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The Biology Curator

Title: The Cultural Impact of Natural Science Collections

Author(s): Pettitt, C.

Source: Pettitt, C. (1995). The Cultural Impact of Natural Science Collections. *The Biology Curator*, Issue 3, 13 - 14.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/544>

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FROM GRAVE TO CRADLE, THE CHANGING FORTUNES OF THE GIANT IRISH DEER.

Nigel Monaghan, Geological Section, National Museum of Ireland, 7-9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland.

Giant deer were known from Ireland long before scientists publicised their significance at the end of the eighteenth century. They posed a number of early questions one of which led to their confusion with North American moose and led to their title *The Irish Elk*. They are found beneath peat bogs in lake deposits which are distributed widely in Ireland and which form the graves of these magnificent fossils. Their value arises from a number of factors, all of which have led to their being treasured possessions cradled by museums and private owners throughout the world.

Novelty value as the owners of the largest antlers known from the fossil record led to their initial worth as trophies. They were given as gifts of importance as is documented from that of the Irish Chancellor to his English counterpart during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Value as trophies increased with the international growth of museums in the 19th century. The theory of evolution also cast the spotlight on these animals as they were used to support arguments on either side of the debate.

These changing attitudes over the centuries have merely changed the reasons why people sought specimens of these fossils. Regardless of why they were sought there has always been a market for full racks of antlers. The availability to the commercial market has changed drastically over the last two centuries and complete antler sets or skeletons are now quite rarely seen in auction rooms. This has been matched by an unpredictable pattern of sales prices. Recent purchase records at auction have reached £20,000 for a full rack of antlers and £27,500 for a complete skeleton.

The scientific value of these animals has also undergone a recent increase due to several independent research projects. These have investigated giant deer extinction, antler design and function, diet, locomotion and taxonomy. New heritage legislation will provide protection for such fossils under law in the Republic of Ireland.

THE EDUCATION AND ETHICAL ROLE OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE.

Professor Mohamed Mouna, Scientific Institute, P.B. 703, Rabat-Agdal, Morocco.

The National Museum of Natural History was created in 1920. Its collections which refer to the branches of natural science branches have been continually completed, safely housed, preserved and kept accessible.

The exhibited part of these collections presents an educational and ethical approach towards the increasing understanding of nature and resolving environmental issues, besides illustrating natural science courses for pupils and students.

Thus we receive public, pupils, students and some educational institutions' staff in the Museum. During these assisted educational visits we present the fauna's role in its ecosystems and the necessity to preserve it. For the same

goal, more than ten educational programmes on television and radio broadcasting were produced as well as some published articles.

The collections constitute a data bank and an inestimable scientific heritage preserved for future generation's education because the fauna is threatened in its environment.

ARCHIVES OF NATURE IN NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS.

Dumitru Murariu, "Grigore Antipa" Museum of Natural History, 505 Kisselef No.1, Secturol 1, 79744 Bucharest 2, Roumania.

All institutions which possess collections of natural history have a special educational and scientific importance. Due to these collections a series of natural phenomena are explained and, afterwards, understood. Among them, the evolutionary process is the most obvious.

According to any kind of synthesis, no matter how general it is, on the collections of natural history those preserved in the developed countries are the richest. Within the areas with a rich biodiversity, such collections are recent or they are still to be organized. Taking into consideration the strong bond between the development degree of the economy and the information on the collections of natural history, developing countries have to make a financial effort in order to enrich them. In this respect specialists for preserving, keeping and estimating them from an educational and scientific point of view are very necessary.

The specimens of such collections give important information on soil, water and air chemistry and on pollution degree at one time. They are real documents of nature concerning the valuable characteristics of the flora and fauna to which they belonged. There are cases when such specimens remain the only proofs of some extinct species. Other specimens are representatives of type categories and others are used as examples in demonstrating the necessity of environmental protection in order to inform on rare or threatened species. The main principles of plants and animals, known by popular medicine and homeopathy, were discovered by the help of such "documents" from the archives of nature, the collections of natural history.

The enriching, preserving, keeping and researching of these collections give a special responsibility to the specialists which are implied in their management and governmental resolutions of financial support.

VALUATION AND TITLE IN LAW.

Professor Norman Palmer, Faculty of Law, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

[Abstract awaited]

THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS.

Charles Pettitt, Manchester Museum, The University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL

Natural science collections have many and varied impacts upon different aspects of the culture of society. Too

often people fail to understand this important role of such collections, so that while a government grant of a million pounds to purchase a famous painting may be seen as a public benefit, the use of ten thousand pounds to conserve and document a major natural science collection is likely to be regarded as a drain on the public purse.

This paper will seek to demonstrate the great value society should place upon research collections by presenting evidence of the wide-ranging ways in which these irreplaceable storehouses of information are used to support such aspects of the structure of society as education, law enforcement, medicine and health, commerce, agriculture and fisheries, and historical studies, as well as the way they have influenced fine and decorative art.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF UNIVERSITY NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

Ms Jane Pickering, University Museum, Parkes Road, Oxford OX1 3PW

University natural history collections form some of the oldest and largest such collections in the U.K. The changes in university funding mean that central facilities such as museums are coming under increasing scrutiny. Coupled with this the traditional use of natural history collections for teaching has declined dramatically, particularly in the life sciences. Museums must emphasise their educational value which does not mean redefining past objectives in the light of the prevailing ethos but recognising their true value to the whole community.

The Government's recent White Paper on Science and Technology has said that all users of public money must consider the public understanding of science. Museums as a whole have a responsibility in this area, which is made easier by the public interest in natural history collections, but what about university collections? They provide a direct link between the public and the research scientists in the universities. Also the collections have been developed for teaching which gives them a broad coverage and global perspective. This complements the facilities in local natural history museums and means they provide a regional resource where otherwise the public would rely on the national museums.

The recognition of university museums' value to the whole community has led to recommendations that these museums should be funded directly through the DNH.

THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION OF ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

Professor Roald Potapov & Professor Vadim Zaitzev, 199034, Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Universitetsyaya nab.1, St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Zoological Museum was established in 1832 and from this time until now it was the centre of the zoological investigations of Russian scientists not only in Russia and adjacent countries but all over the world. Due to the efforts of several generations of zoologists in the Museum numerous collections of all groups of animals were

assembled, and the total amount now is nearly 15 million specimens. The collections of animals from Polar and Pacific oceans, North-West North America, Central Asia, Siberia and Eurasian Tundras are most complete and rich. Now no serious research on Palaearctic faunas can be complete without a study of this collection. The Institute (the Museum was transferred to the Institute in 1930) constantly expends serious efforts, including financial, to support the collections and to increase its value.

MUSEUMS AND THE MINERAL SPECIMEN MARKET

Ms Monica T. Price, Assistant Curator, Mineral Collections, Oxford University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PW.

Mineral specimens are widely collected for their beauty and rarity and a thriving worldwide market revolves around these natural works of art. It is influenced as much by politics and economics on a national or local scale as by the chance find of a pocket of fine crystals or the break-up and sale of an old collection.

An up-to-date knowledge of the mineral market is part of the connoisseurship which enables a curator to make judicious decisions about how an existing collection is used or expanded. Mineral shows in Britain and overseas provide curators with excellent opportunities to evaluate the ever-changing specimen market and, in turn, to establish the value of the collections in their own care. Museum authorities should encourage and enable their curatorial staff to attend shows as much for professional development as for any purchasing of specimens.

PAPER GIVING A LOSS ADJUSTERS VIEW OF THE VALUATION OF COLLECTIONS.

Mr Stephen Rollo-Smith, Robins, Davies House, 1-3 Sun Street, London EC2A 2BJ

[Abstract awaited]

THE EFFECT OF HIGH MARKET PRICES ON THE VALUE AND VALUATION OF VERTEBRATE FOSSILS.

Ms Sally Y. Shelton, Collections Conservation, San Diego Natural History Museum, San Diego, California 92112, USA

In the past few years, vertebrate fossils have become highly sought-after items, and their catalogue prices have climbed. These prices and the availability of buyers at those prices have had serious adverse effects on the conservation of fossils and fossil sites worldwide. Can museum staff working with vertebrate fossils fairly assess the value of these specimens for administrators, insurers, and the public, without basing their values on runaway market prices? Does the purchase of top-price vertebrate fossils by museums encourage activities which work against the conservation of those fossils and their sites? Does a market value or an appraised monetary value make an assessment of scientific and scholarly value more difficult? Are these values