national and university museums, much like the rule of the land, is dynastic, as they represent a set of ideologies formalised and patronised by the elite of the land, which form part of a lineage drawn from privileged families, the privately educated and intellectuals within the establishment. Nineteenth-century ethnographic agendas have been immortalised in glass, stone, classification systems and display cabinets that continue to influence the way we understand non-European cultures and how we see ourselves in relation to them. The word 'ethnographic' or 'ethnological', just like the similar concept of 'the anthropological', remains words

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[4] Dates provided for popes, monarchs and emperors are regnal. All others are dates of birth and death.

used and accessed by a small group of people, usually from the educated and upper classes, and privy to the worlds attached to collections held in stately institutions. Artists, amateurs, specialists and tourists form a large audience for the exhibitions and permanent exhibits on show, but the objects in a display case are often silent and a short description of the provenance and material of the object does little more than scratch the surface of much deeper narratives and complex histories inextricably linked to the collections.

The dynasties of museum builders and directors of the ethnographic display in Western Europe came in different manifestations, and they slot into different tribes depending on their bloodlines, families, alliances, businesses, schools, clubs and societies. In the Europe of the nineteenth century, there were relatively few individuals with the credentials necessary to form part of the elite that influenced how museums were created. Leaders, politicians, academics and founders of institutions were drawn from a much smaller pot of stakeholders, and the rest of the population had little to do with the relevant decisions. Few women would have been included in this exclusive set in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and those who were would have been empowered through association rather than by holding an important office independently. The exception of course to this set of relationships was Queen Victoria (1837–1901), but her role was extraordinary in every respect. In addition, it was her husband, Prince Albert (1819–1861), who masterminded the 1851 Great Exhibition, albeit in her honour. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, however, a new middle-class was on the move by the mid nineteenth century, and this newly literate and wealthy set sought access to cultural artefacts in places hitherto only accessible to the governing class of the nation.

Evidence of historical interactions between Europeans and non-European cultures remains in the European ethnographic museum. The entangled roots of empire that came to dominate the world in terms of economic and political strength are uncovered by questioning the provenance of collections in the ethnographic museum. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a new set of palaces was constructed as national or scholarly museums in the European capitals and university towns: in 1873 in Berlin, the Museum für Völkerkunde, in 1876, the Welt Museum or Ethnology Museum in Vienna, followed in Paris by the Musée d'Ethnographie in 1878, and shortly after, in 1884, the Pitt Rivers in Oxford and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge. These museums drew material from across the world through their trading and diplomatic networks and echoed the European penchant for collecting that had grown exponentially in terms of numbers of artefacts and systems of classification since the seventeenth and eighteen centuries.

These collections include a wide range of artefacts such as paintings, photographs and sacred objects that might have been brought into Europe by traders, missionaries, colonial families, scientists, explorers and the like, and then bought by curators, collectors, agents and individuals for museums, art galleries, commercial collectors and universities. Collectors of all nationalities sought after artefacts from abroad in the late nineteenth century, and their displays could be as part of a wider collection on the country of origin or as a piece that was admired for its aesthetic value, just like any form of collecting and curating practice today. Material culture from small-scale

societies, or those who were ethnically different in terms of belief and custom, were often considered less valuable, but collectable all the same, especially as conversation pieces for the wealthy, and as they entered forums of the political and intellectual classes, they began to take on new significance[5]; they became worthy of study in the universities. In an era obsessed with cataloguing, ordering and seeking origins, the humble ethnographic objects played an enormous role in explaining origins of Mankind.[6]

Ideas emerged about what to do with the proliferation of material culture arriving from European empires as collections overflowed from offices, houses, palaces, scholarly departments and international trading ports. Architects were contracted to create edifices that would combine a recognisable aesthetic based on classical and religious emblems, evoking meaningful associations with the sacred and the sublime. The buildings embodied the physical and spiritual symbols associated with temples, churches, cathedrals and libraries of the ancient European world. Museum building coincided with European empire building, and they were placed at the heart of European capitals. They became the storage facilities for the ever-growing collections obtained from non-European cultures. Within the proto-scientific descriptions of how non-Europeans lived and worked, these few objects were held up as evidence of the diversity of human invention and tradition and furnished the intellectuals and social elite of the day with amusement, entertainment and food for thought about the evolution of the human species. From the teacup to the urn, from the wooden sculpture to the totem pole and from the feathered headdress to the sacred stone, each artefact represented a specific cultural phenomenon and a meaningful social relationship in the eyes of the beholder; these meanings were considered and published by Western intellectuals without consulting the communities from whence they came. Very few connections were made between the objects and the communities and individuals from which they originated, and, without voices to tell, the European receiver of the material decided what they were and what should be done with them.

It was reasoned that the new arrivals to Europe should be exhibited in one way or another, decided ultimately by the gatekeepers who worked in the museum or the funding bodies and organisations that held control. People and objects alike were traded as commodities. Since Europeans held the reigns of a diverse set of networks across the world, they bought the artefacts at a price decided by these players in the game of exchange and trade, creating a diverse set of new relationships based on demands from the scientific and entertainment communities seeking to gain proof of a theory or an audience, or both. The European powers that propelled these networks in the late nineteenth century were principally Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, British and German, all of whom had expansionist policies based

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[5] There were exceptions to this, as explained by Penny (2021: 80–84), regarding the carved bronze and ivory artefacts of Africa seized by the British during a punitive expedition to the Kingdom of Benin in February of 1897. This resulted in a bidding frenzy by the Germans headed by Felix von Luschan, who knew they were valuable pieces of material culture and were prepared to pay great sums of money for them.

[6] See Penny (2021: 1–14).

on economic control, strategic strength and Christian ideologies that fortified their sense of entitlement to enter foreign waters and foreign lands.

European intellectuals saw ethnographic museums as the scientific storehouse and laboratory for the investigation of non-European cultures. Adolf Bastian's vision of classification system had been formed to order the vast range of material culture that had been accumulated, and the creators of the objects were sometimes also put on display. Their presence formed part of the landscape, photographed or gazed upon as if in a zoo; individuals were sparsely clothed, depicted in the act of physical labour, crafting, carrying, digging or staring curiously into the camera. The ethnographic display was one of many types of exhibitions where non-European small-scale societies were seen. They were set apart from the 'freak shows' attached to travelling circus and public fairs, and for the more discerning or educated, the *Wunderkammers*, natural history cabinets, cabinets of curiosities and royal collections with limited access to the public, which also included material from non-European lands. A new kind of dynasty was thus formed that would build its reputation on the earnest endeavour of the European intellectual, who saw himself as the natural inheritor of the world's curios. As collections from abroad grew, they were divided into different categories according to commercial value, aesthetic appreciation and appeal to the European imagination. Since so little was known about non-Western cultures, especially small-scale societies, their curation depended on few facts and a lot of fantasy. Therefore, decisions were taken as matters of expediency and logistical appropriation, and theoretical scientific 'truths' were decided upon with little evidence to support the case, and classification systems and taxonomies were built upon in a highly autonomous manner by the museum officials of the time. The effects of these decisions *curated* an understanding of the world that contributed to a cultural revolution in Europe.

Inherited Dynasties of Princely and Scholastic Museum Enterprise Bridging Empires and Nations

The rise of the museum age of the late nineteenth century represents a material manifestation of ideologies that can be identified as Liberal Humanism and positivist approaches to the curating and collection of objects. This era coincided with the height of several European empires, including the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the German Empire, the French Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire. These ancient empires soon clashed with waves of nationalism that spread across Europe, and their imperial collections would be incorporated into museums for purposes of national identity that would influence the generation that closed the nineteenth century.

In many ways, Liberal Humanist ideas paved the way for the success of the museum age, transforming cabinets of curiosities, *Kunstakammers* and exotic collections previously only open to the few into a rigorous set of display cases and galleries

that showcased the success of European powers across the world. This core of activity that began to inform Europeans of the natural world around them, progress in science and definitions of self and other would shape education systems and research into the twentieth century. However, it could be argued that the move away from a moral and religious-based set of values towards a more empirical scientific world would contort the initial spirit of progressive Liberal Humanism and be used for a much more dangerous agendas attached to nationalism and notions of racial superiority in the twentieth century.

Penny reminds us of the Liberal Humanist agendas of Bastian's Museum that preceded the dangerous decline that led to the tragic history of German ethnology[7]:

> Over time, we also all but forgot that nineteenth-century German ethnology, or Wölkerkunde, was incredibly pluralistic, characterised by its practioners' refusal to entertain unproven racial hierarchies and by their quest to analyse and understand the great diversity of unitary humanity across space and time—a quest that set German ethnology apart from its counterparts in America, Britain, France, and much of the rest of Europe. Yet that too was forgotten, and with that moment of forgetting we lost as well as the understanding that these museums, as houses of human history, were never meant to be sites for the exhibition of exotic others. They were meant to be locations for helping people better understand the human condition, and thus themselves. (Penny, 2021: 11)

This study, however, traces the rise of what was deemed at the time as the progressive spirit of Liberal Humanism, an ideology that Bastian championed, and which became strongly associated with museum building in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here, 'liberal humanism' is used as a term to encapsulate the spirit of an age such terms as museum building, but its progressive agenda and idealism should be understood as thoroughly of its time: Western, ethnocentric, sexist, racist and elitist, and thoroughly problematic by today's standards of liberalism and humanism. Here I introduce the Vatican's new museum era that began with the PME in 1925 and incorporated the spirit of mid-nineteenth century Liberal Humanist agendas, which were intent on revealing the unknown world in order to understand it, and the people that inhabit it better. This is contrasted to the late nineteenth century nationalistic and more extreme eugenic-based ideologies that occurred as a by-product of biological evolutionism. The Vatican's 'great' exhibition provides the closing bookend to this study and, although it takes place in 1925, it is asserted here as the last great nineteenth century European exhibition that fulfils the Liberal Humanist agendas from the mid-1800s.

The term, museum dynasty, is a vehicle through which we might address the artifice of exhibition to expose cultural transformation beyond nationhood, and cultural identity beyond ethnicity and religion. Asking questions that focus on social interactions of object exchange attempts to see the ethnographic museum as a series of changing relationships that created the many contracts and disputes about belongings. Curators of national museums represent an historical thread, traditionally serving as a mouthpiece of the Establishment. Any historical study of bygone eras should include

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[7] See Penny (2021) for an extensive study of the Berlin Ethnographic Museum and the work of Adolf Bastian and Alexander von Humboldt.

the challenge of understanding the actions of their predecessors' policies within the cultural norms of the time. The origins of nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnographic museums in the Western Hemisphere lie firmly in the colonial era; actions and attitudes of the colonial era are currently at the centre of a move to decolonise the museum. It has been suggested that historical artefacts beyond the museum, such as statues to men of power from an era with which our current society no longer identifies, should be destroyed, and collections from other cultures and nations, previously under colonial control or influence, should be repatriated. Here I consider these tensions with the concept of the dynastic nature of museum creation and legacies of empire in mind.

Museums were places of interest for the leisure classes of Europe; they served as a space for thought and contemplation by those who had the time to engage in the exhibits on display. However, the museum was also a public display of philanthropy and social reform with a mission to educate. An extension of the colonial fair and the temporary exhibition, the museum became a place for permanent displays, a place to see and be seen, much like the opera and the theatre, and as a rule, if the rituals of the museum visit were adhered to, almost everyone was welcome. The institutional European ethnographic museum is a product of a series of networks that merged evangelical empires, colonial empires and nation states. Understanding the history of the ethnographic museum within a dynastic framework and drawing on an entangled history of evangelical and colonial relationships with objects and people, we are prompted to consider the mutual influences of object-related power relations within a range of political, social and anthropological histories.

Nowadays, the national European ethnographic museum is, in many cases, an extreme example of tensions that exist between the heard and the unheard, as its collections highlight the political, economic and historical differences between the collectors, curators and the societies they seek to represent. The argument, which is elaborated upon throughout this book, uses examples of European ethnographic exhibitions, and those enterprises associated with the visual culture in the context of the time. I propose to maintain the conceit that museums are always influenced by their creators' original agendas and are thus tied to their dynastic heritage if they continue to exhibit the same collections to the same set of audiences. We cannot change history, or histories, but we can broaden debates around collections and their original and contemporary contexts by discussing their constant re appropriations with a wider set of stakeholders. The contradictions that emerge through the dynamics of dialogue and polylogue create and release tensions and lived experience spawned from cultural pillage and transformation. Understanding the success and failure of the aims of Liberal Humanism, as a reason for the rise and fall of the ethnographic museum in Europe between 1851 and 1929, is a pathway upon which we tread to understand how closely linked museums are to the political and socially climate of their day.

When observing debates about postcolonialism, and the fate of the European ethnographic museum in the twentieth century, it is worth considering the details at a more granular level. The period of history in which we understand to be that of European colonial expansion was made up of different forces of enterprise; some

were indeed a national endeavour to expand territory and control economic markets, but others were of an intellectual kind. In Germany, two influential figures could have changed the course of history if their ideas had been upheld by the end of the nineteenth century: Alexander von Humboldt and Adolf Bastian. Penny reminds us that:

> Bastian knew the power of objects. He also knew that knowledge, science and display should not be divided. He knew that his museum had to be more than a municipal or national display, more than a statement of grandeur- static, didactic, and, to his mind, boring. The central point of drawing together those hundreds of thousands of objects was to allow to interact through juxtapositions that would be dynamic, active, enlightening. The point was to have the objects teach us to see, to have them teach us about the areas of human history for which there are few or no written records. The point was to use the visual displays to help locate the consistencies that cut across the endless variations in humanity. (Penny, 2021: 10)

In many ways, the projects of Humboldt and his pupil, Bastian, had similar ideological problems as those of today's ethnographic museums. They knew that possessing objects alone was futile if they had no clear method in which to display them for the purpose of the production of knowledge; a knowledge that could only reveal itself by creating a forum of debate that included many voices. But this pluralism of voice was to be explored much later and attitudes of the time were far from egalitarian, and their promise of the museum as a place to use objects to open minds, was not to be. After Bastian's death in 1905, another set of agendas took precedence in Germany, and the first age of the Museum Era, ended as Europe descended into the chaos of war.

Introducing the Pontifical Missionary and Ethnological Museum to the History of Ethnographic Museums

Although missionary quests and collections have been included in recent studies of material culture and colonialism, few have inquired as to the hierarchies of missionary collecting, that is, the infrastructure of the Catholic Church and its missions. One of my principal objectives is to demonstrate how the Vatican's collections represent a unique set of histories that connect the Catholic Church at its highest level to colonial discourses of collecting and curating of non-Western artefacts. The 'tribe' in question here is not the present or past inhabitants of New Guinea, for example, provenance of the largest single collections in the PME. Rather it is the highest authority of the Vatican, consisting of the pontiff and his council, and one of its missionary orders, the Society of the Divine Word (abbreviated SVD for the Latin name Societas Verbi Divini). Examining the relations between the apex of the Catholic Church and its missionaries in New Guinea provides us with a perspective where we might consider several layers of colonialism, which occur separately and simultaneously: Europeans had different allegiances, and their presence in New Guinea was largely due to economic, scientific, anthropological and evangelical interest. Christian organisations encountered the colonial administration and the native population already

there. The SVD were not the first missionaries to venture to New Guinea; indeed, the London Missionary Society and the Methodists had arrived several years prior to the Catholics. However, the SVD had an important presence in northeast New Guinea between 1900 and 1939: they were successful ship and railway builders, plantation, sawmill and school owners, and it is their story that is relevant to this study.

To understand the Vatican's collection from New Guinea, the largest collection within its Ethnographic Museum, we must consider it in the context of other museum collections gathered from that region during the early twentieth century, such as those made by A. B. Lewis for the Field Museum in Chicago, Beatrice Blackwood's collection from New Britain for the Pitt Rivers in Oxford, Gregory Bateson's collection for Cambridge University's Fitzwilliam's Museum, E. W. Brandes's collections from the Sepik Region for the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. O'Hanlon (2000) points out that the collecting of artefacts represents agendas beyond the colonial and the local and individual cases have been overlooked in material culture studies to categorise the past; this is certainly the case for the Vatican's New Guinea collection. However, while the colonisers drew from their colonised subjects for material goods to fill up their museums and prove their anthropological theories, indigenous peoples were not always passive in the process. Each party was continually recategorising the other; it was like a tug-of-war where the mark in the middle was continually being shifted. These localised interactions can be seen as *mutual influence* that only occurred in the field; this is expanded upon when we learn the missionary approach to collecting and documenting material culture may be far removed from the curator's approach back in Europe.

My case study centres around the collections of the SVD missionary Fr. Franz Kirschbaum (1882–1939); his second collection from New Guinea in 1932 is noteworthy as there was no trading involved. The collection came about as a reaction to colonial and missionary intervention and marked a moment in time when indigenous beliefs were challenged to breaking point. The result was the so-called Christian Awakening when large numbers of indigenous people converted to Christianity and sought to rid themselves of reminders of their traditional ways. When the Sepik River natives threw their sacred objects into the river, they literally threw away their beliefs. Fr. Kirschbaum's action in collecting them before they sank to the bottom brought about a new set of relationships between the collectors and collected. As a representative of Christianity and 'collector' of indigenous belief, he became destroyer and conserver of Sepik heritage.

The setting of this study relates to the period of high colonialism and extensive missionary activity worldwide when objects from non-Western domains were flowing into Europe at a faster rate than their receivers could organise them. Regarding the PME of 1925, it was the sheer quantity of artefacts that was impressive to the visitor rather than the distinction between them. Categorisation above the geographical origins of the material was an unnecessary task since the Church's exhibitors' aim was to promote the work of the missionaries and not to identify indigenous people's lives and artefacts. Gardner's account of the George Brown collection from the Bismarck Archipelago in *Hunting the Gatherers* (2000) can be compared to Kirschbaum's collections from the Sepik since both arose from missionary agendas, albeit with

fundamental differences, and both came to represent a unique contact between the evangeliser and the evangelised. Brown's scientific agenda and Methodist persuasion can be compared to Kirschbaum's primarily linguistic agenda and Catholic persuasion. Both used objects to understand the peoples with whom they worked and to further their own knowledge of the natural world. When Brown sent examples of Melanesian shell money from the Bismarck Archipelago to E. B. Tylor, he was contributing to ethnological theory within an evolutionist paradigm of human cultures. Kirschbaum sent his first collection to Fr. Schmidt in 1923 as a contribution to Schmidt's ethnological understanding of Man's notion of God, based on a non-linear perspective of human development. Thus, the missionary as field worker contributed to the ordering of Man and its practices from a European perspective.

In contrast to the George Brown collection, which has appeared in auction halls three times since the 1970s, most of the original Kirschbaum collection resides in the Vatican's newly monikered 'Ethnological Museum', which is currently inaccessible to scholars. Both Brown and Kirschbaum adhered to scientific agendas but also became pioneers in their profession in setting up mission posts in uncharted territories. Both missionaries are known to have met other well-known travellers and scientists of their day; Brown is linked with von Müeller, Lorimer, Fison, von Hügel and E. B. Tylor. Kirschbaum met A. B. Lewis, E. W. Brandes, Speiser and Gregory Bateson in the field, as well as Schmidt back in the Vatican.

Acknowledging intellectual debates surrounding approaches to museum representation and authority, I argue that, while all other Western European ethnographic museums have begun to come to terms with the post-imperial nature of representation, the Vatican's ethnographic museum lies outside the parameters of Western post-imperial history. While one may talk of a post-colonial world, there are yet no plans afoot for a post-Catholic world. Thus, the histories of the Vatican's collections cannot be assessed using the same criteria. Here we examine the nature of the 'Catholicised' ethnographic object and its place in the history of the Catholic Church, early twentieth-century anthropology, Pacific history, museology and material culture studies. This is primarily an historical study of an era when the discipline of ethnology was used by the Catholic Church to educate missionaries and advance their cause, as well as step into twentieth-century discourses on science and religion. We see how German anthropologists of the mid-to-late nineteenth century grappled with ideas of fixed natural time and Darwinian evolutionism. Furthermore, their concentration on collections and archive fieldwork engendered a Historical-Cultural approach in Vienna, which was influential in early nineteenth-century continental anthropology. When Franz Boas left for America in the early twentieth century, he took with him ideas from the German school of cultural relativism, whereas Wilhelm Schmidt came to represent the Historical-Cultural School, which incorporated Diffusionist ideas and the concept of culture circles. The very nature of these subjects demanded historical contextualisation, and Schmidt always placed his work with an historical framework. The Vatican's ethnographic collections have often been overlooked in academic studies concerning ethnology and collecting of ethnographic objects; the Church and its missions had a great impact in the collecting of non-Western artefacts before and after the height of colonialism and its famous anthropologists.

Collections of ethnographic artefacts sent to the Vatican for the PME were offered by as gifts for Pope Pius XI from the local communities where the mission houses were stationed around the world; this included Kirschbaum's own Sepik collection of 1923, originally housed at his mission station in Rabaul. Fearing it may fall into alien (Australian colonial) hands, he offered it to Schmidt for safekeeping, but attached instructions for its final resting place after the exhibition. Once in Rome the collection joined the thousands of other artefacts from the entire mission world and was organised according to Schmidt's instructions. They were displayed to represent missionary progress while denying the visitor information of the processes that had enabled the objects to be sent there in the first place. There have been studies made on the missionary and colonial links in every region of the world. Gosden and Knowles define colonialism as a 'mass of small processes with global effects' (2001: xix), emphasising challenges European anthropologists and museum curators overcame to produce collections from the Pacific. They talk of the processes of trade and exchange that occurred locally and outline the wider effects on the histories of the collectors and the collected. Hirsch reminds us that the landscape of powers between mission, administration and native was a constant battle, as each strove to achieve different ends: 'To form a landscape is to form one's vision of power; one's vision of persons and places in particular times, and … in particular encounters and contentions' (2003: 17).

In many ways, ethnographic objects arriving at the Vatican from non-European contexts underwent a reversal of this procedure. They underwent a process of de-sanctification, as in the case of religious artefacts; the detachment from their indigenous communities demystified their original significance. Most of the Kirschbaum collections sent to the PME and the MEML were of a religious nature. Although he acknowledged the singular importance of his communities' artefacts and attached photographs and notes to them, much of his research was lost or burnt during World War II before it even reached Rome. However, once in the Vatican, the objects were de-elevated, sometimes including rituals similar to exorcism, and functioned only as symbols of missionary progress. Their display, cluttered together with other like or unlike objects, devalued their original status. Since 1925, the Vatican New Guinea objects have not been studied with great attention, and their original purpose in New Guinea, as well as in the Vatican, has long since been forgotten.

Finally, I assess the importance of understanding the original agendas of the dynasties in question to understand their legacies as a way to address the ongoing issues outlined in the recent conference in 2019 in Heidelberg. Many of the discussions centred around issues that stemmed from the imperialist agendas of nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe: cultural memory and issues surrounding the de-colonisation of objects in the ethnographic museum. While these issues are not new, in the twenty-first century we have witnessed a radical change in agenda for the ethnographic museum and its reconfiguration of displays in some, stress the importance of being seen to have created new priorities that respond to the political, social changes in the European psyche. Rethinking displays and community projects associated with the collections break with the past both in terms of structure and ideology. We have seen a new building at Paris, in the form of the Musée du Quai Branly, the

rebranded interior of Vienna's Welt Museum and the new Humboldt Forum in Berlin, all of which hold major national ethnographic collections. Based on discussions held at the 2019 Heidelberg Conference, ethnographic museum curators ongoing issues still purvey the conversations. Treating the symptom of disharmony and intellectual malady in an institution is never enough, as if the cause is unknown the sickness will strike again and could eventually be fatal.

Our journey begins with an overview of the concept Liberal Humanism, an ideal of progressive thought that drives the spirit of the age between 1840 and 1900. Drawing from the traditions of Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau and the exploration of ideas during the Age of Enlightenment, Chap. 1 analyses the roots of the modern European ethnographic museum in the international world fairs and exhibitions. As the century progressed, Liberal Humanism inspired considerations of the cultural other, both within Europe and in lands beyond the continent. In conjunction with the growth of industry and technology, a burgeoning middle class, colonial expansion and the rise of nationalism in Europe, Liberal Humanism manifested itself as an expression of the self in the form of International World Fairs and, subsequently, ethnographic museums, in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin.

The methods used to organised cultures from other lands and religions at these events influenced the approach of the man who would later curate the PME, Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, SVD. Chapter 2 reveals how Schmidt's ethnology and his desire to establish monotheistic religious origins in humankind, while also celebrating the missionary work for which his order, the Society of the Divine Word, was founded in 1875. Expressing his wishes to hold a missionary exhibition in the same vein as the international events held in Europe's capitals, his efforts were frustrated by a growing anti-modernist stance from within the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the years leading up to the PME, Schmidt made a name for himself as a linguist, and he developed his methods of ethnological study so that missionaries could apply them and further his research into Primeval Monotheism and culture circles; in addition, his studies of science and history would contribute to the advancement of the missions. Ultimately, with the election of Pope Pius XI in 1922, Schmidt found a willing supporter, and the time had come for an exhibition like the one Schmidt had always envisaged.

Chapter 3 studies the culture of German anthropology in the latter half of the nineteenth century, which can be compared with the culture of Vatican anthropology in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Outlining the structural, cultural and ideological aspects of German anthropology from the 1860s, I draw on similarities with and differences between Wilhelm Schmidt's Vatican policies a generation later. I argue that, although influenced by the methodology of Fritz Graebner (1877–1934) and Bernhard Ankermann (1859–1943), who made their mark in German anthropology in 1904 with the creation of the theory of culture circles, Schmidt's attitude was more akin to that of the older generation, such as Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), Adolf Bastian (1826–1905) and Felix von Luschan (1854–1924). By the early twentieth century, Darwinism dominated, or at least influenced, much of modern science and philosophy, but another more dubious strand of thinking had emerged from physical anthropology that would mark a change of direction in studies

from museum-based ethnology to racial classification. Schmidt devoted much of his life to maintaining the attitude towards religion and science that was dominant in Germany between 1860 and 1890. While the academic and political climate changed in Germany, Schmidt embodied a former age of progressive humanitarianism and unchallenged Christianity.

The SVD played a crucial role in the establishment of the PME, as the largest collection of material sent for the exhibition came from the order's mission houses in New Guinea. Chapter 4 outlines the SVD's history in New Guinea, emphasising the juxtaposition of the missions and colonialism that resulted in mutual benefit for both sides. These dynastic networks made the PME possible, and it was the SVD that provided curators for the exhibition and the subsequent museums in the Lateran Palace and then the Vatican Museums, until 1997. As trustees of the Vatican's ethnographic collections, the SVD effectively ruled as a dynasty over the museum long after Schmidt's practices held ethnological influence in the collecting or curating of the objects.

Crucial to the success of the SVD and the colonial administrations, as well as the conservation of indigenous artefacts in New Guinea, was the presence of Fr. Franz Kirschbaum SVD. Kirschbaum lived and worked in New Guinea from 1906 until his tragic death in a plane crash nearly 34 years later. Trained as a linguist and not as an ethnologist, Kirschbaum nonetheless played a vital role in collecting objects that still form part of the Vatican's ethnographic collections. Chapter 5 studies Kirschbaum's significance in the exploratory and missionary expeditions in the Sepik River Valley. It is important to gain some insight into Kirschbaum's character and role in New Guinea during the time he was collecting to understand the exact circumstances in which the objects were found, while also gaining insight into why the labelling and notes in the current archive are so inconsistent. He was greatly admired by all with whom he came into contact, and his death was deeply mourned.

Chapter 6 brings together these major players in the foundation of the PME. In response to Schmidt's requests for objects and information, a series of letters reveals the relationship and varying agendas of archivists like Schmidt in Rome and those out in the field like Kirschbaum in New Guinea; in addition, the correspondence reveals Kirschbaum's attitude towards the purpose of the PME and the MEML and how differently his priorities regarding the objects in his collections were to those organising the displays. In fact, after cooperating at the outset, one letter demonstrates that Kirschbaum had become impatient with requests from Rome and was unwilling to sacrifice a lifetime of fieldwork to support the ethnological theories of his colleagues in Europe. This chapter delves into the correspondence of the key players and discovers the entangled agendas of the collectors and curators. It also provides some explanation about the state of the Kirschbaum collections in the Vatican museums today.

Coming towards the end of the path, Chap. 7 studies Schmidt's ideology behind the displays of the PME of 1925, especially his theories of Primeval Monotheism and his quest for ethnology to serve the missions and the faith. I address the question of how successful the exhibition was, in terms of fulfilling its goals and establishing a legacy, or dynasty, of the Church's presence and influence. Included is an overview

of the structure and organisation of the PME according to the official accounts of the exhibition, and the collections that it contained. I will address the question of why the PME, although taking place a quarter of the way through the twentieth century, should be considered the last Great Exhibition of the nineteenth century.

At the time of the closure of the PME in 1926, work had already begun on the establishment of a permanent Pontifical Missionary and Ethnological Museum in the Lateran Palace in Rome; however, the Golden Age of the Western ethnographic museum was coming to an end. Chapter 8 explores how, despite the eradication of most of Europe's great empires by the end of World War I, in Rome in the 1920s, evangelical and imperial aspirations became aligned as the Roman Catholic Church sought to hail the success of its missions, and Benito Mussolini's (1883–1945) Italy harked back to the days of Ancient Rome to establish his imperial vision of the country. It can be argued that the PME and the MEML helped pave the way for the *concordat* signed on 11 February 1929, between the Holy See and Mussolini's Government, establishing statehood for the Vatican and reinstating Catholicism as the state religion of the kingdom. A study of the ideology and organisation of the MEML also reveals how Pius XI had broken from Vatican tradition by placing so much emphasis on the role missionaries had played in the history of science in his new museum.

A brief epilogue provides a historical overview of the legacy of the Vatican's ethnographic collections and ethnological museums, including the closure of the MEML in 1963, the incorporation of the Missionary and Ethnological Museum into the Vatican Museums (MEMV) in 1973, subsequent closures and openings to public viewing and, finally, the eradication of the missions from the story of the museum, in the recently renamed Ethnological Museum, *Anima Mundi*. As stated above, while we live in a post-colonial era, we should not forget the origins of the Vatican's collections, nor the missionaries who acted as destroyer and preserver of objects from an entanglement of relationships they had on their travels. They sat in many camps, both figuratively and literally: they represented the colonial trader; the foreign explorer; the private entrepreneur; the scientist; the linguist; the confidant; the outsider and the insider; and most importantly to them, the person who would influence their belief systems. In their quest to evangelise, the missionary translated and interpreted material culture both ways, and their influence and legacies live on in many museums and private collections around the world.

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Contents

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Alison L. Kahn was trained as Anthropologist at the universities of London (M.A.) and Oxford (M.Phil., D.Phil.). She works in the digital archive management sector and in academia, lecturing on documentary filmmaking and museum anthropology. She integrates the use of audio-visual artifacts and digital media as tools and products of her research. Her area of study includes the Vatican's ethnographic collections and colonial and post-colonial discourses in India, focusing on Naga material culture in European museums and Anglo-Indian global diasporas. Alison is Director of the Oxford Documentary Film Institute, Visiting Fellow in Digital Learning Systems at Loughborough University, and Senior Tutorial Fellow in Museum Anthropology at Stanford University's Overseas Program in Oxford. Her research portfolio spans across museum curatorship, digital learning, and collaborative ethnographic film-making. Her current research investigates how children engage with multimedia activities, including: film, AI, and online learning platforms.