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Developing The Colonial Museum Project in British Nigeria

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Art History

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A.B., Georgetown University, 2005

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An abstract of  
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University  
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2013

## Abstract

### Developing The Colonial Museum Project in British Nigeria By Amanda Hawley Hellman

In 1943, Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray began a survey of antiquities in the British colony of Nigeria. This project led to his own department, which wrote antiquities legislation, regulated archaeological excavations, and established all of the museums in the country – seven before independence. These museums were established for antiquities' preservation, but were also a demonstration of Britain's imperial presence in Africa. The formation and products of the department of antiquities reveal the way in which the British intended to use the museum to unite a diverse population while at the same time use artifacts to educate and create the modern colonial African subject. The department of antiquities looked to British institutions as a model for antiquities legislation and museum practice. "Developing The Colonial Museum Project in British Nigeria" explores the processes by which European museum models were translated to colonial-era African museums and analyzes how knowledge production and heritage formation were generated within these institutions. The colonial African museum maintained ties to the institutions in Europe, yet it was something different because it was set within colonial territories and catered to colonial European and African audiences. This in turn shaped the classification of art objects, which affected our perceptions of what the Nigerian visual culture is today. Nigeria plays an important role in museum development on the continent because the department of antiquities opened the first bilingual institution to train museum professionals, thus influencing museum practice across Africa. This dissertation examines Nigerian museums as both an extension of and departure from the way British museums were used for social and political purposes. The focus is the development of the department of antiquities and the institutions it founded in the period leading up to its establishment in 1946 and the dismantling of the British Empire with Nigerian independence in 1960. The final chapter considers the department in the 1960s through the Biafran War and into today.

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Reconstructing the history of museum development in Nigeria is complicated because many of the pertaining documents were lost when the headquarters of the department of antiquities was moved from Lagos to Jos in 1957 and back again in 1968. In a letter to his sister Betty from February 18, 1961, Kenneth Murray wrote that he “hoped to find at [the museum some] notes on my last visit to Umuahia in 1958-9 but the notes seem to be lost, as are the photos, strange. I can only suppose they were lost by the museum.” This, of course, leads me to acknowledge, John Murray, whose supervision of his aunt and uncle’s papers in the West Sussex Records Office has ensured that the history of this period from the unique perspective of Kenneth Murray is preserved. Additional support in the Records Office came from Nichola Court.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: R. K. Granville. The Punitive Expedition, showing brass plaques (and heads) strewn across the foreground, photograph, 1897.

Figure 2: *Olokun* crowned head. Ile-Ife, Nigeria, bronze, 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Figure 3: “Bascom” head, bronze, 10-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Source: *Nigeria* 37 (1951): 23).

Figure 4: *The Jema’a Head*, Nok culture area, Hemaa, Kaduna State, Nigeria, fired clay, 10” x 7”, c. 500 BCE. The Jos Museum.

Figure 5: *Opa Oranmiyan* (“staff of Oranmiyan”), Ife, Nigeria, granite and iron, 18”, 1<sup>st</sup> millennium C.E. (conserved 1953).

Figure 6: Plaque showing the Oba of Benin with Attendants, Edo, Benin City, Nigeria, brass, 20” x 15”, 16<sup>th</sup> century. The British Museum.

Figure 7: Series of heads, Nok culture area, Jos, Nigeria, terracotta, 2”, c. 400 BCE – 200 CE. The Jos Museum.

Figure 8: *Érē Esię*, Esię, Nigeria, soapstone, 26”, c. 1100-1500. The House of Images at Esię.

Figure 9: Murray installing a display of Ekpu figures in the National Museum, Lagos, 1957.

Figure 10: Floor plan of the museum at Esię, 1948.

Figure 11: Floor plan of the museum at Ife, 1948.

Figure 12: Oni of Ife in full regalia. Ile-Ife, Nigeria, bronze, 14”, 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nigerian Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.

Figure 13: Head with cat whiskers, Ife, Nigeria, terracotta, 5”, 10<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

Figure 14: Floor plan of the museum at Oron, 1948.

Figure 15: Joseph Chukwu. *Mammy Wata Group in a Canoe*. Annang Ibibio culture group, Nigeria. Wood and pigment, 1976. Oron Museum.

Figure 16: Gidan Makama, Kano, Nigeria.

Figure 17: Leopards that stood on an ancestor altar, Edo, Benin City, Nigeria, bronze, 27.5", 16<sup>th</sup> century. National Museum, Lagos.

Figure 18: Queen Mother Head, Edo, Benin City, Nigeria, bronze, 20", 16<sup>th</sup> century. National Museum, Lagos.

Figure 19: Monkey, Nok culture area, Jos, Nigeria, terracotta 9", c. 400 BCE – 200 CE. The Jos Museum.

C Figure 20: Elephant, Nok culture area, Udegi, Nigeria, terracotta, 6", c. 400 BCE – 200 CE. The Jos Museum.

Figure 21: Floor plan of the museum at Jos, 1948.

Figure 22: The Jos Museum before the opening, 1952.

Figure 23: Anambra water jar, ceramic, 14" H, 13"D. The Jos Pottery Museum

Figure 24: Decorated interior of a Nupe House at the Jos Museum, 1970.

Figure 25: Jarawa water jar. Jarawan Kogi, Nigeria. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Terracotta, 15" collected by Sylvia Leith-Ross for the Jos Pottery Museum.

Figure 26: Map of MOTNA, 1977.

Figure 27: Kano Wall. MOTNA, Jos Museum.

Figure 28: Head with pierced eyes, Nok culture area, Dinya, Plateau State, Nigeria, terracotta, 14", c. 400 BCE – 200 CE.

Figure 29: Ikpa mask, Akpa district, Nigeria, wood. 20<sup>th</sup> century. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Jos Museum.

Figure 30: Maternity Figure, Afo, Nigeria, wood, 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jos Museum.

Figure 31: The National Museum, Lagos, 1957.

Figure 32: Courtyard of the National Museum, Lagos, 2012. (Photograph by the author).

Figure 33: Program distributed by St. Saviour's Church for the funeral of Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray, May 4, 1972.

Figure 34: Proposal for the Museum Kitchen and Craft complex of the National Museum, Lagos, designed by James Cubitt & Partners, 1977.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Structure of the Dissertation .....	10
<b>Chapter 1 .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Antiquities, Anthropology, and Museums in 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Britain....</b>	<b>13</b>
Growth of Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century England .....	14
Antiquities Commission .....	18
Anthropology, Archaeology, and Museums.....	24
The British Museum. ....	28
The Pitt Rivers Museum. ....	33
Anthropology in the University.....	36
Anthropology and Colonialism .....	41
A Continuation of the German-British Rivalry in Nigeria: The Case of Leo Frobenius ..	44
The Effect of British Policy on Nigeria.....	48
<b>Chapter 2 .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Building the Department of Antiquities in Colonial Nigeria .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray.....	55
William Bascom and the Ife Heads.....	66
World War II.....	74
Edward Harland Duckworth .....	81
Education Office or Public Relations Office.....	85
Bernard E. B. Fagg.....	89
Mission of the Antiquities Service: Repatriation, Excavation, and Preservation .....	97
Excavation.....	101
Preservation.....	106
Regulation of Exports and the Antiquities Ordinance of 1953 .....	112
Conclusion.....	117
<b>Chapter 3 .....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>The Fight for Museums .....</b>	<b>119</b>
The Colonial Endeavor: Herbert Meyerowitz, Julian Huxley, and Hermann Braunholtz .....	124
H. J. Braunholtz's Tour .....	138
Continued Opposition .....	144
Road to Museums .....	146
Exhibitions in London and Lagos .....	148
Working with the Oni and Oba .....	155
Employing Nigerians.....	158
Hesitation of Colonial Office .....	161
A Regional Versus a Central Museum .....	164
Storage.....	168
Conclusion.....	169
<b>Chapter 4 .....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Development of the Nigerian Regional and National Museums.....</b>	<b>173</b>
The House of Images at Esiẹ (1945).....	176

<b>The Ife Museum (1954).....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>The Oron Museum (1959).....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>The Gidan Makama Museum Kano (1960) .....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>The Benin Museum (1960).....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>The Jos Museum (1952) .....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>The Museum .....</b>	<b>215</b>
The Pottery Museum.....	224
Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture. ....	228
Jos Zoo and Botanical Gardens.....	230
The Technological Museum. ....	232
UNESCO Training School and AMAT-MATA. ....	233
Conclusion. ....	236
<b>The Nigerian Museum, Lagos (1957).....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Expansion of the Department of antiquities .....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Chapter 5 .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Museums and the Department of antiquities after Nigerian Independence .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Kenneth C. Murray’s Retirement.....</b>	<b>252</b>
The strained relationship between Murray and Fagg.....	254
<b>Ekpo Eyo .....</b>	<b>262</b>
Amendments to the 1953 Antiquities Ordinance.....	263
<b>Civil War .....</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>FESTAC ’77 and the future of the NCMM .....</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>NCMM Today.....</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>283</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century British museum is well documented as a venue for public education (Bennett, 1995), the construction of national identity (MacKenzie, 2009), mapping culture and evolution (Coombes, 1994), and, more specifically, for the exhibition of curiosities, aesthetic objects, and art (Court, 1999 and Karp, 1991). How do these models translate to colonial-era African museums? What kinds of knowledge production and heritage formation were generated within colonial museums?

British colonial officer, Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray was stationed in Nigeria as an art teacher beginning in 1927. As he traveled the country he saw the loss and damage of the material culture along with the practices and craft production that went with it. Murray thus began to collect. He collected to preserve, to understand, and, perhaps to console during a period of great change.<sup>1</sup> The motives of the colonial government did not clash with Murray's, but their use of museums as social and political tools neglected to acknowledge the romantic element of wonder that a museum indulges.<sup>2</sup> This project, in

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2009 novel *The Museum of Innocence*, Orhan Pamuk describes a man obsessed with a woman, whom he reduces and objectifies by collecting the *things* that make her up. Inspired by the "empty museums of Paris," particularly those that tried to capture the essence of a person by displaying the artifacts that made up daily life. Pamuk established an actual museum in Istanbul, opened to the public in April 2012, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. He brought his character to life by compiling all of the objects that would have remained if she had been real. Indeed, museums provide, in Pamuk's words, "consolation" and "deep understanding" of a person, or, in the case of this project, a people, practice, culture, and world that is nothing more than their remnants. Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, translated by Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 495.

<sup>2</sup> The model of "wonder" is taken from Stephen Greenblatt's idea that there are two powerful evocations of display: resonance and wonder. Resonance acknowledges that a museum display must be relevant to the viewer; a display must also amaze a viewer. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," *Exhibiting*

part, explores this tension that arose between the colonial government and Kenneth Murray. The project explores Murray's experience by using his letters written home to his family in England, which have never before been published.

This dissertation, "Developing the Colonial Museum Project in British Nigeria," examines the founding and development of the department of antiquities in colonial Nigeria under British control.<sup>3</sup> The department wrote antiquities legislation, regulated archaeological excavations, and established all of the museums in the country – seven before independence. The project focuses on the decade leading up to the establishment of the department in 1946 and the dismantling of the British Empire with Nigerian independence in 1960. I examine the processes by which European museum models were translated to colonial-era African museums and analyze how knowledge production and heritage formation were generated within these institutions. I argue that the colonial African museum maintained ties to the institutions in Europe, yet it constituted something different because it was set within colonial territories and catered to colonial European as well as African audiences. This in turn shaped the classification of art objects, which still affects our perceptions of what the Nigerian visual culture is today.

I concentrate on the West African country of Nigeria because it is distinct on the continent due to its large, diverse population and the corresponding richness and historical depth of its art traditions. Museums in Nigeria were established for antiquities preservation, but were also a key demonstration of Britain's imperial presence in Africa. Nigeria plays an important role in museum development on the continent because the

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*Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian, 1991), 42-56.

<sup>3</sup> Before becoming the department of antiquities, the branch was designated differently from 1943 until 1958. The antiquities service, section, and branch are interchangeable.

department of antiquities opened the first bilingual institution to train museum professionals in English and French, thus influencing museum practice across Africa. The formation and products of the department of antiquities reveal how the British intended to use the museum to unite a diverse population and used artifacts to educate and inculcate the modern colonial African. The department of antiquities looked to British institutions as a model for antiquities legislation and museum practice. My project explores Nigerian museums as both an extension of and departure from the way British museums were used for social and political purposes.

Though the term “museum project,” describing the institutionalization of display and preservation of objects, is often overused, in this case the “Nigerian museum project” was just that: a colonial project to inhibit the destruction and export of antiquities instigated by the director of the education department, Edward Harland Duckworth, anthropologist, Arthur Hunt-Cooke, superintendent of education, J.D. Clarke, and, most uncompromisingly, Kenneth C. Murray.<sup>4</sup> Working under the education and information departments of the British Colonial Service, they issued a request to discharge Captain Murray from the West African Forces in May 1943, in which he had enlisted in 1940, to take a new assignment as the first surveyor of antiquities for Nigeria. In Murray’s mind, the culmination of the antiquities assignment would lead to a museum. But, his letters and

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<sup>4</sup> Hunt-Cooke was the author of the article “On the Niger” from 1949 and “Dahomeyan Crafts” published in 1937. Listed as a Colonial Servant Teacher and possibly Oxford University educated by the Pitt Rivers Museum Relational Museum Collector Information Database (accessed July 24, 2012). In a letter to his mother, Murray wrote: “Hunt Cook is an S of E (One year junior to me in appointment) I met him about 4 years ago. He has been nearly all his time except part of his last tour in Abeokuta and so hears Yoruba very well. When we go out together on our investigations he does nearly all the talking therefore and really [sic] I might not be there especially [sic] as his ideas are quite sensible. We get on quite well together. Next week we go to Isehin [sic], the Ibadan Ife and back here for the end of the month. Then Lagos, Badagry, French Dahomey. (probably).” Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 26, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

reports suggest that his idea of the “museum” differed in many ways from what his superiors and peers in the colonial government, and their Nigerian counterparts, envisioned. For Murray the primary mission of a museum was to preserve “articles.”<sup>5</sup> This vision reflected Britain’s attitude towards antiquity and anthropological museums; but in post-war Britain new approaches to museums were emerging, which would leave Nigeria and other British colonies behind in development. Murray looked to antiquities and ethnographic museums, such as the British Museum, as models. However, his superior Duckworth envisioned that the antiquities of Nigeria would enhance work produced by modern artists and desired to create a space to exhibit antiquities together with modern Nigerian art. Murray did work closely with many modern Nigerian artists and was actively involved in facilitating their exhibitions, education, and job opportunities. However, he did claim as his responsibility, whether as an education officer, surveyor of antiquities, or eventually as the director of the department of antiquities, to advance modern art in Nigeria; rather his charge was to document the breadth of traditional artistic objects and monuments produced across the country and collect it for the central museum, propose it as a national protected monument, preserve it *in situ*, or help locals acquire the resources to care for it. The growth of the department of antiquities and the museums in Nigeria, as well as protocol for objects, export ordinances, training, and display practices relied heavily on their familial relationship with the British Museum, but also the practices of the Birmingham Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, and the Horniman Collection among others. England had been ensconced in the development of the field of anthropology and the museum’s role in its scholarship.

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<sup>5</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5. “Article” is a term commonly used to refer to works/artifacts/objects of artistic merit in the Annual Reports of the Antiquities Service.

To understand the climate in which the museums were founded there are a several key players and a few historical factors that must be pointed out, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent chapters. Between 1910 and 1912, German ethnologist Leo Frobenius traveled through Nigeria on a collecting expedition sponsored by three German ethnological museums. His “campaign” in Nigeria resulted in charges brought against him by the British government for stealing religious objects, and also fuelled the rivalry between Britain and Germany. Frobenius’s exploration of the British colony, his interest in the artifacts and objects therein, his distribution of those objects and the subsequent interest of the market and anthropologists encouraged the British to develop the position of a colonial anthropologist in the Nigerian colonial service after World War I in 1925. Furthermore, they began to encourage their district officers to be trained in Bronisław Malinowski’s emerging anthropological method of fieldwork in which colonial officers should travel to the villages to gather data and collect objects, rather than performing “armchair anthropology.” Led by district officers P. Amaury Talbot and Charles Kingsley Meek, the Nigerian colonial office sought to catalogue and categorize the different regions and ethnic groups. This meant that the stage was set for cultural projects.

The stage in Nigeria was also influenced by museum policy in Britain, particularly that set forth by the British Museum. Many of the policies concerning antiquities looked directly to the Antiquities Act of 1882, proposed by John Lubbock and implemented by General Augustus Henry Lane Pitt-Rivers. Kenneth Murray and government archaeologist, Bernard Fagg, were closely connected to preeminent museums in Britain; Fagg would, in 1963, be appointed curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford where he stayed for the remainder of his career; his brother William was the

keeper of the department of ethnography at the British Museum from 1946-1974, going on numerous collecting and research trips to Nigeria between 1949 and 1959. How did these close ties with British institutions contribute to display practices and, ultimately, the classification of Nigerian objects?

But, the story does, in fact, begin with Murray. Kenneth C. Murray arrived in Nigeria in November 1927 under the direction of Eric Swanton, deputy director of the education department.<sup>6</sup> Swanton unexpectedly died in Italy, leaving Murray without direct supervision. In June 1936, the education department sent Murray to study crafts in Ibadan and Abeokuta with Hunt-Cooke, a project with the goal of reforming the education policy to encourage people to stay in the villages rather than moving into town. He had begun collecting works by this time, but it is in a letter written to his mother on August 22, 1936 that he first mentions his intentions to create a museum. Murray purchased a mask from a carver in Ikot Ekpene and noted,

I am not bringing these home to decorate the barn but intend giving them to somewhere like Uumuahia [sic] where they could be kept in a museum. It is a pity that all these should be lost to Africa and I would prefer leaving them with their owners if I did not know how quickly they would disappear [sic]. Probably in 20 years from now there will not be one carving surviving in Ikot Ekpene that is existing now! The fall in quality in the last ten years is very very great. Only about 4 of the 60 carvers I know of, are good.”<sup>7</sup>

Twenty-five years later, Murray’s efforts were realized. By independence on October 1, 1960, the department of antiquities had built and opened seven museums: The House of Images at Esie (1945), The Jos Museum (1952), the Ife Museum (1954),

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<sup>6</sup> James, Vicky. “Kenneth Murray, Father of Museum Movement in Nigeria,” in *Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments*, Volume 3, 1994, 69-74.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 22, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Nigerian Museum in Lagos (1957), Oron Museum (1958), Benin Museum (1960), the Historic House Museum in Kano (1960). Each of these has a different history, different challenges, but all serve to preserve and conserve the antiquities of Nigeria. This project focuses on the Nigerian museums founded before Independence, particularly the Jos Museum and the National Museum, Lagos because they hold the largest collections and run the most programming.

Although there are a variety of cursory reviews of the history of the museums in Nigeria, no extensive study on the history, development, collection, or display of these museums has been undertaken. The residue of the initial missions, organization, priorities, and outlook linger on the current institutions, which are critically underfunded and in constant threat of losing their collections to thieves, mold, termites, ants, and simple neglect. The National Commission for Museum and Monuments and other advocates arguably remain distracted by issues of repatriation—a legacy left by Murray—leaving little time for new scholarship about old objects.

This dissertation contributes to the field of African art history because it explores early attempts to collect and classify African art. Murray was selective about what he purchased and how, forming the standards used in subsequent years. By choosing which objects qualified as antiquities and were “worth” saving, he also played a major role in developing the canon of Nigerian antiquities, which are still regarded as the most important in the field. Additionally, unraveling these formative years of museum development in both Britain and Nigeria informs our understanding not only of museum practice today – particularly in regards to Nigerian antiquities that left the country

beginning with the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897, but also of how we see and study Nigerian antiquities today. This is because the information and objects collected beginning with Murray's initial surveys in the early 1930s through the collecting missions after the civil war in the 1970s form the basis of Nigerian art history – and African art history.

The relevance of this project extends beyond African art history and antiquarians collecting practices. Murray's work is central to the creation of the department of antiquities. Through his efforts the colonial government in Nigeria began to think about how to construct a visual heritage for such a culturally and geographically diverse country. Murray envisioned himself uniting Nigerians by establishing museums and collecting art throughout the country. Murray's work is thus key to Nigeria's central importance to archaeologists, anthropologists, and art historians. He preserved the majority of the ancient and modern visual material in the country; therefore, bringing to light his contributions will enrich the scholarship within these fields. Murray is a contested figure among art historians today; he is seen as a savior of Nigerian art by an older generation of scholars, but the new perspective, predominantly formed by a younger generation of Nigerian scholars is largely negative. Murray is seen as a colonialist who inhibited the development of modern Nigerian art. I attempt to negotiate these polar impressions and I used them as a point of entry into how he operated. Moreover, publishing Murray's papers will deepen the history of the British Empire, and an in-depth investigation into the complex story of the department of antiquities and the national museums in Nigeria will have repercussions on the literature of British colonial

history, British museum history, Nigerian history, and potentially on museum practice in Nigeria today.

This project was developed around the letters of Kenneth Murray, which are kept in the archive of his sister, Betty Murray, in Chichester, England. The archive contains over 2,500 letters that Murray wrote home over the 45 years he lived in Nigeria. They were written exclusively to his family: to his mother Kate until her death in 1951, then his father Harold until his death, and then his sister until Murray's death in 1972. They reveal some details of his relationship with his family, such as business regarding their family estate at Heyshott, his brother Donald's death, his father's success, or requests for a book from Bumpus, his pet name for Betty. The reader sees a glimpse of his life in Nigeria when he refers to his health or describes to his mother swims in the choppy waters off the coast of Lagos. But, for the most part, Murray describes his professional duties, accomplishments, frustrations, and discusses the doings and personalities of his colleagues. This focus on his role as a colonial officer, art teacher, then antiquities surveyor and director, leads me to believe that he wrote other letters home in addition to those preserved in his sister's archive. I think that perhaps he intended to save this collection of letters to write a memoir or account of his time in Nigeria developing the National Museum, Lagos, a supposition supported by a draft of the history of the Nigerian museum written by Murray in the archives held at the National Museum. There was a certain challenge presented by the archival material in Nigeria. The papers held at the National Museum, Lagos, were not organized or in very good condition. Murray,

himself, acknowledged that this was the case upon his retirement in 1967.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Angela Fagg Rackham, Bernard's daughter, explained that a flood in Jos destroyed the remaining archival material concerning the Jos Museum. As a result, Murray's papers in England provided substantial material for this project.

### Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1, "Antiquities, Anthropology, and Museums in 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>- century Britain," sets the stage for museum development in Nigeria. The chapter begins with the burgeoning field of anthropology in Britain, covering from the founding of the Aborigines Protection Society in 1837 through the integration of Malinowski's fieldwork method into colonial officers' training. Then the chapter addresses the development of antiquities legislation in Britain, particularly the early and essential role of Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers. Pitt-Rivers also made crucial contributions to museums in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and his collection and method of display, along with the history of the British Museum, will be described. Additionally, the relationship between Britain and Germany as it affected Nigerian colonial policies, particularly exacerbated by Leo Frobenius, will be explained. By laying out this history, links will become apparent with the policies and practices in colonial Nigeria in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 2, "Building the Department of Antiquities in Colonial Nigeria," introduces Kenneth C. Murray as a young colonial officer in the education department. The chapter considers the events leading up to his dismissal from the army during World

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<sup>8</sup> See Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, March 13, 1967 Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

War II in order to take charge of a survey of Nigerian antiquities. Murray had conducted surveys of Nigerian crafts since 1936, but due to increasing interest by E. H. Duckworth from the education department and the removal of two Ife heads by William Bascom, the Nigerian colonial government realized that antiquities policies and export legislation needed to be created. Murray, along with his colleague, archaeologist Bernard E. B. Fagg, saw this as an opportunity to establish a museum—an institution he insisted would serve to promote the mission of the antiquities service. This chapter will explore the mission – excavation, preservation, and repatriation of Nigerian antiquities – in further depth as well as the resulting antiquities ordinance that was finally passed in 1953.

Chapter 3, “The Fight for Museums,” explores Murray and Fagg’s efforts to establish and open museums in Nigeria and convince the colonial office that it was a necessary effort. The key support for this task came from Herbert Meyerowitz, who was attempting a similar scheme in The Gold Coast, Julian Huxley, who led a tour of West Africa on behalf of the Elliot Commission on Higher Education, and Hermann Braunholtz, keeper at the British Museum. There were several logistical issues to decide, including whether there should be regional museums or a central museum, training and employing Nigerians, working with local leaders, and finding proper storage facilities.

Each of the seven museums opened before Nigerian independence in 1960 was developed under distinctive circumstances and had to resolve a different set of problems. Chapter 4, “Development of the Nigerian Regional and National Museums,” describes the conditions under which Murray and Fagg collected for, built, and opened these museums to the public. There were five regional museums opened: Esię (1945), the Ife Museum (1954), the Oron Museum (1959), the Benin Museum (the temporary museum

opened 1960), and the Gidan Makama Museum Kano (Historic House Museum in Kano, 1960). In addition, there were two National Museums: the Jos Museum (1952) and the National Museum, Lagos (1957).

The final chapter, “Museums and the Department of Antiquities after Nigerian Independence,” examines the department after independence as it was transitioning from a British to its first Nigerian director. In particular, the chapter discusses the circumstances under which Fagg retired and Murray was appointed to direct the department and train Ekpo Eyo. Eyo took over the department of antiquities on the brink of the Biafran War and led it for nearly twenty years. With amendments to the 1953 Antiquities Ordinance, the department became the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and its mission grew to include establishing museums of unity rather than simply preserving antiquities.

## CHAPTER 1

### ANTIQUITIES, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND MUSEUMS IN 19<sup>TH</sup>- AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY BRITAIN

Beginning with events in nineteenth-century England that led to the formation of museum policy, antiquities policy, and anthropology as a discipline in universities, this chapter considers several factors that would affect the survey of antiquities in Nigeria and museum policy in the mid-twentieth century. Though tangential, the German presence and practice in Nigeria also had repercussions for how the British would handle anthropology and the collecting of objects in Nigeria. The history of anthropology in Britain is complex and has been covered extensively in articles and volumes; this chapter will only cover the events, developments, and figures germane to Nigeria's history.

I begin with this discussion because it is necessary to understand the environment out of which the Nigerian colonial officers emerged, particularly Edward Duckworth, Kenneth Murray, and Bernard Fagg. I argue their decisions helped to form the field of African art history as we know it today. One of the central points of investigation in this dissertation is whether or not there was a relationship between museum practice in England and that which emerged in Nigeria. The short answer, according to former curator of the National Museum, Lagos, John Picton, is yes. Kenneth Murray and Bernard Fagg did not look to other African museums (few of which existed in tropical Africa); rather, they looked to institutions in England: Brighton, Liverpool, the Horniman

in London, Birmingham, the Pitt Rivers in Oxford, and, perhaps their closest connection, the British Museum.<sup>1</sup> Murray and Fagg had professional and familial ties to the British Museum, which was the point of intersection for developments in anthropology, antiquities, and museum practice.

This chapter presents the development of the field of anthropology in nineteenth-century England and how Malinowski's teachings on the fieldwork method changed colonial practice in the twentieth century. Second, I will consider the Antiquities Commission in England, which has direct parallels to the development of the department of antiquities and antiquities legislation in Nigeria. Third, I will look at museum practice in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century England, particularly in light of the growth of the British Museum. Finally, I will explore the involvement of the Germans, particularly explorer Leo Frobenius, whose controversial and illicit excavations fuelled a repatriation mission that continues today.

### Growth of Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century England

Over the course of a century anthropology and ethnography went from a humanitarian effort, to an amateur's hobby, to an official university discipline and museum practice, to a requirement in colonial officers' training. The most important anthropological organization in Britain in the mid-twentieth century was (and continues to be) the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI). The RAI had its beginnings in 1837 as The Aborigines Protection Society (APS). Founded by Thomas Hodgkin (1798-1866)

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<sup>1</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum Lagos and Professor of Art History at the School of Oriental and African Studies), in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012. Picton also notes the close ties among these institutions too. The British Museum mined the Horniman for curators.



and Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845), the APS began as an abolitionist group with Evangelical and Quaker leanings. When slavery was outlawed in 1833, Buxton and the APS began to focus on evangelical work and the protection of human rights.<sup>2</sup>

Hodgkin was a proponent of studying the languages of the peoples whose cause they were championing.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he was interested in the questions of cultural similarities and difference; for Hodgkin, scientific study took precedent over the philanthropic goals of APS. When Hodgkin visited the *Société Ethnologique de Paris* in 1839, he saw an alternative to the philanthropic society and established the Ethnological Society of London (ESL). In 1843, the mission of the ESL was to explore “man” in all of his diversity – physical, cultural, linguistic, and moral.<sup>4</sup> In a sense, it was to understand if mankind was “of one blood,” referring to the slogan of APS, or if humans, in fact, had genetic variations.<sup>5</sup> Hodgkin separated the scientific study of man from the humanitarian work when he began the ESL and though there were reports of the members feeling disenfranchised with APS, Hodgkin remained a member of both of his organizations until his death – he saw their efforts as complementary and not in conflict.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> George Stocking, “What’s in a Name? The Origins of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1837-71),” *Man* 6, no. 3 (1971): 370. “The goals of the Aborigines Protection Society were defined by the paradoxical contrast they saw between the behaviour of Britons at home and overseas: between devotion to ‘civil freedom; ‘moral and intellectual improvement’, and the furtherance of ‘sacred truth’ in England, and the ‘injuries we have inflicted, the oppression we have exercised, the cruelties we have committed, the vices we have fostered, [and] the desolation and utter ruin we have caused’ in the colonial areas (APS 1837b:vi).”

<sup>3</sup> See Ronald Rainger, “Philanthropy and Science in the 1830’s: The British and Foreign Aborigines’ Protection Society,” *Man* 15, no. 4 (1980): 703.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann J. Braunholtz, “Anthropology in Theory and Practice,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 73, no. 1/2, (1943): 2. See also Stocking, 1971, 372. See also Ronald Rainger, “Philanthropy and Science in the 1830’s: The British and Foreign Aborigines’ Protection Society,” *Man, New Series* 15, no. 3 (1980): 713.

<sup>5</sup> Stocking, 1971, 372.

<sup>6</sup> Stocking, 1971, 371.

The 1850s was a period of decline for the ESL and its later resurgence was due to the developing interest in European antiquities thanks to the work of Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography at the British Museum. The British Museum was fast becoming the hub of antiquities excavation, preservation, and display. There were other, official exhibition spaces for ESL members as visual evidence became increasingly important to defining the “distinguishing characteristics” of man;<sup>7</sup> in 1852, the ESL received an exhibition space in the Crystal Palace Exhibition.

This interest in visual material increased in the 1860s with the membership of ESL expanding to include Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers, Edward Burnett Tylor, Sir John Lubbock, and Franks, all of whom were interested in antiquities, archaeology, and the collection of objects.<sup>8</sup> Franks wanted to see the national collection used to advance the field of ethnography. In 1861, Pitt-Rivers joined the ESL. For Pitt-Rivers, the ESL was more than an intellectual community; he had high hopes that they would exhibit his collection.<sup>9</sup> It was at this time that Pitt-Rivers and John Lubbock began to forge an important relationship, which grew into a partnership that legislated for the Antiquities Bill. In 1863, Lubbock was elected president of ESL.

This same year the Anthropological Society of London (ASL) seceded from ESL. James Hunt (1833-1869) instigated the separation after a disagreement about the engraved depictions of people from Sierra Leone for an ESL journal article. He modeled

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<sup>7</sup> Stocking, 1971, 373.

<sup>8</sup> William Ryan Chapman, “Ethnology in the Museum: A.H.L.F. Pitt-Rivers (1827-1900) and the Institutional Foundations of British Anthropology,” (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1981) 206-207. This project is indebted to William Chapman’s comprehensive dissertation on General Pitt-Rivers.

<sup>9</sup> Chapman, 1985, 21. Pitt-Rivers, born A. H. Lane-Fox, inherited his cousin, Henry Pitt-Rivers, 6<sup>th</sup> Baron Rivers estate and title in 1880 and subsequently changed his name. For consistency, I will refer to him using his final name of Pitt-Rivers.

the new organization after Paul Broca's organization *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*. The ideologies of these two societies were developed in contrast to one another. With the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's theories of natural selection in *On the Origin of Species*, a distinction between the goals of the ESL and ASL emerged. The ESL was generally in support of Darwin's ideas and in 1860 ESL member Thomas Henry Huxley coined the term "Darwinism," encompassing the gamut of biological and social evolution.

The heated feud between the ASL and the ESL would last nearly a decade. The most distinct difference between the organizations was their position on religion and Darwinism. The ASL made a point of being anti-Darwinian, subscribing instead to polygenism. The ASL was interested in "the science of the whole nature of man," separating itself from ethnology, which had become concerned primarily with the science of race.<sup>10</sup> George Stocking cites Hunt when he states that

...anthropology would be empirical, rejecting unproven hypotheses, and busying itself with the collection of facts. But it would also be practical, uncovering the 'laws [that] are secretly working for the development of some nations and the destruction of others'. Ultimately, it would require government aid and university co-operation in the training of anthropologists, but for the present its growth would depend on the ASL.<sup>11</sup>

As demonstrated by the schism of the ethnology society and the anthropology society there were fundamental differences among practices. These differences would, in some

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<sup>10</sup> Stocking, 1971, 376-377. "In contrast, anthropology would treat the great questions of man's relation to animals his connexion with the physical universe, the laws regulating his physical nature, his psychological characteristics—in short, everything pertaining to his nature." He continues on page 379, anthropologists "stand as the archaetypical of the traditional racist view of Blacks. Entitled, in obvious paraphrase of Thomas Huxley, 'On the Negro's place in nature', Hunt's paper argued that Negroes were a different species, closer to the ape than they were to the European. Incapable of civilisation, either on their own or through the influence of others, they were better off as slaves in the Confederate States of America than they were as freemen in Sierra Leone (James Hunt, "On the Negro's place in Nature," *Mems. Anthropol. Soc* I (1863) 51-2, 54, 57)."

<sup>11</sup> Stocking, 1971, 377, citing James Hunt "Introductory address on the study of anthropology," *Anthropology Review* I (1863), 2, 8, 9, 12.

respect, play out in the museum. While anthropology proved to provide an important framework for fieldwork and the study of contemporary societies, ethnology was aligned with antiquities.<sup>12</sup>

The ESL and ASL joined up again in 1871 as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. The combined society received its Royal patronage in 1907.<sup>13</sup> RAI's Journal *Man* (now *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*) was one of the most important forums for art and archaeological advancements in colonial Nigeria. Moreover, beginning in the 1920s, its members such as Hermann J. Braunholtz (who was president from 1937-1939 and 1941-1943), Meyer Fortes (president from 1965-1967), and William Fagg played significant roles in the archaeological and museum work in Nigeria.

### Antiquities Commission

The societies were platforms for scholars, hobbyists, and politicians to discuss and collect relevant material; but they were also platforms on which they could conduct legislative change. ESL members Pitt-Rivers and Lubbock, also a Member of Parliament, worked on an Antiquities Bill from 1872 until it eventually passed in 1882. Lubbock initially proposed a governing body and an Inspector of Ancient Monuments to supervise the program.<sup>14</sup> Pitt-Rivers and Lubbock imagined that the inspector would be responsible

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<sup>12</sup> Chapman, 1981, 198-199. Most ethnologists at this time were not basing their claims on object comparison, but language comparisons.

<sup>13</sup> The goal was no longer to simply study ethnology, which Braunholtz explains does not allow for prehistory, which anthropology does. See Braunholtz, 1943, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Chapman, 1981, 409. "Lubbock himself had preferred the latter course at least since 1865, when he suggested in *Prehistoric Times* that a 'Conservator of National Antiquities' be appointed to carry the law into effect'." See also Mark Bowden, *Pitt Rivers: The Life and Archaeological work of Lieutenant-General*

for developing a “schedule” and record of monuments to be nominated for protection.<sup>15</sup>

The thrust of the bill was to protect ancient monuments and ruins. Lubbock and Pitt-Rivers also wanted to include a component to restrict landowners’ rights without completely overlooking them.<sup>16</sup> Lubbock suggested to the landowners that once a site was on the monuments list, it would be taken care of by the state, which would also take on any expense. This level of governmental commitment necessitated detailed surveys of the sites conducted by the inspector.<sup>17</sup>

It was not until spring 1882 that the bill was reintroduced to Parliament. The terms of the act provided for a salaried inspector to survey and recommend monuments for protection; provision for the inspector to negotiate consent with the landowners; and to organize a list of protected monuments and arrange for the care from the office of works. When a monument on private property was added to the list, the owner could no longer act in any way that could potentially damage the protected site. In some cases the inspector could petition to erect a fence to further protect the monument.<sup>18</sup>

In autumn 1882 Parliament finally passed the Ancient Monuments Act, and in November Lord Richard Grosvenor from the Board of Works approached Pitt-Rivers and offered him the position of Inspector of Ancient Monuments, a post that would begin on January 1, 1883. In this capacity, Pitt-Rivers was at the forefront of antiquities preservation and ahead of his time in his approach to fieldwork and cataloguing. Indeed,

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*Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, DCL, FRS, FSA.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95.

<sup>15</sup> Bowden, 1991, 95. See also Chapman, 1981, 410.

<sup>16</sup> Bowden, 1991, 95. See also Chapman, 1981, 409.

<sup>17</sup> Chapman, 1981, 411. From October 1878 to April 1879, Fox conducted a trial-survey in Carnac, France. While part of this mission was surely for personal collecting and surveying, Chapman and Thompson suggest that another motivation was to press Parliament to pass Lubbock’s bill (Chapman, 1981, 410-412).

<sup>18</sup> Bowden, 1991, 95.

his interests at this time are most closely aligned with twentieth-century archaeologists and anthropologists.<sup>19</sup> As inspector, he standardized the rubric for identifying and evaluating possible sites. As an advocate of museums and a collector, according to anthropologist William Chapman, Pitt-Rivers used archaeology “to construct a history, a history based not on the speculation of philologists, or even that of the more recent evolutionist anthropologists, but one based on the dependability of objects themselves.”<sup>20</sup> This idea that objects could provide evidentiary support of a cultural group would instigate a change in museum practices and the collection of information.

Pitt-Rivers, however, struggled to secure the funds and the manpower to actually protect and preserve the antiquities he listed and collected.<sup>21</sup> In *Pitt Rivers*, Mark Bowden, a Field Officer in the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, cites a letter Pitt-Rivers wrote to George Payne on December 20, 1895. The letter expresses the lack of support from the Office of Works; it notes that in 1890, less than a decade after the inception of the act, Pitt-Rivers relinquished his salary to support the preservation efforts, but he was still unable to raise enough money for the efforts and there was not the kind of response he expected from landowners. Few applications were filed and when one did come across his desk, he found ways to privately fund the preservation project to avoid a fight for government funds.

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<sup>19</sup> Chapman, 1981, 459. “It is through his work as Inspector of Ancient Monuments that Pitt Rivers most closely approaches the preoccupations of present-day archaeologists and anthropologist. Indeed, his concerns for management and protection seem strikingly modern in retrospect, and many of his specific recommendations are only now being introduced into the relatively newly-defined field of ‘cultural resource management’.”

<sup>20</sup> Chapman, 1981, 460. This became the major claim of William Fagg as well. See William Fagg, “In Search of Meaning in African Art,” in *Primitive Art and Society*, ed. A. Forge (London: Oxford University Press, 1973): 151-168. See also John Picton, “A Tribute to William Fagg, April 28, 1914-July 10, 1992,” *African Arts* 27, no. 3 (1994), 28.

<sup>21</sup> Bowden, 1991, 97.

As the letter continues Pitt-Rivers explains that he

...concur[s] in thinking that the owners of monuments as a rule, are the best people to have charge of them & that our Govt. will not do it as well as the owner will. The interest in old monuments has increased of late. Public opinion is more in favour of them than it was. More so than a Govt, (any Government) which will attend to nothing out of which political capital cannot be made. Neither Govt. nor Parliament care a button for ancient monuments but the majority of the owners take an interest in their *own* monuments as family possessions.<sup>22</sup>

This letter demonstrates Pitt-Rivers's struggle to gain government support. When he died in 1900 only 43 monuments had been placed under government protection. No one replaced him as inspector.<sup>23</sup>

The Ancient Monuments Act was revised in 1900. It was not until the Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings Act of 1913, in which the three royal commissions on historical monuments, of England, Scotland, and Wales were established, that the government took responsibility for historical sites.<sup>24</sup> The royal commissions were charged with cataloguing historic sites, eliminating the need for an inspector.<sup>25</sup> Inspector Pitt-Rivers and the Ancient Monuments Act most certainly provided a precedent and a framework for the Nigerian antiquities survey and commission.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bowden, 1991, 99-101, citing Barley and Barry 1971, 220.

<sup>23</sup> One more point of interest occurred in 1900. Pitt Rivers wrote *Antique Works of Benin* on the 2,500 bronze and ivory objects that came to Britain and were dispersed throughout Europe during the punitive 1897 Benin Expedition. Pitt Rivers's early volume was an important resource for Kenneth Murray who fought for the repatriation of these works to Nigeria beginning in the 1940s.

<sup>24</sup> David M. Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), 191. See also Evans, 1943, 156 and Wilson, 2002, footnote 320, page 367: "When Lubbock first brought forward a bill for the protection of ancient monuments in 1876, he proposed that the British Museum should be responsible for executing the task. Wilson, former director and scholar of the British Museum provided a different perspective on the effect of the Ancient Monuments Act. Rather than increasing public awareness of antiquities, the Act "was to impinge greatly on the work of the Museum, the staff of which continued to excavate, but now concentrated more and more on the study of material."

<sup>25</sup> Bowden, 1991, 102.

<sup>26</sup> E.B. review of *The Care of Ancient Monuments: An account of the legislative and other measures adopted in European countries for protecting ancient monuments and objects and scenes of natural beauty, and for preserving the aspect of historical cities*, by Gerald Baldwin Brown, *Man* 6 (1906): 60-61. Though Britain led various countries to follow suit to establish State antiquary councils, for example The

There is no direct evidence that Murray or the Nigerian colonial office was looking to the policies developed in other countries under British Rule. However, the precedents set by colonial administrations in India and Egypt must have provided some support. The British commenced their interest in antiquities in 1784, when Sir William Jones began the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Though this was not an official arm of the government and was mostly developed through private means, the British government took credit for *allowing* such activities to take place. Gerard Baldwin Brown quotes Lord Canning from 1862 in his book *The Care of Ancient Monuments*:

It will not be to our credit as an enlightened ruling power, if we continue to allow such fields of investigations...to remain without more examination than they have hitherto received. Everything that has hitherto been done in this way has been done by private persons, imperfectly and without system. It is impossible not to feel that there are European Governments, which, if they had held our rule in India, would not have allowed this to be said.<sup>27</sup>

Canning considers the British role to be supportive in that it did not inhibit progress, but the government was aware that antiquities preservation was important. Indeed, in 1865 Colonel Alexander Cunningham conducted the archaeological survey of upper India. The survey's success led him to facilitate surveys in Bombay and Madras, though he did not conduct them himself.

In 1881 the position of curator of ancient monuments was developed after a 1878 memo from Lord Lytton asserted that "the conservation of the national antiquities was an

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Netherlands, 1903, Serbia 1883 and Bulgaria 1889. Scandinavia led the pack with Royal Commission Denmark established in 1807, Sweden in 1666, Russia in 1859. Finland used the Swedish edict of 1666 and revised it in 1883. The scope of the Act was expanded after 1900.

<sup>27</sup> Gerard Baldwin Brown, *The Care of Ancient Monuments: An account of the legislative and other measures adopted in European countries for protecting ancient monuments and objects and scenes of natural beauty, and for preserving the aspect of historical cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 231-232.



‘essentially imperial’ duty of the central government.’<sup>28</sup> Drawn largely from the British Ancient Monuments Act of 1882, the 1904 Monument Act for India laid out the goals and sanctions. These included: mandatory guardianship by the government of all declared monuments; the government’s power to regulate the export or removal of antiquities from the country; and regulations regarding archaeological excavations. Brown expresses an interesting opinion when describing the ease in which the monument act for India was passed: “this illustrates once again the fact already noticed, that in less advanced communities it is more easy to pass stringent monument laws than in states where the individual citizen is accustomed to stand stiffly by his rights.”<sup>29</sup> And yet, France had an international congress for the protection of art and antiquities since 1889; The Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal all established efforts to record and protect monuments and antiquities. Others still, at the time Brown’s book was published in 1905, were considering such action.

Perhaps, most important to Nigeria’s story, was the work conducted in Germany. After the war and unification of Germany in 1871, the entire country underwent incredible economic expansion, which led to urban transformation and an outcry for the protection of the antiquities. Beginning around 1899, the *Heimatschutz* sought to preserve the historic elements of the German landscape – both natural and manmade. The results of this movement will be discussed in more depth below, but the impact on the pugnacious relationship with Britain would initiate a greater interest in the antiquities of her colonies, particularly Nigeria.

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<sup>28</sup> Brown, 1905, 233.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, 1905, 235.

### Anthropology, Archaeology, and Museums

The Ancient Monuments Act was a culmination of the work of several archaeological associations, such as The Society of Antiquaries of London (SAL), the Archaeological Institute and the British Archaeological Association. The British Museum, in particular, helped develop the Council for British Archaeology, an archaeological pressure group. The increasing interest in archaeology as a nineteenth-century pastime developed into a serious practice for institutions such as the British Museum with the increasing popularity of the work of prominent antiquarians. Chapman posits that

in the broadest sense, archaeology could be said to have been organized around the idea of the museum. Meetings of the Society of Antiquaries were dominated even at an earlier date by exhibitions of various kinds. Descriptions of collections or individual pieces had been one of the main components of many of the several archaeological journals.<sup>30</sup>

Amateur archaeology was essential to the discovery and protection of antiquities in Nigeria; the insight that such artifacts were worth preserving – and displaying – came from the established tradition in Britain.

Archaeology was a pastime that was at one time both a scientific venture and a fantasy of discovering a bygone era.<sup>31</sup> In the 1850s antiquities and amateur archaeological pursuits gained popularity with folklorist William Thomas's translation of J.J. Worsaae's *Primeval Antiquities of Denmark*, which described the Danish Three-Age System of archaeological organization. The Three-Age System divided pre-history into three periods: the stone age, the bronze age, and the iron age. This system transformed

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<sup>30</sup> Chapman, 1981, 146.

<sup>31</sup> Chapman, 1981, 120. By the mid-1860s, The Society of Antiquaries of London (SAL), the Archaeological Institute, and the British Archaeological Association, had well over 2,000 members.

European archaeology.<sup>32</sup> The interest in local archaeology arose around the same time as the push by the British Museum.<sup>33</sup> In part this was due to the influx of archaeological materials acquired by the British Museum in the 1840s and 50s.

Pitt-Rivers was an amateur archaeologist who became a collector and member of the Society of Antiquaries. He relied on his excavations to enhance his collection acquired through the traditional route of dealers.<sup>34</sup> Pitt-Rivers was an obvious contributor to museum development in Britain; in 1884 he donated his collection to Oxford University contingent on Oxford supporting a professorship in anthropology. He also established another museum at his estate in Farnham. Furthermore, he donated a significant part of his collection to the British and South Kensington Museums. Pitt-Rivers was not the only collector and amateur archaeologist to support the development of museums. Pitt-Rivers looked to the Danish models, specifically Christian Thomsen's use of the Three-Age System at the National Museum in Copenhagen, as support for the idea that museums were a vital tool for archaeological research.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, what seems to be in play is the general question: how best can museums classify and display ethnographic specimens – chronologically, geographically, or typologically?

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<sup>32</sup> Chapman, 1981, 151. See also Bowden, 1991, 57-58.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, 2002, 91-92. See also Chapman, 1981, 120.

<sup>34</sup> Chapman, 1981, 117.

<sup>35</sup> Chapman, 1981, footnote 133, 147. Chapman also explains from pages 152 to 167 that The Royal Irish Academy in Dublin was one such model after its drastic reorganization in 1851 by George Petrie (1780-1866) and William Robert Wills Wilde (1815-1876 – physician and father of Oscar Wilde). This model was based on Lord Talbot de Malahide's ideas derived from Christian Thomsen's concept of the Three Age System demonstrated at the Danish National Museum. The Three Age System began with the notion that chronological organization of ethnographic objects could not be executed. Wilde adopted a system employed by Natural History: Class, Order, Species, and Variety. Efforts to model the British Museum on the Danish National Museum were developed. The Three Ages System, also known as the Danish system among British archaeologists, had a brief surge in the 1860s with a rise in the concern for using ethnography comparatively. However, the sequence of material did not hold up historically, and though Pitt Rivers would adopt a version of this approach, the geographical method was really taking hold.

The museum, a product of the baroque cabinet of curiosities, has long been seen as a way of collecting, organizing, and understanding the previously unknown. Objects of distant lands, peoples, and ideas can be gathered in one place and, in the nineteenth century, made accessible to everyone. Museums were seen as educational centers. The Surveys of Museums of the British Empire conducted by Sir Henry Miers and Sydney Markham underscore their purpose: museums offered a place “for research, education and inspiration. Museums were indeed seen as treasuries, storehouses, laboratories and colleges.”<sup>36</sup>

In 1845, Parliament passed The Museums Act, also known as the “Beetle Act,” which permitted municipal boroughs to raise taxes to fund the establishment of museums, expansion projects, and traveling exhibitions. This stimulated the development and public outreach of institutions such as the Ashmolean, the British, and the Hunterian Museums. On the one hand the act provided support for local antiquarian societies, who wanted to display their collections.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, the act was a response of the middle class who felt that the lower class workers would need enriching activities for all the leisure time that industrialization and capitalism would afford them.<sup>38</sup> Thus the British saw museums as a place where they could manufacture upstanding citizens.

The British Museum was a leader in museum development in Great Britain; it was also a crucial platform for the display of antiquities and non-Western art. But there was another important stage for objects of the British Empire. The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 instigated provincial museum development by sending traveling exhibitions all

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<sup>36</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 12.

<sup>37</sup> The Public Library and Museums Act was passed in 1850 and amended again in 1885.

<sup>38</sup> See David McMenemy, *The Public Library* (London: Facet Publishing, 2008), 24–26.

over Britain and the world. As historian John MacKenzie explains, “exhibitions, from 1851 to the 1930s, offered what were in effect museums of global explanation, visual encyclopaedias of knowledge about empire. Such exhibitions – on a variety of scales – spread to almost every imperial territory, influencing the foundation and development of museums as they did so.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, expositions were critical and before the museums were established in Nigeria, the large exhibitions in Great Britain provided a stage for Nigeria to demonstrate its aesthetic prowess. For example, E. H. Duckworth requested a large gallery at the 1938 World Exposition in Glasgow. As art historian Annie Coombes argues, these platforms developed after the 1851 World Exposition were central to the colonial agenda to distinguish between the British and the colonized subject.<sup>40</sup>

The British Museum was certainly looking to colleagues in other countries, such as Dutch geographer Phillip Franz Balthazar von Siebold (1796-1866), who developed the Dutch National Museum for Ethnology (the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde) in Leiden. Siebold curated his museum according to cultural units to demonstrate the progression of man (and his encounters with other cultures) based on material production. This, of course, parallels the geographical system, which they were grappling with in Britain.

The relationship between the British Museum and Pitt-Rivers was contentious to say the least. Pitt-Rivers was vocal about the organizational program of his collection. Rather than a geographical approach, like that of the British Museum and Henry

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<sup>39</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 213.

Christy's program (Christy's collection went to Franks at the British Museum), Pitt-Rivers organized his collection into two categories: antiquities and ethnography.<sup>41</sup>

### **The British Museum.**

The British Museum in particular is an important case study and demonstrates Britain's "civilizing" mission. Not only did it cultivate a relationship with Nigeria that still exists today, but it also had an incredible impact on the development of ethnology within the museums in Britain. The British Museum was built upon the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, a physician who bequeathed his estate to King George II at his death on January 11, 1753.<sup>42</sup> The executors were given £20,000 pounds to purchase the Cotton Library and the Haleian Library and an Act of Parliament was passed to form the British Museum.<sup>43</sup> Officially opened to the public in 1759, the British Museum contained both exhibition and storage space, as well as the national library (until 1997). The original mission espoused an "aspiration to universalism that informed Sloane's collecting and thereby shaped the British Museum. It is this idea that still differentiates the Museum from the great 'art' museums of the nineteenth century with which it is often in ignorance

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<sup>41</sup> Chapman, 1981, 169. "Antiquities included examples from Scandinavia, Great Britain and Ireland and France. those were divided into 'early' and 'later' Stone Age tools (in reference to Lubbock's Palaeolithic and Neolithic) and tools dating from later than the Stone Age. Ethnography included articles from Greenland, the 'Caribes', the Incas or ancient Peruvians, 'ancient Mexican-Taltecs and Aztecs', modern Mexico, North America (the Eskimo), North America (the Indians), South America, Australia and Oceania (with several subdivisions), Asiatic Archipelago, Africa, Ireland."

<sup>42</sup> Sloane's collection of around 71,000 objects included works of natural history, prints, books and manuscripts, and included the purchased collections of William Courten and Engelbert Kaempher. The collection has, over the last two centuries, been divided among the British Museum, The British Library, and the Natural History Museum; additionally, in the early nineteenth century, the Trustees divided and sold many of the albums of prints. Distributing a collection among various "specialized" museums was also practiced by Nigerian Museums. Perhaps this is a tenuous link, but it is also a tactic to develop a mission and fulfill it.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, 2002, 21.

lumped together.”<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Britain used her army and navy to develop a collection to reflect her empire.<sup>45</sup> Among the most famous works acquired through British military action is the Rosetta Stone.<sup>46</sup>

In 1851, shortly after the amendments to the Museums Act resulted in the Public Library and Museums Act, the British Museum appointed Franks, who shaped the department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography (a sub-department of The Department of Antiquities) for nearly half a century.<sup>47</sup> David Wilson, director of the British Museum from 1977-1992 and scholar of its history writes that Franks’s “appointment was a direct result of the need felt by the Royal Commission for a more coherent attitude to be taken by the Museum towards the collection of national art and antiquities.”<sup>48</sup> At this time the British Museum held the only public ethnographic collection. Under Franks, the British Museum worked closely with the Archaeological Institute to drum up support and create an alliance that would promote the significance that antiquities would have for Britain and the British Museum.<sup>49</sup> Franks was interested in associating his department with ethnographers who were working in the field such as Charles Newton, who worked on the excavation of the tomb of Mausolus at Halicarnassus. The British Museum focused predominantly in Europe. Though it is hard

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<sup>44</sup> Wilson, 2002, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, 2002, 102. In footnote 49 page 356 Wilson cites a letter from Secretary Farshall to Edward Hawkins, April 15, 1836. BM:ANE Correspondence, vi, 1882.

<sup>46</sup> Napoleon’s army was in possession of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 until 1801 when it became British property according to the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria and was displayed at the British Museum beginning in 1802.

<sup>47</sup> Wilson, 2002, 141. The Department of Antiquities was established in 1807 and would be divided into The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities and The Department of Oriental (Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities) in 1860 and 1861 – then a sub-department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography (headed by Franks); and the Department of Coins and Medals. Many disapproved of a Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography and it did not become its own full department until 1866.

<sup>48</sup> Wilson, 2002, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Wilson, 2002, 132.

to say that this practice was the direct model for colonial ethnographers, it was a factor in the success of the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882 in Britain.

As noted earlier, Franks was invested in the London ethnological and anthropological scene. He was also a proponent of Britain's collecting scheme, and though he never journeyed beyond Europe, he developed the questionnaires that travelers took to record information about the objects they acquired. Wilson explains that Franks "used carefully chosen colonial administrators to build up the collections. Perspicaciously, he realized that they might help with specimens which we most care for [which] are but seldom brought home by ordinary travelers, as they are but rarely of any beauty, and are in general the commonest things of the country."<sup>50</sup>

Wilson also suggests that Franks, as an archaeologist, was really interested in artifacts as objects that exposed culture. He did not collect from the far reaches of the empire as did Napoleon who wanted to display works in the Louvre to illustrate France's imperial presence. Along these same lines, McKenzie states that

it has been a curious fact that the British were never particularly interested in the representation of the historical, cultural and social aspects of empire in their own museums, not at least in a formal and explicit way (natural history collections were a different matter). Empire was, in a sense, nowhere in the museums of the dominant power; yet imperial artefacts were everywhere.<sup>51</sup>

This is in contrast to the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, the Dutch East India Company, whose endeavors were transparent in the displays at the Rijksmuseum and the Maritime museum in Amsterdam or the Belgian expeditions present in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren in Brussels. The British Museum was not, during

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<sup>50</sup> Wilson, 2002, 160.

<sup>51</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 13.



Franks's tenure, "interested in the material as art – that came with the acquisition of the Benin bronzes at the end of the century – but more as representative of the life of the people who had made it."<sup>52</sup> Of course, the Benin bronzes, as will be discussed in later chapters, were also an impetus to establish museums in Nigeria.

Franks steered the department until 1896. The next age of transformation within the British Museum Department of Antiquities was the age of Hermann Justus Braunholtz (1888-1963), who arrived at the Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography Department in 1913. Wilson suspects that there was some anti-German sentiment at the British Museum, though there is no explicit evidence of it. However, when Braunholtz

was due to be confirmed in his appointment at the end of his second year in the Museum, his keeper, Sir Hercules Read, [who retired in 1921] found it difficult to recommend him, 'owing to his want of zeal and efficiency and the departmental friction arising out of his family connection with Germany'. The Trustees, approving the payment of his increment, asked for a further report in six months' time, and then confirmed him.<sup>53</sup>

In 1921, the Department was reorganized and R.L. Hobson was appointed Keeper of Ethnography in the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography. Thomas Athol Joyce became his deputy.<sup>54</sup> In 1925, Joyce and Braunholtz, both Africanists and the only ethnographers appointed in the department, published *Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections of the British Museum*. At this time, Joyce was often engaged in fieldwork in British Honduras.

In 1933 it was again renamed, this time the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography. In 1932 Adrian Digby was appointed the first anthropologist in the

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<sup>52</sup> Wilson, 2002, 161.

<sup>53</sup> Wilson, 2002, 210.

<sup>54</sup> Joyce worked from London with Emil Torday while he collected for the British Museum in the Congo between 1907 and 1909 and co-authored *Les Bushongo* (1910), though he never actually went to Africa. His fieldwork took place in British Honduras, which served as the research for his book on Mayan Art, published in 1927. He was also an active member of the RAI and served as president from 1931-1933.

department. Upon Joyce's retirement in 1938, Brauholtz became the deputy keeper. One of the key contributions Joyce made to the department was acquiring the H.G. Beasley collection in 1944, which included numerous Benin bronzes. With the onset of World War II, British institutions capitalized on the consequent rise in taxes, which forced many collectors and custodians of family collections to consider large gifts. Moreover, in the years that followed with the dismantling of the British Empire, works obtained by missionaries, explorers, and colonial officers were unloaded in unheard of numbers. The Department of Ethnography at the British Museum benefitted from these circumstances; their records indicate that between 1939 and 1966 almost 50,000 pieces had been acquired.<sup>55</sup> In 1946, Ethnography officially became its own department and Brauholtz was promoted to keeper.

In January 1945 the colonial office and Colonial Social Science Research Council sent a request to the Trustees of the British Museum to consult on cultural projects in West Africa. Just over a year later in February 1946 Brauholtz, as the keeper of the Department of Ethnography and the former president of RAI, conducted a tour of West Africa to make recommendations on the archaeological programs and development of museums. The influence of this trip will be discussed further in chapter 3, but it should be noted that the relationships Brauholtz developed with Kenneth Murray and Bernard Fagg from the Nigerian antiquities section instigated the British Museum's extended commitment to museums in Nigeria and created a case for the multiple collecting visits that William Fagg made over the next 15 years.

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<sup>55</sup> Wilson, 2002, 290. "The largest single element was 15,000 items given by the Wellcome Trust. Other collections included, for example, the mostly African material held in the museum at Kew Gardens, and the important collection of African art built up by two London-based Americans, Webster and Margaret Plass, given in 1956. In 1971 first steps were taken to draw up a formal acquisitions policy for the department, but this was not finalized until the appointment of Malcolm MacLeod as keeper in 1974."

Braunholtz retired in 1953 and Adrian Digby was promoted to keeper. William Fagg, who had been appointed to the department in 1938 became deputy keeper in 1955 and then keeper in 1969. It was not until 1967-1968 that the staff of the Department of Ethnography under the direction of William Fagg, was required to conduct their own fieldwork and collecting expeditions.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps Fagg's policies were based on his own extensive experience in the field. Bryan Cranstone was appointed to the Department of Ethnography in 1947 and would remain there until he took up the post of curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford from 1976-1985 following Bernard Fagg's retirement.

One of the important connections between the organization of the British Museum and the Nigerian Museums was who was in charge of renovating the galleries. Initially, I thought the colonial government was so segmented that the duties were prescribed and there was no flexibility, but it was not until 1964 that the British Museum hired their own designers and, according to Wilson, there was no cohesive display policy. Rather, the new galleries were drawn up by architects from the ministry of works and assistant keepers were in charge of any reinstallations and writing all of the labels.<sup>57</sup> This suggests that, in fact, when Murray sought the approval for the display and design of the building from the public works department in Nigeria, he was simply following the protocol of the British museum system.

### **The Pitt Rivers Museum.**

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<sup>56</sup> Wilson, 2002, 290.

<sup>57</sup> Wilson, 2002, 264.

Pitt-Rivers hoped to offer an alternative method of organization from the British Museum's geographical arrangement.<sup>58</sup> While Pitt-Rivers's museum differed greatly from the British Museum, both saw that the best place for an anthropologist's education would be a museum, capable of both training the specialist and educating the general public.<sup>59</sup> Having been rejected by the government and the British Museum in the 1880s, Pitt-Rivers's collection of 20,000 objects was accepted at Oxford in 1884 around the time in which the "museum approach" was losing support among anthropologists.<sup>60</sup>

The arrival of Pitt-Rivers's collection at Oxford was a key victory for the university, which had shown an interest in anthropology since the 1860s. Publications such as Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times* (1865) and Tylor's *Early History of Man* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871) led to the establishment of an anthropological society at Oxford. Many of the members, including Professors George Rolleston and Henry Moseley, were also members of the Anthropological Institute and Ethnological Society of London.<sup>61</sup> The department of ethnology at Oxford was created in conjunction with the Pitt Rivers Museum.<sup>62</sup> Anthropology and museum ethnology emerged side-by-side, employing similar methodology. It was Darwin's publications and subsequent publications by Lubbock and Tylor that influenced curators such as Franks at the British

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<sup>58</sup> Chapman, 1981, 216.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Rivière, introduction to *A History of Oxford Anthropology*, ed. Peter Rivière (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 3. See also Bowden, 1991, 141 and Chapman, 1981, 538. This insistence that a central museum would fulfill the needs of the public, rather than smaller, regional museums, was reflected later in Kenneth Murray's own mission in Nigeria.

<sup>60</sup> Today the collection contains around 500,000 objects. See Alison Petch, "Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers," *Pitt Rivers Museum*, 2005, [http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/pitt\\_rivers.html](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/pitt_rivers.html). See also Chapman, 1981, 462.

<sup>61</sup> Rivière, 2007, 2-3.

<sup>62</sup> See for example T. K. Penniman, "General Pitt Rivers," *Man* 46 (1946): 73-74.

Museum and Henry Balfour at the Pitt Rivers Museum and triggered the differences between anthropology and ethnography.<sup>63</sup>

The display of the non-Western ethnographic collection at the British Museum under Franks was geographically based, and though it informed the theory of social evolution and influenced anthropologists of the late nineteenth-century, it was not meant to be a strict evolutionary commentary in the Ethnological Society of London and Darwinian sense. This same display approach was seen in Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin.<sup>64</sup> Pitt-Rivers, perhaps, saw the development of artifacts in a more linear evolution, from simple to complicated and developed his display as such. Rather than a geographical approach, Pitt-Rivers organized his objects typologically, which means he grouped objects according to their similarities and in an ascending order of complexity.<sup>65</sup>

Twenty years after Pitt-Rivers's death museums such as the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London, and the Horniman Museum at Forest Hill began to adopt his method.<sup>66</sup> All of these institutions had African collections which were acquired in a variety of ways, and they would all be approached by the antiquities section in Nigeria during Murray's tenure to send resources and consultants or to repatriate their African collections.

Pitt-Rivers's other goal was research, which was accomplished by linking the Oxford University diploma in anthropology to the work in the museum. The first curator Henry Balfour used the museum as a research laboratory.<sup>67</sup> In 1963 Bernard Fagg would

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<sup>63</sup> Bowden, 1991, 45.

<sup>64</sup> Wilson, 2002, 160-161.

<sup>65</sup> Wilson, 2002, 161.

<sup>66</sup> Chapman, 1981, 561.

<sup>67</sup> Christopher Gosden, Frances Larson, and Alison Petch, "Origins and Survivals: Tylor, Balfour and the Pitt Rivers Museum and their Role within Anthropology in Oxford 1883-1905," in *A History of Oxford*

leave his post as the director of the department of antiquities in Nigeria to lead the Pitt Rivers Museum in a major expansion project that would include an anthropological research center. This project was never realized, but it was intended to fulfill Pitt-Rivers's mission and reflected the multi-functional approach of museums Fagg had developed at the Jos Museum.

### Anthropology in the University

Anthropology and ethnography were seen as decisive tools of the museum, so when initially brought to the university they were still seen as training for museum professionals. The establishment of the Pitt Rivers Museum and the expansion of the collection was the foundation for anthropology at Oxford.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Tylor was appointed to the University Museum at Oxford in 1883, before becoming a lecturer in anthropology and creating a diploma in anthropology in 1905. Several Universities adopted anthropology and ethnography programs around the same time: the University College London offered a degree in 1906; in 1900, Alfred C. Haddon was appointed lecturer in ethnology at Cambridge University and became the custodian of their ethnographic collections in 1920; Cambridge also developed a department of anthropology in the university museum in 1885. The London School of Economics held its first course in ethnology under the sociology department in 1904. Taught by Haddon, the primary constituencies for the course were civil servants and missionaries. Also created in 1904 was a diploma in anthropology for graduate students and colonial officers at the London

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*Anthropology*, ed. Peter Rivière (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 23. Balfour was curator until 1939 when he died. An example of his use of the Museum as a research tool was his study of the Tiv imborivungu pipe which was part of the witchcraft investigation trove.

<sup>68</sup> Gosden, Larson, and Petch, 2007, 22.

School of Economics. Charles Seligman, appointed in 1910, would create a full degree by 1923 and a post for Bronislaw Malinowski – a key player in this discussion.<sup>69</sup>

Universities now had formal programs in anthropology, but the museum still controlled ethnography.<sup>70</sup> These worlds, however, as illustrated by the overlap in this chapter, were small and interconnected. The keepers at the British Museum were active members of the field. For example, Hercules Read held two terms as the president of RAI along with Joyce and Braunholtz. Moreover, William Fagg was the editor of RAI's journal *Man*.<sup>71</sup> Read and Franks never conducted fieldwork, nor did they collect for the British Museum. Rather, they solicited gifts and purchased objects from collectors, dealers, auctions, and in the twentieth century with Malinowski's teachings on fieldwork in the universities, from anthropologists and colonial officers working in the field.<sup>72</sup>

Entirely relevant to the formalized study of antiquities is the introduction of archaeology into the university. At the time of the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882, universities had not formalized the study of archaeology. In 1892, University College London hired Flinders Petrie to chair Egyptology, acknowledging it as a formal

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<sup>69</sup> The lexicon was particular and in 1909 Cambridge, Oxford, and London met to streamline the terminology and make the study more universal across Great Britain.

<sup>70</sup> In footnote 143, page 370, Wilson notes that Coombes (1994, page 60) "in an admirable if controversial book, does not appreciate the power structure of the Museum in describing the position of ethnography at the turn of the century as fragile. Read within a few years had two ethnographic assistants and he, a powerful figure in the Museum's hierarchy and himself an ethnographer, continued to collect aggressively with full documentation in this area." The fragility came later, after WWII, with Evans-Pritchard in the chair of anthropology in the University and his criticism of diffusionist theory employed in museum ethnology.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, 2002, 224.

<sup>72</sup> Wilson, 2002, 224.

discipline. Arthur Evans (who excavated Knossos in Crete) and Percy Gardner spearheaded the inclusion of archaeology into the classics department at Oxford.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps the biggest development in the field, which incited the most attention, and would have the greatest impact on the policies guiding the department of antiquities in Nigeria, was the development and acceptance of fieldwork as a method. Nineteenth-century ethnography and anthropology, as demonstrated earlier in the chapter, was shaped and restricted by the data. Certain figures such as Thomas Hodgkin insisted on learning the languages of the people he studied and there was some precedent for conducting fieldwork in Europe set by Pitt-Rivers. However, most scholars conducted “armchair anthropology” for work outside of Europe. Their primary resources were information and accounts gathered by missionaries, explorers, and colonial administrators.<sup>74</sup> Fieldwork was not standard practice until Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. Malinowski arrived at the London School of Economics as an expert who would create a new kind of anthropologist. Though it would be inaccurate to suggest that Malinowski developed functionalist thought, as it came to be known, he did introduce this theory into anthropology, displacing diffusionism and creating the twentieth-century distinction between ethnology and anthropology. Functionalism insisted that to truly understand a culture, the scholar needed a privileged perspective – a trained fieldworker’s perspective.<sup>75</sup> The functionalists renounced diffusionism, but the debate, according to Radcliffe-Brown was not between diffusionists and the evolutionists,

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<sup>73</sup> Wilson, 2002, 191. Quoted in footnote 320 on page 367: “When Lubbock first brought forward a bill for the protection of ancient monuments in 1876, he proposed that the British Museum should be responsible for executing the task. See also Evans, 1943, 156.

<sup>74</sup> Bowden, 1991, 45. Though E.B. Tylor conducted fieldwork in Mexico for his seminal text *Anahuac: Or Mexico and the Mexicans, Ancient and Modern* from 1861, he never completed fieldwork again.

<sup>75</sup> Kuper, 1996, 32.



“but between conjectural history on the one side and the functional study of society on the other.”<sup>76</sup>

Malinowski was assisting anthropologist R. R. Marett in New Guinea when World War I began. Unable to return to England, he undertook research in the Trobriand Islands where he developed his fieldwork method. He kept copious, detailed notes, which were published 25 years after his death.<sup>77</sup> The personal diary mentioned below created a sensation when it was published in 1967 because it revealed that such a larger-than-life scholar had all the human flaws, is not what made his fieldwork method famous- that would be *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* in 1922. His journals and notes demonstrated the hardships of an isolated researcher, but also the way in which extended time in the field can transform the study. Anthropologist Adam Kuper explains that

Malinowski told his students, he saw the personal diary of the fieldworker as a safety-valve, a means of channeling the personal cares and emotions of the ethnographer away from his scientific notes. The diaries deal with the private life of the fieldworker, and show Malinowski struggling with boredom, anxieties about his health, sexual deprivation, loneliness, and what Georges Mikes once called the Slav Soul. They also contain outbursts of irritation directed against the Trobrianders. They reveal that he did not achieve that separation from European contacts, which he advocated. But above all they illustrate how hard he worked, and how creatively.<sup>78</sup>

Malinowski was not simply advocating that explorers answer the questions on Franks's questionnaire; he was not suggesting that his students merely learn their subjects'

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<sup>76</sup> A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, “A further note on Ambrym,” *Man*, 29 (March, 1929): 53. See also Kuper, 1996, 4.

<sup>77</sup> See also Nigel Rapport, “Surely Everything Has Already Been Said About Malinowski's Diary!” *Anthropology Today* 6, no. 1 (1990): 5-9.

<sup>78</sup> Kuper, 1996, 13. On pages 14 and 15 Kuper also points out the many types of material the Malinowskian ethnographic researcher must collect: an “outline of institutions,” organized in a chart; the “imponderabilia of everyday life,” elaborated on in an ethnographic diary; documentation of ethnographic statements and folklore to grasp the “native” perspective. See also Rapport, 1990, 5-6.

languages, just as Hodgkin from the Ethnological Society of London required; nor did he think that anthropologist Northcote Thomas's contribution to the Nigerian census was sufficient. Malinowski required that his students live among the subject of their research and attempt to understand culture from the inside out.

In 1923 the University of London appointed Malinowski to lecturer in social anthropology. Malinowski held this appointment until 1938, when he went to Yale, where he remained until his death in 1942. Malinowski's theories and practices infiltrated the programs of study for all anthropology students between the World Wars. Students, regardless of where they studied, missionaries, and colonial officers on sabbatical alike attended Malinowski's seminars at London School of Economics.<sup>79</sup> Malinowski himself insisted that if the colonial government seriously employed anthropology it could transform the way in which they governed. In an article from 1930, Malinowski explained

our present-day academic anthropology is not yet mobilized for the task of assisting colonial control. At the same time...a new method and a new theory, the functional school, is rapidly crystallizing, and that this, if it receives the cooperation of the men in the colonial field, will undoubtedly play the same part in constructive policy as physics and geology have played in engineering.<sup>80</sup>

Though anthropology would never develop beyond an elective for the colonial officers' training, the newly established degrees offered in anthropology were legitimized as necessary preparation of officers for colonial work. Since the Nigerian colonial service

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<sup>79</sup> Kuper, 1996, 66.

<sup>80</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Rationalization of Anthropology and Administration," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 3, no. 4 (1930): 405-430: 408. This push for the method of fieldwork and the functional theory particularly resonated with Major Fitz Herbert Ruxton, Lieutenant-Governor of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria from 1925-1929. Coincidentally Ruxton collected one of the "Afo" figures in the Horniman collection, from "somewhere in the Benue Province."

established the Anthropological Department in 1924, there was more of an incentive for their district officers to attend Malinowski's lectures. The department sponsored colonial officers, such as J. R. Wilson-Haffenden, to study under Malinowski and Seligman at the LSE.<sup>81</sup>

Malinowski became increasingly interested in the countries under colonial rule. Malinowski's work in the 1920s and 1930s explored the "scheme of culture" appealing to colonial officers preparing to go into the field.<sup>82</sup> By attracting colonial officials to take his courses while on leave, he was able to promote his functionalist methodology. In 1926 the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures was established to train and support fieldwork in the African colonies.

After the war, in 1946, Edward Evans-Pritchard became the chair of Oxford's anthropology department, which consisted only of himself and Meyer Fortes, a reader in African Sociology and co-editor of the canonical 1940 text *African Political Systems* with Evans-Pritchard. At this point there were four anthropology programs in England: Oxford, Cambridge, the London School of Economics, and University College London. The LSE had the premier program in progressive social anthropology.<sup>83</sup>

### Anthropology and Colonialism

The British ruled their West African colonies through a system of indirect rule in which traditional Nigerian leaders were employed to carry out the day-to-day business under British administration. In Nigeria this system was developed and applied by Lord

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<sup>81</sup> J. R. Wilson-Haffenden, *The Red Men of Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1967), 7-8.

<sup>82</sup> Malinowski, 1930, 409.

<sup>83</sup> Kuper, 1996, 80.

Frederick Lugard who held the post of High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1906.<sup>84</sup> The British had to have a more thorough understanding of the nearly two hundred ethnic groups within the Nigerian borders. Anthropology was a seemingly perfect fit to accomplish this. In 1914, Northcote Thomas was appointed to the position of government anthropologist to develop a census.

Back in England, Malinowski instigated the most dramatic change and influence over the field of anthropology in the colonial governments. He taught courses for colonial officers at the London School of Economics, covering culture contact, the fieldwork method, and functional anthropology. Malinowski promoted functionalism in which all parts of society make a cultural whole and cannot be understood in isolation.<sup>85</sup> Though Malinowski's methods were transforming the field and the methods of data collection in the colonies, Kuper posits that "the functionalist failure to cope with change was *not* something which endeared anthropologists to colonial administrators."<sup>86</sup> They were not amused by ideas of cultural relativism.

Despite efforts in Nigeria, the British and their colonial governments were never entirely convinced or committed to anthropology as a colonial tool and its use did not gain ground beyond Africa.<sup>87</sup> Lord Hailey's survey in 1938, along with a "more radical

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<sup>84</sup> Lugard is also credited with uniting Northern and Southern Nigeria into one colony which he led as the Governor-General from 1912-1918. He wrote his treatise on indirect rule in 1922 entitled *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1965).

<sup>85</sup> The biggest difference between Malinowski's functionalism and his colleague, Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism was Malinowski's focus on the individual rather than the society. He suggested that as long as the needs of the individual are fulfilled, the needs of society will be fulfilled.

<sup>86</sup> Kuper, 1996, 112.

<sup>87</sup> A variety of commissions were being developed to support social research in the 1930s: The International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1926 (of which Frederick Lugard, the first Governor-General of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria from 1914-1919, who set up indirect rule was a member). Meyer Fortes received one of the first fellowships sponsored by them for fieldwork. Other

rethinking of colonial issues,” would result in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (see chapter 3).<sup>88</sup> This act would support research by anthropologists working in Africa.<sup>89</sup>

I argue that the colonial government’s distrust and rejection of anthropology suggests that Kenneth Murray was selected to conduct his survey because he was an artist and not an anthropologist. The Nigerian colonial service did create a department of anthropology and employed trained anthropologists such as C. K. Meek. As mentioned earlier, they also recruited young colonial officers to complete a short course with Malinowski at LSE. However, the colonial office did not entirely respect the work of anthropologists. Responding to Audrey Richards’s article “Practical Anthropology,” Kuper suggests that the anthropologist was

regarded as a romantic reactionary, who wanted to preserve ‘his tribe’ from any outside contacts, and to keep them as museum exhibits in splendid isolation from trade, government and Christianity. Despite the myth of Indirect Rule, the colonial governments were all committed to the extension of the cash economy, to the support of missions and mission education (with some local exceptions), and to the establishment of new forms of law and government...[In contrast to this] the liberal position on colonial affairs for much of the 1920s and 1930s was that ‘change’ was dangerous; that cultures all have a value, which should be respected, and that tribal cultures are particularly vulnerable to corruption, even disintegration, on contact with outside forces...<sup>90</sup>

Malinowski himself does not deny this kind of characterization. He wrote:

“anthropology, to me at least, was a romantic escape from our overstandardized culture...I was still able with but little effort to re-live and reconstruct a type of human

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organizations include the International African Institute and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia. In 1938 Lord Hailey would begin his survey of the continent.

<sup>88</sup> Kuper, 1996, 103.

<sup>89</sup> Kuper, 1996, 103-104.

<sup>90</sup> Kuper, 1996, 108, responding to Audrey Richards’s article “Practical Anthropology in the Lifetime of the International African Institute,” *Africa* 14, no. 6 (1944), 293-4.

life moulded by the implements of a stone age, pervaded with crude beliefs and surrounded by a wide, uncontaminated, open stretch of nature.”<sup>91</sup>

As we shall see, though Murray was an eccentric and controversial figure – often a thorn in the side of the colonial office – he was distinctly not an anthropologist. During his early surveys of Nigerian art, he was accompanied by a trained anthropologist, Arthur Hunt-Cooke. But, later on, he was given more freedom to collect objects and discuss their significance. Murray was concerned with the rapid loss of traditional culture, as revealed in the change in art, and watching this change made him quite anti-colonial.<sup>92</sup> Murray, who lived in Nigeria for forty-five years, learned several languages including Yoruba, Igbo, and Efik, thus employing Malinowski’s fieldwork method. But, he was not methodical in his ultimate collection of information and did not publish what he collected. Ultimately, he was more interested in the object rather than its meaning.

#### A Continuation of the German-British Rivalry in Nigeria: The Case of Leo Frobenius

The Germans’ influence on museums and anthropology in Britain seems tangential to the discussion above. However, the fact that the Germans were interested in African antiquities and culture, and the fact that they funded exploratory missions to collect and research in Africa, motivated the British to do the same. This was all about control, beginning with the Berlin conference: collections would be physical evidence of being there and exercising territoriality. British Museum keeper O. M. Dalton was very aware of the incredible amount of money the Germans were spending to explore Africa

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<sup>91</sup> Malinowski, 1930, 406.

<sup>92</sup> He was interested in Nigeria’s independence, though he felt Nigerians were not ready, which I might suggest stemmed more from a fear that his job and museum project would be jeopardized than a concern that Nigerians could not run the country without the Crown. He was anti-Zik, but he was also anti-colonial.

and purchase collections of African art, such as items from the Benin Expedition of 1897, to develop the ethnographic collections for Berlin museums – which were already more developed than the collections at the British Museum.<sup>93</sup>

The Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897 differentiates the British attitude toward antiquities from that of the Germans, which is important to understanding the complexity of their rivalry. Less than six weeks after the acting Consul-General James Phillips led his fatal mission to Benin City, the British sent 1,500 soldiers and attacked the city. Britain heralded the successful reprisal and benefitted from the ivory and bronze spoils (figure 1). The Pitt Rivers, Horniman Free, and British Museums all acquired work brought back by officers. The press depicted the Edo as uncivilized and the British sold the booty to finance the expedition. Financially backed by the Kaiser, the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin outbid the British Museum on much of the Benin collection. The British were enraged, but less over the loss of the collection than the fact that it went to the Germans. Annie Coombes notes how this event distinguished the British from the Germans: “unlike the British, Germans of all classes found ethnography of great interest” and financially supported collecting and exploration.<sup>94</sup>

The German interest in ethnology and archaeological exploration on the African continent hit its peak in the early twentieth century with the tour and excavations of the continent by ethnologist Leo Frobenius (1873-1938). Though his work did not create the tensions between Germany and England, it certainly fuelled distrust; moreover, it changed the overall attitude the British had towards anthropological fieldwork,

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<sup>93</sup> Wilson, 2002, 225. Wilson noted in footnote 144 on page 370 that the British Museum Trustees published the report by O. M. Dalton and freely circulated it among interested parties. Dalton, known primarily for his work as a Byzantinist, succeeded Sir Charles Hercules Read as Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography in 1921.

<sup>94</sup> Coombes, 1994, 60.

instigating an overhaul of the training of British colonial officers. Because of Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck's foreign policy, Germany lost out on a strong colonial foothold in Africa, which Great Britain was able to take advantage of at the Berlin Conference. Britain thus maintained dominance over international maritime trade and colonies. This certainly exacerbated a rivalry between the two countries.<sup>95</sup>

As noted briefly above, the Germans began developing an interest in antiquities preservation after the war and unification in 1871. With the founding of the *Heimatschutz* in 1900 by concerned citizens (not the government), they began to hold an annual *Tag für Denkmalpflege*. This meeting would occur in various cities of the empire – its mission was to not only identify and protect monuments and antiquities in Germany proper, but also across their empire.<sup>96</sup> Their regulations made it illegal for any monument of importance to be destroyed or deliberately allowed “to go to ruin, restored, essentially repaired, or altered.” Additionally, all archaeological excavations that occurred on public land had to be overseen by government authority and privately owned monuments and antiquities were subject to expropriation.<sup>97</sup>

Franks from the British Museum built the collection through colonial administrators because he himself never left Europe. He created questionnaires to encourage them to look beyond the flashy objects to find the ones that were most valuable representations of the people who made the work.<sup>98</sup> These questionnaires would also enrich the information collection on the works. Franks's selectivity contrasted with

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<sup>95</sup> Olubukola A. Gbadegesin, “The intersection of modern art, anthropology, and international politics in colonial Nigeria, 1910-1914” (master's thesis, Emory University, 2002), 2.

<sup>96</sup> Brown, 1905, 27.

<sup>97</sup> Brown, 1905, 99.

<sup>98</sup> Wilson, 2002, 160.



the accumulation method of most ethnographic collections, but was also supported by the anti-British Frobenius who stated in 1898:

as far as I am concerned, to travel, collect and fill one cabinet after another does not even come close to preserving these records of the world's history. As such, the rags and rubbish to be found in some ethnographic collections are near to worthless. Rather, their real significance derives from the fact that they are evidence of a vigorous evolution. They are nothing more than tokens, dead hulks waiting to be imbued with living breath.<sup>99</sup>

One of the key contributions of Frobenius was his “conviction that material culture could form the basis for an alternative historical method.”<sup>100</sup> He also loathed the British, publishing a harangue after the 1897 Benin Punitive Expedition in which the British seized booty from the royal palace.<sup>101</sup> The spoils were auctioned to benefit the Protectorate. Anthropologists and museums were unable to purchase all of the artifacts, most of which went to the Germans.<sup>102</sup> He began traveling across Africa in 1904. It was during his fourth trip in 1910 that he landed in Ife, Nigeria the heart of Yorubaland. This trip generated his notorious theory that Ile-Ife must be the site of Atlantis, the lost Greek colony. What came of this archaeological expedition was not only a desire to preserve these African cultures, but also legal woes.

In 1911, Frobenius tried to leave Ife with terracotta and bronze artifacts, which he had purchased from the Oni. The British colonial resident, Mr. Charles Partridge prohibited him from exporting “Olokun,” a brass head (figure 2).<sup>103</sup> This led to a media

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<sup>99</sup> Frobenius, 1898, reprinted by Planksteiner, 1998, 61; quoted in Wilson, 2002, footnote 105, 363.

<sup>100</sup> Suzanne Marchand. “Leo Frobenius and the Revolt against the West,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 2 (1997), 157.

<sup>101</sup> See Leo Frobenius. *Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen*. See also Marchand, 1997, 158.

<sup>102</sup> Annie Coombes *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 59-60.

<sup>103</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.).

frenzy. Frobenius was thus accused of stealing “objects of worship from natives,” and that “his discoveries were not original.” He responded with venom towards the British whom he accused of torturing his informant and notes that if he “had been guilty of unlawful conduct previously we should certainly not have been permitted to travel any more in the colony.”<sup>104</sup>

Another outcome of this expedition was “a thickish book on African art in German by Leo Frobenius.”<sup>105</sup> Murray would request *The Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the years 1910-1912* nearly 25 years after its publication. Though this was before he began his surveys of the art of Nigeria, it was a text that Murray used to locate missing works. He referred to it for the rest of his career as he fought the Germans to restore the work he felt they had unrightfully stolen. Moreover, much of the work described in Frobenius’s tome had simply disappeared. Murray wrote after his initial surveys that “Frobenius described in *The Voice of Africa* how in 1910 he collected from Ibadan two carved doors. These he was made to return, and now they do not exist.”<sup>106</sup> There is also Frobenius’s famous photograph of a Shango shrine in Ibadan, which also disappeared.

### The Effect of British Policy on Nigeria

In the early twentieth century as the British began establishing their form of governance in Africa, they collected data by distributing ethnographic questionnaires.

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<sup>104</sup> *The Times*, “Professor Frobenius’s Mission in West Africa: Charges against British Officials,” April 24, 1911.

<sup>105</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 12, 1935. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>106</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Art in Nigeria: The Need for a Museum,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 41, no. 165 (1942), 246.

The colonial office then hired an anthropologist to evaluate the material that was returned. Northcote Whitridge Thomas (1868-1936) was hired, but found the data to be insufficient and insisted that they create a new position for him. Thus he became the first government anthropologist in Nigeria in 1914.<sup>107</sup> Thomas was the earliest encounter the Nigerian colonial office had with an anthropologist conducting fieldwork, and it was not a perfect relationship.<sup>108</sup> He did tour the country and conducted research, but he was not communicative with the government and they complained that the information was not useful, nor was it always accurate.<sup>109</sup> His primary contribution was collecting valuable linguistic data. This experience discouraged the Nigerian administration from employing an official anthropologist. But Malinowski's influence was gaining momentum and Lord Lugard felt that ethnographic studies and the fieldwork method coupled with colonial officers training would help steer the data collected in the right direction. The district officers stationed in Nigeria would keep an Intelligence Book and submit Intelligence Reports about their findings.<sup>110</sup>

The British Museum benefited greatly from the emerging interest in antiquities in the 1920s and 30s. Murray wrote that

when the Nigerian Government itself came into possession of any works, these were given to the British Museum. Even as late as 1935 a very fine bronze pendant dredged up in Lagos Harbour was given to the British Museum, and a brass head from Ife which had been smuggled from Nigeria across the Sahara by an English Journalist was bought by the

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<sup>107</sup> Dmitri van den Bersselaar, "Establishing the Facts: P. A. Talbot and the 1921 Census of Nigeria," *History in Africa* 31 (2004), 75.

<sup>108</sup> Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther also conducted linguistic research of the same type on expeditions in the 1840s and 1850s. He was the Bishop of the Niger at Lokoja, prior to the beginning of official British administration when the British presence consisted of missionaries and trading companies.

<sup>109</sup> Bersselaar, 2004, 76.

<sup>110</sup> Bersselaar, 2004, 76. By 1920 R. Hargrove, the Resident Officer of Calabar Province, was hired to analyze the data.

British Museum and retained there after its illegal removal from Nigeria was known.<sup>111</sup>

The British Museum had gone through significant changes in the nineteenth century – which would influence and be influenced by the development of the fields of anthropology and ethnography. Though the early history of museums in Britain are well documented, as well as their changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their influence on colonial museums is often only addressed in passing - though their hold on the museum system in Nigeria remains strong. The residue of policies and practice from pre-World War II England is still visible; there are also direct ties to the British Museum today, training and exchange programs, and exhibition development.

Though American institutions such as the Museum for African Art in New York and the Ford Foundation also insert themselves into Nigeria's museum scene, they do not seem to influence the museum philosophy the way the British did in their embryonic stages. Two British museums, in particular, stand out; and, in the end, they remain the most prominent. The British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum had direct contact with Murray and Fagg as they were developing the practices and policies of the department of antiquities – through colleagues such as William Fagg, Bernard's brother and Hermann Braunholtz from the British Museum. But also in the training of Nigerians for the department: Alhaji Adamu Liman Ciroma went to Birmingham University and Ekpo Eyo attended University of Cambridge. Later on, the Horniman Museum in London would play a part in the restoration of the Oron Museum.

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<sup>111</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.).

Fagg's curatorial method at Jos in particular paralleled the system of organization at the Pitt Rivers Museum described earlier. Pitt-Rivers divided his collection into antiquities and ethnography. As described in the *Guide to the National Museum Complex Jos*, the displays at Jos were divided into two groups. The first was "Ethnographic Materials," which showed the range of cultures within Nigeria and covered dress, masks, instruments, carved figures, and recent antiquities such as Benin and Ife bronzes.<sup>112</sup> The second grouping consisted of archaeological specimens demonstrating the technological development in the region from the Paleolithic period to the Late Stone Age. Also included were early antiquities, such as the Nok terracottas excavated by Bernard Fagg.<sup>113</sup> We know that Kenneth Murray was familiar with the Three Ages curatorial organization because in an August 13, 1944 letter to his mother, Murray requests *The Three Ages* by G. E. Daniel from his sister, Betty.<sup>114</sup>

This chapter explored aspects of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century practice of the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers museum in order to consider their impact on the department of antiquities in the 1940s and 50s. The Beetle Act of 1945 and the growth of museums in Britain as places where citizens could be educated parallels the debate the colonial office was having in British West Africa. Though certain voices like Creech Jones, Murray, Meyerowitz, and Huxley saw a museum system as an educational legacy that would help for a successful decolonization process, the official colonial authority was not thinking about independence at all as many of the museums in Nigeria were opened.

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<sup>112</sup> *Guide to the National Museum Complex, Jos* (Jos: Federal Department of Antiquities, 1977), 10.

<sup>113</sup> *Guide to the National Museum Complex, Jos*, 1977, 10.

<sup>114</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 13, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Paul Basu explains:

However, while these advocates of museums in West Africa may have had the best of intentions, their ideas also manifested a paternalism that did not question the appropriateness of the cultural institutions for which they lobbied. In his letters and articles, even Murray admitted: ‘at present there are not many Africans who will patronise a Museum but, as education spreads the demand will grow’. For all their respect for local populations, these educationalists did not doubt – even less so figures such as Huxley and Creech Jones – the superiority of contemporary European values, or that West Africans would inevitably aspire to these same values once they had been educated out of their ‘primitive’ state. This logic remained fundamental to the developmental doctrine of Fabian colonial policy, revealing its ideological rootedness in Victorian cultural evolutionist thinking. The value of museums was taken for granted in Europe and...was even regarded as a trait only to be found in the ‘older [i.e. more advanced] civilisations’ and therefore unlikely to emerge in West Africa.<sup>115</sup>

As will be discussed further in chapter 3, figures like Huxley saw the museum as a common ground upon which the British and Nigerians could truly communicate.

Further exacerbating the difficulty Nigeria had in developing museums, Murray struggled to secure the funds and the manpower to actually protect and preserve the antiquities he listed and collected, just as Pitt-Rivers was often unable to safeguard the monuments in Britain.

There is one more connection between the museums in Britain and those that developed in Nigeria. The system of display and the transmission of information at the British Museum informed those in Nigeria. This is primarily because Bernard Fagg and Kenneth Murray found valuable resources in William Fagg and Hermann Braunholtz at the British Museum. At the British Museum, “groups of antiquities were pinned to the

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<sup>115</sup> Paul Basu, “A museum for Sierra Leone? Amateur enthusiasms and colonial museum policy in British West Africa,” *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience*, ed. Sarah Longair and John McAleer (New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 164. Basu quotes Kenneth C. Murray, “Art in Nigeria: the Need for a Museum” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 41, no. 165 (1942), 248.

‘tablets’ or boards, descriptive text sometimes being painted directly on to those not covered with textiles. The tables could easily be moved about the table-cases, and both they and the larger boards could be mounted on slopes or vertically in the wall-cases.”<sup>116</sup> Likewise, the Jos Museum adopted a similar approach. Furthermore, until the mid-twentieth century, wall labels did not have extended didactic material. Rather visitors would refer to gallery guides, which offered further explanation of the material on display. One of the most important contributions the department of antiquities produced was the gallery guides for each museum.

This chapter serves as background for the upcoming chapters which explore the development of the department of antiquities and the museums in Nigeria in further depth. The climate and progression of anthropology and ethnography in England would affect the way in which colonial Nigeria collected objects, drafted antiquities legislation, designed and appointed the position of surveyor of antiquities, and developed the missions of their museums. It is not a stretch to make the connection between Britain’s development and its impact on her colonial policies; but this particular relationship is interesting because of how complex the development of anthropology and museum policy was in Britain and how the resulting problems surfaced (and are still visible) in Nigeria. Neither anthropology or museum development was straightforward; neither garnered unwavering support from the government, the universities, the colonial office, or the public. However, the expansion and increasing legitimacy of both fields certainly shaped the job description of Kenneth Murray as the surveyor of antiquities and provided funding and consultants from British institutions to guide the development.

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<sup>116</sup> Wilson, 2002, 207.

## CHAPTER 2

### **BUILDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES IN COLONIAL NIGERIA**

To develop regulations and protocol for Nigerian antiquities, the colonial office looked to the precedent set by British antiquities policy and practice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As described in the previous chapter, in November 1882, after many years of negotiation, Pitt-Rivers accepted the position of inspector of ancient monuments. In this capacity he surveyed the country for sites of national heritage, developed a formal records system for cataloguing the monuments, and liaised between the government and property owners to conserve declared monuments. These responsibilities would parallel Kenneth Murray's own job description as the surveyor of antiquities for the colonial government in Nigeria.

The post of surveyor was the only one of its kind in West Africa, and contributed to the development of museums in Nigeria. Murray's ultimate goal was to establish a central Nigerian museum. The museum's core collection was formed by Murray's acquisitions. Most of the works were purchased while Murray surveyed the country for the government, seemingly following the trend set by Pitt-Rivers and Sir Hans Sloane, whose collections became the core of the Pitt Rivers and British Museums. Murray's philosophy aligns with those of Pitt-Rivers and Sloane: where there is a collection of objects, a museum must surely follow.



To create a place for his collection, Murray would first have to develop the department of antiquities in order to establish credibility with and secure funding from the colonial office and to cultivate relationships with artists and local Nigerian leaders who often held collections of their own. He would also contribute to the development of proper archaeological practices for systematic and responsible excavations; establish antiquities legislation to regulate the export of objects deemed to be important to a Nigerian heritage; begin a major collecting campaign to acquire objects to be conserved and protected in a museum; and, among other responsibilities, create a department which could request funding from the government to support these projects and expand cultural endeavors. Murray was certainly driving this mission; however, the interest in cultural preservation was gaining momentum among the British in West Africa when the Nigerian colonial government made the investment in the project.

When Murray arrived in Nigeria in 1927, he did not know that he would spend the rest of his life in the country. Murray was witness to the dismantling of the British Empire and the transition of power with Nigerian independence in 1960. He collected well over 800 objects for the national collection, established seven museums, and developed the department of antiquities. All of these developments continue to play a crucial role in Nigerian culture today.

#### Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray

Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray was vitally important to the Nigerian museum project, yet his reputation within art history and museum studies is disputed. To anthropologist Keith Nicklin, curator at the museum in Oron during its reconstruction,

Murray “was a champion of the museum movement in Nigeria at a time when little practical recognition of the importance of precolonial African culture was given by the British authorities.”<sup>1</sup> Many scholars suggest that Murray was anti-colonial in his pursuits.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there are indications in Murray’s letters home to his mother that he saw himself as a rogue within the colonial government who would defy fools in order to save cultures that were dissolving before his eyes.<sup>3</sup>

Others, such as art historian Chika Okeke-Agulu, insist that Murray directed the growth of Nigerian modern art to fulfill a colonial agenda by preventing artists from moving beyond crafts. Okeke-Agulu contends that Murray’s art education program “appears radical...anti-colonial and progressive” in contrast to the traditional European model, which Aina Onabolu advocated. However, when Murray’s efforts are considered in the context of “[their] intellectual milieu, [we are] able to appreciate [them] not as a precursor of the radical work that emerged in Nigeria by the mid-century, but in fact as an index of British colonial educational policies in Africa.”<sup>4</sup>

Though Murray had good intentions and believed that he was preserving the art and culture of Nigeria, I suggest that Okeke-Agulu’s analysis has validity beyond his work in the education department. Murray’s effort to establish museums was not anti-

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Nicklin, *Ekpu: The Oron Ancestor Figures of South Eastern Nigeria* (London: Horniman Museum and Gardens, 1999), 96.

<sup>2</sup> Father Kevin Carroll noted that he “found Kenneth Murray polite and informative but peppery about the Establishment and its officials, who to him seemed insufficiently anxious to divert good money to such things as antiquities.” See Kevin Carroll’s contribution to “Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends,” *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 75.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvia Leith Ross wrote that Murray “spoke endlessly of Nigeria, lovingly, impatiently, hopefully, despairingly. I think he was often wrong in his judgement of white officials, too prone to think they knew nothing of the country, nor could he make allowances for those who did not share his own selfless, single-minded devotion.” See “Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends,” *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 76.

<sup>4</sup> Chika Okeke-Agulu. “Nigerian Art in the Independence Decade, 1957-1967.” (PhD Diss., Emory University, 2004), 93.

colonial in nature. Despite the lack of support from the colonial government, building museums and developing cultural heritage were actions in service of a colonial agenda. Moreover, Murray followed the proper colonial channels to accomplish his goals. His challenging personality won him both friends and foes, but his dedication to antiquities and his love of Nigeria garnered respect from British and Nigerians alike. A prickly character not easy to please, most agree with Nicklin's assessment: "Few who knew Kenneth Murray failed to be profoundly impressed and moved by the man: his knowledge, flair, dedication and integrity. Many, like myself, were inspired by his example, despite the dauntingly high standards which he had set."<sup>5</sup>

One of the foremost criticisms of Murray is that he focused far too much attention on antiquities and crafts, when modern Nigerian artists needed promotion and training. Undeniably, this frustration was felt by artists working closely with Murray. In a letter home, Murray recalls a lunch with Onobolu at the British Council, where Murray had curated an exhibition of masks. Murray wrote that Onobolu did "[most] of the talking and as usual argued on his beliefs in art...I was in the position of defending traditional African art against them. Neither [Onobolu or another Nigerian Esua] scarcely looked at the carvings on the walls."<sup>6</sup> Murray was concerned with modern artists in Nigeria, but not in place of traditional arts and crafts. In his 1942 article "Art in Nigeria," Murray is explicit that Nigeria is unique on the continent because of its breadth of antiquities, but also because it "contains some of the best recent work, and its very varied handicrafts,

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<sup>5</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 3, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Describing the exhibition at the British Council, Murray writes in a January 4, 1946 letter to his mother that the work in the exhibition was for sale and consisted of insignificant masks he "had bought for Govt at Niven's request with a few others of mine I dont want (all are new works)."

developed far beyond the primitive or “savage” stage, show a keen artistic sense.”<sup>7</sup> In support of this position, curator Vicki James, who wrote a brief biography of Murray in a 1994 edition of *Nigerian Heritage*, asserted,

in the 1920s, a host of Nigerians who were primarily interested in acquiring European culture, despised the arts and crafts of their forebear as primitive and uncivilized. Very few colonial administrators and missionaries had any sympathy for “native” crafts which they view as “fetish” or “pagan” objects. Thus, Murray faced apathy, if not hostility, for years. Nonetheless, he was determined to save Nigerian art objects. Indeed, he was remarkable for his single-minded devotion to Nigerian art.<sup>8</sup>

Murray was born in Wolverhampton in September 1902. His father, Harold James Ruthven Murray (1868-1955) worked in education and was a chess historian. His mother, Kate Maitland Crosthwaite Murray (1873-1951), was a suffragette to whom Kenneth wrote faithfully from the moment he left England until her death. Kenneth’s brother, Donald, died in service during World War II. Their sister, Dr. Katherine Maud Elisabeth Murray, fondly known as Betty (1909-98), helped raise Donald’s children following his death. Betty was the principal at Bishop Otter College in Chichester and biographer of their grandfather, Sir James Murray.<sup>9</sup>

Having dropped out of Balliol College, Oxford, Murray became an artist. Subsequently, Eric Swanston, the deputy director of the education department, recommended Murray for colonial service. He left his home in Heyshott in Southern

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<sup>7</sup> Murray, 1942, 241.

<sup>8</sup> Vicki James, “Kenneth Murray, father of Museum Movement in Nigeria,” *Nigerian Heritage* 3 (1994), 69.

<sup>9</sup> Also notable was Murray’s grandfather, Sir James Murray, who was the first editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, and about whom Murray’s sister, Betty wrote an acclaimed biography, *Caught in the Web of Words*. Betty’s location in Chichester also plays an important role in this story. Not only did Kenneth help his sister establish a collection of Nigerian art at Bishop Otter and the Pallant House Museum, but his letters to his mother, father, and Betty were archived with Betty’s papers at the West Sussex Records Office in Chichester.

England and set off for Nigeria, arriving in Lagos on November 30, 1927. His wife Phyllis, whom he divorced in 1936, would join him shortly after his arrival.<sup>10</sup> Murray was assigned as the first officer to teach art for the Nigerian education department, only to learn that Swanston had died unexpectedly while on leave in Italy.<sup>11</sup> Unsure of what to do with Murray, the colonial office assigned him the role of itinerate art teacher, traveling across southern Nigeria and developing the art curriculum and training teachers.<sup>12</sup>

Of his arrival, Murray wrote, “I had very little knowledge of West African art and there were no clear lines laid down about what I was to do. I did think, however, that the indigenous crafts should be taught rather than painting and sculpture.”<sup>13</sup> This is an important point, one that would fuel the controversy surrounding his intentions. Murray has been accused of neglecting modern art and discouraging artists from participating in an international market. This is not entirely true. Murray helped many artists, most famously Ben Enwonwu, receive art educations in England and promoted their work in Nigeria and abroad.

Murray was, however, devastated by the apparent loss of traditional crafts in the face of colonialism. In light of hundreds of impassioned letters, I suggest that Murray saw his role not as someone who could facilitate *or* inhibit modernism in Nigeria. Rather, Murray saw himself as ensuring that everyone, Africans and Europeans alike, could appreciate, protect, and respect Nigerian antiquities, crafts, and craft-making including

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<sup>10</sup> Murray’s wife, Phillis Rowlands, would join Murray in Nigeria. They divorced in 1936. There are a few early letters to Phillis, but very little correspondence between the two and she is rarely referenced in his letters home.

<sup>11</sup> J. D. Clark, “Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends,” *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 2.

<sup>12</sup> For further information on Murray’s work as an art teacher see Chika Okeke-Agulu’s PhD dissertation for Emory University, “Nigerian Art in the Independence Decade, 1957-1967,” 71-100.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 1.

carving and ceramics. While his letters demonstrate a certain amount of venom for Nigerians and colonial officers, they also reveal a man who was profoundly passionate about Nigerian visual culture and those who produced and cared for it.

Murray sought creative approaches to develop his curriculum. On his first leave, he returned to England to study pottery with Bernard Leach at Leach Pottery in St. Ives, Cornwall. Leach and his colleagues had an incredible influence on Murray.<sup>14</sup> Leach, having grown up in Hong Kong and Japan, felt strongly about uniting the East and West through art, pottery in particular. In regards to his impact, Murray wrote that Leach

very greatly stimulated my ideas and I began to develop pottery on the lines that I had learnt from him. In the subsequent years I did a good deal of experiments with clays and simple kilns and tried to use a galena from Abakaliki as a glaz4 [sic]; but my duties in the Education prevented me from getting very far. These experiments were however very exciting and the nights I spent tending a kiln on the edge of a wooded ravine on the outskirts [sic] of Umuhunta village near Umuahia are among my most vivid experienced.<sup>15</sup>

Murray writes extensively about his time working and perfecting the kilns, but his position within the education department was that of an itinerant teacher. His nomadic job gave him the experience required to fulfill the second part of his career as a surveyor of antiquities. This experience allowed him to study several languages including Yoruba, Igbo, and Efik, for which he passed the colonial tests. He spent the first few years traveling between the government schools in Umuahia in the southeast and Ibadan, just 100 miles north of Lagos in the Southwest. He also spent time in Uyo, at the Teacher's

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<sup>14</sup> It was through his work with Leach that he met Michael Cardew, Leach's apprentice from 1923-1926. Cardew would work in West Africa for 23 years, first at Achimota in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and then in Abuja, Nigeria. See Michael Cardew, *Pioneer Pottery* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Press, 1969). Cardew's role in The West African Institute of Arts, Industries, and Social Sciences will be discussed further in the next chapter. See Michael Cardew's contribution to "Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends," *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 7 and 74-75.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 1.

Training Centre, to which he would bring the students he wished to train as art teachers. This is where Ben Enwonwu and Murray cultivated their complex lifelong relationship.

Murray began his quest to establish museums early in his career and, well before any notion of a department of antiquities, he called for help in supporting the arts. In his 1940 article “A Museum for Nigeria,” Murray is adamant:

it is, of course, the duty of the Nigerian Government to provide a museum. Unfortunately, however, there is no independent public opinion in Nigeria that can bestir Government in such a matter. Nigeria, moreover, is a poor country, and cannot afford all the social services that are most urgent. When hundreds of thousands of pounds are needed for social services, and when the revenue of the Government has decreased by one-quarter last year, it is hard to find the few thousands needed for a museum. The Government departments work short-handed, so it hardly seems the time to ask for the creation of a fresh post. Yet the provision of a museum is of the greatest urgency or it will be too late, and is an essential part of a country's cultural and educational equipment.<sup>16</sup>

While working across the country, visiting the small government middle school museums at Bauchi and Katsina, the need for a plan to preserve Nigeria's visual culture was alarmingly apparent.

Murray was also actively acquiring work starting in 1935, at a time when there were few collectors.<sup>17</sup> He wrote:

During my first years in Nigeria I made little attempt to look for or collect examples of traditional Nigerian art: indeed I seemed hardly aware of its existence! It was not until 1934 when I was posted to Uyo and was faced with the problem of training primary-school teachers in their traditional crafts that I began to discover it, and began to realise that it was disappearing.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Murray, “A Museum for Nigeria,” *Nigeria*, no. 20 (1940), 274.

<sup>17</sup> On page 4 of Murray's “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” he lists several foreign collectors, such as G. I. Jones, M. D. W. Jeffreys, and William Bascom. He does not list, however, any African collectors.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 2-3.

In the summer of 1936 his collecting mission took on a more professional tone. Murray and Arthur Hunt-Cooke were sent to Ibadan and Abeokuta to study Yoruba crafts.<sup>19</sup>

Though Murray was excited about the assignment, he was once again frustrated by the colonial government's lack of communication and ambiguous intentions. He wrote there was "...no consideration for what will happen at the ETC. All the work I have done here is wasted, I really never needed have started it if they had had some policy. Besides no consideration for my special art students. It is typical of the way the country is run. People want to act like dictators."<sup>20</sup>

It appears Murray's initial survey was redundant, investigating antiquities of the places he had already had visited in the course of training art teachers and developing curricula in the 1930s. Of his experience Murray wrote that

[Hunt-Cooke] has been nearly all his time except part of his last tour in Abeokuta and so hears Yoruba very well. When we go out together on our investigations he does nearly all the talking therefore and really [sic] I might not be there especially [sic] as his ideas are quite sensible. We get on quite well together.<sup>21</sup>

Murray was the art consultant and would take photographic documentation, while Hunt-Cooke was the "social side." Hunt-Cooke, trained as an anthropologist under Malinowski's fieldwork method, provided the "scientific" component to the survey.

In a letter posted in August 1936, Murray found himself in Ikot Ekpene (Annang Ibibio), a city in the middle of a geographical triangle formed by Port Harcourt (Ijo),

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<sup>19</sup> Arthur Hunt-Cooke was the Surveyor of Education, who was one year Murray's junior in appointment. According to Murray's letter to his mother September 26, 1936, he met Hunt-Cooke four years before their tour. See Oluwale Fagbemi, "Mass Failures: The way Forward" *The Nigerian Tribune* May 7, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, June 20, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 26, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Calabar (Efik), and Umuahia (Igbo) in the Niger Delta. He described his challenges trying to negotiate with locals to purchase dolls and masks:

first I saw Ukpong and then we went to a place a mile or so away to see a mask I wanted to photo. We found however that our informant had deceived us and that the man he said was the owner had died ten years [ago]. We came back and went to see the informant. We found him with some native doctors as it was the yearly festival for doctors. They were preparing their little shrine dusting things up. I bought two of the little dolls (about 6 inches high) that are used for holding some medecine [sic]. One I think is distinctly good. A man who...brouht [sic] out a similar dol [sic] of his and I bought that also. (6d each). The informant wanted 2/6 to take us to the true owner of the mask coming down to 1/. But as he had twice deceived me I objected to paying anything to him so we thought out another way. We went to another carver where the mask had originally been (it was said that it had been returned to the owner) and there it was. I said I would buy it but the carver could not speak for the owner. (I had offered 10/) so we went to the owner who lived near the house we had originally gone to and was prepared to sell, I could have got it for less than 10/ but felt I would have to pay that as I had mentioned that amount. Thus it is the dearest carving I havebought [sic] (baring [sic] a skin covered one from Calabar). At the same place some other masks were brouht [sic] out which I photoed including a small one 15 years old which was a beauty and I bought it for 2/. It adds to the 3 or 4 first class ones that I have. (I have 19 round the house) One is unlike any African mask I have seen and is of a laughing man rather Chinese in look. I am not bringing these home to decorate the barn but *intend giving them to somewhere like Uumuahia [sic] where they could be kept in a museum*. It is a pity that all these should be lost to Africa and I would prefer leaving them with their owners if I did not know how quickly they would disapear [sic]. Probably in 20 years from now there will not be one carving surviving in Ikot Ekpene that is existing now! The fall us quality in the last ten years is very very great. Only about 4 of the 60 carvers I know of, are good.<sup>22</sup>

This letter is the first time Murray mentions the need for a museum in Nigeria to ensure the preservation of objects. Though the idea may appear to be superficial, I posit that it would prove to be a defining moment in the genesis of the museum project. More than

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<sup>22</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 22, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. The exchange of money indicates that he paid 10 shillings and 6 pennies (10/ and 6d). An Annang Ibibio carvers' cooperative was formed at Ikot Ekpene, which has supplied masks all over southeastern Nigeria.

twenty years later, in his unpublished draft of the history of Nigerian museums, Murray wrote that it was in the report written by himself and Hunt-Cooke that they “were asked to make a report on Yoruba crafts particularly at Abeokuta; in this we mentioned museums.”<sup>23</sup>

Murray’s role in the survey was to assess the state of crafts in Nigeria, but it was embedded in a larger investigation for E. H. Duckworth and E. R. J. Hussey’s education scheme. Elaborating on this mission, Murray explained that:

For the investigation into crafts, there are various influences, the Governor the Colonial Office keen on ruralising education and finding ways of encouraging people to remain in their villages instead of going into the towns. There is [the] unemployed committee in Lagos composed of Hussey and Duckworth and some Africans who thought of getting work for the unemployed there (i.e. the people who have drifted into Lagos from the villages) by getting out some blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers etc as instructors. Huss [Hussey] had a scheme of this sort for more than Lagos and with Duckworth thought of trying it out in Abeokuta, and Duckworth wrote to Savage of the English Board of Education to find out what possibilities there were of finding suitable candidates Duckworth went on leave (thank goodness) and Hussey retired. MacCowan asked Milburn’s opinion on the scheme. Milburn raised many objections and suggested that it should only be started after investigations. Hence the research. But Milburn who was to take part with me has transferred to a better post in Sierra Leone so Hunt Cooke is to join me. The inquiry has been widened to include not just the possibility of Hussey’s scheme, but to make suggestions for other scheme of teaching crafts. Incidentally [sic] the question of processes, material etc hardly arises, it is more a matter of marketing possibilities, number of craftsmen, demand for improvements etc.<sup>24</sup>

Murray continued to develop his position on the loss of traditional crafts. In one letter he describes his trip to Ife:

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<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 9, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Ife is the traditional home of the Yorubas and is famous for some carvings and terra cottas that a German Frobenius found and a number of which he carried off to Germany. Remains are still in the bush many carefully concealed and fresh ones are sometimes dug up. Some have been collected by the present Oni, an ex station master and placed in the Afin palace. These include some extraordinarily [sic] fine specimens. In the fat book of Frobenius that I have there [are] some photos of the work. These relics of the past are all that is now of interest in Ife. The traditional life has gone and now the place is a progressive Yoruba town with many foreigners and traders. The principal street is a line of small shops with some 'modern' craftsmen. Of the traditional [sic] craftsmen there are few, some women weavers and silk spinners, some men weavers [sic] nearly all from other towns such as Iseyin, a decreasing number of blacksmiths and one or two wood carvers. The Afin has some good modern pillars which I photoed [sic].<sup>25</sup>

Murray saw that if such losses were occurring in Ife, a well-known site where excavations and tours had taken place, the loss in other sites must be extensive. During this tour Murray began to grow his reputation as an effective surveyor, but at this time he also began to collect works of art actively and eagerly.<sup>26</sup>

In just a year, as Murray continued to travel across southern Nigeria, he amassed a collection

of wood carvings, terra-cottas and water colours done by the group and I resolved to exhibit these in London as I was confident that the reception they would get would have a great effect in convincing officials and others in Nigeria that art did and could exist in Nigeria. The exhibition was held in the Zwemmer Gallery and was most successful. The press gave much notice to it and many works were sold at prices which astonished Europeans in Nigeria. The exhibition was opened by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Ormsby-Gore (later Lord Harlech), whom I had asked to mention in his speech the need for a museum in Nigeria. This speech was for me the real start of my campaign for a museum.<sup>27</sup>

He wrote at the bottom of the page that "it had taken me 10 years to realize the need."

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<sup>25</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 30, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 22, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 3.

It was after his exhibition at Zwemmer in 1937 that Murray began to consciously collect. This collecting mission was facilitated by a new tour for the education department, in spite of criticism from the colonial office.<sup>28</sup> This time, Murray travelled more extensively in the Southeast through Owerri, Onitsha, and Calabar Provinces. In the villages, he noted:

I saw very many old carvings and realising how rapidly they were decaying I began to collect as many as I could within the limitations of cost and, more particularly, of means to transport and space to store them. This collection I intended should form the nucleus of the future Nigerin [sic] Museum and I began to think of establishing a “corner” in Nigerian carvings which would lead to the exchange of duplicate specimens for such works as the Benin bronzes which had left Nigeria.<sup>29</sup>

Murray worked hard to assess the state of traditional Nigerian art and collect high-quality specimens. But, he discovered that in order to build a collection of Nigerian antiquities his efforts had to extend beyond active collecting; he would have to seek the repatriation of artifacts that had migrated overseas. One case in particular, that of William Bascom and the Ife heads, formed the basis for the Antiquities Ordinance, which was finally passed in 1953.

### William Bascom and the Ife Heads

A crucial turning point in the push for an antiquities policy, including export legislation and local museum development at Ife, came in 1938. A man digging a foundation for his house near the *Afin*, the Oni’s house, excavated seventeen cast-bronze

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<sup>28</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 4. Here he lists the assistant director of education as someone who was critical of his collecting mission.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 4.

heads.<sup>30</sup> According to Paul Basu, Robert Tignor, and Simon Ottenberg, twelve heads were restored to the Oni and three heads were taken abroad. Of those three, one was removed by a British journalist working for the Nigerian *Daily Times*, who would sell it to Lord Kenneth Clark. Lord Clark gifted the head to the British Museum.<sup>31</sup> The remaining two heads initiated the change in antiquities policy. The matter would take over a decade to resolve.

William Bascom, a doctoral student in anthropology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, purchased the heads for seven pounds ten shillings, with the knowledge of the Oni (figure 3).<sup>32</sup> Like Bascom, Frobenius also claimed that that Oni knew of the excavation and purchase. What is unclear from Bascom's correspondence is how the Oni felt about the purchase. Ottenberg and Tignor each provide different perspectives on the incident and accounts from the Oni of Ife further confuse the issue. Tignor states that "Murray and Duckworth rallied the Oni of Ife to their side,"<sup>33</sup> citing a May 2, 1947 letter from Aderemi, Oni of Ife, to the senior district officer of the Ife Division (currently in the United States National Archive 848L. 927/6-2347). The Oni articulated that he begrudged Bascom's argument that the heads would do more good outside of Nigeria and disputed whether or not Bascom removed the heads legally. He wrote of Bascom, "if he had acquired the heads honestly, why did he not mention it to me

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<sup>30</sup> There is some dispute over the number of bronze heads excavated. In Paul Basu's article, "A museum for Sierra Leone? Amateur enthusiasms and colonial museum policy in British West Africa," he states that there were seventeen heads discovered; Robert Tignor suggests there were fifteen; Kenneth Murray notes on page 5 of the *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947* that 15 out of 17 recovered bronze heads were sent to the British Museum, implying that there were seventeen in his possession in Nigeria, excluding the two that Bascom held and one that was smuggled out of Nigeria at the same time for a total of twenty excavated bronze heads from Benin.

<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Tignor. "W. R. Bascom and the Ife Bronzes," *Africa* 60, no. 3 (1990), 434.

<sup>32</sup> The controversy over Bascom's heads is explained in Tignor's article "W.R. Bascom and the Ife Bronzes," and there is a rebuttal by Bascom's student Simon Ottenberg entitled "Further Light on W.R. Bascom and the Ife Bronzes," *Africa* 64, no. 4 (1994), 561-568.

<sup>33</sup> Tignor, 1990, 429.

before he left Ife?”<sup>34</sup> Contradicting Tignor’s use of the Oni’s letter, Ottenberg cites a letter from the Oni of Ife to Bascom. Here, the Oni states:

We all knew how you have got the Heads and recognise the fact that there was no law forbidding you from doing so at the time you did. We all recognise that your returning them was only a gesture and a desire to accede to the wishes of the people of Ife and myself, whom you rightly regard as your friends.<sup>35</sup>

Bascom was allowed to return to Nigeria during World War II, but he did not make his presence known to the colonial government.<sup>36</sup> Murray notes in a letter to his mother on April 4, 1945 that

It is dreadful the way people are allowed to handle and photo these works...Saw Bascom’s interpreter and tried to find out about the German deprecations unsuccessful as usual. But I did hear Bascom has been about and bought some carvings (not very old) from Abeokuta which he got packed by his interpreter. I will report this but of course nothing will be done. Cox at Benin siad [sic] they had some warning of Bascom and watched him carefully. But I don’t think the warning was official.<sup>37</sup>

Murray feared Bascom would continue to freely remove antiquities from the country. By 1945, as surveyor of antiquities, Murray was in a position to regulate all objects exported from the country, a direct result of the loss of Ife heads in 1938.

The Bascom incident of 1938 was significant enough for the enactment of export legislation and the formation of museums in Nigeria for Murray to discuss it in his brief draft of his “History of Museums in Nigeria.” Murray’s story differs from some of the

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<sup>34</sup> Tignor, 1990, footnote 16, 433.

<sup>35</sup> Ottenberg, 1994, 566. Ottenberg cites correspondence between The Oni of Ife to William R. Bascom, 6 January 1951. Native Authority Office, the Afin, Ife, No. 127/163.

<sup>36</sup> Tignor notes that Bascom returned ostensibly for ethnographic research but actually had orders to report on Nigeria for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which precluded him from being open about his being in the country – perhaps, Tignor supposes, this incited frustration with the Oni (Tignor, 1990, 429-430).

<sup>37</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 4, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

related literature on one key point: where the 1938 discoveries went. He states that after the discovery of the heads:

some of these were taken to the Oni as it was considered that such finds were his property. Others wer [sic], however held back and some months later a German trader told Duckworth, who had been showing him photographs of the finds, that there were more heads like them in the possession of Europeans in Lagos. Duckworth did all he could to find and stop these works, but if there were any they were got out of the country. One of these eventually reached the British Museum as has been described earlier.<sup>38</sup> Inquiries were made at Ife and the owner of the new house then brought to the Oni some more heads. Later photographs of two more which had been purchased by Bascom, the American anthropologists who had been working at Ife at the time of the finds, were in the Illustrated London News. These were returned with considerable generosity to Ife when a museum had been built there and Bascom was returning to Nigeria. As a result of Duckworth's agitation about the alleged heads in Lagos an Order was made under the Customs Ordinance prohibiting the export of antiquities except by permission of the Governor, and at the instigation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies a start was made on drafting an ordinance to protect antiquities. The heads obtained by Bascom apparently went out of the country before and the head purchased by the British Museum subsequent to the passing of the Customs Ordinance [of 1953]. The report of Hunt-Cooke and I had stirred up some interest in local musuems [sic] among the administration and Ife was an obvious place for one. Duckworth now began to press for a museum there.<sup>39</sup>

This passage indicates that the Bascom event not only led to the development of export regulations, but also generated interest in establishing a museum at Ife.

The confusion surrounding this dispute is important, as it provided the fledgling antiquities section a rhetoric regarding the export and repatriation of Nigeria's antiquities that is still used today. Perhaps Bascom was a scapegoat who allowed Duckworth and Murray to leverage the support of Malcolm MacDonald, secretary of state for the colonies. Duckworth and Murray also enlisted the key backing of Julian Huxley, who

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<sup>38</sup> This was most likely the head given by Lord Clark.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 4-5.

was appointed to the Colonial Commission on Higher Education to develop universities in West Africa in 1943. They also made connections with Herbert Vladimir Meyerowitz, who had conducted a survey of crafts of the Gold Coast. Both Huxley and Meyerowitz will be further discussed in the next chapter.<sup>40</sup> With their backing, MacDonald issued an urgent request to the colonial governors in April 1939 to exert control over the exportation of cultural artifacts.<sup>41</sup> Basu cites a letter by Duckworth to emphasize the importance of MacDonald's request to the colonial government that they take notice of the disappearance of antiquities. In the letter, Duckworth states: "it is amazing how dead the Nigerian Government are about the constant loss of antiquities... The communications from London are of the greatest value in activating the authorities here. The Governor was doing nothing."<sup>42</sup> MacDonald's effort, triggered cooperation from Governor Bernard Henry Bourdillon and resulted in a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to fund a museum at Ife.<sup>43</sup> It was also this support from the colonial office, as I have suggested, that led to Murray's post as surveyor.

Of course, World War II interrupted the progress of the case against Bascom, yet Duckworth and Murray returned their attention to the case as soon as they could. They

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<sup>40</sup> Basu, 2012, 148. Basu also notes that Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery and involved in the Ife heads scandal, and John Rothenstein, Director of Tate Gallery and were also in support of antiquities legislation. I don't know HOW involved Huxley was once he arrived in West Africa, because he had a mental breakdown. However, in 1946 he became the first Director-General of UNESCO.

<sup>41</sup> Basu, 2012, 148.

<sup>42</sup> Basu, 2012, footnote 11, 149, he cites a letter from E. H. Duckworth, Lagos, 28 June 1939, TNA, CO 554/121/8.

<sup>43</sup> Basu, 2012, footnote 12, 149: "The Carnegie application was successful and a grant of \$4,000 was made in 1941 'for the purpose of erecting a small local museum at Ife'. However, the project soon ran into difficulties and, after a war-time review of funding for 'agencies and institutions in the British Dominions and Colonies', Carnegie later revoked the award. See TNA, CO 583/261/5. Regarding the antiquities ordinances, it is ironic that Nigeria's legislation was the last to be enacted. A bill had been drafted in 1940, but its progress again stalled due to war-time circumstances. See British Museum (BM), Eth Doc 261, "a Bill entitled An Ordinance to provide for the better preservation of objects of aesthetic, historical, archaeological or scientific interest", sent by O. G. R. Williams, Colonial Office, 27 April 1940."



did this for several reasons. Without a strong collection of antiquities, the colonial office would not consider their case for a museum. A high profile case would increase the government's awareness of the international interest in Nigerian antiquities. Duckworth and Murray also believed that returning the rightful property to the Oni would strengthen their alliance when it came time to funding and building the museum in Ife. Finally, Murray understood that his project was not a priority and knew he would have to pursue the issue tirelessly.<sup>44</sup>

It is not until 1948 that Murray mentions enlisting the help of the United States Consul to deal with Bascom.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps this was also a result of Bascom's image in *Nigeria*.<sup>46</sup> In a letter from 1948, Murray referred to "Bascom complaining about the constant attacks on him in 'Nigeria.'"<sup>47</sup> But it is not until July 2, 1950 that Murray wrote:

One great bit of news is that Bascom has agreed [sic] to return the two Ife heads provided I and Duckworth give him signed recantations of our previous remarks about it. My part is easier than Duckworth's as I have written so much less except in letters and I think I can compose something which should satisfy him. I think this result has been reached by the tactful diplomacy of the man in the Sect who has been dealing with this and who fortunately knew Bascom.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> He notes, in a letter to his mother from May 3, 1945, that he is "...working out details of my museums [sic] proposals. I want to get it worked out before I leave and get it before the Development branch. What to do about [Lieutenant-Governor of Nigeria, Sir Cecil Rex] Niven I don't know, probably just ignore him. I don't think he has done anything about sending to the Sect. my information about the American collector Bascom and the thing I wrote on Museum [sic] Policy has been filed away and he has done nothing about it, although I said the Secretariat were just dealing with Huxley on Museums" (Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, May 3, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office).

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 18, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>46</sup> *Nigeria Teacher* replaced the *Bulletin of Educational Affairs* in 1933 as the primary resource for African teachers. In 1936, Duckworth renamed it *Nigeria*, to expand the range of material covered in the journal. There were many contributors to the magazine, but Duckworth wrote extensively for it and contributed his own photographs.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, August 4, 1948. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 2, 1950. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. He continues to discuss the museum at Ife: "the PWD it seems admit that the Ife Museum is pretty disgraceful and evidently they are going to make an effort to repair it properly. The

Indeed, the issue was settled by fall 1950. On August 13, 1950, Murray noted “I hear that Bascom is satisfied with my withdrawal of accusations against him so he will be returning the two heads. A great victory.”<sup>49</sup> In October 1950 Bascom “and his Cuban wife,” folklorist Berta Montero Bascom, returned the heads:

I had heard so much from Duckworth about what charming people they were I expected something better than the actuality. But we quite friendly in spite of the past events and he seems quite satisfied [sic] to return them. She I am not so sure about, perhaps she regrets them. She dropped a remark that he had bequeathed the heads to Ife but that it was so much better to give them now and so get the credit before he died and not after.<sup>50</sup>

Back in Lagos in March, Murray wrote “I also collected the Bascom Ife heads which the Oni had brought to Lagos. They are better than I expected, probably the best two. They are now back here waiting to be packed.”<sup>51</sup>

For Bascom, however, the compromise was not settled. Before he left, Murray stated in a letter that he and the Bascoms had “quite a good evening although the supper was not very good. Bascom argued a lot against the customs regulations prohibiting export of antiquities and both he and she keep on harping on the sacrifice they have made in returning the heads.”<sup>52</sup> Perhaps Bascom felt as though he was forced to return the heads in exchange for permission to continue excavating in the country.

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Engineer has suggested that later on I should go round with him man and point out all the minor defects.” The struggle to open the Ife Museum will be elaborated on further in Chapter 4.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 13, 1950. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 18, 1950. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 2, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 22, 1950. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Murray was grateful for Bascom's decision. He hoped that it would encourage other anthropologists and museums to consider returning their own collections to Nigeria. In a letter to William Buller Fagg (1914-1992), older brother of Bernard, assistant keeper at the British Museum, the secretary of the RAI and editor of *Man*, Murray wrote:

I hope the BM will offer more things I am most pleased to have got the plaques [of Benin bronzes]. I do think it a bit hard and impolitic if they ask almost maximum prices, but it might be pointed out that the Nig. Govt does not deserve to get them cheaply since they do not build anywhere to keep them... You will have heard [sic] that Bascom is returning to Ife the two heads he obtained. A great triumph, but at the same time it is to his credit that he should have agreed to do so. Do you think that it would be possible to make some comment on this fact in "Man"? I am trying to think out how it could be framed because I don't remember seeing items of news appearing in "Man". Have you any suggestions. I should have liked to bring to the notice of anthropologists the fact of the return and how Bascom's action is appreciated and thought a generous one.<sup>53</sup>

This episode is significant when considering the work of both Duckworth and Murray for two reasons: the first is that it gave them a case to demand attention from the colonial government regarding antiquities. The second is the impact that it had on the precedent and rhetoric of repatriation, which still exists today.<sup>54</sup> The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, formerly the department of antiquities, currently requests that their antiquities be returned to them, citing the case of the Ife heads as the acknowledgment that antiquities removed from the country, even if before the antiquities ordinance of 1953, should be returned to Nigeria. Repatriation is the driving force of the NCMM, a legacy, I have claimed, rooted in these early beginnings. Indeed, Helen O. Kerri, the former assistant director of NCMM, frames her article

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<sup>53</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to William Fagg, September 9, 1950. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

<sup>54</sup> See for example Yusuf Abdallah Usman, "Nigeria's antiquities abroad must return," *National Commission for Museums and Monuments*, September 22, 2012, <http://www.ncmmnigeria.com/nigerias-antiquities-abroad-must-return-dg/>.

“Developing Museums: The Nigerian Experience” around the 1897 sack of Benin, demonstrating that all interest in protecting objects in Nigerian museums stemmed from the “catastrophic” looting of the Benin bronzes and ivories, 95 percent of which, she supposes, reside in institutions abroad.<sup>55</sup>

## World War II

Coupled with the Frobenius episode thirty years earlier, which was described in the first chapter, the Bascom incident raised the British Government’s awareness of the antiquities in their colony. The early surveys were at the forefront of art development in the region. Indeed, they were important surveys to conduct before World War II complicated the education office’s plans. In March of 1940, just over three years after Murray began these surveys of Nigerian crafts, he wrote to his mother, stating that

Rumour (from Duckworth) is that I am soon to be released from censoring as the Secretariat are beginning to think I am wasted where I am. Duckworth apparently had been seeing one of the Secretariat people lately – one who has to do with the finance committee for “Nigeria”- and he heard that this particular person wished to put in something in the proposals for the expenditure of the Home Govt grant for the development of arts and crafts.<sup>56</sup>

Having conducted these surveys, however, Murray had the ammunition to make incredible advancements in cultural preservation in the later years of the war and the twilight years of the British Empire. In September 1940, approximately one year after Britain declared war on Germany, Murray enlisted in the West African Forces.

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<sup>55</sup> Helen O. Kerri, “Developing Museums: The Nigerian Experience,” *Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments* 3 (1994), 59. There are significant mistakes in this article, but also a very useful perspective on the efforts to establish museums in colonial Nigeria.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March, 14 1940. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

As he was heading to Enugu for service, Murray was also packing up his collection of well over 290 works, primarily masks and headdresses to send to the University of Cape Town Museum.<sup>57</sup> This collection was intended for Nigeria upon the development of a museum. However, with the outbreak of World War II and his enlistment in His Majesty's Forces, Murray felt it was important that they be safeguarded in an established institution in case Nigeria fell to Germany. He wrote to faculty at two institutions in addition to the Cape Town Museum, including W. D. Hambley, curator of African ethnology at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and the National Museum (Smithsonian). The Smithsonian accepted the loan, but on the same day that it had already been shipped by way of the P. Elder Dempster Lines Limited to South Africa. In Murray's letter to the Smithsonian he writes "I am very sorry that the collection has not gone to America as I am sure that a considerable part of it would have aroused great interest."<sup>58</sup> Surely he was thinking about Bascom's collection, which had engendered attention in Evanston, Illinois.

Indeed, Murray saw the United States as the safest place, one away from the battlefield Europe was becoming. Yet he also feared what the outcome of the war might mean for Britain's colonies, and by default, the ownership of his collection, which he intended entirely for Nigeria. To Hambley at the Field Museum of Natural History, Murray wrote:

In the present critical situation in Europe one can not tell what may happen. It is possible that all that one has attempted to achieve will be lost. I am anxious to prepare for the worst, and therefore wonder, if the

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<sup>57</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to The Curator, Cape Town Museum, October 5, 1940. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive; Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 25, 1940. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>58</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to the Smithsonian, October 20, 1940. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos Archive.

situation should worsen and the danger of Germany obtaining control of this country should arise, whether the Chicago Field Museum would be disposed to take this collection of mine on loan? As many of the examples were purchased by me on the understanding that they were eventually to be placed in a Nigerian museum, I would have to make the condition that they should be returned to Nigeria if a museum should ever be properly established here. Otherwise there would be no restrictions on the loan. It is purely my private collection and in spite of efforts of myself and other there is as yet no legislation preventing the export of these works as it includes.<sup>59</sup>

It is most important to further emphasize that Murray never saw himself as a private collector amassing objects for personal gain. He built the collection with his own funds on behalf of the future Nigerian museum.<sup>60</sup> Murray's primary concern was finding a place for the work he had acquired in the previous four years. His shipment of thirty-four cases containing his collection of 290 artifacts arrived at the University of Cape Town Museum on February 4, 1941, days before he began his service.<sup>61</sup>

Murray served in the West African Forces from autumn 1941 until his unexpected discharge, sponsored by the colonial information office, in June 1943.<sup>62</sup> Murray was on leave in South Africa, visiting family and his collection at the University of Cape Town Museum, when he was notified to return. Of the timing of his discharge, Murray notes that

by a curious coincidence, I who had already resolved that after the war I would abandon my frustrated attempts in education but would put all my

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<sup>59</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to The Curator, Cape Town Museum, October 5, 1940. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive; Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 9-18, 1940. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>60</sup> "I intend to continue to purchase from my own pocket so that I can keep control" (Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, no date on letter or envelope, but it is from Benin and written sometime between September 5 and 19, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office).

<sup>61</sup> Telegram from P. Elder Dempster Lines Ltd. to Kenneth C. Murray, February 4, 1941. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive; Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 12, 1941. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>62</sup> Telegram from Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, June 19, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In his July 4<sup>th</sup> letter he says he was discharged from the army on June 18<sup>th</sup>, but that they had known since May 1943.

energies into getting a museum for Nigeria before I retired, at this moment reappeared in Lagos having unexpectedly left the military forces, in which I had been since 1940, and had been possted [sic] to the Information Office. Characterist [sic] when I went to see the Education Department I was told that my release from the forces had not been wanted my [sic] them.<sup>63</sup>

Upon his return to Lagos, a meeting was scheduled with Duckworth; Chief Secretary C. R. Butler; D. C. Fletcher from the Information Office; principal assistant secretary Malcolm Macdonald; the Chief Commissioner of the West Provinces, Sir Theo Chandice Hoskyns-Abrahall; and Governor Alexander Grantham. Murray anticipated the proceedings would clarify his duties.<sup>64</sup>

Grantham was particularly interested in a museum at Ife, which had garnered attention from international organizations, including the Museums Association in Great Britain, since the excavations conducted by Bascom in 1938. The Carnegie Foundation began an inquest into the feasibility of a museum at Ife, which resulted in a report by Colonel Markham and a grant from Carnegie to construct a museum there.<sup>65</sup> This line of funds was not enough encouragement for the government and, because it went unused, was revoked in 1943.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps it was one of the factors that led to Murray's appointment.

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<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 6.

<sup>64</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report 1953*, 3 and Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 6. In his memoir, he writes that Alexander Grantham, who was the Chief Secretary of Nigeria from 1941-1944, was quite concerned about the project and "asked about the proposed Ife Museum and I spoke about criticism which Julian Huxley, who was visiting Nigeria with the Commission on Higher Education, had made of the plan because it did not include a workshop. Grantham asked how much more would be needed for that and I though[sic] £5000. Next day it was arranged that the extra amount should be provided."

<sup>65</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.).

<sup>66</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 1, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

The meeting took place at the Government House on Wednesday, July 28, 1943.

According to Murray they

discussed 3 things- I had only been warned of one- Antiquities. They were a temporary museum at Lagos a scheme of Duckworths, Ife museum and W.A. Inst of arts etc. I was placed [a]t the side of the table next to Graham. I did not have much to say to the first scheme. Duckworth has kept on putting up proposals for a show room etc in a prominent place in Lagos. I don't knwo [sic] why it should have been approved now. It will include old works of art, new (for sale), scientific objects etc. An old army hut or huts is being bought for it, failing anything better turning up and site is to be found. It is advertising value and I suppose that is what they are concerned about. Any way Ducky is very pleased. Antiquities it was agreed that legislation is needed, and that will be continued with. The Ife museum is to be gone on with in spite of the withdrawal of the Carnegie money. The plans and fresh estimates are asked for. The Act Gov [Grantham] desired that I should give full time attention to the protection of Antiquities. So that was settled. There was some discussion whether I should be under the Inf Off. or Ed. And who should pay my salary. Fletcher had to surrender me from his scheme for touring in W. provinces on Inf work. But it was decided that I should remain in the Inf Off. They will provide a lorry, one of a number of new ones that have just come out. Butler makes no attempt to fight for Ed Dept interests. He just said that he had no money to pay for my touring which is true. But it is interesting that there is plenty of money for the Inf office etc but nothing for Ed. It seems that the Inf Office is gradually taking over a number of the duties that the Ed dept should have done. I have got to make plans of what I will do.<sup>67</sup>

His position, which was currently under the Information Office, was two-fold: the first was a formal survey of antiquities from across Nigeria, which could be recommended for preservation and export regulations.<sup>68</sup> The second job, which helped Murray ride the momentum of starting museums and art schools in West Africa, was as

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 1, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 4, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: "...perhaps I have not made it clear that my work will be travelling. I am just in the Lagos Office to get the hang of thinsg [sic] and to see what happens. I suppose in a bout a month time I will be travelling. I shall see how I shall like it..."



the Nigerian representative in Meyerovitz's scheme for the Achimota Institute of Arts in the Gold Coast.<sup>69</sup> This component will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

Murray's post as the surveyor of antiquities parallels the duties laid out in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Explained in *The Care of Ancient Monuments*, the antiquities surveyors are

state-appointed Conservators of monuments, and Monument-Commissions the members of which form a council attached to the Minister, whether of the Interior, of Education, or of Religion, who has in charge the department of the Fine Arts. The commissions are generally served by Inspectors of monuments...<sup>70</sup>

In his first report in his new capacity, Murray's recommendation was to establish a committee that would be charged with establishing a central museum.<sup>71</sup> It would take, however, another decade before an antiquities committee was formed to regulate the Department of Antiquities.

In August 1943 Murray officially began his survey of Nigerian antiquities, which would last until focus shifted to museum development and export legislation. Armed with a camera and film from the information office, his mission was to extensively document the work.<sup>72</sup> He recalled at the time that,

when I started on antiquities in 1943 one of my first steps was to consider the scope of the future Nigerian Museum...I did not find much enthusiasm

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<sup>69</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 4, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>70</sup> Brown, 1905, 41.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Murray. "Preservation of Antiquities: Report and Recommendations Arising from a Tour in the Western Provinces," Official Government Report, 1943, 9. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

<sup>72</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 8, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: "...It would be a great nuisance to have no camera on this work. For Instance the Esie stone heads in Ilorin wnat [sic] cataloguing and I think then should be photoed. There are nearly 800 of them." The Information Office maintained control of the copyright of Murray's photographs.

[beyond Haig]. It therefore seemed to me that it would be better to concentrate on antiquities and ethnography alone instead of [tackling] the natural science [sic] also.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps he was given a budget and permission to collect for the government. Though there is little documentation to suggest it, he does make a point of collecting work to amass a private collection rather than a government collection because, as Murray suggests, he did not want to be restricted by an allowance so that he could negotiate better prices for the artists.

Before Murray began to document and collect antiquities, he had to define the parameters of his search. As Murray was posted to survey Nigeria, D. A. F. Shute, the district officer, replaced MacDonald as the Principal Assistant Secretary and took

on the Antiquities file he was able to suggest some quite useful alterations in the working of the orders as composed by the legal dept. There is a stiffening of the Order in Council prohibiting export without Gov. Permission. It now covers things made before 1918 and works of art which have been or are being used in African ceremonies. Which is pretty drastic and as I wanted. Specimen Rules have also been made for Native Authorities...I have been visiting the Secretariat also frequently for files. I have been going through files and intelligence reports that have any information on antiquities etc.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to all objects made before 1918 (at the conclusion of World War I) and any work made specifically for religious purposes after 1918, all archaeological artifacts would be protected and collected under antiquities preservation.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 7a.

<sup>74</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 8, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>75</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum, Lagos and Professor in the Department of the History of Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies) in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012.

One of the initial surveys, conducted between August 25 and September 27, 1943 in Ondo Province, specifically Ife, Benin, and Esie, resulted in the report “Preservation of Antiquities: Report and Recommendations Arising from a Tour in the Western Provinces,” distributed through the colonial offices.<sup>76</sup> Murray would continue his survey of Nigerian antiquities for about three years. During this time, however, he faced the bureaucratic challenges of working with the colonial government.

One of the important results of Murray’s conclusions about antiquities is also one of the most controversial aspects today: the separation of art and antiquities. Scholars such as Okeke-Agulu claim that Murray was inhibiting the development of modern art in Nigeria because of his emphasis on traditional crafts. Indeed, Murray focused on antiquities, and this would distinguish his efforts from those of Duckworth, who did focus on modern Nigerian artists. I suggest that promoting modern artists was not in the scope of Murray’s job; rather, the colonial government expected Murray to focus on antiquities. Murray does stress his fear of losing Nigeria’s heritage to modernism, seeming to stem from the efforts of Meyerowitz in the Gold Coast, who wanted to industrialize traditional crafts, and the curriculum proposed by Onabolu, who privileged European artistic traditions over traditional Nigerian art.

### Edward Harland Duckworth

Crucial to Murray’s campaign was Edward Harland Duckworth, director of the education department, who had a keen interest in Nigerian art and pushed for the

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<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Preservation of Antiquities: Report and Recommendations Arising from a Tour in the Western Provinces,” 1943. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

extensive multi-year survey of the country's visual culture in 1936. Duckworth arrived in Nigeria as an inspector of education under E. R. J. Hussey, the director of education, in October 1930.<sup>77</sup> Duckworth would help write the curriculum for science education and teach at the government colleges in Ibadan and Umuahia. Duckworth began his administrative career the following year in Lagos by helping to produce the programs for science teaching at Yaba Higher College and at mission schools. In 1933, Hussey expanded Duckworth's duties to include editing a periodical for teachers, which would become the illustrated, multi-disciplinary journal *Nigeria*.<sup>78</sup> This publication would prove to be an important platform for Duckworth and other colonial officers to express their ideas, concerns, and work in the colony. Additionally, *Nigeria* is the journal that first published a call for museums in Nigeria.<sup>79</sup> Not only this, *Nigeria* magazine became a popularized version of an ethnography journal and as such is an invaluable resource to scholars even today. By 1935, Duckworth had completed the science curriculum and hired a sufficient number of teachers, and was looking for a new project.<sup>80</sup>

Though little is written about Duckworth, his friends and colleagues had mixed feelings about him. For Murray, he was at once an ally and friend and a foolish bureaucrat. In Murray's unpublished account, he writes that Duckworth "was an individualist who aroused the resentment of several members of the Department because

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<sup>77</sup> Duckworth's biography at the Bodleian explains that he arrived in Nigeria in autumn of 1930. Murray states in his "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum" that Duckworth was appointed to organize science teaching in 1929.

<sup>78</sup> "Collection Level Description: Papers of Edward Harland Duckworth," *Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House*, accessed July 24, 2012, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/blcas/duckworth-eh.html>.

<sup>79</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 1.

<sup>80</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 5, 1935. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

of the freedom of movement which he acquired for himself and because of his higher salary. Several of the Department became his friends.”<sup>81</sup>

Though it is unclear when Duckworth first became interested in the art of Nigeria, he seems to have developed his interests through the education scheme he worked to instate with Hussey in 1936. This scheme proposed to teach crafts to the unemployed who came to Lagos from their villages.<sup>82</sup> Duckworth and Hussey proposed to employ blacksmiths, carpenters, and cobblers, among others in Lagos and Abeokuta. The English Board of Education called for a more extensive investigation, so Duckworth assigned Murray and Hunt-Cooke to conduct a survey regarding his proposal. A byproduct of this initial survey was a more comprehensive curriculum for teaching crafts.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, at this time, Duckworth was soliciting articles about various crafts from Murray.

It was not until 1944, that Duckworth’s position as Inspector of Education was eliminated and his title became "Editor of Nigeria and Organiser of Exhibitions." This was a crucial role for Duckworth and Nigeria. In this capacity he developed exhibitions of modern Nigerian artists in Lagos, but he also sought to generate interest in their work abroad. Furthermore, he began to construct his own ideas about what a Nigerian museum would look like: he envisioned an exhibition space for expatriates to see Nigerian modern art mingled with Nigerian traditional art and antiquities.

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<sup>81</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 1.

<sup>82</sup> Duckworth started a number of programs, for which, he was never recognized. In 1942, he ran a small boys camp for impoverished children from Lagos in Igboshere. Igboshere was a center for many of his benefits and he sought to enhance living conditions. He was a proponent of linking village life and education to promote jobs and improvements within the villages rather than educating villagers only to have them seek opportunities in the big cities. He began a school in Igboshere, which initially garnered attention, but eventually fizzled out.

<sup>83</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 9, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray makes an interesting observation when he says about the project that “Incidentally [sic] the question of processes, material etc hardly arises, it is more a matter of marketing possibilities, number of craftsmen, demand for improvements etc.”

In 1943, after Murray began his survey, he wrote of the support Duckworth received for his project:

Duck. Has got his money for the temporary museum. I hope the Govt will be as generous over life. Nearly £2000 for a temporary museum, including upkeep and £200 for purchases. I intend to continue to purchase from my own pocket so that I can keep control. I don't rely on D's idea of a museum especially as he wants to put his proteges in as curators. I know D hopes that I will purchase things as I go round as examples of new work that will be put in special SHOWS but I don't think I will have much time for that anyway at present.<sup>84</sup>

Duckworth wanted to combine his exhibition efforts with Murray's, seeing their missions as the same and believing the impact would be stronger together. Murray disagreed:

I think he wants to combine forces but in an independent capacity. I must wait till I see what he says before deciding, but there is always the danger to be avoided that the unpopularity of someone [sic] may prevent progress with one's own plans. Thus it is a disadvantage that Nevin is very unpopular: things [sic] I put forward for museums which must go through [sic] him may get turned down by someone in order to disoblige Nevin. Duckworth is not unpopular but is thought to be rather wild in his ideas, so I don't want to compromise the museum plans but [sic] people getting the idea that they are impractical simply because Duckworth [sic] has had some connection with them.<sup>85</sup>

By 1948, Duckworth had fought to open an exhibition center, which he envisioned would become the national museum – one in which contemporary work from Nigeria and Europe could be displayed with antiquities.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Duckworth was very

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<sup>84</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, no date on letter or envelope, but it is from Benin and written sometime between September 5 and 19, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 22, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>86</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

interested in museums.<sup>87</sup> Murray, dissatisfied, sought a separate site for the National Museum, Lagos.

Duckworth would retire to Cheltenham, England in July 1953.<sup>88</sup> He continued to return to Nigeria for the remaining twenty years of his life. In spite of his contribution to education in Nigeria, the Department of Antiquities, and art exhibitions in Lagos, he was overlooked for an invitation to the independence celebrations of October 1960. However, Nnamdi Azikiwe, fondly known as Zik, did invite Duckworth to a reception at the National Museum, Lagos just over a month later on November 17, 1960.<sup>89</sup> Duckworth continued to travel back and forth from England to Nigeria, at least until 1968. He died in England on January 14, 1972, just four months before Murray.<sup>90</sup>

#### Education Office or Public Relations Office

Duckworth fought to have the antiquities section under the direction of the education office and even found himself seeking a new title to expand his control over Nigerian art. Murray revisited the places in southern Nigeria he had initially explored during his 1936-1940 tour under the auspices of the education department. After the July 28 meeting, the antiquities survey was under the direction of the public relations office,

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<sup>87</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 18, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>88</sup> "Collection Level Description: Papers of Edward Harland Duckworth," Bodleian Library, accessed July 24, 2012, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/blcas/duckworth-eh.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Murray attended this function as well. Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 23, 1960. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Zik would become the first president of Nigeria.

<sup>90</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray, November 21, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray, February 3, 1968. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

which changed the survey's emphasis.<sup>91</sup> Murray, independently minded as he was, felt stifled having to report to either office. He envisioned his own department under which to direct antiquities preservation and museum development. So, as the education department and the public relations office fought for control over antiquities, Murray tried to position himself in such a way that would allow him to easily extricate his work from either department. In a letter to his mother in March 1944, Murray wrote:

I cycled some way back with [Grantham], and also mentioned that I wished the Antiquities were under Education than PRO, but he thought it would be easier to break Antiquities away from PRO than from Education as he pictured Antiquities as separate. He is a very easy person to talk to.<sup>92</sup>

Murray would probably have had an easier time making a case for why the survey fit less within the jurisdiction of the PRO than the education department.

Murray preferred working under the education department. He had a good relationship with Duckworth and felt as though Duckworth would give him free reign. On the other hand, Sir Rex Niven from the public relations office expected Murray to write memos through his department and held Murray accountable for all of his expenses and efforts to build museums.<sup>93</sup> Ultimately, Murray was discouraged by both departments and made little effort to choose one supervisor over the other until he was able to make a case for his own department. He told Davidson: "I am inclined not to trouble and leave

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<sup>91</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946, 1947*, 1. "In July 1943 a member of the Education Department was seconded to the Public Relations Office in order to tour and make a report on the practical steps to be taken to preserve the known antiquities of Nigeria. During the following twenty-two months this officer travelled extensively in Nigeria paying particular attention to the antiquities at Ife, Benin, Esie, Ikot Ekpene, Bende and Oron. Many of the chief centres in the Northern Provinces at which antiquities had been reported were also visited. In 1946 Antiquities and Cultural Relations were constituted as a separate section of Government and were for the purposes of the Estimates placed under the Secretariat. A new post of Surveyor of Antiquities was established."

<sup>92</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 7, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>93</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, n.d., but most likely the last week in May, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



antiquities as it is until it can be separated both from education and PRO.”<sup>94</sup> For Murray, this was not his fight; he preferred to be left to conduct his work, particularly after Duckworth was given the title of Curator of Antiquities, a major blow to Murray. After this, as far as Murray was concerned, Duckworth, as curator, could fight to have the antiquities section under the purview of the education department.<sup>95</sup>

By spring 1945, Murray began to push for his own department, feeling frustrated with Duckworth and the education department and knowing he was a low priority for the public relations office:

I put forward what I thought my position should be and my misgivings about attachment to the Ed. Dept. Davidson seemed keen to get me back into the Dept and had a post as researcher under his technical scheme. I did not show much enthusiasm for this preferring [sic] to get something done under Antiquities. I had to try and tactfully make out the point that I should do Antiquities and Duckworth circulating exhibitions as two separate but alli[e]d works. I think that Davidson had intended that I should do research into antiquities while Ducky should be curator of antiquities (as he has been put down in Estimates). Ducky had already said that that title was really wrong as I was doing antiquities but I think he did hanker after it, for he did drop a remark about Director of Museums and Antiquities might be a suitable title for him. But I stuck to my point although I could not state it outright that I would not let Ducky have the antiquities, but that I would hand them over to a qualified curator when there was one. Duck. Rather tried to attack me as not being justified in buying the carvings for myself and not for the Govt when the Govt pays me for travelling round. I had tried to bring Duckys schemes [sic] into the museum [sic] scheme by providing workshops and [sic] galleries in the central museum [sic] for circulating exhibitions. But Ducky came quite uncooperative and did not want to play. He is funny, evidently like or worse than Nevin, he only wants what he has thought about and further does not want to have anything to do with what he does not run himself. Over Antiquities I drop hints where I would like his help but clearly he will do nothing whatever except to imply how much better he would do it. He is really rather childish. Anyway I think he was annoyed with me as

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<sup>94</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 10, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>95</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 10, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

he would hardly speak after and although I hung back to see if he wanted to say anything he clearly did not. Since it was due to him that I got the work on antiquities it puts me in a slightly awkward [sic] position, although I have never changed from the line I have always taken on the subject. Davidson proposed [proposed] to get me made Antiquities Officer under the Ed. Dept. But on the whole the interview left things more nebulous. It seems necessary to put up a scheme for museums to get money out the CDevlpfund, but this is not easy when so much depends on certain [sic] decisions on policy. But I have spent to day [sic]...in seeing what I could make out, onto this I will tack the que[s]tion of the position of Antiquities Officer as being independent of a dept.<sup>96</sup>

In spring 1945 Murray sought the opinion of Hoskyns-Abrahall, chief commissioner of the West Provinces, who was at the July 28 meeting:

I wanted to get his opinion on my position. After my experiences from Esie onwards I decided things could not go on as they were and that either I must get more direct responsibility or else refuse to go on with the work on antiquities. I have composed a strong letter which I am not yet sure whether I will send. It is so damning of Niven although I have tried not to make it seem a criticism of him. Abrahall thought my attitude was reasonable. I have taken Oron, Esie and Ife as examples of muddle and delay due to PRO. I now hear the [sic] Niven is getting pushed out of PRO and that Fletcher is coming back. I therefore wonder whether to send the letter or not as Fletcher is unlikely to interfere. I shall have a talk with him first. On the other hand I want my position clear for I equally don't want to be mixed up with Education, since they do not show enthusiam [sic] for antiquities. Since Davidson the Director says I should write an article to show how musuems [sic] are useful for education I think I will leave that to Duckworth and not spend time and energy in trying to convince them. So [I] try and separate Ducksoeths [sic] exhibition schemes from protection of antiquities.<sup>97</sup>

It was during H. J. Braunholtz's visit in 1946 that Murray received the news that the colonial office would fund antiquities as an independent section under the Secretariat. Murray received the new title of Surveyor of Antiquities and his salary would be paid by

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<sup>96</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 25, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>97</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 4, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

the Secretariat. Duckworth insinuated, “Antiquities will eventually be a separate dept.”<sup>98</sup> The antiquities service was shuffled among different departments for the next ten years.<sup>99</sup> With the ministerial government in 1951, the service fell under the minister of works. In 1957, it once again became a subsection of the education department. Finally, the antiquities service became an independent colonial department in 1958, under the ministry of education.<sup>100</sup>

### Bernard E. B. Fagg

Murray had been researching archaeological practice and ethics from the beginning of his survey, but he had no formal training. By the time he arrived in Ife in August 1943, he knew that he needed to seek the advice of an expert. “I want to look out for someone who can undertake excavations at Ife for example. Who is competent and public spirited. He does not want to carry off what is found. An interest in African history desirable. (ie an interest in something that hardly exists, but is of intriguing interest)...”<sup>101</sup> So, when Murray was introduced to Bernard Fagg in late December 1944, Murray did everything in his power to develop a position for him in the antiquities service.

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<sup>98</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 16, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>99</sup> In the *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 3, Murray wrote, “In October, 1951, the slender connection which the Antiquities Branch had had for “administrative convenience” with the Education Department was ended and it became independent.”

<sup>100</sup> Bernard Fagg, “The Museums of Nigeria,” *Museum* 16, no. 3 (1963), 124.

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In this letter he was also developing questions about conservation: “I should be glad of Betty’s opinion and inquiries from her archeological friends. (i) How can wooden carvings best be treated to preserve them from weather and insects. (a) in a house (b) in open under cover. (The carvings are often painted) (ii) How to treat wooden postes which nominally support a cross beam. They stand in a mud wall. I favour at present clearing the earth from the part in the ground and pouring tar round the base. Then treating the unpainted surfaces and perhaps the painted surfaces with cellulose in acetone. But will that withstand open air conditions?”

During Murray's first trip to Northern Nigeria, he spent time in Jos, in the Plateau region, where a productive tin-mining industry regularly uncovered Stone Age artifacts. It was in Jos that Murray met Fagg, an assistant district officer for the plateau region. Fagg was an active contributor in the department and, as the only trained archaeologist working with Murray, established the archaeological protocol in Nigeria and oversaw excavations throughout the country. In 1957, Fagg was promoted to director of the department of antiquities. Fagg worked hard to establish the Jos Museum, a project already in development when he met Murray. As surveyor, Murray bridged the conversation that was happening with the colonial government and in the Gold Coast with Fagg in Jos, which until this point had been isolated from the discussion about antiquities and museums.

Bernard Evelyn Buller Fagg (1915-1987) completed a degree in archaeology and anthropology from Dulwich College, Cambridge University in 1937. He continued at Cambridge in Downing College with the year-long colonial officers' course, where he studied Hausa. Fagg arrived in Nigeria in September 1939 and was posted to Jos as an administrative cadet, eventually becoming an assistant district officer.<sup>102</sup> His interest in archaeology made the Jos Plateau the perfect assignment, as stone tools had been found there by tin miners: "He was interested in the archaeology from the beginning and he would go out into the tin mines any chance he got. There were educated amateurs...out there, but no one trained. All the development – of roads, infrastructure was destroying

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<sup>102</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012. Also see Trevor Clark's *Was it only Yesterday? The Last Generation of Nigeria's 'Turawa'* (Bristol: British Empire & Commonwealth Museum Press, 2002), 189.

evidence.”<sup>103</sup> His daughter, Angela Fagg Rackham, explained that as a student of archaeology, Fagg wanted to be in Jos, where opportunities to practice were always available to amateurs and, when the position of Government Archaeologist became available, for professionals. In a letter Fagg wrote to Murray in 1946, just before his official appointment, he said: “I confessed that if I was given the chance here or elsewhere I would like to become a whole-time archaeologist.”<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, in Jos, there was an embryonic museum at the mines run by the chief inspector of mines. The museum held material found on and off the plateau. Col. John Dent Young had a lease in the Nok area and he excavated and put things in the museum. When Fagg arrived at his post, he was put in charge of the museum.<sup>105</sup> When war was declared, he joined the Royal West African Force and was sent to serve in Abyssinia and East Africa in 1940-41. He worked with archaeologists Louis and Mary Leakey in Kenya while on leave. There, Fagg met and married Catherine Davidson in 1942. Within days of their wedding he was sent back to Nigeria. Fagg, who could speak Hausa, was involved in making sure the tin was getting out and back to the United Kingdom. Catherine was waiting in Kenya and was finally allowed to join him in Nigeria in 1943. Together they catalogued the little collection.<sup>106</sup> He and Catherine used their local leave to work on the

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<sup>103</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>104</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, August 3, 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archives.

<sup>105</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012. See also Ekpo Eyo, John Picton, John Povey, and Frank Willet, “Bernard Fagg: 1915-1987,” *African Arts* 21, no. 2 (1988), 10 and 12.

<sup>106</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012. See also Ekpo Eyo, John Picton, John Povey, and Frank Willet, 1988, 10 and 12.

rock shelter at Rop in 1944.<sup>107</sup> Bringing along their children, they would later excavate Nok and Taruga, making it a family affair.<sup>108</sup>

Just as Murray publically vocalized the dire state of antiquities, Fagg also tried to advocate for the disappearing history. In his 1946 article “Archaeological Notes from Northern Nigeria,” published in *Man*, he wrote,

the buried archaeological material of Northern Nigeria, is in part at least, a wasting asset, no less than the archaeological riches which lie a few feet below the ground of the city of London : the draglines of the tin industry and the natural action of the rivers and the elements are removing the evidence as effectively as will the builders of the new London, and it is up to us to rescue all that we can. Unfortunately it is the earliest relics that tend to suffer worst in this process of destruction, and it may be, therefore, that we ought to concentrate our first efforts on preserving the traces of the old Stone Age. But, it is not on archaeologists alone that the responsibility lies of furthering the work of discovery and preservation, though they must certainly point the way. It lies also on the mining companies and the individual miners, the Government and its officials, and increasingly, we may hope, on the Africans themselves. We must urge all these people to realize more clearly than most of them do at present that archeology is in Northern Nigeria, as elsewhere, the responsibility of the whole community and that the prehistoric materials buried there can serve the same political and social purpose that two thousand years of history do in this country.<sup>109</sup>

Murray was thrilled and relieved to find a trained archaeologist to assist him, particularly in regulating excavations in Nigeria. Fagg was a dedicated colleague who worked tirelessly to excavate for Nigeria. One particular find, the Jema’a Head (figure 4), is still recognized as one of the most important antiquities from Nok. Fagg’s excavations

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<sup>107</sup> Fagg describes the Rop excavation in “Preliminary Report on a Microlithic Industry at Rop Rock Shelter, Northern Nigeria,” *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 10 (1944), 68-69. Fagg’s daughter Angela Rackham recalls in an interview on June 25, 2012 that they made no more than one trip to England a year and so excavations were always a family affair. This would continue to be true even in the 1960s when Angela and her brother, John, returned to Northern Nigeria in 1967 with archeological degrees.

<sup>108</sup> Though this letter is dated at the time in which he had only one child, it demonstrates that the Faggs were not afraid to bring their children into the field with them (a practice that Murray was very vocally against). See Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, April 24, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

<sup>109</sup> Bernard Fagg “48. Archeological Notes from Northern Nigeria,” *Man* 46 (1946), 54,

at Nok will be elaborated on in chapter 4. The discovery of the Jema'a terracotta in 1947 gave Fagg the means to raise funds for a museum. About this find Murray wrote:

...Fagg seems to be getting on quite well. A new and fine terra cotta [sic] has come to light. Somewhat similar to the other finds on the Plateau, I think it is really the finest of them. It is rather delicatel [sic] mouleded [sic] with a curious coiffure. Probable date about 100 BC. It is most interesting how a new hitherto unknown culture of this gae [sic] is now coming to light. The interest on hair styles suggests a rather similar interest in these artists and those of the Esië stone figures, which were probably not more than 300 years old. And the terra cotta a link with Ife. I wonder if bronzes will yet turn up...<sup>110</sup>

The Jema'a Head sat on Fagg's mantle, on display, appealing to colonialists and wealthy Africans who might help to support a museum for Jos.

Fagg was initially charged with regulating and managing the archaeological excavations in Nigeria. In 1948, in his official capacity as government archaeologist, Fagg conducted surveys:

During the nine months spent in Nigeria during 1948, the most important field work was concentrated into three periods. The first, lasting nearly a month in March and April, was a 2,000—mile reconnaissance journey to Yoruba-land and the Western Niger valley. Plans were made for excavations to be begun during 1949 at Ile-Ife, traditional home of the Yoruba people and one of the richest protohistoric sites yet discovered in West Africa.<sup>111</sup>

Interest in Ife had not waned. Fagg would spend years with a team excavating and restoring the Opa Oranmiyan (figure 5), which will be discussed later in the chapter.

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<sup>110</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, 29 November 1947. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>111</sup> B.E.B Fagg, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 7.

Like Murray, Fagg intended to build a permanent museum to house his archaeological collections. In his 1946 article for *Man*, Fagg revealed his approach to museum culture:

If the Museums are to serve the people, as they surely should, then they must evolve locally, among and out of the people whose pride and confidence in themselves and their culture they can do so much to foster and to confirm. Good use might well be made in this connexion of the private museums kept by some of the Emirs and also of such small school museums as already exist.<sup>112</sup>

Fagg challenged Murray's idea of the central museum. He felt that centralization, particularly in a country as large, diverse, and historically rich as Nigeria would deprive the majority of the population of its cultural material. Rather, Nigeria should invest in a combination of central and regional institutions.<sup>113</sup> Perhaps part of his opinion was informed by the concern that the Jos Museum would probably be marginalized next to a museum in Lagos, the political, economic, and educational cosmopolis.

Another important opinion Fagg espoused early in his antiquities career concerned repatriation. Though he felt it important to develop and enforce export policies, he did provide a balance to Murray's dogmatic advocacy for repatriation. In his article for *Man*, Fagg explained that equally important to displaying cultural objects for the benefit of citizens was having an international audience develop an interest in and understanding of the culture. This parallels the British Museum's own mission. Conceivably Fagg was influenced by the philosophy of the British Museum due not only to his association with Braunschweig, but also because of familial ties, his brother William Fagg. Fagg suggested that

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<sup>112</sup> Fagg, 1946, 54-55.

<sup>113</sup> Fagg, 1946, 54-55.



selected specimens and type series might and should, wherever possible, be sent to Lagos, Achimota and Dakar, to London and to Oxford and Cambridge, not grudgingly but with pride. By such means as these archaeology and archaeological museums can, I believe, help the African to stand in the role of a self-assured partner in association with us, and not merely as our ward in trusteeship, imitating too uncritically the superficial attributes of our alien culture.<sup>114</sup>

This was, and remains today, in contrast to much Nigerian rhetoric regarding repatriation, which asserts that Nigeria was looted and therefore colonial countries are benefitting from Nigeria's heritage, while the museums in Nigeria are barren.<sup>115</sup>

Fagg's resistance to Lagos was as strong as his commitment to Jos. Upon his promotion to director of the department of antiquities, Fagg moved the headquarters to Jos, where he thought they always should have been. This may have been because he had made his home there and his work necessitated access to the North. Yet there were practical reasons for the move as well. The climate in Jos, with its low humidity, was more ideal for objects, documents, and books than that of Lagos.

Fagg's contributions extended beyond his hard work for the antiquities service. Before he met Murray, he met Julian Huxley in Jos in 1943. Huxley's tour will be discussed further in the next chapter, but during this meeting Fagg surely divulged his plans for a museum. Additionally, Williams Fagg connected the Nigerian antiquities section to the entire network of British anthropologists. Bernard provided Murray a letter of introduction to Braunholtz in April 1945.<sup>116</sup> William worked for Braunholtz, the keeper of ethnology at the British Museum, who would not only tour the country to make

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<sup>114</sup> Fagg, 1946, 54-55.

<sup>115</sup> See Peju Layiwola, *Benin1897.com: Art and the Restitution Question* (Lagos: Wy Art Editions, 2010).

<sup>116</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, April 24, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

recommendations for museum development in 1946, but send a reference to the colonial government recommending Bernard for the government archaeologist position Murray had developed.<sup>117</sup> William Fagg played a major role in the archaeological work in Nigeria from his first trip to the country in November 1949 until 1959. During this decade, he researched, collected for the British Museum, and took upward of 3,000 photographs, currently held at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London.<sup>118</sup>

William studied classical paleography at Cambridge under Sir Ellis Minns, which proved to be a valuable skill set in the excavations of Ife and the collecting of objects for both Nigeria and the British Museum.<sup>119</sup> He was hired by the British Museum in 1938. He had hoped to work on the ethnographic collections of the American Indians, but Adrian Digby had seniority and pursued it first, leaving William with no choice but to manage the African collection. Coincidentally, William had a strong connection to the emerging field of West African archaeology. He made many visits to his brother between 1949 and 1959, assisting on the 1953 excavations at Ife and the reconstruction of the Opa Oranmiyan. Murray picked up William Fagg from the airport on January 18, 1953 to begin the Ife expedition.<sup>120</sup> He conducted several collecting trips for the British Museum and from November 1958 until April 1959 William “traveled with the Yoruba Historical

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<sup>117</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 7a.

<sup>118</sup> See Deborah Stokes, “Documentary Observations: The African Photographs of William B. Fagg, 1949-1959,” *African Art* 36, No. 4 (2003), 58-71 and 95-96. The negatives and copyright are held by the RAI, but copies of his photographs are archived at the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institutions, Washington, DC; The Robert Goldwater Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; and the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

<sup>119</sup> Henry Drewal and William Fagg, “To William Fagg,” *African Arts* 19, No. 4, 1986, 77.

<sup>120</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, January 18, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Research Scheme, led by S.O. Biobaku of the Western Region Government of Nigeria.”<sup>121</sup>

1946 was the turning point for the antiquities project in Nigeria. In February, Brauholtz arrived from England thanks to a research grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The impact this tour had on the establishment of museums in Nigeria will be discussed further in the next chapter, but the tour also raised awareness of antiquities preservation as well. His tour included visits to the Gold Coast, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and, of course, Nigeria, where Brauholtz remained for six weeks under the guidance of Murray. Brauholtz’s visit was nearly exhaustive, as he traveled to every region that Murray had surveyed in the previous three years.<sup>122</sup> The colonial office looked to Brauholtz to produce a report to inform their next move. In the Annual Report for 1946, Murray wrote that the

plans and decisions on general principles and future policy to be followed in the protection of antiquities in Nigeria await the arrival of Mr Brauholtz’s report...One of the chief questions is whether there should be a central museum, in which the more important objects will be concentrated, and small regional museum, with touring collections to serve provincial headquarters and educational centres.<sup>123</sup>

#### Mission of the Antiquities Service: Repatriation, Excavation, and Preservation

With the help of Bernard Fagg, Murray and the antiquities service were beginning to make their voices heard. It was Murray and Fagg’s mission to establish museums in Nigeria, but the antiquities service was responsible for much more. By 1946, the mission was more concrete. The antiquities service was “charged with the responsibility for

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<sup>121</sup> Stokes, 2003, 60.

<sup>122</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 1.

<sup>123</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 3.

discovering, preserving and studying the traditional material culture of the diverse peoples of Nigeria of the present day and backwards in time to the remotest past, in all its aspects and manifestations, and for presenting and publishing the results of this work.”<sup>124</sup>

The service also fought tirelessly for the repatriation of antiquities that had been taken abroad. This range of responsibilities was entirely executed by one department, distinguishing Nigeria from every other country in tropical Africa, which divided the tasks among different divisions.<sup>125</sup>

Repatriation was one of the most direct missions that Murray pursued for the antiquities department, and one of the strongest legacies that he left behind. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments is still actively pushing for museums and collectors abroad to return the objects they feel left the country under inappropriate circumstances. Murray began pursuing the return of the nation’s antiquities in 1938 with the William Bascom case. For Murray this opened many cases in which Nigeria had been “robbed” of its heritage. Though an antiquities ordinance was not passed until 1953, Murray began regulating the export of objects as soon as he took his post as surveyor.

In 1940, Murray began to investigate the total loss of antiquities at the hands of the Germans, particularly during Frobenius’s expedition. Frobenius described his discoveries in his three-volume tome *The Voice of Africa*, which Murray owned and consulted to verify the Ife terracottas that had been excavated and removed from Nigeria.<sup>126</sup> Though the antiquities service hoped that museums and collectors would

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<sup>124</sup> Fagg, 1963, 124.

<sup>125</sup> Fagg, 1963, 125.

<sup>126</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 20, 1940. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: “I have a fat German book by Frobenius, I wonder if father would mind looking up the illustrations at the back and see how many terra cottas from Ife are illustrated. I am trying to find out how many Frobenius took away with him. It is either 7 or 9.”

generously return Nigerian artifacts, they soon realized that, in many cases, they would have to buy the objects. It was not until 1946 that Murray received money to purchase Nigerian objects in foreign collections, particularly German and British collections.<sup>127</sup> In the Annual Report for 1947, Murray reiterated the progress made in 1946:

In the 1946 Report it was stated that the Nigerian Government had provided £25,000 for the purchase of Nigerian antiquities abroad. Inquiries had been made and it was hoped that it would be possible to purchase a part of the large amount of Nigerian work that before the war was in German museums. Many museums had works from Benin and the largest single collection in the world was in the Volkerkunde Museum in Berlin which also had terra-cottas and stone carvings from Ife which had been collected in 1910. The removal of these things from Ife had been resented by the people at the time and to this day Yorubas remember and regret the loss. It had been difficult to get information about German museums but it is now known that the collections in Berlin were evacuated during the war and have completely disappeared, but that most of the other important collections of Nigerian work are intact and in the British or American zones of occupation. It has been ruled, however, by the Control Commission that no part of these can be sold and that all must be kept until the Peace Treaty when they may be partially used as reparations for museums that suffered loss through German action during the war. Although nothing was obtained from German museums, purchases have been made from England. There are still a number of ancient works from Benin that were brought to England in 1897 and that have not gone into public collections. Information now reaches the Nigerian Government of most important works that come on the market, so it has been possible to get examples of Benin ivories and bronzes that were completely or almost completely unrepresented in Nigeria. Thus have been obtained among other articles a number of fine bronze heads, a type of work which previously in Nigeria there had been only one intact specimen, a large carved ivory tusk and several bronze plaques and pendant masks. Most of these pieces were bought from an exhibition of Benin art that was held at the Berkeley Galleries at the end of the year. The exhibition was opened by Lord Milverton who in the course of his speech appealed to owners in Great Britain of old specimens of Nigerian art to make arrangements wherever possible for the return of these works to Nigeria. Only fifty Benin bronzes and ivories are in Nigeria while there are between two and three thousand in England and other countries.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 2, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>128</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 8.

Murray pursued the collection of the British Museum, which held a significant number of Benin antiquities acquired during the Benin punitive expedition. He was willing to acquire these either as gifts or purchases, but resented when he was asked to pay market price for anything. A crucial purchase Murray made was the collection of Admiral Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson, commander of the Benin Expedition.<sup>129</sup> Murray often looked to colleagues to bid on objects for him at Sotheby's, but also asked Brauholtz and William Fagg to represent Nigeria's case to the trustees of the British Museum to return the Benin collection (figure 6). This request was always denied, instead they provided counter offers such as selling reproductions or twenty or thirty Benin bronze panels.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, in 1949, the Trustees of the British Museum sold thirty panels to Nigeria at cost. Though Murray requested funds from the government, he also sought out individuals to build the collection and the museum.<sup>131</sup>

Murray did not just have William Fagg watching the market. Whenever anyone from the antiquities branch returned to England, they sought out collections. The money could always be gotten later, but Murray wanted to ensure that every collector knew that he was looking to repatriate all Nigerian antiquities. For example, while on leave in 1948,

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<sup>129</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 15, 1949. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>131</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 23, 1949. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. This particular letter is interesting because Murray alludes to the tensions that were beginning to build between the government and Nnamdi Azikiwe, whom Murray disliked. "I heard from Brauholtz that the BM Trustees did not agree to give any Benin work to Nigeria but have agreed to sell thirty panels. It will be wonderful if this comes off. They may cost about £5000 so I may have to ask the Govt for more money. Will they give it. I made a proposa; [sic] to raise[sic] money for the museum from a few wealthy individuals. The latter was turned down chiefly I think because [sic] it was feared that Azikiwe's name might be associated with the museum. The former has been approved but as a general fund for purchase of antiquities. Thus the money for the BM panels should be there because the C.S. said that lack of money was not the reason why the museum was not built, but on the other hand it may be said that I should raise the money by private contributions."

Fagg was enlisted to see about “two very fine Benin bronze heads” in the possession of M. Hakim, an antiques collector in London.<sup>132</sup>

By 1950, the cost of Nigerian artifacts had risen out of the reach of the antiquities section’s budget. The British Museum continued to build their collection and made casts of many of the newly acquired works, which they sold to Nigeria.<sup>133</sup> Murray found that publishing information and catalogues about Nigerian archaeological discoveries and antiquities research increased the amount of looting. It had the same effect on the market value of the objects. In 1952, Murray noted, “just after Fagg got back home he went to a sale at Sothebys and managed to get a couple of Benin pieces. The prices have shot up. Bronze heads which in 1947 were £100 are now £700. Americans are paying high prices.”<sup>134</sup> For Murray, this meant that he would no longer publish his research on Nigerian antiquities. His work began to shift focus to on body art and rituals. Though his notes would still be a vital source of information, much of Murray’s archive in the National Museum, Lagos is now lost, an unfortunate casualty of the humid climate and lack of resources.

### **Excavation.**

Murray knew, almost from the moment he took the post of surveyor in 1943, that he would need to establish archaeological protocol in Nigeria, a field about which he knew little. In 1943, he sought the advice of his sister Betty:

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<sup>132</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, August 4, 1948. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

<sup>133</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 4.

<sup>134</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, July 13, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

can you give me any thorough advice about excavations. Method, precautions, and so, on. Records. It seems that I may have to make some. I don't intend to touch Ife, but there are places like the site of the long juju at AroChuku that ought to be done. Shute said he did dig about there himself, but it should be done systematically. Glad for early help...<sup>135</sup>

The Antiquities Section led the most important archaeological missions in Nigeria. From the Nok, Rop, and Ife excavations led by Fagg to the critical discovery of Igbo-Ukwu by Thurston Shaw in 1959, proper archaeological practice and a dedication to identifying the wealth of artifacts was one of the core functions of the department. Some excavations had taken place in conjunction with the tin-mining industry in northern Nigeria; however, miners primarily made the finds. Systematic excavations would need to be undertaken to minimize losses. In the 1946 Annual Report, shortly after Murray met Fagg, he wrote,

it is unfortunate that archaeological work in Nigeria is neglected for the whole science of pre-history in Africa is suffering. The tin-mining activities on the Plateau provide splendid opportunities for securing information about the Stone Age in Nigeria, but the evidence is in danger of being lost. It was therefore very fortunate that Mr B. E. B. Fagg, Assistant District Officer, and a trained archaeologist, has happened to be stationed at Jos. The fact that the tin-miners have known of his interest has meant that all finds that take place have been brought to his notice and as far as possible he has been able to make careful records.<sup>136</sup>

Murray, who had no training in archaeology, was almost entirely concerned with collecting works. The excavations by Bascom at Ife in 1938 brought the need for regulated excavation practice to Murray's attention, but it was not until he met Fagg that Murray saw a potential partner to commence any initiatives.

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<sup>135</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 15, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>136</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 3.



As described earlier, Fagg enjoyed the Northern Nigeria assignment because of the archaeological opportunities the region offered. In 1944, he and his wife Catherine took their local leave to excavate a rock shelter at Rop where they uncovered microlithic artifacts. These discoveries led to the antiquities section providing funds to continue his work at Rop, as well as in the alluvial deposits in the Nok Valley in 1946 (figure 7).<sup>137</sup> Of the excavations made during this trip, Fagg wrote:

At Forum we already have over 400 implements. It is a magnificent site. Burton is due to be here for another 9 months by which time I hope to be back. He is leaving for good then according to his present plans and will of course want to take away 3 or 4 type series with him – perhaps a total of 40 or fifty specimens. We should allow him to take these as they will go to museums. If I am here I shall probably photograph them. If not, I shall write asking you to send him authority to export. There will probably be over a thousand by next June.<sup>138</sup>

Though Murray and Fagg had been planning to get a line for an official government archaeologist since they met, it took years of negotiation to make the position a reality. In a letter to Murray dated August 3, 1946, Fagg described the possibility of being appointed to the antiquities section. He noted that the resident

frowned at the idea of an archaeologist coming to Jos and presumed the older the house the better. Then he asked if there was any chance of my being appointed and I said I thought there might be. He brightened up and said that if it was me they could always find a place for me, but he had thought that he might be landed with an old man with a beard excavated from the basement of the B.M!! The traditional idea of an archaeologist is about as unreal as the English idea of a Frenchman, as shown in our caricatures. I confessed that if I was given the chance here or elsewhere I would like to become a whole-time archaeologist, & he was quite encouraging, suggesting even that I should wire you immediately asking what are the chances, & then put in a formal application for the post if it is

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<sup>137</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, September 26 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archive.

created. He also can more or less guarantee quarters in Jos & certainly in the region of Jos.<sup>139</sup>

The lack of housing and storage was always a problem for Murray and Fagg, but they made do with what they had. They often kept their collections at their private homes, which caused problems as colonial officers did not have permanent residences, requiring frequent relocation. While moving represented a minor inconvenience to the average officer, it proved to be a major problem to Murray and Fagg, who also had to move their growing collections.

Murray and Fagg had a difficult time getting approval for an official archaeologist position, but once they did in 1947, it was “undoubtedly the most important event of the year.”<sup>140</sup> The appointment meant that the antiquities section could develop protocol to ensure that systematic excavations could be instated and that the process by which antiquities were uncovered and catalogued was organized and responsible.<sup>141</sup>

Once Fagg was promoted, the antiquities section sought to bring in qualified archaeologists to lead excavations. For example, early in his tenure, Fagg worked with geologist Dr. J. W. du Preez of the Geological Survey and Mr. Geoffrey Bond, geologist to the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia. The Nigerian government paid for their trip and they worked primarily in Jos.<sup>142</sup> In early 1953, A. J. H. Goodwin, professor of archaeology at the University of Cape Town, and William Fagg, representing the British

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<sup>139</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, August 3, 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archive.

<sup>140</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 5. Fagg was quite vocal about wanting to be a full-time archeologist – whether in Nigeria or abroad. He was offered a position in the Sudan in 1946, which he would considered if they could not find a place for him in Nigeria. Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, September 26, 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archives.

<sup>141</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 5.

<sup>142</sup> B. E. B. Fagg, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 7.

Museum, assisted Bernard Fagg in the excavations of the sacred groves in Ife.<sup>143</sup>

Goodwin would also facilitate excavations in Benin in 1954-1955. Frank Willett, from the University of Manchester, excavated Ita Yemoo in 1957 and continued to work in Ife through 1962. Additionally, C. Thurston Shaw from Cambridge and Alhaji Adamu Liman Ciroma (1930-2004) excavated Igbo-Ukwu in 1959.<sup>144</sup>

Another focus for the archaeologist was to train a Nigerian staff. Most famously, Ekpo Eyo was trained through this initiative. Eyo would become the first Nigerian director and carried out excavations at Ife, Owo, and Ikom. Among their earliest correspondence, Murray wrote to Fagg concerning his hopes in instituting the position:

I was proposing the temporary appointment or secondment for four years of someone to undertake excavations at known sites. After, I hoped Africans might carry on. You mentioned the possibility of traing[sic] Africans but what previous education should they have. An intelligent boy might learn the work, whether std vi, middle vi or Higher College, but unless he had had a university course would he be able to interpret what he found? The four year archaeologist could train two assistants who might even do some more work in a course at home, but could they be relied on to carry on by themselves?<sup>145</sup>

In the end, the dilemma was not whether they “could be relied on to carry on by themselves.” Rather, the antiquities department struggled to keep archaeologists and museum professionals that they had schooled. In particular, the department had a difficult time holding onto students from the north, who, due to the less-developed education

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<sup>143</sup> According to the *Annual Report* from 1952, during this initial trip, they excavated the shrine of Osangangan Obamakin as well as the shrines to Esu Ejubo, Ogun, Ogun Ladi inside the Afin, and Olokun Walode. A grove dedicated to Olokun was also excavated (pages 7-10).

<sup>144</sup> Mallam is an Islamic title given to Ciroma in 1993. There is confusion in some texts because his name is often written as Mallam Liman Ciroma, (clarified by John Lavers in his review of *A History of African Archaeology* by Peter Robertshaw, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 61, no. 2 (1991), 284).

<sup>145</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, May 14, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

system, were often sent abroad for a university education and later filled other government positions. Ultimately, this was the case for Ciroma.

Almost immediately after Fagg was appointed, Murray acknowledged that assistants were needed to complete all of the work they were taking on. He explained in the 1947 Annual Report that:

there is abundant evidence of the rapidity of the decay of Nigeria's antiquities of wood and iron and of the urgency of taking measures for their protection. Nigerians, who have both an ability in the use of their hands and an interest in their old arts and customs, could carry out admirably, when trained, the small but lengthy works that are needed to save such articles.<sup>146</sup>

In 1949, the first Nigerians were hired to study under the department. Mallam Musa Abubakar and Ciroma, both from northern Nigeria, were appointed to work with Fagg. Ciroma went to England to study archaeology at Birmingham University. He was being groomed to assume the administrative duties of the department after independence. Unfortunately, he was approached by Sir Ahmadu Bello and left antiquities in 1961 for a government post in northern Nigeria.

### **Preservation.**

Preservation of Nigeria's visual heritage was complicated. Murray was fighting the climate, the missionaries, and the inevitable disintegration of heirlooms because there was no cultural precedence for storing an object for posterity. In many cases the heirlooms were *supposed* to decay. Convincing people to hand over their antiquities to the government to be stored in a museum was quite difficult. This paralleled Pitt-Rivers's

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<sup>146</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 8-9.

struggle in Britain. Gerald Baldwin Brown elaborated on this dilemma in his 1905 book,

*The Care of Ancient Monuments:*

the crux of all Monument Acts is the difficulty of safeguarding structures and other objects in private hands. The state can deal as it likes with its own property, and has a certain hold on the property of public bodies that are officially connected with the state, but private individuals and private corporations, where there is no dependence on government, claim the right to dispose of their property at their own will. The problem of the monument legislator is to prevent these independent entities from injuring monuments that may be of national interest, either by neglect, by alteration, or by injudicious repair; or from destroying them, or alienating them for gain.<sup>147</sup>

Brown's point was that legislation is necessary in order to ensure that monuments and antiquities are safeguarded against destruction caused deliberately or inadvertently by private owners.<sup>148</sup>

Murray's efforts to change the way Nigerians saw preservation did advance his cause over the years. In 1948 Murray wrote:

a tendency of Ibo to treasure their old carvings more than they used to was noted. The preservation of certain of their religious carvings presents a difficult problem. Many villages in Onitsha Province and some in Owerri Province have large figure carvings usually connected either with their founder or with a local deity. These suffer gradual decay through the attacks of insects, exposure and lack of attention. Their owners, however, will not be persuaded that with modern developments in education and religious beliefs these carvings will get even more neglected than they are now. It is of the opinion of the old men that there will always be someone in the village who will by public direction have charge of these images, and that decay of carvings need not be lamented since their dust will be added to the holy dust of the previous carvings on the sacred site. It was formally the custom to replace a carving that had rotted away, but offers to replace any of those existing, so that it could be preserved in a museum, were refused. The number and scattered distribution of these carvings would make their preservation *in situ* at present a difficult undertaking.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Brown, 1905, 67.

<sup>148</sup> Brown, 1905, 68.

<sup>149</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 4.

Murray always faced a new challenge in his quest to collect works and preserve them *in situ*.

Murray advocated for the care of the visual culture of Nigeria, yet he imposed Western ideas of what that care meant. This fact may fuel the criticisms of Murray's art-education scheme. To Murray, the objects themselves had to be preserved, an attitude Nigerians did not necessarily share. In Murray's 1942 call for museums, his argument was that individuals or societies own masks, but:

in no case, however, does it follow that care will be taken of them. The individual owner or the society may make use of them for a few seasons and then tire of them and get new, or the owner may grow out of the mask and costume that was designed to fit him, or he may go away in search of work, or a wave of Christianity may pass through the village and the people may piously abandon dancing, for some Churches condemn this form of self-expression.<sup>150</sup> The carvings will be abandoned, given to children to play with or even destroyed.<sup>151</sup>

The risks of fire, water damage, or a lack of interest by the next generation are great. He continued:

often some of the property of the deceased is intentionally left to rot. To sell an old *Ikenga*—an Ibo carving that enshrines a man's soul—would be like selling its owner, while its decay is considered no different from nor worse than the decay of the body of a dead man. Carvings kept in shrines are not necessarily cared for: Africans have not yet got the modern European attitude toward works of art, though there are cases where, for sentimental reasons or from genuine appreciation of a fine object, care is taken of them. A state of growth, decay and re-birth seems natural to Africans while a static perfection is not...The decay is natural and the work can be replaced at any time by a new one, the erection of which will supply a good deal of excitement and pleasure to the local people. Unfortunately old and damaged works are now rarely replaced.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Murray, 1940, footnote 1, 275: "Africans sometimes give as a reason for abandoning a dance that masks that should be kept secret from women have been disclosed openly by Europeans."

<sup>151</sup> Murray, 1942, 245.

<sup>152</sup> Murray, 1942, 245.

Murray had to navigate the practices and interests of the Nigerians and his own understanding of heritage formation and preservation. This was complicated by interventions from missionaries and groups such as the Atinga Cult, which actively destroyed the very objects Murray was desperate to preserve. Murray and Fagg felt that their only option was to acquire as much as they could and build an institution in which to store the collection.

Murray had advocated for the preservation of traditional crafts and antiquities since the 1930s. He had been fighting the climate for years, trying to protect his collection and books from mold and insects.<sup>153</sup> Murray also fought disinterested owners and those who were actively destroying Nigeria's visual heritage. With the increased activity of missionaries and the appeal of urban opportunity, preserving antiquities was a constant fight.

In February 1951 the Atinga Cult was a force that caused a significant amount of destruction, but also created an opportunity to build the national collection. According to the government file on Atinga:

they were "prophets" who came from Dahomey and cast out witchcraft and other evils and that many villages had invited them to come and do their work inspite of the opposition of the [District Officer]. There had been some minor disturbances. The DO was attacking them under the Criminal Code which makes it an offence to accuse anyone of witchcraft.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> See, for example, Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 5, 1935. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>154</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 27, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Briefly Mentioned in Murray's *Our Art Treasures*, 14.

That February, the cult ventured to Nigeria, where they convinced villagers to hand over their ancestral and religious objects to be burned. The result, in cities such as Ilaro and Benin, was rubbish piles of carvings and ancestral objects.

As soon as Murray heard of the attacks, he went to Ilaro. The Olu of Ilaro, whom Murray had met six years previously:

raised no objections to my going through the heaps...among a mess of beads, cloth, solidified blocks of plam [sic] oil, baskets, iron work, pots many carvings could be seen. I went round the pile for about an hour and a half picking here and there and then started systemaically[sic] to work through it from one end...I filled my car with smaller things. Next morning I visited a second but smaller pile and went straight through that. Of course this scene of a European going through a rubbish heap attracted a good crowd but I had no crime to look at them except when one mant[sic] picked out an ivory staff and wanted to keep it. By threats I recovered it but after they managed to steal it back. I loaded the finds into baskets etc found on the spot and with the help of the cnstable[sic] carried them to the car. After unloading them at the RH I went to a third pile also of smalish[sic] size and went through that.<sup>155</sup>

Upon pulling as much as he could from the piles in Ilaro, Murray went to Benin. Murray had been courting these villages for nearly a decade and was so disappointed to find that instead of gifting their heirlooms to the national collection, they would fall into the superstitions of the Atinga Cult, destroying all trace of the visual heritage that could no longer even be documented. Murray wrote that when he arrived in Benin,

my heart [fell] to see it as it was nearly 4 feet high and packed well over abt 11 by 5 yds. The [Asst] helped and starting at one end we worked at high speed through to the other. The oil runs pit over things to make it durtier [sic]. Bags calabashes pots full of "nedecines [sic] and dust, cowries beads, a human bone or two, iron staffs sticks, ppts [sic], plates cups enamel bowls, any new, some bits of money, rages bead crowns and costumes, cowries costumed, boxes, papers and so on.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 27, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: "The collection made included approximately 100 Elegba figures, 120 Thinde [?] god staffs, 17 twin figures, 22 stools and many other miscellanoeus[sic] things."

<sup>156</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 27, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Though the majority of the works had been handed over voluntarily, “it was evident that there had been forced entry into the shrines and that [many] had parted with their things unwillingly. I called them foolish and pointed out [sic] that things I had offered £5 for two years ago I here picked off the heap for nothing.”<sup>157</sup> In other cases, objects were handed over willingly, but when Murray came to search through the piles, the owners crowded around, demanding money for their possessions or going through the piles themselves. In these cases, Murray exerted his power: when people did

refuse to let me take away what I had taken and I think there was even a move to take the things away as I kept on hearing someone beginning told not to touch. I brought the matter to an end by picking up a wooden staff I had selected and smashing it on the ground and thr[ew] it on the rubbish heap. The leader of the objectors immediately said all right take them.<sup>158</sup>

According to his estimates, Murray spent approximately twenty hours in the rubbish heaps and acquired truckloads of works. In the estimates at the end of the year, Murray recorded that he had collected over 700 objects from this episode.<sup>159</sup>

The antiquities section also pursued the preservation of monuments *in situ*. The earliest examples, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4, are the Esiẹ figures (figure 8). One of the most important preservation projects happened in 1953 in Ife with the reconstruction of the Opa Oranmiyan (figure 5). This project was extensive, and the antiquities section sought the advice of authorities on the subject of preservation. In 1951, B. H. St. J. O’Neil, chief inspector of ancient monuments under the Ministry of Works in the United Kingdom, visited the Gold Coast and Nigeria to recommend options to

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<sup>157</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 27, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>158</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 27, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>159</sup> Murray, *Annual Report*, 1951, 8.

conserve the Bokokos bridges in the Plateau State, monuments in Ife, and the architecture in northern Nigeria.<sup>160</sup> He also instructed Fagg on appropriate methods for reconstructing the Opa Oranmiyan.

Conservation was another issue altogether. Murray had come to Nigeria as an art teacher. He knew nothing about archaeology, museum practice, or conservation. He often requested books and journals from England to study up on the latest methods. In one instance he asked his sister Betty to look up “the cleaning and restoration of Museum Exhibits 1<sup>st</sup> report dept of Scientific and Industrial Research (1924) and see what instructions it gives for removing lichen by the use of dilute ammonia.”<sup>161</sup> He relied on the support from consultants provided by British institutions to conserve the collected works and train Nigerian museum technicians.

### Regulation of Exports and the Antiquities Ordinance of 1953

One significant contribution the antiquities section made was the passing of export legislation. An antiquities ordinance had been considered and discussed beginning in 1939. The Bascom controversy necessitated that export regulations be enforced immediately. There were several ways in which works were smuggled and illegally gotten. For example, Gerald Wormal invited Murray to see a few Yoruba works “which he had collected in the old and common illegal way of keeping articles confiscated by the police in court cases.”<sup>162</sup> The police confiscated objects that were in dispute or evidence

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<sup>160</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 8.

<sup>161</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 13, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>162</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 12, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

in a case. Murray tried to obtain such objects for the museum.<sup>163</sup> Other cases were not necessarily malicious, nor, at this point, illegal. For example, G. I. Jones gifted a large part of his collection to the Pitt Rivers Museum.<sup>164</sup>

Part of Murray's frustration was that he felt anthropologists, archaeologists, and the British Museum should help build the collections of the Nigerian Museum.<sup>165</sup>

William Fagg had to negotiate object collection for the British Museum and assisted in the development of Nigerian museum collections. He did help Murray buy important works from auction. In 1953, after William's spring in Nigeria working on the excavation at Ife, Murray wrote to his father:

I expect you will have seen in the papers how William Fagg bought all the Allman collection for us including the head for the record price of £5500. This went for a good deal more than was expected while several other things went for less. It was fortunate that I was able to get the further money above the £7500 I originally asked for on the basis of Fagg's first estimate, and that also I had been given authority to let the BM know in confidence that they could go above the 10000 in order to secure the head. I don't know how long it will take to extract them from [from] the BM.<sup>166</sup>

The British Museum was both an ally and a fierce competitor. William Fagg and Brauholtz made purchases on behalf of Nigeria's antiquities section and offered to make copies of many of Nigeria's most treasured antiquities in the British Museum's holdings.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 3, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>164</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 25-April 2, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>165</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 29, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>166</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 15, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>167</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, August 4, 1948. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive. Murray requests that, while Fagg is on leave, he should "try and get a word with Brauholtz and someone in the Colonial Office on this. I think it useless to make more efforts to try and save these

William was not always willing to purchase work for Nigeria's collection. Perhaps his purchases on Murray's behalf, either in Nigeria or in England, helped to easily secure export permits from the government. In one instance, just prior to his purchase of the Allman collection and two months before the antiquities ordinance was passed, William Fagg and Murray went to Oye to purchase some cloth and carvings.

Father Kevin Carroll delivered

the carving that Fagg wants for the B.M. and I agreed to take it back but would not promise a permit for its export. We are sore about the way the BM sold 3 Benin panels to America, [competes] with us for Benin works, charges almost market prices for what it sells to us and expects to get works from Nigeria at cost price. I pointed out to W. Fagg that Nigeria might well put the Ibeji carvings, I got at Illa and he would like, on the USA market to see what they are worth and let the dealer offer one to the BM at his price for that is what the BM did with the panels.<sup>168</sup>

Murray was highly possessive and competitive in his approach to the Nigerian antiquities market. He sought to ensure that Nigerian works remained in the country, in spite of any favors his contacts might have done for him.

It took fourteen years from Bascom's removal of the Ife heads to the passing of official laws regarding the export of antiquities and cultural objects. Fagg explained that one of the central purposes of the antiquities department

is to act as the executive arm of the Antiquities Commission in its efforts to prevent the illegal export of valuable works of art and to curb the activities of petty dealers in antiquities, including some known to be financed from abroad, who are doing so much irremediable damage to the study of Nigerian art history and the documentation of its traditional cultures.<sup>169</sup>

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Southern Nigerian antiquities and I am doing my best to reduce my activities. It would suit the Nig Govt if they did not exist."

<sup>168</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, February 24, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In this same letter, Murray notes that "Father Carroll is good but I can not see this effort to introduce indigenous art or traditional art into the church will succeed."

<sup>169</sup> Fagg, 1963, 125.

In 1953, the antiquities ordinance was passed. The ordinance empowered the antiquities commission to issue export and excavation permits, consent to museum development, and catalogue monuments and antiquities or declare them protected. The final iteration of this ordinance emerged from previous attempts to regulate the export of objects, particularly orders prohibiting the export of antiquities in 1939, 1943, and 1950.<sup>170</sup>

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there were precedents in Britain for the identification and protection of monuments and antiquities. Yet there was no model for export regulation. Brown explains that the prohibition of exportation in Britain

is not a matter that specially concerns our own country. We are buyers rather than sellers, and though we occasionally lose by our indifference some treasures of priceless value, the scandal thus created does not affect the public mind so deeply that legislation on the subject would stand much chance of being carried. It is true that the British public is periodically startled by the rumour that the proprietor of Stonehenge is going to sell the monument for exportation to America, and is reminded thereby that there exists no law for the prevention of such an act; but it relies on the common sense of owners to preserve them from unpopular proceedings of the kind, and goes to sleep contentedly till aroused by the next scare.<sup>171</sup>

The British saw themselves as buyers of the world's visual material, not sellers. To regulate the Nigerian export laws meant they were restricting their ability to buy antiquities from their own colony.

Fourteen years between the initial proposal of 1939 and the final passage of legislation in 1953 seems like a long time, particularly in light of initiatives made by other West African colonies such as the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, which passed ordinances in 1945 and 1946, respectively. Perhaps due to Britain's interest in the antiquities of Nigeria, particularly for the British Museum's collection, there was some

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<sup>170</sup> Kenneth Murray. *Annual Report 1953*, 5.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, 1905, 66-67.

hesitation to move ahead with formal legislation that would restrict the import of works from Nigeria. Furthermore, the strict legislation that Nigeria was implementing would complicate Britain's own ability to sell Nigerian artifacts abroad. In 1951, an application to export a Benin bronze leopard head came before the Great Britain Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art. The British Museum and the colonial office petitioned for Nigeria to bid for the work. The Committee agreed and also resolved that

if in future an export licence were sought for a work of exceptional importance which would be of interest to a colonial government the collection concerned should indicate that this interest existed and the Board of Trade would inform the Colonial Office so that the colonial government should have an opportunity to comment on the application to export. If the recommendations of the Waverly Committee on the Export of works of Art are adopted, only works over £1,000 in value will come before the Reviewing Committee. Most Nigerian works have been of less value.<sup>172</sup>

Shortly after this victory in England, Murray was able to solidify legislation in Nigeria. A draft of the antiquities ordinance, which was first proposed in 1939, was sent to the three regional offices for approval before the law officers would prepare it to be published.<sup>173</sup> In November 1952 the Antiquities Bill was published and scheduled to be discussed in spring 1953.<sup>174</sup> In March 1953, the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, minister of works, introduced the bill, which passed without resistance.<sup>175</sup> The antiquities ordinance instituted a seventeen-member antiquities commission whose responsibilities included "the declaration of monuments and scheduled antiquities, and the control of archaeological excavations and the export of antiquities."<sup>176</sup> Additionally, the

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<sup>172</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 8.

<sup>173</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 3.

<sup>174</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, November 30, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>175</sup> Fagg, 1961, 8.

<sup>176</sup> Fagg, 1963, 124.

commission “acquired authority to approve museums, and also to withdraw such approval if for security or other reasons such museums should cease to be suitable repositories for valuable specimens.”<sup>177</sup> These parameters were a major accomplishment for Murray. Before the decade was complete, Murray retired and Nigerian independence was finalized, but the safety and preservation of antiquities was now secured.

### Conclusion

On May 5, 1957 Murray retired from the post of director of antiquities. Fagg was promoted to director of antiquities and Hamo Sassoon, also an archaeologist, was hired as deputy director. In March 1958 the antiquities service was promoted to Department of Government status.<sup>178</sup> Upon the transfer, the department’s headquarters were also moved to Jos. The efforts of Murray and Fagg changed Nigeria’s relationship with its visual culture. Murray and Fagg developed antiquities and monument preservation, archaeological protocol, and export regulations.<sup>179</sup> These achievements, however, only

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<sup>177</sup> Fagg, 1963, 125. According to page 61 of Helen O. Kerri in “Developing Museums: The Nigerian Experience,” the original Antiquities Commission in 1954, which was the governing board of the Department of Antiquities, included: Kenneth O. Dike, historian and vice-chancellor of University of Ibadan), who became the second Chairman of the Antiquities Commission; S. I. Wangboje from Ahmadu Bello University; A. Obayemi from Ahmadu Bello University; and S. O. Biobaku, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, who succeeded Dike as Chairman.

<sup>178</sup> Bernard Fagg, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1957-58*, 1.

<sup>179</sup> In Murray’s, *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*, 4, he states: “the intelligent use of museum collections is now commonly considered as important as their acquisition. The Antiquities Branch has been steadily increasing its collections but has not been able to make much use of them...In the collection of exhibits the policy has been, firstly to bring back to Nigeria ancient works of which examples no longer exist here, in particular bronzes and ivories from Benin: secondly, to preserve for future generations works of art that would otherwise perish. When the protection of antiquities was started in 1943 there were no Benin works left in Nigeria except for a few pieces in the possession of chiefs and priests and a diminutive but good collection at Benin which the general public could not see. The Nigerian Museum has now obtained from Europe over a hundred pieces, several of which are of the very best quality. The price that has had to be paid for such works has, however, steadily risen. At the same time a large number of woodcarvings has been collected from all parts of Nigeria. It has not however been possible to make systematic collections representative of the material culture of different Nigerian tribes: it

partially illustrate their contributions to Nigeria. Murray and Fagg expanded the antiquities section beyond the parameters outlined by the colonial government. They fought diligently to build national institutions to house the collections they built. I suggest that, in fact, this was a mission distinct from the one outlined by the colonial office. The following chapter will explore the path Murray and Fagg walked to build the museums of Nigeria.

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has not been possible to spend sufficient time in any area to do so, nor has there been storage for such perishable and bulky articles as baskets and mats.”



### CHAPTER 3

#### THE FIGHT FOR MUSEUMS

The previous chapter outlined the development of the department of antiquities. This chapter will discuss the department's fight to build museums in Nigeria. I have consciously divided this material because the colonial government, which endowed Murray's survey and eventually funded the department of antiquities, was primarily interested in antiquities preservation. Though I have established that antiquities were always a concern to societies and museums, protection and preservation of these antiquities did not always garner the same unyielding support. It was hard for advocates like Pitt-Rivers to convince even his peers in museums that antiquities preservation was a real and pressing issue. To the colonial office, particularly during the tenure of Governor Alexander Grantham, this translated to museum development only in the cases of *in situ* preservation and places of diplomatic interests, such as Benin and Ife. Thus Murray struggled to persuade the government to support a central museum to house his diverse and ever-growing collection. Though he never hid his vision for museums in Nigeria, it was not within the parameters of his assigned mission.

A major roadblock for Murray was the push for smaller local museums rather than a single central museum. Britain also struggled with the question of establishing

central or regional museums, a debate which plagued Murray for his entire career. In *The Care of Ancient Monuments*, Brown wrote that

the question of national against local museums, which is of importance as connected with the still larger problem of centralization or decentralization in monument administration generally...Britain also possesses excellent local museums some of which are in their way as well arranged and supervised as the British Museum or those of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland or the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Now though there is something imposing in the idea of a single central collection gathering together for comparison all important available specimens, yet the balance of evidence seems in favour of the encouragement of local collections side by side with the central one.<sup>1</sup>

This debate played out at the Museums Association, which was founded in 1889, and whom Murray contacted in 1939 about establishing institutions in Britain's colonies, to little avail.

Murray felt passionately that a national museum must be opened in Lagos, complemented by smaller regional museums with specialized collections located around the country. He debated with the government and Fagg, who opened the Jos Museum with a significant collection. Murray hoped to create a roving museum that would tour the collections around the country via the railway system. Murray's and Fagg's different approaches to museums parallel their differences in personality. John Picton, who worked under both men, described Fagg as "outgoing and extroverted, with an intense loyalty to family and friends." In contrast, Murray "was solitary and critical, with an equally intense loyalty to the Lagos fishermen, and a witty skeptic."<sup>2</sup>

The last chapter sought to construct the history of the department of antiquities, whose primary concerns, according to the colonial government, were to protect

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, 1905, 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> John Picton. "Bernard Fagg: 1915-1987," *African Arts* 21, no. 2 (1988), 12.

antiquities from illegal export and impose responsible, systematic archaeological practice in Nigeria. Museum development was a separate issue. The colonial government did not approve the department of antiquities to establish museums, only to survey Nigeria and construct export legislation. At the same time, however, there were several colonies in Africa and organizations in Britain trying to develop museums, and these efforts generated support for Nigeria's cause.

The effort to establish museums was not smooth, in spite of the extensive history of museums in Europe and the British government's use of the museum institution to mold upstanding citizens. Murray and Fagg opened their own museums with the backing of several groups including the Carnegie Trust, the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa, UNESCO, and the efforts of Herbert Meyerowitz in the Gold Coast. Yet the way in which Fagg and Murray approached museum-building was entirely different. Moreover, the colonial museum was distinct from its counterparts in Great Britain. Collecting work from a range of people to be housed in a single place controlled by the government was not only a foreign practice, but disrespectful in the eyes of many Nigerians. Murray consistently found himself negotiating with people for their ancestral objects because they did not trust the colonial government and they did not necessarily see a problem with the natural deterioration of the objects.

There was also the issue of audience. The colonial office saw the museum as a place for expatriates to enjoy the art of the empire. Those intimately involved in establishing the institutions intended for the primary constituency to be Nigerians themselves. In John M. Mackenzie's 2009 book *Museums and Empire*, he considers museums in the colonies and imperial territories as institutions that exhibit European

perspectives of the world for Europeans. To Mackenzie, the museum “offered a route into a global memory, the perquisite of western cultures. Memory itself is a source of power, a means of supposedly understanding the present and divining the future. Thus, the museum’s visitor constituency was expected to be an immigrant one.”<sup>3</sup> In one sense, Murray’s acquisition mission demonstrates an effort to capture Nigerian culture in all of its diversity for the purpose of displaying and interpreting it for a European audience. Yet I suggest that Murray and Fagg envisioned museums in Nigeria as places for Nigerians, rather than the British. Indeed, in reflecting on the high numbers of people who visit the museums, Murray and Fagg note that they reflect the diversity of the country. The museum gave many people access to objects which they had previously been prohibited from seeing.<sup>4</sup>

The public fight for museums began with written advocacy and pleas for help in the early 1940s and progressed into a resolute demand for action. Murray, however, had been inquiring about the resources needed to organize an institution before then. While on leave in England in 1939, Murray contacted William Cadbury of the Cadbury Chocolate firm. Though not explicitly stated, this letter could be from the William Adlington Cadbury Charitable Trust, founded in 1923. Cadbury’s response to Murray states:

I appreciate your wish to see a Museum and Art Gallery established in Nigeria, and wish I could tell you that private enterprise was likely to step in where the Government and Colonial Office hesitate to tread. My own

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<sup>3</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 5.

<sup>4</sup> According to art historian Sidney Kasfir, who worked for the Department of Antiquities in the 1970s, This new open access to previously secret objects “was actually a sensitive issue, since traditional rulers (representing councils of elders) mainly did not want anyone other than initiated males to see things such as their masks. They were particularly concerned that women might see them up close, which led to embargoes on the public display of certain objects even though they were in the museum’s storeroom.” Sidney Kasfir, personal correspondence with the author, May 11, 2013.

Firm, from which I have now retired, has done a good deal for the Gold Coast, but as far as I know there is no Museum yet in that colony, other than a small department attached to Achimota College. I wonder if there is any hope of making a small beginning in the same way in Nigeria. I am sorry that I cannot offer financial aid...<sup>5</sup>

Murray also sought the advice of the Museums Association and met with Braunholtz for the first time in 1939. Murray solicited advice for developing a museum program in Nigeria and once he returned looked to the Nigerian Field Society and Edwin Felix Gray Haig for help, though they showed little interest. It was also on this leave that Murray began soliciting the return of Nigerian works, which had found their way into various collections. For example, the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum (now the Wellcome Collection) was de-accessioning their collection of Nigerian art and Murray requested it for Nigeria.

When Murray returned from his leave in 1940, around the same time he began searching for a museum to take on his collection, he wrote an article for *Nigeria* calling for a national museum. In the article he stresses the destruction of cultural objects all around the country, a practice instigated by Westerners insisting that African art was ungodly. Murray believed this could be rectified by education. He makes a controversial statement in this article when he says that

it is the general belief that Africans should develop their own culture while adopting the best that can be learnt from the white man. The psychological, historical, social and economic reasons for this are obvious. If all traces of their culture are taken or lost from the country, Nigerians will be unable to learn or understand and value what was best in it...It is, in fact, easier to study Nigerian art in England or Germany than in Nigeria! For such students, through whom it is hoped that the negro will maintain his reputation as an artist, it is urgently necessary that there should be a collection of African work in Nigeria.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> W. Cadbury to Kenneth C. Murray, June 6, 1939. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Murray, "A Museum for Nigeria," *Nigeria*, no. 20 (1940), 273.

Indeed, this assertion is controversial and riddled with problems, but Murray's passion for allowing Nigerians to write their own heritage is evident. He felt Europeans and Africans must create museums for the preservation of African history. He elaborated on the idea that African visual culture must be preserved for Africans as much as for Europeans and Americans, whose own art and culture was enriched by the continent. "It might be claimed," he wrote, "that other countries have a responsibility to themselves in preserving and encouraging the culture of Africa..."<sup>7</sup> The cost, to Murray, seemed insignificant in comparison with the potential gain for Africans and Europeans.

At this time Murray had little idea of what was required to begin a museum. Yet having traveled around southern Nigeria, he saw the way in which works were deteriorating. Moreover, his experience in the education department influenced his ideas regarding staffing. Murray knew that without trained staff, experienced curators, proper storage facilities, and galleries, there was no point in putting money toward the project. For the last decade, he had watched his art studios appropriated for other projects and knew that if the colonial government would not make the museum a priority, they may as well let the collection decay or disseminate the objects among the institutions of Europe and America.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Colonial Endeavor: Herbert Meyerowitz, Julian Huxley, and Hermann Braunholtz

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<sup>7</sup> Murray, 1940, 274.

<sup>8</sup> Murray, 1940, 274. Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 2, 1941 Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. While in South Africa, he wrote to his mother that "I have been trying to rewrite the article I did on museums last year and which the Govt. did not approve and so on Thursday I find a quiet and sunny spot in the hotel to write in..." That article became "Art in Nigeria: The Need for a Museum" published in 1942 in *Journal for the Royal African Society*.

The social and educational benefits of a museum garnered attention from many Western organizations. There was growing interest among British colonial developmental agencies in establishing museums in West Africa. In 1940, Arthur Creech Jones founded the Fabian Society Colonial Bureau, a branch of the Fabian Society, Britain's oldest political think tank. The bureau's mission was to rethink colonial policy to facilitate political and social development, particularly on the road to independence. This resulted in the creation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940.<sup>9</sup> Under this initiative, artist and educator Herbert Vladimir Meyerowitz, anthropologist Dr. Meyer Fortes, and E. Amer created the Institute of West African Arts, Industries and Social Science. IWAAISS was founded in 1943 at Achimota College in the Gold Coast. Initially proposed in 1937 and closed in 1945 shortly after Meyerowitz's suicide, IWAAISS was based on the Senegalese Institut Français d'Afrique Noire.<sup>10</sup> The goal was to promote a West Africa that was free from economic dependence on Europe by investigating "local arts and crafts, to teach certain selective native crafts in the light of European experience, and thence to inaugurate local craft industries; and, on the other hand, to conduct a parallel investigation into local history, tribal life, customs, traditions, religion, and

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Basu, "A museum for Sierra Leone? Amateur enthusiasms and colonial museum policy in British West Africa," *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience*, ed. Sarah Longair and John McAleer (New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 149. This section of the dissertation is indebted to the critical research by Paul Basu, who outlined the efforts and dialogue surrounding the development of museums in West Africa.

<sup>10</sup> IFAN was founded in 1936, and the Musée de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (now the Musée Théodore Monod d'Art africain) in 1938 in Dakar, Senegal. Théodore Monod was the director from 1938 until 1963 and was incredibly influential on Huxley's proposals. Huxley and Read also met with Monod at IFAN in 1944, while touring with the Elliot Commission. Murray wrote a letter to his mother, Katherine Murray on March 7, 1944, suggesting that Huxley and Read "had had a shock" when they found out how much the Antiquities Service was attempting to do in Nigeria, and they proposed that Monod lead the central institution that would regulate the museums in West Africa. Murray and Niven were obviously opposed to this. Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 7, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

economic conditions...”<sup>11</sup> Meyerowitz sought this independence through an economy that capitalized on the popularity of crafts, as well as “humane industrialization,” a plan that corresponded with Duckworth’s own attempt to further develop an economy for artists and craftsmen during the 1938 Empire Exhibition described later in this chapter.<sup>12</sup>

The avenues Meyerowitz drove to establish a museum in The Gold Coast paralleled many of Murray’s own schemes. Meyerowitz and his wife Eva extensively researched and collected for the proposed museum, and, just as intended at Jos, IWAAISS insisted on a “technical workshop and experimental production unit.”<sup>13</sup> The ultimate goal was independence. Murray noted a key distinction between his own practice and that of Meyerowitz, who

is in favour of the rapid industrillisation [sic] of west Africa under African control. He takes Russia and its backward areas as a model and believes it possible to alter this country in a generation and would be prepared to be ruthless in doing so. He argues that otherwise W. Africa must become the prey of some [sic] fascist power or of another race. I don’t think he has any belief in fostering a native art but thinks European civilisation good enough to be accepted completely. He belongs to the functional school of thought and so has no use for art for arts sake or anything approaching that. He has accordingly no use for painting. He founds [sic] nearly all things in African life unsatisfactory. He claimed that the Institute was a service but that he was bound by his council, but even to the end [sic] I was not satisfied in my own mind that he was being quite open and that he did not really intend to push his own ideas through in spite of the council...<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> H. V. Meyerowitz. “The Institute of West African Arts, Industries, and Social Science,” *Man* 43 (1943), 112.

<sup>12</sup> Basu, 2012, 150.

<sup>13</sup> Meyerowitz 1943, 113. Murray criticized Meyerowitz and Cardew for their initiative to industrialize pottery in West Africa because they intended to exclude women. Cardew claimed that this would follow the trajectories of society because anywhere that pottery wheels were used, men were the primary potters.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, May 3, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Indeed, Murray insisted that bulldozing culture would inhibit economic prosperity and industrialization must happen with culture in mind.<sup>15</sup> Murray felt as though the social impact of these schemes had not been fully explored. Moreover, he suggested that Meyerowitz was actually misdirecting his energy; he “set out to [prove] what was never in doubt, that these things could be made as an economic success...and it has not brought Africans, in my opinion, sufficiently into co-operation.”<sup>16</sup>

In response to criticisms toward Murray for focusing on crafts and work of the past, I offer another point to explain the pressure he must have felt to concentrate on traditional work. Meyerowitz described in his own work that

it is an important part of the original project, quite indispensable on its scientific side, that there should be ample provision for collecting and studying typical examples of the craftsmanship of the past. Otherwise the technical ‘improvements’ will merely substitute imitations of European work for the living arts of the natives, and hasten the extinction of interesting and often beautiful constructions and designs.<sup>17</sup>

Murray and Meyerowitz were circulating within the same programs, conferences, and colonial circles. Though they did not always see eye-to-eye regarding their ultimate goals, they used one another’s rhetoric for the purposes of their own arguments and requests. Meyerowitz makes the same plea as Murray. “A Museum,” Meyerowitz writes, “is as important as a record office is in administration.”<sup>18</sup> Basu employs this same sentence in his article, “A Museum for Sierra Leone?” simply to argue that for IWAAISS, and to many foundations charged with cultural preservation, a museum was

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Murray. “Arts and Crafts of Nigeria: Their Past and Future,” in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 14, no. 4, (1943), 155.

<sup>16</sup> This is a short quote from an important letter Murray wrote to his mother on December 28, 1942. The Institute at Achimota was an important jumping off point for Murray to generate interest and a framework for his own museum project. To see the letter in its entirety refer to Appendix 1.

<sup>17</sup> Meyerowitz, 1943, 113.

<sup>18</sup> Meyerowitz, 1943, 113.

non-negotiable, in spite of the difficulty in finding an approach to persuading the colonial government.<sup>19</sup>

Meyerowitz and Murray were certainly in contact with each other and perhaps encouraged to collaborate, forming a stronger front for government funding. In July 1943, Murray noted that he was going to Achimota to discuss the Institute with Meyerowitz, Reverend Robert Wright Stopford, principal of the prestigious Achimota College from 1941-45 and director of IWAAISS, and A. E. Southern. The efforts of the IWAAISS were not disagreeable to the Nigerian officials, however, Murray noted that

Stopford said [sic] he wished the Institute had been started in Nigeria and that of course it could be moved here. My position may become rather awkward [sic] as Meyerowitz [sic] has already been appointed head of the art side of it, and I have no intention of being under him. [C.R.] Butler the Act. Director [of Education in Nigeria] backs me up. He is not too [sic] keen on this invasion of Nigeria from the Gold Coast. But I think it is rather a reactionary attitude as clearly cooperation in the solution of economic problems etc is desirable. Only great care will have to be taken to avoid a Gold Coast dictation.<sup>20</sup>

This letter highlights Murray's attitude toward collaboration. He appears very interested in making connections with colonies attempting to create museums and opportunities for artists, but he was unwilling to relinquish control or jeopardize his vision.<sup>21</sup> As the

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<sup>19</sup> Basu, 2012, 150.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 11-18, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>21</sup> Nearly one year later, in a letter to his mother dated April 30, 1944, Murray sees this play out in the scheme for the pottery school. He wrote: "I had a letter from Meyerowitz about the Abeokuta pottery scheme. Not very enthusiastic. He has clearly made up his mind already about how he wants developments. As I suppose none of the Nigerian [sic] representatives on the Institute will know anything about these crafts he is likely to get his own way. He gave qualified approval but not really helpful. I shall write to Davidson later and point out the insincerity of the institute scheme. It is made out to take action based on previous study of the native industries, but I think that is all eye-wash and that it intends to follow a preconceived scheme regardless of what exists at present. Anyway with his Abeokuta scheme he makes no mention of any 'anthropological & sociological or economic inquiry. He may accept what I have said, but on the other hand suggest that he agrees with Michael Cardew who would favour another course in which women are not taught to throw pots. He also wants to start making of coolers etc instead of glazed ware, ie follow the Achimota scheme. I suppose I must wait for events to prove me right..." Kenneth C. Murray to

IWAAISS was trying to establish strong, independent African nations by connecting their cultures, politics, and economies *with* museums and libraries, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was separating itself from its museum in Zambia under the leadership of South African and British anthropologist Max Gluckman, who directed the RLI from 1941-47.<sup>22</sup>

The IWAAISS was an important model for Murray because it institutionalized both art production and preservation. Murray was able to use the recognition the Institute received as leverage for his own project, the central museum. Though the war had not yet come to a close, Murray aggressively acquired support for his museum. On January 2, 1944 Chief Secretary to the Government Alexander Grantham sent a memo to the public relations office in order to form a committee composed of colonial officers in a variety of fields, missionaries, and influential Africans to supervise the building of a central museum, contingent on the end of the war.<sup>23</sup> At this point, no museums had been built, so

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Kate M. Murray, April 30, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>22</sup> Meyerowitz envisioned that each of the IWAAISS's three enterprises – art, industry, and social science – would “have the three functions of research, teaching, and practical work for the community, supplemented by a museum and library,” (Meyerowitz, 1943, 112).

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 13-19, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: Murray wrote of a conversation he had with Rex Niven while trying to organize a museums committee: “I made out a list of possible members of a committee, putting on at his suggestions as many names as I could think. He called them a lot of hot-heads and blockheads. I almost said his name was among them, but he did not mean to say as much. Perhaps he was afraid that there might be some people there who knew more [sic] about the subject than he.” In a Memo from C. S. G. to P. R. O. 34636/201 from January 2, 1944, KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives, Murray includes a list of suggested members of the committee for a Central Museum are T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, Art and for Chief Secretary; P. G. Harris, Anthropology; C. R. Niven, History and Public Relations Office; Dr. M. D. W. Jeffereys, Anthropology and Pre-History; A. F. B. Bridges, Crafts and Nigerian Field Society; E. F. G. Haig, Entomology and Nigerian Field Society; D. A. F. Shute, Archaeology; G. I. Jones, Physical anthropology and African art; J. O. Field, Archaeology, Technology, and Anthropology; B. E. B. Fagg, Archaeology and Anthropology; Dr. G. Bryce, Agriculture for the Department of Agriculture; C. C. Southall, Chemistry and Science; T. H. Baldwin, History for the Department of Education; E. H. Duckworth, Science and Exhibition Technique; K. C. Murray, Antiquities, Arts and Crafts; W. F. Jeffries, Arts and Crafts; J. D. Clarke, Art, Yoruba History, Birds; F. S. Collier, Game Preservation, Fauna; D. R. Rosevear, Fauna; Dr. W. E. S. Merrett, Editor Nigerian Field; A. P. D. Jones, Botanist; F. C. Haslam, Public Works Department Architect; Nnamdi Azikiwe; Herbert Macaulay; Aina Onabolu; Canon Lucas; Okwesa, Public Relations Department; Bank Anthony; Okorodudu, at the Higher College; Mbanefo, Lawyer Onitsha; the heads of the Departments of Forestry, Agriculture, Education, Public Works

Murray asserted, without opposition, that there should be a central museum rather than regional institutions.

In addition to Meyerowitz, there was another contributor interested in museum development in British West Africa. Huxley, who lent his support to retrieving the Ife Bronzes in 1939, was a biologist, member of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, and founder of Political and Economic Planning, a policy think tank.<sup>24</sup> In 1944, he sent an article, “Research and Development in Archaeology, Ethnology, African Art and Museums in West Africa,” to the Colonial Research Committee (which controlled the Colonial Research Fund) regarding museum development in British West Africa. His proposal stressed the cultural importance of their antiquities as well as their archaeological and ethnological legacies. Just like Meyerowitz, Huxley was influenced by the endeavors of the IFAN in Senegal in contrast to Britain’s disregard. After submitting his scheme, Huxley, along with Creech Jones and Dr. Margaret Read, a member of the Colonial Commission on Higher Education, toured Nigeria with Murray and Duckworth and the Gold Coast with Herbert and Eva Meyerowitz under the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa.<sup>25</sup>

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Department, Geology, Mines; A member of the British Council, Commercial firms, the Nigerian Field Society and Missionaries Mellor, Wesley, Ijebu Ode; and Lewis, C.M.S., Lagos.

<sup>24</sup> Like Kenneth Murray, Huxley won a scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 7a. There is some confusion about the date. The Commission commenced in 1943 and the tour seems to have begun then, but Murray first met with Read and Huxley the week of February 13, 1944 (see Letter from KCM to his mother, February 12, 1944). In Murray’s “Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” he says the event occurred in 1943, while Basu claims 1944. While on this tour, Huxley suffered from hepatitis and had a mental breakdown, for which he was institutionalized for a year.

Though there is little indication from Murray that he admired Huxley, it is clear that their ideas on the subject of museums were aligned. Indeed, during Huxley's visit, Murray noted that Huxley said

he would do what he could with pushing on with the museum and would support the pottery scheme, so now I must put it up through the Resident....I don't know if Niven was pleased but Huxley was. He spoke of things that Taffy had just shown them in Ibadan and we talked of the museum which he said he liked the plan. If Ife had been more helpful in showing me things I could have easily [sic] got the museum doubled in size, but I am skeptical about all the thousands coming that Huxley talks about so prefer to reserve the request for more money for things that I know will need doing. I am not sure that Ife has so much: it is impossible to say.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, as stated repeatedly throughout this investigation, most of the attempts to establish interest in museums and cultural projects came to nothing.

In Basu's investigations into museum development in Sierra Leone, he explains that in addition to

stressing the need for research, collection and conservation, it is clear that Huxley saw the development of museums in West Africa as an integral part of Britain's long-term decolonisation process, in which first a sense of national identity needed to be inculcated in each territory and a new ruling class formed that would share European sensibilities and values: 'Knowledge of an interest in the history and cultural achievements of the region will be of great importance in fostering national and regional pride and self-respect, and in providing a common ground on which educated Africans and Europeans can meet and cooperate.'<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 21, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray also stated in the letter that "H [Huxley] said the museum [at Ife] was too small and had no storage space or workshops. But H was confusing it with the central museum and I had deliberately told Taffy to leave out store and workshop owing to lack of money and unlikelihood of there being anyone to use them. In any case I considered that reserachers [sic] could use an odd room in Afin or RH in the way that way that we in Nigeria have had to put up with."

<sup>27</sup> Basu, 2012, 151. Basu cites Julian Huxley, "Research and Development in Archaeology, Ethnology, African Art and Museums in West Africa" (1944), in Julian Huxley to C. Y. Carstairs, 14 May 1944, pg. 3. TNA, CO 927/5/5.

Huxley envisioned a united museum system, based at IWAAISS, where larger museum policy would be developed and published and museum professionals trained. Each colonial country would have a large national museum as well as smaller regional museums, which they would maintain and individualize to their interests.<sup>28</sup> Nigeria did not approve of such a union. Murray explained

The Higher Ed. Commission seems upset that Nigeria feels that the institute is for the Gold Coast. I will be glad if it comes here and goes on the right lines but I feel my position is going to be difficult, for the whole idea of the Institute is coming into my sphere of work in every direction and I have no wish to be under meyerervitz [sic]. Huxley is all pro institute and meyerovitz: he wrote and said that the Institute must have some considerable say in general museum policy and that grants for museums will have to come through it. But that is not the only difficulty. Niven is the other trouble. He is all out for himself [sic] according to everyone, and he is trying to take on museums. He has interposed himself[sic] between me and the Secretariat and is trying to get all the Antiquitiy business into his hands.<sup>29</sup>

The Nigerian colonial office was quite unwilling to turn over control of any project to other colonies. Their reluctance to cooperate with Huxley's proposal to collaborate on a larger museum project for West Africa was due, in part, to their resistance to losing any kind of control. Early in Murray's tenure as the surveyor of antiquities, he was stationed in the public relations office under Sir Cecil Rex Niven.<sup>30</sup> Niven took great interest in developing a museum for public exposure. For Murray,

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<sup>28</sup> Basu, 2012, 151. Huxley proposed to fund the initiative with contributions for the colonial governments, and grants from the Colonial Research Fund and the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. He advocated for a federal education scheme as well, modeled on the French West Africa. Murray eventually felt betrayed by Huxley who had proposed that the Ife heads should be sent to England, in spite of Murray's position that over half were currently stored there (Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 21, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.)

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 28 - March 5, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>30</sup> Sir C. Rex Niven was a brutal colonial officer serving primarily in the Public Relations Office, best known for his memoirs *Nigerian Kaleidoscope: Memoirs of a Colonial Servant*.

Niven's attention to the project proved to be a nuisance. Murray wrote that he spoke to Niven about a

central museum, but he has some scheme of his own that is as far as I can make out that like me he wants to avoid outside control but therefore wants to limit the museum, his advertising idea again. He would be satisfied [sic] with any room-the wretched Duckworth exhibition room. He said we must get that going (I did not reciprocate) I must continue to work for a [sic] more ambitious plan and yet avoid the outside control. I was scheming for an expensive museum which would be backed by the Col Development Fund. Niven wants something of a few thousands and asserts that it would be most dangerous to talk about a building for nothing would be got, that Govt house must be the museum but that this must not be mentioned yet, that the Gov, Chief Sect had been annoyed by things [sic] that had been said. In fact actually I felt that he knew he was on not very secure grounds...I then rang up the Sect and heard [sic] that £5000 (£1000 to be recovered [sic] from [sic] NA) had been printed in the estimates for the Ife museum. I did not mention this little triumph to Niven as he might be disappointed that he not thought of it.<sup>31</sup>

In this same letter Murray described the hope that he would also find support for the Benin Museum from both the PRO and Huxley. He continued "but here the difficulty is Huxley's Pro-Meyerowitz [sic] and Institute inclinations [sic], so his pressure must [sic] be used, as on the Ife museum, up to a point and not too far. But I think my position not very hopeful."<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps this is when the collaboration between Murray and Meyerowitz really began to deteriorate. For his own efforts to build a museum in Nigeria, Murray found Meyerowitz to be a complicating factor. Meyerowitz also wanted a museum and antiquities preservation as proposed by Huxley. Murray, however, was skeptical:

although seeing his attitude I don't see why he should want a museum. He said he did not think there would be a central museum for [sic] the institute

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<sup>31</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 13-19, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 13-19, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

and that he was keen to remove the idea that the institute would make “raids” on Nigeria to secure antiquities. Our chief difference here was about the extent to which the institute would have a say or control in Nigerian archaeology, museums etc. He argued against the officials concerned with these things being civil servants, with which on the whole I agreed, and that curators should be appointed by the institute: a central curator at the institute over other curators. I argued for local freedom and advocated an association of the local museums, inspection by the museums association from England and possible one curator being made senior. I could not see much purpose in an extra curator over all other curators seeing that he would hardly have a museum to look after but did agree that expert advice for all 4 colonies would be useful at the start. On art education there was not much discussion or disagreement...he wanted a scheme of craft centres on the educational side. I was not opposed to these but rather doubted whether the introduction of a fresh scheme in Nigerian education would be advisable.<sup>33</sup>

While Huxley was in favor of a sort of regionalization in which each country developed their own museum under a larger West African ministry, Heiner Meinhard, a German anthropologist working for the Pitt Rivers Museum (formerly of Berlin’s Museum für Völkerkunde), conceived of a large “Central Museum of West African Ethnology and Archaeology.” Basu suggests that “although IWAAISS is not explicitly mentioned in Meinhard’s memorandum, it is likely that this was the intended location of the central museum (reference is made, for example, to collaboration with ‘sister institutes’ such as IFAN and RLI).”<sup>34</sup> He supposes that there might even have been a collaboration between Meinhard and his friend Meyer Fortes, head of sociology at IWAAISS.<sup>35</sup> Meinhard put forward a museum plan that would encourage research beyond Anglophone West Africa. Basu explains, however, “the proposal failed to link the

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<sup>33</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, May 3, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: Murray states that along the lines of Huxley’s proposals, “on Antiquities and museums there was more agreement” between Murray and Meyerowitz.

<sup>34</sup> Basu, 2012, 152.

<sup>35</sup> Basu, 2012, 151-152. Basu cites Heiner Meinhard, “Suggestions for a Central Museum of West African Ethnology and Archaeology” (1944), in O. G. R. Williams to G. H. Creasy, 15 November 1944. TNA, CO 927/5/5.



museum's 'three-fold task of preservation, research, and teaching' with the objectives of Britain's colonial policy, which would surely have been necessary to attract support under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act."<sup>36</sup>

The colonial office did not welcome such proposals, not just because of the financial obligation during wartime, but due in part to Lord Malcolm Hailey's comprehensive survey of Africa, in which he concluded that museums and antiquities preservation and research were little use to Africans themselves. Lord Hailey's report was taken very seriously. He did explain, however, just as Northcote Thomas had in the early twentieth century and Huxley had in his scheme, that Britain's cultural preservation efforts lagged behind those of Germany and the United States, something Murray knew all too well.<sup>37</sup> Meinhard's memorandum and Hailey's report were sent to the governors of the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Nigeria. Basu explained that by and large the governors

supported the idea that museums should be established in their respective territories, but they also agreed with Hailey that such an expensive programme could not be justified at the time. Gerald Whiteley, writing on behalf of the Governor of Nigeria, suggested that 'Huxley's scheme...[wa]s more of an ideal to be aimed at than a practicable proposition which [they had] any hope of carrying out'.<sup>38</sup>

Part of Whiteley's hesitation, and most certainly Murray's fear, was that the proposed museum headquarters would be at the IWAAISS in the Gold Coast. "Whiteley put this most forcefully: 'I consider Nigeria large enough to formulate its own museum policy and I consider it necessary that we should be left unfettered to direct our research to our

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<sup>36</sup> Basu, 2012, 152

<sup>37</sup> Basu, 2012, 152

<sup>38</sup> Basu, 2012, 153.

own needs.”<sup>39</sup> Of course, this discussion took place at a time of great change: the end of World War II and the closing of IWAAISS. For Nigeria in particular this meant that funds would hopefully become available to finance the cultural projects that had been gaining momentum.

Perhaps most frustrating to Murray was that the funds came in support of Fagg’s project in Jos, rather than going toward Murray’s pursuit of a central museum in Lagos. Fagg wrote a letter to Murray on April 24, 1945 from the labor office in Jos: “I have heard...that I shall shortly be receiving papers regarding a museum for Jos, which is very good news.”<sup>40</sup>

What these papers would specify was not as clear as Fagg has hoped. He worried that the colonial office would push for an all-encompassing museum. He was hoping for an ethnographic museum focused on material culture, not a space that displayed archaeological specimens among taxidermies and flora. His letter to Murray continues:

the task of an ethno. is surely the display and interpretation of Nigerian culture. A very small amount of geology (not mineralogy) would be in place to assist in the interpretation of archaeological and ethnographic material. The same applies to botany, natural history etc. etc. in so far as they help to interpret culture in such things as agriculture, hunting. But don’t let’s have stuffed birds, pressed flowers, butterflies and dry as dust minerals unless we are prepared to build another British Museum and staff it accordingly. The sciences could wait 50 years and not anything will be lost. Everyday we are losing the evidence of Contemporary and past culture. I know you agree about all this, but I want you to know the danger of such a move exists up here. However perhaps the “papers” refer to a specifically ethnological museum. Dent Young,<sup>41</sup> incidentally, quite

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<sup>39</sup> Basu, 2012, Footnote 37, 153.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, April 24, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives. In the letter Fagg asked Murray: “Please write and give me a line on roughly how much money we are likely to get for Jos and how high to aim – pretty high, I imagine.”

<sup>41</sup> Lieutenant Colonel J. Dent Young led mining operations in Nok.

agrees to restricting the scope of a museum to ethnographic and archaeology to set this stage.<sup>42</sup>

Murray was also unwilling to compromise on the mission of the museum. He sought the support of the Nigerian Field Society, but had no interest in developing a multi-faceted museum. He saw his role as developing an antiquities museum, not a museum that had a natural history component, a modern art component, and an antiquities component.

It seemd [sic] that except for Duckworth my fight had been almost single handed – on no one else could I rely on for continuous support and encouragement. My interests were chiefly in antiquities and ethnography and so if others wanted natural hisory [sic] and so on included in the museum, let them come forward and carry on a campaign like I had. While fauna and flora of Nigeria might be altering, not so very much would have been altogether lost in another twenty years, but human artefacts were changing and disappearing with much greater speed. I must confess that archaeology a subject in which I was ignorant, did not take much place until Fagg joined me and inspired me with his enthusiasm and knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

With the momentum and support that Fagg was garnering, Murray worried that his own project would be overlooked. He responded to Fagg's April 24 letter:

I was going to propose for the first five years an instalment [sic] of a central museum at Lagos to cover 8000 sq ft floor space and to cost about £25,000, and an addition of 400 sq ft to the museum at Jos costing about £10000, as a regional museum. Curators would be appointed to both...I wanted to discuss the fitting in of these proposals to yours. I assumed your first part would be built out of local funds and the additions out of C.D.&W funds [Colonial Development and Welfare Funds]. The question arises whether your plans should cover the two parts to be built simultaneously, or whether the second part should come later. I should like to know your feelings on this. I spoke to Niven about how much money you should plan for and he suggested £10000 with the additional remark that your should not be afraid of being ambitious, we want a big

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<sup>42</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, April 24, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives. In the letter Fagg asked Murray: "Please write and give me a line on roughly how much money we are likely to get for Jos and how high to aim – pretty high, I imagine."

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 7a-8.

scheme and should aim high. I think it is fairly safe to do so, although Niven next tour may not be in a position to influence the matter.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, this plan, though a step in the right direction, made Murray fear for the security of a national museum:

my only fear is that the provision of a moderately sized museum at Jos may prejudice the chances of getting a central museum at Lagos within a reasonable time (in any case difficulties arise at Lagos over sites which must be cleared or prepared and that will take some years). Also that the Jos Museum may weaken the central collections by taking in everything from the North. Also that the Jos site may be unsatisfactory and the museum become a museum for Europeans and tourists. (So I hope you proceed with your side). But I don't [sic] think we should grudge what we can get for museums, and if there is a chance of making a museum at Jos we should take it.<sup>45</sup>

#### H. J. Braunholtz's Tour

Ultimately, Huxley's proposal and tour did not directly result in a museum in Nigeria. It did, however, lead to two important connections. The first was the support of Creech Jones, who became the secretary of state for the colonies. Creech Jones wrote a letter to the governor of Nigeria resulting in an advisory conference of Nigerian officials in 1947. More importantly, it was Huxley's efforts that encouraged the colonial office to send Braunholtz to West Africa in 1946, leading to a transformative report in 1947.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg on May 14, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives. In the letter Murray explained that he hoped the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund would financially support the project. He noted that "I am afraid it will have to await completion until I have seen some people at home. Braunholtz was so insistent on the need for air-conditioning but the costs seem very high so I want to find out if any alternatives or modifications are possible..."

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg on May 14, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth Murray, "Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum," (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 7a: "Thus when Creech Jones became Secretary of State for Colonies he wrote to the Governor of Nigeria asking him to help my [my] work. As a result a conference [sic] of some Nigerian officials was called in 1947 to advise the Governor, but the results were few. Largely as a result of Huxley's interest Braunholtz [sic] visited West Africa in 1945-6 on behalf [sic] of the Colonial Office in order to advise on museums and the preservation of antiquities. His report finished in 1947 as invaluable."

Murray and Duckworth had been looking at British models to develop education programs and the antiquities survey and legislation. Yet it was not until Hermann J. Braunholtz, keeper of ethnography at the British Museum and president of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1937-39 and 1941-43) came to conduct a survey and make recommendations that Murray and Duckworth solidified their connection to one of the most important cultural institutions in the British Empire.<sup>47</sup> Raymond Firth, secretary of the Colonial Social Science Research Council, suggested that Braunholtz tour West Africa and make recommendations to the colonial office about museum development.<sup>48</sup> The British Museum was struggling to recover from World War II, so Braunholtz did not arrive in Nigeria until February 16, 1946. He was two weeks late, having been held up at Bathurst.<sup>49</sup> Murray oversaw Braunholtz's six-week itinerary in Nigeria and, as Basu suggests, "it is fair to surmise that [Murray] had a strong influence on the recommendations that Braunholtz eventually put forward in his report."<sup>50</sup> This tour of Nigeria was an important part of Murray's year and he wrote extensively about it in his letters home and in the first annual report of the antiquities section.

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<sup>47</sup> Deduced from a letter from Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray first wrote to Braunholtz in November 1943. At this time he also began to search for material about proper protocol for archeological excavations.

<sup>48</sup> Basu, 2012, 153. In footnote 39, Basu references H.J. Braunholtz, "Special Report: Visit of the Keeper to West Africa," 8 July 1946. British Museum Eth Doc 172. He also employs Hermann J. Braunholtz, "Report on the Preservation of Antiquities and on the Establishment of museums in British West Africa," (1948). TNA, CO 927/31/5. Basu explains that "the amount of attention Braunholtz paid to each territory during his survey reflects the size of the territories, of course, but it is also another indicator of their perceived archaeological and ethnological value. Thus, during the eleven weeks of his tour, Braunholtz spent six weeks in Nigeria, twelve days in the Gold Coast, five days in the Gambia, and just four days in Sierra Leone. In the last two territories, he did not venture beyond the capital cities of Bathurst and Freetown."

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 3, 1946 and February 16, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 2, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office; Basu, 2012, 154.

Braunholtz, having published on Nigeria for the British Museum for the last twenty years, was excited by the prospect of visiting. In his official capacity as a consultant for the colonial office, Braunholtz would advise on the need for museums in West Africa. As such, one of the most important stops on his Nigerian tour was at Jos, where he spent time with Fagg. But, as the senior keeper of the department of antiquities at the British Museum, Braunholtz was also on a collecting trip and visiting potential donors. Murray took him to Uburu Uku to see the Oba, who “showed his coral crowns. A coral robe and crown [that] had been in the BM on loan from a trader who before the war had got it returned to the Oba. We saw this but it was not being kept too well.”<sup>51</sup> This kind of side trip would surely influence Braunholtz’s report on how to preserve the visual culture of Nigeria. Early in the trip, Murray took Braunholtz to a demonstration of *Ifa* divination. Murray wrote that the “Ifa did not require any sacrifice but went on to say that B’s expedition would arouse the jealousy of other nations owing to its success [sic]. To avoid this undesirable result a sacrifice was needed of 4 goats, 4 white cloths, 4 pipefuls of tobacco and £4. B is risking the envy.” They also saw the Alake and carvers at Abeokuta and Ake before heading to Jos via Enugu, where Fagg met the two of them and took them to the Hill Station before exploring the site of the proposed museum, settled on nine months earlier.<sup>52</sup>

While Basu noted that Murray was, perhaps, influential in Braunholtz’s report, Murray could not necessarily get Braunholtz excited about antiquities and notes that his

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<sup>51</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 10, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 16, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

primary interests were “pottery, music, carving, - in that order for those 3 items.”<sup>53</sup>

Murray reflected:

I hope B will not be so intent in studying the present day crafts [sic] that he will miss the older things, but he claims that he is also concerned with things that will be antiquities in 100 years, which is justifiable. He is now tempted to stay longer. It is certainly a pity if he had to rush and miss many things for the sake of a few days.<sup>54</sup>

Braunholtz was only useful to Murray’s mission if he could justify the need for a museum and a preservation plan to the colonial office. To achieve this, Murray took Braunholtz to Oron, where he hoped to establish a museum.

B. was properly shocked by the decay that still goes on. A court member we saw said how the council supported the idea of a museum. We then came back and called again at ETC to see Umana. I was fed up to find his store with various carvings as exhibits had been relegated to a small dark room.<sup>55</sup>

The first exhibition would be held in Oron by the end of the year.

Two further events during Braunholtz’s tour compel discussion. On March 10, three weeks after his arrival, Murray took Braunholtz to meet Azikiwe editor of the independence newspaper *The West African Pilot*. Zik already had a reputation in Britain as someone who would play an important role if and when Nigeria was granted independence. Of course he would become the first president of Nigeria in 1963. Cultivating a connection would prove imperative for both Murray and Braunholtz. Perhaps Braunholtz was most interested in meeting Zik because he was a member of the Royal Anthropological Institute, of which Braunholtz had been president. Braunholtz

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<sup>53</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 3, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 14-24, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>55</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 3, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

must have felt as though Zik was an important connection that would help Braunholtz and the British Museum develop proper archaeological practices and interest in Nigeria.

Though Braunholtz's thoughts about Zik are unknown, Murray wrote about his distrust of Zik on multiple occasions. During this particular meeting, Murray wrote:

It is hard to see the African Messiah or Gandhi in Zik who is not a very impressive figure. He does not seem very lucid in his ideas or very forceful in character. He showed no anti-British bias. He said his journalism was only a means of getting a living and he hoped now to have more time to devote to anthropology which he had studied in America. I thought him very nervous rather as though he had a bad conscience. Opinion is that his star is on the wane. His assassination story has not been accepted well by many a number of Africans and he has two libel actions [each] for £1000 against him and he does not seem confident of winning as his papers are full of appeals for a national fund to save "Zikism", but only has raised about £50 I believe. He has put up the [price] of the Pilot to 3d and so has lost subscribers.<sup>56</sup>

Murray did not feel as though Nigeria was ready for independence, but I suggest that Murray feared the process would stall his efforts to establish a museum for his collection.

The second event necessitating closer examination occurred just before Braunholtz departed for the Gold Coast. Braunholtz gave a talk on museums at the British Council, where Murray was exhibiting a small collection.<sup>57</sup> For many of the colonial officers who had heard of Murray's survey, this lecture must have made the museum a more urgent necessity. This said, Murray faced more opposition than interest. Just after Braunholtz left, Murray saw Geoffrey Francis Taylor Colby, the administrative

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<sup>56</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 10, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. "Zikisms" were principles that would lead to a prosperous and independent Nigeria, developed by Zik. Zikisms include "spiritual balance," "social regeneration," "Economic determinism," "mental emancipation," and "political resurgence." Azikiwe claimed to have intercepted a plan by the government to assassinate him. See Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Assassination Story: True or False*, (Onitsha: African Book Company, 1946). See also Eme O. Awa, *Federal Government in Nigeria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 89.

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 2, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



secretary (later the Governor of Nyasaland), who refused Murray the use of the Old Golf Club as a temporary store and museum.<sup>58</sup> It was another 11 years before Murray's museum opened.

It took Brauholtz two-and-a-half years to finish and submit his report to the colonial office. The report supported the call for museums; more specifically, he insisted that museums were necessary to prevent the loss of the antiquities.<sup>59</sup> For Brauholtz, it was not so much a question of whether or not museums should be established in West Africa, but of how the museums in West Africa should be organized. Should the British colonial government establish a larger organizational body with managers in each country, or should each country establish its own department? "If federation and centralisation become keynotes of Colonial policy," Brauholtz wrote,

the unified direction of the educational and scientific services provided by museums may eventually be desirable [sic] for the whole of West Africa. But for the present there is a very strong case on several grounds, such as local sentiment and special knowledge of local conditions, for independently planned archaeological and Museum services for each of the Colonies, or at any rate for the Gold Coast and Nigeria.<sup>60</sup>

Brauholtz put in a special note for Nigeria, underscoring its rich artistic traditions and current system and suggested that Nigeria should be the priority for the colonial government.<sup>61</sup> The outcome of this report, however, was minimal. There was a

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<sup>58</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 2, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>59</sup> Basu, 2012, 154. See also *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 3. And Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Basu, 2012, 154-155. Basu quotes Hermann J. Brauholtz, "Report on the Preservation of Antiquities and on the Establishment of museums in British West Africa," (1948). TNA, CO 927/31/5.

<sup>61</sup> Basu, 2012, 154-155. Basu quotes Hermann J. Brauholtz, "Report on the Preservation of Antiquities and on the Establishment of museums in British West Africa," (1948). TNA, CO 927/31/5.

conference held in July 1948 on museum policy and antiquities preservation to discuss the next steps, but nothing was decided.<sup>62</sup>

### Continued Opposition

Around the time of Brauholtz's 1946 tour, Creech Jones was promoted to colonial secretary. In his initial correspondence with Governor John Macpherson, Jones took up the fight for cultural preservation and promotion:

I am convinced that we cannot afford to continue neglecting our responsibilities in the matter of arts and antiquities in Nigeria, as I am afraid that they have been neglected in the past. The cultural importance of the whole subject is in my belief very great. But it seems to me to have a wider importance than that. I believe that we have much to gain politically in Nigeria itself by making as much as we possibly can of the remaining cultural riches and also by encouraging the development of arts among people who have so much aptitude for them. I very much hope that you will be able to give this subject the stimulus which I am sure that it needs.<sup>63</sup>

This plea elicited little reaction from Macpherson, who “deflected responsibility for such matters away from central government towards the newly reorganized higher education sector and non-governmental organisations such as UNESCO, the first director-general of which was none other than Huxley.”<sup>64</sup> By 1948, with strict financial constraints, William Monson, chief secretary to the West African Council, wrote to Leslie Gorsuch, head of the West African department at the colonial office, to put an end

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<sup>62</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Basu, 2012, 155. Basu quotes Arthur Creech Jones to Sir John Macpherson, 13 April 1948. TNA, CO 859/172/2.

<sup>64</sup> Basu, 2012, 156. UNESCO would be both a nuisance for the antiquities department and a partner for critical programs such as the curatorial training school at Jos. In 1952, Murray expressed his frustration in their continued research about museums in West Africa with little action. Of the material he collected and sent, “nothing comes of all this. People go on collecting information about organisations [sic] but all to no purpose. Some of this staff would be better employed in the organizations themselves” (Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 14, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office).

to the “development and implementation of a colonial museum policy in British West Africa.”<sup>65</sup> This vocal opposition at the end of 1948 effectively ended any effort the colonial office would make in pushing for museums. Basu writes, “the museums *did* get built – but this was largely in spite of, rather than because of, official colonial policy.”<sup>66</sup> It is at this point that the British West African colonies are no longer seen as a group in terms of a larger museum policy; rather each developed an individual relationship with its own government. Basu makes a crucial point when he asserts that there is a

common mistake of supposing that the British had a significant interest in such a museum and, indeed, that there was any kind of policy in operation in the colonial era (whether a collections policy or a policy of museum development)...despite the efforts of a few dedicated individuals, no such policies were adopted in British West Africa. From a Colonial Office perspective, museums were regarded as indulgences of limited value, the expense of which simply could not be justified. In the West African context, therefore, colonial era museums could hardly be described as ‘cultural technologies of rule’: they were, rather, the pet projects of museum-minded individuals at various tiers of the colonial service (from education officers such as Murray to governors such as Hall or, indeed, the Colonial Secretary himself in the figure of Creech Jones). The enthusiasms of these individuals were often academic in nature and they were convinced of the social value of preserving traditional crafts and skills in the countries where they originated. These interests and convictions were not widely shared, however, among either the British colonial administration or the emerging local elites.<sup>67</sup>

In light of World War II and the growing encroachment of independence, the colonial office did not see museums as essential in spite of the assertions by their supporters.<sup>68</sup> They did give provisions to develop the antiquities section, in part, to maintain control over the physical objects, which Germany seemed only too eager to get

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<sup>65</sup> Basu, 2012, 156. Basu quotes William Monson to Leslie Gorsuch, 29 December 1948. TNA, CO 927/31/4.

<sup>66</sup> Basu, 2012, 157.

<sup>67</sup> Basu, 2012, 163.

<sup>68</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 9.

a hold of for their own museums. Therefore, a convincing argument for museums was simply to restrict the constant stream of antiquities leaving the country.

### Road to Museums

The efforts of Brauholtz, Duckworth, Murray, Huxley, and Meyerowitz were not enough to convince the colonial office to channel funds, resources, or manpower to establish museums in West Africa. The fact that a museum was built in Esię in 1945 was not an indication of interest or support by the government. Murray's priority from the beginning was a central museum in Lagos. Not only was he opposed to regional museums, but he was also opposed to the suggestion of a central museum located in Ibadan, which was proposed by the finance committee, perhaps because the University of Ibadan had been opened in 1948 with high hopes that it would become an academic center.<sup>69 70</sup> To Murray this meant another obstacle to the proposal, and he became indignant. His initial response was to not look for a site for the museum, choosing to withhold his collection from Nigeria. Instead of having it sent back from South Africa, he would send it on extended loan to the British Museum.<sup>71</sup> Murray always went through the

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<sup>69</sup> Incidentally, historian Kenneth Dike, the first Nigerian Vice-Chancellor of the University, was also a prominent figure on the Antiquities Commission in the 1960s. His role in the Department of Antiquities will be explored further in chapter 5.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: "then the Finance Committee. Has a long wait for them. I put my case well up to a point but missed our one vital point that I had not thought neede [sic] emphasising, that I knew of no other site than Owo. The Committee was 3 Africans and two English. I was therefore not surprised to hear on Saturday that they had turned Owo down. They voted the money however but for a building at Ibadan. It is annoying that having to deal with an obtuse Govt one now has to deal with obtuse Africans. It seems [sic] absurd that 3 unrepresentative African on the finance Commtte [sic] should decide a question of principal where the central museum will be. I don't know what they will suggest for a site. I don't intend to look for one. I shall look at what is offered. This means more delay. I am not thinking of

proper governmental channels, but he was also always resentful and most often unwilling to compromise.

Murray clearly felt strongly about developing museums for cultural preservation; however, he felt that without proper staff and training, any efforts toward preservation were useless. He saw the spaces created by the department of mines in Jos, the Native Authority Museum at Udi, the museums operated by middle schools in places such as Bauchi,<sup>72</sup> Katsina,<sup>73</sup> Kano, Maiduguri and the new museum in Bamenda in Cameroon, as in such poor condition that they

are of no use to the public: that at Udi is usually locked and there is nothing to indicate that it is a museum or when or how it can be opened. It is advisable to concentrate on museums that can be properly built and staffed: only exhibits that can be replaced should be kept in school or locally established museums.<sup>74</sup>

Fagg reiterated this point a decade later. He wrote that until the antiquities section took up the cause, antiquities were in the jurisdiction of schools and independent departments.

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having my collection on in S.Africa sent home next leave and I will lend it to the BM. After the meeting I saw someone about sites in Lagos...”

<sup>72</sup> In a 1946 letter Murray wrote of his impressions of the middle school gallery in Bauchi: “We went to Middle School to see the Museum. It was in as bad order as when I last saw it, and worse for white ants were eating the things on one shelf. We then had breakfast. After we again went to the Middle School to see the SEO, Bowler. He said he had no time for the museum and wanted the room and had spoken to the Resident about it being moved. We looked at a “model” house that is being built in Zaria. There was a competition for designs, but the Resident decided his was the best and adopted it. I thought it wasteful and I should have thought unsuitable. We then went to see the resident [sic] about the museum. He is a man of ideas and said he intended to put it in the library, in spite [sic] of my criticisms of this course” (Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 30, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office). Six years later a £30,000 school was built and it housed the museum. In spite of its cost Murray described it as “a shabby place. White ants already in the building, borers in the ceiling and the cement peeling off the mud walls. Thus do the Ed. Dept waste money. The chief [sic] exhibits in the museum were the dead lizards on the floor. The white ants had not started on the exhibits (what were left from the last time I saw it) The exhibits were noticeably fewer than then. The labels [sic] were more or less in place except those on minerals. A stone implement was labelled a piece of iron ore. So my opinion of these small museums was not disturbed” (Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, August 3, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office).

<sup>73</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 15, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office, “which has one or two old things out badly labeled and in fact the historical value of some is lost because no record has been kept of their discovery.”

<sup>74</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5.

He explained that in spite of the best intentions, it was nearly impossible to maintain a collection of antiquities and artifacts without larger institutional support.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the colonial office did not see the use in building an entire museum when there were departments to store and exhibit objects. The education department, led by Duckworth, was particularly active in creating opportunities to exhibit Nigerian art, crafts, and antiquities.

### Exhibitions in London and Lagos

There were multiple opportunities to exhibit Nigerian art in Lagos and abroad. Each exhibition was accompanied by the hope that such displays would generate enough excitement to build a museum. Many of the exhibitions were curated and promoted by Duckworth.

In addition to his duties in the education department, or perhaps as part of his job as the editor of *Nigeria*, Duckworth's interest in modern Nigerian art resulted in several exhibitions. In spring 1936, while on leave, Duckworth coordinated an exhibition of Nigerian arts and crafts.<sup>76</sup> Alluding to the show in an April 1936 letter Murray writes, "I hear that Duckworth is having a small exhibition of Nigerian arts and crafts in England this leave. If you see anything about it could you please send the cutting to me."<sup>77</sup> Perhaps nothing came of Murray's request because fewer than three months later he

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<sup>75</sup> Fagg, 1963, 124.

<sup>76</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 26, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>77</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 26, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

conceded, “I expect Duckworth’s exhibition of African things is rather a private one.”<sup>78</sup>

This exchange may be significant, as Duckworth’s exhibition coincided with Murray’s

*Nigerian Wood-Carving, Terracottas and Water Colours*, at Zwemmer Gallery in

London in 1937, opened by Sir William Rothenstein, secretary of state for the colonies.<sup>79</sup>

In 1938, Duckworth led the curatorial team that installed a Nigerian component of the West African Colonies pavilion in the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland. To highlight Nigeria’s contribution, he dedicated the summer edition of *Nigeria* to the Nigerian artists and exhibition.<sup>80</sup> This special edition also served as a guide for the art and crafts exhibits.<sup>81</sup> He explained in “The Empire Exhibition: May-October, 1938: A Lost Opportunity: Is it too Late to Recover it?” that “Nigerian Arts and Crafts were nearly excluded but informed counsels finally prevailed and the work of Nigerian craftsmen and women did eventually, at the eleventh hour, find a foothold and this work proved a very great attraction to the thousands of visitors who passed through the Pavilion.”<sup>82</sup> Nigeria and the Gold Coast had the largest exhibition galleries, while Sierra Leone and the Gambia shared a smaller space. A.B. Olumuyiwa,<sup>83</sup> M.B. Thomson (also from the

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<sup>78</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 15, 1936. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>79</sup> Kenneth C. Murray, *Nigerian Wood-carving, Terracottas and Water Colours: 6<sup>th</sup> July 1937 – 7<sup>th</sup> August 1937* (London: Zwemmer Gallery, 1937). See also G. I. Jones and Kenneth C. Murray, “The Exhibition of Nigerian Wood-carving, Terracottas and Water Colours: the work of five Nigerians trained under the Nigerian Government, held at the Zwemmer Gallery, London, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1937 – 7<sup>th</sup> August 1937,” *Nigerian Field* 7, no 1 (January 1938), 12-15.

<sup>80</sup> Sylvester Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 55. See also Ogbechie, 2008, footnote 96, 238.

<sup>81</sup> *Nigeria*, No. 14 (1938). 12,000 copies were printed with the support of anonymous donations and a price of 6 pennies.

<sup>82</sup> E.H. Duckworth, “The Empire Exhibition: May-October, 1938: A Lost Opportunity: Is it too Late to Recover it?” in *Nigeria* 16 (1938), 263.

<sup>83</sup> A.B. Olumuyiwa was a Nigerian studying in London, signed on by Mr. Falk, the Exhibition Commissioner.

education department), and Hunt-Cooke arranged the exhibitions and gave tours. All of the work in the exhibition was sold and Duckworth noted that

it was evident that an excellent export trade could be built up with many of our Nigerian village products and a much-needed stimulus given to our fast-vanishing wood carving crafts...The volume of orders became quite embarrassing, but there was one great difficulty. It had been clearly foreseen that the high quality of the Nigerian art and craft exhibits would cause a sensation and bring many orders, and before the opening of the Exhibition a carefully-thought-out plan was drawn up for establishing an art and craft sale centre, an enquiry bureau, and an inspection, packing and dispatch depot at Lagos. Unfortunately, owing to lack of the small capital (about £300) to get things established, the scheme was not put into action and in the end all the orders received for duplicates of the craft work exhibited had to be refused and the money returned to the people who were anxious to trade with us.<sup>84</sup>

What is unclear is if Duckworth used this failed project as ammunition to develop further schemes for artists in Nigeria and abroad. Regardless, this exhibition announcement highlights Duckworth's opinion that promoting Nigerian art (both modern and traditional crafts) would be lucrative for Nigeria and Britain. It was this commercial success that led Mr. Falk, the exhibition commissioner, to add that

it would next be necessary to have an agent in the United Kingdom with some stock of goods and some illustrated literature. Samples of Nigerian Arts and Crafts would have to be displayed occasionally to keep them before the public eye. I feel certain that in a short time trade connection would be built up, and thus employment given to quite a number of African craftsmen.<sup>85</sup>

This vote of confidence as well as models developed by Malaya, the Gold Coast, Ceylon, and the French African colonies led Duckworth to make a call for a craft sale center.

"What other Colonies can do," Duckworth wrote,

Nigeria can. Here is a golden opportunity for our progressive young men and women and our Native Administrations to engage in a fine piece of

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<sup>84</sup> Duckworth, 1938, 264.

<sup>85</sup> Quote by Mr. Falk in Duckworth, 1938, 265.



constructive work and help to create an organization in our capital town working in co-operation with provincial centres and providing the driving force, the expert knowledge that could expand and develop our internal trade out of all recognition and bring us happiness and make us less dependent on the ups and downs of world prices for cocoa, oil and cotton.<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps due to the war, it took approximately five years for Duckworth to propose an exhibition scheme. This occurred shortly after Murray began the survey:

On my return [from Ife] Buckworth [sic] came in bringing plans for his museum and show room. It is not getting on as quickly as he hoped, but once they get strated [sic] on the building it should not take so long. He seems to expect me to provide material for it. I said I did not know what I could produce as the Yoruba would not sell anything, but from his reply he seems to have gone back to the old idea of a showroom for new work, a thing I have always been opposed to. I hope the Govt wont refuse the £3000 or more that I want for local museums etc (Ife, Benin, Esie) having given him nearly £2000...<sup>87</sup>

They did refuse his requests, and Murray would have to settle for Duckworth's small exhibition in Lagos.

...Duckworth, who raised the question of my buying exhibitsvfor [sic] his room. I said I would do what I could but it would be difficult to get time. I think he thinks I ought to make a special tour round the country specially to get things together. It is rather awkward, as it was chiefly through him that I have got the Antiquities job, -he had written to Govt about Ife etc and said that I was the person to do the work -(otherwise perhaps it would not have come my way, it would be quite like the Govt to have never thought of asking me, but they would have had difficulty in finding anyone else whou could have done it, unless Jones.) But...Duckworth would pay attention to what I have said in the past, he would remember that I have always opposed this pet scheme of his.<sup>88</sup>

This exhibition displaying Ben Enwonwu's work was opened in early 1944. It was intended as a purely commercial venture organized by Duckworth in a new space

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<sup>86</sup> Duckworth, 1938, 266.

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 3, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>88</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 10, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

overlooking the lagoon. Because they had every intention of selling the work, there was some dispute as to who would be an appropriate choice to open the exhibition. Murray selected Grantham, whose participation was announced on the local radio and papers. The opening was well attended by approximately 50 Europeans and 200 Africans. The show stayed open for two weeks. Much to Murray's frustration, however, "the press seems to have taken no notice of Ben's exhibition I think I will have to write a criticism of the pictures."<sup>89</sup>

Murray later notes that the exhibition is a huge success, garnering approximately four thousand visitors per week: "a smattering of Europeans, the others old and young African men and women of all types and classes."<sup>90</sup> Though there is no way to substantiate these numbers, Murray uses the information to reinforce his request for a museum in Lagos. He suggested the numbers were so high for two reasons: "they are interested in art and are glad to see [sic] an African excelling."<sup>91</sup>

In spite of the success of this exhibition, the colonial government was not convinced that art was a worthy use of resources. According to Murray, Duckworth was particularly discouraged:

As so often in this country within a few years of his departure nothing of his work will remain. He appears to have got tired of the effort to run Nigeria and no one will continue it in the way he has started. Probably the P.R.O will take it over and run it on different lines. They have taken over his exhibition room. It is a disappointing country with its frustrations. A

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<sup>89</sup> This early exhibition is described in Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 2, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>90</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 9, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>91</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 16, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. He noted that 680 visitors saw the show that morning and he estimated 12,000 visitors came to the exhibition in total. This exhibition generated £232 for Enwonwu and led to one of Enwonwu's trips to England.

radical change is needed in the higher ranks. The Ed Dept should not have had such a succession of self-seeking or elderly directors.<sup>92</sup>

Murray had hoped that the exhibition would convince the government that a museum would be extensively utilized. Duckworth also hoped that this exhibition would lead to a museum with the potential to be fiscally independent. The suggestion was contentious for Murray and he felt possessive of the project, writing, “I want to keep some hold on it, in order to be a position to influence the permanent museum in the way I want, and I want to prevent D and his proteges getting right in on that.”<sup>93</sup>

Shortly after the exhibition, however, the British Council confiscated the gallery, which went hand-in-hand with Duckworth receiving a new position. He became the editor of *Nigeria*, the organizer of exhibitions, and the curator of antiquities, a title Murray and Duckworth both protested. Though these titles meant that the colonial government saw the museum project as a permanent venture, they provided no funding with which to enable programming.<sup>94</sup>

The first exhibition of antiquities, in 1946, consisted of Murray’s collection along with some of the long-term loans he had arranged, such as the Oron *Ekpu* figures (figure 9).<sup>95</sup> Rather than being held at the Old Golf Club, which was reassigned as museum storage, the display was held at the Exhibition Centre.<sup>96</sup> Within the first month, Murray

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<sup>92</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 23, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>93</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 23, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>94</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 15, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>95</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 98.

<sup>96</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946, 1947*, 2: “Almost the entire collection has had to be kept in the Surveyor’s house and for that reason it has been impossible to collect as much as could and ought to have been collected. The Old Golf Club on the road to Ikoyi has now been made available for a Museum Store and when some alterations have been done the problem of storage should be solved for several years.”

recorded that over 30,000 visitors saw the exhibition. “The idea that Nigerians are not interested in their arts and history was therefore disproved,” he wrote.<sup>97</sup>

Duckworth found a passion in curating small exhibitions in Lagos. Early in 1948, he paired contemporary Nigerian and European works at his exhibition center.<sup>98</sup> About the exhibition, Murray wrote: “it is a pity this can not be known in England. But don’t think it unduly worries me. The exhibition showed two tendencies: the rememennts [sic] of my teaching and the new influence of Europeanisation by the British Council.”<sup>99</sup>

In June 1948, the *Second Exhibition of Nigerian Antiquities* was held at the Exhibition Centre in Lagos. The exhibition displayed Benin bronzes recently acquired from Great Britain and antiquities collected by Murray during his survey through the Western Provinces.<sup>100</sup> The following year Murray collaborated with the Zwemmer Gallery again to develop *Masks and headdresses of Nigeria*.<sup>101</sup> That same year, William Fagg curated *Traditional Art of the British Colonies*, held at the Royal Anthropological Institute.<sup>102</sup> This exhibition then traveled to the Imperial Institute in London in summer 1951.<sup>103</sup> Part of the excitement over this exhibition was due to the fact that the British Museum’s ethnographical galleries had been closed for nearly 12 years because of the

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<sup>97</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 2.

<sup>98</sup> Murray mentions the exhibition in Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: “I had a bathe and then Shute turned up and wanted me to go to the exhibition of contemporary Nigerian art (with European work) at Duckworths exhibition centre. I went rather reluctantly.”

<sup>99</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>100</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 5.

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth C. Murray, *Masks and Headdresses of Nigeria: 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1949 to 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1949, the Zwemmer Gallery* (London: Zwemmer Gallery, 1949).

<sup>102</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 77.

<sup>103</sup> See Kenneth Murray. “The Colonial Art Exhibition,” in *The Nigerian Field* 17, no. 1 (1952) 41-42.

extensive damage they incurred during World War II.<sup>104</sup> Murray took advantage of these exhibitions to gain popular support for his cause, but also acknowledged

the negotiations for the loan of objects, their collection, packing, insurance and despatch [sic] gave much work to the Branch during the first quarter of 1951. Works from Ife, Benin, Owo and Idah were lent by their owners and others were sent from the collections at Jos and Ibadan. Attempts to obtain the loan of works from Tada, Esie, Aro-Chuku and Iloffa were unsuccessful, chiefly owing to the short notice that was given.<sup>105</sup>

Though the colonial office never appeared to acknowledge a building dedicated solely to exhibiting art and antiquities was needed, these exhibitions did demonstrate Nigeria's interest in its material culture. For Murray, the goal was to generate support for a national institution in Lagos. Instead, as he continued to cultivate relationships with Nigerians, particularly Oni and Oba, he was strengthening the case for smaller, regional museums.

#### Working with the Oni and Oba

Working with Nigerian leaders was an important part of making antiquity preservation a priority for the country. It was, however, also necessary to supporting the system of indirect rule. I feel that if the colonial government had made museums a priority, Murray would not have sought the local leaders' support for the initiative. Yet Murray likely required their support to build a diverse collection. He used the offer to develop regional museums as a way to leverage support from the communities. Though Murray preferred a centralized national collection over local museums, he knew that he was asking most Nigerians to think about their heirlooms in a different way. He asked

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<sup>104</sup> Kenneth Murray. "Traditional Sculpture from the Colonies," in *The Burlington Magazine* 93, no. 581 (1951), 260.

<sup>105</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 4.

Nigerians to consider preservation a necessity to keeping the knowledge of their culture alive.

The issue of gaining support from Nigerians was political in nature. Naturally, Nigerian leaders wanted to make sure they would benefit from any colonial intervention. Likewise, the colonial government did not want to put their control in jeopardy by accepting support. For example, Murray proposed to solicit funds for antiquity preservation from Nigerians themselves, but it “was not greeted with much favour, the Sect so afraid that Azikiwe might contribute and therefore get publicity. But I think I may get my way.”<sup>106</sup> The British feared that Azikiwe, a controversial character and thorn in the colonial government’s side, would demand control in exchange for his financial support. Garnering support from both the colonial government and influential Nigerians was critical to the success of the museum project in Nigeria.

Murray, however, was not patient and he was not always willing to compromise on his mission. As a result, his dealings with Nigerians were often colored by frustration and self-righteousness. During the first month of his survey in 1943, Murray began to realize that he would need to convince Nigerians to take an interest in the preservation of their objects. He wrote:

I have to concentrate on practical suggestions of what to do, and these are often hard to think of in view of the people to be dealt with. 1 method of approach has to be perfected. In the Ibo country I had got one that generally produced what I wanted, but with the Yoruba is [sic] is different. Thus I tried with one man the line of emphasising the importance of keeping the old works in the country and spoke of the loss to the country if they went. I spoke of the commercial value, as an experimental approach, taking a carved door in the “palace” of the Chief (Owa) of Ijesha as an example. Said that now the Govt acting in the interests of the people had

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<sup>106</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 15, 1949. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

prohibited the export of any of such things. Then became aware that the man I was talking to was thinking “what a pity!” and he asked how much would that door sell for in England. The Yoruba have their “kings” or Obas and thus it may be necessary to work through them. On the other hand it may be quicker and more effective, as producing things that the elders prefer to conceal, to work through a compaarative [sic] nonentity. I am not decided which. Then whether to stress one side or another of the mission. Either preservation in the loyalty or preservation in accentral [sic] museum. The one means later protective measures and what those can be need careful thought the other, buying, and with limited accommodation in the lorry. In the Ibo country I felt sorry to buy, until I realised that the things would only rot away, now again I feel sorry. (It would be so much preferable to see these things in situ or let them remain hidden in the houses as living and not as museum specimens, if only they would be cared for.) If I buy I rather compromise apparently, my stated honesty of purpose. The idea of preserving things rather appeals to the old, but it takes on a different appearance if preservation means in another town. The caring for things “in situ” requires thought and knowledge.<sup>107</sup>

Museums were appealing propositions for local leaders. It was not that they necessarily wanted an institution for antiquities preservation and education; rather, they found the opportunity for a new building constructed by the British colonial government appealing. In this sense, museums were negotiating tools for both parties. For Murray, proposing a museum to local leaders meant that they were more willing to help him collect various objects from villagers. For local leaders, a museum meant a new building and the chance to be seen as a cultural destination and a player on the international stage. This appeal did not always translate to the interest Murray needed. Benin, like Ife, was a site that had garnered support for a museum. However, when Murray met with the Oba he “got the impression that he [was] not the slightest interest in the museum. thinks [sic] it is just for the Europeans.”<sup>108</sup> This question of the local museum remained for many

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<sup>107</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>108</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 24, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. The case of the Ife Museum will be considered in more depth in the next chapter, yet it demonstrates one of the most complex relationships between the Oni of Ife and Murray. The

years, long after independence. Ekpo Eyo was against the department supporting local museums in principle because, as he correctly suggested, every chief in Nigeria will want his own museum.<sup>109</sup>

Murray often needed the leaders to liaise between the antiquities section and the villagers, whom Murray looked toward to enhance his collections. Though the process of gaining their trust was not easy, he saw significant advancements toward his cause as the years went by. One of Murray's key contributions to the Nigerian cultural program was the acquisition of a national collection. This was important to his case for institutions to house, study, and display the collection, but also in developing relationships with Nigerians across the country. His relationship with the Oni of Ife and the Oron Clan Council was crucial to his mission as the surveyor of antiquities, but so was building a Nigerian staff.

### Employing Nigerians

It was the hope of the antiquities department, particularly with the approach of independence, that trained Nigerians would take charge. Murray knew that anyone dealing with museums, archaeology, and antiquities would have to be trained, either in

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Oni was very interested in antiquities preservation and supported excavations beginning with Bascom's in 1938 through 1953 with the reconstruction of the Opa Oranyin. Yet the Oni did not want to be subservient to the colonial mission. In a letter from Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, October 20, 1953 (Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.) he described an encounter with the Oni over the Ife Museum in 1953: "The question of ownership of the museum has rearisen. I had the Oni for about 2 hrs in the office on Monday. He is determined that Ife should own the museum but does not want the control so it would seem [sic seem] fairly easy for Govt to sell it and then take it on a lease. But a new catch appears: it seems that Ife now wants to use the museum for something else. The Oni only wanted a 10 yrs lease and talks about the Govt building a new, larger and better musuem[sic] then. It is a bit discouraging to spend all the effort on such an impermanent affair! The Oni declared that small countries had money for museums becaise[sic] they do not spend money on armaments." By 1953, Murray had been courting the Oni for nearly ten years, a building had been built (though unsatisfactorily), and excavations were in full swing.

<sup>109</sup> Sidney Kasfir, personal communication with the author, May 11, 2013.



Britain or by professionals posted in Nigeria. In a letter to Fagg in 1945, perhaps responding to his request for an assistant, Murray wrote

the question of African assistants is difficult. With all the demand for trained Africans it will be difficult to get anything like enough and museum being cultural may get the last choice. I plan for the training of assistants of middle vi education, possibly higher College if any available under the curators and with a course of a year to eighteen months in England. In time there may be university trained Africans who could come full curators. The provision of assistants with museum development has to be correlated to some extent.<sup>110</sup>

The department would always have a difficult time getting provisions for African employees and, when they did get the funding to educate them either in Nigeria or in England, these trained employees were often lost to other civil servant positions.

Murray and Fagg knew that in order to make the antiquities section successful in the coming decades, they would need to employ and train Nigerians. Their ultimate hope was to groom a Nigerian to take on the directorship of the department. The first was Ciroma, recruited by Fagg while a student at Kaduna College in 1949. Ciroma worked with Fagg to build the Jos Museum and conserve the Opa Oranyan from 1949-1953. A government grant funded Ciroma's study at the London and Birmingham universities before he returned to the department of antiquities as an archaeologist.<sup>111</sup> With Fagg's promotion, Hamo Sassoon became the deputy director until 1962, when he left to become Tanzania's first conservator of antiquities. At that point, Ciroma became the acting deputy director of antiquities, a position he did not hold for long because he was

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<sup>110</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard Fagg, May 14, 1945. KCM papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

<sup>111</sup> According to page 7 of the *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* by Fagg. Mallam Musa Abubakar was also hired as a technical assistant in 1949. Instead of accepting the post immediately, he began his studies at the University College, Ibadan. In Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 1, they also provided a scholarship to J. D. Akeredolu, known for miniature carvings in thorns, to study museum work in England. The ultimate expectation was that these students would return to Nigeria to take up an appointment in the Antiquities Section.

conscripted to a post in the northern regions' government ministry.<sup>112</sup> His most important archaeological work occurred at Igbo Ukwu with Thurston Shaw in 1959.

Murray and Fagg were conscious of hiring equally from the north and the south and intended for the first Nigerian director to be from the north. One of the points of pride for Fagg was hiring a technical instructor from the British Museum to train Nigerians leading up to the opening of the Jos Museum. The seven employees came from a "cross-section of the territory's mixed peoples—an Ankwe, a Bolewal, an Efik, a Fulani, an Ibo, a Tiv and a Yoruba."<sup>113</sup>

Ekpo Eyo (1931-2011), an Efik from Calabar recruited in 1951, was the second Nigerian to receive training under the department of antiquities. He received his master's degree from Cambridge in social anthropology and studied prehistoric archaeology at the University of London. He eventually earned his PhD in archaeology at the University of Ibadan in 1974.<sup>114</sup> He had influence as the vice president of ICOM, president of Association des Musées d'Afrique Tropicale-Museum Association of Tropical Africa (AMAT-MATA), and as the first Nigerian to be appointed director of the department of antiquities, in 1968.<sup>115</sup> Eyo's role in the department of antiquities will be explored further in chapter 5. He joined the department of art history and archaeology at the University of Maryland in 1986 and retired in 2006. Eyo was the only connection most Nigerians had to Murray's enterprise.

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<sup>112</sup> Liz Moloney, "Liman Ciroma: Nigeria's first qualified archaeologist (Obituary)," *The Guardian*, June 30, 2004.

<sup>113</sup> M. N., "The Showplace of West Africa's Remote Antiquity," *West African Annual* (1953), 62.

<sup>114</sup> Eyo's dissertation, "Recent Excavations in Ife and Owo and their Implications for Ife and Benin Studies," was advised by Thurston Shaw and Alan Ryder. Christopher Slogar wrote "An Artful Life: Ekpo Eyo Remembered," in *African Arts* 45, no. 1, 2012, pages 12-14.

<sup>115</sup> Museum Association of Tropical Africa

Murray resented the way in which the museum establishment was given so little priority by the government. He saw the institutions as vital and urgent. To him this played out in the government assigning Africans to the museum committee. Murray was adamant that Nigerians should always be included, and that they should be trained in museum development and archaeology, so that they could be active contributors to the program. Yet the government's colonial prejudices also surfaced:

if it had been a question of whether offices should be on the Race Course or in the back streets of Lagos, the African memebsr [sic] would probably have not been given much free scope, but as musuems [sic] are considered unimportant the govt were able to let the Africans govern themselves.<sup>116</sup>

More than anything, Murray wanted to work with people who could help him achieve his mission for the department of antiquities regardless of whether they were British or Nigerian. His prejudices toward Nigerians and colonial officers arose only when he felt his efforts were threatened.

### Hesitation of Colonial Office

The struggle to find support for museums in the colonial office ultimately demonstrated why Fagg's approach to building the museum himself was successful compared to Murray's attempt to secure government assistance. The government felt that it was important to develop an antiquities survey for several reasons. Germany was Britain's enemy in World War II, and the Germans had shown interest in Nigerian artifacts during Frobenius's 1910 expedition and again in 1938. The animosity led the British to corner the market on Nigerian antiquities. Second, the subject of anthropology

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<sup>116</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 31, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

and the development of the fieldwork method were now well established within colonial training. This interest had played out in Nigeria through the appointment of Northcote Thomas to the position of government anthropologist in 1914 and the development of the anthropological department in 1924. Third, indirect rule as a system of governing required that the central colonial government understand the culture of the many regions of Nigeria. Recognizing the visual culture of an area would certainly inform this relationship. There was precedent for an antiquities survey in Britain, so it made sense to establish a system that would catalogue the antiquities in Nigeria and develop export protocol. Yet the colonial office was not prepared to commit the funding, resources, and staff required to make the antiquities survey its own department until 1958, much less take on the responsibility of museum-building in a country it was preparing to ease into independence.

This lack of support surprised Murray, who thought that his appointment as a surveyor was a nod of approval to create a museum to house the collection that he had promised to Nigeria, but was safekeeping in South Africa. Murray was wrong. He was also vocal about his frustration. In his official report for 1948 he stated:

I was disappointed to find [sic] cooperation is not making strides. It seems that the Govt is not enthusiastic. I thought it would be the great post-war move, but perhaps it will be the capitalistic development by capital ejected from a socialist (slightly?) England. No moves seem to have been made in the industrial direction. Cooperation tends to remain on the production side. Perhaps fresh blood is needed and not the civil servant who has been disillusioned by years of impecuniosity, govt obstruction, Col office ignorance and British public indifference. But then the fresh blood will know nothing of the country.<sup>117</sup>

This venomous passage comes after a decade of fighting for a museum.

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<sup>117</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 4.

Murray was often passed from one department to another, from the department of education, to the PRO, to the information office, and back again. Each time he was refused funding, in some cases because he was requesting too much money, in others, because he had asked for too little.<sup>118</sup> Though Murray insisted that the major obstruction to museum development in Nigeria was not the colonial office, it may have been Murray himself. Despite his passion for completing his project correctly, he was also reluctant to relinquish any of his jurisdictions. As illustrated earlier, Murray would not willingly work for Meyerowitz. He also felt Duckworth was incapable of designing a museum and, when Niven requested architect Taffy Jones's plans for the Ife museum, Murray was unsure if it meant Niven wanted to control them or he wanted to support Murray's efforts:

I suppose Niven sees that it is the thing to back up museums so now will. I suppose that is something especially if finally something is done. Really the only claim I feel he has to take on the museums is that he is a historian and has written a short history of Nigeria. I do not think musuems [sic] is part of the work of Public Relations.<sup>119</sup>

In some cases, however, it seems as though the hesitation was not so much reluctance as purely miscommunication. In the first annual report from 1946, Murray wrote that:

No progress with the building of museums has been made during the year. Money has been provided for two years for a museum at Benin, but the site has not been finally chosen, nor its plan decided. Meanwhile a small room belonging to the Native Administration is being used as a temporary museum under the honorary curatorship of Chief Egharevba, the Bini historian... This collection, which is well on the way to over-fill the room, has attracted much interest among the people of Benin and visitors to the place, for none of the exhibits had previously been on public view.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 12, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>119</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 28 – March 5, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>120</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 2. Murray describes the efforts, which did not hold up well over time: "Six well-designed glass cases, made by the Public Works Department at

This, unfortunately, was repeatedly the case. The government would eventually supply the support for the building, but there was rarely any money left to run the museum. In the same annual report Murray stated that

the same report of no progress must be made of the Ife Museum. Six years ago the Carnegie Corporation granted £1,000 towards the museum and later had to withdraw it as it was not used. Money has been placed in the Estimates for the last two years and at various times promises have been made that someone will be sent to supervise the building, but owing to shortage of staff it has been found impossible to spare anyone, and the museum remains unstated.<sup>121</sup>

### A Regional Versus a Central Museum

Murray's charge as the surveyor of antiquities was to catalogue the art and antiquities of Nigeria and develop antiquities legislation and export policies. With his background teaching art and surveying the arts and crafts in the 1930s, he saw the devastation to heritage that was being caused by Christianization and Islamicization as well as the push to move to the big cities. The only solution he saw was purchasing as many objects as he could. What could not be collected would have to be researched and overseen by trained antiquities officers.<sup>122</sup> He did not want the restrictions that collecting using government funds would require, so he purchased as much as he could with his own money. As any educated Briton knew, the only proper place to protect antiquities

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Benin, have been put in the room, and in them have been collected all the bronzes that have hitherto lain in a rather dirty and neglected state in the Iweby Court of the Palace. All the objects in the museum have been given a preliminary cleaning, have been full catalogued and have labels in the cases to describe them. The Oba has generously put in this temporary museum a number of other objects from the Palace, including a fine bronze head which had disappeared from view for over twenty years. Several of the Benin chiefs have also lent things."

<sup>121</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946, 1947, 2.*

<sup>122</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, May 14, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

from looting, destruction, or disintegration was in a museum. In effect, Murray's conservation and preservation plan was to establish a central museum.

One of the primary questions throughout the process of building museums was whether to establish several small museums or one large central museum. Murray had been pushed consistently to support regional museums. This was the system most commonly supported in England. For Murray, there was a particular fear of losing his control and position exacerbated by the push for regional institutions. Just as Fagg was beginning to request a museum in Jos, Murray wrote

it seemed that there is a possibility that museums are to be considered as regional charges. To this I am opposed and although it may be too late I am rapidly making a survey of what Government's policy on museums should be without waiting any further for Braunholtz's report...I consider that the Jos should be a special local museum for Plateau archaeology, but that a secondary but much more important and urgent need for it is as a workshop and store for the collections you make. I think that there should be one central, general, museum for Nigeria, to which any regional museums should be subsidiary, and that all collections unless specially given to another museum, should be made for the central museum. At a later date these collections should be split up so that each region may have as far as possible a collection representative of the whole country but naturally with some extra emphasis on its own region, and that as a general rule the most important pieces should be kept in the central museum. Thus the Jos museum would largely be a store for the central museum and that things would be placed in it without prejudice to their future distribution...Jos would be one of the eventual regional museums. I think it is important that at this stage collections should not be tightly bound to one museum or another and that rivalry should not develop between one museum or another in making collections, especially that regional museums should not be allowed to develop in a way that will foster local sentiment...<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, January 8, 1948. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

This came at a time when Murray was under a significant amount of pressure to make his case.<sup>124</sup> Part of the pressure came from Fagg, who thought there should be two central museums, one in the north and one in the south, and then smaller regional institutions. Fagg also envisioned a roving museum that would take exhibitions and collections all over the country via the railroad.

The system that developed, of course, was Fagg's proposition of two central institutions with large, diverse collections, and smaller regional museums with local collections. This was more viable due to reasons which have been explained: the local Clan Councils, Oni, and Oba had more power and could assert their influence to develop the national collection in exchange for a museum; funding was more readily available in smaller amounts from international organizations, private donors, and the colonial government; Nigeria is expansive and limiting cultural institutions to one southern and one northern metropolis would have severely reduced the number of visitors. (These central museums would have been readily accessible to the majority of British expatriates, however.) I suspect that for Murray, who wanted to retain control over his project, spreading the antiquities across the country, particularly without the trained staff he knew he needed, would not have resulted in a quality product.

The struggle to maintain control over regional museums proved to be difficult. As will be described in greater depth in chapter 4, in July 1954 the Ife Museum was no longer under Murray's charge, because the colonial government made arrangements with

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<sup>124</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 11, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



the Oni of Ife that he would own (though not be responsible for) the Ife Museum.<sup>125</sup> This change also caused many of the colonial officers to want control over the cultural institutions in their region. For example, the senior resident in the north wanted to reclassify Jos as a regional museum, perhaps to obtain control over it.<sup>126</sup>

By 1954 the British government was preparing for Nigerian independence. The revised constitution, authored by Oliver Lyttelton, sought to uphold political unity.<sup>127</sup> Lyttelton proposed that the three regions of Nigeria share power with a central government. Murray saw the development of this federation as parallel to his own struggle balancing regional and central museums. To Murray, the regionalization of the museums caused disunity and he feared the same of independent Nigeria.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, Murray never identified objects by their tribal name; rather he indicated the town or village where the object had been collected. According to Frank Willet, “the dangers of promoting tribalism were apparent to Murray before it became a political hazard in Nigeria.”<sup>129</sup> In the end, Murray did have to compromise on two national museums and five regional museums before independence. Though the civil war caused a significant

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<sup>125</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, February 19, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: “At Ife Fagg and I saw the Oni. I said how upset I was over the Ife decision and he calimed[sic] (untruthfully) that he did not think I would mind. However he did not seem to be aware of the leagl[sic] implications and when these were explained promised to try and get the decision altered. Which I am sure is impossible, am opinion confirmed by Sect. Varvill the Perm Sect came to see me at the end of the week about this and from a remark he made I am sure that there was a plan to regionalize the whole dept. which is frustrated because I do not retire till 1957. I wonder what the Times said about this disastrous conference. Fagg says that the resident when he heard of the Ife decision, wanted to regionalize the Jos Museum. Of course most British Civil Servants do not care what happens now: and take the line that the Africans have made thier[sic] bed, let them lie in it. The Northern ones however are looking to their own interests in pressing for more regionalization for the North.”

<sup>126</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, February 14, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>127</sup> Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004), 133.

<sup>128</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, February 6, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office

<sup>129</sup> Frank Willet, “Museums: Two Case Studies of Reaction to Colonialism.” In *The Politics of the Past*, edited by Peter Gathercole and David Lowenthal, 172-183. London: Routledge, 2003, 173.

setback in the development of these seven museums, the subsequent mission to expand the department of antiquities followed this same principle of regional institutions supplementing the larger central museum.

### Storage

After the strides made in 1946, namely completing the tour with Braunholtz, little happened toward building museums in 1947. The 1946 annual report describes a common scenario for Murray. He would request an office, storage, and exhibition space. He would be assigned a building (for example, in 1946 he was given the Old Golf Club building, currently the Ikoyi Club Golf Course) before it was reallocated. Duckworth opened his office to store the collection, offering to improve the security, protect the work from insects, and appoint a guard while Murray went on leave. Murray was unhappy with the facility, particularly because it could not be displayed.<sup>130</sup> Shortly after, he would be reassigned. Unfortunately, this is a common story when reading the annual reports and letters by Murray. He knew that until he had a permanent building he would be shuffled from space to space. The government was pushing for the central museum to be located in Ibadan and in 1947, the government suggested developing storage in Owo, in Ondo Province, about 237 kilometers east of Ibadan and 121 kilometers north of Benin City. Murray proposed that after the central museum was completed the Owo facility could become a local museum.<sup>131</sup>

Subsequent years produced no sufficient results. Without a suitable office, Murray stored the collection destined for the national museum in his house: “the collections for

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<sup>130</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 5.

<sup>131</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 5.

the Central Museum were at first beneath the Lagos Education Office in a store where they could not be unpacked. All fresh acquisitions during the year have had to be received and catalogued in the Surveyor's dining room."<sup>132</sup> When the education department was relocated, the antiquities branch was assigned two offices, but no storage space.

These rooms are so congested that there was difficulty in getting space to unpack the boxes containing the collection. One store now contains ivories, metalwork and chemical stores and is not yet excessively overcrowded, one office contains the collection of wooden articles which are piled up in cupboards and on the floor, and the other office is occupied by the carpenter and caretaker, and by timber and miscellaneous stores.<sup>133</sup>

It was not until the antiquities section opened the National Museum, Lagos that they had a base with storage facilities, offices, and exhibition space. At that time, however, Fagg moved the headquarters to the Jos Museum.

In its fruition as a department, there were three superior positions: the director, deputy director, and the curator of the National Museum, Lagos. The remaining officers, the number of which fluctuated each year, were appointed to archaeological, ethnographical, and architectural research.<sup>134</sup> All of the badgering, all of the proposals, all of the reports did eventually lead to the establishment of seven museums before independence in 1960. They were built in spite of the general hesitation and obstacles of the colonial government. The history of each of these museums will be described in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

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<sup>132</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1.

<sup>133</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1.

<sup>134</sup> Fagg, 1963, 124.

The colonial museum has long been subject to theories about what drove its production, asking primarily, why would museums be useful to colonial governments?

MacKenzie, asserts that

the colonial museum, in some respects, heightened the theme of the raiding of nature. It often symbolized the dispossession of land and culture by whites through the rapid acquisition of specimens and artefacts. Such colonial acquisitiveness occurred on a global scale, representing a worldwide movement brokered by imperial power. The museum's intellectual framework, its collecting habits, and so many of its methods were closely bound up with the nature and practices of imperialism.<sup>135</sup>

In the case of Nigeria, this is both true and untrue. Murray was unable to fully convince the colonial government that a museum was a microcosm of the empire. I am not convinced that the British ever considered the museum project useful to them in Nigeria. However, it is undeniable that Murray and his peers created a system of research, collecting, museum-building, and display that reflected their own culture and understanding of museums. They treated the artifacts and antiquities of their colonial territories the way in which they treated their own antiquities. The biggest problem with this is that it rarely reflected the culture's view. Ultimately, however, museum and antiquity legislation in Britain did not always line up with the principles of the British people either, which led to government role in funding and preservation.

MacKenzie continues:

The paradox lay in the fact that [the museum] was principally concerned with the past, the deep time of the natural sciences and archeology, the more recent era of human endeavour, and even the 'contemporary past' of ethnographic artefacts, so often collected in order to reflect social and technological atavisms. Indeed, the act of collecting such emblematic artefacts demonstrated the alleged distance of the societies that produced them from the progress symbolized by the imperial modernism of the

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<sup>135</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 4.

museum in which they were displayed. Thus, the museum revealed its modernity through its organization of the pre-modern.<sup>136</sup>

This section, perhaps, describes the museum project in Nigeria perfectly. Murray was continuously faced with opposition. He was always negotiating between the colonial government; Duckworth, who was interested in the commercial prospects of modern art and antiquities; and Nigerians, who also saw antiquities as commercially viable and were often reluctant to hand them over for public display.

The museum in Britain had been used as a tool to help create the model citizen, promote education, present to the country their imperial expanse and power, and promote cultural policy. The British Museum spent the last half of the nineteenth century generating interest in European and British antiquities. This construct of the role of the museum most certainly influenced the understanding of the museum in Nigeria by colonialists, and eventually by the administration after independence. The idea of the museum was always valued by the Nigerian officials who saw it as an opportunity to establish recognition within the colonial government, but also on an international stage.<sup>137</sup> For example, visiting dignitaries were brought to the museums. Furthermore, there was, and remains today, a committed enthusiasm for being Nigerian. Both Nigerians and colonial officers sought to foster Nigeria's cultural, political, and economic independence.<sup>138</sup> The museum had potential to play a role in this process.

The fight to found the museums in Nigeria was arduous and wrought with trials caused by a world war, intellectual and financial hurdles, and a lack of trained staff.

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<sup>136</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 4.

<sup>137</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum, Lagos) in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012.

<sup>138</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum, Lagos) in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012.

Additionally, Murray and Fagg struggled with the practical logistics of acquiring a collection, demonstrating the need to display it, and convincing the colonial government and the locals alike that Nigeria must have an institution for which no prior cultural model existed. While the antiquities service only opened one museum in the 1940s, it was a period of research, collecting, advocating for storage for the collection, and envisioning what the outcome of the project would be. The actual outcome of the 1950s, the opening of six additional museums, was the result of the momentum generated in the previous decade. In addition to the six museums, the 1950s saw the training of British and Nigerian officers as staff, the passing of the antiquities ordinance, the establishment of an official and independent department, and the swell of archaeological projects. In my view, this productivity was the direct result of a decade of very little tangible production, but a myriad of strides in bureaucratic and cultural development, spearheaded by Murray.

## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGERIAN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL MUSEUMS

From its inception in 1943 until independence in 1960, the department of antiquities established seven museums. There were five regional museums: Esiẹ (1945), the Ife Museum (1954), the Oron Museum (1959), the Benin Museum (the temporary museum opened 1960), and the Gidan Makama Museum Kano (Historic House Museum in Kano, 1960). And there were two National Museums: the Jos Museum (1952) and the National Museum, Lagos (1957).<sup>1</sup> In the cases of Esiẹ, Ife, and Benin, temporary facilities were erected as holding places for a collection until permanent structures could be built after funding was released or manpower from the public works department became available. As the director of the antiquities section from 1946 until 1957, Kenneth Murray fought diligently through the proper channels for funding, staff, and legal authority.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, his deputy director, Bernard Fagg, raised funding for the Jos Museum primarily through private donations. He hired local craftsmen, designed the museum, landscaped the grounds, and created programming without government funding

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<sup>1</sup> Museums were also proposed in Enugu, opened in 1978; Owo, opened in 1968; and, among others, Kaduna, opened in 1975. Kerri suggests the Oron Museum opened in 1958. This is not entirely incorrect; a temporary museum was erected in 1947 before a permanent structure was built in 1958. The museum officially opened to the public in 1959.

<sup>2</sup> As stated earlier, the Antiquities Section changed names several times, alternatively called the Antiquities Branch, Antiquities Section, or Antiquities Survey. It became a department in 1958 and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in 1977. The terms are interchangeable and imply no change in structure, organization, or responsibility.

or permission. The differences in their methods are reflected in the institutions they built. This chapter will outline the establishment of the early museums.

I have demonstrated that Murray and Fagg fought to establish the museums at a time when museology was developing and even places like the British Museum were thinking about display and education in a different way. The participants of the 1964 UNESCO Sixth Regional Seminar on the “Role of Museums in Contemporary Africa,” which was held in Jos, discussed how a museum should look. Robert Gessain, the Director of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris and the vice president of UNESCO led the Seminar and explained that

the architecture of the museum must be thought out from this viewpoint. The ideal museum, according to Mr. McEwan and Dr. Gabus, has no windows and is lit by reflected artificial light (artificial light can always be kept under control and is safer than daylight, which deteriorates colour; fluorescent lamps give out no heat and are preferable to incandescent lamps). It has no stairs, and cork flooring eliminates noise and fatigue. There should be no internal walls; with mobile partitions the inside room arrangements can be changed at will, together with the route traced out for visitors during different exhibitions. These frequent changes of scene and circuit renew the visitor’s interest, making each visit a new experience, and seem essential if museums are to be made more attractive.<sup>3</sup>

Many of these elements were out of reach for Murray and Fagg as they built their institutions, but they certainly took the point that architecture could define a museum.

They endeavored to create buildings that fit each region, using local materials and labor as much as possible.

Each institution was established under different conditions and with its own set of dilemmas and support. The museums in places such as Benin and Ife were approved with

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Gessain, “The Role of Museums in Contemporary Africa, Sixth Regional Seminar” (Final Report, UNESCO/CUA 128, Jos, Nigeria, August 24- September 18, 1964), 1965, 15. Frank McEwen (1907-1994) was an English artist and founder of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. Dr. Jean Gabus (1908-1992) was an ethnographer of Africa and the director of the Musée d’ethnographie de Neuchâtel.



little resistance from the colonial government because they were already established cultural centers with reputable collections. Moreover, once the objects held overseas were rightfully repatriated, their collections would be world-renowned. Murray was faced with a conundrum: he had to use the museum proposal as a negotiating tool for developing the collection prior to the acquisition, but he also had to establish the importance of the collection as a negotiating tool to build a museum.

Though every museum was different, each institution's mission sought to preserve antiquities and make those antiquities accessible to the public. The museums controlled by the department of antiquities were subsidized by taxes and did not have an entry fee.<sup>4</sup> Murray fought for and successfully opened a national museum; the government wanted to open regional museums that would allow people from all different parts of the country to have relatively close access to a cultural institution, rather than expecting everyone to be able to visit Lagos in the south or Jos in the north. In the end they compromised with two larger, national museums in Lagos and Jos, and multiple regional museums that held collections *in situ*.

Developing these smaller, more focused museums in places such as Esię, Ife, Benin, and Oron was fundamental to obtaining the trust of the locals who possessed the objects. The people in the Oron region who had *Ekpu* sculptures were reluctant to hand over their collections to the colonial government. At Ife, the museum had many setbacks and the objects were often exposed to the elements and theft. Negotiating with the locals for smaller institutions encouraged people to "loan" their work to the government museum without losing track of it.

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<sup>4</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134. This was, and still is, the model in Britain.

In spite of these issues, Murray and Fagg were able to make progress and opened these institutions before the first Nigerian director, Ekpo Eyo, took control in March 1967. While the first four chapters of the present study outline the environment in which these museums were cultivated, this chapter will lay out the particulars of each institution, beginning with the regional museums and then the museums at Jos and Lagos.

### The House of Images at Esiẹ (1945)

The first museum officially opened by the antiquities service was the museum in Esiẹ, southeast of Ilorin. The first account of the carved stone figures of Esiẹ, known as *Érē Esiẹ* (figure 8) was written by F. de F. Daniel in 1937. Daniel credits H. G. Ramshaw, school superintendent for the Church Missionary Society, with bringing *Érē Esiẹ* to the attention of the colonial authorities, particularly Clarke, S. Milburn, and Duckworth.<sup>5</sup>

In August 1943, stationed with the public relations office, Murray made his first visit to Esiẹ. Having surveyed the work, Murray sent a request to the information office for a camera to document nearly 800 stone figures.<sup>6</sup> One month later, Murray decided that a museum must be created in order to preserve the steatite carvings *in situ* because they “were being damaged by exposure to the weather and by the bush-clearing and

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<sup>5</sup> F. Daniel, “The Stone Figures of Esiẹ, Ilorin Province, Nigeria,” in *Man/The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 67, 1937, 43. Further information on the *Érē Esiẹ* can be found in Phillips Stevens, *The Stone Images of Esiẹ, Nigeria* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978). See also Thurstan Shaw, *Nigeria: Its Archaeology and Early History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 1, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. He explains that the Information Office would provide a camera and the film, but would also retain the copyright. He wrote “it would be a great nuisance to have no camera on this work. For Instance the Esiẹ stone heads in Ilorin wnat [sic] cataloguing and I think then should be photoed. There are nearly 800 of them.”

grass-firing at the annual festival towards the end of the dry season. When first brought to the notice of the antiquities service most of the figures were already fragmentary and bore evidence of matchet [sic] blows.”<sup>7</sup> Initially the colonial office would not provide such funds, so Murray tried to encourage the people of Esię to provide £200 to complete renovations to a shelter, which consisted of pillars covered by corrugated tin and held down by sculptures. He also purchased posts, which they did not want to sell at first, for a negotiated price of £8.<sup>8</sup>

Murray was eventually able to secure a temporary structure, and in January 1944 he began to negotiate with the public works department to commission the government architect to discuss the proper course of action to design permanent museums at Esię and Benin.<sup>9</sup> Though Murray would face roadblocks in the future at both Esię and Benin, the initial support seemed promising. In a letter dated February 1944, Murray wrote: “I shall have to make the rough plan for the furnishing of this museum and there are also suggestions to be made about Benin, besides an enormous amount on Esię. The Govt has now agreed after 13 months delay to pay for the building.”<sup>10</sup> Murray’s best case for arguing for a museum was that work needed to be secured *in situ*. The octagonal building, as illustrated by its plan (figure 10), is a covered structure built around an open-air octagonal courtyard. The stone carvings were displayed on “open stepped shelves built along the inner side of the surrounding wall.”<sup>11</sup> There were also hundreds of

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<sup>7</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Discussed in Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 19 and September 26, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 2, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 3, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>11</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 9.

fragments scattered across the grounds of the grove, many of which were damaged during construction.

The House of Images at Esiẹ was completed and opened in 1945 in what was formerly a sacred grove approximately a mile and a half from the village of Esiẹ.<sup>12</sup> The location was strategic for Murray. Though he wanted the project to be successful and well attended, he was also concerned with the repercussions of heavy traffic. The government agreed that a museum at Esiẹ was important for the preservation of the figures, but due “to the absence of a motor road to Esiẹ very few people ever visit this impressive crowd of carvings.”<sup>13</sup> Eventually a road was built to Esiẹ, but not connecting the town to the grove. This, Murray felt, would encourage an increase in visitor numbers, without making the crowds unmanageable. However,

the people of Esiẹ, on their own initiative and without assistance have built a bridge across the stream which cut their village off from the main road. This will make a visit to the House of Images much easier so more people from other parts of Nigeria should now be able to go to see it.<sup>14</sup>

All visitors were asked to sign their name in a book, which, along with the key to the museum, was in the custody of a priestess.<sup>15</sup>

An annual festival made the Esiẹ Museum an important destination. Murray describes this festival as previously unknown to him and his fellow European surveyors. “Throughout one day,” he described, “on which the surrounding bush is set alight and hunting takes place, the courtyard is thronged with visitors whose numbers are such that some of the carvings on the lower shelves around the ‘King’ of the images get

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<sup>12</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 9; *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6; and Fagg, 1963, 130.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 3.

disarranged.”<sup>16</sup> Although Murray was pleased that taking measures to protect the stone figures did not inhibit their ritual use, the festival was unexpected and he proposed that another structure would be required to accommodate the offerings and protect the installed work.<sup>17</sup>

In 1947 Murray stayed in the museum with two manual workers and two priestesses of the Esiẹ cult to clean, organize, and reinstall “hundreds of heads broken from their bodies, the bodies with no heads, legs with no bodies, feet, arms, hands and so on.”<sup>18</sup> During this evaluation, Murray also made a multi-year plan for conservation of the site. Just three years after the reinstallation Murray explains the transformation of the museum into a popular destination. “The visitors’ book,” Murray notes, “gives evidence of the interest that Yoruba people have in these carvings. Several parties from the railway workshops at Offa, fifteen miles away, and people from Lagos who have been in the neighbourhood have taken the trouble to walk the two miles to the grove from the nearest road.”<sup>19</sup> For the antiquities service, these numbers proved crucial to their case for museums. However, to Murray’s frustration, the numbers also gave the colonial office the evidence they needed to push for regional museums over large central institutions.

For the rest of the decade, Murray returned annually to evaluate the condition of the museum; unfortunately repairs were not made every year, even when needed for security purposes because of a lack of manpower and resources.<sup>20</sup> As a result, by 1951, the House of Images at Esiẹ was in a state of complete disrepair. The project, according

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<sup>16</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Murray, *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*, 2.

<sup>20</sup> See Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 1, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also the *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 2.

to Murray “is causing anxiety as the walls are badly cracked...Extensive repairs to the building are now necessary.”<sup>21</sup> His review, made in 1951, did not yield any results and repairs were not made. Two years later, in spring 1954, Murray returned to Esië for the first time since that assessment and “was relieved to find it had not fallen down but its disorder is rather disgraceful.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Murray was unable to secure funding for repairs through his remaining time as director. The building fell into such a state that the department felt it was better to simply tear it down and erect a new museum rather than salvage the old. The plan was to construct a building on a nearby site. The design would be

based on the North Yoruba courtyard system. Two trial trenches were excavated and it was found that fragments of stone sculpture lay buried to a depth of as much as three feet. An application for a plot of land 900 feet square was made and the Technical Officer (Antiquities) and two Technical Assistants were posted temporarily to Esië to begin the monumental task of reconstructing the hundreds of fragmentary steatite figures.<sup>23</sup>

It was not until the 1960s, under Bernard Fagg that there was renewed interest in Esië as an archaeological site. As a result, the department of antiquities acquired land surrounding the grove in order to continue excavations. In 1963, Fagg wrote that

the present plan is to build a new museum on the approach path to the grove consisting of a series of *impluvium* courtyards in the traditionnal [sic] Yoruba style and in traditional materials...The figures will then be transferred to the new building, the old building demolished and archaeological excavations carried out in the grove.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 21, 1954 Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>23</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1957-58*, 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 9. See also Fagg, 1963, 130. Fagg notes that this project was meant to both protect the Esië Stones and create atmosphere with the grove: The new building “will be built on an antitermite reinforced concrete raft and roofed with corrugated iron sheets with a strip of translucent corrugated fiberglass to provide top-lighting of the specimens...The grove will subsequently

However, by the time Ekpo Eyo took office in 1967, a new museum had yet to be erected.

### The Ife Museum (1954)

The Ife Museum was originally conceived of in 1939, one year after the Ife heads were excavated (see chapter 2). Impressed by the archaeological activity in the area, the Carnegie Trust contributed £1,000 toward construction. In 1939 the Museums Association of Great Britain, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, began an inquest into the feasibility of a museum at Ife. This resulted in a report by Colonel Markham and a grant from Carnegie to construct a museum at Ife.<sup>25</sup> This line of funds was not enough encouragement for the government and because it went unused, was revoked in 1943.<sup>26</sup>

The museum was first proposed during a trip in August 1943, when Murray put forward the idea of a museum to the Oni. He wrote:

I had drawn out my plan with slight embellishments that I thought would appeal. I noticed that the Oni genuinely liked the idea, but perhaps he will change before he reaches Ibadan. The chiefs conference is on and he was going Wednesday morning. My idea is that the museum should not be a conventional museum (the present plan is combined with a library) but should be an architectural jem [sic] (what a hope!) and a shrine of the Yoruba people. The danger in making this suggestion is that it may make for delay. A difficulty is the site.<sup>27</sup>

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be replanted and a limited number of the reconstructed figures restored to their original place in the second grove. The 18-acre site will be carefully landscaped and replanted so as to preserve the rural aspect of the museum in spite of any developments that may take place on the surrounding land.”

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.).

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 1, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 2 and Fagg, 1963, 128. Perhaps, World War II delayed the project indefinitely and the grant lapsed.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Murray was right that the building would be a major point of contention.

At this point in 1943, the effort to develop a museum in Ife was moving along quickly. Less than a month after this initial meeting with the Oni, Murray met him again, along with native authority engineer Taffy Jones, the district officer and a few Ife chiefs.<sup>28</sup>

At the meeting I explained [sic] what I thought the museum should be: only for old not for new and that I pictured a shrine or a monument rather than a conventional museum. Oni and chiefs said they did not want a shrine, but a modern building such as Ife had not got, and referring to the much admired council hall said they knew all Europeans liked it, but they did not and did not think the Europeans really did either. I then pointed out that in a modern museum the use and position of the articles were shown and not just put in cases, hence the museum should rightly suggest a shrine. But, they said no, no shrine. I produced the plan I made, Cloisters round a sq. courtyard and explained how the things would be arranged and how the lighting would be arranged, all from the court and no outside windows. They looked at this and saw its resemblance to a Yoruba court and its absence of outside windows and said they did not want it and that they wanted the design Taffy had made with a façade of pillars and tower. I pointed [sic] out that this building was not suitable for a museum. It was clear that they did not care tuppence about a museum: it is simply a weapon to get a pretentious modern building in Ife. Provided they got the façade they wanted I don't think they would mind if the exhibitions were in a dark-room. Finally it was compromised that they would have their façade but that the rooms behind it would be replanned. After this we had drinks with the Oni, who appeared to be very grateful for my help...<sup>29</sup>

This story alludes to the cultural discrepancies that Murray would continue to face, particularly at Oron. But it also shows the way in which the museum could function on a

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<sup>28</sup> I think this is a very important moment for Murray's museum project. Not only does it change the chronology of museum development in Nigeria, but it also demonstrates Murray's effort to actively involve Nigerians to create museums that would be useful to them.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 26, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In a letter Murray wrote to Kate M. Murray, August 15, 1943 (Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office), he said "...the first thing I am to get on with is the Ife museum. I am afraid Taffy Jones has made a rather conventional design. I want to persuade him and the Oni if it is not too late or too expensive to set up more of a shrine for the Yoruba people [sic] than a museum in the conventional sense. I pictured a domed building but with wood tiled steep roof with four wings—one for wood, one for bronze, one for stone..terracotta. Some attempt in the wings to embody the Yoruba impluvium style of architecture. Under the dome the stone monolith: the Staff of Oranyan..."



variety of levels for the Nigerians and the colonial government. A museum could at one time be used to preserve antiquities and serve as an entry point into modern urban development.<sup>30</sup>

After this meeting, Taffy Jones redesigned the Ife Museum, though not necessarily to the satisfaction of anyone involved. After the second iteration, Murray noted that Jones

was using brick after all, was including the library and had not kept to the façade that Ife wanted, nor had he kept to the plan that we had more or less decided on. However the plan and design were very much better. He had adopted my plan of cloisters round a courtyard and had put the museum beyond. The floor area was larger than before which was all to the good. The only doubts are whether the Oni will like it as it has taken my plan which “resembled a Yoruba compound” and whether the Govt will give money meant for a museum to build a library. However as far as the latter is concerned the Oni now says that it will not be called a library, will only house books (of which there are none at present) until there are enough [sic] things in the museum to fill it and that there already plans for a library with an office building. Taffy has however added a stage for theatricals? To the library, but it will not be difficult to cut that out. The chief question is whether Ife will accept it.<sup>31</sup>

Jones revised the plan several more times and according to Murray adopted his ideas, though tempered for the Oni.<sup>32</sup>

Murray soon learned however, that designing the building and gaining the support of the Ife Council were not guarantees that the museum would be built. At this point, in

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<sup>30</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 26, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: Murray describes the next steps: “After I went to see Taffy Jones and we wrestled with replanning the Museum. I have always got on very well with him so he does not mind in the least doing the owrk [sic] for the third or 4<sup>th</sup>? He sca\_ped [scrapped?] the façade however. The proposal is a building with 2 arms coming out on either side. The front will have no windows. A tower in centre. The windwos [sic] will be on back and sides, the galleries will be narrow and lit from one side. Things arranged along the blank wall and isolated pieces in centre. No cases, and I think glass only over the terracottas.”

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 31, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 7, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. A handwritten note at the bottom states: Taffy “has adopted my idea. The general opinion seems to be that it is much better than earlier designs. He thinks he has got the Oni to be satisfied.”

1943, he was ambitious about building the museums and naïve about the support he would get from the colonial government. The museum initiative was just taking off and the government wanted concrete evidence that such institutions were crucial to the survival of antiquities. Braunholtz had not been called to duty, and Huxley and Meyerowitz had yet to publish their opinions, so absolutely no precedent had been set. Murray described the beginnings of his struggle and explained “how I might find it difficult to justify the money I had recommended for the museum if I did not know what there was in Ife and the Govt might refuse to give enough to build the whole museum....”<sup>33</sup> Many people who wanted the museum also wanted a concerted archaeological effort.

What this also demonstrated to Murray was that in order to build museums, a perfect syncretism of support from the Nigerians, the antiquities owners, the local chiefs and councils, and the British colonial government would have to emerge. In the following week the Oni requested that Murray come see him.

Evidently my complaints had reached him for he said that he understood that I was not getting on very well. I explained that what was happening and how I feared that I would find it hard to justify increased govt. grant to a museum if they asked me to do so. He expalined [sic] that he was afraid that my inquiries might deter the owners of carvings from bringing them in when the museum is opened. That is if I mentioned that my inquiries were on behalf of the museum, but I have avoided mentioning the museum except to the educated chiefs who understand the poisition. He also was afraid that if I mentieond [sic] the rule prohibiting sale that the younger Ife people would learn these things were worth selling which they do not think at present. The owners too might think the actual possession of the

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<sup>33</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 7, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray continued They [Ladipo, who is fairly educated, Jagunoshin who speaks English and an old man Lawate who is supposed to know about the sites] argue that when people have fled from Ife as has happened from time to time the priests would bury their valuable pieces in a pot in the ground and mark the place with a stone or stones or a Pregun [sic, Peregun] tree. If digging was made at these points something would surely be found. Perhaps in some cases at the yearly festival the things are brought out. I was skeptical but listed all the spots.”

things had value to them as a source of income. I explained that I needed a list of shrines and to see one or two things so that I could speak with knowledge if I had to justify the grant; and that up to the present I had seen little of value and had only some 40 places on my list.<sup>34</sup>

The Oni assured him that there would be plenty of objects for the museum and a list would be prepared.

Finally Jones drew up another plan constructed of clay brick. He was still calling the museum a library, which Murray felt would prevent the government from providing the financial support: "Thy [sic] are hardly likely to pay £1000 for a library when they intend a museum. Any way the Oni said cut the library out."<sup>35</sup> Another setback for Murray was Jones's confirmation that he would retire in March 1944, making him unable to personally complete the museum. For Murray, this meant, the public works department, rather than the native authority under Jones, would take over the building project. By Murray's estimate, they would charge double what Jones proposed to build it for.

Hence the museum I think will not be built, or on a reduced scale. But If[e] will be to blame for not assisting me more. Mackell told me an amazing fact. The DO brought in to the Afin from a certain grove the terracotta heads. 8 are now in the Afin Mackell went to his grove in 1929. There were so many that he did not think one would be missed and took one which he is returning. At that time he is sure there well over 20 and might have been 50. Where have they all gone. All Ife talks about is something taken by Bower in 1898...<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 7-14, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>35</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Jones did retire in 1944, but British “modern” architect Maxwell Fry and his wife Jane Drew were made town planning advisor to the West African colonies.<sup>37</sup> Murray enlisted their help immediately:

Mrs Fry came round to talk museums. She had the Ife plans, and was inclined to criticise some of the architectural finish or the design. She did not like imitation Renaissance work such as Taffy Jones design is. I told her my part in the designing and she approved of the courtyard idea. She then went into a description of her ideals for a museum. On this she got rather excited which was a pity as after she clearly was a bit tired and so I did not get all the attention I wanted to other museum questions. Her ideas were good, and she were [sic] much in agreement with what I was wanting, eg. To create and atmosphere. She was optimistic about what could be done. She talked about top lighting which both I and Humpidge think would be of doubtful success nere [sic] owing to faulty workmanship. (and what about expense). She was not as severely “functional” as I expected after reading her husband’s book. She talked about getting a Yoruba atmosphere into the building so I warned her of my pschylogical [sic] mistake with the Oni in advocating the same. I showed her photos and we talked of Benin, Oron and Esie. I think she should be most helpful. My only fears are that if she redesigns the Ife museum (once again) there will be more delay and a greater expert still will come who will alter it again and so on. Secondly that she will not realise all that is needed in accomodation [sic] in the museums, as she did not pay close attention [sic] to my descption [sic] of types of things that must be put in the museum. She said she would know better when she had seen them (she is going to Benin and Ife) but I fear that ahe may not be shown or told about what I know. Thirdly I am not sure how far she will embody local forms of architecture and decoration in the buildings. Here again she may not be shown the things that I know about. Anyway I am glad that there is now a competent architect to consult with.<sup>38</sup>

A museum at Ife was an important public relations element to generate interest because of its activity as an archaeological site. During the Higher Education Commission’s tour in 1944, Jones’s plans for the building were shown to Huxley and Margaret Read. Their critique of the proposal led the Chief Secretary, Sir Alexander

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<sup>37</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 10, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 10, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Grantham, to offer an additional £5,000 for further expenses.<sup>39</sup> Murray had also piqued the interest of the British Council who could provide further financial support.<sup>40</sup>

Construction of the Ife Museum began four years later. The final museum was built on a corner site on the grounds of the *Afin*, donated by the Oni.<sup>41</sup> In exchange for the land and the royal collection, the museum was to be owned by the Oni and the Western Region government. This technicality aside, the Ife Museum would be managed, staffed, and funded by the antiquities service.<sup>42</sup> The Ife Museum was plagued by continuous construction issues, requiring an additional five years of maintenance from its completion at the beginning of 1949 until it opened to the public in November 1954.

Work began in summer 1948 and was nearly completed by the New Year. The building consisted of a workshop and two galleries – one large and one small gallery – built around a courtyard (figure 11). The peristyle would also act as an outdoor gallery. In the initial structure, which Murray envisioned would be completed and opened in 1949, he designed the storage “in drawers and cupboards under the exhibit cases in the main and side gallery. Stone carvings will be put in the colonnade... There is a water supply but no electricity.”<sup>43</sup>

The museum was completed in 1949, but, while waiting for the vitrines to arrive from England, flaws were discovered in the roof, which had to be dismantled and

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<sup>39</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 7, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See chapter 3.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 25, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray notes that Lloyd Williams from the British Council hoped to provide as much support as the organization would allow.

<sup>41</sup> The Royal Palace of the Oni of Ife.

<sup>42</sup> Fagg, 1963, 128. This arrangement was negotiated at the Constitutional Conference in January 1954.

<sup>43</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 9.

reconstructed.<sup>44</sup> The roof of the Ife Museum was eventually repaired, but not sufficiently enough to open it.<sup>45</sup> By 1951, a second story was added, “without complete success and without an improvement to the appearance,” and the roof still leaked. This was just one failure in a laundry list of problems from the malfunction of vitrines and inadequate paint jobs to

‘improvements’ in the Afin grounds. The last of the traditional buildings which made a sort of courtyard has been pulled down and two disconnected (physically and visually) buildings have taken its place. The roads have been tarred and one of the ancient relics a small piece of ancient paving has gone al together. This was in the Afin compund [sic] so one would have thought that it might have been noticed.<sup>46</sup>

There were many excuses made to explain the delay of the opening. For example, in 1951, a selection of the collection was shipped to England for the “Traditional Art from the Colonies” exhibition.<sup>47</sup> It would take another three years to open it to the public.

Nothing caused more tension and delays, however, than the Oni himself. The year 1953 was a turning point because the excavations were re-opened in Ife. This imposition reignited a longstanding dispute over the ownership of the museum itself. Murray explained that the Oni

is determined that Ife should own the museum but does not want the control so it would seen [sic] fairly easy for Govt to sell it and then take it on a lease. But a new catch appears: it seems that Ife now wants to use the museum for something else. The Oni only wanted a 10 yrs lease and talks about the Govt building a new, larger and better museum then. It is a bit discouraging to spend all the effort on such an impermanent affair! The

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<sup>44</sup> Murray, *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*, 2. Additionally, the museum suffered a setback with the exhibit cases, which arrived shattered and had to be reshipped. See also Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, October 26, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>47</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 2.

Oni declared that small countries had money for museums because [sic] they do not spend money on armaments.<sup>48</sup>

The Oni wanted ownership of the museum, but did not want the responsibility of running it, maintaining it, or controlling it.<sup>49</sup> The Oni did not care if it was the federal or regional government who cared for the museum. It is hard to say whether this disagreement slowed the museum's progress, considering all of the technical and fiscal setbacks, but it does illustrate a point about whose project the Ife museum was (and perhaps all of the projects of the antiquities service). The dispute continued while Bernard Fagg conducted excavations at the site beginning in 1952:

A difficulty is arising over Ife as the Oni and his council do not want the museum [sic] to belong to the Government but to Ife. It has been built on ground withing [sic] the [Afin] and Govt has made no arrangements about owning or renting the site so the Oni is in rather strong grounds. I however wish the Govt to keep that amount of control over the antiquities that possession [sic] of the museum will give.<sup>50</sup>

Early 1954 saw the completion and opening of the museum. At that time, at the request of the Oni, it was taken off of the federal list. Instead, it was owned and funded by the Western Region, but was still operated by the antiquities service.<sup>51</sup> I suspect that Murray was not a supporter of this arrangement, but I also think that he felt that as long as it did not interfere with the opening and general operation of the museum, he would not care about the technicalities of titles.

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<sup>48</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, October 20, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, January 18, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, October 19, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, January 31, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also Murray, Annual Report, 1954, 4.

Murray's primary concern was not what role the Oni wanted him to play because the museum was in such a state of disrepair that it could not be open to the public. In 1954 the antiquities service invited Mr. Kennedy, a consultant from the Royal Scottish Museum (now part of The National Museum of Scotland) to provide training to Nigerian staff and assist Murray in completing several museums including Ife.<sup>52</sup> Though Kennedy's work provided the finishing touches before the museum opened to the public in early 1954, the work at Ife was far from complete. Murray "found Ife as depressing as ever. I do not think the result is successful, chiefly too much mahogany about, but [A. E.] Southern's red curtains [sic] and some seats might have [sic] helped things. And the colonnade is so very dirty thanks to Fagg letting his labourers store their materials there."<sup>53</sup> Moreover the fixed exhibition cases were purchased from Edmunds in London, where the Jos vitrines were designed. When they arrived, they were a foot shorter than those at Jos, causing further delays.<sup>54</sup>

The primary collection held at the Ife museum included the bronze, terracotta, and stone antiquities excavated at Ife from the Oni's collection, including a bronze of the Oni of Ife (figure 12). Before he gifted his collection to the museum, the Oni took his bronze heads to the British Museum, which had offered to clean and conserve the works. Murray notes how "the cleaning which the British Museum so generously undertook has considerably enhanced the beauty of these most outstanding works of art of West

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<sup>52</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 21, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See also Murray, Annual Report, 1954, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 21, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, June 8, 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Africa...After the bronzes had been cleaned they were exhibited in the British Museum.”<sup>55</sup>

Though there were numerous bronze heads in the Oni’s collection, Murray (and Duckworth) fought to restore the collection, scattered all over the world, in its entirety to Ife. This meant soliciting the British Museum, the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin, and, of course, William Bascom in the United States. In 1950, when Bascom returned the heads to Nigeria, the colonial administration was required to publically retract their earlier accusations (see chapter 2). Changing his tone and message from earlier reports and letters, Murray took the official position that Bascom took the bronze heads out of the country during

a time when there was no proper place to preserve them in Nigeria. Dr Bascom exhibited the heads in many places in the United States of America ; but, on his proposed return to Nigeria to continue his studies of the Yoruba, he decided to return the heads to Ife when he heard that there was a museum there. These two heads, which are among the finest of those known, were formally handed over to the *Oni* of Ife in December 1950. Dr Bascom’s very generous gift is deeply appreciated.<sup>56</sup>

The return of the Bascom heads was an important gain, but, in Murray’s mind, Ife’s collection was far from complete, which informed Murray’s distrust of the Germans. Five years earlier, in August 1943, just one month after Murray began his new post, he had been to see Jones about plans for a museum at Ife.<sup>57</sup> It was Jones who first took Murray to the Temple of Shango, which was at the time falling apart and being overtaken

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<sup>55</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Branch, 1950-51*, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Robert A. (Taffy) Jones (1882-1949), stationed in Nigeria from 1910 until his retirement in 1944. He primarily worked as a road engineer for Ibadan Native Authority. In a letter from KCM to his mother, August 28, 1943 he writes that Jones was “a great character whom you may remember from older times...Then went up to his house. He was recovering from one of his too frequent nights. He is I believe over 60. I have always got on well with him and he told me a great deal about Yoruba antiquities...” Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

by shops. In Jones's yard, Murray discovered a door that had been taken by Frobenius, which he was forced to return in 1910.<sup>58</sup> The location of its matching pair was unknown, but this would be an important start to Murray's collection for the Ife Museum. While in Ife, Murray visited the Ebolokun Grove, where Frobenius conducted his historic excavations. What Murray found was unexpected.

It was a fair distance and then the bush was thickish or now famred [sic] and cocoa growing. New excavations may be difficult. There were many holes none to 18 ft or more which F. and previous local people had reached. The shrine was almost destroyed the sacred trees cut down and only a slab of stone with a hole in it to mark the sacred spot. The most interesting thing were some holes about 10ft dep [sic] with cleancut sides and one with solidified laterite stone like cement round the edge. In these the Modekekena or others had dug for beads. I was shown a pot embedded in the ground and told that here if the famous bronze Olokun head had been placed it would be later found in one of the holes. The past of Ife is curious...a man came up and prevented the youth from shoing [sic] some beads that I had asked him to show me...

Murray had a hard time gaining accurate accounts.<sup>59</sup> In Ife he discovered holes which seem like passages, but no one would give him any information.<sup>60</sup> His investigation into the Germans intensified after this tour. Murray wrote home, "...I want to try and trace some of the missing works and get to the bottom of the report that Germans removed a lot about 1938."<sup>61</sup> And before the year was out he made a trip to the Immigration Office to request the names of the Germans who came to the country in 1938, to little avail.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>59</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, August 28, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 31, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>61</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 3, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 12, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Nonetheless, he used his 1939 report from Abeokuta and Frobenius's book in order to develop a catalogue of Ife antiquities.<sup>63</sup>

In November, Murray continued his amateur excavation at Ife and his investigation of the antiquities.

We went to the grove and removed the pot covering the head. It was a small head and broken at the back. With it were some broken pieces and two crude small stone carvings. Having cleared the pot I moved the base of the pot that was under these and probing about found some more pieces. I then went back for breakfast. After joined by the driver we went back and I made a shallow ditch from the outside to the site of the pot. The pieces evidently had just been thrown in. At about 18" there were a lot of broken pot and some placed like a kind of sill. Beyond these the ground was soft as though there was a hole. Here I stopped and refilled my excavation. Frobenius found his terracottas 20' deep, and I have been told by one man of things buried 6-8' while that evening I was told by Rev Adejumo of his finding things 17' deep. It thus did not seem advisable to go on without spades etc. We then washed all the pieces. There were bits of some half dozen figures, but like all the fragments here scarcely any to join together.<sup>64</sup>

It was not until 1949 that they returned to excavate Ife, though extensive excavations began when Fagg enlisted the help of his brother, William, to come to Ife in 1953 for the mission. Not much happened for the first month and then momentum began to build at the excavation site in Ife. They found a shaft on the Osangangan site and uncovered

At Ogunladin at the Afin more paving was found and bettr [sic] quality 18" below the higher level. At Walode some more fragments were found

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<sup>63</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 31, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Five years later, there was still no progress on the "The extraordinary discovery was made, however, that the head of *Olokun*, which was the most valuable and famous antiquity in Nigeria, is probably a replica cast in Europe. The original, which has completely disappeared, must have been removed sometime between 1910, when Leo Frobenius who first brought the head to light visited Ife, and 1934 when the present *Oni* had the head placed safely in the Afin. The results of a very detailed examination that was made of the head while it was in the British Museum have been published in *Man*." Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2. For the rest of his career, Murray would continue to fight for the return of Ife objects, a battle that continues today.

<sup>64</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, November 7-14, 1943. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

including a life size model of a pig's foot. At Igbo Olokun the position seems a bit clearer and diggings in another grove produced many fragments some of which hlep [sic] to make up fragments already in the museum.<sup>65</sup>

Beneath the shrine, *Olokun Walode*, Fagg discovered a naturalistic head with cat whisker scarification (figure 13). William Fagg was critical to the success of the excavation:

After digging in the Iwinrin [sic] grove they had found various fragments that joined [those] in the museum. W. Fagg had been skilful in joining together pieces in the museum and had strated [sic] the reconstruction of a large terra cotta stool. It seems to stand on a large base, has a cylindrical column from which another cylinder comes out and should probably curve back to the top of the stool. It must stand about 2 feet high and be 2 ft in diameter. I wonder how it was fired for it must have been a very fragile object. The musuem [sic] building appear to have progressed and it might almost be finished by the end of the month.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to excavating at Ife, Bernard Fagg worked tirelessly to restore the *Opa Oranmiyan* (figure 5). The granite-gneiss column, just over eighteen feet high, is the walking stick of Oranmiyan (or Oranyan), son of Odùduwà, father of the Yoruba. Before the restoration, it had been broken into five sections and rebuilt, though not in its entirety, standing only nine feet in 1948. In 1953, Fagg began excavating the area, with a goal of creating a more stable foundation and searching for buried offerings made at the site.<sup>67</sup> The five fragments were then reassembled. The *Opa Oranmiyan* project fulfilled one of the primary missions of the antiquities service and came at a time when they were seeking support for the antiquities ordinance to protect monuments *in situ*.

### The Oron Museum (1959)

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<sup>65</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 6, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>66</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, March 10, 1953. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>67</sup> Murray. *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1953-1954*, 7-13.

The Oron Museum had a complex history, which required that Murray negotiate with villagers for their ancestral carvings. In October 1944 Murray surveyed Oron and the surrounding villages.<sup>68</sup> He encountered hundreds of ancestral wood carvings called *Ekpu* (figure 9) owned by equally as many families. They were in various stages of deterioration, which Murray noted before recommending that the antiquities section record and collect on extended loan as many *Ekpu* as possible. Just like at Ife, part of the negotiation to acquire the work was the guarantee that a local museum would be established to house the collection.

Though Murray would have surely known about Oron early in his career because he spent time in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, and Calabar, which surround Oron, it was his interaction with Shute in 1938 that first brought the Oron clan carvings to his attention.<sup>69</sup> In 1944, Murray made a serious effort to preserve the objects he encountered in Oron and the approximately 90 surrounding villages. His first efforts were to catalogue all of the ancestral figures and then

decide which ones ought to be preserved and also persuade the clan to allow something to be done to preserve them...But when I think of the difficulty in persuading the clan council, it seems a pretty hopeless job to hope to persuade the even less enlightened owners. Then there remains the Govt. to be persuaded, that will take six months. Then six months for the building and by that time 25% of the selected carvings will be destroyed!<sup>70</sup>

This letter to his mother highlights several factors that must be pointed out, though they have been alluded to in previous chapters. The first is that Murray did pick-and-choose the works he felt were good examples of ethnographic objects and high quality. Second,

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<sup>68</sup> Murray did take photographic records of *Ekpu* carvings while at the Government Teacher Training College in Uyo.

<sup>69</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 97. Murray notes that he refused to publish anything about the *Ekpu* sculptures for fear that it would contribute to a rise in looting.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 9, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

Murray's indignant and patronizing judgment on the owners being "less enlightened" does reveal that Murray was a product of colonial Britain and was working with the goal of indirect rule. It is my belief that Murray assumed that everyone should be willing to build a museum and its collection. This project proved to be quite difficult. By the end of July, he was still in Oron trying to persuade the Oron community to help him preserve the ancestor staffs.<sup>71</sup> Eventually people became indignant; he found and photographed rotted carvings in the bush.<sup>72</sup> I think Murray saw this behavior as ignorant rebellion; alternatively, Murray showed a lack of cultural sensitivity to the life of an object. The ultimate point, however, was that the tradition of making *Ekpu* was disintegrating and so were the objects themselves.

His early attempts to document *Ekpu* carvings were difficult. Recalling an episode early in his second collecting trip, he wrote that

unfortunately the chief was away and so no one would show me their carvings but they did report some thefts. These were ones I had not heard of before. As the chief was at Oron court I went in there and asked him to try and identify the lost carvings from among those there but he could see none. A man from Ekim village which had identified its lost carvings and the youth had been prosecuted who had stolen them came and insisted on taking back two of the three carvings (they were poor specimens because a man had died and it was decided through a diviner that the Ekpo carvings had caused his death. This incident seems to make a museum rather difficult [sic]. The man was a "Christian" and could speak English.<sup>73</sup>

He did visit nearly every village in the clan and initially documented 1,296 carvings. By autumn 1944, the Oron Council finally sent Murray the approval, though "rather grudgingly," he was seeking to establish a museum to house the villages' *Ekpu* collection

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<sup>71</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 28, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>72</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, July 30-Aug 6, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>73</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, September 17, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

and Murray proceeded to seek Duckworth and Niven's help to move the project forward.<sup>74</sup>

Due to natural deterioration, however, or destruction instigated by the Salvation Army and the Apostolic Church, only 600 were acquired. Of those, 500 were on extended loan from nearly 200 families and approximately 100 were collected by the antiquities service.<sup>75</sup>

After the Civil War, Murray wrote *The Oron Ancestor Figures: their Collection, Theft of Some and Loss of Most*, a memo recalling the beginnings of the Oron collection. "When the carvings were collected," he explained,

the head of the family was given a numbered receipt and a numbered label was tied to each carving....Two caretakers, both recommended by the District Officer, were put in charge; one of them was a local man who had assisted in the collection. Unfortunately they quarreled and accused each other of damage which occurred from time to time to some of the exhibits.<sup>76</sup>

The antiquities service was not assigned permanent staff until 1949 and the struggle to conduct their duties while training workers for each task proved incredibly challenging for Murray and Fagg.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, October 22, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>75</sup> Kenneth C. Murray, *The Oron Ancestor Figures: their Collection, Theft of Some and Loss of Most*, typescript. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive. Also quoted in Nicklin, 1999, 98-99. In a letter to his mother, Murray wrote "The collection of carvings for the Oron Museum is now finished although there must be many still not in. There are over 500, but over 100 of them are ruined fragments, collected from over 200 families and 43 villages" (Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, March 9, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.)

<sup>76</sup> In *The Oron Ancestor Figures: their Collection, Theft of Some and Loss of Most* (typescript, National Museum Lagos) and quoted in Nicklin, 1999, 98-99.

<sup>77</sup> According to the 1948 Annual Report, in addition to the surveyor (Murray) and archaeologist (Fagg), there were two watchmen and two drivers employed by the Antiquities Section. Lines were opened for four museum technicians, but they were not filled until 1949. In 1948 a line was also opened for a museum technical instructor, but it was only filled temporarily in 1951 and remained a contracted position. Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1. See also Murray, *Annual Report for the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49-31-3-50*, 1 and Murray, *Annual Report for the Antiquities Service 1951-52*, 3.

By 1946 nothing had been done and the support of the Oron Clan Council did not necessarily promote preservation of the existing *Ekpu* carvings. The 1946 annual report noted that “during the tour in the Eastern Provinces the Surveyor met the Oron Clan Council and once more got their confirmation that they want a museum to be built at Oron for their ancestral carvings. Meanwhile many of the surviving carvings are lying decaying in the open.”<sup>78</sup> Though this trip did not yield many acquisitions, it was an important mission in gaining popular support for a museum in Oron. Duckworth and Murray curated an exhibition of modern art and antiquities in Lagos in December 1946 in which seven Oron *Ekpu* carvings were exhibited. Murray used this opportunity as a platform to propose a museum to preserve endangered antiquities.<sup>79</sup>

Years went by and it seemed as though Murray was repeating himself again and again in the annual reports, correspondence with colonial officials, and letters home to his family. Each year that passed meant the disintegration of additional sculptures. In 1947, Murray secured approval from the Oron Clan Council for a specific museum plan. With this authorization, Murray began making arrangements to house what carvings he could into a temporary museum.<sup>80</sup> Shortly after this accomplishment, in early 1948, Murray stationed himself in the Oron area to acquire objects on extended loan. In this particular trip he acquired 500 *Ekpu* carvings from 43 villages.<sup>81</sup> Once the Oron Clan Council had fully endorsed Murray’s project they supplied the support and a committee to convince the villagers to essentially hand over their ancient ancestral carvings to the colonial

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<sup>78</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 1.

<sup>79</sup> See Murray, “Nigeria’s first exhibition of antiquities,” in *Nigeria Magazine* 27 (1947), 19-24 and Nicklin, 1999, 98.

<sup>80</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>81</sup> In some accounts, including Murray’s March 9, 1948 letter to his mother, the number of villages is 43. In other accounts it is 45.



government. Murray's official report noted "the Oron Clan Council supported the collection and appointed a committee to accompany and assist the Surveyor. Some opposition, although no more than was expected was met with in a few villages; but the Clan Council showed its keen annoyance with those concerned."<sup>82</sup> Murray did not describe the resistance to his work in the official documents. He did, however, recount his trials in letters home to his mother. Upon collecting the *Ekpu*, he wrote in one letter that

...I also got some books for receipts and labels for the carving. One man who speaks English and knows the district has been detailed to accompany me as guide and interpreter and he has ben [sic] writing out the receipts for the loan of the carvings. The waterside RH at Oron is being closed and altered for the temporary museum until the new one is built also at the waterside as Cobb supports a site there. I took the most educated of the Orons, Isong, the District Clerk to Oron with me. He looked at the RH to decide alterations...A crowd collected and there was some hostility and boos and groans as the carvings were put in the lorry. At the next site the woman refused to give up her carvings, but Isong stayed behind and persuaded her to do so when her chief was there...<sup>83</sup>

Though Murray had good intentions and hoped to protect *Ekpu* ancestor carvings from further deterioration and loss, he imposed his colonial agenda on Nigerian art practices. He insisted that honoring culture meant preserving the visual remnants; for many of the owners of their ancestor carvings, deterioration was an important component of the life of the work and their veneration for their ancestor.

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<sup>82</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, January 18, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Also mentioned: The carvings are discussed in Kenneth C. Murray, "Ekpu: The Ancestor Figures of Oron, Southern Nigeria," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 89, no. 536 (1947) 310 and 312-315.

The carvings Murray collected were stored in a temporary space at the Waterside Rest House near the quay used by the Calabar ferry.<sup>84</sup> This site was key to Murray's plan to attract visitors. Its location was strategic as a transfer site, linking Oron to Calabar.

Fagg explains in his 1963 article that this was important because

the ocean-going ferries which ply the estuarine creeks of the Cross River take one and a half hours to make the journey between Oron and Calabar, which means that a high proportion of the passengers have time to visit the museum while waiting for the departure of the ferry boat.<sup>85</sup>

Though the Waterside Rest House was renovated just enough to hold exhibitions, there was no security (a problem that would continue to plague the Oron Museum even after the permanent building was opened). Murray had, by this time, secured the colonial approval for a permanent museum, as well as the adjacent site, a mangrove swamp.<sup>86</sup> Of the experience getting everything established before he left Oron, Murray wrote:

The wood from the sawmill was being fetched that day, and I took down some carvings from the RH to the museum...I spent the rest of the day in the museum arranging the carvings. I have got two [youths] cleaning them. There are now over 300 but over 100 are ruined. Maybe 100 are in good enough order or interesting enough for the musuem [sic]...<sup>87</sup>

By the end of the year, Murray had his design for the building planned and approved (figure 14). The building would sit on a triangular plot on the banks of the Cross River.

It is aligned so that a corner view of the front of the building will be visible from the approaching ferry, and a view up the river may be had from the additional gallery which will also be used as a Reading Room for the Oron township. The rest of the site, which on the third side slopes down to low-lying ground with mangrove bushes, will be laid out as a

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<sup>84</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Fagg, 1963, 129.

<sup>86</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2. See also Department of antiquities Annual Report 1958-1962, 1961, 38.

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 15, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

flower garden. There is no piped water supply or electric light. The contents of the museum will be confined, except for a few related objects, to the ancient ancestor carvings of the Oron Clan, and will be exhibited on open stands arranged on the floor and around the walls.<sup>88</sup>

Keith Nicklin describes an account by Murray:

Although the drawings for a permanent museum were made in 1949 the Colonial Government delayed making a start and criticised [me] for collecting so many carvings. From its start the Antiquities Service worked under difficulties...Visits to Oron...could be undertaken at rare intervals. On each visit [I] photographed as many of the carvings as possible, and tried to keep the labeling in order. But this was a difficulty as the original labels came off and painted numbers rubbed off. Metal labels were made and fastened on with wire, but it was not always possible to identify a carving correctly, even with the location list, as the position of some had been disturbed by the caretakers.<sup>89</sup>

The years passed with little progress on the permanent museum. Murray would return to Oron to continue cataloguing the collection of *Ekpu* ancestor figures when he could, but the trips became increasingly sporadic. In one letter home he wrote:

Dear Father, Last Monday I was still at Oron. I started the morning by taking photographs in the museum. I want to get all the 570 specimens done and have now only about 40 good specimens and about 50 poor ones left to do...one of the ADOs looked in at the museum during the morning and talked about the new local govt. elections for which are now taking place in Eket. He thought that it was being pushed forward [sic] to fast...I went to Uyo to get money and also saw the Dist Engineer about the museum. Several people now seem willing to undertake the work provided the govt will release funds but I wonder whether they will be able to do a good enough job.<sup>90</sup>

Though the museum was not officially opened, it was still an important institution for education. In late 1951, Murray and Fagg brought six of the museum students to Oron to examine carvings, select about a dozen for conservation at Jos, and make crates for

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<sup>88</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 9.

<sup>89</sup> In *The Oron Ancestor Figures: their Collection, Theft of Some and Loss of Most* (typescript, National Museum Lagos) and quoted in Nicklin, 1999, 98-99.

<sup>90</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 23, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

transportation. The works were taken to Jos for conservation and “ it was astonishing how much their treatment had improved them.”<sup>91</sup> The antiquities department continued to make basic repairs to the structure, with the hope that a permanent building would shortly follow. Once the Jos Museum opened, they began to train technicians and caretakers. The custodian at Oron went to Jos to receive training on how to treat the Oron carvings and re-thatch the roof.<sup>92</sup>

Though opened as a temporary building in 1947, the completed museum, situated on the river and near the ferry terminal, was officially opened in 1959. Much of the land secured for the Oron Museum was reclaimed from the mangrove swamp adjacent to the plot. The goal was to build the museum to serve local populations and commuters on the Calabar Ferry, who might have a layover in Oron. When it was finally opened there was some interest in constructing a botanical garden and other amenities.<sup>93</sup> The opening ceremony was held in 1959, less than one year after construction finally began. Philip O. Nsugbe, ethnographer and curator at the Oron Museum<sup>94</sup> and Aja Nwachuku, the Federal Minister of Education, officiated the opening, which was met by large visitor numbers clamoring to see the *Ekpú* and antiquities from all over Nigeria.<sup>95</sup> The Civil War decimated the collection at Oron and the museum. This will be explained further in the following chapter, but the National Museum, Oron reopened in April 1977 with a growing collection of work from the region (figure 15).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 23, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>92</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Fagg, 1963, 129.

<sup>94</sup> Department of Antiquities Annual Report 1958-1962, 1962, 52.

<sup>95</sup> Department of Antiquities Annual Report 1958-1962, 1960, 20.

<sup>96</sup> See Keith Nicklin, *Guide to the National Museum Oron*. (Lagos: Department of antiquities, 1977).

### The Gidan Makama Museum Kano (1960)

This palace serves as both a museum and a protected monument (figure 16). It is also the central repository for the Emir of Kano's collection. For the department of antiquities, this project was a conservation effort. The Makama, a leader of a Kano Emirate district, donated one-third of his Kano home to be used as an elementary school when the department declared it a heritage site. Originally constructed of earth in the fifteenth century, there is also an eighteenth-century addition. It is located on the southeast corner of the emir's palace and connects the provincial office of the native authority and the city hall.<sup>97</sup> The complex is surrounded by a stone wall approximately two-meters wide. This is, according to architect Zbigniew Dmochowski, unusually thick in a two-storeyed structure and he supposes that it was designed "to give an impression of strength and opulence."<sup>98</sup> When the department began to conserve the structure in 1958, they found deterioration due to termites. They had to dismantle the entire structure, rebuild the foundation and reconstruct the building. Fagg installed vitrines and built an open-air theatre.<sup>99</sup> This museum complemented other heritage sites in the city, including the Kano City Walls.

There is little written about the Kano Museum in the archives or in the annual reports. Fagg notes in the 1960 annual report that on January 19, 1961 "the City Walls of Kano and the Makama's House in Kano were each declared a Scheduled Antiquity by the Kano Native Authority."<sup>100</sup> At this point the department of antiquities began its

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<sup>97</sup> Zbigniew Dmochowski, *An Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture: Volume One, Northern Nigeria* (London: Ethnographica, 1990), 4.5.

<sup>98</sup> Dmochowski, 1990, 4.5.

<sup>99</sup> Fagg, 1963, 130

<sup>100</sup> Department of Antiquities Annual Report 1958-62, 1960, 36.

conservation efforts and renovations for the gallery to display the emir's collection of silver and saddlery.<sup>101</sup> The lack of material concerning this museum as well as Murray's oversight during his second tenure as director in the 1960s implies that the Gidan Makama was restored and converted into a museum for political purposes. Besides Jos, there were no other museums in the north. Moreover, Jos was not representative of the predominately Muslim north. Kano was a key political city as the seat of the emir and at the moment of independence the department of antiquities, perhaps strongly encouraged by the colonial and transition governments, strategically opened a government museum in a major Muslim northern Nigerian city.

Situated around the Gidan Makama are other cultural landmarks such as the Gidan Dan Hausa, the Kano Wall, and the Gidan Rumfa. The Gidan Dan Hausa was built by the Emir of Kano. In 1909 Hans Vischer, a Swiss who was charged with organizing education in northern Nigeria, expanded Gidan Dan Hausa as a residence and a primary school.<sup>102</sup> By 1927 the school had grown so much that it was relocated to Rumfa College and Gidan Dan Hausa became a residence for colonial officers. Before it was restored and opened as the Kano State Museum in 2000, it housed the zoo. The museum contains artifacts and china from Vischer's collection as well as musical instruments and costumes from the emir's collection. Next door to the museum is the Kano State Historical and Culture Bureau.

The Gidan Rumfa, the emir's palace, was built in the fifteenth century by Emir Sarkin Rumfa. It is situated on a 33-acre estate just outside of the old city. The compound

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<sup>101</sup> Department of Antiquities Annual Report 1958-62, 1960, 37.

<sup>102</sup> Martin Matthews, *Nigeria: Current Issues and Historical Background*, (New York: Nova, 2002), 140.

is surrounded by a wall 20 feet high and visitors enter through a door of the same height. The audience chambers are the most ornate areas of the palace, decorated by *bakan gizos*, a kind of rib vaulting distinctive to Hausa architecture, decorates the audience chambers. The plaster interior has relief patterning painted with black, white, and gray. Currently these are all tourist destinations and together they demonstrate Kano's cultural depth. Perhaps the region did not captivate the department of antiquities because Fagg was interested in the archaeological potential of the Jos Plateau and Murray focused on the south, leaving no one to work closely with the Emir of Kano. Whatever the reason there is little documentation of the sites beyond Dmochowski's survey.

#### The Benin Museum (1960)

Like Ife, Benin City was considered an obvious place for a museum as a hub for art and culture of the Edo people, particularly the Oba's royal precinct. It was also the victim of the 1897 Benin Punitive Expedition in which the British carried off some 2,500 cultural artifacts. Though the British Museum retains a significant collection of the brass and ivory artifacts, much of the booty was auctioned to subsidize the mission. When Murray sought the repatriation of the works he had to seek out the collections in Germany, France, and the United States, among other countries that acquired an object or two for their collections.

Murray was preoccupied with the repatriation of the so-called Benin bronzes, even though "there is a lot of new work which was made during the time of last two Obas after sack of Benin. The present Oba does not seem to patronise the old styles of art. Since I was here years ago Benin is much transformed, but no sign of native art. It seems

a most dull town.”<sup>103</sup> Indeed, Murray expressed his frustration with the deterioration of the “old art” (figure 17). So while external foundations and the colonial government agreed that Benin would be a crucial cultural center, Murray hoped only that building a museum would trigger the generosity of the major European institutions that held the high-quality brasses and ivories.

Murray began his survey of Benin in 1943. For many years it seemed as though the museums, so seemingly simple to Murray, would be built. But, it was a slow process and when work is delayed it leaves plenty of time for people, such as Fry and Drew to give their input. Murray had written to Fry about designing the Benin Museum. At the request of Niven, he met with Drew, who had experience in museum work, while her husband was in Accra. Fry drew up perspective sketches for the Benin Museum in 1945, around the same time he was working on the proposals for the museum in Accra.<sup>104</sup>

In 1948 a temporary museum had been approved and opened to the public. The museum was a single gallery funded by the local authority near the Oba’s palace. Chief Jacob V. Egharevba, the honorary curator and court historian of Benin supported the museum initiative and was integral to building the collection and generating interest. Egharevba encouraged other local leaders as well as the Oba to provide objects from their collections to the museum on extended loan.<sup>105</sup> This collection, small as it was, consisted of some of the rarest and highest-quality works (figure 18).

It was not until 1958 that the department of antiquities acquired two and a half acres near the King’s Square for a permanent museum. The original designs, drawn in

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<sup>103</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, from Benin n.d., (probably between September 5, 1943 and September 19, 1943). Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>104</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 3, 1945. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>105</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 2. See also Fagg, 1963, 130.



1959, were “based on elements derived from surviving buildings in or near Benin, on early documentary and even archaeological evidence, and when built will ennoble and enhance Benin sculpture and traditional Benin material culture by displaying it against the background of the traditional builder’s art of Benin.”<sup>106</sup> The actual building took several years to complete, so in place of the permanent building, the department of antiquities opened a temporary museum in the old Benin Post Office, specifically for the Independence celebrations. “The collections from the Local Authority Museum were taken over and substantially enlarged, new internally lighted display cases were provided and the building modified and redecorated.”<sup>107</sup> Finally, under Ekpo Eyo’s directorship in 1968, a permanent building opened around King’s Square in the city center.

#### The Jos Museum (1952)

What distinguishes the Jos Museum from all of the museums developed by the antiquities department is said best by Fagg himself: “it is the museum where it has been possible to carry out most museological experiments and where an interdisciplinary museum complex is about to become a reality.”<sup>108</sup> The Jos Museum was not simply a museum for artifacts from northern Nigeria; the Jos Museum was a complex that took, in total, over 30 years to build. In addition to Fagg, there were many players who worked tirelessly for its expansion: Sylvia Leith-Ross built the Pottery Museum; Zbigniew R. Dmochowski designed the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture; there was a

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<sup>106</sup> Fagg, 1963, 130.

<sup>107</sup> Fagg, 1963, 130-131.

<sup>108</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132.

zoo, a botanical gardens, and a technological museum; there was also a museum training program to provide technical training for museum professions in Nigeria and abroad.

Located in the Middle Belt, Jos is the capital of the Plateau State. Although located in the Muslim North, Jos has been the home of Protestant missions since the colonial period, and, due to its high altitude, temperate climate, and the presence of important tin deposits and dairy ranches, it has been a multiethnic city with both Christian and Muslim populations, as well as a strong expatriate presence. Arriving at Jos in spring 1946, Murray describes traveling along the plateau:

at this time of year the breeze that comes in at the window of the moving car is like a hot blast from a furnace... There are two good points on the road, first when you come off the Plateau near Jos where there is a picturesque spir [sic] of hills running on parallel to the road, and later when there is another descent by the side of a large lump of a hill 4700 ft high.<sup>109</sup>

This region is distinguished by the wealth of minerals and alluvial mining. When formal mining operations began in the region in 1903, workers uncovered small ethnographic artifacts, such as stone tools. The Jos Plateau (formerly the Bauchi Plateau) was an unofficial excavation site in the alluvial deposits of tin-stone for decades, gaining momentum in 1909 before Fagg or any archaeologist was able to begin systematic excavations.<sup>110</sup>

Miners and amateur archaeologists uncovered stone implements and pottery in the alluvial deposits of the region.<sup>111</sup> It is unknown how many objects were lost due to

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<sup>109</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, April 12, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>110</sup> See also Okechukwu O. Njoku. *25 Years of Jos Museum* (Jos: National Museum, Jos, Nigeria, 1978). See also Bernard Fagg, "48. Archeological Notes from Northern Nigeria," *Man* 46 (May-June, 1946), 50.

<sup>111</sup> As an assistant Keeper in the Ethnographic Department of the British Museum, H. J. Braunholtz published the findings of Langslow-Cock, Dr. Falconer, D'Arcy Leaver, Stanley Williams, C. K. Meek,

mining; however, it is amazing how much was preserved thanks to touring colonial officers and mining operations.<sup>112</sup> Colonel Dent-Young, co-owner of a mining operation, discovered a terracotta depicting a monkey head (figure 19) among the deposits. In 1928, he gave it to E. A. Langslow Cock, the Chief Inspector of Mines at the time, who created a small museum to house a growing collection in the offices of the department of mines at Jos.<sup>113</sup> However, this embryonic museum, maintained entirely by the department of mines was not enough to generate concern for archeological preservation in the area. Though coupled with small collections kept by emirs and chiefs of northern Nigeria, it was not until the intervention by a junior colonial officer with a keen interest, that attention to the preservation and popularization of historical objects occurred so that proper precautions were taken during excavations. In fact, Murray, who made his first visit to Jos in late December 1944 found the museum had been dismantled: Murray

went to the Mines Dept and saw the Chief Inspector of Mines Frayling. He was rather bitter about the museum, as it apparently been neglected and as a [result] various people had removed things. Two wives had taken ancient tin beads as necklaces. It had been moved from house to house until finally the Education Officer had put the collection outside in the rain.<sup>114</sup>

As an assistant district officer and trained archaeologist, Bernard Fagg and his wife Catherine had “obtained permission to work on the museum collection. All the specimens were marked, catalogued (and the stone age collection photographed),

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Montagu Porch, and A. S. Davidson in his report for the Geological Survey of Nigeria entitled “Stone Implements of Palaeolithic and Neolithic Types from Nigeria” (London: British Museum, 1926).

<sup>112</sup> Fagg, 1946, 49.

<sup>113</sup> Fagg writes of the temporary museum in the Jos Mining office that “though also for geological specimens, this museum maintained for years its anthropological and archeological section. Three times in its history small buildings have been allocated for housing the museum only to be taken over as offices when accommodation became deficient. During these vicissitudes some specimens were inevitably lost or damaged.” Fagg, 1946, 50.

<sup>114</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 24, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

repacked and stored to await a more permanent home.”<sup>115</sup> Fagg and his wife took all the responsibility for the objects and stored them in their home.<sup>116</sup> They received little interest or support from the miners, in spite of the preliminary protection they provided the objects. Fagg’s initial actions protected the core of the collection that would help him raise enough funding for a proper museum. Murray was frustrated by the inadequate support. In one letter to his mother he wrote: “I felt inclined to blame Frayling a bit and others in Jos, for there had been no publicity about the museum. If I had known what was happening I would have tried to have come before and I know Duckworth would have been seeing the governor.”<sup>117</sup> When Murray paid a visit to H. H. W. Boyes, the head of the tin miners, in 1944, the idea of a museum at Jos was certainly a possibility.<sup>118</sup> It is in this letter, from December 24, 1944, that Murray first refers to Fagg. Whether Murray was aware of the archaeologist or not is uncertain, though he would have likely been told about the attempts made to recover antiquities. It was entirely Fagg’s perseverance and his collaboration and eventual employment with the department of antiquities that enabled a museum in Jos to be built and expanded into a museological laboratory.

Thanks to a tip by the director of geological survey in spring 1944, Fagg investigated a terracotta head found by F.H. Townsend, a tin prospector in Jema’a in southern Zaria.<sup>119</sup> The Jema’a Head was displayed on the Fagg family mantelpiece, until

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<sup>115</sup> Fagg, 1946, 50: There were several amateur collectors (whom Fagg names) who gave their collections to English museums.

<sup>116</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>117</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 24, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, December 24, 1944. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>119</sup> Fagg, 1946, 54.

a museum was built to house it (figure 4).<sup>120</sup> The style corresponded to a monkey head elaborated on by H.J. Brauholtz at Nok in 1929.<sup>121</sup>

Not only was Fagg storing the artifacts discovered by the miners, but he was also storing his archaeological finds. Fagg needed to build a museum to hold this constantly expanding collection. The first step was to find a location:

I have come to the conclusion that the most suitable site for a museum is the one I mentioned to you at the very centre of Jos. The possibilities of making a beautiful park and gardens are excellent and we could have an admirable botanical gardens and even something of a bird sanctuary in the open air. We could even label the rocks and import large specimens! There is permanent water in the creek & this has endless possibilities. This scheme, I believe, is exactly the opportunity we should be careful not to miss of contributing to a better understanding between the North and the South (there is a big Southern element here as you know) & the Europeans. Such an understanding is particularly lacking in the Plateau.<sup>122</sup>

Indeed, securing a site was crucial, and, with the backing of H. J. Brauholtz from the British Museum, Fagg generated further support.

As described in chapter 3, in February 1946, Brauholtz arrived to tour the country and to give a lecture on museums.<sup>123</sup> Murray and Brauholtz flew to Jos on February 22, 1946, where Fagg met them and took them to the site for the proposed

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<sup>120</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>121</sup> H. J. E. Peake and H. J. Brauholtz, "Earthenware Figure from Nigeria in the Newbury Museum." *Man* (1929), 87. In this excavation summary, Brauholtz describes a carved monkey head found 1926. See also Bernard Fagg in Trevor Clark, *Was it only Yesterday? The Last Generation of Nigeria's 'Turawa'* (Bristol: British Empire & Commonwealth Museum Press, 2002), 189.

<sup>122</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, April 24, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive. He continues: "There is a danger that P.W.D. expansion of their works yard and setting up of a stone crushing plant and lasting of rock at the very hill we have our eyes on as a museum site may interfere with the plans. I must try and see the Resident tomorrow for it would be a very bad thing for the Township, apart from the prospects of a Museum."

<sup>123</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 3, 1946 & February 16, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

museum.<sup>124</sup> Bernard's daughter, an archaeologist for the department of antiquities from 1967-1976, Angela Fagg Rackham described how Fagg had found the spot. From the beginning he was thinking about the surrounding grounds and put in a bid to retain it for the complex. By creating the zoo it meant that no one else could get the land, which was being developed.<sup>125</sup> The 1946 Annual Report of the department of antiquities notes:

Mr Fagg, who has been Secretary of the Jos Museum Committee, has been looking after the archaeological and ethnographical [sic] collection at Jos. There has been nowhere to show this collection since it was ejected first from one, then from another home, during the war. It has now been packed in strong cases and put in a special store. A proposal has been made and plans have been prepared for a museum at Jos, costing between £15,000 and £20,000, that will serve the surrounding area up to a radius of about eighty miles.<sup>126</sup>

With no official museum set up, Fagg housed the antiquities in his own home.

The Jos Museum is arguably one of the most important and groundbreaking museums in tropical Africa. Not only was it imaginative and inventive in terms of development, but it also strove, almost from its establishment in 1952, to be a leader in terms of archaeological scholarship, training, and preservation of the many different histories of this complex African nation. It is important to consider the Jos Museum as both a part of the department of antiquities and a result of the culture of anthropology in British museums. However, its progression from an idea to a unique, multi-faceted reality happened in spite of the links to these institutions. The Jos Museum came to fruition simply because of the efforts of its founder, Bernard Fagg.

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<sup>124</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 16, 1946. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>125</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>126</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 3.

In light of Murray's unwavering dedication to building a central museum in Lagos since 1935, why was the Jos Museum completed in four years and opened five years before the Lagos Museum? Rackham's answer is simple: Bernard Fagg executed the entire thing himself. He learned how to build, and built it. He learned how to use explosives, and quarried and faced local stone. This is alluded to in the annual reports of 1948-1952; furthermore it highlighted the fundamental difference between Kenneth Murray and Bernard Fagg: Murray was brilliant at looking at existing objects and wood carvings, but struggled with the practical tasks; Fagg was more practical, but he was also very charismatic and could persuade.<sup>127</sup> He would negotiate for funds, rather than putting in applications for funds like Murray. This was more successful because antiquities were inconsequential to the colonial office, so the antiquities section had to be strategic in making their claim for funds. Just as Murray pushed ahead with antiquity preservation, regardless of the bureaucratic barrier that was the colonial office, Fagg managed to continue archaeological excavations, promote artifact preservation, generate local interest, and build a major museum, in spite of a lack of resources from the government.

For Fagg, one of the most important ways in which this played out was through the ancient monuments section of the antiquities department, which he developed. No one could deny that there was constant destruction occurring and Fagg saw one way of combating this was through regional museums. Rackham supported this claim when she said that "small museums were developed based on what was being discovered, not some

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<sup>127</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

larger colonial idea.”<sup>128</sup> The institution at Jos, as the first national museum in Nigeria, acted as a central museum for northern Nigeria.

Fagg lived in Jos for his entire career in Nigeria and developing the museum there remained his most important concern. When Murray retired from service in 1957 (upon the opening of the National Museum, Lagos), Fagg was promoted to director of the department of antiquities.<sup>129</sup> Instead of moving to Lagos, where the antiquities headquarters had been established, Fagg relocated the office to his home in Jos.<sup>130</sup> Though Fagg’s primary reason was his own convenience, he made the practical point that the humidity was lower in the Plateau region, providing a better climate for records, archives, the library, and objects. The department would continue to be run from here until Fagg retired to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford in 1963.<sup>131</sup> In his 1963 article in *Museum*, which was published as he retired, Fagg wrote that

so many activities are in fact taking place or are being envisaged in the grounds of the museum and so close is the museum itself to the adjacent golf-course land that it has been decided to attempt to stabilize both areas as well as some further unused land, which is quite unsuitable for building development, as a green belt within the centre of Jos,

creating the Jos National Park and a Plateau Sports Club.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>129</sup> Rackham claims that Fagg became the acting director in 1956, but I have not found evidence to support this. Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>130</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>131</sup> Murray replaced him to train Ekpo Eyo until 1967. The headquarters was moved back to the offices at the National Museum, Lagos during Murray’s tenure not only because Murray wanted to remain in Lagos, but also because Eyo refused to move to Jos due to tension between the northerners and Igbo. When Eyo took his post and tension in the North increased, he had all of the records returned to Lagos. According to Angela Fagg Rackham, they were lost on the journey back.

<sup>132</sup> Fagg, 1963, 135.



### The Museum

As stated earlier, the museum existed in a couple of different forms before the Jos Museum was completed and opened to the public. Though a museum was proposed as early as 1944, in the 1947 annual report it was explained that no housing was secured for the newly appointed government archaeologist.<sup>133</sup> Luckily, Fagg was able to make his own provisions with the help of the resident who was initially opposed to an archaeologist coming to Jos, and had vowed to give the appointed person poor housing, that is, until the resident found out it might be Fagg. Then Fagg wrote to Murray that “he was quite encouraging, suggesting even that I should wire you immediately asking what are the chances, & then put in a formal application for the post of it is created. He also can more or less guarantee quarters in Jos & certainly in the region of Jos.”<sup>134</sup> Fagg had the opportunity to build several homes for his family over the 25 years he was in Jos.<sup>135</sup> These homes often had to act as storage facilities for the ethnographic collection of the former museum and the archaeological material acquired by Fagg himself.<sup>136</sup> Fagg acknowledged that the small archaeological finds in the tin mines were not enough to constitute a museum collection in Jos. Uncovering the figurative terracottas in Nok such as the “elephant” found in 1949 (figure 20), however, would prove to be the popular edge needed to fund and promote a museum.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>134</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, August 3, 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archive.

<sup>135</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to Kenneth C. Murray, August 3, 1946. KCM Papers, National Museum Lagos, Archive.

<sup>136</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>137</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132.

At the time of Fagg's appointment proposals were submitted for office and exhibition space as well as storage and conservation.<sup>138</sup> The museum was always intended to be a research collection for excavated material. The original design of the museum, which was conceived at a tennis match by Fagg and J. C. M. Hames, public works department architect, was the plan that was eventually built (figure 21).<sup>139</sup> This is in contrast to Murray's approach. The designs for all of his museums went through multiple iterations that were still being developed even after the structure was built.

By 1948, however, Fagg's collection had grown beyond storage capacity and nothing had been built.<sup>140</sup> Fagg began storing the collection "in an isolated corn store in open farm-land and in a small office building on the fringe of the town."<sup>141</sup> His house acted as a workshop and a darkroom, but the mining company through which he was renting wanted to renovate it. He put in another request to build his museum at an estimated cost of £6,500. In the plan he first proposed the site that would link as a park the town of Jos and the government reservation.<sup>142</sup> He continued to acquire land and proposed purchasing the golf course. This was an important move, but was not motivated by a desire to create a massive recreational area for expatriates as the colonial government might have expected, but because he knew that if he acquired the golf course, it would be a huge block of land that could not be broken up, but into which he

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<sup>138</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1947*, 6.

<sup>139</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012. Frank Willet incorrectly states that the Jos Museum was originally drawn on an envelope during a cricket match in his "To Bernard Fagg on His Seventieth Birthday," in *African Arts*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1986, 73-74, 74.

<sup>140</sup> 1948 was the first time the government archeologist contributed to the *Annual Report*.

<sup>141</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1-2.

<sup>142</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1-2. It seems this same £6,500 was approved in the 1949-1950 budget (See Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 7. See also Fagg, 1963, 132.). Whether the money was actually provided is unknown.

could slowly expand. Initially, he obtained 34 acres and expanded his grounds another 31 acres.<sup>143</sup>

Fagg raised the majority of the funds through private donations; however, the colonial government did provide the money needed to acquire land and begin building. In September 1949,<sup>144</sup> Fagg and Hames began building the museum. Of the effort by Fagg, Murray wrote that

by the end of March, 1950, the museum was well on its way to completion. It has needed very hard work by Mr. Fagg, who is not of course a professional builder, but the building has been very carefully done and should be thoroughly sound. The Archaeologist can now look forward to getting down to his proper work without the troubles that would have been his if he had had to wait until the Public Works Department had finished all the buildings that had priority in their Jos programme.<sup>145</sup>

Indeed, Fagg oversaw all of the labor and even helped build the Jos Museum himself.

“No contractors were employed; all labour was engaged and directed by Mr Fagg who got together a set of craftsmen to whose good workmanship and the efficiency and foresight of Mr Fagg’s supervision the building bears witness.”<sup>146</sup>

As noted earlier, it was Fagg’s persistence, focus, and willingness to construct the building himself that distinguishes his project from Murray’s experience building the Lagos Museum, which took well over ten years. The cause of the delays seems common with any large scale government project: the public works department was overbooked,

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<sup>143</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

<sup>144</sup> The *Annual Report* for 1952-1953 states August 1949, while the *Report* from 1949-1950 states September.

<sup>145</sup> Murray, *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*, 2.

<sup>146</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1952-53* (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1954), 4.

there was a shortage of staff and architects, and museums seemed unwarranted when basic infrastructure was needed.<sup>147</sup>

In 1949 the proposal for Jos

was accepted on condition that the building operations should not interfere with other Government building projects in any way. By purchasing scarce materials and borrowing plant[sic plans] from civilian firms this condition has been strictly fulfilled. Mr Hames completed the working drawings by the end of August, the building was laid out, and construction actually began on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.<sup>148</sup>

An approved plan, however, was just authorization for Fagg to go negotiate for his own material and funding. “In order to ensure a supply of dry timber for the roof trusses and purlines, then in very short supply,” Fagg pursued B. E. Eiritz, holder of a timber concession, to fell trees and prepare timber from the Jagindi Forest Reserve in early 1949 so that they could season before actual construction began.<sup>149</sup>

Other important gifts came from the Société Commerciale de l’Ouest Africain, who provided a cement mixer for preparing the foundation; The Nigerian Electricity Supply Corporation connected the building site to the nearest power line 800 yards away; Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Whale provided room and board for 29 apprentice carpenters and bricklayers from the Kaduna Trades Centre who built the stone-block walls; the Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria and Birom Trading School at Sabon Gida donated their services of “joggling” on window bars; they then provided a transportable welding plant to complete the job. Within a matter of months, by May 1950, the exterior of the Jos Museum was completed and the administration was operating out of its offices (figure

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<sup>147</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 7.

<sup>148</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 7-8.

<sup>149</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 8. See also Fagg, 1963, 132.

22).<sup>150</sup> Again, the speed at which the building was constructed was entirely due to Fagg's efforts. The materials, collected locally, were in some cases obtained by Fagg himself. For example, Fagg disassembled an old bridge and used the timber of *opepe* piles to create the library floor.<sup>151</sup> Rackham confirmed that in fact her father and the architect decided to build it by direct labor hiring and training untrained labor and helping to complete tasks himself as well. When material was scarce, they became resourceful: there was no timber, so they used timber abandoned from a washed out bridge. Fagg built an access road through 30 acres he acquired and salvaged the seasoned wood. Stone was chosen for the exterior the museum because cement was expensive and stone was a local material, so he studied and obtained a license to use explosives and quarried the stones himself. He got books on building and taught himself how to face the stone.<sup>152</sup> He also constructed a stone bridge across the stream in front of the entrance, and "a circular fish-pond with a fountain fed by gravity with stream water and a masonry terrace wall and approach steps matching the main block in style and colour," and all of this for under

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<sup>150</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 8.

<sup>151</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 4.

<sup>152</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012. See also Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 4.

£10,000.<sup>153</sup> Additionally, Fagg constructed the floors in the entrance hall and galleries of seasoned *iroko* wood.<sup>154</sup>

Over a decade later, Fagg recalled that

the museum therefore had to be built, if at all, by the archaeologist himself, employing direct labour. In spite of its obvious disadvantages this method had the great advantage that the basic design (executed on a single drawing) could be elaborated as the building progressed, and that a cadre of first-class craftsmen could be selected from those engaged on the building to form the nucleus of the permanent works organization.<sup>155</sup>

Furthermore, he did it quickly, efficiently, and at low cost. He ordered metal-framed glass exhibition cases from England and bronze display furniture.<sup>156</sup>

As noted earlier, the museum was originally envisioned as a storage facility and research center for the archaeological material discovered under mining and excavations sanctioned by the antiquities section. The initial building was 6,920 square feet of which 1,200 square feet were developed for public display. It was “a single display gallery with clerestory windows communicating, through openings lined with solid ebony, with a front gallery and small entrance lobby containing further exhibits...”<sup>157</sup> The remaining space was developed to include a library and lecture room, a research store, offices, space for unpacking, indexing, and cataloguing, a conservation laboratory, a darkroom, a

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<sup>153</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132. See also Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 4. Fagg’s unorthodox methods for fundraising and operating outside of the system did not always work out. Murray noted that “Fagg has given me rather a problem since his financial arrangements are rather unorthodox [sic]. I had not been watching his vote since I had asumed [sic] it was satisfactory but I examined it last week and found he had overspent his allocation from me and a great many of the items were not proper charges against the vote at all. In consequence I have had to give notice to all his daily paid labour and am now trying to see how I can straighten things out to keep the musuem [sic] running,” Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, September 5, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>154</sup> Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 4. According to SLR, footnote 3, page 184: “The *Iroko* tree is a West African tree valued for the quality of its wood by Africans for carving statues and by Europeans for export for furniture-making.”

<sup>155</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132.

<sup>156</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archaeologist, 1950-51*, 5. See also Fagg, 1963, 132.

<sup>157</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132.

joinery workshop, and a garage.<sup>158</sup> Lady Kirson donated a large part of her husband's library to Jos.<sup>159</sup> This library was integral to Jos's research component and later to the curatorial program. Further donations were made by Dent Young and Gordon Wilson.<sup>160</sup> The exhibition space was made up of imported glass cases from Edmunds in London and fittings made in the museum workshop. The department of commerce and industries used local weavers to produce the curtains and cloth backdrops, dyed to complement the artifacts, a system Fagg criticizes because while "enhancing their appearance has the disadvantage of discouraging the curator from changing the exhibits so carefully set up." To further enhance the objects, "the labels were written on small glass panels with white or coloured ink to permit the cloth to show through, thus making the labels less obtrusive, yet quite clear."<sup>161</sup>

On April 26, 1952, the Jos Museum held its inaugural ceremony, officiated by the governor, Sir John Stuart Macpherson, and opened its doors to the public.<sup>162</sup> It is worth including a large portion of a letter from Murray to his father to set the scene most completely. Murray recounted the day leading up to the ceremony:

we got away early the next day and after a call at Toro outside Jos to collect a carving given to the museum by J.D. Clarke and a stop elsewhere [elsewhere] for breakfast got to Jos about 2pm. From then onwards the time has gone very quickly and spent pretty well entirely in the museum.

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<sup>158</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1952-53* (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1954), 4. See also Fagg, 1963, 132.

<sup>159</sup> Lady Kirson's husband discovered the Udi coalfields.

<sup>160</sup> Fagg, *Annual Report of the Government Archeologist for the Year ending in 1949* (in *Report of the Antiquities Branch for the period 1-1-49—31-3-50*), 9. Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012 and M. N., 1953, 62.

<sup>161</sup> Fagg, 1963, 132. See also Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1951-52*, 4. See also M.N., 1953, 61-62.

<sup>162</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1952-53* (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1954), 4.

Yesterday morning the Governor came round in the morning and spent about an hour and in the afternoon there was the opening ceremony on the terrace in front of the building. We were lucky with the weather for there has been rain nearly every day since I have been back and downpours on some days such as Friday and the rain has been mostly in the afternoon. But although rain threatened at 2 by 5 the weather was excellent and kept so. There were a great many invited guests probably about 400. Fag [sic] I and the Resident met the governor as he arrived and escorted him up the steps to his seat and then I made a short introductory speech which apparently did not go off too badly. Then the Governor spoke and I handed him the key and he opened the door. Afterwards the guests came in and after going round the muuem [sic] we gave a sherry party in the library. Everything went off very well and all looked excelent [sic]. The Governor left about 6:45 and then the other people gradually went away and about 8 the general public were admitted. There were various anxieties before the building was done. The library was the last to be finished and in order to the floor sandpapered the Yoruba carpenters worked for 24 hours from Thurs morning till Friday morning. Labels were another anxiety as the man we had got up from Lagos was a bit slow to begin with and wanted to go back on Thursday. Finally he stopped so most of the labels were done. Lables [sic] were beiun [sic] made up to the last moment. The minister of Works did not come. Possibly the PWD have tried to discourage him as I got rather a snotty letter from his secretray [sic] and a telegram saying he could not come as he had a conference. The minister of Labout [sic] however came from Kaduna. He said to me that the museum was the biggest indictment of the PWD, as it is so well built withot [sic] any PWD help... This morning the museum has been open to the public and there has been a steady stream of African [sic]. They each have to sign their name on entering or get someone to sign for them the attendant, so the room is never crowded. I suppose some 40-50 an hour are entering. I am still thinking of coming up here when Fagg goes on leave and live in his house.<sup>163</sup>

The public response was incredible, and the antiquities service hoped that it would give them the momentum they needed to open the remaining five projects they were trying to push through. In just under one year, 62,629 visitors came to the museum. Though there was no cost to enter, the museum insisted that everyone must record his or

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<sup>163</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, April 27, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



her name in the visitors' book. The records show that "the visitors, although mostly domiciled in Jos, represent all parts of Nigeria."<sup>164</sup>

Rackham posits that part of her father's success was in the simplicity of the design, which would allow him to continue to change and add to the museum. Over time, he acquired approximately 65 acres of land with a plan to expand, change, and develop the museum and grounds. Much of the land around the museum was located between Jos proper and the government reservation and, in spite of development pressures, was preserved due to a "building-free zone" regulation. Fagg was able to secure the land before the restriction was lifted.<sup>165</sup> Rackham added that Fagg was observant and saw all the things going on. The Jos Museum Complex grew as needed.<sup>166</sup> At the time of the opening Fagg had already envisioned the construction of traditional, endangered dwellings, an arboretum, and a zoo.<sup>167</sup> When Bauchi Light Railroad line was disassembled, Fagg could not stand the idea of losing this critical part of Nigerian history, so he built the Technological Museum to house train cars. He wanted to preserve the Kano wall, so he expanded his schemes for the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture, which did not originally include the historical monument. On the Jos Plateau and throughout the north there were a number of distinctive styles of domestic

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<sup>164</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1952-53*, 1954, 7. In a letter from Kenneth Murray to his father, he described its popularity: "Before I left Jos the attendances [sic] at Jos musuem [sic] had been very good. Everyone signs his or her name or it is done for him, so the numbers are known. Stated at 800 on Sunday and had dropped to about 600 by Thursday Total since opening well over 3000. We hope to reach 10000 in the month. Very mixed visitors almost naked Pagan women and clerks, many Yoruba. All very appreciative and to my surprise seem most interested in the stone implements." Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, May 8, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray also noted on July 6, 1952 that "The museum had its 20000<sup>th</sup> visitor last Sunday" (See Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, July 6, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office).

<sup>165</sup> Fagg, 1963, footnote 3, 134.

<sup>166</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>167</sup> Kenneth Murray, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service for the Year 1952-53*, 1954, 5.

architecture including granaries for millet and guinea corn. MOTNA was originally inspired by the granaries. He also had a plan for a canteen, the Bight of Benin.

Perhaps one of Fagg's most important contributions, which would reverberate throughout tropical Africa, was the technical and curatorial training program that would open about a decade later. It stemmed from his experience building the museum. When Fagg started in Jos he knew that he needed technicians and assistants. He negotiated for Langton from the British Museum to come out to train his workers on conservation. He made sure that his technicians were trained, but was aware that there was no museum school in all of Africa – so he made it bilingual for all of Anglophone and Francophone Africa.<sup>168</sup> Perhaps no one other than Fagg himself could have imagined the evolution of this unlikely institution over the next two decades.

### **The Pottery Museum.**

Ceramics were an important component of Murray's art curriculum in the 1930s. He studied pottery techniques, built kilns, and corresponded with Michael Cardew on his initiatives in the Gold Coast. Of course Nigerian pottery gained further interest when Cardew opened his studio in Abuja in 1951. In 1954, on a tour of The Gold Coast, Murray noted that

what chiefly struck me was the great quantity of pottery which they had got compared with Nigeria. Probably it has just not been noticed here. The GC has this dry coastal belt in which it is easier to spot old sites. Nigeria has its bronzes and carvings which GC has not and GC has this quantity of old pottery.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>169</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, October , 1954. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

It would take a monetary gift to the Jos Museum and the incredible dedication by a British expatriate to develop a competitive national collection of Nigerian pottery.

The Pottery Museum officially opened in 1961 and came to full fruition through the tireless efforts of Sylvia Leith-Ross, a British expatriate who had followed her husband to Nigeria in 1907.<sup>170</sup> Though he died just one year later, Leith-Ross had fallen in love with the country and would devote the remainder of her long life to Nigeria. During her career she was the first female superintendent of education and an intelligence officer during World War II. She authored several books including *Practical West African Cookery; Fulani*; the seminal book *African Women; Nigerian Pottery*, covering her work with the Jos Museum; and her famous memoir *Stepping Stones*. Leith-Ross started a finishing school for Nigerian women, all before collecting pottery from across the country for the Jos Museum. In recognition of her work, particularly thanks to letters of recommendation from Fagg and Murray, she was honored with an MBE in 1966.<sup>171</sup>

While in Lagos visiting the newly opened National Museum, Fagg, who was about to take over as director, suggested that Leith-Ross come visit him in Jos. She eagerly accepted his invitation, assuming that it would be her last time.<sup>172</sup> Feeling nostalgic, she made the 850-mile journey, recalling the way in which her first journey through the country exactly 50 years before blended into this one. Her later journey over developed land was “superimposed” onto the landscape she had remembered, “mingling, dateless, one with the other. I no longer knew whether I was looking at today or at

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<sup>170</sup> For further information on her life and work see Sylvia Leith-Ross, *Stepping Stones: Memoirs of Colonial Nigeria 1907-1960* (London: Peter Owen, 1983) and a brief biography by Bernard Fagg, 1963, Footnote 2, 133.

<sup>171</sup> Letters by Murray in support of her nomination for Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire are housed in the archive of the National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.

<sup>172</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 153.

yesterday.”<sup>173</sup> She reached Jos and the hospitality of Fagg and his wife Catherine, who were ready with a guest room and a request that Leith-Ross return in October 1957 “as an unofficial voluntary helper” to build the pottery collection for the Jos Museum.<sup>174</sup>

Rackham suggests that Fagg was responding not only to Leith-Ross’s connections across the north and approachability, but also her longing to return to the country she loved.<sup>175</sup>

Arriving in Jos, Leith-Ross recalled in her memoir that

Jos seemed a foreign country, hard and empty after the soft and teeming South. I loved the Museum, my Director and his wife, the rest-house which the Museum had built for passing visitors and in which I lived. It was delightful to be between mud walls again after the cement (‘the only material which cannot be humanized’) of Lagos and the Public Works Department. All the same, I was a stranger in this unknown Plateau Province which never *felt* Nigerian.<sup>176</sup>

Nonetheless she began investigating pottery, which had previously received little notice.

With the help of volunteers Leith-Ross recruited, she collected first within a 60-mile radius of Jos and then from across the country, researching the potters and their methods.

Over three years, she acquired approximately 750 ceramics (figure 23).<sup>177</sup>

In 1961 the Jos Museum responded to her acquisitions as well as gifts from donors with a small exhibition space on the grounds, in addition to an actual structure with display shelves, which was developed by Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey Wimbush, from the forest department, and designed by Polish architect Zbigniew R. Dmochowski. There was also a space designed for a practicing potter on the premise. Moreover, Leith-Ross’s

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<sup>173</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 153.

<sup>174</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 155.

<sup>175</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>176</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 158.

<sup>177</sup> Fagg, 1963, Footnote 2, 133. Leith-Ross notes in particular the help of Victor Mtser from the Jos Museum, Roger Withers from VOS, her niece, Mary Ruxton, and Nicolas Hawkes from the Education Department. See Sylvia Leith-Ross, *Nigerian Pottery* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 15.

collection decorated the interiors of MOTNA (figure 24). Upon Leith-Ross's final night in Jos, Binta, a Jarawa potter hired by the Jos Museum, was firing nearly 50 pots nearby in a handmade kiln of grass and wood (figure 25).<sup>178</sup> By displaying the entire collection, the Jos Museum established "a comparative ethnographic exhibit and as a fairly complete type series of Nigerian pottery to assist in working out archaeological sequences of pottery style and decoration for various parts of the country."<sup>179</sup>

Leith-Ross continued to return to Jos until 1969 and watched the collection grow and the museum change. In the Postscript of her memoir she wrote:

It was not, after all, quite the end. I returned to the Jos Museum a number of times until 1969. The new section built to house the growing collection of pottery had been finished. A cool green garden where shallow tanks reflected light-leaved trees had been created. The whole had been surrounded by a mud-walled arcade with carved posts upholding the grass-thatched roof. The pots were of all kinds and from every part of the country, well over a thousand of them, smooth textures and springing forms, boldly flaring or softly curving lips, double handles on great heavy bodies. There were ornamental water-jars, gay in white and blue for a bride, or stately in burnished red-gold clay, a squat beaker all askew, tiny bowls for giving a sip of water to a child, the whole intimate home-life of Nigeria spread before one's eyes.<sup>180</sup>

Her work in Jos was complemented by and perfectly situated within the work of the department's architect, Dmochowski, who was designing the garden and the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture. Fagg described the Pottery Museum in his 1963 article as a space in which

120 carved Nupe verandah posts, have been successfully incorporated in the design and the walls have been used for further pottery displays, supported on wrought iron rings driven into mud walls. The rough mud

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<sup>178</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 172.

<sup>179</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

<sup>180</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 175.

texture has been found to be an ideal background for the hand-made pots as well as being extremely economical and adaptable.<sup>181</sup>

In addition to the museum itself, Leith-Ross's work also culminated into a book on Nigerian pottery, published in 1970 with a grant of £4,000 from the Ford Foundation.<sup>182</sup>

### **Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture.**

In addition to the Pottery Museum, Fagg envisioned a section of the museum demonstrating the extensive diversity of Nigerian architecture from the beginning. In 1948 he commissioned staff housing in the form of "a two-storeyed [G]anawuri hut on the rocks and a Tiv compound by the stream bank... To these were later added Birom, Ham (Jaba) and Jarawa compounds, which are also being lived in, and some remarkable Mada granaries."<sup>183</sup> The goal was to eventually build thirty structures in a range of styles from across the country.<sup>184</sup>

In February 1958 Dmochowski joined the department of antiquities.<sup>185</sup> Though charged with surveying the architecture of Nigeria, he first reconstructed Gidan Makama into a Museum in Kano. In 1959 Fagg sent a request to Dmochowski to create a pamphlet on Nigerian architecture. In Dmochowski's acceptance of the project (though with some trepidation), he suggests that the pamphlet serve as an introduction to a "more ambitious book and a larger volume" if he is "able to stay in Nigeria, as desired another three

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<sup>181</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

<sup>182</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Betty Murray, March 13, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. See Sylvia Leith-Ross, *Nigerian Pottery* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970).

<sup>183</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133. See also Bernard Fagg, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1957-58*, 2.

<sup>184</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

<sup>185</sup> Bernard E. B. Fagg to N. McClintock, Senior District Officer, Kano, on February 4, 1958. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive. He writes requesting an interpreter and driver upon Dmochowski's February 13<sup>th</sup> arrival in Kano for a quick tour Makama's House, the market, and the Kano Walls before he heads to Jos for his official appointment.

tours...”<sup>186</sup> His surveys were extensive, lasting from 1958 to 1965 and then again from 1972 to 1981.<sup>187</sup> During the interval, he established the Research Centre for Tropical Architecture at Gdansk University in Poland. Dmochowski conducted the survey with the help of Nigerian assistants, whom he trained. He compiled his research into a three-volume tome of traditional Nigerian architecture.<sup>188</sup> The series contains hundreds of architectural plans, sections, elevations, and photographs.

Dmochowski’s second major contribution to the antiquities department was designing the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA) at the Jos Museum. The mission of MOTNA was to “preserve for posterity the great achievements of Nigerian architects. Architecture is one of the basic elements of every nation’s heritage. Thus all over the world conservation of architectural monuments is regarded as a cardinal issue in preserving national culture.”<sup>189</sup> Fagg had acquired the Jos golf course in the hope of creating such an open-air exhibit.

The Ford Foundation offered a £60,000 scheme to build MOTNA provided the department of antiquities and the education ministry contribute a portion of the funds.<sup>190</sup> The construction began in 1973 and was under Dmochowski’s supervision until 1976, when Alhaji Baba Galadima took over his position. Dmochowski hired regional workers to build each of the displays and brought all the building materials to Jos from the site of the original buildings, ensuring that they would be fully authentic examples of the style.

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<sup>186</sup> Zbigniew Dmochowski to Bernard E. B. Fagg at the Jos Museum, October 31, 1959. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archives.

<sup>187</sup> R. O. Rom Kalilu. “Review: An Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture, Volume 2,” *Nigerian Heritage* 5 (1996), 150.

<sup>188</sup> Zbigniew R. Dmochowski, *An Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture*, (Lagos: The national Commission for museums and Monuments, 1990).

<sup>189</sup> Okechukwu Njoku, *25 Years of the Jos Musuem* (Jos: National Museum, Jos, Nigeria, 1978), 43.

<sup>190</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Betty Murray, June 7, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

MOTNA opened in 1978. As illustrated in figure 26 the MOTNA exhibits covered the grounds of the Jos Museum. They were arranged geographically, allowing visitors to travel through Nigeria via its diverse architecture. The entrance to the museum was bordered by a partial, scale replica of the Kano Wall (figure 27). Other full-scale replicas include the Katsina Palace, the Afin Akure, the Ile Orisa Ikire shrine from Ife, an Igbo Mbari Shrine House from Owerri, the Ilorin Mosque and the old Zaria Mosque, a Rubuka compound, Nwaokator Omili's House, Nimo, Uno Nkpo, Nibo, Awka, Chief Ogbua's Compound, Onitsha-Umuaroli, Ndi Ezera Temple, Ohafia, a Madan and a Tiv village. Not all of the buildings are just for show. The Bight of Benin, the museum canteen, is a replica of a Benin palace (and a play on the word "bite," while referencing the bay on the Nigerian coast), and the student and staff quarters are reproductions of Tiv huts.

### **Jos Zoo and Botanical Gardens.**

As described earlier, Fagg envisioned more than a simple museum and he acquired as much land as possible, in order to give himself the flexibility to expand. One such expansion project came entirely out of necessity. In December 1955 Fagg and his wife opened the Jos Museum Zoo. Fagg needed to use the land in order to keep it and a zoo would utilize a significant portion of the property. Rackham recalls that they acquired animals because people would hunt and then they would find a baby, which they would bring to Fagg. Catherine Fagg raised the baby animals.<sup>191</sup> In June 1960 the zoo had swelled to the point that they needed more support. Thus, the Northern Region Government, together with the Federal Government, funded the Zoological Society of

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<sup>191</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.



Jos. Fagg pushed for a zoo that would reflect the natural surroundings and take into account the landscape – the three granite hills, the outcrops, and the two streams on the grounds. The cages were not severe, but used local materials to help them “blend well with the landscape.”<sup>192</sup> By the time Fagg wrote his seminal article on the museums in Nigeria in 1963, the Jos Museum Zoo retained 140 animals and 47 different species, such as a “leopard, cheetah, warthog, many species of antelope and monkey, large birds, chimpanzees, baboon, the smaller cats, two giant desert tortoises, turtles and terrapins.”<sup>193</sup> There were also lions, and a pond full of crocodiles each visitor had to pass over on the entrance bridge.<sup>194</sup>

Today the zoo is in disrepair with few remaining animals. However, Professor Frank Willett, who worked as a surveyor and curator under Fagg wrote of the zoo:

yes, the Jos Zoo was one of your most brilliant ideas. You managed to get a large area of land assigned to the Department, but were in danger of losing it if it was not obviously in use. So you made a zoo, with some very generous paddocks. A wise decision, for the zoo became more popular than the Museum with the Europeans, who still held power. The Museum was far more popular with the Nigerians. Now those paddocks have provided the basis for a large Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture, which you had initiated by erecting traditional buildings in the zoo and around the Museum.<sup>195</sup>

Another element to the museum project that Fagg imagined was the development of a botanical garden. Initially in 1945, Fagg proposed the gardens and arboretum in order to secure more land. It was not until autumn 1961 that the Nigerian Botanical Gardens was approved by the Federal Council of Ministers and financial support was

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<sup>192</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133-134.

<sup>193</sup> Fagg, 1963, footnote 3, 134.

<sup>194</sup> Sidney Kasfir, personal correspondence with the author, May 14, 2013.

<sup>195</sup> Frank Willett, “To Bernard Fagg on His Seventieth Brithday,” *African Arts* 19, no. 3 (1986), 74. The zoo was also popular among young Nigerian boys.

provided as well as support from the department of agricultural research.<sup>196</sup> He hoped there would be provision for a stage for outdoor performances of dances and masquerades. Though Fagg would not see its completion before he left Nigeria for his post at the Pitt Rivers Museum, he began plans for finishing a natural amphitheatre created by an outcrop of granite.<sup>197</sup>

### **The Technological Museum.<sup>198</sup>**

Fagg's museum vision was spontaneous; he developed the Jos Museum Complex as opportunities emerged. Accordingly, as trains and automobiles were discontinued he began to build a technological museum. The mining leases doubled between 1911 and 1913 because the government had begun building the Bauchi Light Railway, connecting the Plateau mines with the mainline that went to the coast.<sup>199</sup> When the Railway closed in 1957, two locomotives, three carriages, rolling stock, station signs, and a length of track were gifted to the museum by the board of the Nigerian Railway Corporation.<sup>200</sup> To complement the train exhibit, Fagg also collected automobiles, a traction engine, and machinery used in mining.<sup>201</sup> As Fagg's tenure as director of the department of antiquities came to an end in 1963, he was laying down the track and preparing to convert the trains

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<sup>196</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

<sup>197</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134.

<sup>198</sup> In addition to the technological museum, Bernard Fagg envisioned a "rolling museum," a touring museum made of a converted railway coach that would travel to towns along the Nigerian Railway as well as a mobile museum funded by UNESCO and the Department of antiquities to travel throughout the country by road. See Fagg, 1963, page 135.

<sup>199</sup> Njoku, 1978, 13. The name, Bauchi Light, came from the origin of the train, the Bauchi Plateau, now called the Jos Plateau and Light from its use of 30 inch-narrow gauge rail.

<sup>200</sup> Bernard Fagg, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1957-58*, 6. See also Fagg, 1963, 134, footnote 4.

<sup>201</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134.

into galleries about mining and land transport.<sup>202</sup> Fagg hoped for much more than a static exhibition of trains. In the early 1960s he began to think about developing a roving museum on train carriages that would go from place to place. The department of antiquities could not justify building museums where there was nothing to preserve, so a traveling museum would bring lots of works and information to people without setting up regional museums, which just was not possible.<sup>203</sup> The roving museum was left unrealized as Fagg left Nigeria, but remains a powerful example of his determination to evaluate and address the needs of the country.

### **UNESCO Training School and AMAT-MATA.**

Perhaps, among Fagg's most important contributions to the department of antiquities is the establishment of the Association des Musées en Afrique Tropicale-Museums Association of Tropical Africa in 1961 and the UNESCO museum training school.<sup>204</sup> UNESCO held a seminar on museum development and education in Jos and Lagos from August 24 to September 18, 1964.<sup>205</sup> Ekpo Eyo presented the material on museums in Nigeria based on Fagg's 1963 article in *Museum*.<sup>206</sup> The conference outlined what a museum needed to accomplish and the position of the director. It also discussed the possibilities of the training school, emphasizing that collaboration among the museums would be a key to their success.<sup>207</sup> If the museum was a center for education, it

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<sup>202</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134.

<sup>203</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>204</sup> See for example, Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze, "Training in African museums: the role of the Centre for Museum Studies, Jos," *Museum*, no. 156 (1987), 278-280.

<sup>205</sup> See Gessain, 1965. Seventeen African countries participated from across the continent.

<sup>206</sup> Gessain, 1965, 8.

<sup>207</sup> Gessain, 1965, 12.

needed to focus its attention on research, but if they developed research, they had a moral obligation to pass the results onto their public.<sup>208</sup>

The training school opened in 1964 as a pilot program jointly sponsored by UNESCO and the Nigerian Federal Government. Because there was no program like it anywhere in the world, UNESCO insisted that it be bilingual (with all written material translated into Hausa as well) to accommodate students from all over Francophone and Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa. Initially they accepted approximately 20 students, no more than a quarter of which would be Nigerian.<sup>209</sup> The school, located behind the museum on the Jos Museum complex, was begun in January 1963 and contained laboratories, workshops, classrooms, a darkroom, and offices. A canteen was built in the design of a Benin nobleman's house; all structures at the site had views of the surrounding hillside, the golf course and the Jos Hill Station.<sup>210</sup> Student accommodations were provided and replicated Tiv huts, and were decorated with traditional cloths.<sup>211</sup>

Murray and Fagg worked tirelessly to train museum technicians before a formal school was established. As early as 1951, Murray was writing home and describing the practical training the antiquities section was providing. While preparing the museum at Ife,

Fagg, Langton and the six musuem [sic] students arrived...the students went to the museum. Wed we went to the musuem [sic] and 3xamined [sic] the carvings and selected about a dozen or so for treatment at Jos and got wood from the sawmill to make boexs [sic] for them. Some of the pieces I had sent from Ibadan to Jos were brought back. It was astonishing

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<sup>208</sup> Gessain, 1965, 13-14.

<sup>209</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134. Footnote 5 on page 134 says that the program would "be financed under the Regional Programme of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA)."

<sup>210</sup> Fagg, 1963, 135.

<sup>211</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg's daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

how much their treatment had improved them. We spent the after noon also at the museum.<sup>212</sup>

The idea for a training school was more formally developed at a 1961 conference in Livingstone, Zambia, the same conference in which AMAT-MATA was created. UNESCO would supply instructors, student fellowships, and any necessary equipment.<sup>213</sup> The UNESCO-provided teachers would come to Nigeria on contract, while the principal was a permanent position.<sup>214</sup> Students would receive training to become technicians in a variety of subjects from conservation and documentation to exhibition and preparator work. As Murray expressed from the beginning of the antiquities survey, there was a need for trained Nigerians to assist him in his mission. What he and Fagg also established early on was their goal of a Nigerian director of the department of antiquities. Fagg explained that “the instruction in the training centre will cover certain aspects of museum administration, particularly documentation, but it is in no sense a curator’s course. The bulk of training will be in conservation techniques, display design, moulding of replicas and all possible aspects of audio-visual documentation.”<sup>215</sup> Students needed their O levels or Baccalaureate and the course would last nine months, followed by three months of practical experience in a museum.

The more complex positions, such as curator and director positions, required different training; the hope was to establish a curatorial component to the school as well (which has since been developed). At a UNESCO conference held in Nigeria in 1964, an

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<sup>212</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 23, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>213</sup> Gessain, 1965, 17.

<sup>214</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

<sup>215</sup> Fagg, 1963, 135.

evaluation of the course under the assistant directorship of Ekpo Eyo was made by Robert Gessain, anthropologist and vice president of UNESCO:

Thus the problems of training museographers, technicians, research workers and museum directors should solve themselves rapidly but they will remain complicated in Africa as long as the shortage of qualified people makes it necessary to appoint, as museum directors, teachers and technicians who have no training in museography. The course at Jos, intended for technicians who cannot be given a research training, will also have to serve for future museum directors for another few years, just as this Seminar has included both. While hoping that this situation will rapidly improve, we must strive to broaden the horizons of future African museographers in preparation for all that will be expected of them. It is, of course, highly desirable that some of the technicians, acquiring the necessary scientific knowledge and methods, should eventually become research workers.<sup>216</sup>

The UNESCO training school was last thing Fagg did before he left with Hiroshi Daifuku, chief of the UNESCO monuments and sites division.

In addition to establishing a training school, UNESCO supported a program for potters, building a two-chamber down-draught wood-fired kiln, built with local materials and capable of firing at 1,265° centigrade. The goal was to provide a facility for alumni of Michael Cardew's Pottery Training Centre at Abuja. To fit within the aesthetic of the Jos Museum, the studios were built in the Habe Hause style and the kiln would replicate Nupe architecture. In addition to this, Buji blacksmiths were employed to demonstrate traditional techniques and at the recommendation of Leith-Ross, a Jawara potter was employed to create earthenware vessels.<sup>217</sup>

## **Conclusion.**

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<sup>216</sup> Gessain, 1965, 18.

<sup>217</sup> Fagg, 1963, 134.

The Jos Museum was truly a museological experiment. Fagg and his wife Catherine built the complex from nothing and continued to expand it in order to meet the needs of Jos and Nigeria. They pushed the boundaries of what a museum complex looked like – a particular feat when their closest model was the British Museum. Rather, the museum center began to look more like city parks in the United States, in particular Forest Park in Saint Louis, Missouri. Located on the site of the 1904 World's Fair, Forest Park is home to the Saint Louis Art Museum, the zoo, a golf course, a restaurant, the Municipal Theatre Association (the “Muny”), a lake, and a greenhouse called the Jewel Box, all in the heart of the city. Just like Forest Park, the Jos Museum Complex aimed to serve residents and tourists alike. Perhaps Fagg continued to expand outward because he found little support to renovate the existing galleries. Indeed, the department of antiquities redirected their funds to build museum services across Nigeria – particularly in Lagos. Funding to renovate the antiquities galleries was provided in 1962 and was used to employ local craftsmen and workers.<sup>218</sup> Fagg lived in Jos until the end of his tenure as director in 1963, when he took up a curatorial post at the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University. He would return to Jos once more to conduct archaeological work in 1967, and once again it was a family affair. His daughter, Angela, would take up a post with the department of antiquities, where she would work until 1976. There remained a strong archaeological and acquisition mission at Jos. The collection of Nok terracottas such as the head with pierced eyes (figure 28), discovered in 1954, was supplemented with masks, such as an Ikpa mask (figure 29) and sculptures, such as the Afo maternity figure (figure 30).

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<sup>218</sup> Fagg, 1963, 133.

### The Nigerian Museum, Lagos (1957)

The Jos Museum was a 20-year project that resulted in a multi-part, multi-function institution. Fagg, who saw the Jos Museum through almost every phase of its expansion was incredibly budget-conscious and sought out innovative ways to address the needs of the constituents in a changing country. The National Museum, Lagos, also took approximately 20 years from the time it was conceived until its opening in 1957. Much of that time, however, was clouded by bureaucratic speed bumps, a lack of funding, and, compared to the determined pragmatism of Fagg, was unproductive.

Upon the completion of this museum project, the National Museum, Lagos, Murray reflected in his “History of the Nigerian Museum,”

was not the outcome of a deliberate, carefully considered plan, but a result of its history and of local circumstances. The idea of a museum was not a planned act of the government or part of its programme but the result of pressure on a reluctant and uninterested succession of officials by a few individuals in the Education Department and the Administrative Service supported by a few influential people in England. The officials were at a disadvantage because their independent attitude and agitation could arouse the annoyance of their seniors, as both I and especially Duckworth at times did. There was no independent local public opinion because the number of educated Nigerians was extremely small, and of course very few indeed of those know even a little about museums. Through steady pressure the Government, represented by expatriate officials, gave way slowly and as they gave way so did the amount of money for building a museum slowly increase. If the museum had been a subject of a complete, foreseen plan, instead of having to grow up piecemeal, it might have had a better, and more economical design.”<sup>219</sup>

Though Murray had been thinking about a large central museum in Lagos since 1936, the first plans for the museum were presented at a conference on museum policy in

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<sup>219</sup> Kenneth Murray, “Draft and Notes for a History of the Nigerian Museum,” (unpublished memoir, Kenneth Murray papers at the National Museum, Lagos, n.d.), 9.



summer 1948.<sup>220</sup> To the frustration of Murray, the finance committee rejected the plans due to the cost of storage and offices in early 1949. According to Fagg the proposal was “not adequate enough for the intended scope of the museum and new sketches and plans were drawn out. These too were subjected to modification and it was not until December, 1953, that work on the present buildings was commenced.”<sup>221</sup> This said, the site in the King George V Park, next to what is today the Tafawa Balewa Square racetrack, was reserved for the museum. In order to hold on to this prime location “it was stipulated that any building there would have to be of a permanent nature. It was therefore planned to erect on part of the available ground the storage and workshop accommodation of the final permanent museum.” The funding, however, was not reapproved, so construction was postponed.<sup>222</sup>

Initially, like the Jos Museum, Murray envisioned that the National Museum, Lagos would play multiple cultural functions. He hoped to employ a musicologist to conduct surveys of Nigerian music.<sup>223</sup> He also knew that in order to make the project appealing to the colonial government he would have to include a library. Indeed,

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<sup>220</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 5. See also Fagg, *Preserving the Past*, 1961, 7.

<sup>221</sup> Fagg, *Preserving the Past*, 1961, 7. See also Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1. Murray’s letters are filled with statements about the progress and disappointment of a central museum in Lagos. After Malins proposed a design that would connect it with the Lagos Library, the subsequent architect Jack, prepared new plans. All the while, the estimate was rising, moving further from the £10,000 in which the Jos Museum was built and closer to the final cost of £100,000 it eventually took to open the National Museum, Lagos. For examples see: Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, November 4, 1951, January 20, 1952, and May 25, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>222</sup> Murray, *Annual Report on Antiquities for the year 1948*, 1. “A plan was made for a building for which the estimated cost, including £3,000 for air conditioning, was £14,000. The £2,500, however, was not revoted in the new financial year and there is little prospect of getting any building in the near future.” See also Kenneth C. Murray to Kate M. Murray, February 8, 1948. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>223</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Bernard E. B. Fagg, May 14, 1945. KCM Papers, National Museum, Lagos Archive.

combining the efforts of the library and the museum was Murray's plan to get the museum built:

I was rather amused by the meeting with the Lagos library committee as the Deputy Financial Sect. is on the library committee and he therefore has to smoeewhat [sic] contradict the previous attitudes in order to admit that there is money to build the library. Since it must be built by April 1953 that gives a date for the completion of the musuem [sic]. One snag may be that the architect proposes to build it sepaarte [sic] from the musuem [sic] which would only link up with it after future development. It could thus be built without the musuem [sic]. I discussed the museum plans thoroughly with [the architect] Malins and feel a bit happier about them.<sup>224</sup>

Malins designed, according to Murray, the "museum including the Lagos Library."<sup>225</sup>

The designs, however, were actually for the Lagos Library including the museum. The National Museum that Murray envisioned was actually a library with a gallery space.

Though Murray never intended to be affiliated with the National Library, he did hope that the National Museum would also act as a research facility. It took years before the plans no longer called the museum the Lagos Library. Murray's plan to build the museum, once again, were thwarted.

Finally in August of 1952 Murray began to work with a new architect. He met architect Jack in Jos. Murray wanted him to see the Jos Museum

as there are various pints [sic] that should help with the Lagos Musuem [sic]. We have also had various discussions on the Lagos Musuem [sic] and clered ip [sic] various details. I have had models made of two of the three galleries and have been trying to work out the arrangement and types of exhibit cases. Now have come to the conclusion that one gallery should be split into two and that several doors in it should be closed and the one gallery air-conditioned. I expect this will mean rather a tussle with Jack, but he may have good reasons to support his plan, as he probably is rather

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<sup>224</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, November 4, 1951. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>225</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, January 20, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. At this point the cost of the museum was £50,000 – a big difference from the initial cost and the final cost of opening the Jos Museum at £10,000.

keen on the present design of the room, especially the openings. But as at present planned it will be difficult to put much in it.

Murray also wanted Jack to see the museum in the evening because “the lighting is another problem I am working on. The Jos Museum has some faults in its lighting arrangements, which I hope to avoid at Lagos.”<sup>226</sup> Murray was adamant about certain issues, particularly lighting, the display cases, storage, and, the biggest challenge, air conditioning – an expense the colonial office found completely unjustifiable.

Not only did Murray have trouble receiving financial support and approval for his plans, but he also struggled to maintain his residence. Colonial officers were transferred to different residences often, usually in accordance with their leave. Once they were no longer occupying a house, it could be reassigned. For many officers this was no problem, but for Murray and Fagg their homes doubled as storage facilities for their ever-expanding collections.

In Lagos I hared [sic] fresh reports of the attack on my house here. The ground behind is being cleared of trees preparatory to building a canning factory. They want this house and my other store into which I have now moved several thousands pounds worth of Benin bronzes. It is nevertheless rather worrying as I am inclined to think that if nothing suitable is given me in exchange I had better retire and have been composing a letter to the Minister to warn him of this in the hope that he may fight to get some suitable place near the future museum.<sup>227</sup>

At one point, while Murray was on leave, the Fagg family left their own home to occupy Murray’s home in Ibadan in order ensure that his collection would not simply be thrown away.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, August 24, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>227</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Harold Murray, December 11, 1952. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>228</sup> Angela Fagg Rackham (former archaeologist for the Department of antiquities and Bernard Fagg’s daughter) in discussion with the author, June 25, 2012.

Beyond maintaining his presence in the colonial office, which was much more concerned with a looming Nigerian independence, Murray struggled to get the museum plans and the funding approved at the same moment. Finally, in March, 1957 the National Museum, Lagos (figure 31), at a cost of almost £100,000, nearly 20 times the expected costs in the early 1940s, was opened to the public. Sylvia Leith-Ross wrote of the early weeks:

the Nigerian Museum was duly opened and was at once thronged by enthusiastic crowds. That some of the enthusiasm was aroused by the ingenious lighting, the varied-coloured walls, the gleaming show-cases rather than by the exhibits themselves, was no matter. It was good to know that at least a portion of the country's treasures was in safe-keeping and that in time their place in the stream of the world's beauty would be recognized by the Nigerians themselves.<sup>229</sup>

Leith-Ross had known Murray for 30 years and admired his dedication to Nigeria.

The location was crucial to its success; as originally planned, the museum was built in the King George V Memorial Park, “situated between the race-course and Magazine Point in the most attractive corner of Lagos Island, and is thus close to most of the important government buildings, the Prime Minister’s residence and State House.”<sup>230</sup>

Murray secured nearly three acres in the heart of Lagos Island. As of 2013 the museum had not changed much from its opening in 1957, though it was renovated in 1960. The entry is two stories: the first storey is open to the courtyard; the second storey originally contained a gallery and offices and overlooks the courtyard (figure 32). There is an open corridor that surrounds the five-sided courtyard with a grass lawn and provides entry to the galleries. This corridor contained display cases for objects and spaces for didactic

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<sup>229</sup> Leith-Ross, 1983, 153.

<sup>230</sup> Fagg, 1963, 125.

material. Several of the display cases are inset with curved glass to prevent any glare – one of the 1960 additions.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, Fagg installed lighting within the vitrines,

which makes the exhibits look their best in the early evening, when daylight begins to fail. For this reason this part of the museum with its attractive grounds and courtyard, has been found very suitable for very important federal government evening receptions such as those held in honour of visiting Heads of State.<sup>232</sup>

At the time of its opening, the Lagos museum had three galleries, only one of which was air-conditioned. Murray finally had a space to exhibit his collections of antiquities and traditional art and he designed the display to follow a typographical model like the Pitt Rivers Museum in the lower galleries and the geographical model of the British Museum in the top gallery. While it was possible to exhibit less than ten percent of his entire collection, much of what was displayed was the repatriated Benin brass and ivory work that had been so difficult to acquire from collections abroad.<sup>233</sup> Also on display were carvings in wood and other “works of art in perishable organic materials,” the collection of which was unique to the National Museum, Lagos.<sup>234</sup>

There are six air-conditioned stores located in the back of the building, embedded among further offices, workshops, and the library, none of which is publically accessible, but this was a later arrangement.<sup>235</sup> Originally, these facilities were open to the courtyard,

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<sup>231</sup> Fagg, 1963, 126. footnote 1: E. Pollard and Co., Limited. Landed cost per sheet of curved plate glass: about £75. Though these cases to prevent glare, one can only view the contents from the front; from any other point of view the objects contained are distorted.

<sup>232</sup> Fagg, 1963, 126.

<sup>233</sup> Fagg, 1963, 126. For further description, see also Fagg, *Preserving the Past*, 1961, 8.

<sup>234</sup> Fagg, 1963, 126.

<sup>235</sup> As I noted earlier, finding approval to equip the National Museum, Lagos with air-conditioning was one of Murray’s biggest battles. Today, though the galleries are air-conditioned, the storage facilities, based on my visit in May and June 2012, do not appear to be. Though the curator said they were, there is only electricity for no more than four hours a day, prohibiting any sort of climate control. The original Library was the Lagos lending library, which intended to move into its own quarters, and supposedly freeing further gallery space for the museum. The museum library contains, not only an extensive collection of volumes about African history, art, and anthropology – primarily from donations and Murray’s own

which was well-situated for the curator who could oversee everything that was going on at the museum, but, as Fagg notes, “the psychological effect on visitors was found to be disturbing, since they felt that more than half of the building was denied to them while they had tantalizing glimpses of uniformed technicians carrying out interesting tasks across the courtyard.”<sup>236</sup> Thus Fagg commissioned a new gallery lined with vitrines to be built blocking the offices, laboratories, and storage and providing remote access to these services for staff.

This also allowed for further exhibition space and Fagg, always in pursuit of accommodating the public, lined the exterior walls with carved doors, drums, and verandah posts that were exposed. This allowed the visitors “to satisfy the natural desire to touch specimens, and experience has shown that these have suffered no damage. There has been no case of vandalism.”<sup>237</sup>

Upon its opening in spring, 1957, Murray retired from the department of antiquities. He would remain an active presence in Lagos and at the museum, taking on the role of interim director from 1964-1967. Fagg was promoted to director and treated the National Museum, Lagos with the same experimental spirit he did the Jos Museum, proposing to complete the musicological studio and an aquarium.<sup>238</sup> Fagg, who was always attentive to visitor numbers, also began to appoint curators to each of the established museums. John Picton arrived in Lagos in 1961 and took on the curatorial duties of the National Museum. Weekly attendance at the National Museum averaged

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collection – it also held the Surveyors’ index card, recording the collections and the ethnographic survey conducted from 1943 through the present.

<sup>236</sup> Fagg, 1963, 126-127.

<sup>237</sup> Fagg, 1963, 127.

<sup>238</sup> Fagg, 1963, 127.

about 1,500 visitors.<sup>239</sup> Picton said that the museum was always full of people in Lagos and in Jos. He found a particular constituency in women, which he attributed to their being able to see, for the first time, forbidden objects. There was also a natural interest in cultural history.<sup>240</sup> At this point, there was no educational policy within the museum. The practice of museology was just being developed and educational programming in the British Museum would only be initiated under the direction of John Pope Hennessy in the 1970s.

Until the 1960s, Murray was the primary collector for the national collection. He did, however, engage a few specialists to help him build areas of the collection. For example, Cardew, the potter, who had worked at Achimota and in Abuja, was appointed to collect pots during his travels.<sup>241</sup> Father Kevin Carroll was also an active collector for the national collection.<sup>242</sup>

### Expansion of the Department of antiquities

The department of antiquities continued to find provisions for more regional institutions. Often the department occupied government offices, rather than building a new institution. For example, The Kaduna Museum exhibited visual material from northern Nigeria in the offices of the Premier of Kaduna. In Argungu, the department developed an exhibition space in a traditional Hausa home, creating Kanta's Museum.<sup>243</sup> The department continued to expand, today boasting 23 museums with galleries, 13

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<sup>239</sup> Bernard Fagg, *Annual Report of the Antiquities Service, 1957-58*, 2.

<sup>240</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum Lagos and Professor of Art History at the School of Oriental and African Studies), in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012.

<sup>241</sup> Michael Cardew, "Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends," ed. Frank Willett *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 75.

<sup>242</sup> Kevin Carroll. "Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends," ed. Frank Willett *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973), 75.

<sup>243</sup> Fagg, 1963, 131.

museums without galleries, two world heritage sites, and numerous protected monuments. The following chapter will outline the events of the 1960s and consider the NCMM today.



## CHAPTER 5

### MUSEUMS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES AFTER NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE

The primary focus of this study is the development of the department of antiquities in the 1940s and the effects of its work, which unfolded throughout the 1950s. As outlined in the previous three chapters, such accomplishments included the establishment of six of the seven museums, the passing of the Antiquities Ordinance in 1953, the institutionalization of the department in 1958, developing archaeological protocol, and supporting excavations throughout the country. These two decades saw incredible growth and established the foundation of cultural preservation for the subsequent five decades.

The museums were the public face of the department's efforts. Indeed, by the early 1960s, Nigerian museums were known on an international stage. In his article "Museums of West Africa," published in 1962, John Davis Hatch, the former director of the Norfolk Virginia museum writes with surprise that in the Nigerian museums in Lagos, Ife, and Jos,

the arrangement and display of ethno-historic materials are not only excellent by Western standards, but favorably comparable with our best medium-sized museums. The collections are well-housed in specially designed museum buildings, for the most part, and the material shown is

very intelligently labeled. Here are museums which would be well worth visiting anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

Hatch seemed amazed to find such fine institutions. This decade following independence mirrored, in many ways, the 1940s. Rather than opening new museums, the department of antiquities sought to reorganize internally, repair the buildings, strengthen collections, and focus on excavations.

The sixties saw the development of art programs and increased interest in contemporary art.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the decade saw an incredible amount of collecting and activity due to an increased presence of the Peace Corps, the American volunteer service, which saw many young assistants such as Perkins Foss, Anita Glaze, and Philip Peek and, the British equivalent, the Volunteer Service Overseas, which brought Anna Craven and Jill Salmons.<sup>3</sup> The sixties also saw an immense amount of destruction, caused primarily by the Civil War, which began in 1967. The Oron Museum saw the most devastation to the building, which was occupied by soldiers. The collection was also decimated and only a fraction survived. This chapter will consider the department of antiquities in the 1960s, the official transfer to the first Nigerian director, Dr. Ekpo Eyo, and will briefly consider the developments after the Civil War.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Davis Hatch, "Museums of West Africa," *Museum News* (September 1962), 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> In July 1969 the Nigerian National Museum Society was founded in Lagos; the Jos Society was founded three years later.

<sup>3</sup> Salmons later received a Commonwealth Scholarship attached to the University of Nsukka allowing her to complete fieldwork amongst the Ibibio (Jill Salmons, personal correspondence with the author, May 4, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> There is a significant lack of material concerning the Department of antiquities in the 1960s. According to Angela Rackham, when she returned to Jos in 1988, the museums said that the catalogues and archived material had been damaged by water, so there was no record of the history of the museums. Indeed, there was little archival material pertaining to the developments in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Therefore, this chapter is based largely on interviews conducted by the author and Kenneth Murray's letters to his sister Betty, currently housed in the West Sussex Records Office.

By independence in October 1960 there were full-time curators coming from Britain and the United States. But, the department of antiquities was hoping to turn power over to the first Nigerian director. In fall 1961, John Picton arrived from the British Museum, having worked with William Fagg, and was appointed as curator of the National Museum, Lagos taking over from Dr. A. S. Lospaschich. Murray did not envy Picton's task; he had to organize the stores, which he felt were left in disarray after John S. Boston's time in the museum. Indeed, Picton noted that even today it is impossible to distinguish Murray's research from that of subsequent surveyors because the catalogue system did not provide space to identify the collector.<sup>5</sup> Murray was enlisted to assist in reorganizing the records; in return for his help, Fagg offered Murray a daily rate.<sup>6</sup>

The primary goal for the department of antiquities after independence was to turn over the directorship to a Nigerian. This was no simple task. The intention seemed to be to train Liman Ciroma, the most senior African in the department and acting deputy director in 1962, during the last years of Fagg's tenure as director. When he completed his degree in England and returned to Nigeria, however, he resigned to take up another government post.<sup>7</sup> The department hoped to give the first directorship to someone from

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<sup>5</sup> John Picton (former curator at the National Museum, Lagos and Professor in the Department of the History of Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies) in discussion with the author, May 16, 2012. See also Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, January 6, 1962 (mislabelled as 1961). Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In this letter he states: "These photographs[sic] I had originally put in numbered envelopes according to their source. EG photos by G.I. Jones. Photos of works in Liverpool Museum[sic]. Photos of works on sale at Sothebys, By Mrs Beasley etc. Boston however had obliterated the numbers and put the envelopes into drawers, one lot exhibitions and another something else, but no system. I was going[sic] back to my original idea, reinstating[sic] the numbers and making an index when I now decided to rearrange the contents under subjects. Benin bronzes, Ife, Ibo carvings etc and disregard the source and photographer. I think this will make them handier and will reduce the indexing."

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, January 6, 1962 (mislabelled as 1961). Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, April 15, 1961. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

northern Nigeria, but after Liman Ciroma, no one was deemed qualified. Murray explained

as there are so few educated Northerners, and he has a degree, the PM North wanted him. He will be a great loss but there is the satisfaction on the other hand that Ekpo Eyo is now likeley [sic] to [be] the future Director, a southerner who may revive the Lagos musuem [sic] and who can made [sic] the HQ once more in Lagos.<sup>8</sup>

In this passage, Murray alludes to his frustration that the National Museum, Lagos had been neglected by Fagg and his sentiment that the Headquarters should be in Lagos rather than Jos.

Though it seemed that the twenty years of work would have allowed for an easy transition into the 1960s and an independent Nigeria museum system, it was not entirely smooth. In fact, it was a struggle to create a leadership transition, the museums were not well maintained, and the Civil War, which began in July 1967 and lasted two and a half years, caused an incredible amount of destruction to the collections all over Nigeria and the buildings in the war area.<sup>9</sup>

Maintaining, managing, and expanding the museums were not the only tasks occupying the department. The 1960s brought new challenges in terms of the export of antiquities. The first, as reported in the annual report from 1960,

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<sup>8</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, April 21, 1961. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>9</sup> Contemporary Nigerian art also found new avenues of support. The Department of Art and Printing at the Yaba College of Technology was begun by Paul Mount in 1952, but expanded when Yusuf Grillo joined in 1962. The Zaria Art Society, formed before independence by Uche Okeke and Bruce Onobrakpeya among others, was increasingly influential. Furthermore, in the 1960s Afi Ekong, Nora Majekodunmi, and Aduke Morore founded the Federal Society of Arts and Humanities with the goal of building a contemporary art collection and the National Arts Gallery. Though they received support from the Ford Foundation, they were unable to find a feasible location, so the project fell through. From 1961-1967 Ekong was also the secretary and art manager of the Nigerian Arts Council (renamed the National Council for Arts and Culture). I think these organization were in response to the lack of support from the Department of antiquities, but also reinforced their mission to deal exclusively with antiquities. Fagg attempted to collaborate with the Federal Society of Arts and Humanities to create a museum complex in Lagos, but was unable to see the project through.

was the arrest and subsequent prosecution of Traore Mohamed, a dealer in antiquities, on a charge of receiving stolen property (some of the Ekpū ancestor figures mission from the Oron Museum). He was convicted and sentenced to 2 ½ years imprisonment with hard labour. The case involved bringing a witness all the way from Switzerland together with the exhibit. This specimen was detained by the court for return to the Oron Museum and the owner, who lives in Paris, compensated by the Federal Government. There were also successful prosecutions in Benin City of people found in possession of antiquities stolen from shrines.<sup>10</sup>

For the department of antiquities, this was a major coup that set a precedent for the apprehension and prosecution of smugglers.

The department was strongly enforcing the export laws it had fought to pass in 1953. Murray recounts a collection of around 1,000 masks apprehended from a German dealer at customs.<sup>11</sup> The dealer had acquired the work in just ten days and Fagg, Murray, and Lospaschich had the task of going through the work and deciding what to do with the collection:

Fagg wants to [dispose] of a large part- and rightly I think- and had got Lopischich [sic] to make the selection, but subsequently was not happy about it. I of course find myself as usual at a difference with Fagg, for (a) I don't think the collection should be dispersed in such a rush as never again will there be such an accumulation of masks of particular types which would provide valuable mater [sic] for scientific examination, nor do I agree with the objection of dispersal, by sale to visitors for the celebrations (hence the rush).<sup>12</sup>

Though the antiquities ordinance was passed seven years earlier, there was little consensus on how to handle confiscated material.

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<sup>10</sup> Bernard Fagg, *Department of antiquities Annual Report 1958-1962* (1960), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Boris Kegel-Konietzko to which I think he refers to later in the letter. Though he misspells the dealer's name, this incident corresponds to the gallery's collecting trip through West Africa.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, September 15, 1960. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Though there was little evidence further substantiating this event, in this same letter, as will be described later in the chapter, Murray indicates that this confiscation was of the Keigal collection. Perhaps, this was a misspelling and Murray was referring to the well-known gallery Kegel Konietzko Exotische Kunst, run by Lore Kegel and her son Boris Kegel-Konietzko. It is documented that they went on extensive collecting trips in West Africa from 1957-1959.

### Kenneth C. Murray's Retirement

Kenneth Murray retired from colonial service when the National Museum, Lagos opened in 1957. He remained in Lagos, appealed to the ministry of tourism to increase interest, and spent time with the fishermen – going out to sea with them and fighting for their rights.<sup>13</sup> He built a home at Tarkwa Bay and continued organizing his papers, working in the library at the National Museum, Lagos, and writing his memoir. In spite of turning his life's work over to his trusted partner, Bernard Fagg, Murray hardly remained quiet. Rather, he was highly active in and close to the activities of the department he built. Fagg had moved the headquarters to his home in Jos and continued to push for museums, repatriation, archaeological excavation, and proper export regulations. His contributions should not be diminished; in addition to overseeing the opening of four museums, Fagg also opened the UNESCO training school.<sup>14</sup>

Independence on October 1, 1960 generated excitement as Murray recounted:

this is an exciting time in Lagos with terrific [sic] activity in every direction: new roads and repaired [sic] roads being rushed forward, and buildings [literally] springing up, and decoartions [sic] being rushed up along the main streets. The [town] in the more important parts has been unceognisably [sic] transformed. The expectancy is beginning to becoe [sic] noticable [sic] among the people. The museum is now thronged with African visitors...Meanwhile in the museum since last weekend there have been thousands of visitors, a [queue] all day. There seem to have been 17000 visitrs [sic] yesterday. Wheh [sic] I went there at midday I could hardly get in and had to go upstairs by a ladder since the staircase

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<sup>13</sup> See for example Kenneth C. Murray to The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, "Tourism in Nigeria: A suggestion for Tarkwa Bay and Lighthouse Beach," no date. Kenneth C. Murray Papers, National Museum, Lagos.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO's presence in Nigeria also increased. In September 1964, UNESCO built a mobile exhibition, built on a trailer in France and curated by the Palais de la Découverte. The exhibition was bilingual about agricultural development under the Campaign against Hunger.<sup>14</sup>

was [jammed] by a struggling crowd. It is a pity that there is never time to take this all in at Leisure.<sup>15</sup>

Murray was included in many of the independence festivities organized by the government and watched as his museum became a symbol of a diverse, sovereign Nigeria.

As noted earlier, Murray's retirement did little to deter his efforts to work on antiquities and was dedicated to continuing his research. In 1961 he was working on a Benin catalogue, which resulted in an article for *Nigeria*.<sup>16</sup> To conduct the research he spent time in the museum library where he was storing the majority of his books for public use. At this time, the museum library was developing its cataloguing system, training its librarian, and determining the public hours of operation. Murray, frustrated with the treatment of his collection (both the objects and the books), threatened to remove his bequest from the library. He was certainly frustrated with the state of the library and museum, but had little choice but to store his collections there. His threats, I think, were only out of frustration:

...Fagg wrote to ask that I should sell them [the books] to the museum and I replied saying that I was determined that the museum should not have them and that the museum was going into chaos. He did not reply. I think like so many British officials, he no longer cares.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps, this was among the earliest indication that his relationship with Fagg was becoming increasingly and irrevocably strained.

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, September 15, 1960. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In the subsequent letter dated September 28, 1960, Murray wrote that the visitor numbers were upwards of 30,000, with a line out the museum for 300 yards.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth C. Murray, "Benin Art," *Nigeria*, no. 71 (1961), 370-378.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, February 7, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

### **The strained relationship between Murray and Fagg.**

I hesitate to make suppositions about the relationship between Murray and Fagg, as neither side can be properly defended. Moreover, the accusations suggested by Murray's letters are not substantiated by other sources and, for the most part, denied by Fagg's daughter Angela Rackham. Fagg was known as warm and outgoing, but also a tireless scholar and archaeologist; John Picton remembered that "he and Catherine ran a house that was always open, generous and hospitable."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Picton recalls having a wonderful experience working under Fagg: "Bernard was not one of those bosses who tried to control your every action...his guidance was light and respectful."<sup>19</sup> Conceivably, this kind of management seemed too relaxed, but I think it is important to present the material represented in Murray's letters home; the tension is apparent in Murray's account of the early sixties even if his letters represent only one side of the story. Perhaps the source of the conflict stemmed from a divergence of their philosophies regarding the handling of the department and antiquities. As noted earlier, in 1960, Fagg asked Murray to evaluate masks confiscated from the "Keigal collection." Those that were of no interest to the museum would be sold to "VIPs."<sup>20</sup> Murray was opposed to such a plan and noted that

it amused me later when he said that there were very few Yorba [sic] works among those for sale and he thought of putting in a large number of twin figure carvings and suggested I might go through these as well. But finally he decide that his brother would be interested in studying them and therefore decided to keep them (But he did not see my earlier point about

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<sup>18</sup> Personal correspondence with the author, April 4, 2012

<sup>19</sup> Personal correspondence with the author, April 4, 2012

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, September 28, 1960. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



the value of this large collection of Ibo and Ibibio masks for study. As interest in supplying masks for VIPs [sic] also amused.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps this is a simple disagreement, but it speaks to a larger schism in their approach to the national collection.

In my opinion the strain was suffered more because Murray had a difficult time transitioning from the creator of the department of antiquities to a retired colonial officer in an independent Nigeria. For Fagg, perhaps he felt as though Murray was always watching over him. Nonetheless, beginning in the 1960s, Murray's letters suggest that he was unhappy with the work of Fagg and that the antiquities commission found Fagg to be challenging to work with. Murray recounted the frustrations suffered during the June 1, 1963 meeting of the antiquities commission.<sup>22</sup> Fagg was not present; he went to Paris in order to stop an auction of Nigerian antiquities, which were proved to have been smuggled out of the country. However, no one came to the annual meeting in his place and no agenda had been prepared. Murray explained that

...archaeology was provided for, but not ethnography [sic]. Jos was flourishing but Lagos languishing. I was [sic] interested that there was no support for Fagg from the Northern members. [Kenneth O.] Dike was outspoken against him- that the Commission had never got on well with him. (Chappell [sic] like others in Lagos complains about having to do jobs for Jos and so [unable] to get on with the museum [sic] work. Ayorunde a Yoruba, from Western Sect, was strongest against Fagg. I was in the fortunate position of not having to make any attack on him but to plead to for a better future. But fundamentally [sic] the Commission was as unsatisfactory as ever...And none showed any real interest [sic] in museums.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, September 28, 1960. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>22</sup> The Antiquities commission was initiated under the 1953 Antiquities Ordinance and held its first meeting on September 10, 1954 under the chairmanship of Dr. Kenneth O. Dike, Professor of History at the University College of Ibadan.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

At this same meeting it became apparent that Fagg would be leaving Nigeria to take up a post at the Pitt Rivers Museum. Without Fagg, or anyone from the department of antiquities present at the meeting, Murray noted that the commission unanimously hoped that he would consider acting as the interim director until they were able to hire “a really suitable Nigerian.”<sup>24</sup> Ekpo Eyo would work directly under Murray to prepare for the position. Murray wrote home that he was ambivalent about the proposition: “I said I did not particularly want to come back to work as I was enjoying retirement especially fishing although I was interested in seeing Antiquities run properly and that I did think that it had been on the right lines.”<sup>25</sup> Murray proposed that the commission bring someone from abroad for the position, but if they were unsuccessful in doing so, he would consider it.<sup>26</sup> Whether it was his eagerness or Dike’s urgency in the matter, Murray accepted the offer.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Murray looked to Betty for her opinion on the offer: “But it was left that I should let him know urgently what my final feelings were. I asked for time to consider it and said I would like to write to you for an opinion. The objections are pique at not being asked to carry on in 1957 – not a sound reason for objecting now, enjoyment of retirement and question [sic] of age. Since I am very fit, the latter does not seem to apply and as long as I am careful[sic] not to overdo things there should be no objections on that score. In view of their clear confidence in me and their appeal, I should perhaps forgo the pleasures of retirement. I feel quite capable of coping with the problems, and would be in a position of being able to get someone else to do [sic] the chores I now engaged on – typing cards. I would also be able to get the stores in order which would facilitate my book on Nigerian art. Possible embarrassment[sic] to Fagg I do not think needs to be considered – he is retiring voluntarily, and I would welcome him back to do excavations at Nok. In fact it would be good to show more magnanimity than he has shown to me. As Dike said, the money question is not of particular interest to me. Some of the minor inconveniences I would be put to would be overcome by the extra money. Whether I would draw pension as well I don’t know but not of importance. Could you send your opinion on this urgently? It would be useful to get another opinion, and as you thought my letter to the Commission some time back was unethical from the professional point of view, I may be overlooking some strong objection.”

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 8, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

What this commissions meeting made apparent was the growing frustration with Fagg's leadership. From Murray's perspective

it is clear that Fagg is highly distrusted. Dike called him a rogue, partly because pf [sic] the clever way he had pushed the Commission to one side and made them a nonentity...Just as they thought that the plans Bernard had already been making shoed [sic, showed] that he was trying to keep control. Bernard had said that the Pitt Rivers had agreed that he should spend 2-3 months every year in Nigeria.<sup>28</sup>

Nine months later, Murray understood that he would not be able to walk into the department and institute all of the changes that suited him. He lamented

I think the decay has gone almost too far for recovery. I dont feel that the Nigerians are convinced that my criticisms are well founded. I think there is a certan [sic] amount of feeling that they are just the resukt [sic] of a private grudge against Fagg but that as I am acceptable to Nigerians they think I might as well do the job.<sup>29</sup>

Though Murray accepted the commission's offer in June 1963, it was not an easy transition. In November 1963, a month before Fagg left Nigeria, there was rumor that the interim position had been offered to an Egyptian, rather than Murray.<sup>30</sup> Murray explained that his only interest in the position was to establish a "sound policy" regarding antiquities.<sup>31</sup> Finally, on February 29, 1964, Murray received a letter from S. O. Awokoya, from the Federal Ministry of Education, inquiring about his return "as a temporary Director of Ant. with the clear understanding that when a suitable candidate is appointed Director you would become a Consultant or Adviser with well defined duties

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<sup>28</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, March 7, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, November 16, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Though I have been unable to validate any of the rumors, Murray suggested that many people were being considered to take up the post of Director including John Picton and Ben Enwonwu.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, January 15, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

and functions.”<sup>32</sup> The position would be contracted for two years, though it would last for nearly three. Murray accepted and took up the familiar post. His first letter on official stationery was sent to his sister on June 7, 1964.<sup>33</sup>

The department of antiquities continued to declare National Monuments and develop museums. In 1965 the Osun Grove in Osogbo, made famous by Suzanne Wenger, was declared a national monument.<sup>34</sup> One of the major developments of the 1960s was a museum at Owo, which opened in 1968.<sup>35</sup> Murray had been hoping for an institution to open there for over twenty years. In the annual report from 1946 Murray explained that

a fairly close survey was made of antiquities at Owo in Ondo Province. Here the people gave their utmost support and a number of valuable objects of wood, ivory and brass were listed. Some days were also spent on a preliminary survey at Agbor and at places in Kwale Division to find out what kinds of antiquities occur in those parts. Kwale, at least, will need a more extended visit and various wood carvings and terra-cottas need steps taken to preserve them in the villages.<sup>36</sup>

At the very end of his tenure in 1963 Fagg published the most comprehensive article on the museums established by the department of antiquities in *Museum*, a UNESCO journal.<sup>37</sup> The article, crucial to this study, described the efforts of the department and the establishment of each institution, but Murray was still critical: the article, Murray wrote,

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, February 29, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 7, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>34</sup> In 1992, the protection increased to 75 hectares and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.

<sup>35</sup> In total eight museums were established between 1943, when the Survey of Antiquities began and 1970. By the end of Eyo’s tenure another four were opened. Since then approximately 36 more museums have been established.

<sup>36</sup> *Annual Report of the Antiquities Section for the Year 1946*, 1947, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard Fagg, “The Museums of Nigeria,” *Museum* 16, no. 3 (1963), 124-148.

...reads most impressively it was circulated to the Commission) [sic] and unless one realizes that beaureaucrats [sic] have great ability in coveing [sic] up their tracks and making a beautiful picture of what is not so good, almost anyone would be taken in by it and think what a remarakble [sic] job he has done in building up such a remarkable organization. (My part is og [sic] course not mentuoned [sic] and there was no reason why it should be in this particular context)...<sup>38</sup>

Murray's letters at this time are saturated with frustration at not only Fagg, but also the new Nigerian government.

The supposed feud between Murray and Fagg did not end with Fagg's retirement.

Fagg's new position as curator at the Pitt Rivers museum relied on his connections and archaeological work in Nigeria. Murray wrote that Dike

remarked that he was going to refuse a permit for Fagg to excavate. I said I would have welcomed him back. But he declared that Fagg would intrigue and would stir up trouble between north and south. Of course Fagg will think this refusal is my doing. But it seems that he will relent for another year.<sup>39</sup>

Fagg's interest in Nigerian museums, particularly the Jos Museum, did not end with his departure either.

Fagg comes back in sept. He as usual was full of proj4cts [sic] – a tie for the Jos Zoological Society, a creat [sic] for the plates for the Bight of Benin restaurant in the museum grounds. Then there is the pottery [center] which he has built with an American gift and Cardew's help...I looked at the Estimates and they are daunting.<sup>40</sup> Mostly at Jos but a railway coach museum, a road museum sponsored by UNESCO, (also a gallery of modern art in train to be attached to the Lagos Museum [sic]), the prestige publicatioin £31000)

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<sup>38</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, January 15, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, May 10, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>40</sup> The center was built, in part, to employ potters who trained at Michael Cardew's Pottery Training Centre in Abuja.

and only £5000 for the purchase of antiquities where he left it in 1957.<sup>41</sup> Fagg returned to Nigeria for the last time in 1967 and his active involvement in the Jos Museum was greatly reduced after May 1968, when he had a massive stroke in England. His daughter was working as an archaeologist for the department of antiquities in Nigeria at the time and was notified.<sup>42</sup> Murray was pleased that the Fagg family came back to Nigeria and Angela continued to work for the department of antiquities until 1976.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, at the end of March 1967, Murray retired once again from the department of antiquities and handed over the directorship to Ekpo Eyo, the first Nigerian to take up the post. Murray wrote home “I am enjoying my regained freedom...”<sup>44</sup> Of course Murray was not content simply to “tidy” his early papers back at Heyshott, the Murray family estate in West Sussex. He sought permission for permanent residency in Nigeria, a task, which, at this time, was not easy:

I have as yet no reply to my seeking to renew [sic] my permission to reside in Nigeria. I telephoned and the man I spoke to did not sound very encouraging, as though they would make it dependent on becoming naturalized. However, Salawu was concerned about this and introduced the subject himself when I last spoke with him on the telephone, so I have hope that his influence will be effective.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, July 5, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, May 26, 1968. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, December 16, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Of his first encounter seeing Angela again Murray wrote: “There I met Angela Fagg, his eldest daughter just finished at Cambridge and appointed Archaeologist in the Dept. Luckily I saw her suitcase at the door so I was able to recognize her, but that should not have been difficult as she looks very like her father. Funnily I had just posted a letter to Fagg and in it remarked how useful Angela would be out here. He and all family had just arrived via Kano to continue their excavations at Taruga.”

<sup>44</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, April 4, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, May 9, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

One last note about Murray: his passion for conservation extended beyond antiquities. He was a fierce advocate for the Fanti Fishermen.<sup>46</sup> Murray worked with his sister for much of his time in Nigeria to conserve areas of the Sussex Downs. Though his time in Sussex, England was sporadic, he owned a farmhouse with his sister in the country. “The Murrays were pioneers of Downland conservation at Heyshott, West Sussex,” the site of the family home, purchased by his parents.<sup>47</sup> His conservation project came to fruition in 1993 more than twenty years after his death. His nephew, John Murray, developed the Murray Downland Trust to conserve the chalk downland in Sussex.

On April 22, 1972 Murray died in a car accident on his way to install objects in the new museum in Benin. He was given a traditional funeral accompanied by an *Egungun* and his viewing was held at the National Museum, Lagos before a service at Saint Saviour’s Church (figure 33). He was buried at Ikoyi Cemetery.<sup>48</sup> Lagos was certainly aware of his contribution; historian Dr. Saburi Biobaku wrote “Kenneth Murray was not only the Father of Nigerian Antiquities, he was also a verifiable Nigerian.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, three months after his death P. Salawu, interim chairman of the antiquities commission, appealed to the commission to rename the National Museum, Lagos to

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<sup>46</sup> Murray fought big European businesses to preserve the rights and practices of Nigerian fishermen. Kenneth C. Murray Papers, National Museum, Lagos archive. See also Frank Willet, “Kenneth Murray: Through the Eyes of his Friends,” *African Arts* 6, no. 4 (1973) 2, 5, 7, 74-78, 90-93, particularly the contribution of Robert Smith, 90.

<sup>47</sup> No author, “The Trust,” *Murray Downland Trust*, accessed January 1, 2013, [Murraydownlandtrust.org.uk/](http://Murraydownlandtrust.org.uk/).

<sup>48</sup> James, 1994, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Dr. Saburi Biobaku, “Kenneth Murray, Collector of Nigerian Antiquities: An Obituary,” *Daily Times*, Saturday, May 6, 1972. Also quoted in P. Salawu “Kenneth C. Murray, O. B. E., Father of Nigerian Antiquities,” July 18, 1972, Kenneth C. Murray papers, National Museum, Lagos archive.

honor Murray and redesignate it as the Kenneth Murray Museum.<sup>50</sup> This request was not fulfilled.

### Ekpo Eyo

Eyo's early involvement in the department of antiquities was noted in chapter 2. Murray suggested that he was not the antiquity commission's first choice for the first Nigerian director; he also suggested that Eyo was not pleased that, by 1963, they felt he was unprepared to take over. Eyo, Murray wrote was

frustrated that he wasn't made director and could lose his allowance and threatens to take job offers from Horniman Museum and Cambridge...but what will happen if Eyo leaves as he was the person [sic] I was to coach as Director and there is no one else in view. He also said he did not want to get involved in Administrative [sic] work but wanted to do some practical work – I think archaeological [sic] excavations. But if he went to do the Administrative work and rejects an Deputy Director for Administration, how will he manage as Director if he ever stays to that point.<sup>51</sup>

Again, it must be stated that this statement is from Murray's perspective, but it alludes to a certain uneasiness within the department.

Whether it took much convincing or just a bit, Eyo jumped into the position with gusto. In 1965, Eyo became the Vice Chairman of ICOM, and, finally, in March 1967 took up the post of director of the department of antiquities. To this day, Eyo held the post longer than anyone else and saw the department through significant changes including revised antiquities laws, the opening of numerous museums, a name change, and, most significantly, a civil war.

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<sup>50</sup> P. Salawu "Kenneth C. Murray, O. B. E., Father of Nigerian Antiquities," July 18, 1972, Kenneth C. Murray Papers, National Museum, Lagos archive.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, May 10, 1964. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.



Eyo was the director of the federal department of antiquities from 1967-1979 and then the director-general of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments from 1979-1986.<sup>52</sup> Since then the NCMM has had seven directors.<sup>53</sup> Eyo left the post in 1986 to take up a professorship in the department of art history and archaeology at the University of Maryland – College Park. His death on May 28, 2011 was commemorated all over the world and he was interred in Ikoyi.

### **Amendments to the 1953 Antiquities Ordinance.**

The antiquities ordinance, passed in 1953, saw several revisions during Eyo's tenure.<sup>54</sup> The first amendment was the Antiquities Decree of 1969; then the Antiquities Decree No. 9 of 1974, which prohibited the transfer of objects; finally came the most drastic change with Decree No. 77, 1979, which altered the title of the department of antiquities to its present name: the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. In September 1979 the duties of the office expanded from the responsibility of maintaining antiquities museums and monuments to all institutions affiliated with "antiquities, science and technology, warfare, African, Black, and other antiquities, arts

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<sup>52</sup> In most official records, Eyo's tenure as director began in 1968, but according to Murray, he retired in March 1967 and at that time was trying to secure his residency in Nigeria because he would no longer be working. See Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, February 19, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth C. Murray 1946-1957; Bernard E. B. Fagg 1957-1963; Kenneth C. Murray 1964-1967; Professor Ekpo Eyo, OFR 1967-1986; Mr. C. O. Ugowe 1986-1987; Professor Ade Obayemi 1987-1991; Dr. Sule Bello September – November 1991 (Sole Administrator); Dr. Yaro T. Gella 1991-2000; Dr. Omotoso Eluyemi 2000- 2006; Chief J. A. Nze Okoro March – August 2006 (Acting); Dr. Joe Eboreime August 2006 – November 2007; Mr. I. A. Akingun-Roberts November 2007-May 2008 (Acting); Dr. Ochi Achi May – July 2008 (Acting); Dr. Joe Eboreime 2008-2009; Yusuf Abdallah Usman September 2009 (Acting for 10 days); Barr. O. A. S. Alasan September – November 2009 (Acting); Yusuf Abdallah Usman November 2009 to date

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, J. E. Arhuidese, "The National Commission for Museums and Monuments as a Legal Instrument for Safeguarding Nigerian Cultural Heritage," *Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments* 5 (1996), 115-124.

and Crafts, architecture, natural history and education services.”<sup>55</sup> Eyo’s title also changed to director-general. As dictated by this decree, Eyo’s scope expanded to include the National Museum, Osogbo (1988), which contains ethnographic, archaeological, and natural history collections and was founded to complement and preserve the Osun Grove. Eyo also founded the National War Museum, Umuahia (1985), and the Museum of Colonial History, Aba (1985).

The regulations established by the ordinance of 1953, did little to keep the collection intact. Moreover, building the institutions to house an expanding collection did little to encourage Nigeria to acquire work. With William Fagg advising British collectors, he made important connections for the British Museum, such as Lady Epstein who gifted her collection to the museum in 1962.<sup>56</sup> Murray unsuccessfully tried to get Dike and Fagg to make a move on the collection before the British Museum. Murray noted that the private collectors “are now in touch with sources of the most important [sic] works,” so if the department did not try to cultivate relationships with these donors, their collections would go to the British Museum instead of being returned to Nigeria.<sup>57</sup> This indicates, perhaps, that Murray saw his job as a collector within Nigeria as increasingly difficult. In spite of Murray’s claim, Fagg worked tirelessly to see to the return of stolen

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<sup>55</sup> Decree No. 77 of 1979 Establishing the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Also quoted in Helen O. Kerri “Developing Museums: The Nigerian Experience,” *Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments* 3 (1994), 61. Also found on the NCMM website: [www.ncmmnigeria.com/museums/](http://www.ncmmnigeria.com/museums/) accessed April 2, 2013. The Decree also gave the NCMM the authority to approve or withdraw approval of any privately founded museums.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, March 5, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, March 11, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

antiquities. As noted earlier, in June 1963, he made an emergency trip to Paris to stop the sale of several carvings supposedly stolen from Nigeria.<sup>58</sup>

While extensive efforts were being made to see the return of antiquities, there were indications that objects from the collections made “gifts” for visiting dignitaries. Murray heard that in 1961 “a Benin tusk [w]as taken from the collection and presented by the Prime Minister to Kennedy. This establisges [sic] a precedent [sic] which may be continued in future.”<sup>59</sup> Dike denied this rumor, but this could be attributed to a number of factors, because he was unaware of some of the official gifts to the Lagos Museum from abroad.<sup>60</sup> Another issue was the damage caused to objects sent abroad.<sup>61</sup>

Keith Nicklin, a British ethnographer for the department of antiquities, was quite reflective about his role in both the dissemination of information about antiquities that led to black market sales and the prevention of antiquities smuggling. When Nicklin was appointed in 1970, he worked to catalogue and collect objects in the southeast; he helped rebuild the Oron Museum after the Civil War; and, perhaps one of the most important components of his position, he helped to identify and collect objects that were confiscated by customs. In 1975, he reflected:

as the representative of the Department in the Southeastern State, I have for the last three years or so reluctantly been involved in many cases concerning theft, smuggling or destruction of art objects. Typically what happens is that I receive a radio message from the police or customs officials requesting me to identify some objects suspected to be antiquities

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<sup>58</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, June 1, 1963. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>59</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, March 11, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, April 13, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>61</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, May 5, 1962. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Damage such as a bronze being painting black so that it would photograph better and breaking a piece from an Ife head.

in one of the remote areas of the state. I then have to travel to the place, examine the objects, and submit a report which is subsequently used in the courtroom. Sometimes the objects turn out to be modern craft materials—the police can hardly be expected to be art experts—but on a large proportion of occasions, objects which can be classed as important antiquities are involved. The incidence of these cases increases steadily, despite the stringent measures of the new antiquities legislation, which prohibits any unauthorized dealing in Antiquities.”<sup>62</sup>

The southeastern region, which had been documented as a rich artistic area, suffered immensely during the Civil War. The destruction was not limited to the art, which Murray had been fighting to protect for so long. More than one million people, primarily from the southeast, died through fighting and famine. This war tested Nigeria’s ability to unify over 200 ethnic groups and changed the focus of the department of antiquities.

### Civil War

The Civil War, which began July 6, 1967, was caused by the southeast seceding to form the Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967. By 1968, there was little fighting; the humanitarian devastation was caused when the Nigerian army formed a blockade around Biafra, isolating them. The resulting famine ravaged the southeast, until they surrendered on January 13, 1970.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Keith Nicklin, “The Rape of Nigeria’s Antiquities,” *African Arts* 8, no. 3 (1975), 86-88, 86. He continues to say on page 87 that “as an “accredited agent” of the Nigerian Government I am required to collect antiquities for the museums of this country. At the same time I am morally bound to work in the interests of the rural people with whom I come into contact in the course of my work. Therefore I have to conduct any research and collection procedures with the approval and cooperation of the local chiefs and elders, and the community in general. Very often no headway is made where the objects in question are still venerated. This is how it should be, since a museum organization should not promote the disintegration of traditional cultures, however urgent research and collection is seen to be. But in the situation where there is an inflated external demand for art objects, sooner or later crooks emerge in the villages to carry out the dirty work of stealing them. This is normally very much against the wishes of the majority of the local community. Sometimes a few wretched “small boys” are caught and sent to prison. But the big-time operators and dealers, who are often based outside Nigeria or even the African continent, are rarely implicated.”

<sup>63</sup> It was of course much more complicated in reality. The Biafrans hired a major public relations firm in London which plastered images of starving children on TV and in the press, Western countries responded

The Civil War in Nigeria and the uncertain period leading up to the declaration of war was also a period of insecurity for the department of antiquities; concern arose regarding the safety of their museums, collections, archaeological sites, and, most importantly, their staff. Murray recounts the coup on July 29, 1966, just seven months after Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was killed in another coup:

The Ibos are particularly despondent. These ms [sic] that the troops were disarmed and then the Hause [sic] were given arms and slaughtered the Ibo. Some 14 offucers [sic] at Ikeja. Two escaped and were caught and killed. What happened to other ranks I dont know but on Sunday am I met four men who said thyr [sic] were looking for a relation an Ijaw sregeant [sic] who had disappeared. I believe all Ibo have fled from the north and they fear to be posted there in this Dept. The fact that [Obafemi] Awolowo has been released is a bright point, but that all the other politicians are back and the corruption inquiries have come to an end is a poor omen. I dont think any one wnats [sic] the politicians back. Certainly a very gloomy prospect for Nigeria.<sup>64</sup>

In Lagos, Murray's letters did not indicate that his work for the department was impacted by the political unrest.<sup>65</sup> He expressed his frustration at the government's intensification of "regionalisation since unity has failed."<sup>66</sup> He knew partisan politics would alter the organization of the department of antiquities, which he tried to design in such a way that prevented regionalization. He also seemed to struggle with the idea that Nigerians would

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by airlifting food supplies but also, surreptitiously, weapons as well. Many Africans were sympathetic to Biafra but their governments did not dare side with secessionists for fear that it would set a dangerous precedent in other African countries (Sidney Kasfir, personal correspondence with the author, May 14, 2013).

<sup>64</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, August 10, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. Awolowo, former Premier of Western Nigeria and member of the Action Group political party, was imprisoned for conspiracy to overthrow the government. Upon his release after the July 1966 coup, he was appointed to the Federal Executive Council and as the Federal Commissioner for Finance by Gowon's military administration, fighting against Biafra.

<sup>65</sup> But Murray is very much distressed by the military violence against Igbos living in the Southwest: "As far as I can make out it seems that the new military move was a Northren[sic] move against the Ibo. It is reported that all the Ibo offucers[sic] have been killed in Lagos, Abeokuta and Ibadan." See Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, August 3, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>66</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, August 3, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

turn on each other and lamented that it “seems unlikely that the end of the trouble has been reached.”<sup>67</sup>

Murray was made much more uneasy by the disruption and danger caused to the Igbo employees working for the department of antiquities – particularly the staff stationed in Jos. In a letter to his sister from September 1966, Murray wrote, I am

unable to get to Jos, all air services are cancelled since planes are evacuating refugees. The East asked all non easterners to leave, this week. The country seems in rather a stunned state and I should think the bloodshed has now finished. But there seems a lack on any leader.

Murray continued to explain that he does not know what happened to his Ibo staff because “no message gets through. No planes, no trains so no posts. Said to be only one telephone line in working. But so many Ibos have left the north many services no longer can work...”<sup>68</sup>

This fractionalization worried Murray, who was at this point, the director of the department but was preparing to entrust the post to Eyo – an Efik from Western Calabar, part of the emerging Republic of Biafra. As explained in chapters 2 and 3, Murray worked hard to ensure that a central department would run the museums and that they would not fall prey to tribalism or a regional agenda. As Murray’s tenure was coming to an end, his fears were being discussed:

the interim report on the constitution proposed that museums and antiquities should be regionalised. I telephoned to Biobakua [sic] and Esua

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, August 3, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office. In this letter he also states: “I think most Nigerians are rather ashamed at their failure. When one thinks that these are all just normal Nigerians one realises that every one one [sic] knows is really a potential assassinator [sic]. What will the Ibo reaction be.”

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth “Betty” Murray, September 2, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

about this.<sup>69</sup> The former thought that the peo-le [sic] concerned knew nothing about museums and the difficulties their proposals would cause. He said he would speak to some of the members he knew.<sup>70</sup>

The complexity of the situation was increasing and finally came to a violent peak after Murray stepped down from the department of antiquities. Just before war was declared Murray explained to his sister that

Awolowo's intervention in the political scene seemed a good one. He renewed the demand that Northern tropps [sic] should be removed from Lagos and the West, and also said that if one Region left or was forced out of the Federation, the Fedration [sic] would automatically come to an end and that the West wouod [sic] leave also. This seems to rather check the Huasa [sic] anxiety to attack the East. Awolowo led a Peach delegation to Enugu at the weekend, but I wonder whether he would make much progress against the East obstinacy. A northern meeting resolved that more [states] should be formed and that the Norther [sic] should make thse whtehre [sic] other Rehions [sic] followed or not. It is a pity that this idea is not followed up. If the North were divided into smaller areas some of the fear of the others might lesson [sic].<sup>71</sup>

Murray's true understanding and position on the war is difficult to ascertain, but his letters seem to indicate that he felt strongly about Nigeria finding a way to keep the nation together. Of course, after the war and over the subsequent 25 years, the number of states in Nigeria was increased from three regions to 36 states.

In his letters home to his sister, Betty, Murray described atrocities occurring in Nigeria, but without much urgency or fear. However, the department of antiquities did

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<sup>69</sup> Olafemi Biobaku and perhaps Eyo Esua, who chaired Balewa's Federal Electoral Commission from 1964-1966. Esua's inability to run a fair election is seen as one of the factors that led to the January 1966 coup.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, September 2, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, May 9, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

suspend the Jos Museum School course in 1967 and he expressed concern that the project would be abandoned.<sup>72</sup>

With the Nigerian-Biafran War some significant changes were made to the antiquities department. As a result of the reformation of the country from three regions into twelve states, each state designated one representative to the antiquities commission, with further appointments made by the Federal Government. Yoruba historian S. O. Biobaku took Dike's post as chairman of the antiquities commissions when it reconvened after the war in 1975.<sup>73</sup> Dike, an Igbo historian, was actively involved in the Civil War. He left his post at Ibadan and accepted a position to establish a University at Port Harcourt, which was put on hold during the war. As a vocal advocate for the Republic of Biafra, Kenneth Dike found himself unemployed and struggling to find a position. In 1971 he accepted a professorship at Harvard University.<sup>74</sup> For many years he was the only Africanist at Harvard. The Civil War also resulted in extensive damage to antiquities – in both private and public collections. In particular, the Oron Museum, located in the southeast, endured the most significant loss because Biafran soldiers occupied the museum during the war.<sup>75</sup>

The Oron Museum's story was far from over. In fact due to the damage caused by the Civil War the museum had to be rebuilt from the ground up. Nicklin worked tirelessly

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<sup>72</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, November 24, 1966. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office.

<sup>73</sup> Kenneth C. Murray to Katherine M. Elizabeth "Betty" Murray, February 19, 1967. Katherine M. Elizabeth Murray papers, Acc 9601, West Sussex Record Office: "Dike wrote in reply to me, does not intend to give up Commission, wants me to remain a member. I am nit[sic] sure whether I should this time? Perhaps for a year to secure my st o/I ppoing[?] in Nigeria, but I don not wanttto[sic] get involved again with the situation I had with Bernard Fagg."

<sup>74</sup> J. D. Fage, "Obituary: Kenneth Onwuka Dike, 1917-83," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 54, no. 2 (1984) 96-98, 98.

<sup>75</sup> Kerri, 1994, 63. See also Nicklin, 1999, 98-99 and Keith Nicklin, *Guide to the National Museum Oron*, (Lagos: Department of antiquities, 1977), 6. Nicklin, 1975, 86.



to build up the collection and reconstruct the museum, beginning in 1970. The rebuilding of the Oron Museum is well-documented by both Nicklin and Murray.<sup>76</sup> Shortly before his death, Murray wrote *The Oron Ancestor Figures: their Collection, Theft of Some and Loss of Most*, which was never published, but archived at the National Museum Lagos. Nicklin, wrote of the collection and the rebuilding in *Ekpu: The Oron Ancestor Figures of South Eastern Nigeria* in conjunction with an exhibition at the Horniman Museum in London.<sup>77</sup>

The Civil War caused an extensive amount of damage and it was the efforts of a few key civilians that ensured the collection was not completely wiped out. Because the Oron Museum was located on the water, it proved to be strategic for Biafran soldiers, who built gun emplacements and fortified the surrounding area. Kenneth E.U. Nwachukwu wrote to Murray on November 10, 1970 to ask for help, though Murray was no longer in service to the department of antiquities. It is curious that Nwachukwu did not approach Eyo as the current director. In part, perhaps, he was looking for a recommendation for a post in the department of antiquities, but he also recounts an important story. He wrote:

when the Nigerian soldiers liberated Umuahia, most of the Antiquities which was evacuated from Oron to Government College Umuahia were scattered in the college campus. As a matter of fact Mr. William is in a position to tell you how I assisted him in order to see that the Antiquities would'nt [sic] be destroyed [sic] by the refugees. The refugees were camped in the Government college compound. Both women and children who were there used some of the Antiquities as fire-wood because they dont know the use. What Mr. William and myself did was to evacuate those that we could carry down to my house, Ofeke village in Ndume Ibeku, for safty [sic]. Those Antiquities were kept under my care till in August this year when some members from the Department of antiquities

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<sup>76</sup> See for example Nicklin, 1977.

<sup>77</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 98-99. Nicklin eventually became the curator at the Horniman Museum

accompanied [sic] by Mr. William came and I handed over to them the above said item.<sup>78</sup>

Though it is unclear whether Nicklin saw this particular letter, he was certainly familiar with this kind of story. He corroborates Nwachukwu tale of ruthless destruction, particularly in light of all the victories against smugglers in the previous decade. “Sadly,” he wrote, “the most serious loss was not occasioned by foreign collectors but by the Nigerian Civil War, the basic cause of which, tribalism, he [Murray] had attempted to discourage by using only village names on the labels in the National Museum.”<sup>79</sup> Indeed, as many of the Oron figures as possible were stored at the Lagos Museum during the Biafran episode.

The Civil War also led to another development. As noted in the 1979 Decree, the jurisdiction of the NCMM was extended beyond antiquities preservation and now included all museums. As Helen O. Kerri notes in her article,

the location of the early Museums tended to be dictated by the sources of the collections in them. For example, Jos Museum houses most of Nok terracottas while Benin Museum houses essentially Benin objects. However, since the 1970s, the siting of museums no longer followed this pattern. The Antiquities commission aimed at establishing a Museum of National Unity in all the state capitals. As a result, the Kaduna Museum was the first to benefit from this policy. It was opened in 1975. Later, in the early 1980s, Enugu, Ibadan, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Calabar, Port-Harcourt and Umuahia Museums were established. But, in most cases the new policy resulted in a situation in which collections had to be created for these Museums while some of the earlier Museums like Jos, Benin and Oron had to have representative collections from other parts of the country to reflect the “national character”.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Kenneth E.U. Nwachukwu, to Kenneth C. Murray, November 10, 1970. Kenneth C. Murray Papers, National Museum, Lagos archive. Damage caused by the war is well documented in Lagos Museum archive and cited by Nicklin, 1999, 100-101 and recounted in Keith Nicklin, “The Epic of the Ekpu: Ancestor Figures of Oron, South-east Nigeria.” In *The Politics of the Past*, edited by Peter Gathercole and David Lowenthal, 291-301 (London: Routledge, 2003), 297.

<sup>79</sup> Nicklin, 1999, 7. This is the forward written by W.B. Fagg C.M.G. and Frank Willett C.B.E.

<sup>80</sup> Kerri, 1994, 62-63.

No longer could the plateau regional collection remain in Jos; rather the Nok terracottas had to be dispersed among several regions to establish a unified Nigerian identity. Moreover, rather than only functioning as antiquities museums the NCMM was charged with developing a range of institutions that included what would become Museum of National Unity in Ibadan, Maiduguri, Sokoto, and Enugu.<sup>81</sup> These institutions were in response to the policy developed by the Federal Government in 1988 after the Civil War to establish a Museum of National Unity in the capitals of all 21 states (now there are 36 states).

#### FESTAC '77 and the future of the NCMM

In 1977 Lagos hosted the second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), which was organized by well-established contemporary artists such as Yusuf Grillo, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Kolade Oshinowo, Na Alah, and Uche Okeke. The contributions of the NCMM were also significant for the event. Eyo curated *2000 Years of Nigerian Art*, which coincided with his publication of the same name. He also funded the Museum Kitchen and Craft complex (figure 34), which became a permanent feature.

With the success of FESTAC 1977, the department expanded.<sup>82</sup> In 1979 The department of antiquities changed its name once again to The National Commission for Museums and Monuments and was under the authority of the Ministry of Tourism. Its

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<sup>81</sup> According to Kerri, 1994, 65, these museums began to take shape after a Governing Board was developed in 1988.

<sup>82</sup> In the propaganda, FESTAC '77 is seen as a success, but in reality, as with the Civil War, it was much more messy. The cultural bureaucrats in charge refused to allow Oshogbo artists to participate because they were not academically-trained with paper qualifications. This caused a big outcry. Wole Soyinka quit the FESTAC committee in disgust. And, among other complications, all the 200 Mercedes Benz buses the government bought for transporting people from site to site were stolen (Sidney Kasfir, personal correspondence with the author, May 14, 2013).

mission was revised under Decree 77, proposed in 1979, under the directorship of Dr. Eyo. The decree was finally made an Act of Parliament (CAP 242) in 1990. Though the name changed, the primary mission was still the same. Under the decree the NCMM establishes and oversees the museums, antiquities, and monuments of Nigeria. They must also continue to survey and declare monuments and antiquities for preservation. Expanding their duties, the NCMM is no longer simply about antiquities and architecture, but also includes science and technology, warfare, natural history, and, of course, arts and crafts. They are also charged with approving privately established museums.<sup>83</sup> In 1991, the NCMM headquarters were moved to Abuja, the newly created capital. A separate department was created in 2002 for the express purpose of declaring and caring for Nigerian Monuments, marginalizing the role of the National Museum, Lagos.

### NCMM Today

Looking at the museums in Nigeria today, under the NCMM, it is fair to say that their development is stagnant. Though there are plenty of articles that reflect on and are critical of museum policy in the country, their approach to exhibition making, display, and outreach is not very active. So, although buildings are being built, collections are being diluted, components that were built in the fifties, such as the zoo at Jos or the restaurant and craft workshops at Lagos, built for FESTAC '77, have fallen into disrepair. Part of what drew me to this project was seeing the National Museum, Lagos, a mere

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<sup>83</sup> CAP 242, 1990. No Author, "Official website of National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria" *National Commission for Museums and Monuments*, accessed January 25, 2013, <http://www.ncmmnigeria.com/monuments/>.

skeleton compared to the pictures from the opening in which throngs of people stood in the front of the building awaiting entrance.

In many ways, the mission of the NCMM reflects the goals of Murray's antiquities section in 1946 and Pitt-Rivers's antiquities commission from 1882. The NCMM seeks to identify and document monuments and cultural objects across Nigeria; they are also dedicated to conserving and preserving declared work of national import. Now, as a branch of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism,<sup>84</sup> and affiliated with ICOM and UNESCO World Heritage programs, the NCMM is also charged with developing a cultural policy to increase "eco-cultural tourism and cultural education."<sup>85</sup> One of the most striking platforms of the NCMM is its unrelenting effort to seek the repatriation of Nigerian antiquities still held in collections abroad.

There is positive work supported by the NCMM too. Since 1992, the NCMM has published "Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments," an annual journal; the NCMM continues to collaborate with international institutions such as the British Museum, The Museum for African Art in the United States, Fundación Marcelino Botín in Spain, and UNESCO. Furthermore, the Jos Museum School did not dissolve despite Murray's concerns; rather it expanded and has a museum technician program and the Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies to train curators, museum administrators, and archaeologists.

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<sup>84</sup> Other parastatals under the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), National Gallery of Art (NGA), National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), and the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC).

<sup>85</sup> "Monuments," *National Commission for Museums and Monuments*, accessed January 25, 2013, <http://www.ncmmnigeria.com/monuments/>.

## CONCLUSION

The basic facts concerning the department of antiquities and the founding of the national museums in Jos and Lagos have been told many times, but never more than cursory information—simply the facts and figures. These stories are important because the founding of these colonial institutions impacted the way museums all across the continent were developed as well as the field of African art history. The dates of the events leading up to the grand openings published in the official documents do not matter nearly as much as the intentions behind the decisions made by the key players. This is what this dissertation set out to do: trace the influence behind the decisions that would build laws and cultural programs and institutions where there were previously none. To achieve this, I looked into the correspondence and journals of the protagonists of this story—particularly Kenneth Murray and Bernard E. B. Fagg whose networks extended far beyond the Jos Plateau and the shores of the Bight of Benin. In Murray's letters home, which have never been published, and the corresponding material in the National Museum, Lagos archive we find new dimensions to this story.

The study presented here unravels the complex history of the museum project in Nigeria. But to what end? For Murray the museum project was really about preservation – creating a space that could save objects of aesthetic value and cultural importance from their destruction and disintegration. He did intend for Nigerians to be the primary

constituents and that, with independence, the museums would be contributors to building a national Nigerian identity – that they would be places of unification, not tribalism.

The museum project in Nigeria was not a colonial imperative. Other British colonies, such as Botswana, had not developed museums by independence. The fact that museums were built in Nigeria is, without a doubt, due to the efforts of Kenneth Murray and Bernard Fagg. The museums and policies in Nigeria are based on those in Britain. This said, through the course of this project, one crucial point occurred to me. Though Nigeria looks abroad to develop their exhibitions, display, outreach, and policies, they are fundamentally different from British institutions—from Western institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The British Museum, for instance, was developed originally for the British consumption of art and antiquities of the world. In fact, it was difficult to convince the trustees and amateur archaeologists that they should consider working and collecting within the United Kingdom. On the other hand, national Nigerian institutions only display work that originated in their borders. The department of antiquities never sought to purchase art from outside the colony. Indeed, the NCMM still does not collect work from outside Nigeria, much less outside of Africa. Moreover, their acquisition efforts center around the repatriation of Nigerian antiquities in foreign collections.

The British used museums in an attempt to develop a sense of British identity, just as Nigerians do. This is not a novel concept, and has been explored extensively.<sup>2</sup> But the British Museum endeavored to achieve this by displaying the world's visual culture in the middle of London. As MacKenzie observes, the museum was “a key ‘imperial archive’,”

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of African museums only collect their own country's art. IFAN in Dakar is different because it represented all of French West Africa. I make this point as a way to begin, at the very end of this dissertation, a critical discussion of museums in Africa.

<sup>2</sup> See for example MacKenzie, 2009, 5-6.

both three-dimensional and conventional, through specimens, objects and records...It was a central part of the process of ordering the world, bringing the remote and unfamiliar into concordance with the zone of prior knowledge, both geographically and intellectual.”<sup>3</sup> The Nigerians, on the other hand, create a Nigerian identity by placing Nigerian visual culture throughout the country – it is insular and uninterested in the larger implication of visual culture.

I visited the National Museum, Lagos in May and June 2012. The museum is only open between two and four hours everyday because the power is run by a generator. There is air conditioning in two of the three exhibition spaces, which would please Murray, but none in any of the six storage facilities. Officially there are 48,000 objects in the national collection, but that seemed to be a conservative guess. The objects, stacked on shelves, were not well labeled and subject to Lagos humidity, white ants, and termites. What was extraordinary to see was not the objects I have come to attribute to Nigeria, but the thousands of objects that have been left out of the canon of Nigerian art. The NCMM received a grant from the Ford Foundation of two million US dollars to build new storage and a conservation lab, contingent on the Nigerian government matching a fraction of that amount. They provided nothing so the grant lapsed, recalling the Carnegie grant to build the Ife Museum in 1943. In preparation, many of the employees had already vacated their offices to make space. The struggle to find funds is repeated again and again; in fact, it seems to have become ingrained as truth.<sup>4</sup> I agree in some regards. But I

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<sup>3</sup> MacKenzie, 2009, 8.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Kunle Filane, who observed: as may be expected, the lack of financial muscle takes its toll on the promotion and sustenance of museums in Nigeria. The primary functions of museums cannot be



also see a lack of creativity and responsibility with the funds they do have as well as a continued obsession with the repatriation of objects the NCMM insists belong to them.

This project revealed the origins of these policies and institutional positions on objects and museums. But, it also gave depth and dimension to Kenneth Murray and Bernard Fagg, who loved Nigeria and understood that excavating and preserving their visual culture in museums was important, not just to create a national identity and sense of heritage, but to awe and inspire.

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effectively achieved, therefore, there are limitations in areas such as standardization of the construction of buildings, the acquisition of additional objects, including viable archaeological and ethnographic works, and effective research and documentation. Other areas that are obstructed by inadequate funding are materials and facilities for conservation and storage, training and re-training of personnel, elaborate display and regular educational exhibitions, and outreach for public awareness. All these are highly technical and professional issues that require the highest level of government attention and support.” Kunle Filane, “Museums in Nigeria. Historical Antecedents and Current Practice” (presentation, Symposium of The Association for Art Critics, Dakar, Senegal, July 2003).

## APPENDIX 1

Started Dec.28.42 From Capt. K. C. Murray. 14<sup>th</sup> Nigeria Regt. W. African Forces.

Dear Mother, Further comments on my visit to the Southernns. I favour a development of village co-operative industries in which women will not lose their present satisfactory status which is based on economic independence. I think that Africans have their own cultural or social virtues but the modern English progressive person overlooks these as arrogantly as the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary condemned root stock and barrel African religion. Cardew argues that wherever pottery has become wheel-made, men have become the potters; that in spite of the introduction of wheel and glazes, hand-made pottery by women will survive in West Africa (as far as it is a matter of large size pots) which can be made as efficiently by hand as on a wheel and do not need glazing) ; that no country can withstand or fail to adopt European industrialisation (but the system may be modified to the general good towards Russian practice). Cardew, who I think is in agreement in this point of view with Meyrovitz, therefore intends to go ahead with a modified industrialisation of pottery in West Africa, and (he said as much) will exclude women from this pottery (except perhaps for decorative work). Thus the new pottery buildings, which I described in my air mail letter how they and the tile factory came about, provide a remarkable opportunity.

I see the new pottery as a dangerous white elephant which may easily lead to developments even more on wrong lines. Cardew's arguments based on historical evolution do not convince me; the exclusion of women is not inevitable, for nowadays developments are planned and not left to chance. After the war all systems should be planned.

I suspect that Cardew as an artist potter is primarily interested in making pots and that the social side is a secondary consideration. The new pottery gives him a splendid opportunity for pot making, but although he seems keen on the country I should not be surprised if he returned to potting in England shortly after the end of the war.

I believe that Meyrovitz's original idea was to have experimental workshops at Achimota in which it could be demonstrated that a smallish production unit of whatever new or developed craft might be under consideration could be run as an economic success and retain artistic quality. These units would be examples of what would be started elsewhere in the country, and would undertake technical experiments as needed. The potter was started on these lines under Davies. Then came the need to make it an economic success (partly the fault of Achimota for looking upon it on business lines) and certain lines were undertaking on a semi-industrial scale eg. Water coolers and tiles. The glazed crockery was more of a luxury product sold at a price above what the peasant could afford. The war created an opportunity and a demand for expansion: bricks were added to tiles, output of tiles and collars [?]was increased for the army, the new pottery

was built. Meyrovitz fell for this rather easily I think because he likes advertisement and saw this as an opportunity to get something started in a big way.

I consider that the social side, the object of the experiment has been sidetracked and that the pottery has not fulfilled its function. It has instead set out to prove [sic] what was never in doubt, that these things could be made as an economic success (but Southern doubts whether the business is really economically sound as run), but it has neglected the African. It has not proved that Africans can do the same, and it has not brought Africans, in my opinion, sufficiently into co-operation. What it should have done, I think, was to make experiments on materials to get a fool-proof, aesthetically satisfactory glaze that Africans could make and would appreciate (but in spite of 2-3 years work, Cardew is not satisfied with the glazes in use and is making fresh experiments and looking for fresh sources of local supply) and to set in working order a small production unit run by Africans that would be an example of what should be attempted elsewhere. When this had been started, fresh centres should have been started in other parts [sic] of the country. But nothing has been attempted outside the centre, and the centre has come so large that it threatens to be a competitor to anything started elsewhere and may easily become in danger of getting taken over or be copied by a capitalist concern.

In the weaving Southern seems to have appreciated my arguments. He is experimenting and starting units outside the experimental centre at Achimota. I think he is not going to neglect the women.

Of the art teaching I had little to criticise. There is a pretty thorough syllabus which I think Southern had a good deal to do with. The work is somewhat sophisticated. The modeling is poor and the wood carving is bad. Of course I feel confident that I could get better results, but the faults existed before Southern came, and are pretty deeply rooted.

Meyrovitz had a good idea which he has been pushing with influential backing from people at home for an institute of West African Culture. It would aim at developing industries while keeping in close touch with the social side. But owing to the war and the success of the brick and tile factory the social side is being neglected. I should like to see developments in harmony with African culture.

Southern saw Stopford (Principal of Achimota) about me some time ago, and understood that Stopford, who it seems would welcome me on the staff of the Institute, would raise the matter with the Colonial Office when he was at home (he went in October but was sunk and his wife drowned). I do not want to find myself subordinate to Meyrovitz, but Southern thought it possible the Meyrovitz may not return. He has been away for a year sick, and has been in London stirring up people there over the Institute. He has been doing broadcasts and Southern says that he has referred to me in them as his colleague in Nigeria. Southern thought that my special contribution to the Institute might be in dealing with the question of African culture in relation to any proposed developments.

I felt rather encouraged as a result of my visits as it did not seem that the pro-African position had yet been lost. On that account I was keen to stay out long enough to keep my Captaincy as I thought that to leave the army as a Captain should give my opinions extra weight.

I did not like Achimota as a place. It is too suburban and shut in. There are remarkably few places in West Africa which are any way near ideal. I think Wnneba is one the best as combining sea, nice country and good climate with a moderate amount of British social life. On the other hand it lacks the “romantic” appeal of the thick bush of the Eastern province of Nigeria nor have the people the vitality and artistic interest of the Ibo or Ibibio.

With love,  
Kenneth

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