Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Foreign Ethnology Collections
in the
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Museum Studies at Massey University
67. 898 (75 pt thesis)

Rosanne Livingstone
1996
Abstract

Museums today face many challenges. Some of these affect parts of collections which, as a result of changing policies and practices, have become inactive and/or no longer relevant to the mission of the museum. At the same time these changes have resulted in new collections being developed.

The subject of this study is foreign ethnology collections (excluding Pacific) held in four metropolitan museums in New Zealand, focusing in particular on those in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

The development of the foreign ethnology collections in these museums shows that they followed a similar pattern to museums in general, and colonial museums in particular, although each has its own unique history. As a result of its early policy and practices the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa has smaller, more disparate collections than the other three museums, and unlike these museums nearly all of its foreign ethnology material was passively acquired.

Current policy and practices in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa relating to the foreign ethnology collections have meant that they are virtually inactive. In comparison, the foreign ethnology collections in the other metropolitan museums are fairly active. In addition to the existing collections all four metropolitan museums are developing a new type of foreign ethnology collection relating to the cultural diversity of this country, in particular Asian immigrant groups. The future for these new collections is promising.

The future for the other foreign ethnology collections, however, is less certain, especially for those held in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa although there is potential for them to become at least partially active. It is proposed that the development of a national computer database would assist in making decisions about the future development, management and use of all foreign ethnology collections.
Acknowledgments

I wish to thank David Butts, Director of Museum Studies, for supervising this project. My thanks also to the members of my supervisory committee: Dr Janet Davidson, Curator of Pacific and Foreign Ethnology, MoNZTPT, and Stuart Park, Concept Leader, MoNZTPT, who took time away from their busy work schedule to provide guidance.

The curators at the other three metropolitan museums, Dr Dimitri Anson at Otago Museum, Roger Fyfe at Canterbury Museum, Dr Roger Neich and Dr Nigel Prickett at Auckland Museum were generous with their time, giving me interviews and allowing me access to their collection records. Thanks also to the staff from these and other institutions, both in New Zealand and overseas, who provided invaluable assistance.

Many current and former MoNZTPT staff helped with this project. In particular I wish to thank Collection Manager Ross O’Rourke who gave me access to the foreign ethnology collections. The staff from the Hector Library went to great lengths to find books and other information for me. My thanks to them and also to the many other Museum staff who provided me with information, photographs, and support while undertaking this project.

Finally I would like to thank my son Brendon for solving computer problems and assisting with the layout, and my husband Paul for his advice and his patience during the past few years.

The support of all these people has enabled me to complete this project.
# Table of Contents

1. **Introduction** ................................................................. 1
   Relevant recent studies ...................................................... 4
   Structure of the study ....................................................... 5

2. **Background to study** ..................................................... 7
   History and development of foreign ethnology collections ........ 7
   Collectors, collecting and collections ................................ 7
   Foreign ethnology collections in Colonial/post-Colonial Museums  11
   Use of ethnology collections ............................................. 15
   Contemporary issues .......................................................... 17
   Current policies and practices in museums ......................... 19
   Prospects for the future ................................................... 28

3. **History and Development of Foreign Ethnology Collections in New Zealand**.... 32
   Introduction ........................................................................... 32
   MoNZTPT .............................................................................. 32
       The history and development of the foreign ethnology collections 33
       Use of foreign ethnology collections .................................. 39
   Case studies ........................................................................... 42
       The European Lithic collection .......................................... 43
       The Native American collection ....................................... 49
   Summary .............................................................................. 55
   The other Metropolitan Museums ......................................... 57
       Otago Museum .................................................................. 57
       Canterbury Museum ....................................................... 60
       Auckland Museum .......................................................... 64
   Summary .............................................................................. 68

4. **Current Policy and Practice relating to Foreign Ethnology Collections** .......... 70
   Introduction ........................................................................... 70
6. Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 129

Appendix 1: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 ................... 131

Appendix 2: MoNZTPT Corporate Principles and Goals ........................................ 133

Appendix 3: MoNZTPT Acquisition Proposal Form ................................................. 136

Appendix 4: Recommendations of the FECRP ....................................................... 140

Appendix 5: Auckland Museum School Service Study Sheet .................................. 142

Appendix 6: Children’s Club Information Sheet ..................................................... 144

Bibliography ............................................................................................................. 145

Published sources .................................................................................................... 145

Museum sources, unpublished sources, newspaper articles and informal
communications ....................................................................................................... 153
List of Figures

Figure 1: Us and Other in Time and Space ...........................................8
Figure 2: Development of the European Lithic collection ....................43
Figure 3: Neolithic implements from Denmark ....................................44
Figure 4: Upper Palaeolithic implements (Magdalenian period) from the Dordogne Valley, France .........................................................45
Figure 5: Lithic implements (representing different periods) from St. Acheul, France...45
Figure 6: Development of the Native American collection ..................49
Figure 7: 18th century bone beater from the North West Coast, USA ....50
Figure 8: 18th century leather and quillwork moccasins from the northeast USA 51
Figure 9: 18th century leather and quillwork fringing from the northeast USA 51

List of Tables

Table 1: The development of museums and ethnology collections ........31
Table 2: The history and development of foreign ethnology collections in the metropolitan museums in NZ .............................................69
Table 3: Estimated annual storage and operational costs for the MoNZTPT foreign ethnology collections for the next five years ..................92