dye. On the other hand, store bought yellow is not used, because turmeric is easy to grow and make into dye. By asking skirt makers to comment on pictures of skirts from museum collections, I was able to learn more about the level of expertise required for specific aspects of production. This was of notable interest in relation to the types of knotting techniques used to secure fibres to the waistband.

The particularities of the fibres, dyes and decoration are indicative of diverse social networks and relationships, in which I include myself. Museum research and fieldwork has shown me the continuing ability of museum objects collected in the past to catalyze relationships in the present.

My interest in museums has its origins in my art practice. Initially, I addressed the museum ‘frame’, imitating the visual language used in museum display to produce the effect of authority: display cases, fake nomenclature, un-authored texts, labels, the grid layout, the use of the series or groups of objects. Now I find that it is the close study of production techniques that feeds into my art practice when I am creating armbands or wristbands woven from rubber (Figure 3).

Conversations with skirt makers during fieldwork in Papua New Guinea have made multiple connections apparent: between myself, museums and both contemporary and past makers.

Arriving in the Torres Straits in 1871, the London Missionary Society (LMS) commenced their attempts to convert communities along the south coast of what is now Papua New Guinea. Building upon their initial efforts in Tahiti (1797), their work in Papua was connected by belief, letter and the flow of objects to their efforts in Africa, China, India and the West Indies. The LMS played a significant role in opening up Papua, a terra incognita for Europeans annexed by the British in 1884. Material culture was integral to engagements between LMS missionaries and local people, and influenced each party’s

Figure 3. A rubber and steel-cable braclet made by Erna Lilje in 2005 (artist’s collection, photograph by Michael Myers).

Figure 2. A shield made from wood, lead, chalk and cord, given by A.W. Franks in 1893, from Vailala River (o.3693, height 32 inches).

Figure 1. An undated pamphlet by Archibald E. Hunt, who served on Murray Island (1887–9) and then in Port Moresby (1895–1902), exhorting supporters for ‘tangible expressions of kindly feeling’ (Haddon Papers Envelope 1047, Cambridge University Library).
perceptions of the other's performances. While the LMS called upon their congregations for donations of clothes, tobacco, and iron implements to give to Papuans as 'tangible expressions of their kindly feeling', the missionaries also received items that enfolded them into local circuits of exchange and sociality (Figure 1). Teasing out the 'making and remaking of relationships' (Strathern 1993:91) that occurred during these transactions, I explore the intentions, histories and experiences materialized in the collections of the Reverends James Chalmers and John H. Holmes. These men's collections form the bulk of the LMS's Papuan objects in the British Museum, and men's collections form the bulk of the LMS's materialized in the collections of the Reverends during these transactions, I explore the relationships' (Strathern 1993:91) that occurred them into local circuits of exchange and sociality. While Pacific Islanders expressed of their kindly feeling', the donations of clothes, tobacco, and iron were probably sold in Papua to European traders, they may very well have become part of revenue generated by sales at the LMS temporary exhibitions in Britain (Mathews 1914). Through the 1930s, objects, among other things, could be borrowed to commemorate the deaths of the Chalmers, Tompkins and their party in Goaribari in 1901 (Anonymous 1951a and b). Alongside numerous publications (Barker 1996), these engagements shaped British impressions of Papua and the LMS. Collecting objects was an important part of the conversion process, as well as being integral to the LMS's production of knowledge about Papua. Lawes, for example, was a prolific photographer, and sold his images through the Sydney based photographer Henry King (Webb 2006). Samuel MacFarlane (1837–1911) sold material to the Museo Preistorico-Etnografico L. Pignor in Rome, the National Museum of Scotland and London's Natural History Museum through the taxidermist and artefact dealers E. Gerrard & Sons (Günter 1906; Grottanelli 1951). Despite internal disagreements about the role of trade goods in the LMS's transactions with Papuans, tobacco, beads, and iron hoop remained a central means by which missionaries represented established and maintained their sociality, and attempted to create the conditions under which proper moral and spiritual relations ensured.

**Today's gospel... is one of tomahawks and tobacco:** Revd James Chalmers

Today's gospel with the natives is one of tomahawks and tobacco; we are received by them because of these. By that door we enter to preach the Gospel of Love... (Chalmers 1880)

Within the British Museum are 189 objects attributed to Chalmers in three across (1891, 1914 and 1979), which reflect his extensive travels from Suasi (1877), the Papuan Gulf (1879) and the Fly River (1890) until his death on Guanbari (1901). Building upon a decade of experience in Rarotonga (1867–77), Chalmers carried out his Papuan work with his wives Jane Robertson Hercus (m. 1865) and Sarah Eliza Harrison (m. 1888) – both of whom died there (Langmore 1974). In 1879 Tamate, as Rarotongans called Chalmers and the name by which Papuans referred to him, visited eastern

Papuan Gulf villages of the Toariipi, and then the communities of Vasilala (1881), Oroko (1881) and the Purat Delta (1883), where he helped establish or lay the groundwork for later stations. As a publicist of his efforts, collecting was integral to Chalmers' missionary activity and intertwined with obtaining information for anthropologists and geographers (Chalmers 1898a, 1898b, Welsch 2006: 80). Chalmers used gifts to establish rapport and build a basis for later visits and conversions. Gift-giving occasions established Chalmers' peaceful intentions, matched Papuan expectations, and formed mutual interdependence. Chalmers carefully noted exchange patterns and actively utilized them, which earned him local credibility. For example, he made use of the friendship network through which the annual hiri trade between Motuans and communities in the Papuan Gulf thrived. By October 1881, the newly baptized Motuans, Aruataera and Puaew were holding services during their hiri voyages (Chalmers and Gill 1885:228–9). At Silo in 1879, through his Mutuan companions, 'Chalmers' secured the hat [mask] of the goddess Kaevakuku', though he failed on his second trip to purchase the two idols named Semese and Tauparau (Chalmers and Gill 1885: 140). Similarly, at the Toariipi village of Moroumoto, Chalmers purchased seven poliisi and ehehoh masks (oc.1914,0418-43 to 79), but 'neither love nor tomahawks could obtain

Figure 2. A mimi/koro, chief's lime gourd and mimia paua lime spatula made of wood, obtained by Holmes in about 1900, from Koriki, Purari (oc. 1915:07.29a, gourd, height 28 cm; oc. 1915:07.23b, spatula, length 32.2 cm).
Expressions of kindly feeling: The London Missionary Society collections from the Papuan Gulf

ethnography. While Holmes collected until his departure in 1919, his largest collection was made from 1894 and 1901. While visiting England to marry Alice Middleton, Holmes donated 489 objects to his friends the Sextons (Haddon Papers 1902), who in 1951 sold the collection to the British Museum (Haddon Papers 1902), who in 1951 sold the collection to the British Museum (Holmes 1902:425). He procured a range of ritual objects, such as bullroarers (oc1951.07.4 to 12), carved bamboo cylinders related to sorcery (oc1951.07.32 to 35), carved wands (oc1951.07.27 to 28) and carved dwarf-coconut charms known as muruput (oc1951.07.68 to 69). At the same time, Holmes frequently misunderstood what he collected and the Papuans' deployment of the LMS's gifts. A 'chief's lime gourd' is a case in point (Figure 2).

Figure 3. Tóa niuru kova, an incised bark belt made by the Tuaris. Collected by James Chalmers between 1865 and 1900. The belt's sago-fibre binding incorporates red trade cloth (oc. 1976.16.18, length 244.5 cm). The second image is the author's own.

At the same time, Holmes frequently misunderstood what he collected and the Papuans' deployment of the LMS's gifts. A 'chief's lime gourd' is a case in point (Figure 2). Attributed to an unidentified 'Kuriki [Koriki] (bush village)' in the Purari Delta, the lime gourd's top is decorated with 100 wallaby teeth set in gum with a pierced shell disc at its opening, while a cotton-reel surmounts the gourd's wooden spatula (oc1951.07.29a). An inventory compiled from Holmes' journals explains:

The one with the cotton-reel he bought from the chief of the village who had promised to hand it to over the next morning when camp broke up. When he came with it Mr. Holmes found, to his great annoyance, that the beautifully carved little spatula-top had been cut off and this empty cotton reel substituted. He dared not say what he thought. The chief explained that he had picked up this wonderful new carving near the camp (where one of the boys had been repairing something) no one in the village had ever seen its like and he had therefore decided to add to the beauty and value of his gourd by fixing it on.

Figure 4. Ita kaea, a pig's tusk ornament decorated with glass trade beads, coconut-shell discs and vegetable fibre, obtained by James Chalmers from the Tuaris between 1865 and 1900 (oc. 1976.16.18, length 22 cm).

(Oxford University Ethnol. 1070)

Recognizing that such adoptions are not straightforward, this encounter appears to be accurately described. Europeans and their things were perceived as being related to ancestors from the sky, and possessed an allure for the Pururi, who understood Europeans to be returning kin bringing objects of value (Bell 2006). For the Pururi the ostensibly foreign was local and such adoptions extended an object's efficacy. In a similar manner, cloth was cut and beads incorporated alongside shells, while metal and introduced paint helped enhance carvings (see oc1914.0418.1, oc1976.16.1; oc1976.16.18) (Figure 3).

Holmes's misunderstanding of Papuan materiality was profound. In a letter to Haddon, he casts doubts upon the genuineness of the sculptures of the Elema ancestors Ivo and Ukiau, obtained by the LMS's J.J.K. Hutchin of Rarotonga (1882–1912). According to Holmes (1920), the Elema possessed only one set of these sculptures, which he collected (see below). For all of his regional knowledge, Holmes's lack of recognition of the fluidity with which the Elema understood ancestors to flow in and out of material forms is striking. The sculptures Holmes collected were just one of many material iterations in which their ancestors dwelt. While surrendering potent forms to the LMS, Papuans retained more than was understood.

Oasis in the desert: pacific island teachers

If the missionary's house is an oasis in the desert, so in a smaller way are the houses of the men from the South Seas, and you will find them everywhere along the coast. (Lenwood 1917:214)

Arriving from the Loyalty Islands (1871), Cook Islands (1872), Niue (1874), Society Islands (1878) and Samoa (1884), Pacific Island teachers formed the vanguard of the LMS in New Guinea (Lange 2006). Some 190 teachers and their spouses served from 1871 to 1891, and of this number half died and eight were killed. By 1922, Papuan teachers became the mainstay of the LMS's efforts (Quanchi 1997). Pacific Islanders brought their own conceptions of the LMS's secular and religious successes and memories of their islands' iconoclastic to Papua, and actively discouraged dancing, destroyed carvings and revealed cult secrets (Mulini and Wetherell 1996). Along with introducing new cooking methods and food crops, teachers imparted weaving techniques for pandanus mats and coconut-leaf fans (Sinclair 1982: 32), and introduced provera anedia (prophet songs) that illustrated biblical stories (Niles 1998:494). Quickly becoming associated with trade goods, the teachers facilitated the LMS's expansion into the region, working as both translators and guides (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982).
While no direct evidence exists of their involvement in making the Museum’s LMS collection, the following examples are suggestive. In a letter to The Brisbane Courier, Chalmers (1880:5) comments, ‘I know a teacher collecting beetles for [Andrew Goldie], another collecting clubs, &c.; another shields, &c.; another plumes.’ A Scottish naturalist and merchant based in Port Moresby, Goldie supplied materials to various venues, such as the Danish naturalist A.P. Goodwin, who sold a collection to the British Museum (24 June 1885). Nested within this, and other collections, is a remarkable acquisition of part of the larger performance of the LMS’s work in the Papuan Gulf in 1884 (Chalmers and Gill 1903:3). These objects may have ended up in Chalmers’ collection now in the Horniman Museum, or as in the case of the Rarotonga artefacts, in the CHAM’s collection. When the museum’s LMS collection is remarkable for the histories and relationships it embodies. Collectively these artefacts are just a fraction of the flow of objects between Papuan communities and the LMS, and within each of these groups. Nevertheless, they are important materializations of these histories, the understanding of which is a crucial part of the interpretation of which is a crucial part of the museum collections discussed in the Museum, these objects emerge from the same intersecting histories and transformations that defined and continue to define the communities with whom the LMS engaged. Various collections are and perhaps could be.

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**Enduring histories and relations**

Traces of the LMS’s interactions in Pupua are not only materialized in museum collections, but are found commemorated in monuments along the coast. Annual United Church memorial services keep alive memories of Chalmers and his companions’ deaths at Goaribari, while the Kerewa in turn understand this event as a reason for their lack of development (Busse 2003). Communities continue to bestow Pacific Islander teachers’ names on their children, and use introduced styles of weaving, cooking and song. Other ‘tangible expressions of kindly feeling’ remain, such as the European adzes I encountered in the Purari Delta. Given to families by the LMS, these objects are now important heirlooms used in resource disputes. Other objects, such as a mother-of-pearl shell possessed by Ivira Kunu in Maipua village, also commemorate these encounters. In a narrative related to me by Ivita in 2001, his shell was a gift to his ancestor Ipvai Vai’s frightened daughter, Aimu, who encountered Chalmers in Hanubada. Giving her the shell, Chalmers explained ‘This shell’s name is Tamate. Now you will be called after me, Tamate. Aimu Tamate.’ Ipvai became Chalmers’ principal interlocutor for contacting the Maipua. As remarked upon by Iviri, the LMS ‘was brought in by this shell’ (Bell 2002:91). While the circumstances of these ‘tangible expressions of kindly feeling’ differ from those within the LMS collections discussed in the Museum, these objects emerge from the same intersecting histories and transformations that defined and continue to define the communities with whom the LMS engaged. Various collections are and perhaps could be.

While no direct evidence exists of their involvement in making the Museum’s LMS collection, the following examples are suggestive. In a letter to The Brisbane Courier, Chalmers (1880:5) comments, ‘I know a teacher collecting beetles for [Andrew Goldie], another collecting clubs, &c.; another shields, &c.; another plumes.’ A Scottish naturalist and merchant based in Port Moresby, Goldie supplied materials to various venues, such as the Danish naturalist A.P. Goodwin, who sold a collection to the British Museum (24 June 1885). Nested within this, and other collections, is a remarkable acquisition of part of the larger performance of the LMS’s work in the Papuan Gulf in 1884 (Chalmers and Gill 1903:3). These objects may have ended up in Chalmers’ collection now in the Horniman Museum, or as in the case of the Rarotonga artefacts, in the CHAM’s collection. When the museum’s LMS collection is remarkable for the histories and relationships it embodies. Collectively these artefacts are just a fraction of the flow of objects between Papuan communities and the LMS, and within each of these groups. Nevertheless, they are important materializations of these histories, the understanding of which is a crucial part of the interpretation of which is a crucial part of the museum collections discussed in the Museum, these objects emerge from the same intersecting histories and transformations that defined and continue to define the communities with whom the LMS engaged. Various collections are and perhaps could be.

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**Figure 5. Ivira Kunu of Maipua village in the Purari Delta holds up a mai, mother-of-pearl shell, given to his ancestor by James Chalmers and named Tamate (photograph by Joshua A. Bell, 2001).**

**Figure 10. Vegetable-fibre bag donated by R.W. Williamson in 1913, from Mafaluf (oc1913.0407.112, width 51 cm).**