Becoming Antiquities: How museum objects gain educational and heritage value

By

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the processes that change the roles of museum objects throughout their lifetime and the resulting effects on the value of objects. Using Object Biography and Actor-Network Theory as theoretical frameworks and two museum collections, a biography of the lives of these collections was created. The biographies examine a specific portion of the collections’ lives from the time they were excavated to their present state as museum collections; as well, they were used as a tool to pinpoint key diversions that represented a change in roles and value for the collections. The analysis of the biographies and the resources consulted revealed patterns and relationships between the type of diversion, the actors involved, the affective weight of the collections and the types of value that were affected. Interaction between actors and objects was found to bring about the greatest amount of change in roles and value.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The journey of an object from its original context to a museum is a process that involves key moments that influence the role, value and identity of the object as it moves through its pre-museum and museum life. An object is much more than the time it has spent within a museum. This thesis looks at the processes that change the roles of objects during their lifetime and the resulting effects on the value of those objects. It takes the stories of objects and collections and creates a biography to pinpoint key moments that effect their value. It specifically looks at the roles of objects that come into museums and how museums shape their value. I utilize the journeys of two museum collections as a case study to examine and analyze the processes that facilitate the changing roles and values of objects. Key diversions consistently seen throughout both biographies result in the evolution of different types of value for each collection.

The life of the object before its role as a museum object contributes to any type of value associated with the object, including heritage, commodity, archaeological, spiritual and educational value. The main focus of my research for this project is the evolving roles of these collections throughout their lives from their first transition from everyday objects to archaeological artifacts and finally to museum collections. I refer to these role changes as diversions. I am concerned with the changes to the value of objects that take place during these diversions based on archaeological or museological processes that may be at work and how these changes influence the value, and by extension, the affective weight of objects.
A Case Study: two archaeology collections become one museum collection

The two collections at the heart of my research each have a unique history that begins in very different cultures, time periods, and locations yet they are linked by key diversions within their biographies. One collection comes from Roman Britain, specifically Salter’s Hall on Walbrook, London, England. It was excavated in 1949 as part of a mass excavation project conducted in the City of London after the destruction of World War II. The collection is comprised of several different types of Roman pottery that date to the 2nd century A.D. The other collection was excavated in Iraq in 1931 as part of the excavations at the site of the ancient City of Ur in Mesopotamia. The collection is comprised of different types of objects ranging from pottery to jewellery to stone figurines. Although their origins are incredibly different, there are also many similarities between the collections and their biographies stemming from shared experiences of archaeological excavation and museum acquisition. Together, the biographies demonstrate the relationships between the processes involved in the creation of collections and the creation of value.

Both collections were discovered in the storage facility of the Museum of Ontario Archaeology in 2011 during a reorganization project. At the time, the collections were stored together in a set of cardboard boxes marked “Old World Roman.” Upon first examination it was presumed that all of the boxes belonged to a single collection and that the objects were all Roman. A collection of ancient Roman artifacts in a museum dedicated to archaeology in Ontario raised a number of questions amongst the museum staff. Katherine Urban, Education Coordinator at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology (MOA) took it upon herself to investigate the origins of the collection. Urban along with
a colleague, Paige Glenen, uncovered as much information about the collection as possible concerning its contents, its origins, and how it came to reside in London, Ontario. Through their research and examination they discovered that the two collections had arrived in London roughly 20 years apart, and yet somehow they ended up stored together in the same boxes in the same place for over 60 years. The Ur collection was a “duplicate” collection gifted to the University of Western Ontario by the British Museum at the request of the University President. The Roman British Collection was part of an exchange that took place between the Guildhall Museum in London, England and the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. With the information they uncovered, Glenen and Urban put together an online exhibition, “Lost Collections of the Ancient World: A Mystery 9000 Years in the Making,” dedicated to the story of how these two collections came to London, Ontario, over 80 years ago, were forgotten for 60 years, and then rediscovered. Glenen and Urban's online exhibition gives a history of excavation, collection and re-discovery, with a focus on the people and institutions involved. It answers the basic who, what, when, where, how, and why questions, but it takes for granted the archaeological identity of the objects. I wanted to create something that went deeper beyond a basic historical overview. I used object biography as a method in order to develop richer insights into what happened to the objects throughout various portions of their lives and acknowledge that they are not inherently archaeological nor museum objects. Object biography and diversions provided me with a way to look at processes of meaning, value, and affective weight of collections. ANT helps me consider all actors, not just people, as part of the biography and as having an influence on the meaning, values, and affective weight of the collections. Early forms of object biography take a
more ethnographic view and favour the actions of people in explaining effects on objects. ANT allows me to create a more object focused object biography. Part of the goal of my research and using these methods is to contribute to museum processes of determining the value of objects.

**Research questions and theoretical frameworks**

From a museological perspective there are many avenues to explore within the stories of both collections, many more than what will be addressed within this work. The initial interests and purposes for this research project were to investigate the relationship between the two collections and how it was shaped by the acts of acquisition, storage, disuse, and re-discovery. As well, I sought to explore the changing perceptions of archaeological artifacts and associated information and how the relationship between artifact and information effects heritage and educational value. Based on the evidence from the investigation conducted by Glenen and Urban, both collections held some type of value at the time of their transfers, and still hold value today. In order to understand the changing values and perceptions of both collections in relation to their biographies, it was prudent to gain a more detailed history of both collections.

During the process of creating the biographies for the Ur and Roman British collections, however, the overall purpose of this research project required revisiting. Other types of value came to the fore and needed to be accounted for. The main interest and purpose of this project turned to an exploration of the evolving roles and various types of value of these two collections as identified through diversions in their object biographies, and the relationship between the value of these objects and their affective
weight as archaeological and museological collections. Whereas other research considers
the overlap between archaeological objects and heritage objects\(^1\) or between museum and
heritage objects, I have found it necessary to attend to these distinct roles and diversions
in the life of objects. I consider how “affective weight” is a reflection of value in all three
of these phases, extending Bennett’s concept from museum objects to archaeological
artifacts and heritage objects.\(^2\)

For the purposes of this work the biographies of both collections required research
to identify specific moments that influenced their value. Object biography states that
much in the same way that people change and acquire new meanings throughout their
lives, so can objects.\(^3\) Objects acquire meaning and value through the people and events
they encounter. Object biography is often used in reference to ethnographic collections
due to the likening of objects to people and their ability to acquire meaning.\(^4\) The theory
has been applied to museum objects and documents in the past, however, for this work it
is applied to non-ethnographic collections and focuses each biography on the periods
where the objects became archaeological artifacts and then museum artifacts. While
Kopytoff was primarily concerned with exchange value and cycles of commoditization,
my use of value reflects the field of critical heritage and includes values such as

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\(^1\) Smith, Laurajane. “Archaeological stewardship: the rise of cultural resource management and the
‘scientific professional’ archaeologist.” In Archaeological theory and the politics of cultural heritage.


\(^3\) Kopytoff, Igor, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process,” The social life of things
commodities in cultural perspective (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1986), 64-90; Marshall,
educational value, aesthetic value, informational or research value, and exchange value.\(^5\) I include “heritage value” as a kind of value, recognizing that heritage value is created through archaeological and museological processes.\(^6\)

Creating the biographies for the Roman British and Ur collections involved a combination of primary sources, including those found when the collections were re-discovered, as well as additional archival documentation, archaeological records, digital collections databases, museum databases, and secondary sources such as museum publications and archaeological papers. There are still gaps in the biographies because there was no available documentation or associated information for certain periods of time. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) guided the creation of the biographies of both collections. ANT advocates that objects are able to create connections with people and other objects. Thus, the biographies I created consider how people, objects and contexts or settings can all be important in an object’s biography. Objects and people are actors, and their relationships form connections that make up a network. I emphasize connections and interactions as well as the processes and circumstances that allow diversions to take place from both a material and social perspective. The Roman British and Ur collection biographies illustrate how object biography and ANT complement each other because of their emphasis on connections and the social aspects of an object’s life.


Value and Objects

Another major aspect of this work is the exploration of the various types of value within collections and what influences changes to these values. The idea of “affective weight” as introduced by Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum* describes one way in which objects interact with people and what results from these interactions. Throughout my diversion analysis, affective weight proved to be a useful tool for examining the relationship between people, objects and their changing values. Throughout my research into the relationship between value and objects the most referenced type of value, especially in relation to cultural property, is heritage value. Laurajane Smith has an extensive body of work concerning heritage and its many facets, including heritage objects. Smith’s work exploring how everyday objects become re-valued as archaeological artifacts and data—and possibly also as “heritage”—provides a foundation for my assessment of value. Using the collections’ biographies, their identified networks and actors and diversions, I conducted an analysis of the types of value that were influenced or changed by what took place during the diversions.

Chapter Overview

The thesis proceeds with a chapter that explains the methods and conceptual frameworks applied to my study of the two object biographies. Chapter three presents the object biographies of both the Ur and Roman British collections. It also provides a brief analysis of each diversion that occurs within the biographies including the identification of the context and network of the diversion, the actors involved, and the types of value that were affected or changed as a result of the diversion. Chapter four explores questions

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of value in depth and how they relate to archaeological and museum collections. As well, it offers an analysis of the changes in value that occurred throughout both biographies and outlines similarities and patterns that occurred. Chapter five revisits the findings and offers further avenues for research.
Chapter 2: Methodology and Conceptual Frameworks

This chapter outlines the research methods and processes I used to create the biographies of the Ur and Roman British collections. I provide some background on how I came to research these collections and adapt my focus. I also describe the various sources I consulted at each stage of my research including archival documents, archaeological documents, online databases, online exhibitions, exhibition records, collections records, archaeological and historical print sources, as well as newspaper and institutional archives. Finally, I discuss the tools used to create and analyze the resulting biographies and key diversions that contributed to the changing roles and values of both collections.

Background

I became aware of the collections through a connection made during my undergraduate work at Western University in the department of Classical Studies. I was pursuing possible topics for graduate research. Dr. Elizabeth Greene, a professor of Classical Studies at Western, is on the board at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. Through her association with the museum she became aware of the two collections and their unusual circumstances and passed along the basic information she had acquired about them including the link to the online exhibition created by Paige Glenen and Katherine Urban.\(^8\) After going through the online exhibition I was immediately interested in their story and saw multiple opportunities to further research the lives of these collections. Glenen and Urban managed to answer the basic questions of when it

came to reside at MOA. What was missing from the story, however, was a sense of how the objects changed through time, and as a result of archaeological and museological processes.

My concern turned to the processes that facilitate the evolution of everyday objects into archaeological objects and finally to museum collections. I sought to understand these collections at key diversions in their biographies involving key actors, including the effect on their perceived value. Before I could fully understand and map this process it was necessary to try and fill in the gaps in the histories of the Ur and Roman British collections.

**Building an object biography**

The online exhibition provided a solid base for my research as it answers the basic questions about the collections’ provenance. The resources consulted by Glenen and Urban also became gateways to other useful resources. I revisited all of the sources consulted by Glenen and Urban. The original documentation found with the collections was the basis of Glenen and Urban’s research. This included: a letter from archaeologist W.F Grimes from 1950, index cards, and the excavation numbers from a few of the objects. The information gained from these sources led Glenen and Urban to a series of letters in the Western Archives between former University President Sherwood Fox and the British Museum from the early 1930s. The letters give brief details of how the Ur collection came to reside at Western University. The letters also provide insight as to the intended use of the collection once it arrived at Western, which I will refer back to later.

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9 See chapter three for details gained from primary and secondary sources pertaining to the history of the collections.
in this chapter. Within the online exhibition, Glenen and Urban site several newspaper articles from the *London Free Press* and Western’s own newspaper describing the arrival of both collections to Western. I revisited all of these primary sources, either in person or digitally.

In revisiting Glenen and Urban’s primary sources I sought to confirm the extent of the original documentation, and look for clues in the documents themselves. The letters and newspaper articles proved to be the most useful. The letters were beneficial for understanding the process by which the Ur collection came to Western and linking their biography to the common museological practice of distributing duplicate collections. The newspaper articles were most useful in establishing exact dates, the intended use of the collections as well as what actually ended up happening to the collection once it arrived. Additionally, newspaper articles provided a sense of the general public’s response to the arrival of the Ur collection. As for the Roman British collection, there were fewer sources available that comment on the circumstances of its arrival in London. The London Free Press article provided the best, albeit brief, description of how the Roman British collection was part of an exchange between Wilfrid Jury at MOA and W.F Grimes at the Guildhall Museum London, England.

To expand upon Glenen and Urban’s research, I began to search for additional primary and secondary sources by contacting various institutions related to both collections. For the Ur collection, I contacted the British Museum as well as The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Penn Museum) requesting any additional documentation about the Ur excavations. I enquired with the British Museum specifically about the distribution of the duplicate collections. The Penn
Museum directed me to an online database they created in collaboration with the British Museum that encompasses all of the artifacts excavated from Ur. The records and the artifacts from these excavations are scattered throughout institutions across the world. The goal of the database is to provide easy access for scholars and the general public alike to all of the known information about the Ur excavations, the objects, archaeological data, related documents, and current locations. The database includes the MOA collection. One of the most useful functions of the database for my research was the ability to search for media related to the collections. Media coverage helped me assess the value of the collection as archaeological discoveries and as public museum collections. The resources uncovered through the database, along with the Penn Museum and British Museum online archives, proved highly useful as I was trying to determine where parts of the Ur collection may have been displayed or where associated information might be kept. The objects in the Ur collection were not always inherently a unit; it was necessary to track multiple pathways through the processes that brought the collection together. I used the database as a secondary resource to create a picture of how Ur collections were used and perceived on a wider scale and to compare that with the Ur collection in London, Ontario.

In the case of the Roman British collection, I reached out to the Museum of London (the former Guildhall Museum), as well as the London City Archives, both in London, England. Unfortunately, the Museum of London archives were not accessible within the time frame of my research and I had no response from the City Archives. I decided to investigate any work by W.F Grimes concerning the excavations in London, England, that may have yielded the collection at MOA. Working from the basic location
information from Grimes’ letter, I searched secondary archaeological publications and found the excavation number and archaeological site of the collection. Knowing the exact location of the excavations that produced the Roman British pottery collection, I was able to pursue other secondary sources related to the excavations in the City of London, including a book featuring all of the excavations conducted by Grimes as well as several others focusing on the archaeological excavations in London, England. As there was a lack of primary resources concerning the Roman British Collection, a large portion of the biography I put together came from these secondary resources. From these resources I gained information about the excavation of the specific collection as well as subsequent excavations in the same location (the Temple of Mithras discussed in chapter three, for example), where the collection was stored, how other archaeological collections were displayed and the reactions of the public.

Secondary sources were helpful in filling in the gaps in the documentation of both collections as well as for gathering evidence of their value as part of wider collections before their respective arrivals in London, Ontario. The primary sources and secondary sources also worked to create a timeline for the biographies of each collection, supporting each other where information was missing in terms of dates, locations, and the actors involved in their lives.
Conceptualizing Object Biography

My primary intellectual frameworks are object biography and Actor-Network Theory. Object biography as outlined by Kopytoff in “The Cultural Biography of Things: commoditization as process”\(^\text{10}\) provided my initial understanding of object biography. Object biography argues that much in the same way that people, through time and movement, are constantly changing and transforming, objects too experience this in being connected with people.\(^\text{11}\) For Kopytoff, the concept is useful for understanding processes of exchange, movement, and commoditization of objects. Kopytoff posits that objects cannot fully be known and understood from only a single point in their existence; rather, objects accumulate history through the people and events to which they are connected.\(^\text{12}\) Objects gain value and connections from the people they encounter and people can enhance their status through the possession of valuable objects. Objects undergo many transformations; their pathway through life can shift. When an object is drawn from its pathway onto a new one this is known as a diversion. A diversion is thus the re-contextualization of an object within its life journey.\(^\text{13}\) There is a symbiotic relationship within the process of creating value for both people and objects. The basis of object biography can be interpreted in multiple ways. At its core the concept is anthropological, focusing on the relationship between people and objects and how both acquire and produce meaning and value.


The type of meaning, and I would argue value, acquired by an object is dependent on the context. There are multiple contexts under which meaning is acquired, be it through exchange, functional change, geographical movement, evolution, or evaluation. My research focused on three distinct contextual changes: that from objects in the ground to archaeological artifacts; that from archaeological artifacts to museum collections; and geographical movements between England and modern-day Iraq to Canada. I focus less on meaning and more on value in my research; value is at once part of the context for how these objects are known, but also can change through diversions, just like meaning.

Kopytoff’s work on object biography and commoditization of objects directed how I wrote the biographies for each collection. I noted what Kopytoff described as important aspects of objects and how their value was determined and as a result the roles the objects fulfilled within their context or network. I also pursued other sources in relation to this concept to more fully develop my understanding on the subject.  

Yvonne Marshall and Chris Gosden write about the use of Kopytoff’s thoughts on object biography and the process of commoditization and its application to other disciplines such as archaeology, sociology and history. They outline how objects and human behaviour are inherently linked and, like people, objects are subject to change and transformation throughout their lifetime. Janet Hoskins writes about the relationship between objects and agency and outlines two variations of object biography. In this thesis I focus on the variation that starts with historic or archaeological research that links

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objects with a written source in order to provide a historical context. Hoskins refers to this type of object biography as “interrogating the objects.” As well, Catherine Nichols’ work about a Smithsonian duplicate collection and its journey using object biography inspired me to apply the concept to my own case study. Geoffrey Swinney conducts an object biography of the museum register as a museum object. He describes subjecting the information and documents associated with a museum object to the same scrutiny and study as a museum object itself. Swinney describes the information contained within museum documentation as “relat[ed] to processes of mobility and to the flow of objects and knowledge into, around and sometimes out of a museum.” If the museum register can be considered akin to a museum object then object biography can apply to the museum register and its associated documentation and information. The biographies created here consider both the objects and their associated information as part of a set of events, diversions, and contexts that create and recreate value.

Object biography provides a framework within which to study the lives of each collection and mark the important moments, or diversions, that contributed to the evolution of their roles and values. After writing the initial biography of both collections I looked for the moments when the collections were part of a significant event, whether they encountered different actors or were faced with a change of context. In keeping with

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Kopytoff, I identified these moments as diversions. Once I had identified the diversions for each collection I was able to more closely analyze the diversion, the people, other objects and institutions that were involved, any changes in context, and any changes (or not) in value and the resulting effect on the collections. These observations are identified in chapter three and discussed and analyzed in further detail in chapter four along with the identification of any patterns or similarities between the changes in value for both collections.

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) was an important counterpart to object biography. It provided a model for identifying the actors, both human and non-human, in each diversion and analyzing their role in the changes made to each collection. Non-human actors became important considerations when I realized the extent to which being placed in a shared cardboard box influenced the biographies of these collections. It prompted me to ask what other material objects, archaeological or museological processes diverted the collections’ paths. ANT also allowed me to map a network for each collection during moments of diversion to better understand why and how value shifted during the diversions.

Using ANT to guide the construction of object biographies for the Ur and Roman collections resists favouring the agency of people in creating biographies for objects. Both ANT and object biography are open to the interactions between objects and people in the creation of value and meaning, however object biography tends to place agency with humans: object biography is stimulated through the agency and actions of people. Though I agree with the concept of object biography and have found it useful for creating
a framework for examining the lives of the Ur and Roman collections, I believe that objects and therefore collections can possess their own form of agency.

In promoting ANT, Bruno Latour advocates for an approach in which objects are able to create connections with people through social processes that are part of the agency of objects.\(^\text{19}\) ANT treats objects as actors within a network that have agency, meaning and the ability to move and transform across time and space. Latour uses the term “actors” because it is associated with action and movement; an actor has the ability to modify or make a difference within a state of affairs. ANT maps the relations, both material and semiotic, between people and objects, objects and objects, and people and people. It attributes agency equally to humans and non-humans (e.g. objects). According to Latour, objects cannot be just “hapless bearers of symbolic projection”, they must create associations and connections through their social network.\(^\text{20}\)

Following this line of thinking, all aspects of an archaeology site or museum are part of a network. This approach can be applied on a much wider scale, between museums as happens with the Ur and Roman collections, and between museums and archaeological processes. Each collection has its own network formed throughout its lifetime and through their interactions, their networks connect. I map the network of each collection in detail, including the connection between the collections, in the next chapter.

\(^{19}\) The work of John Law, “Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics”, takes a similar approach; using various empirical case-studies to explain ANT and examining it within the context of other theories such as Michel Foucault’s post-structuralism; Law, John, “Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics” (Lancaster University: Lancaster, 2007).

Value and heritage process

Part of my research is dedicated to assessing the values of the Ur and Roman British collections during their various roles throughout their lifetimes. Value is an expansive topic on its own. I focused on those discussions of value that deal with the topic within archaeological and museological collections and contexts. Recent work within museum studies from Raymond Silverman discusses “objects of knowledge” and affirms the different layers of meaning than an object acquires throughout its life and the effects it can have on the value of an object. Laurajane Smith writes extensively on the topic of heritage and the connections between archaeological processes, heritage objects and value. Much as Kopytoff identifies a relationship between exchange value and cultural production, Smith identifies a relationship between heritage value and cultural production.

In Legal and Policy Issues in the Protection of Cultural Heritage in South Asia and the Pacific, Cathy Lynne Costin identifies and defines five types of value that relate to cultural property and cultural heritage: symbolic, historic, informational, aesthetic, and economic. Her definitions of symbolic and historic value combined have elements of the definition of heritage value that applies to my work. In symbolic value she focuses on how cultural property helps shape a cultural or national identity. Historic value is focused

on the preservation of a culture’s past and traditions. These definitions of value work in conjunction with Messenger’s definition of cultural heritage. It is the constructed connection to the past and the connection between cultural heritage objects and a shared identity that contribute to heritage value. Costin’s informational value is much like educational value. It relies on the extraction of information about a people or culture from their material culture and how this information can be put to use for both scholarly research and public education.25

When discussing a definition of non-monetary value the term meaning comes to mind. Meaning is a type of value that I believe functions on a smaller and more personal scale than other types of value. Value is constructed on a large scale and thus it tends to apply to a wider range of people, for example a cultural group, a religious group, or a community. Meaning is smaller and consists of a deeper more unique, personal connection. Meaning and value often function together, an object can carry educational value or use value and still have meaning and a personal connection to a person. For the purposes of my work I stick to the term value as I am looking at how value is determined and changes on a larger scale.

Within these academic resources I was looking for theories about value as it relates to objects as everyday objects, archaeological objects, and museum objects. I paid special attention to sources that noted changes in value associated with processes, specifically museum processes, that affected the roles of objects such as Nichol’s work with Smithsonian duplicates.26 I also paid attention to sources that dealt specifically with archaeological process and objects and the evolution that archaeological artifacts go

25 Ibid 27.
through once they have been excavated.\textsuperscript{27} I looked for examples in academic texts that were similar to the diversions that occurred in the biographies of the Ur and Roman British collections so I could form connections between the object biography, ANT and the research I was conducting. These sources reaffirm that collections possess different types of value and that value must be perceived as fluid when applied to museum collections.

**The “weight” of a museum object**

Affective weight can also be thought of as a component of object biography and a barometer for value. According to Tony Bennett, museum objects possess a kind of “weight,” or more specifically an “affective weight.” An object’s affective weight is its ability to engage and relate to visitors. It is the charismatic qualities of an object that engage the senses and engage thought processes. It is the ability of objects to act in ways that generate as well as contribute to human behavior. The notion of “affective weight” can be seen on a broader scale in Tony Bennett’s *Birth of the Museum*. He writes about museums as a whole rather than the objects themselves, and he writes about how museums affect the “mental and moral health” of society. At the turn of the 19th century museums became de-privatized and were less socially-exclusive institutions. According to Bennett they became spaces of representation whose purpose was to enlighten and increase society’s knowledge of culture.\textsuperscript{28} Objects do not exist in isolation within the


museum, they generate connections through people that span across time and space,\textsuperscript{29} and thus they are able to carry their own “weight.”\textsuperscript{30} Bennett does not describe how a museum object acquires or loses affective weight. In my research I aim to answer this question by using object biography and ANT. By using object biography as a deeper method of analysis that goes beyond a simple retelling of events and ANT as a tool to discern the interaction of actors I can develop a richer insight into the meaning, value and roles of these collections. I believe there is a relationship between value and affective weight of object. Objects acquire value that evolves over the course of their life; objects also acquire affective weight in a similar manner. I believe that affective weight is acquired throughout an object’s life, through the changing roles and values an object encounters within each new context, not just from being a museum object. I also believe that affective weight is susceptible to change in the same way that an object’s role or value is subject to change throughout its life. During my analysis of the diversions for both collections I noticed an increase in popularity often lead to an increase in value. The collections benefited from popular interest in archaeology with the public’s excitement surrounding the excavations transferring to the artifacts. In Chapter four I note and describe the symbiotic relationship between popularity and affective weight, however, I also explore affective weight as it is created through engaging thought processes. The digital diversion presents a strong example of the ways museums can potentially influence affective weight through varies and stimulating programming. Thus, I believe there is also a link between affective weight and value. All of these concepts and their

\textsuperscript{29} Byrne, Sarah, and Anne Clarke and Roney Harrison, \textit{Reassembling the collection ethnographic museums and indigenous agency} (SAR Press: Santa Fe, 2013).

\textsuperscript{30} Byrne, Sarah, and Anne Clarke and Roney Harrison, \textit{Reassembling the collection ethnographic museums and indigenous agency} (SAR Press: Santa Fe, 2013), 20.
relationships rely on the activity of actors, it is activity that sparks these processes and initiates change within a collection.

In the next chapter, I illustrate the biographies of the collections as shaped by theories of object biography and ANT. I also explain in greater detail how each of these intellectual tools shape how object biographies are told and how they can be read.
Chapter 3: Two Collections, One Destination

Introduction

Part of the research conducted on the collection of the Roman British pottery and Mesopotamian artifacts has been to think of their becoming one cohesive collection. They have been stored in the same boxes for approximately 65 years, and even after their re-discovery and identification in 2011, they remain in the same boxes in the storage room at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. Those boxes acted as uniting materials that played an influential role in uncovering the stories of both collections, as well as in my goal of producing object biographies for the collections. It is important to remember that for the majority of their lives they existed not as collections, but as objects used by people in the course of their lives, and then as objects buried under the ground. The objects were not inherently linked, existing and living in entirely different locations at different times. My focus here is on the events, actors, and processes that turned these objects into collections. Archaeological and museological processes, as well as the time they have spent together in a common storage container, have linked them in such a way that their lives, histories, and most importantly their biographies have now been intertwined. Even the simple decision of storing both collections in the same series of boxes that was made during the course of a museum process (relocating MOA’s collection to a new site) influenced how actors interacted with the collections.

This chapter examines major diversions in the lives of each collection, including the diversions that turned disparate objects into collections; the respective excavations of each collection; the journey of each collection to London, Ontario; and their varying states as museum collections. To begin, I emphasize the diversion in 2011 when what
was presumed to be a single collection was re-discovered during the relocation of the MOA storage and understood to have not one, but two, origins. I then go back in time to consider how these objects became part of collections in the first place, and to determine how they came into such close proximity at MOA.

Rediscovery

In 2011, staff at the MOA rediscovered a collection of artifacts contained within seven cardboard bankers boxes, while relocating the museum’s holdings in storage. The only clue as to the identity of the collection was a label written on one of the boxes that read “Old World Roman.” Museum staff, as part of the relocation, had to take everything off the shelves and out of their boxes. The boxes containing this collection looked like countless others in the storage room. They were made of white cardboard with handles on each side and a matching lid. The handwritten label reading “Old World Roman” caught the attention of the museum staff. The box was opened and the contents were pulled out and examined.

There was minimal documentation associated with the collection, only a letter and a handful of index cards. The museum staff took it upon themselves to further research the contents of the box. This began not with the artifacts, but with the object documentation. The letter, short and succinct in its description, stated that the “collection” was Old World Roman. It described several types of pottery: Samian ware, Belgic ware, and coarse ware, and dated them to the first and second centuries A.D.

According to the letter the pottery was excavated from a World War II bomb crater at Salter’s Hall in London, England. The letter was not especially helpful in terms of
determining the origin of the collection. It was not specifically addressed to anyone and the signature at the bottom was partially obscured by a stain. The letterhead was from the Corporation of London, Guildhall Museum and it was dated the 13th of March 1950. The index cards contained brief and disjointed descriptions of artifacts and occasionally a date. There was no signifier on the cards, no indication of the institution the cards came from, no catalogue numbers, or collection name. The cards were stored alongside the collections, scattered throughout the boxes. The un-contextualized information on the cards meant little to the museum staff at the time of re-discovery as there was no clear link between the information on the cards, the “Old World Roman” label and the contents of the boxes. The simple fact that the index cards were in the boxes with the objects created a material link, however the contextual link was still unclear. In other words, there was a non-descript box with an out of place label, a brief letter about Roman pottery and an archaeological excavation, and decontextualized index cards. But, the simple act of opening the box and uncovering its contents also marked a major shift in the state of these collections as archaeological artifacts, museum objects, and (perhaps more interestingly) as a newly contextualized collection.

The next step was for the boxes to be unpacked and the contents properly examined. Katherine Urban, the Education Coordinator at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, took it upon herself to research the collection further. Urban has a background in Classical and Near Eastern studies and was intrigued by an Old World Roman collection. Piece by piece, the objects were unpacked from the box and, as indicated in the letter, a large portion of the artifacts were Roman pottery. Out came beautiful pieces of Samian ware plates and bowls made of bright orange clay, smooth,
and carefully etched with patterns of plants intermingled with people and animals. There were spouts and handles from large coarseware amphora, rough and undecorated. There were also many sherds from basic black Belgic ware vessels. All were characteristically Roman. Urban continued to unpack the other boxes, however every so often there would be a piece of pottery that seemed out of place. Some shreds were decorated with bright and bold geometric prints and small vessels that were not shaped like typical Roman pottery. Urban kept unpacking, and the contents began to vary. It was no longer only pottery sherds and vessels, but copper pins, carved stone figures, and seashells. This was another moment of diversion, albeit a smaller one. The unfamiliar forms of the objects made it known to Urban that not all of the artifacts in the collection were Roman and there must have been more than one collection contained in the box. The collections were no longer thought of as a whole. However, it is important to remember that, even though it was brief, the time that these two collections were considered to be one has intertwined their biographies forever.

This set of events marks a major diversion for both the Roman British and Ur collections. Both collections changed from being stored, unused materials to researched materials; the collections went from a period of stasis to a period of activity. As described above, once the boxes were opened, the surprising nature of the materials led to a series of interactions with museum staff eager to more securely identify the artifacts. The objects in the collections were being examined, handled, assessed, and identified, and associated information and documents were sought and researched. The key actors in this diversion were the collections themselves and the MOA staff, specifically Urban as she lead the research project, as well as the sparse documentation. It was the clear material
differences between the pottery that lead Urban to investigate the objects beyond the identification of the collections as “Old World Roman”. The label, the clearly Roman pottery, the clearly not Roman pottery and other assorted artifacts, the stained letter, and the de-contextualized index cards did not add up to a single, whole collection. These discrepancies between the objects and associated materials that caused Urban to dig deeper into the history of these two collections and uncover more associated information. The diversion of becoming actively researched collections led to a change in use value for both the Ur and Roman Britain collections as well as a change in intellectual value because the information and associated layers of meaning were being accessed, researched and augmented. Prior to this diversion the collections had no discernable affective weight. Affective weight relies not only on the charisma of the objects, which in this diversion is related to the mystery surrounding their presence at MOA, but also on the ability of objects to generate human behaviour. I argue that the collections and their associated materials generate Urban’s research process and prompted her to uncover more information surrounding their history and current circumstances. At this point in their biography I believe that both collections had affective weight, however it was a small amount. The collections had not encountered enough actors or regained enough value and popularity to have considerable affective weight. There had not been enough activity generated at this point in their biographies.

Urban was faced with two equally important questions about the collections now that it was clear that the box contained more than just Roman pottery. First, how did these objects come to reside in a regional museum of archaeology in Ontario? Secondly, how long had they been there? To help identify the other objects, Urban sought the help of
friend and colleague Paige Glenen, who also had a background in Classics and Near Eastern archaeology. The Roman British pottery was the only portion of the collection with any indication as to when it arrived in London, or at least arrived in Canada. The letter was dated March 13th 1950. The key to identifying the other objects lay with the index cards. Their descriptions were brief and decontextualized, but the dates and time periods were the biggest clues. They referred to the time of ancient Mesopotamia. Urban and Glenen were dubious of this hypothesis but upon further investigation, more descriptions on the cards matched up with the more out-of-place artifacts such as the seashells and stone figures. The decidedly non-Roman artifacts were closely examined in search of a clue or signifier of their origin. Glenen and Urban discovered a catalogue number or excavation number written on some of the Mesopotamian artifacts (for example, a copper sewing needle had the number U. 15.405). A simple “global search” in an old archaeological report by Woolley revealed that the “U” numbers on some of the artifacts indicated that they came from the well-known Ur excavations conducted by Sir Charles Leonard Woolley in the 1920s and 30s. There were a total of twelve seasons of excavations between 1922 and 1934 conducted jointly by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania.

Thus far only the information contained in the boxes with the objects had been used to identify the collections, however it was still not clear how they had come to London, Ontario. Glenen and Urban found the answers in the Archives at Western University. The Roman pottery came to the Museum of Ontario Archaeology (formerly the Museum of Indian Archaeology) as a result of a trade between W.F Grimes at the

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Guildhall Museum in London, England, and the founder of MOA, Wilfrid Jury. Grimes was the archaeologist who excavated the collection in 1949 and he sent the collection to Jury in exchange for a selection of Indigenous artifacts from the Museum. The Ur collection was gifted to Western University at the request of the former President Sherwood Fox. A series of letters between Fox and the British Museum documented the correspondence and eventual donation of the Ur collection. The collection was formerly housed in the British Museum; they had been classified as “duplicates” and thus donated to the University. As the Museum of Ontario Archaeology was formerly housed at Western University, it is likely that all collections were stored in the same area. When the museum moved to its current location in 1981, the Roman British and Ur collections were transported along with the rest of the collection.

Returning to the Roman and Ur collections, Glenen and Urban finished their portion of the research and were left with a wealth of information. Each collection was a subset of larger archaeological collections. Each arrived in London, Ontario, at different times but both from London, England. Each collection was intended for a different institution, and each collection was intended for a different purpose. However, for an unknown reason they ended up stored at the same institution in the same boxes for 65 years. Glenen and Urban decided to create the online exhibit in 2013. Prior to the online exhibition, Glenen and Urban co-curated a temporary exhibition at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology in 2011. The exhibit showcased the artifacts, highlighted the excavations that each collection came from, and provided a timeline of how the collections came to London.
Before discussing the most recent diversions – many of them digital – in the collections lives, I return to earlier moments in these collections’ lives. In the same manner as I explored the pivotal diversion when their biographies intersected, I transform the narrative and timeline created by Urban and Glenen into object biographies of the collections, beginning with the origins of the Ur collection.

**Ur: Archaeological artifacts**

The excavations at the ancient Sumerian site of Ur, modern day Iraq, were some of the most extensive and well-publicized ever conducted, comparable only to the excavations in Egypt and the discovery of King Tutankhamen’s tomb in 1922. The excavations spanned twelve seasons starting in 1922 and finally ending in 1934. They were a joint venture between the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, with the permission of the newly formed country of Iraq under a permit provided by the Department of Antiquities. The artifacts were divided three ways: 50% was to stay in Iraq and become among the first objects to be accessioned into the Iraq National Museum, the other half was to be further divided equally between the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania. Headed by Sir Leonard Woolley, a well-respected British archaeologist who specialized in ancient Near Eastern civilization, the excavations attracted a large amount of excitement and attention from around the world.

The archaeological excavations at Ur are a major diversion. This is the diversion from inactive, everyday artifacts in the ground to active, archaeological artifacts. This

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diversion involves multiple processes. The process of archaeological excavation is multifaceted and involves physical, aesthetic, and intellectual changes to the artifacts. Using multiple types of tools such as shovels, trowels, screens, and sifters to remove artifacts from the ground involves physical and aesthetic change. Recording is an important part of the archaeological process and it contributes most to the intellectual value of archaeological artifacts. Archaeological documentation takes into account what stratigraphic layer an artifact was found (which aids in dating the artifact), and what other artifacts were found within the same area which provides context for the artifacts and the site. This type of information comes only through archaeological process and produces a specific, material and spatial kind of information. These archaeological processes not only divert buried objects into archaeological artifacts, but they also change objects into archaeological data.34

There are changes to multiple types of value through this diversion. The use value changes as the objects go from inactive objects in the ground to actively handled archaeological artifacts, and ideally, as circulating archaeological data. As a result, there is also a change to their educational value. The intellectual change enhances the educational value of the objects themselves as there is more information associated with them, however, they also become a tool for education about archaeology: how its processes work and how archaeology interacts with cultural and heritage preservation and presentation.35 With this interaction between archaeological process and culture and heritage, I argue this diversion creates a change in heritage value for this collection. It is

not a direct change to the heritage of the collection and its connection to ancient Mesopotamian culture, but a change in how the archaeological process influences how heritage is valued in association with objects. The discourse of archaeology as a protector of the past, and the empirical nature of the information gained through the materiality and contexts of the objects, seem to give privilege to archaeological artifacts that represent the heritage of a culture, thus allowing them to be viewed as more authentic heritage because of the rigorous processes of archaeology and the information gained from these processes. The process of archaeology allowed the heritage of ancient Mesopotamia to become known to archaeologists, researchers, and the general public and combined heritage and intellectual value. There were many key actors at work during this diversion: The British Museum, the Penn Museum, the National Museum of Iraq, Leonard Woolley and all of the excavators who worked on the Ur site, the archaeological processes including the tools that were used, and the archaeological artifacts themselves. At this time the affective weight of these artifacts was growing. The large change in activity level was the biggest factor as the artifacts were being handled, analyzed, researched, contextualized and turned into archaeological data. The information came from the archaeological process of analysis that focuses on the object and what it and its surrounding context can say about the archaeological site. At this time I believe that the majority of the collection’s affective weight stemmed from the magnitude of the excavations and their popularity with the public back in Europe. It was the sheer size of the excavations combined with the well-known narrative of Ancient Mesopotamia as the first civilization that created charisma for the artifacts. This combined with the

archaeological activity bolstered the affective weight, popularity, and various values of the Ur artifacts.

Ancient Mesopotamia is often referred to as “the cradle of civilization” and Ur is thought to be the world’s first city. Perhaps the most well known icon of Ancient Mesopotamia and the City of Ur is the Ziggurat. Although the site of Ur was never re-inhabited after its abandonment, the massive pyramid-like temple located at its center remained visible long after the city “disappeared” some time after 400 BCE. The Ziggurat remained a massive landmark in the Iraqi desert for thousands of years, however no major excavations were conducted until Woolley’s arrival in 1922. Excavation began in the late fall of 1922; two large trenches were dug near the Ziggurat as test sites, Trench A and Trench B. Within a week Woolley and his team had uncovered numerous artifacts, the ruins of a temple wall, and evidence of burials.37

Though the Ur collection at MOA is comprised of artifacts from a variety of time periods and locations, a number of the artifacts came from the Royal Cemetery. Finding the Royal Cemetery was what glorified the Ur excavations and made them famous in the public view.38 Excavations on the Royal Cemetery did not begin until the fifth season. The Royal cemetery refers to the section of excavations that contained approximately 1800 tombs, sixteen of which Woolley identified as the royal burials of the kings and queens of Ur. They were thought to be Royal as they yielded an extraordinary amount of artifacts, many of which were made of precious metals and stones such as gold, silver,

38 Woolley, Leonard, Ur ‘of the Chaldees’: the final account, excavations at Ur (London: Herbert Press, 1982).
and lapis lazuli.\textsuperscript{39} Each royal tomb contained a death pit containing the bodies of people that were buried with each member of the Royal Family. The excitement surrounding the excavations of the Royal cemetery was mainly due to the vast amount of wealth in artifacts that was discovered within the tombs as well as the evidence of human sacrifice in each of the Royal tombs.\textsuperscript{40} The artifacts from the excavations at Ur were numerous and displayed great variety. The excavations shone an unprecedented spotlight on Ancient Mesopotamia and the Middle East.\textsuperscript{41}

The excavation at the Royal Cemetery represents another archaeological diversion for the Ur collection. It was a primarily a diversion of affective weight. The same factors and changes that take place with an archaeological diversion still take place, however it is the context of this excavation that produces a diversion. The specific objects that were excavated from the Royal Cemetery increased the overall popularity and public interest in the excavations at Ur. This diversion caused no major changes in use value. However, the media coverage of the findings increased the popularity of Ur artifacts; as more people developed an interest in the Royal Cemetery, the objects’ affective weight increased as did the educational value of the collection through association. The more popular and attention-getting a collection or object is, the more affective weight it can accrue: objects with greater affective weight draw in more visitors, and have greater potential to connect with visitors.

There is some change to the intellectual value as the context gained from the Royal Cemetery expands the associated information. Through the increase in popularity

\textsuperscript{40} Woolley, Leonard, \textit{Ur ‘of the Chaldees’: the final account, excavations at Ur} (London: Herbert Press, 1982).
\textsuperscript{41} “Ur of the Chaldees A virtual vision of Woolley’s excavations, \textit{University of Pennsylvania Museum}, 2013, \url{http://www.penn.museum/sites/ur/project/}. 
and affective weight, the heritage value of the Ur collection also increased. More people interacted and connected with the heritage represented in the collection; the heritage and the culture it is associated with became better known to the public. I argue that the affective weight of the Ur collection increased its heritage value. The key actors in this diversion were: the excavators, the newspapers that reported on the excavations and the Royal Cemetery, the public that increased the popularity and affective weight of the artifacts and the archaeological site, and the artifacts themselves. The newspapers as actors played a key role in the change in popularity and affective weight of the artifacts. They both document and influence the public’s reception of archaeology and archaeological artifacts. As well, they are evidence that these materials had value beyond the discipline of archaeology and outside the realm of museum collections. The newspaper stories communicated details about important aspects of Mesopotamian culture, increasing the educational value of the objects. A simple everyday object, such as newspapers, provided a connection between the artifacts, the excavations and the people actors that interacted with them.

**Ur artifacts become duplicates**

The objects excavated at Ur went from forgotten and inactive to some of the most in demand artifacts that were sought by cultural institutions across the world. The excitement and publicity surrounding the artifacts from Ur continued into the 1930s, particularly in North America and Europe. Reports of the excavations appeared often in newspapers across the United States. Woolley regularly contributed to news reports,

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42 Headlines include “Ruins of Ancient Ur Reveal Civilization Older than that of King Tutankhamen,” *Washington Times Herald*, April 14th 1923; “6000-Year-Old Treasures from Ur Reveal a Modern
particularly in the *Illustrated London News* about the progress of the excavations and any impressive finds. The artifacts coming from Ur were so numerous that it was common practice for the British Museum to donate portions of the collection to smaller museums and cultural institutions. In 1931 W. Sherwood Fox, President of the University of Western Ontario, Canada, wrote to the British Museum requesting a “selection of duplicate pottery from the Excavations at Ur” to be gifted to the University. A “duplicate” is an artifact or set of artifacts within a collection that are represented multiple times. Museums often have limited amounts of storage space for their collections; rather than have multiple representations of an object from the same culture, location, or time period, some museums determined that it was preferable to have a varied, representative sample of different types of objects. The act of distributing sets of “duplicates” to cultural institutions was one that was usually mutually beneficial; an overburdened collection could be culled while the collection of a smaller institution was able to grow. Alternatively, duplicates could be used for the purpose of exchange to help diversify larger collections. The diversion at this moment in the Ur collection’s biography is its identification as a duplicate collection. This diversion includes a change in role and identity for the collection. By classifying these objects as duplicates, the British Museum changed their use value. They no longer had significant use value as museum objects to the BM as the museum already possessed multiple types of the same objects. While their use value at the BM decreased, their value as exchange objects

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increased. The collection held a much greater use value to the University of Western Ontario. With this change in value in relation to both institutions, the affective weight of the Ur collection also changed. For the BM the affective weight decreased. By being classified as duplicates with the intention of being removed from the larger Ur collection at the BM they had less popularity, and as previously mentioned they had a diminished use value. However, at UWO their use value was greater, and the wider popularity and charisma of the Ur excavations had made this smaller subset of the Ur collection desirable. In this diversion use value was the determining factor in the changes of affective weight. With this diversion, the educational value of the collection also changed. Though it may not have been directly active at this time, the educational value was being transferred from one institution to another where it was intended to be put to use. There are other types of value present within the Ur collection that are inactive and do not change with this diversion, these include: intellectual value, heritage value, and aesthetic value. The key actors in this diversion were the Ur collection, the staff at the British Museum, President Sherwood Fox, and the University of Western Ontario.

It was President Fox’s hope that the University would gain some highly publicized and coveted artifacts. His request was denied, however, and the University was put on a waiting list to receive a possible donation the following year. In 1933 President Fox’s request was granted and the British Museum agreed to send a selection of artifacts from the 1931-1932 excavation season at Ur. Along with the notice of the donation, a brief list of the types of artifacts the University would receive was included. These included: flint implements, pottery sherds from various time periods, pottery
vessels from various time periods, bronze and copper tools and weapons, terracotta figurines, and cockle shells.\textsuperscript{46}

A lot happened to these artifacts from the time of their excavation until their transfer to Western. They were taken from their excavation site and packed in boxes and shipped thousands of miles to the British Museum. As part of the larger collection of all artifacts excavated from Ur, they became museum objects alongside archaeological objects. They were assimilated into the rather large collection at the British Museum—at least for a short time. From this point to their arrival in London, Ontario the details are unclear, including how specifically the exact artifacts were chosen other than the fact that they were considered duplicates. Common museum practice suggests that the artifacts would have been unpacked upon arrival at the British Museum, cleaned, identified, given a catalogue number, and then stored until they were chosen for donation to MOA. Museum staff isolated 25 objects from a wide cross section of artifact types and created a new collection purposefully for Western. This represents a smaller diversion for the Ur collection. They enter into another period of inactivity as they are packed and shipped to Canada. They are in a period of transition, however there is no immediate change to their use value, educational or intellectual value, their heritage value, or aesthetic value; and thus, there is also no immediate change to their affective weight. During this period of stasis there is no charisma, no mystery, no spark or influence to human actor activity. Though the diversion here did not bring about a great deal of change for the collection, the process of the objects being catalogued and classified as duplicates at the BM occurred because they existed within a museological institution. Being transferred to

UWO they still existed within a “museum-like” setting. Both institutions are dedicated to research and education and UWO intended to use the collection in a similar function to how it would have been used in a true museological institution, to be exhibited and displayed. The collection was living along similar museum trajectories across different institutions. The key actors are the British Museum, the University of Western Ontario, Sherwood Fox, the objects themselves, and the shipping containers that temporarily store and move the collection. The letters written by Sherwood Fox prompted this diversion for the Ur collection. The letters between Fox and the BM were the primary forms of communication and were the only indication of what objects UWO would receive. Fox’s original letter prompted the BM staff to choose objects from the duplicate collection, pack them in shipping containers and send them to Canada. Although the letters help us see Fox as an actor in this diversion, it is worth noting that we do not find the names of the excavation and museum staff whose repetitive but essential tasks helped create value for the collection as an archaeological assemblage and museum collection. These same unidentified staff likely were involved with the shipping containers, which themselves played a large role as they enabled the transport of the collection. The information contained in the response letter from the BM to UWO was the only link between the collection and its intended new home at the university. The actions of the people and institutions as actors were enabled by the other objects involved in this diversion.

**Ur arrives in London, Ontario**

The subset of 25 Ur artifacts took on new meaning, value and purpose as a collection that was being donated to a University thousands of miles away from its
original context. The news that Western would be receiving a collection from the famous Ur excavations was a great source of excitement not only within the university community but also throughout the city. In a letter to the British Museum, President Fox expressed his “thanks and appreciation” for the gift of artifacts from Ur. Included in the letter was a statement of intent to exhibit the artifacts as soon as possible as there was a wide public interest in the collection. The letter also indicated that the artifacts would be of educational value: “We have found a very wide public interest aroused by the announcement of the gift and feel sure that it will have great educational value not only among our own students, but with the general public as well.”\textsuperscript{47} The imminent possession of such a high profile collection was a source of great excitement for the university; having such a collection on display would enhance the prestige of the university and the use of the collection as a teaching tool would grant students a rare opportunity to handle ancient material first hand. This is another diversion of affective weight for the Ur collection. With the popularity and affective weight of the Ur excavations still surrounding it, the collection arrived in London, Ontario where it was met with great excitement not only by the University but the general population. The various newspapers that told the story of the arrival of the Ur collection in London, Ontario and at Western played an important role in perpetuating the popularity of the collection as well as influencing its affective weight. Newspapers were widely distributed throughout the city of London and the university, they ended up in a variety of locations and encountered many actors. The act of such a weighted collection arriving at a young institution only served to increase its affective weight even more. The use value of the

\textsuperscript{47} Personal correspondence letters between Sherwood Fox and the British Museum (Scanned copy of Primary source). “Western Letter 3,” Western Archives (London, ON) First Accessed, January 29\textsuperscript{th}, 2016.
collection changed along with the educational and intellectual value. As a new addition to
the university the collection was to have a dual purpose as an exhibited collection and a
teaching collection. The exhibition and use as a teaching collection created potential
opportunities for more people to access the objects and their associated information, thus
increasing their educational value. Their use as a teaching collection increased their
intellectual value as students would use this collection as objects of research and study
that would add to their intellectual value. This diversion caused no real change to the
heritage value of the collection, only that more people were intended to interact with the
collection and the culture and heritage associated with it. The aesthetic value of the
collection had not yet changed, though at this point there was the intent to change it
through exhibition. The key actors in this diversion were: Western, Sherwood Fox, the
students of the university, other staff at the university, the general population of London,
Ontario, and the objects and the local newspapers. Just as they had during the excavations
of these objects at Ur, the newspapers in London, Ontario influenced the popularity and
affective weight of this collection.

When the collection arrived in London, Ontario there were a series of articles
published both in the local paper, The London free Press, and the University’s own
publication, The University of Western Gazette, describing the wonder and intrigue as the
case containing the duplicate collection was unboxed. Headlines gushed: “Value of
Collection Unequaled in Canada” and “Gasps of Astonishment Greet Opening of Box
with Ur Relics.” The articles described how the collection was unmatched in Canada and
what an honour it was for the nation’s youngest university to house this collection. Many
of the articles mentioned the intent to display the collection as soon possible, one
specifically from the February of 1933 in the Western Gazette stated: “…the antiques will be displayed as soon as the cases are purchased.”

It seems President Fox assumed that the citizens of London would be eager to donate to the University now that it was in possession of such a high profile collection and raising the money for display cases would not be a problem. However, an article published in the London Free Press at the end of February 1933 read: “Ancient relics from Ur come to light here but re-buried at college.”

The university issued a statement that until the appropriate cases could be purchased the collection would be stored safely in the crate in which it arrived. The article emphasized that this was a temporary measure and that the collection would be displayed as early as possible.

The newspaper article in 1933 was the last mention of the plans to display the collection. There is no archival evidence to suggest that the collection was ever displayed at the university in any formal manner. The excitement and curiosity surrounding the collection faded. It was put into storage at the university and it seems likely that it did not resurface again, until its re-discovery in 2011, 78 years later. A handful of students and faculty saw the collection when it was originally unpacked but it is unclear if the collection was ever used for teaching purposes after it was sent into storage.

The only official record of the collection’s existence and presence at Western comes from the letters exchanged between President Fox and the British Museum. There is no formal accession record or receipt of donation. It would appear that the collection that originally

48 “Gasps of Astonishment Greet Opening of Box with Ur Relics” The University of Western Gazette (London, ON), February 21st, 1933.


50 I encountered a rather large gap in Western’s archival records at this point. I contacted Western’s reference librarian and the Department of Classical Studies, but I was unable to uncover any record regarding the use of teaching collections within the department.
caused so much excitement and fanfare was soon forgotten, both by the university and the public.

The collection had undergone somewhat of a rollercoaster in terms of its different types of value and affective weight from its excavation until it was put into storage at Western. At the moment of its excavation, it was part of a celebrity collection that was publicized across the world. This celebrity status followed the pared down collection to London, Ontario where its arrival was met with great excitement and again more publicity. The fact that the collection appeared in different newspaper publications multiple times reflects the affective weight the collections held at the time and reflects a kind of engagement among the citizens of London with this collection. Their intended purpose was not fulfilled, however, and their affective weight diminished swiftly. They were put into storage and began a large period of inactivity. The collection was no longer popular or in demand by the public or the members of the university community. Almost all of the types of value the Ur collection possessed were affected. The use value changed due to the collection’s inactivity; this also detrimentally affected the educational and intellectual value as the collection was not being engaged with or studied. The heritage value was perhaps the least affected type of value as it never had the chance to be brought to light through acts of exhibition, interpretation, scholastic research or heritage-building processes.

Up until 1933 the Ur collection experienced four major diversions within this section of its biography: its excavation and transformation from objects to archaeological artifacts, its movement to London England and its second transformation to a museum collection, its identification as subset duplicate collection, its donation to Western as a
teaching collection, and its disappearance into storage. I turn now to describe and analyze the Roman-British material, and how it came to join the material from Ur in London, Ontario.

**Archaeology in London, England**

It is 1949 and the Ur collection is in storage in London, Ontario. The collections are still separated by both time and geography. London, England in the late 1940s and early 1950s was a place focused on archaeology.\(^{51}\) London was still dealing with the aftermath of World War II and large portions of the City (up to 50 acres) were still in ruins; air raids levelled many buildings and left large gaps in the cityscape. There was a gap of several years between the end of the war and the beginning of the city’s rebuilding. This created a unique opportunity to delve into London’s ancient past through archaeology.

In 1945-6 the Roman and Medieval London Excavation Council (RMLEC) was established for the purposes of organizing systematic excavations in London in order to take advantage of the opportunity of “already broken ground” in the City.\(^{52}\) Professor W.F Grimes was also keen to take advantage of this rare opportunity and became head of the RMLEC and the director of excavations. These post-war excavations were the first of their kind to be undertaken in the City solely for archaeological purposes. Grimes’ overall objective was to produce sequenced dates for each site he worked on and to therefore

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create a fuller picture of the Roman city Londinium.\textsuperscript{53} Excavations of such a scale caught the attention of the media and the British public. As a result, archaeology was becoming a matter of great interest and curiosity for many people in London. Starting in the winter of 1949 “hardly a week went by without a story in the newspaper or on the BBC of some remarkable find.”\textsuperscript{54} One of the biggest finds of 1949 was the discovery of the Cripplegate Fort, which included a large section of the Roman city wall. Perhaps the most famous site was the Temple of Mithras (WFG52) excavated in 1950-1. The site was located on the west side of Walbrook where one and a half acres had been levelled by bombing. It was not until 1954 that real progress was made with the site (lack of funding and resources had made progress slow). On September 18\textsuperscript{th} 1954 the head of a statue of Mithras was found and the publicity surrounding the archaeological site exploded. The week following the discovery saw approximately 30 000 people visit the site, many of them having to wait for hours just to see the excavations in progress.\textsuperscript{55} The excavations of Roman London ignited public interest in archaeology. This attitude is similar to the one surrounding the excavations at Ur, although on a smaller scale applying mainly to those living in London, England at the time.

The first diversion for the Roman British collection I am concerned with involves its archaeological excavation. It is the same type of diversion that took place when the Ur collection was excavated; the objects transition from inactive everyday objects in the ground to active archaeological artifacts. The archaeological process influenced the use value of the artifacts as they became archaeological objects and data once they were


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 145.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 147.
excavated. The excavations also changed the intellectual value because of the context provided by the archaeological process, and the educational value changed due to the increase in intellectual value. These various shifts in value also prompted a change in affective weight for these new archaeological artifacts. The archaeological activity as well as the interaction with human actors gave them affective weight where as previously, when they were inactive objects in the ground, they had none. The popularity surrounding the Temple of Mithras also contributed to the affective weight of the overall excavations. This find created an excitement for archaeology that extended to all excavations happening in London at this time. The biggest factor influencing affective weight in this diversion however was activity. As with the Ur collection, I believe there was a change in heritage value that was caused by the relationship between archaeological discourse and heritage.\textsuperscript{56} However, for this collection, there is a much more significant shift in heritage value because of the geographical connection between the inhabitants of the past city and the inhabitants and excavators of the city in the 1940s and 1950s. The key actors in this diversion were: W.F Grimes, the RMLEC, the excavators, the Guildhall Museum, and the artifacts. The RMLEC and Grimes sparked the archaeological activity that produced these artifacts, but it was the Temple of Mithras find that positively influenced the value of the collections, capturing the public’s imagination and attracting the public to the excavation site and the museum exhibitions.

**Roman British Archaeology**

From the numerous sites excavated in the City under Grimes’ direction came a small, rather anonymous, collection of Roman British pottery; this is the collection that came to reside in the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. The biography of the Roman collection starts much later than the Ur collection and has very different beginnings, however, as my research progressed I was able to identify similarities between the biographies of both collections. Much like the Ur collection, this small collection of Roman pottery lay dormant and unknown for a long period of time before it emerged from the ground as a collection of archaeological artifacts. This was the first major diversion in its biography, though it was not met with the same fanfare as the Ur collection. Grimes sought to develop the knowledge of the city of Londinium through archaeology and this collection contributed to that cause. The collection was excavated from a bomb crater at Salter’s Hall, located near the Walbrook area by Grimes in 1949.

This collection was excavated from the same area as, but prior to, the discovery of the Temple of Mithras. It was also found in an earlier stratigraphic level. The unassuming, earlier collection excavated by Grimes benefitted from the Temple’s excavation. Though both collections technically came from the same site they were from different time periods; they share some context and data but also possess their own separate significances as archaeological collections. Despite this, the Mithras collection retroactively influenced the smaller and more anonymous artifacts. Archaeological collections can function as actors for each other. Along with the head of Mithras a number of exciting artifacts, including more sculptures, were recovered from the temple site at Walbrook. The artifacts were displayed at the Guildhall Museum’s temporary
location at the Royal Exchange. The exhibit was a display of artifacts from all periods of the City’s past: a history of London in one exhibition.

The Mithras and Walbrook collections were a massive draw for visitors and the museum was providing a service that was in demand by the public and the media; both the museum and archaeology were relevant. The museum was more popular than ever. The museum opened at the Royal exchange in 1955 and by 1957 the annual attendance had risen to some 122 000 people. The museum remained a center of value to the public and as a result its “temporary” home at the Royal Exchange was moved to Gillett House on London Wall. The new home proved to be a great improvement for the museum and a better method of display for the prized Mithras collection. The Guildhall Museum remained at this location until it merged with the London Museum in June of 1975.

Grimes’ work in the City ended in 1962 though excavations continued.

This is a diversion of both affective weight and heritage. As previously mentioned, the finds from the Temple of Mithras were met with the same type of excitement and popularity as the Royal Cemetery finds at Ur. The Temple of Mithras and the connection it shared with the Roman Britain collection through the shared excavation site changed the affective weight of the collection. I have previously discussed the relationship between popularity and affective weight as it related to objects; the popularity of the artifacts as well as the excavation site itself increased the affective weight of the collection. The increase in affective weight led to changes in educational, intellectual, and heritage value for the objects, while the aesthetic and use value of the

58 Ibid, 149.
collection remained relatively unchanged throughout this diversion. The educational value changed because more people were interacting with the site and the exhibited objects and therefore more people were learning about the collection and the archaeological process. The intellectual value changed because of context and archaeological information from further excavations on the Temple site. The heritage value changed through this diversion, although heritage is also part of what caused this diversion. These shifts in value can be seen in the ways the interest and excitement that the people of London, England, showed for the discovery of the Temple of Mithras site prompted the display of the artifacts excavated there. The exhibit focused on the objects as part of the history of London, creating a connection between those who lived in modern day London and the artifacts and remains that made up the ancient city. The affective weight of the artifacts was influenced by the site that reinforced the heritage connection between past and modern day Londoners through these materials. The key actors in this diversion were: W.F Grimes, the excavators, the Guildhall and its staff, the people of London, England, and the objects. The most influential actor(s) within this diversion are the Temple of Mithras finds. The previously excavated artifacts from around London already possessed affective weight and the concept of archaeology and what it produced was already popular with Londoners. However, this particular find enhanced these factors even more. The Mithras finds acted upon archaeology as a concept and a process further increasing its popularity and it acted upon the Guildhall making the museum more well known to the London public and linking it to the excavations. Within a category of objects that were already actors, that were interacting
and networking with other actors, the Mithras artifacts became even more influential. At this time the Mithras artifacts had considerable affective weight.

It is necessary to note that at the time when the Roman British excavations and resulting archaeological artifacts became so popular the small collection that was sent to MOA did not experience the benefit of this celebrity status. The Temple of Mithras was not excavated until five years after the MOA collection was excavated and therefore it did not benefit from the diversion of affective weight and heritage that benefited the larger collection. There is a contextual connection between the MOA collection and the larger Mithras collection, however, beyond that there is no formal documentation to indicate any ongoing relationship between the two collections. There is also no documentation to indicate that the popularity of that particular excavation site reached London, Ontario and was able to influence the collection at MOA. The connection between the collection at MOA and the excavation of Mithras happened as a result of the first diversion I discussed: the research into the poorly-documented, materially-haphazard collection in the banker’s boxes marked “Old World Roman.” The material link of a shared excavation site became known, and the expansion of the network associated with the artifacts was broadened, through a relatively recent diversion in the collection’s biography.
Roman Britain arrives at MOA

Relatively little came from the initial trench that was dug apart from a partial Roman Wall and some minor finds including the pottery. The collection was excavated and recorded at the Guildhall Museum, however it did not remain there for long. The collection (WFG49) was excavated in 1949 and in 1950 it was sent to the Museum of Ontario Archaeology (MOA) in London, Ontario. Another two major diversions occurred roughly within the span of a year. Similar to the Ur collection, the Roman pottery went from newly minted archaeological artifacts, to museum objects, and finally museum objects within a new location and context. Again, very similarly to the Ur case there is a certain amount of hypothesizing about what happened to the collection in terms of purpose and usefulness within that year period before it was sent to London, Ontario. Although archival records exist for the collection and its time at the museum, they are inaccessible. I have been unable to locate any documents about the donation or transfer to MOA. The only documentation that arrived with the collection was a brief letter from Grimes addressing the basic archaeological provenance of the collection. There is no evidence of any formal documentation from the Guildhall about the transfer. The only explanation for the arrival of a Roman collection to a museum dedicated to archaeology in Ontario came from the previous museum director, Dr. Robert Pearce. According to Pearce, the Roman pottery was part of an exchange between Grimes and the MOA’s founder, Wilfrid Jury. Jury received a collection of Roman pottery and in return Grimes


60 Ibid, 154.
received stone tools, projectile points, and pottery from the Lawson site.\textsuperscript{61} The trade was mutually beneficial to both parties; each museum received a collection that would normally be difficult for them to access.

The exchange and movement of these objects is a diversion of use. Both parties sent materials from their respective institutions, and though their intended uses are unclear, their use values did change at this moment. The Roman British collection now resided in a different institution, with a different mandate, and in a different location; the use of the collection could not be the same. I believe this diversion also affected the collections’ educational and intellectual values. Wilfrid Jury may have acquired the Roman British collection for personal study. In addition to founding MOA he introduced archaeology as a discipline to UWO. He taught a class on archaeology as well as ran a field school for students.\textsuperscript{62} There is no evidence that Jury had any formal experience with Roman archaeology, however, based on the literature about him and his work he was very dedicated to the discipline of archaeology and I postulate that he would have been interested in the Roman British collection for his own research purposes. The collection would have been difficult for Jury to access had the trade not occurred. The aesthetic value did not change through this diversion. The key actors in this diversion were: W.F Grimes, Wilfrid Jury, the Guildhall Museum, MOA, G.O Knight, and the two collections that were exchanged. For this diversion I would state that the affective weight of the collection increased. The collection was interacting with more actors and this prompted more activity, thus adding to the affective weight. It is difficult to comment on the


charismatic qualities of the collection and whether this prompted the trade between Jury and Grimes as there is little information concerning the reason for the trade and just as little documentation about the collections themselves. I hypothesize that the link between all of the actors in this diversion rely on archaeology. The trade occurred between two archaeologists and involved two collections of archaeological artifacts. The institutions represented handled, housed, and displayed archaeological collections. I argue that the discipline of archaeology was also an actor within this diversion in both its materiality and its processes.

The transfer made headlines in London, Ontario. An article from March 1950 in *The London Free Press* chronicles the exchange of artifacts between Jury and Grimes, including a summary of the artifacts, where they were excavated from, and detailed descriptions of “Show Pieces” including the well-preserved Samian ware and Roman leather. The article also describes how each collection was transported. Mr. G.O Knight of London, Ontario, accompanied the indigenous artifacts to London, England, and returned with the Roman collection.63 During his stay in England, Mr. Knight was able to observe the excavations at Salter’s Hall first hand and though he was only in London for a short time “…he provided a link of courtesy between the two archaeological groups,”64 referring to Grimes and the Guildhall Museum staff and Jury and the MOA. The Roman pottery was a source of excitement in London, Ontario, at MOA and the University. The arrival of the collection warranted mention in the newspaper, and Mr. Knight making the trip to London, England, to accompany the collection to MOA in person. The newspaper

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63 Mr. G.O Knight was referenced in a newspaper article in the London Free Press: “U.W.O Gets Roman Relics From London Bomb Crater,” *The London Free Press*, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1950,
article did not state any specifics about what intentions MOA had for the collections. Due to the lack of material actors such as archival documents, museum records, or even other newspaper articles, it is difficult to determine the changes and processes that took place involving the collection upon its arrival at MOA. It is possible that the collection was informally displayed. Beyond the collection’s initial arrival, there is no record of its purpose nor what Jury intended for it. All that is known is that at some point the collection went into storage and was amalgamated into the museum’s permanent collection. This is the fourth identified major diversion for this collection. It still existed within a museum context, but the lack of evidence indicating whether it was displayed, researched, or used in teaching suggests it became an inactive collection. This is a diversion of use value that led to a period of inactivity for the Roman British collection. The collection went from an unconfirmed period of research and study to being inactive as a museum collection in storage. This type of diversion is interesting when compared to the first major diversion for both the Ur and Roman British collections when they went from a period of stasis and stagnation to one of activity. These are opposite types of diversions and thus they affect the value of the collections in different ways. When there is an element of activity involved in the diversion there is an active change in values. This makes sense as a diversion is a change in pace, use, and activity for an object or collection and it would seem that a diversion also represents a change in value and meaning. The key actors are hard to identify for this diversion as it is unclear who was involved with the collection when it arrived at MOA. I offer three actors that played a role in this diversion: Wilfrid Jury, MOA, and the objects. It is interesting to note the lack of actors at this time in the collection’s biography. With few actors there is also a lack of
activity and change. The number of actors interacting and influencing a collection has an effect on the activity of the collection as well as the affective weight and value, actors help facilitate process that shape collections. With little to no actors there is little to no change.

**The convergence of two collections**

By 1950 both the Ur and Roman collections were being stored at the University of Western Ontario. From the absence of archival or museum records, it seems neither collection was ever displayed either by the university or the museum. MOA remained a part of the University campus until it moved to its current location on the Lawson site in 1981. When the museum relocated, both the Roman and Ur collections moved with it. As the Ur collection technically belonged to the University, not MOA, it is unknown why the collection was relocated along with the rest of MOA’s collection. At an unknown time and for an unknown reason, between 1950 and 1981 both collections were placed in the same storage boxes and remained together until they were rediscovered in 2011.

If the two timelines of these collections are added together it extends from 1922 to the present. Within this time span, there were relatively short moments of activity and long periods of inactivity for both collections. 2011-2016 represents the most recent period of activity for both collections and represents the first time, that it is known for sure, that both collections were consciously considered one entity. Between 1950 and 2011 it is unknown how many people encountered these collections and in what capacity. At the very least, within the 31 years that Western and MOA shared a building, somebody put these collections together. Perhaps they were simply mistaken for a single
collection. Perhaps they were put together for convenience sake to save storage space.

There are many possibilities. The period from 2011-2016 represents another significant diversion for both collections.

Until 1950 when the Roman collection arrived at Western there was a seventeen-year period where the collections had not been introduced. Following this they spent a significant amount of time in a box developing a relationship and building a biography despite being hidden away from the world. Simply by remaining in the same storage container for a significant period of time, the biographies of each collection have changed. Since their re-discovery, digital diversions have continued to keep these collections together.

**Digital diversion**

The temporary exhibition at MOA and the online exhibition were the first occasions that these collections had been publicly acknowledged at the institutions that housed them since 1933 and 1950. This represents part of a digital diversion for the collection. This diversion allows a wider range of accessibility to the collection and its associated information, including part of its history as told by Glenen and Urban. It opens up the accessibility of the collection beyond those that have ready access to the physical museum. This represents a major diversion for both the Ur and Roman British collections. The online exhibition shares similarities with the storage containers in that it binds the two collections together. The development of the online exhibition created a large change in use value for both collections. At this point, they went from researched collections to publicly-accessible and exhibited collections. Their educational value
increased because the information associated with both collections and the various archaeological and museum processes that resulted in their arrival at MOA were made available to a wider audience. The use value of both collections also changed because they are displayed and photographed for the exhibition. The heritage value did not necessarily change, however, more people have access to the information related to the heritage of the objects that came from their archaeological data.65

The on-line exhibition also influenced the affective weight of both collections. They are accessible to a wide range of people now compared to when they were stored collections or even researched collections. As well, the mystery and circumstance surrounding their arrival in London, Ontario lends a sense of enchantment and charisma to the collections that contributes to their affective weight at this moment. The key actors for this diversion were: MOA, Urban and Glenen, other MOA staff, Western, archival records and documentation, the general public, and the objects. Arguably, the internet can also be thought of as an actor in this diversion; it widened the accessibility of the collection and its story beyond the walls of the museum. Without knowing just how many people have accessed the online exhibition it is difficult to say how much activity it facilitated. Affective weight is about popularity, charisma, and the ability to engage people and thought processes. A large portion of affective weight comes from the ability to facilitate intellectual engagement and form connections between an object and a human actor. The online exhibition created by Urban and Glenen presents a visitor with multiple possibilities for further engagement beyond simply reading the exhibition text.

There is a detailed picture gallery that depicts the objects, the letter from Grimes as well as the index cards from the Ur collection. There is also a “Further Reading” section that features links to articles, the websites of the institutions featured, as well as several videos of presentations about the collections. There is even an activity section for children that features an Ur themed colouring page. The museum has created multiple avenues to stimulate thought processes and convey the charisma of the collection. The relationship between digitization and affective weight it difficult to pinpoint. The problem is knowing whether digital accessibility means engagement from all types of people actors. Perhaps it only widens accessibility for actors already interacting with MOA, or only for people actors in academia, and even within that subset those who study archaeology or history. Digitization widens accessibility, but only to a certain degree. More research is needed in this area to provide a more definitive answer.

The change in use and roles for objects had perhaps the greatest affect on their different types of value. Different values are affected by different contexts, actors, and networks; however, the accessibility of objects often leads to change across a wider variety of values. I discussed the relationship between the type of diversion and the effect on value in an earlier section of this chapter. Diversions that create a greater amount of activity lead to changes in value and diversions that lead to inactivity or stasis produce little to no changes in value. When more actors are able to interact with objects, that greatest changes in value, especially use value, are produced.

This is not the extent of the renewed interest in the collections in the present day. The digital diversion reconnects the collections at MOA with the larger collections that the Ur and Roman British collections came from. Before the re-discovery in 2011 of the
Ur materials at MOA, the Ur materials excavated and collected alongside these materials became a great source of interest and research at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the original institutions associated with the Ur excavations. The renewed interest was sparked by the looting of the Iraq National Museum in 2003. The museum was vacated on April 8th 2003 with the beginning of the Iraq War and was left unattended until April 12th. During this time an estimated 15 000 artifacts were looted from the galleries and storage and further artifacts were destroyed in the process. 66 There was the distinct possibility that some of the artifacts belonging to this collection had been stolen or damaged. Museum staff in Iraq and elsewhere realized it would be difficult to recover or identify them especially considering that the records of the collection were also damaged in the looting. This prompted the Ur digitization project. University of Pennsylvania Museum staff realized that there were no copies of artifact records at any of the three institutions where the Ur collection resided. Upon further examination of the records it was found that, as with most museum documentation, there were many gaps in the records. Thus, Penn and the BM sought to collaborate on a total digitization of the Ur collection, creating an ever-evolving, open access online publication.

The vision was to create an extensive and interconnected research tool that could be used by researchers, students, and the general public as well as digitally preserve the records of the excavation. When it was clear that there was enough interest and potential for the project to continue, the scanning of the archival material at the BM began and the remainder of the records at Penn were scanned forming the core of the publication. The publication includes: field notes, catalogues, letters, photographs, maps, articles, and

other publications surrounding Ur and the excavations. Additional data and resources including photography, articles, and associated publications and references are slowly being integrated. The integration of the various functions is a time-consuming process especially considering the collection is spread across 25 cultural institutions globally, including the collection that resides at MOA.

The database is a valuable research and educational tool that benefits people studying a number of areas including: archaeological practice, digital preservation, collections, the archaeological site of Ur, and the Mesopotamian civilization. The database together with the on-line exhibition have changed the Ur collection at MOA in that it now exists beyond its physical presence in the museum. The digital format of the collection and its associated information open the collection up to a number of new networks with people, objects and institutions around the world. At present there is a sparse amount of ancillary materials linked with the database, however, there are a couple of links to current and past exhibitions featuring pieces from the Ur collection. A past exhibition at the CKS ZhongZhen Art Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan titled “Quest for Treasures: Searching for Lost Empires,” featured an artifact from the Ur collection at Penn. The artifact was a clay Humbaba mask. The exhibition ran from January to April in 2013 and brought together the “world’s most rare and intriguing artifacts” from “well known and forgotten civilizations,” including Mesopotamia. Though the clay mask was the only artifact from the database that was linked to the exhibition, there were fifty-one artifacts in total from the Ur collection at Penn used in the exhibit. There was also an online exhibition hosted by Penn titled “Conservation: The Ram in the Thicket, an online
exhibition.” The focus of the exhibition was about the excavations at Ur, highlighting preservation methods used on archaeological artifacts. This online exhibit focused on one of the most famous artifacts from the Ur collection, The Ram in the Thicket. The exhibition itself was not linked in the database, but it was linked to an article reviewing the exhibition.68 At present there are eight artifacts from the Ur collection on display at the Penn Museum in the “Iraq’s Ancient Past” exhibit.69 There are two objects from the Ur collection currently on display at the BM: a silver decorative lyre70 and a lapis lazuli cylinder seal.71 Both artifacts were excavated from the Royal Cemetery and allocated to the British Museum between 1927 and 1929. There is an extensive history of display for the lapis lazuli cylinder seal from 1990-2003 at cultural institutions around the world. The exhibition of these artifacts is not currently linked through the Ur database; I found the record of these exhibitions through the BM online catalogue. There is the potential for the ancillary materials related to the Ur collection at MOA, the letters between the BM and President Fox and the index cards, to be linked to the collection through this database, which would contribute to the educational value of this collection as well as the wider collection.

This should be the section where the present state of the Roman British collection and its relationship to the former Guildhall Museum and MOA would be addressed; however, due to a lack of access to the museum archival records from the 1950s and the current state of the remainder of the collection it is not possible to comment on it at this time. The only known revival of interest in the collection comes from the digital and

70 BM number: 121199
71 BM number: 121544
temporary exhibitions hosted at MOA. There is the potential that more of the Roman collection from Salter’s Hall was distributed to other cultural institutions much the same way the BM gifted portions of the Ur collection. However at the present moment I am unable to confidently state the various uses or locations of the collection beyond that already presented.

**Conclusion**

The re-discovery and the information recovered from the initial investigation led to the origins of each collection, their respective journeys to London, Ontario, and various circumstances surrounding them, their amalgamation into a single collection, and finally back to their rediscovery and their present reconnections with their larger collections as a whole. These biographies examined the Ur and Roman British collections through a specific lens; it is by no means a total biography of their lives as archaeological artifacts, collections, museum objects, or museum collections. By attending to the diversions in the object biographies, however, I have been able to think about the ways these artifacts have acquired new and changing values, and therefore deepen how museums can know and interpret these objects. By creating biographies through an ANT approach, I have also identified wider networks of value that have influenced how these collections were perceived throughout their histories.

There are many facets to the biography and respective biographies of each collection and this chapter has focused mainly on the periods of activity versus inactivity for each collection; when they were relevant, useful, in demand, and accessible by the general public. By conducting a detailed examination of each collections’ periods of
activity and inactivity it is possible to not only discern their fluctuating relevancy but also
to determine the networks that have been made over the course of their lifecycles, with
each other but also with various people and institutions.
Chapter 4: Value in Material Culture

Introduction

The main focus of my research has been the evolving roles of these collections throughout their lives from their first transition from everyday objects to archaeological artifacts and finally to museum assemblages. I am concerned with what facilitates these changing roles and the resulting impact on the value of these collections. I chose object biography and Actor-Network Theory as frameworks for studying the lives of these collections. The application of object biography allows me to study these collections through a biographical lens, pinpointing diversions that lead to significant changes in the roles and values of each collection. ANT provides a means by which to place these diversions within a network and to identify what actors were at work. Each diversion can be thought of as a smaller network of relationships and connections between actors (people, institutions and objects) and objects. Together, these diversions constitute larger networks for the Ur and Roman British collections, and it is possible to see connections between the two networks and biographies themselves.

In my analysis of the diversions I noted the connections, patterns and similarities that exist within both biographies. I also identified the specific moments where the affective weight of the collections change and how it influenced the changes in roles and values that occur for both collections. This chapter is an exploration of value as it relates to museum collections and, on a narrower scale, how it relates to the Ur and Roman British collections. This exploration uses the work of Laurajane Smith, Igor Kopytoff and Phyllis Messenger, who write on the concepts of heritage, value and cultural property.
The Value of Objects

Thus far I have focused on heritage value as it relates to museum collections and the Ur and Roman British collections. Before I begin my detailed analysis of the diversions I want to discuss value: not one specific type of value but value as it relates to objects and how value is defined and determined for objects. Kopytoff defines a commodity as “an item with use value that also has exchange value.” According to Kopytoff, the two most important factors of value in a commodity are use and the ability to exchange or transfer the commodity. When an object is deemed to have use and exchange value it is considered a commodity and in the process of its exchange or sale it remains a commodity until that transaction is complete. The object does not necessarily lose its status as a commodity after the transaction; once deemed a commodity an object always possesses that potential to be commoditized again. To differentiate commodities and the various values, according to Kopytoff there are different spheres of exchange values. Certain objects that are considered commodities are grouped based on a shared commodified exchange value. Different spheres represent different levels of commodification and exchange and therefore value.

Kopytoff’s examination of objects as commodities and value is one that comes from a monetary or exchange perspective. However, his discussion of how commodified objects can transcend their exchange spheres and obtain a different kind of value through interactions with people and culture is applicable to museum and archaeological objects and the processes they are subject to. He also acknowledges that objects that are deemed sacred or cultural by a community work within a different kind of value context while

73 Ibid, 71.
still acknowledging their lives as everyday commoditized objects. The diversions that I have identified in the biographies of the Ur and Roman British collections are comparable to the transition an object can make between two exchange spheres. Both kinds of transitions result in a change in value for objects. Both transitions can also result in a change in role for objects. The diversions within the object biographies constructed here exist within non-monetary value spheres including heritage value, educational value, and use value; even their exchange value is not for money but for other objects with comparable potential heritage, educational or use value. The result is a biographical diversion that changes the context of the objects involved and holds the potential to change their roles and non-monetary values.\footnote{I say potential because there is no guarantee of a change in value or role within a diversion. This is discussed later on in this chapter.} My analysis of the diversions of value for the Ur and Roman British collections are influenced by Kopytoff’s definitions of value and commoditization because they harmonize with the questions I am trying to address about roles and values of museum objects and what prompts changes to these contexts.

In an effort to better understand how non-commoditized objects are valued and what factors and processes influence the value of these objects, I consider the values attributed to cultural property. The term cultural property along with other terms such as cultural resources, cultural heritage, and heritage resources are the common language used to describe heritage objects.\footnote{Messenger, Phyllis, George S. Smith and Hilary A. Soderland, Introduction to Heritage values in contemporary society (Left Coast Press: California, 2010), 15.} According to Phyllis Messenger “cultural [property] is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs,
knowledge, and traditions.” This definition of cultural property encompasses heritage objects as well as how people relate to tangible heritage. It also shows that the concept of cultural property is constructed and it evolves and changes along with the people it is related to. This ties in with Laurajane Smith’s work on heritage and how the connection of the past and heritage is constructed as well as how heritage discourse is focused on people and their connections to heritage objects. Objects, as physical representations of culture are thought to possess heritage value and this value is generated and assigned through the actors within a society or community. Thus, in the same way that heritage and cultural property are constructed and influenced by actors, so too then is heritage value.

Throughout the literature there is a common theme that heritage value differs from economic value, and knowing the price of something does not mean knowing its value especially in terms of heritage and culture. Heritage value is not determined in the same manner as economic value. Heritage value is determined and constructed in terms of social, community and cultural factors that influence what constitutes heritage value in objects.

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76 Ibid, 15.
77 Smith’s work is discussed and referenced later in this chapter.
78 Messenger, Phyllis, George S. Smith and Hilary A. Soderland, Introduction to Heritage values in contemporary society (Left Coast Press: California, 2010).
Heritage Value

Throughout my research and analysis I have found heritage and heritage value to be the most difficult concepts to define and identify. Laurajane Smith writes extensively on the topic of heritage, its many iterations and applications, and its relation to identity, materiality, and its construction.\(^1\) Smith writes that while physical sites and material objects are undoubtedly part of heritage they are not the full story; heritage is also the moments, events, and experiences that happen within or around the physical places and objects.\(^2\) Moreover, the material objects are the tools that facilitate the process of heritage and help construct a connection to the past. This connection is often thought of as being inherent, however Smith advocates that it is created through process, and that process is facilitated by people based on how they choose to express their heritage.\(^3\) This idea of a constructed connection with the past as part of heritage and the role of people (or actors) has similar components to Messenger’s definition of cultural property or cultural heritage. It reinforces that heritage in multiple iterations, be it heritage objects or heritage value, is produced through a process and that process is made possible through actors and the connections and relationships they construct between material cultural property, the past, and themselves. Heritage that is represented by material culture is often identified as important because it provides a physical representation to the elusive concept of identity. The power of materiality in heritage is perpetuated by experts from traditionally material-centered fields such as archaeology. Smith states that heritage is

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\(^3\) Ibid
often only recognized as “legitimate” through traditional means of heritage management and preservation. This discourse within heritage management increases the heritage value of objects because their value is grounded in their materiality.

Smith also writes about the roles of archaeological theory and its affects on how national identity is established through heritage. This comes chiefly from a popular discourse born in the 1970s in archaeology that archaeologists are protectors of the past because of the scientific and objective nature of the archaeological process. Due to its scientific character it claimed the authority to interpret the past. Archaeological material provides a physical representation of heritage, and reinforces the connection to the past that is present within heritage and how it is defined and communicated. It is the information associated with archaeological artifacts that helps reinforce this connection; the information provides insight into cultures of the past, which can then be incorporated into modern day culture. The associated information provides a sense of authenticity to the heritage associated with the archaeological artifacts. The information increases the heritage value of objects because it opens the connection to the past and makes it accessible to actors. The authority of materiality in heritage has been promoted by the scientific nature of archaeology and this evokes an ideology of truth and thus what is determined through archaeology is deemed objective. Increasingly, those within the field of archaeology, as well as curators of archaeology in the museum field, use digital tools and digital representations of materiality to support their authority and maintain the archaeological record. Glenen and Urban’s online exhibition as well as the database

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84 Ibid, 104.
created by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are examples. This discourse of authority through materiality becomes more prevalent as the culture or past that it represents becomes more distant from the present as there are less, or possibly even no people left to represent the culture. The shift to Processual archaeology aimed to interpret past cultural systems through the material culture they left behind, not just record information about objects and create a timeline of archaeological material as with the previous archaeological model.\textsuperscript{87}

The information gained from the excavation of both the Ur and Roman British collections increased their value as archaeological artifacts because their associated information contributed to archaeological data, their value as archaeological collections as well as their heritage value. I believe that contributing to the archaeological record is a form of educational value. It is contributing to a body of knowledge that is dedicated specifically to material culture and the information and conclusions that can be gained from its study. This type of educational value translates when the collections are diverted again into being museum objects. They still contribute to the archaeological record from their time as archaeological artifacts, but they also possess a different type of educational value as museum objects. As evidenced in the newspaper coverage of their arrival in London, Ontario inclusion of these artifacts in the museum was seen as a benefit for all people in the city. The museum possessed the potential to make archaeological data widely understood and appreciated.

Educational value in relation to cultural property lies in the information and meaning that accompanies an object. The information contributes not only to the overall understanding of the object, its uses, and history but the information also contributes to the heritage of the object. For example, the Ur collections is celebrated in the newspapers for its rarity, for its role as a momento of one of the earliest civilizations as well as its achievement for the city’s university. Attention is drawn to its material authenticity through evidence of historic civilization and the city’s own civility. Educational value relies on the extraction of information from objects through processes carried out by actors who then relay that information to another set of actors who have the potential to form connections with it. Educational value starts to blur with heritage value as people not only learn about the past, but build material and intellectual connections with the present.

The Diversions

This section looks at the major diversions in the biographies of the Ur and Roman British collections that were highlighted in chapter three. I examine the patterns, similarities, and differences in the changes in roles and values caused by these diversions for both collections. Both collections share a number of similar diversions starting with their archaeological diversion, which brought about a major role change for both collections. They went from inactive to active, from everyday objects buried in the ground to archaeological artifacts and archaeological data, and they both experienced changes to their use value, intellectual and educational value, and their heritage value.

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The excavation diversion for both collections lead them from a sedentary and inactive state to one where they were active and interacted with; and through this diversion their use value changed because if an object is not active then it has little to no use value. The potential for use value exists still, the same way a commoditized object still has the potential to be a commodity even if it is not in the process of exchange. This first diversion influenced the use value of both collections the most, however it also changed the roles of both collections as well as influencing the educational and heritage value of the collections. The activity of objects and collections is determined largely by the interactions they have with actors and their processes. For example, the archaeological process and excavations as a network of actors were what popularized the objects in these collections initially. The interest and charisma surrounding archaeology at the time sparked the initial widespread engagement of the general public with these archaeological artifacts. Every actor that was part of this archaeological process, Leonard Woolley, the many other excavators involved, the tools, the information recorded, sparked the public interest surrounding these excavations. Without these actors there would have been less popularity and affective weight associated with the collection. As well, the wealth of knowledge gained from the archaeological process could not have contributed to the archaeological record and the intellectual and educational value of the collection were it not for the actors. These values also influence the affective weight of the collection as they provide multiple avenues for engagement among people and the collections. I argue that the activeness of a collection contributes most to influencing the use value of a collection. As well the activeness of a collection has the potential to bring about the most types of changes in value and role. The consequences of inactivity can ne
seen when both collections become inactive again later in their biographies when they are left in storage at Western and then MOA. During their diversions of inactivity they had potential use value, educational value, and heritage value however as un-engaged collections their overall affective weight diminished. Their affective weight changed because there was little, if any, interaction with actors. Their various types of values arguably decreased as the processes that create and maintain these types of value rely on the involvement of actors.

The second diversions for both collections were diversions where the affective weight of the objects can be seen in terms of value creation and affirmation. The circumstance and popularity of both the excavations that produced these collections gave them considerable affective weight. Popularity is not the only component of affective weight that influences a collection. Tony Bennett’s explanation of affective weight discusses an object’s, or collection’s, ability to engage the senses and thought processes through its charismatic qualities. He also states that objects with affective weight have the ability to relate to visitors.89 I believe that the popularity of a collection is a component that can be incorporated into affective weight; as well, affective weight functions as a form of value that interacts with the other kinds of value. In the same way that heritage and educational value rely on processes and connections made through actors, so does affective weight. I believe that the ability to engage thought processes and senses is a form of educational value. The information associated and presented with an object that is then transmitted to people has the potential to engage their thought processes whether it is in relation to the history of the object, its former uses, or its cultural meaning. Part of

what contributes to this ability to engage people as actors is a result of the processes that have acted on the objects throughout their lifetime. For example both the Ur and Roman British collections are archaeological collections and have thus been subject to the archaeological process. This in itself holds a certain charisma as these objects are now part of the realm of archaeology and they contribute to the archaeological record. As I have stated previously the Ur and Roman British collections at MOA still maintain a connection with their larger collections\textsuperscript{90}, and these connections to other objects also contribute to the charisma and affective weight of both collections. The connections to other objects and archaeology also help perpetuate the intellectual engagement of the Ur and Roman British collections through their archaeological data and the context of information created by the larger collection and their respective excavations. This enhances the affective weight of the collections as well as the educational value. People as actors are able to engage with the objects through multiple modes besides popularity. Affective weight can also be an important component of heritage value, which relies on the ability of people to relate to an object, or of an object to relate to people. Affective weight is a cyclical process. As the collection engages and interacts with more actors the affective weight and thus the popularity increases which allows the collection to interact with more actors. With affective weight being subject to the processes and actions of actors it is also susceptible to the activity level of the collection or object. For the Ur and Roman British collections, their affective weight decreased during their periods of inactivity and increased when they were being actively handled, researched, or

\textsuperscript{90} This is especially true in the case of the Ur collection as it is featured alongside the rest of the Ur collection on the Penn Museum database.
exchanged, and when objects associated with them through their archaeological networks captured the imaginations of the public.

The current diversion in the biographies of both collections is the digital diversion where they were exhibited as museum collections in MOA and online. Both collections were more widely accessible to the public and this resulted in changes to their use value, educational and intellectual value, and heritage value and affective weight due to their increased activity. As previously mentioned in chapter three it is difficult to discern the affective weight of the collections through the online exhibition. Without the material actors, for example the newspapers, or even a physical exhibition where attendance can be monitored, it is difficult to say how many people as actors are engaging with the exhibition and the objects. As well the digital diversion raises the issue of if people are truly engaging and interacting with the actual objects. What is online is a digital representation of the objects, it is unclear whether they have the same ability to convey charisma or interest the way objects in a museum do. Further research can improve our understanding of how digital interfaces and digital engagement interact with the affective weight of the original objects, as well as the ways digital access might influence popularity.

**Patterns, Similarities, Differences, and Conclusions**

Overall, both the Ur and Roman British collections had a similar pattern to the diversions in their biographies. Both collections faced an archaeological diversion at the beginning, which affected almost all of the types of value that both collections possess. The most important change was the creation of heritage value for both collections and
this was due to the relationship between archaeological discourse and notions of authentic heritage, especially within cultural institutions. This refers back to Laurajane Smith’s and Phyllis Messenger’s concepts of heritage and heritage value in cultural property. This constructed connection between archaeological knowledge and data and heritage objects gives considerable affective weight to heritage objects in cultural institutions. Cultural institutions use objects as tools to represent heritage and thus perpetuate the relationship between the scientific nature of archaeological data and the resulting idea of authenticity this relays to heritage objects. Their second shared diversions of affective weight also produced significant changes to their heritage and educational value. I noticed that there was a relationship between the affective weight of the collections and increases in their heritage value. The more popular a collection or site is along with its level of heritage and educational value, the more affective weight it carries because it connects with more people. The other shared diversion of affective weight for both collections occurred during their digital diversion. At the time of this diversion both collections had come out of long periods of inactivity with no change in roles or value. Their accessibility to a wide range of people and the charisma and mystery of their rediscovery and stories increased the affective weight of both collections. I also noticed that along with the relationship between the affective weight and heritage value of the collections that when these values and factors increased, so did the educational value of the collections. More people were able to encounter and connect with the associated information and archaeological data of the collections when digitized, and thus increase the educational value.
The Ur collection faced a second diversion of affective weight upon its arrival at Western and experienced similar increases to its affective weight, heritage value, and educational value. Though there are no records or documented evidence of the arrival of the Roman British collection, it is possible that it would have had a similar increase in values. Aside from the relationship between affective weight and heritage and educational value, the other largest pattern within the diversions of both collections is the relationship between the amount of interactions and the changes to the roles and types of value for both collections. The diversions that involved the most actors resulted in changes to more types of value. As well, all of the diversions that involved affective weight also involved the greatest amounts of actors, and more specifically, actors that were people (versus institutions or other objects). In the diversions that involved fewer actors there were changes to fewer types of value, if any at all. Take for example the third diversion in both collections; the diversion of becoming duplicates for the Ur collection and the exchange diversion for the Roman British collection. The third diversion for both collections resulted in fewer types of changes in value and within those changes the kind of actors did not change substantially: the archaeological objects were associated with curator-archaeologists and collections workers who shared common goal of cataloguing and documenting the material whether on the archaeological site or at the museum. These diversions were more diversions of identity than value. Both collections became museum collections but the Ur collection became duplicates and the Roman British collection became an exchange collection. These major changes in roles were due to the actors involved, both human and non-human. The archaeological process and actors that acted upon the collections in previous diversions influenced the actors that caused this
diversion of museum process. The archaeological data and connection to the larger Ur collection influenced actors at the British Museum to classify the smaller subset a duplicate collection, thus initiating the museum process of the time of gifting duplicates to other cultural institutions. The same data and connection influenced the change of the Roman British collection from being an archaeological collection within a museum to an exchanged collection, another common museum process of the time. The changes and influence caused by actors within a diversion do not stop influencing the objects once they move past a diversion. These changes and effects compound and are carried with the objects as they continue their journey and as they are encountered by other actors in different diversions. The use values change due to the change in identity, however this change in identity was not entirely clear for the Roman British collection due to lack of associated information. There were impending changes to the educational value as different people would encounter the associated information and data of the collections once they reached their respective destinations; however, there was no direct change to the educational value of each collection during these specific diversions. During the diversions of inactivity for both collections there was minimal to no change in their values, roles or identities because there was minimal to no interaction with actors. During their periods of inactivity the only actors at work for both collections were the institutions they were moving between and the collections themselves, there were no people involved. People who are actors in the biographies of collections create the greatest amount of change and influence to the values and roles of the collections.

My conclusion that actors elicit the greatest amount of change to the value and roles of collections is supported by my exploration of the relationship between value and
objects earlier in this chapter. Kopytoff and his ideas of value and commoditization state that objects can move between their value spheres obtain a different type of value that exists outside of the monetary value through interactions with people and culture.\textsuperscript{91} This is applicable to the changes in value that I have described through the diversions in the Ur and Roman British biographies. The collections moving from diversion to diversion is like the spheres described by Kopytoff where they encounter different kinds of value as well as different levels of changes to these values. The changes are brought about by the people actors and the various interactions they have with the collections. In the case of the Ur and Roman British collections these interactions are based on archaeological processes, museum processes, heritage value, affective weight, intellectual and educational potential and value, use, and aesthetics. This ties in with Smith’s assertion that heritage is not inherent but rather a process constructed by people.

Within my research, interaction between actors is the largest determinant of value. It is the interaction between people as actors and objects as actors that facilitate diversions within the biography of an object or collection. Encounters between actors within an archaeological, museum, or institutional context drives objects to become archaeological artifacts, museum objects, duplicates, exchanged collections, inactive museum collections, or exhibited and researched museum collections.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Overview

Throughout my research I have focused on how the roles and various values of objects and collections change over the course of their lifetime and what processes and factors facilitate these changes. I used the journeys of the Ur and Roman British collections that were forgotten and then rediscovered under interesting circumstances as a case study for my research. Applying object biography as my main method to study a specific timeframe within the lives of the collections and Actor-Network Theory as a tool of analysis I was able to create biographies for both collections that began with their excavations and ended with their current role as digitally exhibited museum collections. Object biography as a method allowed me to identify diversions in the collections’ biographies, where the contexts changed for each collection and what changes, if any, were made to their various types of value and roles. ANT allowed me to identify the actors within each diversion in the biographies and then later analyze the diversions and determine what roles the actors played in the changes to the collections.

Before completing an analysis of the diversions to identify any patterns and similarities between the collections I defined the larger concepts that I was analyzing such as value, heritage and heritage value, cultural property and its relation to heritage, educational value and affective weight. I began with Kopytoff’s definition of value in commodities, the process of commoditization and how the value of a commodity can change. As my interest was not specifically with commoditized objects and economic or exchange value, I also referenced Phyllis Messenger’s work on the value of cultural property and later her work on heritage value. Laurajane Smith’s work provided insight
into how heritage is a process constructed by actors to maintain a connection with the past. Heritage objects are tools used to facilitate this connection and act as physical representations of heritage. Together Smith’s and Messenger’s work helped define heritage and heritage value as I referred to it in my work. The definition of educational value referenced in my work also comes from Messenger’s work on cultural property. The measure of educational value lies in the information associated with the object or collection and its ability to be transmitted to actors. Affective weight is a concept from Tony Bennett that measures an object’s resonance based on its ability to engage with and relate to people through its charismatic qualities. Through my own research, I determined that popularity was a component of affective weight and its abilities and that affective weight is a form of value for objects. Having defined these concepts I was able to complete my analysis of the diversions.

Observations

In analyzing the diversions and the changes in value and roles considering the actors at work, I came to a set of conclusions based on the theories and concepts I had referenced as well as my own research from the case study of the Ur and Roman British collection. Firstly, within the concepts of value, heritage, and affective weight that I referenced they all have two major similarities in how they are defined and assessed. Each concept is a process that evolves and builds over time and each process is constructed and facilitated by actors. Due to these similarities, each concept is related to each other and is able to interact together in relation to objects and collections. Secondly, through my research I determined that activity is a major facilitator of change for objects.
The more active a collection is, the more susceptible it is to changes in roles but especially to changes in value. This is due to the fact that activity comes from interaction with actors, and actors drive heritage, heritage value, educational value, use value, and affective weight. This is especially true in determining affective weight. The more actors, the greater a collection’s affective weight. This relationship is reciprocal: the more affective weight a collection acquires through activity, the greater the number of actors involved with the collection tends to be. Each of the concepts, roles, and kinds of value I have described throughout my analysis all interact and relate to each other, mainly because they are facilitated or constructed by actors. I also conclude that the power of materiality and objects in relation to heritage, value, cultural property, affective weight and archaeology are subject to change. Actors and activity are what drive change and determine value in objects and collections.

Conclusions

The research I have conducted and the analysis of this research demonstrates the ways actors play a defining role within processes related to museums, heritage, archaeology, and value. Heritage discourse is largely focused on people: how people relate to and express heritage; how people use objects to define, construct, and determine value in heritage. It is focused on people and their actions to the point that it almost forgets objects. There is no denying that people are an important factor in what defines heritage, however objects and what they represent and express are equally as important to heritage discourse. I believe it is important to bring objects back into heritage studies and I believe it is possible using object biography and ANT when deciphering and analyzing
the lives of museum collections. These methods provide a look not only at how the collection came to reside at a specific institution but they look at the history of the collection beyond cultural institutions. It allows the examination of other factors and processes in the lives of objects, such as archaeology and archaeological discourse that contribute to heritage and educational value, as well as affective weight and how its cyclical nature helps contribute to the values of objects.

I believe that object biography can be a useful tool within the field of museum studies. It provides a wider picture about an object or collection that relies on associated documentation and information. As well, the analysis of diversions can help determine factors that may not previously be known to a museum through traditional documentation such as use value, heritage value, educational value, or affective weight. Such information might be useful to a museum looking to enhance the educational value or affective weight of a collection to draw in more visitors. ANT considers all types of things, not just people, as actors with the ability to influence each other. I advocate that incorporating ANT into museum contexts when examining objects and concepts such as their value, role, or affective weight is important in bringing objects back into focus in heritage and museum studies. ANT works with object biography in examining diversions to pinpoint key actors—not just people but institutions or other objects that influenced the value, use, or role of an object or collection. Throughout my work I have identified a number of different actors within the diversions of both the Ur and Roman British collections (see Chapter Three). I assert that people should be thought of as actors within the framework of ANT: within ANT all actors have the same type of affective potential and when working within a museum setting that is centered around objects, materiality, and people,
it is important to consider more than just people as potential influences. My findings show that it is the contributions of all actors that influence the processes that objects undergo throughout their lives.

**Future Research Possibilities**

My work with the Ur and Roman British collections has provided me with ideas for future research projects to expand on the work I have conducted here. One aspect from the research I have conducted that could be expanded upon is the role of value within museology and how museums influence both the non-monetary and monetary value of objects in their collections. Exchange and economic value and commoditization were not focal points of this study, however, these are important dynamics that link museums, cultural heritage, antiquities markets and even archaeological looting.

I would also further research the potential to couple object biography and ANT together in other museum settings to determine their viability as investigative methods within the field of collections. I believe that object biography alongside ANT has the potential to not only be a useful pairing within museum collections to augment the body of knowledge of specific objects or collections, but also to communicate different aspects of an object or collection’s life to visitors. Object biography together with ANT allows for the exploration of multiple facets and networks of an object, opening up contexts beyond those specifically associated with individual artifacts or individual people.
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