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We often become so caught up in trying to reconstruct the life of objects before they entered collections that we forget that their history continues when they leave their place of origin to take up this other form of existence. While we may think of it as an “after life”, not seminal to the purpose which generated the artefacts, it is also part of what they are. Indeed, it is a very significant part if one considers the role of collected items in how we study the past. Adrienne Kaeppler ensures that we do not overlook this absorbing aspect of the stories of objects, at least for those that came to reside in the Holophusicon or Leverian Museum.

Kaeppler’s account opens with a short history of Ashton Lever’s fascinating museum, drawing on archival material and contemporary descriptions. We learn, for example, that Lever’s extensive collection of birds was installed against a white background to show their brightly coloured plumage to best advantage—demonstrating that compelling display was a consideration for Lever. His equal thirst for knowledge was reflected in extensive labels (some still surviving) and in the visual records of the collection which he assembled.

Although a private collection, Lever opened it to the public at Alkrington Hall from 1771, possibly the first to do so, and it formed an important resource for study in many fields. But he could not sustain the expense. Despite moving the collection to London where he charged an entry fee and undertook various ingenious fundraising attempts, in 1786 Lever consigned the collection to a lottery (with disappointing returns!). The new owner James Parkinson, too, had to finally relinquish the collection, which was broken up in the auction of 1806. It has been Kaeppler’s task—one might say obsession, given its forty-year span—to discover what became of it. To this end, she painstakingly assembled information from twelve annotated auction catalogues that have survived, and many subsequent sales, as well as tracking and identifying pieces in numerous collections in the UK, Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Kaeppler’s interest was undoubtedly prompted by her work on ethnographic material from the Cook voyages, where she has numerous publications to her credit, and she convincingly argues that Lever acquired many items from both the second (1772-75) and third (1776-79) expeditions. Although focusing on her area of expertise, she devotes Chapter 3 to the dispersal of Lever’s natural history collection too to spur other researchers, making a case for their importance as a source for many type specimens in
emerging taxonomies. She emphasises that, while in the 18th century the classification of the natural world was well underway, for “artificial” collections there was as yet no scientific approach, making identification of early artefacts doubly challenging.

In Chapter 4 Kaeppler tracks the collecting history of many ethnographic items that came from Lever’s museum, including those with a provenance in the Cook voyages. There are numerous examples in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna, where the transfer depended on a single transaction, but she also succeeds in uncovering convoluted pathways via a myriad sales, gifts and trades among private collectors, to such institutions as Cambridge University and the British Museum (which unaccountably did not attend the 1806 auction), as well as others outside Britain. While Kaeppler modestly recognises that there is more research to be done, her book is an excellent stimulus for further investigations. And what she has already achieved is remarkable. The illustrated catalogue section (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), organised by area and then type of artefact, gives the “biography” of each item, beginning with its Leverian auction catalogue number and description, listing any depictions, then its sales history, and finally, if known, its current collection reference and its measurements. All items are listed, but her most complete information is in the Pacific section, with quite a sizeable number of identifications in the Americas section also.

Kaeppler acknowledges how much her detective work owed to visual records, particularly those of Sarah Stone, the water-colourist who documented much of Lever’s collection. Chapter 2 discusses the nature of these images, ranging from documentation to stage prop designs to details in history paintings, and Kaeppler offers a fascinating side study on artefacts in different paintings of The Death of Captain Cook to suggest the value of collections such as Lever’s to artists engaged in historical reconstruction. Her discerning analysis also demonstrates the advantages of Stone’s untrained eye and hand for identifying objects: Stone did not impose a “style” as a professional artist might, so that, even though there are inaccuracies, she by and large faithfully documents the specific characteristics of individual items—unlike more generalised paintings by artists such as John Webber, who took part in Cook’s third voyage (although his work too has ethnographic value, not least because it also records artefacts that were never collected).

It is one of the delights of Kaeppler’s volume that it is so handsomely illustrated, with many hundred modern photographs as well as contemporary drawings by Stone and others, making the book an outstanding visual resource. The sheer quantity of material can make it quite difficult to negotiate at times. In that objects are listed in the catalogue under lot number from the Leverian auction (which is not in sequence as it does not correspond to her more logical grouping), it might have been helpful to include that number in the captions for modern photographs, as well as those for the contemporary visual records, to make it possible to see at a glance the relationship of catalogue entries, photographs and drawings. There are also occasional errors in references. For example, on p. 29 we are invited to compare images of variegated baboons by Ryley and Stone in Figures 3.33 and 3.34, when they are in fact 3.46 and 3.47; and Stone’s sea urchin drawing is referenced as Figure 3.24 instead of 3.33 (p. 31). Similarly in the catalogue section a Roman fibula in the British Museum is referenced as illustration 7.55 when it is actually 7.63 (p. 253). The aforementioned
items are readily identifiable but, when a discussion of Stone’s drawings of baskets (p. 33) incorrectly refers us to Figures 5.312-313, it is more problematic as there are many baskets to choose from. Fortunately there do not seem to be too many such blemishes to undermine this impressive work, which provides so many artefacts with a convincing 18th-century provenance.

The full implications of the information Kaeppler has uncovered will no doubt be addressed in many future publications by her and others. She has already been able to correct errors, such as the British Museum record for a number of their holdings mistakenly believed to be from George Vancouver’s 1791-95 expedition when they in fact came from Cook’s. And the book provides a wealth of new information, conclusions made possible by Kaeppler’s consummate knowledge of Pacific material. In that area especially, it is highly recommended as an indispensable reference tool.


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Tuamaka is a wonderful record of the work of one of New Zealand’s most distinguished and well respected anthropologists. Joan Metge clearly explains some of the differences in understandings between Māori, Pākehā and other ethnic groups living in New Zealand in six essays, derived from firsthand encounters with Māori individuals and communities over a period of 50 years. With the Māori word tuamaka, which Metge defines to mean ‘a rope plaited in the round from five or six strands of flax fibre’ and ‘also the rope that the mythical Māori hero Māui and his brothers used to snare the sun’ (p. xi), tying the essays together, Metge charts her vision for a united and uniquely flavoured New Zealand nation. Indeed, this nation is one where citizens rise to the challenge of not only understanding but respecting difference.

Indicative of her precise and reflexive research style Metge begins this work on inter-cultural relationships by first sharing with readers a list of ancestors from whom she has shaped her own philosophical whakapapa ‘ancestry’. With a list of thinkers including the likes of Joan of Arc, Jane Austen, Pei Te Hurinui Jones, Wiremu Tamihana and Rewi Maniapoto, Metge takes a diplomatic position to examine the relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi for New Zealanders (p. 3). Using tuamaka and the Treaty not only as metaphors but also as key narratives, Metge theorises the potential for constructive relationships between Māori and other New Zealanders. She emphasises that genuine relationships between people may only be achieved if equal amounts of effort and goodwill are exchanged by the parties in the relationship. Giving weight to this discussion is Metge’s cogent reminder that all relationships are imbued with power and that difference occurs between people in relationships when the power between them is disproportionate (p. 8). At the outset this work presents a strong commitment to the building and strengthening of a multi-cultural and multi-

Reviews 299